Fatum Stringis

by Charred

Summary

Hermione accidentally uncovers a closed chest that is the size of her palm in Fitch’s office during detention. For some reasons she feels drawn to it causing her to steals it. Finding that Hogwarts doesn't have information about the box, she might have to use her relationship with Draco Malfoy to help her out.

She keeps it with her until graduation, fearing that Filch will catch her with it. It was not a Dark object, she was sure. Trials after trials of opening it, Hermione must about to give up.

When her parents leave for a weeklong wedding anniversary trip, she gets the answer of the puzzling trip through an accident deep cut when the chest accidentally drops from the table and her feeble attempt on catching it.

The chest absorbed the accidental drop of blood.

Whatever she learned during school, she knew that Blood Magic was the most potent
compared to anything else. She doesn't realize how powerful until the evidence of five DEAD Death Eaters stand in front of her.

Notes

Dumbledore is dead. Sirius Black is alive and well and the person that took his spot was Rodolphus during Fifth year.

I will try to get close to Hermione's personality but I feel like some of my belief of her will show through.
"Closed off from love, I didn't need the pain
Once or twice was enough, but it was all in vain
Time starts to pass, before you know it, you're frozen
But something happened, for the very first time with you
My heart melts into the ground, found something true
And everyone's looking round, thinking I'm going crazy

But I don't care what they say
I'm in love with you
They try to pull me away, but they don't know the truth
My heart's crippled by the vein, that I keep on closing
You cut me open and I---"

Bleeding Love, Leona Lewis

The repairment of Hogwarts began from the courtyard. Some thought it was symbolic; others thought that it was the most damaged part of the castle. Whoever thought what, they all seem to catch themselves from staring at the spot where everything ended. They would sigh to themselves, relieved and pained at the same time, turn back to their own designated jobs. Everyone chose to help fix the school whereas three students chose to clear up the docking shed.

The Golden Trio, penned by the The Daily Prophet, had chosen this exact spot for a specific reason. Headmaster Professor Severus Snape died at this place after being killed by one of his masters, Voldemort. He was a dour man, held together by secrets and grudges, but yet had a heart strong enough to be loyal to two masters. How many lies that man had to tell to keep everyone alive? How many deaths he had to see to keep up the facade of a cold-blooded killer? How could be so emotionless after killing Dumbledore even though---as everyone found out---the old man ordered him to do it?

And what did he get in return after all his sacrifice? Nothing. He got something after he died: posthumous Order of Merlin First Class award but that didn't mean anything if the person is dead! Knowing Snape, if he was alive, he wouldn't even accept the award.

He deserved something better but they didn't know what.

As she cleared up the blood splatter on the wooden walls of the shed, Hermione Granger wiped tears
from her cheeks. No matter how many times she swiped or freshened up her face, tears kept on rolling. She tried to hide it from the two boys who avoided a certain area but they knew.

Harry had finally shown what the memory was about after everything settled down. As if the missing puzzle pieces settled down in its rightful places, everything started to make sense to Hermione. Why everywhere they were in trouble, he was there. He was not there to sabotage them, he was there to protect them without giving himself away.

What misunderstood guy, Hermione thought, and she turned around to face the spot where the professor had died. To have both Dumbledore and Voldemort control your life.

Hermione was sure that if Professor Snape had survived, he wouldn't want to do anything with the medal. It would be a slap to his face or that's what Hermione thought so. Or do, if she was in Professor’s shoes. I would go live in a remote area after the whole ordeal, Hermione mused. He would probably hate people fretting over him, him being so shut off from the people around him.

Harry has convinced McGonagall to bury Severus Snape at Godric’s Hollow, right next his mom. Some people who was not aware of the true nature of the professor was scandalized by this gesture but Harry, Hermione, and Ron cleared his name through a press conference, having the acting Minister of Magic Kingsley Shacklebot view the memory in front of Wizengamot members and press. To say people were in shock was an understatement. The next day the profit of the Daily Prophet skyrocketed to an all time high, surpassing the record when they release the return of the Dark Lord during the end of fifth year.

“Hogwarts is not going to be the same anymore.” Ron stated, wiping the sweat from his forehead. Harry placed his hand on the redhead’s shoulder.

“No, it’s not.” Harry agreed, looking up at the castle, his hair slicked to his forehead by sweat. His nose was covered with rubble dust, his green eyes bright against his tanned skin. He glanced at Hermione and Ron then smiled.

“ It will be better.”
The first two chapters, barring the Prologue, will be like time skips.

CHAPTER ONE

September 1, 1999

The Great Hall was bustling with energy. The enchanted ceiling created night sky and lit candles floated around above the bustling students of Hogwarts. The atmosphere could be considered excitement but there were hints of sorrow for everyone, knowing exactly what happened a year ago. It took almost a year for the renovations of the great school to be finished and the last remaining months to convince parents that it was safe for them to return.

Pre-Final Battle students has returned to complete the seventh year that they couldn't finish. Many Gryffindors, Ravenclaws, Hufflepuff returned to finish their schooling but few of Slytherins. It could have been that they didn't want to return to school because of the stigma they have created in the past few years or it may be the reason of their parents being Death Eaters. The ones who have returned stayed to themselves, not even speaking to each other. Most of the houses still have to realize that Slytherins, too, had to face the “greater good" that their parents had instilled them. That they were also the victims of the war.

The new Headmaster---Headmistress, in this case---looked over her students who were settling down. She hadn't in mind to take over Dumbledore’s spot as the Headmistress but the personal visit from each of the teachers to the Wizengamot finalized the decision: Minerva McGonagall will be the first lady to be the Headmistress for Hogwarts. Her chosen Deputy Headmaster is Flitwick who sat beside her, drinking his pumpkin juice.

“A full house, eh?” the part goblin noted, smiling up at the weathered former transfiguration professor.

A twinkle of delight appeared in her eyes. “Unbelievable, isn't it? I was thinking there would be smaller numbers but this has taken a pleasant surprise.” McGonagall added, watching a stream of kids entering the Great Hall. “This is what we wanted. To show people that no matter the damage Voldemort has dealt us, we can still move on.”
“I think it is also the fact that Harry Potter is also attending.” Flitwick replied, nodding towards the door. The Headmistress turned back to see the said boy standing at the mouth of the Great Hall with his companions. Harry Potter, with his unkempt hair and green eyes, looked almost awkward. His best friends, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley stood next to him. Granger was looking at the ground whereas Weasley looked almost confident.

She could feel eyes on her as they ventured deeper into the Great Hall. She let her hair curtain around her face, trying to keep the attention off of her. How can Harry act so normal under all that attention? Hermione would go crazy if she had lived under the spotlight like Harry did most of his life. She raised her head to eye the redhead next to Harry. *Forget about Harry, Ron seems to love the attention*, she thought, biting her lower lip.

“What's wrong, Hermione?” Harry asked, nudging her shoulder with his. She met his eyes and smiled at him. Be it Harry to know how exactly she feels and try to help her out...it had to be in his blood to help everyone out.

“Nothing, really, Harry.” Hermione said, shaking her head, smiling softly. “I am still not used to the attention.”

“Really? I quite like it.” Ron added, waving at a first year who had stars in his eyes. Hermione rolled her eyes. Being the second youngest and have brothers with respectable jobs can bring insecurities to one but to this extent of validation? She couldn't put her finger to it. She guesses that she won't be able to figure it out.

They decided to go sit at their usual spot, seeing that Ginny, Neville and the others were already there before them. It felt all surreal to the Muggleborn witch. It’s as if she was having an out of body experience. She hadn't really expected life to go back to normalcy after the war. Or as normal as it could get.

“I am surprised that Malfoy came back.” Harry noted, looking over the table that housed the said man. The trio looked over to see Draco Malfoy talking with Blaise Zabini, a relaxed smile on his face. Hermione’s mouth fell open, comically. Realizing that she might look like a buffoon, she closed her mouth with a snap. Without the sheer and his nose high up in the air, Malfoy looked *good*; healthy even.
“I haven't seen him so... relaxed.” she noted, her eyes widening in amazement.

“Well, he doesn't have a crazy, genocidal, megalomaniac sharing his house anymore. I think that would make anyone relaxed.” Harry pointed out, taking a sip from his pumpkin juice. “He has his family with him now, albeit that Lucius is serving three year probation and house arrest.”

“I still think that git’s father should be in Azkaban.” Ron said, dumping a clean chicken leg on his plate. Hermione crunched her face at his behavior.

Harry shook his head. “If it weren't for him, Neville wouldn't have been able to kill Nagini and we needed Nagini dead. As much as he is a scum, he did help us out a lot. Remember in the Manor? If he hadn't told us that we could call Dobby to escape, I wouldn't know where we would be now.”

Hermione cringed. She knew exactly where they would be, under Voldemort’s foot that's for sure. She went back to eyeing Draco then looked away, smiling softly. Even if they haven't been on the same level or been friends, Hermione was glad that Draco can finally relax and be happy. She kept her thoughts to herself; Harry was forgiving and Ron was not and they won’t believe that Hermione would ever think of Malfoy in good thoughts.

Hermione had all her friends around her and her favorite teachers looking over the students; the ghosts (several new ones) floated above or through students; firsts years losing their nervousness; laughter all around her. Harry caught her grinning and he grinned back.

“It’s going to be a good year.”

______________________________

December 17, 1999

“Oh, hello.”

Hermione had turned the corner of a hallway, heading towards the next class of Charms when she almost collided with the infamous snake. Malfoy’s eyes widened at the curly-haired witch then went back to his emotionless face. There were no longer malice in his eyes nor a sneer on his pink lips. Hermione noted a faint shimmer over his left eye. Like one would if they were trying to cover something up with glamour charm.
She felt like she would be intrusive to ask him about it so she kept her mouth shut.

“Granger.” he replied back, nodding his head in greeting. His voice was hoarse as if he had been screaming. Worriedly, Hermione feared—knew—that some people were not as forgiving as she was. She feared that students might have retaliated back against Malfoy for him being on the opposite side of the war. But how could she raise up her inquisition without angering him?

She knew that he kept to himself during class, only talking to his housemates and professors. Harry wanted to extend his friendship to Malfoy as well but didn't know how to without being patronizing. Ron’s advice was for him to look the other way. That cost him silent treatment from Hermione.

Hermione sighed, deciding to take to the bull by its horns. “Why haven't you got that treated?” she asked, pointing at his eye. Malfoy looked away, ire flashing through his face. “I know it's not my business.”

“Then don't make it your business.” Malfoy hissed but Hermione didn't let it offend her. She knew he will be defensive for a while. Malfoy looked back at the golden girl of Gryffindor to see her biting her lower lip then sighed, rolling his eyes exaggeratedly. “I can't have it treated by Pompfrey.” He didn't want it to come out softly but it did, feeling vulnerable for some reason.

“Why?”

Malfoy pinched the bridge of his nose as he sighed. “Granger, I am on probation for a year. I can't fight. My wand is monitored heavily. It doesn't matter who gave me these injuries in their eyes. It means I got into a fight and I will head straight to Azkaban.”

Hermione gasped, indignant at the Ministry. “But you haven't caused the fight!”

“Doesn’t matter, princess.” Malfoy denied and Hermione pursed her lips at the nickname. “They will see the bruises and assume the worst. Who do you think they are going to believe? A Death Eater or a couple of Ravenclaws?”

Hermione was stumped. He was right. Her shoulder slumped, hopeless. An idea popped in her head causing her to raise her head to look at him. “I can heal that for you instead.”
Malfoy’s fair and thick eyebrows raised in surprise. “Why?”

“What do you mean by ‘why’?” she asked, confused.

“I have treated you like shit for all our lives and you still want to help me?” he asked, fishing for information. He couldn't fathom it.

“You have been mean to me because you have seen your father do the same thing. I don't know if you still think that way but I am willing to look past all that shit if the tables have turned on you.” Hermione explained, almost growling. The fact that even after all the war filled with hatred and prejudice, instead of healing and helping each other out, there are people who still hold prejudices.

Now, Hermione understands that some of the kids here lost a loved one because of this war from both sides but can't they see the Draco and others were also the victims on this side?

“Now, will you let me heal you?”

A simple nod and wave of her wand, the glamour vanished, leaving a black and blue, puffy bruise on his cheek. Malfoy looked away and Hermione wasn't sure why. Embarrassed that a person he had hated so much seeing him like this? Indifference? Not trying to make it personal?

Deciding that there were no broken or fractured cheekbone, with a wave of her wand, Hermione healed Malfoy’s face, bringing it back to his normal, alabaster skin. A faint shade of yellow covered the spot but if you were too close to him you would see it.

Hermione removed her trusted beaded back, loosening it up, and shoved her hand all the way down until her elbow was barely visible through the mouth of the bag. She rummaged around until she felt the edges of the thing she wanted to remove.

“This is a patreon coin. I have charmed it during our fifth year. That's how the DA communicates with each other. Just think what you want to say and point your wand to the coin. The coin in my pocket that I always carry will heat up. Here, take it.” she said, putting her hand out, palms open and facing the ceiling. A gold coin, similar size to the Galleon, rested on her palm. Malfoy eyed the charmed coin with distrust. Hermione sighed, impatiently.

“Why?” he parroted the same word from last time.
“So when you do get injured, you can tell me so I can come heal you.”

Malfy didn't respond; he just stared at the coin, indecision fluttering in his eyes. He never asked for help during the war, even though he wanted to; *Malfy solved their own problems* was one of his father’s ideals, *Never lower yourself by asking help*. It was his father’s ideals and his own drive to please his father that brought him in this situation. *Would things would have been different if he did tell Dumbledore the mission?*

Maybe this time, he will make the decisions; his own ideals.

Malfy raised his hands to reach over her outstretched hand. His fingers were cold as he grabbed the coin. Hermione gave him a hesitant smile.

He just nodded and walked away, leaving a smell of pine trees behind.
OH BOY

This is a long one. I promised all of you guys that the time skips happens only in two chapters so this chapter turned out to be a really long one.

Thank you all to those who left kudos on my first work.

CHAPTER TWO

December 20, 1999

*Heal. RoR.*

Hermione looked at the coin, cooling down. She replied back as she hastily packed her bags. Neville and Ginny looked up, confused. Not knowing how they will react that she was going to meet with Malfoy, Hermione said, “I had totally forgotten about an extra credit assignment so I will go grab that.”

Ginny chuckled. “You don't even need extra credit.” she noted, going back to her essay for Potions.

“It's better to have all your bases covered, in my opinion.” Hermione said, smiling. “Anyways, if Ron comes looking for me, tell him that and I will meet up with him at the Great Hall.”

“I still can't believe you are dating my brother.” Ginny said, looking horrified. Hermione rolled her eyes at the chaser. With a wave of hand, she power walked out of the library. Once out, she amped up her walking speed, over taking students. *I wonder how bad it is if he is asking to meet at Room of Requirements*, Hermione thought, worrying her lower lip with her upper teeth.

The engraved wooden door of Room of Requirement was already erected, notifying her that he was already in there. With a fast look around to see if she was followed, found none, hurried inside, closing the door behind her. The room was modeled after a drawing room, one long couch with one
seaters beside each side of the couch. A low-rise coffee table sat in the middle of the semicircle of couches.

Draco Malfoy was laying on the couch, holding his left arm tenderly across his chest. She would have noted the green walls with exasperation but she let that go as she bounded over to the injured Malfoy. He wasn't wincing in pain or look blotchy/pale, he simply stared at the ceiling, stone faced.

There was a long cut on the back of his left hand. It started slightly past his wrist bones and ended between the knuckles of the index and middle finger. It was deep, rivulets of blood seeped out, passing over his right hand’s fingers then dropping on the acrylic couch, immediately getting absorbed.

Hermione brought out her beaded bag. She rummaged around to remove vial of pain potion, a little bottle of dittany and some bandages. She hadn't cleaned out her bag since the run and thank Merlin for that! She magicked away the blood and quickly put a stasis charm on the wound.

“This time around, they were smart.” Malfoy’s voice punctured the air suddenly, almost causing Hermione to drop the potion. She turned to look at him to see his grey-silver orbs were already on. He must have seen the confusion in her eyes. “My attackers, Granger.” His clarified which brought her out of thinking.

“I know that, Malfoy. How were they smart this time around?” *Keep cool, Hermione.*

“They didn’t wear their colors tonight.” He explained as she handed the pain potion to him. He took a swig then grimaced, placing the potion on the table. “They were bold enough to use slicing hex.”

With a flick of a wrist and a whispered *evanesco*, the blood vanished, leaving the dark pink hue of flesh beneath the sliced open skin. Malfoy may have called her foul names and made mockery of her plains looks, but he had never physically harmed her. With a dropper, she dropped dittany along the wound, seeing the potion already doing its job. She wrapped his hand with bandages tightly.

“There you go. By the end of tonight, you can remove it.” she said, packing her things up. She cleaned his robes and made sure that the injury on the hand was the only one. She got up and patted her skirt down. “That's that.”

Malfoy got up from the crouch, towering over her. She realized that he grew into his skin and no longer the pointy chin Malfoy she knew from before. Years of playing seeker filled out his shoulders.
Riding the broom muscled up his thighs very well. He let his pale blond hair loose, no longer gelling it back. His ends brushed his shoulder lightly. Hermione knew that he was good looking and looked away, not wanting to be caught staring.

Malfoy turned around as he walked towards the door, looking almost shy and embarrassed. “Thank you, Granger.”


“You are...you are incorrigible, Ronald!” Hermione yelled, keeping her tears at bay, “you blithering idiot! If you think Lavender can do anything better, then go to her!”

She turned around and walked out of the Gryffindor common room. She heard Harry call her name from behind her but she ignored him. She didn’t know where she was going but anywhere but back there. She wiped away at her angry tears, keeping her chin down to hide away from the stragglers. As if her body knew what she needed, she entered her safe haven: the library. She went deep into the sanctuary, finding a table that was quite far from the rest of the room.

How could he do that to her? *Say* that behind her back? She knew that she didn’t have many experience with boys but she knew how to make each other happy. *Or she thought she knew.* Ron is----was?---her first serious relationship. Viktor Krum knew that long-distance relationship wouldn’t work (in his eyes) so he was straightforward about it. That’s why she was so attracted to him. He didn’t mince his words or try to make her feel better by lying. He liked her and he said so. He kissed her with assurance. She liked it. He knew that their relationship wouldn’t work because of the distance and his occupation. She tried to deny it but he wasn’t having it.

“You need to have someone that could keep your interest. *Quidditch is my passion. It’s not yours.*”

He was right. He knew he will not be as interested in her way of life as she would not be interested in his way of life. They are still in touch, him sending letters whenever he can. After Krum, she kissed Anthony Goldstein while she was tipsy (she doesn’t know if that counts), and that’s about it. When Ron asked her out, she was relieved that he also liked her as well. Now, she doesn’t know if he even liked her.

“I can hear your sniffling from the Great Hall.”
She gasped out of her thoughts at the drawling voice. Her head snapped up to see Malfoy standing in front of her, his book bag slung over his left shoulder. She quickly wiped away her tears and cleared her throat.

“Sorry.” she said, her voice cracking at the end. “Was it really that loud?” She felt ashamed. She had to cry at the library where people---like Malfoy---can stumble upon her? She waited for judgement even though she knew he was a changed man. How changed? She didn’t know.

“No, you are just sitting at the study table I like.” he answered, placing his bag on the table. “It’s far.”

She simply nodded as she watched him remove scrolls of parchment and a DADA book. Even though she sat at this table first, she felt like she was the one intruding. She watched his black quill write out the assignment. She placed her unruly hairs behind her ears, corrected her uniform.

“What did he do?”

“What?” she asked, shocked, not comprehending that Malfoy asked about her business.

“What did Weasel do?”

“What makes you think he did anything?” she asked, sniffing, feeling oddly defensive about Ron. “I could be crying about my classes.”

Malfoy snorted. *Snorted*. “You know you are doing great in class, Granger. Don’t fish for compliments. It’s unbecoming.” Hermione opened her out in protest; *she doesn’t fish for compliments!* “Only time you will cry is for stupid things like Weasel. So, what did he do?”

“Why do you want to know? So you can make fun of me?” she asked, looking at him suspiciously. He just stared at her, biting the tip of his quill.

“You helped me out a lot in this semester.” he answered, finally. He wanted to help her as she had helped him. Hopefully, she doesn’t cry. Malfoy doesn’t know what to do with a crying witch, especially a witch he had tormented over the years.
“You know that Ron and I have been seeing each other.” she began and Malfoy wrinkled his nose in disgust. She ignored it. “I was relieved to find that he actually liked me for who I am. I have been in love with him all these years. I thought he was happy with me.”

She was filled with shame that someone else had to hear this. If anything, she should be talking with Ginny or Luna or Hannah but she couldn’t bear to let the other girls know that she wasn’t capable of keeping a man.

“Ron said that he wishes that I was responsive as Lavender.” she said, finally letting go of the insult. “That now that we are dating, I shouldn’t be a frigid prude. He said that Lavender ‘gave it up’ after a month.”

“Why haven’t you given him sex if you were in love with him all this time?” Malfoy asked, looking confused. “If you were in love with him all these years, it wouldn’t make sense in waiting. What are you waiting for?”

Hermione was stumped. What was she waiting for? A sign from the gods? She waited long enough for him to realize his feelings for her. What is stopping her? Her first time with Krum was painful but enjoyable. She knew what sex was and is like. If she can have sex with Krum when she only known him for few months (not like years like with Ron), why was she so hesitant when it comes to having sex with Ron? She knew that he was in a relationship with Lavender before.

“Do you even like him?” Malfoy asked, placing his quill down. She snorted in indignation.

“Of course, I like him! Why would I date him if I didn’t? Everyone thinks that we are good couple! Harry said so and so did Ginny. They knew about the crush I had.”

“No, I am asking if you like him, not what everyone think who you like. Because I personally don’t know how you like him.” he remarked, shrugging. Seeing Hermione confused face, he sighed. “You two are equivalent to a patronus and a dementor; oil and water. Hell, he makes fun of you when you study. He doesn’t intellectually stimulate you.”

“But---”

“Listen, Weasley is the type of person who likes girls who will give them all the attention, like Lavender. I still have to hear about what she wants to do when she graduate. Granger, everything about you is meticulous, hell you color code notes and you probably have notes from your first
Hermione looked even indignant at that. I was right? She still has notes from her first year? Malfoy thought, his eyebrow raised.

“So, when you masterbate, you think of him?”

“Draco!” she hissed, looking around them to see if anyone was nearby. If she hadn’t been freaked out or emotionally wrecked, she would be mortified that she used Malfoy’s given name.

“What? It’s a natural question. When I like someone, I masterbate to them. So, was Weasley the person who you wank yourself to?” It even sounded crude to his own ears. He hoped, no, prayed, that he will never use the word ‘wank’ with ‘Weasley’ in the same sentence ever again.

Hermione’s blank face was all the answer he needed.

“Wait, you haven’t even wanked yourself about him? Does he not sexually stimulate you?” Malfoy hissed, his pants must have been blown away from the shock.

Hermione wanted the ground to split open beneath her legs. She wanted the devil to snatch her away from this predicament and take her away to hell so she can hide away in shame. As much as she would try to deny it, Malfoy was right. Everything was where it suppose to be. The last year of school, having your childhood crush as your boyfriend, having your best friends surround you...but even in her eyes it seemed too perfect. There had to be defect to make everything real. That defect was Ron. Or her.

Hermione always heard what girls feel when they kiss someone who they like. Butterflies. Tingling. However, when she kisses Ron, it’s just lips meeting each other. To her, every time she kisses, she feels like someone was watching her. She felt so uncomfortable whereas Ron would get heated and have wandering hands. She would stop him. She could see his irritation. She felt guilty but the feeling of discomfort was stronger.

She shouldn’t be feeling discomfort from a guy she was in love with! Then why?

And Malfoy knows. And he is not being hateful or mocking. He is listening. That brought fresh tears to her eyes for some reason.
“Everytime we kiss, I feel out of sorts. Like I am uncomfortable. It’s as if my body is rejecting him. Why? I had a crush on him for years and when I do get the chance of being together, I can’t seem to reciprocate his feelings.” she let it out, feeling the burden sizzle off, leaving her feel marginally lighter.

Malfoy was silent as he mulled it over. Hermione was still in shock. She is having a heart to heart with Malfoy of all people. She could use the raw truth right about now and she figures that he will give it. She needs to hear it. She has been torturing herself over the problem: is it her? Is it something wrong with her body?

“Maybe, you were dating him because you were expected to.” he finally said and Hermione eyes widened. “You are with him all the time and over his house during breaks. Harry has Ginny, so the girl left to date Ron is you.”

Hermione was flummoxed. “I've never thought of that.”

There were signs. Whenever Molly would speak to her about Ron and her and how happy she would be Hermione and Ron were together. How Ginny would take her out shopping and say that Ron likes the color red. Or how people looked at her when Ron was with Lavender.

“You honestly thought you were compatible with Ron? Or did the others told you that you were?” He asked, wondering how the smartest witch that Hogwarts has seen be so dumb and blind.

“Everyone said that I was.” she muttered, looking at the table. She felt off her path, the truth that she always had at the back of her head laid out in the open in front of her. She dated Ron because it was right. Not because it was true.

“Did you ever ask yourself that it was true?”

“I...I always thought about it. I guess I didn't want to face it. I was trying to hold on to a relationship that was fake in hopes of making others happy. If I do break up with him, what would Ginny think? Harry?”

That was it! That was the reason why she was holding on to the farce of a relationship! She feared that she will lose the only few friends she had. It was an eye opening realization.
“If they are your real friends, they will understand. If not, you need new friends,” Malfoy said, then nodded, as if he gave out wisdom. “If we are done with this...touchy feel-y stuff, I have homework to do.”

With renewed energy, she nodded.

“Thanks, Malfoy. It means a lot.”

January 1, 2000

Hermione had decided to stay at Hogwarts during the winter break. She feared that she won't be invited at the Weasley’s after breaking up with Ron on the day before Christmas. As usual, Ron didn’t take the news very well. Ginny and Harry did after Hermione explained why she did it. Harry even went far to say that he also thought that they weren't good for each other but didn't say anything for the fear of insulting either of them.

She actually spend her holidays with Malfoy who also decided not to go home. It was not planned. She just came upon his sitting spot at the courtyard and decided to say hi to him. The ‘hi’ turned into ‘how is his Christmas going?’ And somehow, it ended up in the conversation about sex.

“Peaceful. Have not experience that in a while.” was his response. He was watching owls play with each other as they flew around in the sky. He looked naturally at ease. “You? Why are you not over at your parents? Or Weasleys?”

“My parents wanted to have an adventurous Christmas break so they are overseas.” she had replied, smiling softly. “Things are kind of tense with the Weasleys.”

“Oh, yeah, heard you broke up with Weasel. How did that feel?”

“Truthfully? Quite amazing, actually. Freeing.”
“I am sure that's true because to lug that idiot around takes a lot of mental fortitude.” Draco muttered and Hermione had felt bad for laughing. “In fact, of all the Gryffindors, you had to have a crush on Weasel? It would be like if Daphne Greengrass fell for Goyle.”

Malfy shuddered at the prospect.

“For you information, he was the only boy who gave me any attention. However, it took him four years to find out that I was a girl, not someone he can copy off of.”

“If it took him that long…”

“I know. It was a sign right there but I chose to ignore it. Hell, four days with Krum felt more real than the seven months I had with Ron.” She said, giggling. Malfy made a face. “What?”

“You had sex with Krum?”

“Uh...yes?” she answered hesitantly. Hermione was clueless about his reaction.

“For some reason, I thought you would be the type of person who would wait till marriage before you had sex. Hmm, interesting. Surprising.” Malfy said as if he was watching a potion he was creating taking a surprising but pleasing turn. She felt like she was the potion in this scenario.

Hermione shrugged. It was true, what he was saying. “I did think like that. I was very naive to think that I could keep my virginity locked away as I studied. It was with Krum when I let that stupid idea go. I still haven't found the reason why I wanted to keep my virginity. Ron and Harry still think I am but why should I tell them about Krum and I?”

“How was it?” Malfy asked, a salacious grin on his face. Hermione gasped at his uncouth—juvenile!--behavior. It was still unbelievable that Malfy she was talking to was the same Malfy who insulted her for her blood. She understood that war changed people. She knew that having sociopathic, genocidal freak residing in his house changes a person. How must he have felt to see the torturing and killing happening in his childhood home, having to see his father finally realize the mistake that grandfather Abraxas had brought by siding with Voldemort, having to see her getting tortured for things she didn't even do or control. She wasn't able to fathom it. He was a bully to her, yes, but that shouldn’t have happened to him.
But it felt so amazing to see him like this, seeing him heal like this. Hermione was glad that McGonagall accepted his request to join Hogwarts.

“You are a free young lady, Granger, who had sex with the famous Bulgarian Seeker! So, how was it?” Malfoy explained himself, a mirthful twinkle appeared in his eyes as he watched Hermione blush. “That good, huh?”

“I wouldn’t have known if it was that good because I didn’t have any prior sexual engagements before him.” she said, primly then softened a bit. “It was uncomfortable to have someone who is...big...to be your first, to begin with.”

Malfoy smirk was making her blush even more.

“However, he knew he was big. He was not cocky about it. He...eased me into it.”

“I bet.” he interrupted, causing his shoulder to get hit. “Sorry.”

“As I was saying, it hurt at first but it was quite pleasurable at the end. I know that I was new at this but I couldn’t believe I got three orgasms from his one. He has stamina... wait a second.” Hermione stopped herself, mortified. Malfoy looked like a cat that ate the canary.

“Why am I even telling you this!?”

Hermione had to hide for half the day before Malfoy found her again hiding in the deep corners of the library. He had said that it was nothing to be ashamed of because you told someone how many orgasms they had. “In fact,” he had said, sitting in front of her, “you should be glad that your first time even had orgasms. Pansy didn’t get any when we had sex the first the time.”

“Wait, your first was with Pansy?”

“Of course,” he said, as if the answer was obvious, “Pansy and I’ve known each other since we were kids. It deemed befitting that our first time should be together. I mean, I finished fast but that was no surprise. Pansy said that it hurt too much for to get any pleasure out of it. The second time we did, she also orgasmed.”
“Is it alright for you to tell me about something so personal about Pansy without her knowing?” Hermione asked, mulling over the fact that Draco’s first time was with someone he grew up with. Hers should have been with Ron but now, she was glad that she actually got some enjoyment out of her first time.

“Unless you use the information to torment Pansy, I see why not. It’s not like sex is a taboo or sexual gratification should just be private talk.”

“That is true. Well, I guess, it’s weird because none of my friends talk about their sex life even though I know that they have one.”

“If it is all same with you, I don’t want to listen to Gryffindor sex talks. So, Granger,” he said, a salacious smirk tugging at the corner of his mouth, “I assume that what makes you pop a good orgasm is a big cock, isn’t it? Poor Weasley, he never stood a chance.” He sniggered as Hermione blushed really hard.

“Draco!”

May 2, 2000.

“Of all the people to receive detentions, I was not expecting it from you two! Ms. Granger, Mr. Malfoy, will you two care to explain why two of my smartest students will be spending their Hogsmeade visitation in Filch’s office?”

The two said persons stood next to each other, side by side, looking equally contrite. McGonagall would have said that being surprised by this predicament would be an understatement. By Merlin’s pants, she didn’t even know that Granger and Malfoy were friends. If she wasn’t fuming at the mouth, McGonagall would notice the healthy glow of Malfoy’s skin or how excited Granger looked.

“Well, aren’t you guys going to explain it to me why my two best students have been sharing a firewhiskey in the Potion’s classroom?”

“We miss Professor Snape, Professor. He died on this day.” Hermione explained, glancing down at
the floor. “Why is it only two of us... I don't think either Harry or Ron will understand why I wanted to do it and why I want to do it with Draco.”

Mcgonagall looked away, feeling a lump appear in her throat at the mention of Snape. She couldn't forgive herself that she would actually believed that Snape would betray them. She glanced at Malfoy whose face guarded up and no emotions swimming in his eyes. The wizened professor knew that Snape was the godfather for this young Malfoy.

“I completely understand why you were doing it but I can’t let you go without punishment or else other students will begin to do whatever they please. I am sorry but you will have to present yourself in front of Filch's office tonight at 8PM sharp for your first day.”

“Yes, Professor.” Granger said, biting her lower lip. She wanted to stomp her foot but she quelled that urge. In all her six years of schooling, she never got detentions for the actual havoc Ron, Harry and her have caused but drinking in the name of man who sacrificed his life and in return got nothing was reason to give her detention?! She could see that Mcgonagall was being the Headmistress here but come on! No one would know that Hermione Granger, goody-two-shoes and Hogwarts extraordinaire, is capable of drinking alcohol with her friend Malfoy.

After the holidays confession about her sex life, Malfoy and Hermione became closer. Not romantically, oh God no, Malfoy was in a relationship with Daphne 100%. Malfoy and Granger became friends like how Harry was to her and they kept it under wraps. Even though Hermione couldn't reason why they should hide their relationship. She found out one day and honestly, she wishes that Draco didn't have to face it.

“If they find out that you were friends with me, they will hurt you, no matter what. They already tried to hurt Daphne but thankfully Theo was there.”

Hermione had seen red. It took Malfoy a long time to bring her from rage to simmering anger. It was that night that she unwillingly cried for Malfoy and the said boy didn't know what to do. He just hugged her and she found out amidst her crying that Draco Malfoy knew how to hug. He was warm and his muscles were good for a headrest.

Harry always asks her where she goes an hour before the curfew and she told him that she has a secret lover that they will never know about. Ron looked green on face value but didn't do anything. Why would he? He was dating the very girl he compared her to.

Malfoy laughed his head off when he heard that. Head thrown back, a red flush on his cheeks, his teeth flashing from the candlelight, type of laugh. All Hermione could think of: Daphne Greengrass
The paused by the foot of the Griffin statue. They turned to each other, still feeling little tipsy. Malfoy was the one to crack first, laughing, Hermione followed shortly. If anyone had come upon them, they would feel like they would need to be admitted into St. Mungos Janus Thickey Ward.

“Did you see her face? To see her favorite club getting punished?” Malfoy said between laughs, “She was this close to looking away but her sense of propriety came out. I think I know where you get your uppityness from.”

“Shut up, I am not uptight. I just have certain expectations that has to be met.” she said, harrumphing. Malfoy swears to himself that he could see a booger hanging in Hermione’s nose by how high her nose was in the air.

“Yeah, another words: uppityness. You’ve come into a full circle.” he pointed out and watched her lips purse in the exact way he knows that she hates being wrong. “Anyways, it’s around 7 and we didn’t even get a proper buzz from the firewhiskey. Meet up at Filch’s door by 7:45?”

“Yeah, sure. I wonder what he is going to make us do now that he finally caught us.” she mused, worrying her bottom lip with her teeth.

“You mean, he finally caught you? Don’t put me alongside what you, Potter, and Weaselbee did together all these years.”

Hermione harrumphed again, agreeing that he was right.

“Why do you smell like firewhiskey?” The voice of Ron came from behind Hermione as she crossed the common room. She glanced up to see Ron with Lavender and Ginny with Harry. How...cozy they seem, she thought, then stopped herself, oh gosh, I sound like Draco!

“Because I was drinking firewhiskey, Ron.” Hermione said as if the answer was obvious. Ron’s eyes bulged out and she took internal satisfaction to see him so discombobulated to thought of her drinking any sort of alcohol. He forgot that she also drank butterbeer. In front of him.

“Since when?

“You have changed a lot, Hermione. Right, Harry? Harry also thinks so.” Ron said, then turned around to look at the bespectacled boy who really didn’t want to be pulled into the conversation.

“Look, Ron, she looks happier and is more outgoing. What’s so bad about that? I think she is doing great.” Harry said, shrugging. Hermione beamed at Harry then gave him a full-blown kiss towards him. He just grinned at her antics. Ron looked put out.

“By the way, Ginny, don’t wait up for me tonight.”

Ginny perked up at this information. “Why? Are you getting it down with your secret lover?” she asked, conspiratorially. Hermione laughed airly as Ron became green with envy? sick?

“I wish.” she said, rolling her eyes. “I just got detention.”

“Detention?! For what?” Harry yelled out, shocked at her revelation. Harry couldn’t believe his eyes. Harry had never seen Hermione step one foot out of line unless duty calls. She is basically gleaming in defiance.

“For drinking firewhiskey.” she answered, then glanced at her watch. “Anyways, I had come here to freshen up but it seems to be late because someone decided to interrogate me about my choices concerning my life!” Ron flinched every time she raised her voice. With that being said, she went back out the common room without even glancing back.

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“What’s her problem?” Ron asked as he watched his ex-girlfriend walk through the common room with a confident gait. “I mean, she just got detention but she is going as if someone invited her to night long party?”

“Why does it matter to you, anyways?” Ginny asked, popping her right eyebrow. “She dumped you because she knew she wasn’t compatible with you. Two weeks later, you hit up Lavender and got
back together with her. But you are still thinking about Hermione?"

“Ginny’s right, Ron.” Lavender spoke up. She quite had enough seeing Ron rage at Hermione for being quite freeing. Lavender wonders who the guy (girl) is that changed Hermione for the better. She also wonders why Ron keep on trying to meddle in Hermione’s affairs. “You seem to want to know exactly what she is doing or where she is going or who she is meeting when you are not even dating. You can’t use the expression that because she is friend because Harry is also Hermione’s friend and he left her alone about it.”

“Don’t you guys want to know who her secret admirer she always goes to meet?” Ron asked, desperately.

“Do I want to know who she is shagging with? Not really, Ron.” Harry denied, looking off-puted.

“You are just mad that she actually says no to when you ask her to do your homework.” Ginny remarked.

Ron didn’t say anything.

“Oh my God, I was right?” Ginny yelled, incredulous. Lavender let out a sigh of relief. Her relationship was not in danger and that is all that matters to her.

“I am this close to failing Charms.” he whined as he felt Lavender cuddle up close to him. Ron looked at Harry to see him look back at him contemplatively.

Ron knew that he could lie to Ginny but he couldn't lie to Harry. Ron groaned internally as he smiled tightly at Lavender. He was going to be talking to Harry tonight.

Malfoy was leaning against the wall beside Filch’s door with no care. She waved at him as she got closer to him. She was still irritated with Ron and his inquisition about her private life. Why was he so curious, anyway? It’s not like they were dating or anything. It was quite unfair to Lavender that he keeps on pushing his nose into her business.
“You look irritated.”

“Ron interrogated me because of firewhiskey! I don't know why he is so...interested in my life! He got what he wanted: Lavender. That poor girl to see her boyfriend harping about another girl right in front of her face. It's as if he still—" before she could finish that sentence, the door open to reveal Filch’s wart filled face.

Filch looked almost gleeful at the prospect of giving Hermione the detention to the point of him excitedly welcoming him to his abode. His office was covered with shelves and boxes stacked upon each other. It was a cluttered mess and Hermione feared that she already knew what the detention was.

“You will be cleaning this office while I go do my rounds. Which will take three hours so I will start moving. The boxes are already labeled but as you can see I am not in the habit of organizing confiscated objects.”

“I can very well see that.” Draco muttered behind her but Filch caught it and threw the haughty blond a glare. “With magic?” Filch’s answer was a mocking grin and Draco sighed. “Of course not.”

With a final malicious grin thrown over his shoulder, Filch left with his door banging close.

“Well,” Hermione began, slapping her thighs. “Snape better be glad that we got sloshed for him or else.”

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It was around 11 when Filch’s office began to resemble an office and not a hoarder’s wet dream. Curly brown hair stuck to Hermione’s forehead and for some reason she was out of breath. _Already? Where did my stamina go? Oh, I need to start running again._ Malfoy looked like he did from the beginning: cool and collected. How did he do it? She asked him and he gave her disbeliefing look.

“Aren’t you a witch? Use a cooling charm on yourself.”

Hermione---the one who created the polyjuice potion in second year, time-traveled in third year, lost her virginity to thick Bulgarian seeker, survived torture, destroyed horcruxes---had not thought about a cooling charm. She did not know to feel mortified or like an idiot. She chose the former. With a
swish of her wand, she felt her face cool and her sweat disappear.

As she let out a sigh of contentment, a sound like a heartbeat came from behind her. She glanced at Malfoy to see if he heard anything but he was wrestling with some boxes of paraphernalia that stuck to his hands. The sound of beating hearts was faint as if she had her back to it.

“Hey, Malfoy?” she called out, worried.

“Yes, Granger?”

“Do you hear that?”

Malfoy paused at what he was doing. “Hear what?” He looked confused as he glanced around, silent. He can’t hear it.

“It sounds like multiple hearts beating together at the same time. It is faint, as if something is covering it and it’s coming from behind me.” she described, slowly turned around, causing the beatings to be clearer. She pinpointed exactly where it was coming from. It was coming from a box that she hasn’t touched yet. The synchronized beatings lulled her; that's all she could hear, not even Malfoy warning for her to remove her wand.

As she got closer, the beatings got louder. As she began to remove the objects from the box without a care, the beatings vibrated her bones. As she got deeper the beatings began to manifest slowly in her chest area as if her pericardium area itself was vibrating. What was it, her insides screamed. Why was she doing everything so recklessly, without thinking? Was she cursed? No, she knew that she could ignore the noise if she kept her back to it.

There, in the center of the mess, was a chest. Would it be considered a chest when it was the size of her palm? Well, her beaded bag still carries the tent they had used in the run. Without thinking or observing or running some tests on it like she normally does, Hermione picked it up in hand.

Hermione let out a startling gasp. The beatings that was coming from the chest synchronized with her own heart beats. She could feel the vibrations match with her own heartbeat. She wanted to throw it away. Hide it again. It was scary, even for her. It was beautiful, however. The chest was made out of some kind of wood and she knew that it was old. It felt like it. It felt like as if you would holding your grandparents pictures from when they were young. The chest had carvings to it, almost Celtic-like woven attributes, and the raised parts where painted dark green or it would be painted dark green
“What is it?” Malfoy asked, looking over Hermione’s shoulder, his chest briefly brushing her upper back.

“I am not sure, Draco.” she mumbled.

“And it's calling to you? When did it began?” he asked.

“It is not calling to me; it is me. The beats tuned into my heartbeats. It started just as I casted the cooling charm.”

“Maybe for some reason, your magical power turned it on?” he speculated, and when she just shrugged, staring at the chest trance-like, Malfoy got worried. “Maybe you should put it back.”

“No, I shall not. This doesn't belong here.” she mumbled then shook head, as if to dispel the trance she was in. She hurriedly pulled out her beaded bag and dropped the chest in there, hoping there wasn't anything fragile in the chest.

“How do you know that?” Malfoy asked, looking perplexed

She looked stumped as if it never occurred to her. “I...I don't know. It is just a feeling I get whenever I think about putting it back to its place.” she answered, then looked worried. “I am not cursed, am I? I mean, how would I? I didn't even touch the chest and it began its beating way before then! Maybe when I did my cooling charm, it got activated and send a curse to the magick it belonged to? Or---”

“RELAX, Hermione!” Malfoy yelled out, placing his hands on my shoulder. She knew she was hyperventilating. The yell and her given name snapped her out of it. Malfoy never called her by her given name. Not even by accident. “I will run a diagnostic charm on you to see if anything is amiss.”

“Thanks, Draco.” her voice was weak; she definitely was in a trance few minutes ago.

With the specific spell muttered and precise hand movements, a series of red tubes appeared out of thin air. She could see all the tubes converging in one area: where her heart would be. Alongside the
red tubes where its molten silver-gold tubes entwining together as they converged around the heart area. That would be her magic, she supposes.

“I don't see any curses or hexes. How did you feel when you were holding it?”

“It felt like the box was sentient and it was calling out to me. I don't know. I am going to keep it so I can research about it. It could be Celtic.”

“You will let me know about what you have found?” Malfoy asked and she nodded, smiling at the concern. “Alright. If Filch sees us dallying, I don't know about you, but I don't want to be the first Malfoy to have his family jewels hanging on the wall.”

She laughed quite heartedly at his serious face.
Thank you for the comments and the kudos. Hope you enjoy this one.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**June 06, 2000.**

Since she “kept” (Draco said it was more like stealing) the chest in her beaded bag, she had lugged it around wherever she went. She got used to the unusual beating as if it was background noise. One time she tried to leave the chest back in her dorm, three hours away from it left her bereft. She immediately went back to put it back in the bag. Hermione felt like that it should scare her that she feels like that towards a *chest*, an inanimate object, but obviously, she doesn't. She wonders if Draco properly casted the diagnostic charm but he is a skilled wizard; he wouldn't have made the mistake.

It felt like a horcrux, *but not quite*.  

Instead of it being Dark and the power of bringing your fears into hallucinations, the chest was quite opposite. It was *seductive* and gave her a sense of security everywhere she went. It almost sounded wonderful. *Almost*. In fact, it was quite scary for one major reason and one minor reason. Actually, various reasons, but one reason has been bothering her since she found it.

It’s unknown originations.

Hermione had scoured the Hogwarts library from top to bottom, corner to corner. Now that she is a seventh year student and Final Battle hero (she hates that title with a passion), she can enter the Restriction section without Harry’s invisibility cloak. She checked out the books that had Celtic lore and antiquities. She found several 1880 chests that had no similar carvings as the one so she threw the idea away. She checked out Celtic *and* Latin mixture of lore but *absolutely nothing*. It was eating at her that she couldn’t find information about an object *found in Hogwarts* at Hogwarts. It couldn’t be a Dark object, Hogwarts wards would have alerted McGonagall or Dumbledore (when he was alive, that old coot). Hermione wondered how long Filch’s had it in his possessions and why? Who did he confiscate from? Or was it before his time?
That brings her to another reason why. She can’t really walk up to Filch and ask him about the chest right in front of his face! It would be like christmas came early for the caretaker. Not only she had broken the rules and served detention with him, she also stole something from him. She wouldn’t know what he would have planned for the punishment and she won’t risk her hide to find answers.

She is a gryffindor but she wasn’t an idiot.

However, right now, the chest wasn’t the important thing even though she is running down the hallway to familiar meetup spot with Malfoy. She had a request for him and she will head back to Gryffindor common room to sort out her graduation robes. She was giddy. She was ecstatic to the point of forgetting about the chest. She really can’t believe that she is graduating.

She found out she was a witch by woman who can turn herself into a cat, she surpassed everyone in her classes, brewed potions as young as 12, flew on a hippogriff while saving her best friend’s godfather, and survived the run and helped win the Final Battle.

Now, she is graduating. Something that didn’t seem possible two years back. Hermione shook her head. None of that, she thought to herself as she entered the library. Madam Pince didn’t look surprised when she saw who walked in. Pince knew who Granger is going to meet; they haven’t been secretive about it all year. Now, Pince always thought Granger and Weasley never worked. However she always thought that Granger and Malfoy would work out.

Hermione went towards the area where their friendship had first bloomed. There he sat, with his back towards the book shelves, glancing down at a parchment. She thought about sneaking up to him but he always knew when she is near. She just wants to see Malfoy unruffled but at the same time, she doesn’t. She wasn’t the one who gets jumped in abandoned hallways like Malfoy does, even though the attacks have been not so frequent. She wouldn’t know how he react so she decided not to scare him. She was the one first years asks for autographs whereas Draco finds distrust and hate from his fellow years.

“Hey, Draco.” she announced herself and the said boy turned around to meet her eyes. Since the first time Hermione seen him, she could see the difference from then till now. His bags under his eyes were not as prominent and his eyes seemed lighter. He explained that he had an exercise regimen that he does every morning that grounds him from the frequent nightmares he has. That gave her idea to go running early in the morning the next day, not realizing that fresh, dewy spring morning can be such a balm to her frayed nerves caused by the night terrors.

“Hey, Granger. I was just double checking my measurements for my graduation robes. Have you done it already?” he asked, waving his parchment. She slid across from him and placed her chin on
her palm of her hands.

“Yes, but I worry that the cap won't work with this hair.” she said, pulling at her vivacious curly hair.

“Throw it in a bun or apply the Sleekeasy potion.” he said, chewing at his quill. “Forget about your hair. Did you figure anything out about the chest.”

“No, I haven’t!” she said, frustrated. “Hogwarts doesn’t have anything about it and what do I search? I have no clue what it is. I haven’t even tried to open it.”

“I can try to find it at my home’s library.” Draco offered, glancing at her chest. She would be amused if she didn't know what he was trying to see. “The faster we know about this chest, the easier to get rid of it. Doesn't Sirius Black have the infamous Black library at his house? Why don't you go check there?”

Hermione’s eyes widened at that. How could she forget about the Grimmauld library? She will have to settle with her parents first then head back to the dark house. Sirius did say that the library was open to her all day, every day. She wasn't that fond of the black-haired animagus before the fifth year; thought he was too childish. But after the disastrous mistake at the Department of Prophecies at the Ministry, her view of him changed when she saw him brilliantly fight against several Death Eaters.

“You are correct. Draco, you are so smart!” she said, fighting the urge to kiss his cheek. He looked away, looking embarrassed. “I can't believe that we are graduating. It almost doesn't feel real.”

A far away look appeared in the blonde boy’s eyes. “I can't believe it either.” he parroted back, his words loaded with more emotions than hers. “The crazy part is that I had accepted that I wasn't going to make it out alive from that torture. Now, here I sit, worrying about my measurements and my NEWTS grades and my plans to ask Daphne for her hand and being friends with you. Sometimes, I still feel like I am back there and all of this is just been a dream and I will wake up with Bellatrix hovering over me.”

Hermione’s hand shot out to clutch at his hand. She could feel tears in her eyes. It would be wistful thinking that one year back into normalcy would heal someone as damaged as Malfoy. He is healed, though. He would never speak about his fears when their friendship is still at its first stages. “Draco, all of this is real. You deserve all of this. You deserve happiness. None of us had a real childhood but now, we can have a real life without anything looming over us. This is not a dream. We are out of that war and into the new. And that bitch is dead.”
He was silent but he was no longer tense like a stretched rubber band.

“And why haven't you told me about your plans with Daphne?” she asked, slowly. She could see a faint blush appear on the tops of cheeks and nose. He was out of whatever fugue he was under.

“I wasn't sure if I am going to do it or not.” he muttered, glancing away from the inquisitorial look in Hermione’s eyes. “I am not sure if she likes me that much.”

“Did she tell you that?” Hermione asked, raising her eyebrow. Malfoy shook his head. “Did she say that she doesn't want to get married to you?” Another shake of the head. “Did she say that you are only good from sexual comforts?” Shake of the head. “Then how do you know she doesn't like you?”

“I don't.”

“I think Daphne is the type of girl who would tell you what she wants. You are just nervous. Which is totally okay.” Hermione said, smiling at her best friend. Draco smiled back with smirk at the end.

“Malfoy’s don't get nervous.”

Harry couldn't believe his eyes as he watched Malfoy lean across the table and kiss Hermione’s cheek. It was not because he didn't trust Hermione that he followed her under the cloak. It was because he quite had enough of Ron’s feelings. Okay, his curiosity won at the end and it was end of his time at Hogwarts. That was not the point. He was quite in shock in what he had heard. Hermione’s secret lover is... Draco Malfoy? He was talking about Daphne, earlier, though... a threesome?

He hadn't given a thought about Draco Malfoy and how he was the victim of the war as well. A sudden rush of guilt ran through him. After the war, it should be about healing and getting their communities patched up again. And here he was doing the exact opposite, still holding onto to primitive ignorance of Houses where it should be all four house intermingling. He did nothing, not even acknowledge, the Slytherin house because the rest of his house ignored them.
Hermione didn't, though. Even though it was in secret, but Harry could see the changes in Malfoy compared to the person at the beginning of the year. What type of relationship Hermione and Malfoy had he didn't know but he wasn't going to forsake her for choosing to be friends with her once tormentor.

He saw Hermione in a new light. He never has considered her as a sexual being but that was a dumb way to think. But a threesome? With Malfoy? Harry chewed at his lips. However, what Hermione does in her mean time wasn't his business and if Draco could get her to smile like that, who was he to stop it? Harry turned in his spot and walked back out of the library.

It was not his and Ron’s business in whom she meets and this time around, he will be firm when he talks to Ron about his selfish feelings. Harry doesn't know if he will ever confront Hermione about her secret lover. It will just have to be in her own power to let her friends know.

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**June 07, 2000**

The graduation robes were slate gray and graduation caps were the color of house colors. Hermione’s set of robes lay on her bed, pressed magically to remove wrinkles. She wore a white, wrap dress with slightly deeper neckline, showing off the top of her tanned breasts and a slit at the skirt area to show off little bit of lower thighs. She had finally settled her bushy hair to a wavy do. She had paired the white dress with bright red lipstick and minimally done eyes so the attention would go to her lips. She wore her mother’s pearl necklace and earrings that her mother sent over the mail. Her mother said that she wore that on her graduation from college and wanted to pass the tradition down to her daughter.

She slipped into her white pumps (with cushioning and stability charms applied to it). Ginny wore a deep green dress to set off her fiery orange-red hair. Lavender wore a namesake peplum style dress with brown pumps. Her blond hair was styled into huge curls and Hermione thought she looked pretty. After the three girls accepted that they were good to go in the dress area, they turned to their robes. With careful movements, Hermione slipped on the robe, the robe perfectly altered to height and body shaped. Madame Twilfit was no amateur that’s for sure.

“Here, Hermione, let me put the cap on you for you.” Ginny offered, smiling.

“Thank you, I will do the same for you.” Hermione said, sitting on the stool in front of her vanity.
“Will you also do it for me, either of you?” Lavender asked, looking hopeful.

“Yeah, I will do it for you, Lavender.” Hermione offered. Despite Ron’s weird behavior towards her, Hermione decided to offer her friendship to Lavender, who accepted it with gratefulness. Ron still hadn’t fess up about his weird behavior and it was getting on her nerves. Does he like her? Does he like Lavender? God forbid, does he like them both? Whatever it was, Hermione was sure to get to the bottom of this. Lavender didn't deserve to played around like that.

“I am so nervous!” Lavender cried out, bunching her bed sheets with her fist. “What if I fall when I am getting my certification of completion?”

“No such thing will happen, Lavender. You just have to stand. I am nervous as well. I know I should not be but I can't help it. I wonder how the boys are doing.” Ginny noted, sitting down as Hermione began to attach the red and gold cap on her her head. With a soft attachment spell, the cap fit snugly on the redhead’s head.

“Probably having no care in the world. Harry still probably messed up his tie.” Hermione mused as she also thought of Malfoy. She wonders how he was faring. Theo and Blaise are with him so he is in good hands. There were only few people who were friends with Draco.

“Hermione, your parents will be here, right?” Ginny asked, worriedly.

“Yeah, my mom said she won't miss it for the world. They should be arriving soon. They are coming with your family, silly. Forgot about that? We are meant to visit our family at the Great Hall right? Before the ceremony?” Hermione asked, feeling giddy to see her parents before they leave again for Punta Cana. This time for their wedding anniversary.

“Yeah, I can't wait.” Lavender said as she settled down for her turn. After she was done with Lavender, all three girls stood in front of their respective mirrors.

“Let’s meet the boys.”

“Oh my god, Hermione, you look gorgeous!”
She heard the voice of her mother from her side just as she and her group of friends walked through the doors to the Great Hall. It was filled with family members of the seventh years and students from various years. Hermione turned to see her parents standing beside the Weasleys. They all came together with a portkey (Arthur Weasley had to fetch Hermione’s parents first). Her mother and father looked so proud as she walked towards them. They brought her into their arms and murmured their congratulatory words. They did the same for Harry and the rest.

“So, will it be like the muggle graduations? They call your name and you get your certificate?” David Granger asked, looking around in amazement.

“Right but instead of you walking to the stage, you just stand up and your certificate will pop up in front of you.” Hermione explained and Mr. Granger nodded, impressed.

“I wish I had that. I was totally sloshed at my graduation. I had to walk extra careful to the stage.” Mr. Granger added as he reminisced of his time of graduation. Helen Granger looked at her husband with a disapproving look but he could see the amusement in her eyes. Hermione simply shook her head.

I wonder where Draco is, Hermione thought and she began to look around the hall if she could find the said man. There! He was with his tall and graceful mother, standing by the far right wall. His dad was nowhere in sight but how could he? He was in house arrest. It would be safe for Lucius Malfoy to be away. Hermione wouldn't want to know how the crowd would act to see the known Death Eater. Hermione watched as Narcissa Malfoy caressed her son’s cheek who looked at her with a small smile.

A tall, mahogany brown haired girl walked up to Draco, slipping her hand through his elbow. Daphne Greengrass. If the wizarding world had its own Victoria’s Secret, Daphne Greengrass would have been the cover girl. She was so beautiful and so sweet. She is a Slytherin but she had a heart of gold and emerald. A smaller stature of exact replica of Daphne stood beside Daphne; a fourth year Astoria Greengrass. She was surprisingly in Ravenclaw and Hermione heard rumors that Daphne was relieved by the choice of the Sorting Hat.

Draco began to look around as Narcissa and Daphne struck up a conversation. His eyes wandered until they caught the eyes of Hermione who was gazing back at him.

She gave him a soft, comforting smile.
He send one back in return.

“Hermione Granger!”

Loud, thunderous clapping followed the shout from Kingsley Shacklebot. The said girl stood up from her seat as the crowd became even louder causing her to look at the ground. She hated this reaction. She felt she was placed in a pedestal just because of her name, not because of her accomplishments. They all didn't know what she faced in her journey to destroy Voldemort; they just acknowledge that she was the brains of the trio. That's all about it.

A whizzing sound appeared in front of her and she snapped out of her head. She watched a scroll appeared in the air, unfurled itself to reveal the certificate with her name written in gold ink then curled back into scroll. She caught it as the magic that was on the scroll got released. She immediately sat down, smiling tightly at Anthony Goldstein. When she sat down, she felt the familiar beating of the chest on her leg, bringing her attention back to the stolen chest.

She couldn't wait until she got to Grimmauld manor to to find out about this sentient chest. She held it for too long. Malfoy was right; the time to get rid of it was getting nearer. She could feel her feet tap with the beat of the box.

What was that box?!

It's been two days since graduation. Apparently, Draco already went in search about the chest after spending time with his father. He was also thinking about taking over his father’s business until his father's get out of the house arrest. Now that Draco was doing his part of search, it's time for Hermione to do hers. Luckily, her parents had already left for Punta Cana so didn't have to explain why she had to go back to the wizarding world again.

She made sure the house was locked, her wand in her purse and her beaded bag around her neck. She walked a bit far from the house and to an area where she wouldn't be able to be seen. With the thought of the designation planted firmly in her head, Hermione apparated.

She landed as gracefully as she could in the alley of the houses where Sirius lived. She still hated apparition because of what happened to Ron during their run in with Umbridge and Yaxley. She didn't want to think about the hag. She honestly would rather think about dancing Yaxley than think
about the pink toad from hell.

As the house appeared after thinking the address, she knocked on the door. The door immediately opened to reveal Harry in his pajamas, with his hair more messy than usual. He let her in with a confused smile. *Oops, I forgot to Floo him and tell him I was coming over,* she thought, sheepishly.

“I am sorry, Harry, I forgot to floo.” she apologized, smiling. Harry just smiled at her. Hermione gets what she wants always and sometimes forgets her manners along the way.

“It's no problem, Hermione. What’s up with the impromptu visit?”

What could she say? *Yeah, remember when I served that detention? I stole a chest and now its synchronized with me. I think I might be cursed so...yeah’*’? Okay, she really hadn't thought it thoroughly.

“I want to visit the library. I still have to figure out what I want to do and hopefully something in the library would give me some kind of sign.” Hermione lied, smiling. *Okay, that was easy.* Harry sighed exaggeratedly.

“Hermione, it’s only been two days since graduation. Relax and enjoy the vacation.” Harry said, groaning. Leave it to Hermione to think about her future like a responsible girl. “I am not surprised, however.”

“You know me so well, Harry.” she said, feeling guilty that she had to lie to her best friend. Harry wouldn't understand why she stole the chest and why she held onto it. She *herself* didn't understand it. She didn't even try to open it but something in her was telling that it wouldn't be that easy. If it was, it would have already been opened, right? “What are your plans tonight?”

“I'm planning to take out Ginny for a celebratory dinner. Ron and Lavender is coming with us to.” he announced, suddenly realizing that he couldn't invite Hermione because she would be the fifth wheel. Hermione, on the hand, was reminded of her single life style and was actually not bothered at all by that. Maybe she grew up. Or maybe she is trying to ignore the fact that her requirements of a guy to keep her interested mentally and sexually was quite high. Maybe.

“That sounds totally fun! We should have get together here soon. Like a party or something.” She suggested, shrugging her shoulders. Harry thought about it.

“I will have to ask Sirius about it---”
“Ask me about what?”

Hermione squeaked in surprise as the deep voice of Sirius appeared from behind her. She twirled around to see the Sirius Black wearing a black pajamas made out silk and his shirt, its plunging neckline showing off his chest tattoos. He looked loads better without being house arrested and the war gone. His skins not grayish anymore but more healthier pale like genetics allowed. He was smiling at the curly-haired witch who had was beaming at him.

“Sirius!” she yelled then launched herself into his arms. Sirius laughed as he hugged the exuberant girl back. “We were talking about having a party here. If you allow, of course.”

“Of course I will allow it. Bring whoever you want.” he said, chuckling, placing the girl down. Whoever? Hermione thought, biting her lip. Even Draco? She knew that was impossible. Or was it? Sirius would understand, right? Maybe, Hermione decided to have a party at her house before her parents come so she could invite Draco. Better plan.

“Alright. I am no good in planning parties. However, Harry is. So I'll leave it him and Ron.” Hermione decided by herself, nodding. Harry looked like he didn't mind at all with how big he was smiling. “I am heading to the library.”

“I will have Kreacher send some tea and snacks up for you.” Sirius offered and she nodded her thanks. Hermione didn't bring up house elf rights ever again after she found out how offended they were. She couldn't fathom why until Luna asked them about Elf culture; that she just went along with what she thought was right without consulting anyone. She didn't even try to figure out how House Elf’s magic was tied to the house they were taking care of and once freed, they have to find some other source to tether themselves to. That's why most free elves go to Hogwarts. That's why Dobby went there.

The library was how it was before but brighter and open. She could see the clean up Sirius had done with the house. No more thick drapes, no more dark carpet and he literally painted the walls light gray. It was no longer the Dark House of Blacks but Light Gray House of Blacks. Oh, the elf heads that were mounted on the walls were gone as well but no such luck with Walburga Black’s portrait. Hermione made sure to walk as quietly past the cursed portrait---or was it cursed? Sirius had to have her as a mother? No wonder Sirius’s father, Orion Black, died before her.

With a pop that startled the curly haired witch out of her thoughts, Kreacher carried over the tray laden with a tea pot and an already made cup with plate filled with cucumber sandwiches. The wizened house elf didn't look at her as he placed the tray on the table. “Thank you, Kreacher.” called out Hermione and watched the elf grunted and nodded its head. At least, he wasn't calling her
mudblood.

“Now, where to begin…”

Hair frazzled out of its bun.

Blotches of red on her cheeks.

Sweat gleaming at her hairline.

Hermione was a mess. She can feel it deep in her bones. Tons of books and tomes surrounds her but yet she couldn't find an inkling about this object. She had finished her second pot of tea and her stomach was crying for some real sustenance. She had been at this for hours and *no clue*! There is zilch information about the chest in the library and with a growing sense of dread, she fears that Draco would be in the same predicament as hers. She wanted to have answers but where? *Please, don't tell me that the only lore I can find about this chest is in some kind of obscure village where Gaelic is prominent and I have to talk to 220 year old village witch*, Hermione prayed as she started to clean up the area around her.

As she descended down the stairs, thinking about Indian takeout, she stumbled upon Harry, Sirius, Ron, Ginny and Lavender. Oh, she had forgotten about the double date. Internally cringing that she forgot about the time, she smiled at the group. She didn't miss the quizzical look Sirius was throwing at her. *No one takes five hour session in the library to give hints about future job ventures*. She wouldn't know how to answer if she were asked why she took so long so she decided to hurry along and not to be caught by herself alone with either Harry or Sirius. Not until she got answers herself. With a hurried farewells and kiss to Sirius cheek, she left the manor.

Knowing that her favorite Indian spot was walking distance away and wanted to share her frustration with someone that is named Draco, she held on to patreon coin and send a message to the Slytherin to meet her up at Leaky Cauldron. From there, they will go to her house to discuss what should be done.
“So, with this naan, you pick up the curry with your fingers?”

Hermione found the struggle of the aristocratic blonde best friend of hers who never had Indian food quite amusing. In fact, she completely stopped eating just to watch him struggle to eat the freshly baked naan. After grabbing good amount of curry with the naan, Draco popped it in his mouth. He chewed it and his eyes widen in surprise.

“This is really good! I am literally allowed to play with my food.” he said, smiling, ripping another piece from the naan. As he grabbed another handful, he nodded towards the chest that was sitting innocently beside the food. “I had no luck in the manor either. However, I did find out about magic-infused chests. Maybe, this chest is like those. A certain, specific charm or spell or even ritual will open the chest. Maybe to keep out robbers or to hide some secrets.”

“Like jewelry?” she offered and Draco shrugged, moving on to saffron-infused rice with chicken curry.

“Or ancestral papers. Even if that is the case, what would it be doing at Hogwarts? Someone doesn't just drop it and forget about it.” Draco mused, offering her bite of curried naan. She accepted it.

“Could someone have stole it and hid at Hogwarts? In Room of Hidden Objects?”

“Ancestral papers are heavily warded, found deep within the estate. If someone were to get past wards that surrounds the house, somehow sneak into the estate, walk around without alerting the house elves and the people living there, break the wards surrounding the papers and grab it, then were to sneak back out? I would be so thoroughly impressed that I would let the man have the papers.” he said, shaking his head. “No, I don't think it holds ancestral papers.”

“I want to throw it. I know I can. But...something is holding me back.” she answered, running her fingers through the raised designs on the chest. She fingered the black, matte stone that is situated right above the lock. The edges of the stone was quite sharp. “What is this stone anyways? Probably the ward itself? Inanimate objects can be turned into wards like I have a necklace that warded and it warns me if it's going to rain.”

“Yeah, that's a jewel, very common type of warding,” Draco said as he watched Hermione rubbed the edges of the black stone reverently. “The only time I have seen a stone being used for warding—Hermione! I've got it! I know how to open it!”
The sudden yell from Draco shocked her out of her reverent petting of the stone so intensely that she dropped the chest from her hands. As if in slow motion, Hermione automatically in reflex tried to catch the box. As she grabbed onto the latch of the chest, her index finger got caught on the sharp edge of the stone, slicing her finger open, causing blood to ooze like beads of rubies. In another, automatic reflex, she brought hand back to her chest.

“How, Draco?” she asked slowly as she watched her smeared blood on the chest getting absorbed by the carvings of the chest. The latch itself began to glow bright as if sunlight was shown on top of a brick gold. The chest began to rock back and forth, smoke wafting out from the carved spots.

...By blood magic…” Draco trailed of, watching the latch melt off like a candle made out of gold. The door of the chest snapped open and Hermione stood up, clutching her bleeding finger to the chest, not even thinking about getting her wand.

“Ooops.” she said, guiltily.

The opening of the chest began to grow brighter and brighter. So bright that Draco and Hermione had to cover their eyes from being blinded forever. Their ears popped and only they could hear was high pitched ringing. Hermione realised how unprotected they are from... whatever that is in the chest. She reached her hand out and grabbed Draco’s hand. He squeezed back.

They were fucked if something bad was unleashed.
This is what you get for being seduced by a chest and keeping it.

Hermione found herself on her hands and knees, not knowing how she got there in the first place, waiting for the dark spots in her vision to disappear and the ringing to stop. She shifted her head to the side to see Draco still standing up, facing the chest. At least he is standing, giving her the sense that whatever that was in chest wasn't as dangerous. She saw the spilled chicken curry on her mom’s favorite rug and she groaned out loud. Her mum was going to kill her if the thing doesn't.

Her vision swam as she tried to stand up. However, before she could do anything, a crippling pain emanated from her chest, causing her to groan out loud. Hermione is an independent woman and can take care of herself, but why wasn't Draco helping her? She reached out her hand to find her seat. With the help of the chair and teeth gritting, she slowly stood up.

“Fuck me, that was shitty.” Hermione cursed as she rubbed her chest, as if it would help the pain lessen. “Draco, you alright?”

“...I'm alright, Hermione. Hey---” Draco said but Hermione startled gasped interrupted him.

“What happened? The chest! Oh man, if something were to pop out and destroy this house, my mom will hunt me down more so than Voldemort. Draco, we need to find that thing that came out of
the chest or we will be doomed. Not doomed...more like---"

“Hermione! Shut up!” Draco shouted which made her snap her jaws shut. “We are in a dire situation and your mum’s favorite house can be put on hold. We got a problem. Five problems, actually. Turn around.”

Hermione hadn't heard Draco’s voice go high pitched since the war. The desperate tone in his voice kept her frozen, not wanting to turn around and face the five problems she had ultimately caused. Biting her lower lip, she realized that even because her back was to the problem and not acknowledging it, the problem would still be there, like a looming cloud of anxiety. You are a gryffindor, aren't you? You faced down Voldemort and Bellatrix. It can't be that bad. Her inner voice piped up, giving her a false bravado. You flew on a dragon and you gave that horrible pink toad Umbridge poetic justice.

With a deep inhale, Hermione turned around, her eyes immediately seeking out Draco’s. He looked pale, paler than usual. He looked like he got the most shocking news of his life and doesn't know what to do with it. His hair became quite messy and had beads of sweat dotting around his hairline. Draco nodded towards an area that she was actively trying to avoid.

Stop stalling!

Hermione snapped her eyes to front of the living room. As soon as her eyes landed on the problem(s), she wished she hadn't. She didn't know what to do with herself. She felt her blood run out from her face as her blood pressure lowered from the shock. She opened her mouth to say something but it seems to be caught at the junctions of mouth and esophagus, almost choking on the collected saliva. She closed her mouth then looked at the open chest then back at five, dead men.

Or they were suppose to be dead. All of them were taller than her and as she scrutinized them more, she realized she knew some of them. Her blood ran cold when she caught the eyes of Antonin Dolohov, then Rodolphus LeStrange. Okay, for two people that have been dead 3 to 4 years, they were looking pretty good. Antonin Dolohov had shoulder length, dark brown hair. His skin was slightly tanned, causing his blue eyes to pop out even more. He had a five o'clock shadow that made his thin, pink lips look slightly more plump. He had thick eyebrows that didn't look unkempt and full set of eyelashes.

Rodolphus LeStrange. He had black hair that ended right above the nape of his neck. He had a side parting with the hair being swept to the side. He was the same height as Antonin but his shoulders were broader, his thighs thicker. He also had blue eyes but it is darker than Antonin. His high cheekbones and his full lips could make any girls envious. Overall, Rodolphus LeStrange and Antonin Dolohov looks pretty damn good for dead guys.
The other two looked familiar whereas the third, a giant of a man, looked unfamiliar. Her eyes shifted to the guys that looked familiar to her. The guy standing next to Rodolphus caught her because the platinum blonde hair that was short and styled to the side and back, almost as similar as Rodolphus. A set of grey eyes sat underneath perfectly groomed set of eyebrows. Next was the familiar nose shape that she had seen before. His lips were plump as well and honestly, they looked biteable.

Hermione looked at Draco for confirmation. He nodded. She turned back to see the Malfoy man catch their silent conversations. It has to be Draco’s grandfather. His nose was the same shape as Lucius and they shared a similar face shape. *I'm sorry, Draco*, Hermione thought to herself guiltily, *your grandpa is hot*. That was such a weird sentence and she hopes that it never repeats it themselves.

The guy next to Grandpa Malfoy was a just as beautiful as the man before him. The man had long, black hair that ended past his shoulders. His skin is beautifully pale, causing his grey eyes that was set deeply in his sockets to contrast brightly. His face was elongated, getting the feel of how a panther would look like if it could turn into a human. He looked like someone she knows but who…? She squinted her eyes as if trying to remember the man...her eyes widened in shock.

*He looked like Sirius!* She knew that this man wasn't Regulus...this man had to be Sirius’s father, Orion Arcturus Black. The man, Orion, looked puzzled at the girl who was staring at him...as if she knew him, which was impossible.

*No wonder Sirius Black was so good looking!*

She pulled her eyes away from her best friend’s godfather’s father, God, that was a mouthful. She settled on the last man who was taking up most the space of the with his wide shoulders. He had to be at least 6’3”, that's how tall he was. He had short cropped dark blond hair. He was tanned, which made his green? hazel? eyes pop out. He was muscular enough to strike fear into Hermione. Hell, his hands were huge and could do serious damage.

“God, who gave birth to you, a mountain?” the words tumbled out of her mouth before she could stop it. She slapped her hand to her mouth in surprise as the towering man raised one of his eyebrows. From her peripherals, she saw Draco smack his forehead with his hand. “Sorry! You.. are really tall.”

The guy knocked his head back and laughed deeply. “After being dead, this is the welcome I get?” Hermione flushed at that. *What kind of welcome were you hoping for?*
“I know the rest of this guys,” Hermione began, “so, who are you?”

“Ah, we haven't fought in the war at all, have we? I heard rumors that you being feisty at the battle.” the man said, smirking, “I am Orias Mulciber.”

Hermione was shocked. She had heard of Mulciber and how cruel he was. She groaned as she rubbed her eyes, suddenly feeling tired. “I am surrounded by Death Eaters, dead Death Eaters!” She eyed the open chest. “Get back in there.” she ordered, desperately, pointing at the chest.

Antonin snorted in humor. “How would that be possible? Last time I've checked, kotenok, you were the one who brought us back.”

“I don't even know how in Merlin’s saggy ball sack that happened!” Hermione yelled, causing Mulciber, Antonin and Rodolphus to look impressed at her word choice.

“How crude.” the Malfoy man said and Orion agreed with him.

“Yeah, I will be damn crude until I figure out how to get rid of Voldemort best friend over there!” I hissed, pointing at the blonde man. Hermione turned to Draco. “He is Abraxas Malfoy, right?” Draco nodded, looking like he was about to puke.

“But why do you even have the impetum animi ligaveris on your persons?” Orion Black asked, kneeling down to investigate the chest.

“Wait, you know what it is?” Hermione asked, suddenly kneeling in front of him.

“You don't?” he asked, incredulous.

“If I knew what it was, do you think I would have opened it?” Hermione asked as patiently as possible. Orion’s lips became thin at the tone of her voice. “Look, I am as clueless as you are. I just found this chest.”
“And you decided to keep it?” Antonin asked, his eyebrow raised. He thought that Granger was one of the smartest witch, but now, he wasn't so sure.

“Where did you find it, Miss…? Abraxas trailed off, looking at her quizzically. Hermione paused, looking at the blonde man. If she were to say her name, he will know that she was a muggleborn. She wouldn't know if she was safe, him being Tom Riddle’s best mate. She eyed Draco who decided to sit back at the dining table. He nodded his head.

“Hermione Granger, Mr. Malfoy.” she answered and watched for any reactions, “I found it in caretaker’s office when I was serving my detention. I wouldn't have known where it was if it wasn't calling for me.”

“Calling for you? How?”

“Well,” Draco began, putting himself in the conversation, “we don't know how exactly. I was there and she didn't do anything complicated. She just used a cooling charm and that's how she found it.”

“When we began the detention at Filch’s office, the chest wasn't calling me. It began to draw my attention when I used my magic. It felt like multiple heart beats and when I picked it up, it synchronized with my heartbeat. Next thing I know, I wasn't able to part with it.”

“How did us happen?” Rodolphus asked, walking around, sitting on her dad’s favorite chair.

“Draco and I were eating dinner and the chest was on the table. We were talking about magic infused chest and warding when it dropped. Like an idiot, I tried to grab it and nicked myself on the black stone. We realized too late that this chest opens with blood rituals and…and here you are.” Hermione explained, standing back up, anxiety rising up. “What am I going to do? My parents will come home to see five grown men…”

“They won't be home until next Tuesday. We will have it figured out where to situate them. We will only have a week to figure out how to send them back to...where do the dead come from?” Draco asked, biting his lower lip.

“Beyond the veil? The shadow realm?” she offered, cluelessly.

“Most likely, the veil. I will start search if there is any books of sending dead people back to being
dead or something.” Draco said and Mulciber cleared his throat. Hermione and Draco looked at the giant of a man.

“You haven't asked our opinions.” he noted and four other guys nodded to agree what he said. “We are getting a second chance here. By the looks of the others face, they want to live too. You can't just decide who lives and who dies.”

Hermione sighed, rubbing her forehead. It was equivalent to showing a horse a carrot and not feeding them. “There are multiple problems. I don't know about Draco here, but I think you guys being dead for five years, 15 for you Mr. Malfoy, is punishment enough for the crimes you have committed. I don't think the Ministry is at the same level as me.”

They all looked surprised at her submission. Hell, Antonin had cursed the girl to the point of dying at the scrimmage at the ministry. If he was her, he would curse them to oblivion. So, why hasn't she?

“If you guys attempt to do magic, they will know that Hermione is harboring four dead Death Eaters at her muggle house.” Draco added. “They don't want another Voldemort happening so they have been keeping a close eye on Dark Magic.”

“Wait,” Abraxas spoke out, looking around. “Muggle house?”

Draco has known how Hermione looks like she was about to lose the modicum of patience she has left and he can see it now. “Yes, Mr. Malfoy, this is a muggle house because Hermione here is a muggleborn.”

“Its surprising because from what I've known most muggle born parents aren't that welcoming of their magical children. It seems that there are parents who accept their child as who they are.” Abraxas noted, walking around, looking at pictures of Hermione and her parents in various parts of the world. “They really are an integral part of your life.” He picked up the picture frame when she graduated from Hogwarts. It was with her with her parents. It was a moving one because it caught Mr. Granger looking at a flying Hippogriff with wonder in his eyes.

“They are.” Hermione agreed, smiling. “I do agree that there are Muggle Borns out there that consider Hogwarts their home because of neglect they face back at their parents house. There are petitions for thinking about creating magical kindergarten of sorts so both sides of the magical field can began their studies earlier on and Muggleborns can be easily introduced to the magical culture earlier. This act won't solve blood purity prejudice in one day.”
“It's a step towards to it, however. Kind of had enough of people telling how the good old days were the best. It is because of that way of thinking we are in such a mess.” Draco added, removing a firewhiskey out from his knapsack. He conjured up two glasses and poured two fingers in each cup. He levitated one of the cups towards Hermione as she stayed silent as memories tried to threaten itself to come out.

Hermione eyed the five men, three of them wanted to kill her in the past and then switched her eyes to the messy dining table. An idea popped up in her head. “You guys want dinner? I am assuming being dead for several years could lead to some hungry pangs.”

“We should have dinner and get our energy back, especially you Miss. Granger. The spell or ritual must have taken its toll on you.” Orion said, then looked around. “I assume you don't have a house elf?”

“No, I don't. And I don't know how to cook five course meals, either. You guys will have to settle for pedestrian food.” she said, showing fake sympathy. Antonin rolled his eyes as Rodolphus snorted.

“What were you guys eating before this happened? It smells good.” Mulciber noted, looking at their forgotten dinner.

“It’s Indian. You have to use your hands to eat with the bread but you can use the fork for the rice and curry.” Draco said, “it’s really good when you get the hang of it.”

Abraxas and Orion’s face already told Hermione everything. She went to packet by the TV and started to look through take out menus. She decided on chicken fingers and fries, garlic bread and eight piece vegetable pizza. “I am gonna order some food.”

With a flick of her wrist, she cleaned up the soiled carpet and the chaise that was covered in chicken curry. She didn't notice the impressed look that graced Abraxas face at the windless magic. “There is a restaurant nearby. I will go and grab some while Draco can keep you entertained.” Hermione said, then nodded. She climbed the stairs before Draco could say anything. She hurried into her room and closed the door behind her.

She needed to get out of the household now! She can't believe she did such a blunder. She scolded herself as she pulled on her jeans and a crew neck, sleeveless navy floral tank top. She applied some sheer pink gloss. Realizing that her routine of getting ready was dastardly short (have to ratify that), she grabbed her wallet as she sighed. She desperately needed some fresh air. Who just pockets an unknown chest without even considering its dangerous? Me, that's who, Hermione thought angrily.
She left her room with her purse to see Draco converse with his grandfather, the said person had a stenched look on his face. “Alright. I will be back with food. Draco, you know how to work the telly, right?”

“I will come with you.” Rodolphus volunteered which caused Hermione to almost choke on her saliva.

“What? Oh, you don't have to.” Hermione said, hesitatingly. “There are muggles out there. There is a high probability that you will get their cooties on you.”

Rodolphus laughed, incredulous. “Come on, Granger, I have a dislike for them so I won't task myself in touching them either. However, I am quite hungry to ignore that I am muggle London. I will also ignore it because I am alive again.”

For some reason, she liked it when Rodolphus laughed.

She didn't know what it was about his laugh—maybe the way he threw his head back? maybe how his laugh was deep and throaty?—but she liked it. She looked away from the man and focuses on his robes. It was regular black robe, however the material that it was made out of screamed expensive. “As much as you like the robe, get rid of it. You are wearing something underneath it, yes?”

Rodolphus nodded and he shrugged of his black robe and placed it over the back of the loveseat that Antonin was currently sitting on. She made eye contact with the Russian then looked away. She still can't believe that the man who almost killed her was sitting in her living room. He still hasn't shown his hatred of her parentage. Actually, neither of them, especially Abraxas. Maybe, it needs couple days for their hatred to settle back into their places. After all, they have been dead for quite a while and being brought back to life could be quite jarring. She needs to be on her toes around these men and she need to have Draco by her side all the time.

Rodolphus was wearing grey shirt with blank pants on with dragonhide boots. He looked at her if it was acceptable and she nodded. With one last look around at the surprise guests, Hermione and Rodolphus stepped out of the house. The restaurant was very close by and she asked if he wanted to do Side-along apparition or want to walk there. “Walk.” he responded.

As they got further away from her house, a dreaded question assailed her. Whenever she thinks about it, she finds herself having tremors and cold sweats, her stomach churning and a headache on its way. “Since you have been back…” she began slowly, causing the Death Eater to look at her
curiously, his blue eyes seemingly bright against night time.

She swallowed the lump that was lodged in her throat and decided to get over it. “Since you have been back, you haven't asked about your wife.”

She could see the instant changes going through his body as she mentioned the word ‘wife’. His arms that was swinging around earlier was clenched to his sides, his hands formed into a fist. His blue eyes darkened as his eyes tightened. His lips became thin as he pulled it into a grimace. “Because I care not for her.”

Hermione assumed that he saw the surprise in her eyes and nodded. “Bellatrix-,” Hermione flinched at the name, “-was my wife only by paper. She was more of a wife to the Dark Lord.”

“What?” Hermione hissed out, aghast. “You are saying that Bellatrix was his woman of choice to suck his pinkie toe?”

“Pinkie toe -” he asked, then broke off, “No, what I am saying is that Bellatrix always had her heart on Voldemort way before we were even married. I am sure she sucked more than his pinkie toe.”

Hermione found herself being disgusted and understanding. Understanding because a deranged, homicidal man could only connect with an equally deranged, homicidal woman. Disgusted because the fact that Voldemort received sexual gratification at all. “Then why did you…”

“Marry her? Like you know, if you go against your family’s wishes, you will have your life decided for you.” Rodolphus answered, his eyes glazed as if he was thinking about something. Hermione felt that she was encroaching a very personal story so she decided to switch lanes.

“The reason I brought her up is to inform you that Bellatrix LeStrange née Black is dead by the hands of Molly Weasley.” she said as formally as she could. “it seems that you don't want condolences.”

“I don’t.” Rodolphus agreed then stayed silent. “I thought that if she were to give me a child, she would be able to spend time with me. I was trying to salvage a marriage that wasn't even real. Realizing the fate of LeStrange family is on my shoulder, I came to conclusion that Bellatrix had no intention to be a mother--or at least, a mother to my child. My family was going to die with me unless and until my younger brother, Rabastan, took the reins of continuing the family line.”
She knew that he was Death Eater; she knew that he had tortured and killed Muggles...she knew all of that but couldn't help but feel sympathy for this man. Whatever he had done in his youth had forced his parents to sign the contract with Bellatrix LeStrange. When he wants to uphold his duty of his house, Bellatrix didn't give Rodolphus a child. After Rodolphus died during fifth year, everything landed on Rabastan. She didn't hear about the younger brother until it came to news that Bellatrix had killed him. *He doesn't know.*

As she glanced back at Rodolphus, she knew that he was going to ask about his brother. Rodolphus seemed to find the answer to his question in her eyes. He became paler. “Was it Bellatrix?” he asked, his voice hoarse. He cleared his throat and Hermione could feel the familiar sting behind her own eyes.

“Yes...we have no idea why.” she replied.

“Voldemort didn't really need a reason to off someone.” Rodolphus said, his voice cold and monotone. “Rabastan could have farted and Voldemort would have ordered Bella to kill him because Rab had soiled the air. It could have been that simple.”

“I'm sorry.” the words tumbled out, causing Rodolphus to look at her as if she was weird.

“This is what we have chosen. This is what I will have to live through with.” The word *again* was met unsaid but it felt heavy between them. It was silent as they entered the rambunctious restaurant. She felt Rodolphus walk closer than he did and he held onto her purse as he pushed through crowded entrance. She turned around, causing the Death Eater to almost crash into her, her chest rubbing against his stomach. He eyed her curiously and she saw the tension of the unknown residing on his shoulders.

Feeling bold--- *where did this confidence come from?!* ---Hermione stood on her toes and let her mouth accidentally brush against his ears. She felt his hand settle on her hip and his hand *burned* through her clothes. “So much for not contracting muggle cooties, huh?”

Rodolphus threw his head back and laughed out loud. She could feel his laughter vibrate from his stomach to her chest. She saw couple of female muggles turned to look at the man laughing. She smiled as she watched the tension release from his shoulder. Instead of being horrified that she almost made out with a Death Eater’s ear, she felt warm inside. She didn't want to dwell on it. She felt good with Rodolphus’s hand on her hips and she hadn't felt that good since Krum. She can revel in it, can’t she? Be a little selfish, ignore that a dead man is currently bringing his attention back to her, and simply bask in his attention?
She is only nineteen year old girl with no serious relationship and most of her time that should have been telling off boys where used up in the war. Even if she had talked to Rodolphus on the real for only 10 minutes since it had been since they left home. It didn't matter. Once they have returned back to their home, this warm feeling will be gone and it will be left with dread. So, Hermione, who was never selfish, decided to be selfish and enjoyed this feeling.

She gave Rodolphus a smirk, grabbed his surprisingly soft hands, turned around and pulled him towards the ordering line. “Is this really a restaurant?” This time it was Rodolphus turn to place his lips to Hermione’s ear. Feeling his hot breath on her ears and neck, it took all her will power not to shiver. He was standing close to her, she could feel his chest on her back. If she were to step back, she was sure that their hips could collide.

Shaking the blush away, she turned her head towards him. “Yes, it actually is a restaurant. I’ve got no idea why it is so crowded tonight.” she responded back. Rodolphus nodded, looking around the area with curiosity. An unbridled yearning of wanting Rodolphus to keep pushing her back with his chest rose up but she squashed it down. She was acting like a virgin! Yeah, he was good looking enough bring attention from both men and women. It’s not like she is going to have sex with him or anything. Turning to face the line ahead of with her ears feeling hot, she hoped that her blush wasn't too noticeable.

It was their turn next and she ordered enough to feed six men and herself. She kept on catching the female cashier looking at Rodolphus and she kept on feeling confused about how she felt so possessive over a guy she barely knew. Maybe, something to do with the chest? Manipulate her to liking Rodolphus? That thought itself made her sick. If she wanted to like Rodolphus, it has to be in her power. Well, you only feel warm with Rodolphus and not the others, her inner voice calmed her down.

Maybe, it's because she didn't spend alone time with the rest of them like she is doing now with Rodolphus. She felt him shift closer to her. “It will take about twenty minutes for your food to get ready.” the cashier said and Hermione thanked her. She walked away from the ordering window and sat on one of the unoccupied benches. Rodolphus sat next to her, looking contemplative.

“Why is it that whenever I mention Bella, you flinch?” Rodolphus asked, the seriousness cutting off the light atmosphere they had around them. Hermione glanced away, biting her lips. She knew he will ask her that question. No one mentions Bellatrix unless they had to. “Come on. Tell me.”

Hermione sucked in a big inhale. “This was after you died. We didn't return our seventh year. Harry, Ron, and I were on the run. Us being undesirable 1, 2, and 3. I was two, can you believe it? Anyways, we were hiding in Forest of Dean near Gloucester. We were doing fine, hunting down Voldemort’s weak points until we came upon the sword of Gryffindor.
“We were resting in between walks when our camp got run over by snatchers. Apparently, they have good nose to track scents. I think his name was Scabior who stole my pink scarf. They took us to Malfoy Manor. They weren't going to do anything to us until B-B,” she stopped herself, then breathing in stutteringly, “until Bellatrix saw the sword of Gryffindor.”

“We had a sword of Gryffindor in our vaults.” supplied Rodolphus. She nodded.

“Bellatrix was convinced that we stole it from ger vault. She went crazy. She ordered Harry and Ron to be taken to the dungeons, leaving me behind with her and Malfoy family. If it weren't for Draco’s hesitate of identifying Harry, Bellatrix didn't call for Voldemort. She decided on… a one on one interrogation,” she said, watching her fingers twist themselves without her permission. She felt hot all over as the memory of the interrogation threatened to spill out.

She took a shuddering breath in and continued. “We didn't know where the sword appeared from. We didn't know but she wasn't convinced. She finally had the mudblood who thwarted her lords plans under her and she will do whatever it took to pull the information out.”

Rodolphus hand appeared in her vision and covered her fidgety hands. Slowly, her tremors stopped as security washed over her. “She used Crucio first and after the fifth time, I stopped counting. When that wasn't enough for her, she used her cursed blade.” She slipped her right hand out from his grasp and grasped her forearm tightly as the scar throbbed from remembering the memory.

He was silent for a while as he rubbed her knuckles. “Let me see it.” he finally said, softly. Should she? Does he want to revel at what his wife did to her? He had no lick of respect for his wife but not as her as well...right? “I hated her torture, in fact, any torture. Especially hers. To see you live through it and move on, you are quite amazing. To know that there was someone out there who didn't give up.”

She held back her sob as she waved her trembling hand over the glamoured forearm. The ugly scar appeared. The strokes of each letter messier than the last. She heard Rodolphus gasp as the word “mudblood” appeared. With his fingers, he went over the scar with light swipes. “There are more but I don't think it's appropriate for me to become naked in a public area as this.” She let out a chuckle as he paused at his ministration.

He let out cracked laughter at that. “No, it is not. Perhaps, when we are alone?”

Hermione gasped, forgetting about the topic they were in then blushed deeply at his words. He wanted to see her...naked? “Not now, obviously.” he quickly said, snatching his hand away. “When our trust builds more.”
“You...want to do that? With me?” she asked softly. Someone wanted to see her scars...not even Ron wanted to see it. Of all people, Rodolphus, husband to the very woman who did this her, wanted to see her scars? She didn't know whether to cry or laugh at the incredulity of idea.

“These scars are part of you, Miss. Granger. Even though they shouldn't have happened to you in the first place, they are yours. Own up to it and wear it as pride. Show everyone what you went through for their freedom. They should know what you sacrificed yourself for.” Rodolphus said, firmly. “My wife...I'm glad that she is dead. You are the living proof that no one can hold you down, only yourself.”

“Granger!” a voice called out, snapping the intimate conversation that her and Rodolphus were having. She glanced up to see her food was ready.

“Time to go, Mr. LeStrange.”

“Rod, Mrs. Granger. Call me Rod.” he said, standing up.

“Then its Hermione to you.” she added, following his suit. As Rod helped her with bags of food, her carrying the soda, it was agreed that apparition with food was a bad idea. As Rod walked ahead of her, Hermione couldn't take her eyes off his ass.

Once she entered her home and into the living room, she saw the five pureblood men watching Doctor Who. Abraxas and Orion looked ultimately focused on the show as Antonin, Draco and Mulicber turned around to greet them. Draco came around and grabbed the drinks from her hand and settled it on the newly cleaned coffee table. Draco was eyeing her, worried. She gave him a reassuring smile. He nodded towards the kitchen and turned around to head to the designated area. She turned to Rod who watched the interaction.

“Don't worry about us; I think we know how to distribute food amongst ourselves.” he said, smiling. She gave him a grateful smile then followed Draco into the kitchen. Once inside, Draco warded the room with a silence charm. He leaned against the counter and let out a shuddering breath.

“You okay, Draco?” Hermione asked, walking up to him and placing her hand between his shoulder blades. Draco scoffed, looking at the Gryffindor disbelievingly.
I'm okay? Are you okay? We just brought Voldemort sympathizers back from the dead and you are asking if I am okay? Hermione, you went to get food with one! And he is the least dangerous one out of all of them. The most dangerous in that room watching Doctor freaking Who is Antonin Dolohov. My grandpa, the first supporters of Voldy Moldy, is sitting there, amazed by a telly! Sirius Black goddamn good looking father is there and he is questioning my sexuality! I am okay? I am more than--"

“DRACO!” Hermione yelled, causing the hyperventilating boy to snap out of his panicked speech. “I know this situation is far from being ideal--"

“You think?”

Hermione shouldered on, “---but it already has happened! I am not being attacked---”

“Yet"

“Will you stop interrupting me?! ” Hermione screamed then breathed heavily. “I know what the situation is, Draco. I know.”

Draco looked stricken then pulled the girl into a hug—a rare occurrence because Malfoys don't hug. She hugged him back, grasping at his robes. She knew that Draco knew this men better than she did. She also felt that Rod would never heart her. She could still feel his hand on her hip, on her forearm. She felt safe being next to him. She didn't know if was being naïve or too trusting. She let the smell of pines that is Draco comfort her.

“I told Rodolphus about my torture.” Hermione whispered against his shoulder. She felt him tense at the mention. He always does. She doesn't know if Draco still blames himself for not helping her out. Probably. One doesn't simply forget about that ordeal.

“How did he take it?”

“He...hated it. He hated her. He has the right to. She killed his brother.” She explained, pulling herself away from the hug. “He told me not to glamour it.” She showed her scarred arm at Draco.
She watched him stare at the scar and watched him blink fast. His hand rose and traced over the raised scar with his middle finger, similar to Rod. “Why?” It was said so softly that Hermione would have missed it.

“He said to never hide your scars because it would be hiding ourselves. We need to bear our scars out so people will know what we have sacrificed for their right to live.” she whispered back. “Ron didn’t even want to see them. As if he was ashamed. He! I was the one who endured it and he can’t even look at them? Rodolphus showed more support than Ron ever did!”

“What about my scars?” he hissed back, snatching his hand away from her to pull back his sleeve of his shirt to show the remnants of the scar left behind the mark when Voldemort died. “When they look at my hand, they know I am a Death Eater. What sacrifice did I make?”

“Did you ask for it, Draco?” she asked, slowly, gazing at his light gray eyes. “Did you go up to Voldemort and asked him for the mark as a free man?”

“Of course not!”

“Then you were just as a victim of the war as I was! You took the torture so your mother wouldn’t have to! You bear the scars from wounds that given to you through torture just like I was! You survived like I did, Draco. You bear those scars proud and fuck what anyone thinks of you.” she said, clearly and sternly, placing her palms on his cold cheeks. He just gazed back at her. “What did I say?”

“Fuck what they think of me.” His voice was strong, no longer the tone of hysteria in it.

Hermione nodded, pleased. She wiped away her tears and refreshed both their faces with magic. “Let’s go find out more about this chest.”

Draco took a deep breath and lifted the ward. They left the kitchen to see the men enjoying the food. Antonin saw her first then indicated the food. “Eat. You are still running around, low on fumes.”

It was weird to see Antonin worry about her. Nonetheless, she nodded. Abraxas shifted on the couch to free up some space for her to sit. With uncertainty, she dropped down on the couch. Abraxas turned to her after swallowing his food. “This pedestrian food as you called it is quite good. Here.” He offered a chicken finger on a napkin, holding up the ranch dipping sauce.
“Thank you, Mr. Malfoy.” she said, grabbing the fried meat and dipping it in ranch. She bit into the savory meat and groaned in happiness. When was the last time she had such greasy food? “Ooh, I was hungry. Summoning you guys took a whole lot of energy than I care to admit.”

“You summoned five men, Miss. Granger. Five.” Orion said, setting his soda down. “Impetum animi ligaveris is only known to bringing back one wizard. These chests are not that easy to find. It is mostly known around the pureblood society.”

“Yeah, leave it to the purebloods to have this things around them.” Hermione said, wryly, causing Abraxas and Orion to give her a look as Antonin guffawed. “Sorry.”

“As I was saying, in some cases, if someone in a pureblood family were to want someone from the life to come back to the living, all they need to do is give their blood as sacrifice. It’s all about intent, Miss. Granger. Once that someone wills, that person will come. Only blood relatives, too.” Orion continued. Hermione bit her lower lip, confused.

“If that is the case, how did you guys come out with my blood?” she asked, worried.

“Maybe, something to do with your magic?” Draco pointed out. When he saw everyone was looking at him, he continued, “you said to bring out five men, five powerful men, the person needs to have very powerful magic. Hermione is powerful. She can get a spell on the first try. Hell, she made polyjuice potion when she was in her second year of Hogwarts.”

“How do you know that?” Hermione asked, noting the skeptical look from Abraxas. She glared at him in return then shifted back to Draco.

“Snape told my dad and my dad told me.”

Hermione almost screeched. “Snape knew all this time?! Why didn't he give me a yearlong detention?!”

“He wanted to but he was thoroughly impressed that you could achieve that so he didn't.” didn't said Draco, smirking. Severus Snape...impressed with her? She could feel herself puffing up in pride as she also felt lightheaded. “Let’s continue before she faints in excitement.”

“Severus was your professor? He became a professor?” Abraxas asked, a genuine smile on his face.
A smile that made him ten times beautiful.

“Yes, he did. He was a hardass but damn, he was a good a professor.” Hermione said, feeling the familiar sting behind her eyes whenever Snape was mentioned.

Abraxas smile fell off. “‘Was’?”

“Voldemort killed him during the Final Battle.” Draco said, looking away. “Voldemort betrayed him.”

Abraxas looked genuinely sad, his face shuttering from shock and sorrow. Hermione placed her hand on his shoulder for comfort. Whoever Severus was to Abraxas, he cared greatly for the potion master.

“The Final Battle…? What’s that?” Orion asked, looking confused and horrified at the same time.

“We will fill you on that later. We need to know about the chest more.” Draco said and Orion nodded in agreement.

“So, you are saying that Miss. Granger’s magick is potent enough to bring back five men?” Abraxas said and Draco nodded. “How? I am not trying to be offensive here but a muggleborn…?”

“Doing a poor job at that, mate.” Antonin quipped. He ignored the glare that the elder Malfoy threw at him.

“She has a large reservoir of magick in her that astounds anyone who crosses path with her. She absorbs knowledge like a sponge and she practices her magic more than any Pureblood I’ve known. Why should they? They were born with having two magical parents to teach them about it. She didn't. She had to learn from the basics so she threw herself into her studies and always came out first much to my displeasure.” Draco said, throwing the girl a mock glare. “Next thing I know, my father kept on comparing me to her. If a muggleborn can get to the top of the class, why couldn't I?”

“Well, Lucius can be a twat sometimes.” Hermione said, harrumphing. Abraxas almost dropped his chicken fingers to the ground as Draco laughed at that. “If it makes you feel better, Mr. Malfoy, Lucius Malfoy is a very smart twat.”
Rod covered his laugh with a cough as Abraxas gave her look of that he didn't feel any better. Hermione shrugged at his reaction. “‘Impetum animi ligaveris ...if I were to translate that, it would mean soul...binding...box?’” she attempted then slowly the words she uttered sunk deeper into her brain. As horror crept up her spine, she made eye contact with Draco who looked like he got to the same conclusion she had, if his eyes widening in horror meant anything. “It is not what I think it means, right?” She looked around the room, catching everyone's eyes. “Right?”

“Wrong, Miss. Granger, it means everything you said.” Orion said, his voice grave.

“Princess,” Mulciber said, finally entering himself into the conversation. She would have shouted at him for his nickname when she saw the concern and amusement in his eyes.

“We are bonded to you until death do us apart.”
OH MY GOD YOU GUYS!!

I am in disbelief at how much love this fic is getting! I am honestly surprised. All the comments, kudos, and bookmark!!! This fic is also a part of a collections!!! I want to thank all of you for your support!

Also, it is really hard to know at which point you finish a chapter. I try to not make it too long because I want this fic to be a long one. But I just simply can't cut it off without giving the chapter a closure.

This chapter is for all of you!

CHAPTER FIVE

If Ricky Martin began singing Livin’ La Vida Loca butt ass naked in the living room, no one would have noticed him. In fact, they were paying attention the witch who sat ramrod straight with full concentration that nothing could distract them.

Hell, if they didn't know better, it would look as if Hermione was petrified again by a basilisk. She couldn't move. She felt like she couldn't breathe by how tight her chest feels. She didn't know where to look or what to say. For the first time someone had rendered Hermione Granger speechless. Bonded…?

“Like marriage?” she whispered, cringing at saying it out loud. She glanced at Antonin who simply nodded. “Oh.”

She couldn't be here. She stood up on shaky legs and walked towards the hallway that led to the stairs. She saw Draco attempt to stand up but she shook her head. She walked into the hallway and placed her back on the wall. Her mouth was dry and she could feel her blood pressure fall.

What had she done?
She is now bonded with five men for the rest of her life. Pulling those men out from the veil and binding them against their wishes to her. Her. There has to be a way to rectify this mistake. Why did her magick decide to pull them out, of all people? Three of them wanted to kill her two years ago and now she is technically married to them. Yeah, she wanted someone to love her and marry her and all that but she was not expected it to be this way. Not five men, evil or not, in forced marriage. It was barbaric!

No. There has to be a way to destroy this bond and keep them in this world, too. It even sounded farfetched in her mind, imagine saying that out loud. She almost scoffed. It’s either one or the other. Married...or back to being dead.

“What did I do to deserve this? Am I too powerful? Is this the way god decided to humble me?!” she yelled out then waited for some kind of answer. Finding none, she let out a sigh of frustration.

She knew she was being irrational but give a girl a break, huh? She finds out what type of conundrum she got herself in and she has the right to freak out. What can she do to fix this mess? How can she right this? Does she really have the right to decide who lives and who dies? Those men just got the taste of living again and didn't show their desire to bring their old master back to life and then tell them that they had to die again? She didn't know what drove those men toward Voldemort. But she knew that one of them enjoyed being under his service. If she let them be bonded to her, could she really be okay with having Antonin Dolohov be her husband? Or Abraxas who doesn't believe that she is powerful? She still hasn't got the feel of Orion but from what Sirius said, he was a traditional pureblood with family values. He wouldn't have let Regulus become a Death Eater, right? And Mulciber...she couldn't get a read out of him. All she knows are what she have heard: he is as dangerous as a corned animal. And yet he hasn't shown that he is dangerous.

But first thing first: find out what this bond entails. She can't jump into this with both feet if she was ignorant about the details. If there was a way to reverse this, would she? She spend at least forty five minutes with that guy and she felt safe...wanted. No one who had seen her scars the way he did. He said he hated what Bellatrix did to her. Was that a lie to get her guard down? It didn't seem like it to her. He willingly touched her. But for now, this was not the case. The case is about the chest.

With a inhale to settle her nerves, she rounded the corner and entered the living room. She saw the six men turn their attention to her, expectantly. “Alright,” she began, her hands on her hips, “I am sure the chest didn't come with a informational booklet and I am assuming you purebloods know about this chest.”

“I am not sure about all the rules about the chests or the bonding.” Orion began, sitting forward, “from what I know, this bonding is... quite strong.”

“How...strong? Are you saying that trying to dissolve this bonds is impossible?” she asked, softly.
“I will not comment until I visit my library.” Orion said, nodding. “Grimmauld’s library, to be precise.”

It as if someone splashed cold water at her.

“Oh, shit.” Hermione cursed, feeling her blood freeze. “How could I forget?” How could she have forgotten? Sirius still stays there and he doesn't know that his dad is alive.

“Forget, what?”

“Before we do any kind of research, we will notify certain people about you two.” Hermione began slowly, eyeing both Abraxas and Orion. “Lucius needs to know and so does Sirius.”

Orion turned pale at the mention of his older son. Abraxas looked hopeful. She turned to look at Draco who looked sick at the thought. “Maybe Sirius would be okay that you are alive, Mr. Black. I don't know about Lucius Malfoy.”

Abraxas was confused; she could see it in eyes. Maybe, a little bit of hurt. “Why?” he asked, slowly.

“Because Voldemort totally decimated the Malfoys.” Antonin piped in looking serious. “He used the Malfoy Manor as his headquarters. There were missions that Voldemort gave Lucius that he couldn't fulfill which landed Lucius in Azkaban.”

Abraxas looked horrified.

“In order to punish my dad’s failures, Voldemort forced the Dark Mark on me and gave me a mission that I couldn't even hope to finish.” Draco slowly said, looking at the telly that was still playing. He became quiet as he legs started to fidget. “I guess it didn't matter because Dumbledore knew what the mission was and had Severus make the vow that he would be the completing the mission.”

Hermione’s eyes flitted towards Antonin, Rodolphus, and Mulciber, respectively, she was trying to catch any reactions. Now they know the truth, how would they react? None of their faces betrayed any emotions but they knew how to control their facial muscles under the Dark Lord. What if
Draco was in danger... Antonin suddenly looked at her, catching her staring at him. She looked away, feeling guilty.

“What was the mission, Draco?” Abraxas asked the boy, softly. Draco took a huge a breath and sat up straighter.

“I had to kill Dumbledore and find a way to let the Death Eaters inside Hogwarts.”

The temperature of the room sank lower as Abraxas slumped his head down. “We already had power!” The shout filled with anger startled everyone. Hermione stared at Draco in surprise. His face was slightly tinged red from anger. He was full on glaring at his grandfather who had his head on his hands. “When people heard Malfoy's name back then, they both cower and respected it. Now, we are punchline to a joke! Even the Macmillans have better name than we do. Mother can't even go to Diagon Alley without being accosted. Father is just one step away from being a squib. We still have money in the accounts but now we have to pay bi-annually to the Ministry for restitutions. Why would you align yourself to that guy?”

Abraxas gaped at Draco, his mouth opening and closing. “I thought what Tom suggested was merely political. There were news about how muggles kept on hurting wizardkind. Tom felt that half-bloods were too liberal with who they procreate with. The very guys that was hurting the wizardkind and they were mating with them? ” Abraxas explained, shaking his head. “We were clueless about Muggleborns. How could two muggles create magical being? There were no studies or findings. It didn’t help that Tom was Heir of Slytherin who was also against letting Muggleborns in.

Back then, muggles burned witches and wizards alive! Our people! Then suddenly muggleborns began to appear, saying that they too can do magic? It was preposterous. Tom made a compelling argument about how Muggleborn stole the magic from pure wizardkind. Pierce LeStrange, Peter Rosier, me, and so many more were part of his party he began, calling ourselves the Knights of Walpurgis. We tried to bring Orion into our side but he remained neutral but we got his father, and later on, his wife, into our party.” Abraxas paused, looking at the ground.

“It was political at the beginning. We didn’t know what Muggleborns were and we wanted them out! Back then, the pureblood families felt threaten bu this group of anomalies. We didn’t want them entering Hogwarts, near pureblood children. I hadn’t realized that it was Tom who killed Myrtle until he told me after graduation. He said he had to create something. I was against what he had done. I told him I quit. I didn’t want a murder to be alongside the name of Malfoys. We just wanted our traditions to be kept safe from outsiders.” Abraxas continued, causing everyone to snap their heads towards the former Malfoy patriarch. Why wouldn’t they? Here was a guy who stood beside Riddle and didn't like the fact that Riddle killed some muggleborn?

“Obviously, Tom didn't like being rejected. Three days later, I somehow contracted a very serious
case of dragon pox.” he ended with another drop of his head. It was Hermione’s turn to flounder at the new found information.

“Wait, wait. Are you saying that Tom Riddle killed you?” she reiterated, shocked. Abraxas nodded. “Why didn't you tell anyone?”

“I didn't have proof that it was Tom was the one who killed me. Anyone could have gotten dragon pox back then. I knew that he was the one who put the death warrant on me but I had no proof. Lucius was also young. I just couldn't abandon him. He was really young when I died but I assume that Lucius was already under Voldemort’s thrall. Along with Lucius, was Severus. I tried my best to steer Lucius away from Voldemort but Tom already had his claws sunk in them.” Abraxas answered, looking at Draco.

It was Hermione’s turn to be discombobulated. Has she been reading this men all wrong? That everything is right and whatever that goes against your beliefs is wrong? That the world wasn’t black and white but all shades of grey. She knew there were magic that is considered Dark but actually results in positive outcomes. Who decided what is Dark and what is Light? All these people had was a belief about their traditions being harmed but Voldemort had twisted their belief into servitude. Hermione knew that not every Death Eater out there were not forced to follow the man but actually wanting to be servant to him, like Bellatrix or Rosier or McNair. Hell, Bellatrix took another step and became a lover to that man.

What was Mulciber’s excuse when it came to serving Voldemort? Antonin’s? Rod’s? Were they forced as well or were they willing to be marked? Will she ever find out? As she tried to control her mind, something earlier Abraxas said caught her attention.

“Mr. Black---” She stopped herself when the said one put his hand up.

“Orion. Call me Orion. We are bonded now.” Orion said, causing Hermione to blush which in turn made him smirk.

“Orion, Mr. Malfoy here said that you didn't take part with Tom’s agenda?” she asked, hesitantly.

“There was something off about him. Everytime we would share drinks or him trying to recruit me, I would not show my back to him. I didn't want to associate myself with him but my sweet wife and my father fell for his words. Walburga tried to mold Sirius into what she believed a perfect person the Dark Lord will like and I was so glad when he ran away.” Orion said, sitting back, crossing his legs at the knee, his left ankle on his right knee. “It was saddening that Walburga blasted him off the family tree. Next time, she switched her sights on sweet Regulus. He didn't even stand a chance.”
Hermione lowered her eyes when Orion mentioned Regulus. Sirius always reminisced about how sweet Regulus was and all he wanted to do was belong. “Well, I guess it didn't matter if I sided with him or not; the Dark Lord destroyed my family.”

“He destroyed lot of families. The only ones he had not destroyed are Goyle, Crabbe, Yaxley, Carrows, and Rosiers.” Mulciber added, looking thoughtfully. “McNair had no family and there was Fenrir Greyback.” Everyone in the room shuddered at those two names. “Those two...they come in pairs.”

“They were the worst. They had joined the Dark Lord just because they have free reign to do whatever. My brother and I joined because our father had already signed us over to the Dark Lord.” Rod said, shrugging. “Obviously we couldn't reject him or else we would have been killed. It didn't matter in the long run; we died anyway.”

Antonin cleared his throat. It looks like everyone was going to explain how they joined the Dark Lord. Hermione wasn't sure if she was prepared for Antonins? He didn't like McNair or Greyback, so does that mean… “I had joined the Dark Lord because he promised me that I could study all about magic under him. He knew I was master at Charms and he personally came and spoke to me about my skills and how he could further improve it. It was too late to realize that he just wanted a strong wizard to do his bidding. Only spell I've learned under him was of my creation.” Antonin contributed, his eyes flashing towards Hermione. She knew exactly what spell he was talking about. “He did the same thing to Severus. All I wanted was more knowledge and all I got in return were praises for harming kids.”

“He seduced us and promised us things we wanted, be it knowledge or power, but once you are in his grasp, you can never leave.” Mulciber uttered, looking out the living room. “I was just like Rodolphus here.”

Hermione thought that she shouldn't feel bad for them but she couldn't help but form links between them and how Dumbledore treated Harry and Severus. Promising them things he couldn't fulfill and expected loyalty at the end. He sucked the loyalty out of Severus just like Voldemort had done. And poor Harry, trying to connect with the very man who raised him to die for the cause. She was sure that Dumbledore slogan “for the greater good” was used to give him power to do whatever he want. According to Severus's memory, Dumbledore knew about the happenings of Potter's death. He stood silently by as Sirius took the fall. Used Remus’s lycanthropy as a reason that he couldn't take care of Harry. He would rather have a muggle family starve and abuse Harry than let Remus take care of the boy.

After the truth of Dumbledore’s death came out, Hermione had begun to analyze everything about Dumbledore. How come he has never vetted out the DADA position more thoroughly. Quirrell had
Voldemort attached to the back of his head; a man who lied about his adventures and wasn't able to protect Harry from the basilisk; a Death Eater disguise as an Auror; a Ministry pink toad who only used theory and applied capital punishment—Dumbledore couldn't vet them thoroughly? She didn't mention Remus or Snape because she actually learned something from those two. She realized that she fought in the war with not that much knowledge about DADA spells.

She felt a tap on her shoulder which roused her out of her thinking process. Draco was watching then looked at the clock. “It is almost two in the morning. I think we should continue our discussion about our...predicament... tomorrow when we are refreshed and clear headed.” Draco said, then eyes the men with scrutiny. “I am sure they will need their rest.”

Hermione slapped her forehead. “Of course! I didn't think about the time.” she cried out, jumping up, causing everyone to stand up. “Obviously, I am not rich and my house can't fit all you so I will have to transfigure some beds. I do have a guest bedroom upstairs. It's upon you guys to decide on who takes it.” She turned to Draco. “You will be leaving for the Manor soon, right?”

“Wrong.” Draco said, startling Hermione. “I will be staying here.”

“Oh. Okay.” she fumbled, noticing a glint in eyes. Oh, she slowly realized. He didn't want to leave her alone with these men even though they were bonded to her.

“And I am staying in your room.” he stated, his voice stern, implying that he will not have his decision argued.

“Okay.” she said, simply. He nodded, looking satisfied by her answer. Abraxas cleared his throat, looking confused and scandalized at the same time.

“Sleep on the same bed?” he asked brokenly as if saying the words was difficult for him. Hermione eyed him oddly.

“You do realize that it is the year 2000 and not 1945. Men and women can be in the same room without chaperones and yes, women do go to work. Yes, they have sex before marriage. However, there are still pureblood marriage contracts going on but it is not as strict as when you were alive, grandfather.” Draco said, sniffing. “I can call you grandfather, right? Or Abraxas?”

“Actually, I prefer if you called me Abraxas.” the man said, looking uncomfortable. Draco let out a sigh of relief. “I do realize that I have arrived in a time period where it is modernized and my belief
of old style must be correct.” Abraxas backtracked. “However, you had informed me about your would-be fiance, Miss. Greengrass. It seems off to me that you should easily sought out another woman’s bed when you are...taken.”

Realizing what Abraxas was implying, Hermione almost choked on saliva again. “Oh, god, no! Abraxas, you don't need to worry about that. Draco and I are not sexually connected whatsoever. I have no romantic interest in him, whatsoever.”

Draco shook his head fast. “Please, get rid of that thought immediately. Truth be told, we had shared a bed together but no in sexual pretences. Back at our last year of school, after the war, we hanged out quite a lot. There were times that Hermione would take naps. However, she would always wake up from nightmares. The same for me. I don't know how but we decided to sleep together and we haven't been getting that many nightmares.”

“Oh, alright.” Abraxas said, still looking uncomfortable. Hermione could understand. What does one say to that? “Seeing that I am the eldest out of all you, I will be taking the guest room.”

“Is that right?” Orion dryly. Hermione left the two patriarchs to settle the dispute. She asked the remaining men to step away from the couches. With a flick of her wand, four singular beds were transformed from couches and other furniture.

“I am sorry. This is what I can do for now. We will have to speak about living arrangement and if you guys were to live separately, how would that affect our bond. Which will be discussed tomorrow.” Hermione said, clapping her hands forward.

“It is better than Azkaban’s beds.” Rod said, smiling.

“It is way better than I thought you would give.” Antonin commented, looking at the ground. What did he thought she would give him? “But, no matter, spasibo.” Hermione assumed that meant ‘thank you’ in Russian.

It seemed that Abraxas won the argument, judging by the smug look on his face. “The bathroom is down that hallway. The kitchen is there if you want a late night snack.”

“Please, have your rest, Ms. Granger.” Orion said, “we will manage. Thanks for the beds.” He gave her a polite smile then went towards the bed that was closer to the window.
Hermione nodded, amazed at his beauty. She had to be careful around this man. It was easy for her to catch a crush on Sirius...how fast would she fall for his dad? The question was: would she catch feelings for him naturally or from the bond? The very thought itself made her sick. She felt a tug on her hand which caused her to look back to see Draco.

“Let’s go. They are grown men. They can take care of themselves. You need your sleep.”

Her bedroom was quiet as they changed into their nighttime clothes. Their routine felt almost systematic. Hermione would do her nightly duties of washing face and brushing her teeth while Draco would change into his nighttime clothes which only consisted of a boxer. When she was done with the bathroom, they would switch places and she would don on her nightgown. This would be the fourth time that Draco was over her house. When it came to his apartment, she would be over there multiple times.

The bathroom door opened and Draco reappeared in her room. At the beginning of this sleeping together session, Hermione was nervous to have a boy who hated her share a bed with her. However, once he settled next to her, a feeling of security washed over as if someone placed a weighted blanket on her. Since that day, this way of sleeping has become routine.

Both of them got comfortable under the blanket. It would have felt like any other normal night, if it weren’t for the five men downstairs. Hermione let out a deep breath that she didn’t know she was holding in. Should she sleep? Or talk to Draco about this? She doesn’t even feel tired. Should she wait till morning to speak to him about this? *His grandfather is alive and all*, Hermione was sure he was up for speaking. But how can she start the conversation?

It seems that she didn't need to as Draco turned to his side to face her. She turned her head to meet his grey eyes. His eyes were bright in the dark room and he bit his lower lip.

“So…” he trailed off, looking away from her. “Quite an eventful day, huh?”

Hermione snorted then laughed, exasperated. “You can say that. I mean... *come on!* I knew I should have just turned back because I knew I could but I was weak in the head. I knew I should have learned Occlumency.” she knew she was whining and she didn’t care.

“I don't think Occlumency would have helped. This is magic. You wouldn't have stood a chance.” Draco said, reaching out to take her hand. She squeezed back. “At least it’s not Voldemort.”
Hermione shuddered. “Or Dumbledore.”

“Or Barty Crouch.”

“Or Amycus Carrow.”

“Or Fenrir Greyback.”

“Okay, so I didn't get the worst of the worst. But Antonin Dolohov…” she trailed off, struggling to bring words together. “I don't know what to make of that guy. He is not…he doesn't seem to be mad that he is attached to me?”

“Back then, Antonin was the only one who left me alone.” Draco said, his face neutral. “There were times that I wouldn't eat and he will find me in some corridor with a sandwich or juice and give it to me.”

You could say that Hermione was shocked. After the fight at the ministry during fifth year, she had been recovering for a month straight caused by the weird curse that Antonin had shot towards her. In her mind, Antonin was way scarier than Voldemort back then. However, to hear that he took care of Draco was bizarre.

“Well, he was way crazier before our fifth year.” Draco mused, thinking. “Yeah, now that I think about it, something happened to him during that fight. Whatever happened, changed him drastically.”

“Changed him...how?” she asked, confused.

Draco bit his lip as he thought about it. After few seconds, his eyes lit up. “Before fifth year, he would take whatever missions Voldemort gave him and finish it with his power. After fifth year, he wouldn't take missions that included harming children. He was tortured and mocked by the Dark Lord for that but he stayed true it. Hell, Voldemort killed him at the end of sixth year because he wouldn't do what he was asked to do.”

“I wonder what happened to make him change like that.” Hermione muttered then clicked her tongue. “Forget about me for a second, what about you? You are seeing your grandfather for the first time ever.”
Draco grimaced. “I don't know what to think of it. I really thought that Abraxas was an ally to Voldemort—that's what father thought as well. To think that Voldemort killed Abraxas with dragon pox is unfathomable. All of them. Their lives were all signed before they were even born except for Antonin. Their deaths were signed before they were even born. When did they realize that the Dark Lord didn't care for the blood purity shite?”

“And they couldn't even get out.” Hermione supplied, shaking her head. A few seconds later, she let out a laugh of disbelief. “Look at us, feeling sorry for Death Eaters.”

Draco didn't laugh. “I do wonder what this bond entails.”

The laughter died off in her throat at mention of the bond. “They did say that it was equivalent to marriage...I can’t believe I am married! I wasn't planning to be married until I am 27 or 28. Well, I need a boy for that to happen. Now, I don't even need to worry about finding a man---I got five of them.” she said, hysterically. The question that has been bothering me raised it head, bringing my attention towards it. “What if I do begin to like them? Would it be natural? Or would the bond create these feelings to further its agenda?”

“Only way we can figure that out is waiting for the information tomorrow.” Draco said, sternly. “Try to sleep—we will have to figure out how to tell Sirius and Lucius about their fathers first then we can learn about the chest.”

Hermione groaned out loud. Again. It's like one thing after another. “What do I even say to Sirius? ‘Oh, hey, Sirius! You can call me mom now that I am married to your dad’?!”

Draco was silent as he thought about her words. “Does this mean that I have to call you grandma?” Draco asked, horrified. “Grandma ‘Mione? Grandmother Granger? Granny Mione?”

“Stop! I will kill you!” Hermione cried out, slapping Draco’s chest who was currently laughing at her. “That’s horrifying! Me? As a grandmother? I can't even think about being a mother, let alone a grandmother.”

Draco controlled his laughing then became serious once more. He is going to say something to put more stress on her, she knew it! She, also, knew why he is doing this. More problems is going to rise up and ignoring it wouldn't mean that the problem went away. “Forget about Sirius—what about Potter? No. Forget it. We will have to talk about it tomorrow.”
“But---” Draco lift up his finger to silence her.

“Go. To. Sleep.”

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**Downstairs**

“What a mess.” Antonin piped up, knowing fully well that no one was asleep. The sound of rustling bedsheets confirmed his thinking.

“Is it?” Mulciber's voice appeared from top of him. “We all are alive and well. We got the second chance we desperately wanted before we died. We don't even have our mark anymore.”

“They did say that Death is cleansing.” Rodolphus mused. Antonin had to quell his urge to tell them to shut up.

“We are attached to the Gryffindor princess or the Order of the Phoenix princess or whatever they call her now.” Antonin gritted out, glaring at the ceiling. “I don't know if you remember but we tried to kill her at least once in our life. And now, she is married to us?”

“I didn't try to kill her.” Mulciber intervened, sounding smug.

“Good for you. I am sure she heard quite a lot about your love for torture instead.” Rodolphus drawled. “Look we all did something to her directly or indirectly. She is a compassionate person as you all see. We expected curses and seeing Aurors in here faster than you can shoot a stunning spell but we didn't.”

“She could be in shock.” Antonin supplied, biting his lower lip. He couldn’t understand Granger’s behavior at all. She is afraid of him but she is not going to attack him? She is going so far to give them beds to sleep on? Giving him a bed to sleep on after what he had done to her in her fifth year? He expected the floor or even the backyard and yet, she provided them with soft beds. When was the last time he could simply sink in and sleep with his two eyes closed? Or not listen to the blasted snake Nagini slithering past his door at the Malfoy Manor?
“Shock wears off in a hour’s time.” The clear and aristocratic voice of Orion Black resonated from his side of bed. “If she wanted to call the LME and bring the Aurors to arrest you three, you three will already be in holding cell now. As seeing as you are not, be thankful that Ms. Granger is emotionally unstable right now.”

It was quiet after that, making the three men consider Orion’s words. However, for Rodolphus, there were other reasons why he didn’t want to sleep—or couldn’t. He thought back to the scar on Hermione’s arm, or about his former lunatic wife, or his younger brother who just wanted to be like his older brother. Bellatrix, that bitch, took notice of Rabastan’s hero worship and convinced him that he do whatever she asks him to do and Rodolphus will be proud of him if he does. Next thing Rodolphus knew, Rabastan was moving far away from as he tried to do whatever it does to make his big brother happy. When the mission to torture Longbottoms was done, it was not only Frank and Alice recieved brain damage, Rabastan came out of the house a changed man, a crazed man.

Rodolphus had lost his only living relative to the hands of the Dark Lord and his wife, Bellatrix. Rod wishes that he was the one to kill Bellatrix. Not only she killed his brother but tortured his bondmate. He knew that Bellatrix was crazy and she will do anything to get what she wants but this extent? At the same time, he felt like a hypocrite. How could he be angry at Bellatrix for harming Hermione when he tried to do the same to her?

“What is surprising is her relationship with the Malfoy kid.” Antonin mused, “I thought they hated each other but they share a bed together?”

“Maybe when you have died, Mr. Dolohov, they hated each other. A lot of things could change between then and now. We will discuss more tomorrow.” Orion said, his voice tinged with ire. “Let’s sleep on it. We got a big day tomorrow.” Orion became silent and other three figured that he fell asleep. “I have a big day tomorrow. I have to see my son, who my wife and father kicked out of the house for having different opinions.”

“That sucks, dude.” Mulciber said, “Good thing I have no one left in my family.”

Everyone became silent. It was if their minds connected and realized how alone they are. They realized what their beliefs and the war had cost them. Instead of bringing communities together like the Dark Lord had planned, it pulled them apart. They all realized that the Dark Lord had ruined their lives but they realised that too late. It wouldn't have matter when they realized it, you will die before you even think about quitting.
Rodolphus sighed loudly. “Let’s just go to sleep. It won't do us any good if we are tired tomorrow.”
Chapter Six

Chapter Notes

I know this took time to be uploaded and it was ENTIRELY my fault. I was reading an amazing well written story on Wattpad. Yeah, I know. Amazing story and Wattpad?

However, if you guys do have Wattpad, read [Storm and Silence] and the continuity. I love that story. Only reason I downloaded Wattpad on my phone tbh.

Okay, so, another MAJOR point: as I was writing this chapter, I have realized that if I put both Sirius and Malfoy's reaction in one chapter, we will be here for days. So I have decided to make one chapter for one man so in total I will be having two chapters how these men will react.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

CHAPTER SIX

Surprisingly enough, Hermione had slept through the night without any terrors or fidgetiness. You would think that raising up the dead would affect your sleep, but apparently it wasn't. Maybe, it was such a tiring day yesterday that her body was adamant to have a healing sleep, nightmares be damned. She wasn’t complaining at one bit. Her eyes opened naturally and she didn't even need to convince herself to close her eyes for five minutes more. She felt heaviness on her chest and by looking down to see ruffled blond hair, she surmised that Draco was using her chest as a pillow. She let out a chuckle, remembering the first time this happened to her. Both of them were a blushing mess after they found out.

The chuckle roused Draco who groaned as he lifted his head. He rubbed his eyes as he shifted back to his side of the bed. This was Hermione’s favorite part when they slept together: to see him unkempt and ruffled, sleep still his eyes as he looked around the room. “You sleep good?” Hermione asked, smiling softly at him.

“I did, actually. However, it would have been better if you had bigger tits, Granger.” Draco drawled then gave her a big, teasing grin. Hermione gasped then grabbed a pillow to wack him with it. “All that big brains and you couldn't even spare some to your breasts?”

“I find them that they are good in size, thank you very much.” Hermione sniffed, looking down at her nightgown to look at her breasts. “Lavender was stating that having big breasts wasn't that fun at all. Actually, she experiences back pain because of them. I will have you know that when she grows
old, her boobs are going to sag.”

“Wow, way to turn a joke into a lecture, Granger. Only you could do it.” he teased back, jumping off the bed to avoid the next pillow attack. “I call dibs on the bathroom first.”

Hermione gasped indignant. “That is my bathroom.” He just pranced into the bathroom without acknowledging her. “Okay, fine! I am going to make some coffee.”

Hermione glanced down at her sleeping attire. It is just a simple nightgown; it’s not even see through or inappropriate. But, still... Ron and Draco were the only ones to see this much skin and that was enough for her. Five men...? Five pureblood men and two patriarchs who believe that showing this much skin was scandalous? However, it was time to let them know exactly what time period they are in and how girls dress these days. They are bounded to a muggleborn girl and they know they don’t share the same viewpoints of women oppressions as the pureblood. Okay, maybe, women oppression was a too harsh a phrase but it was the women who were put in high pedestal. They expect a lot of things for girls that they don't for boys. Purity, chastity, gentleness, and were raised to be perfect wives.

No, Hermione thought, determinedly, I will have to show them that I won't bend to their expectations from me. She spelled her mouth clean and gave her hair a brush through with her fingers. With that in her mind, she opted for keeping the nightgown on. She always did wear it around the house in morning, why change it now? Without waiting another second(lest that she second guesses), Hermione left her room with a mission. She went down the stairs with a mission. She rounded the corner that led to the living room with a mission.

Just to find that three of the four occupants were still asleep. She froze at the scene like a deer in headlights. Antonin, Mulciber, and Rod looked like they were one with the bed. Orion’s bed was unoccupied and by the flush of a toilet, she surmised that he was freshening up. She went back to peering at the sleeping men. Sleeping removed their worry lines and their slackened faces made them years younger. Hell, Antonin looked peaceful. Not knowing what to think about that, she turned towards the kitchen. As she entered the kitchen, the door to the downstairs bathroom opened to reveal Orion, his face clean and hair slightly wet. Thank God her mom decided to leave shampoo in the downstairs bathroom! Orion noticed that he wasn't the only one in the hallway and glanced up. Noticing it was her, he smiled hesitantly.

Orion looked like a snack and she wanted a bite.

Okay, calm. “Good morning, Orion.” she said, smiling back. She watched his eyes travel down her body then back up to meet her eyes. She could see he was uncomfortable with her attire but he didn't say anything about it.
“Good morning, Ms. Granger. I hope you sleep was good with all the happenings from last night.” he said, following Hermione into the kitchen.

“I actually slept better than most nights, actually.” she admitted, filling the kettle with water. “I think it was because of how tiresome it was bring you guys from the dead. Tea? Coffee?” She looked at Orion, expectantly.

“Coffee, please. Thank you.” Orion answered, slowly coming closer to the granite counter. He watched her set up three cups. She added little bit of cream and sugar in the first cup. Just plain sugar in the second one. She looked at him expectantly. “Just a little bit of creamer.”

As she waited for coffee to brew in the kettle, she glanced at Orion to see him looking at the ground, warring with himself. “Orion? You okay?”

“Sirius!” The name bursted out from his lips as if he was trying to hold it back. He blushed at her perusal. “I am sorry. I was thinking about Sirius. I wanted to speak to you about him, but I don't know how.”

“I can tell you some but the details has to be said by him.” she offered, putting a hand out on him in a show of support. He peeked at her and nodded. “Sirius is funny, smart and caring. He will go beyond for his friends and especially for his godson, Harry. He has a sense of familial duty to Harry but he loves him as if he was his own son.”

Orion smiled softly at that and Hermione felt like a shitty person to ruin it but he had to know. “That's the good part.” He became confused and alarmed at the same time. “I believe this is after you died. Sirius was committed to Azkaban for a crime he didn't commit but was framed for. He spent 12 years in that hellhole and didn't come out unmarked.”

Orion let out a horrified gasp, leaning against the the counter for support. Pain and sorrow alongside with tears gleamed in his eyes. “Azkaban? 12…? Framed…? How?” he asked, stutteringly.

“You will need to get more details from him. All I can say is that one of his close and dearest friend betrayed them to the Dark Lord and Sirius wanted revenge. The traitor blew up many muggles then cut of his finger then turned himself into rat. The traitor ran away as Sirius was blamed for the murdering of the muggles. He was the one everyone thought who gave his friends up to the Dark Lord. He didn't even get a trail.” Hermione ended with an angry whisper. She was still mad at Dumbledore (I don't care if he is dead!) for not stepping up for Sirius when he was needed the
most. Hermione glanced back at Orion to see him totally destroyed. His pale skin was paler, sweat gleamed in his hairline and he was shaking so slightly that if she weren’t focusing hard on him, she would have missed it.

_Hermione, you stupid girl! Couldn’t you have been more sympathetic?!

“Oh, Orion, I’m so sorry.” she whispered, grabbing his cold hands. Without thinking of repercussions, she pulled him towards her and wove her hands around his midsection, laying her head on his chest. How could she say it like that? Hermione was sometimes tactless and it’s too late when she realizes that she had forgotten her manners. He froze at the contact but seem to relax a little bit as he hugged her back.

His shaking had began to lessen when the kettle whistled, pulling the two apart. Orion looked away, his cheeks slightly flushed. Hermione was no better. With cheeks blazing, she focused on pouring the coffee in the cups. After few minutes of loaded silence, Orion cleared his throat. “Both of my children was ruined by _that man_.”

“Ruined, yes, but Sirius is _healing_ through Harry. Harry stays with him with his wife, Ginny. Sirius is finally being able to be the godfather he intended to be. Sirius is _good_ , Orion. He is an amazing, kind, intelligent, carefree, and so much more. Sirius Black is doing well, Orion. Very well.” Hermione said, smiling softly. “He will be understanding of this. He will be angry, yes, but he will understand.”

She needs to find out how to speak to Sirius without either Harry or Ginny being there. Not yet—-they can't know about this as of yet. God, how would Ron react? He would already hate her for befriending Draco so how much would he hate for the three Death Eaters? _Not now. One thing at a time_.

“Do you think I should bring Sirius here or should we go to him?” I asked, giving him his cup of coffee. “I don't think he will react all too well to see all five of you guys.”

“We should head over there.” Orion suggested, taking a sip from his coffee. “Let him be in the familiar ground so he won't be too...taken back with my reappearance.”

“Very well, I will send an owl to him pronto. I wonder if we should do the same for Mr. Malfoy.” Hermione took a sip from her coffee and she could feel it refresh her immediately.
Before Orion could answer, Rodolphus entered the kitchen, his hair ruffled by sleep. He stopped short when he noticed the two but he collected himself and nodded at them in greeting. “Tea or coffee? Are the other’s awake?” Hermione asked, suddenly feeling foolish of her headstrong decision to wear her nightgown as she watched his eyes rove up and down her body.

“Yes, sort of. I am sure Mulciber is walking while sleeping. We all like teas. I came in here to make it.” Rod said, walking deeper into the kitchen. Hermione couldn't help but giggle at the mental image of the hulking giant sleepwalking.

“I can make it.” She offered, walking closer to the man. Rodolphus shook his head. “No?”

“Just tell me where the pot and tea is and I will do the rest.” he replied, smiling at her. She simply nodded then went back to Orion, suddenly remembering what they were talking about. Orion was simply leaning against the counter, his butt sitting on the marble.

“I don't know about Abraxas really thinks but I am sure he will want to see the Manor.” Orion said, placing his empty cup down in the sink. Hermione wasn't the type to be dramatic but she swears that her heart stopped beating for three seconds when Orion mentioned the manor. Of course Lucius Malfoy can’t come over to her house because of his house arrest condition that was part of his probation. She can't very well go ask to the Wizengamot to lift the house arrest for several hours because she will have to them why. It's too soon for them to know as of yet. She will need to have her bases covered before she goes public.

She will have to go to the Manor. Or does she? She can just ask Draco to go because A) Abraxas is his grandfather and B) Lucius Malfoy will not be happy that she will be grazing his house. If they don't solve this, both Lucius and Hermione have to suck it up. Draco even said that they had completely shut and warded off the drawing room. Now that Draco was the man of the house, he willed the house to create another drawing room in the way he liked: airy and bright. Hermione had been meaning to check the new room out but she couldn't find it in within herself to do so.

“Is everything alright?” Orion asked, worriedly, noticing the paleness of the girl. Rodolphus paused in his tea making to turn his head towards the girl.

“Ah, yes,” Hermione replied, uncomfortably, “it’s just that bad things happened at the manor. To me.” Her eyes flitted to Rodolphus and lingered at his blue eyes. She watched as it dawned on the man on exactly what she was talking about. Orion noticed the exchange.

“What happened? Why did you look at Mr. LeStrange like that?” Orion asked, fast and stern. Hermione believes that he was sick of being in the dark about this.
“My former wife tortured Hermione at the Manor.” Rod’s voice was clipped and void of emotion. “We know exactly where the Manor is. You don't need to come with us, Hermione.”

“Tortured? In my manor?” The aristocratic voice sounded from behind Hermione who internally groaned. They turned to face the newcomer: the Malfoy patriarch, Abraxas Malfoy. He looked angry, confused, lost, and many more. “What in the world happened in my home?”

Hermione swallowed. “That is what you will ask your son seeing that he was there.”

Abraxas looked at the girl, willing her to say more. He sighed, knowing she was right. “At least, tell me what happened to you, Ms. Granger.” He pleaded and Hermione nodded, giving up at the incessant man.

“Bellatrix LeStrange tortured me in the drawing room of the Wiltshire Manor, Mr. Malfoy.” Hermione said, squaring her shoulders. “It happened two years ago.” She turned to Rodolphus who was staring at the ground. “I can go to the Manor. I have to be there. Draco had warded off that drawing room so none of them will see the room that the Dark Lord resided in. Now that Draco is the head of the house, he created a new drawing room. I will be fine.”

It was enough. She can’t let that woman rule over her ever again. She can’t be seen as weak in front of these men.

“Why were you tortured in the first place?” Mr. Malfoy asked, looking further confused. He really didn’t know how depraved Tom Riddle was, did he?

“Well, she believed that we stole something from her vaults and I was a Muggleborn. It was as simple as that.” Now that she kept on repeating the story, it didn’t seem so hard anymore. “The Tom Riddle you knew, you wouldn't have been able to see it in the Dark Lord. Or maybe you could have. His marbles must have been lost long time ago.”

“He charmed all of us good, didn’t he? All we wanted was to keep our traditions safe and somehow that evolved into planning a genocide.” Abraxas said, taking the tea offered by Rodolphus. “You should come to the Manor.” The subject change was sharp and Hermione had to think hard to realize what he said. “It is a sign that you are willing to move forward, despite what had happened to you. My father said that if anything bad happens to you, you grab it by its throat and kill it so it will never hurt you again.”
Something about the phrase lit a slow fire in Hermione’s body. She had let the bad times control her movements. She opted out on swimming dates with her female friends, she wore long sleeves despite the temperature on the rise, or simply not being able to get motivation to do anything. Instead of moving forward, she let her fear control her. What Abraxas had said was almost revolutionary to her. However, Hermione was realistic. This change wasn't going to happen overnight or in few days. “I do like your father’s advice.” she said, smiling softly at the blond man.

“Is there any tea made, Rodolphus--- oh, a party.” Mulciber, the great lumbering giant, entered the kitchen as well. Hermione could see the Antonin behind, trying to look into the crowded kitchen. “Good morning, Ms. Granger. I hope you slept well.”

“I did. How about you two? We got a long day ahead of us. Before we leave to be acquainted again with Malfoy, we will have to speak more about the bond but I feel like we will get answer after Orion looks through the library.”

“I am assuming correct that it will only be you and Orion visiting Sirius Black?” Antonin asked, squeezing past Mulciber. Hermione realised that her kitchen was really small and the men surrounding her were all in a touching distance.

“Uh…” she trailed off then cleared her throat. “Yes, you assumed correctly. I don't think it would be a bright idea to take all of you at the same time.” She turned around to see Rodolphus pouring tea in three cups. “And they will need to have some privacy together.”

“You will only have to do with Malfoy and Black; we don't have any family members we can surprise.” Mulciber said, nonchalantly. Hermione frowned at the way he said it. He noticed it and smiled at her. “It is what we have chosen to do with our lives, Ms. Granger, and it is in our responsibility to accept the consequences from it.”

“But still…” Hermione trailed off as Antonin shook his head. “Don't you guys want anyone to know that you are back? Either of you? Like a friend?”

Antonin laughed, his laugh hollow sounding. “All our friends are either dead or in Azkaban which brings me to some questions: is Thorfinn Rowle still alive? Yaxley?”

Hermione nodded. “Both of them are serving jail time in Azkaban. By the latest news I know of, Rowle’s and Yaxley’s sisters are trying to petition to bring their brothers home. They believe that Yaxley and Rowle should receive the same punishment as Lucius seeing that those three were
“Yeah, Rowle may be loads younger than Lucius but somehow they clicked together. Despite his size, Rowle is smart. Yaxley was - is - my best mate.” Antonin said, his gaze far away.

“Yeah, Yaxley was a pretty funny dude. I still don’t believe that you are his best friend.” Mulciber said, giving Antonin a puzzling gaze who in return frowned.

“Why do you say that?”

“You are a great miserable bastard after all.” Mulciber said in a serious tone but broke into laughter as Antonin’s face fell and Rodolphus errant chuckle. Hermione had to hold back her giggle as Antonin threw a mock punch at Mulciber. She settled between Orion and Abraxas, watching the two playfight.

By seeing that big grin on Antonin’s face as he dodged a punch thrown by Rodolphus --- when did he get into this fight? --- made Hermione feel off. She always seen him as big, bad villain and to see him exhibit normal human behavior was startling. Grudgingly, she will admit that when smiling, Antonin becomes ten times more handsome than his resting face. If she can accept Mulciber, the known torturer, as he is, she can also do the same with Antonin.


Draco was standing at the the doorway of the kitchen, wearing creme button up shirt and black skinny pants. He was staring at the spot where the three men were roughhousing then looked to where she was standing. She waved at him. “This - what - never mind. I don't want to know. I thought you were making coffee?”

That was his way of asking if she made his coffee. “It’s been made.” she replied back, nodding at the lonely cup on the counter. She raised her eyebrow at him as if to say: *come, get it by yourself.*

Draco just shook his head and squeezed past the tangled male bodies. He wedged himself between Abraxas and her to grab his coffee. “So, what is going on here?”

Hermione shrugged. “Impromptu party?” she suggested and he just stared at her. She sighed, her attempt to keep the atmosphere light and airy crashed and burned. “I explained about my hesitancy to
visit the manor to Abraxas.”

Draco visibly stiffen. Actually the whole room became tense. Antonin looked confused and Mulciber had blank mask on. There were more confused looks which caused Hermione to let out a big sigh. “We will have to start at the beginning --- before the Final Battle. I will get freshen up and I will be right down.”

“Hermione, you don’t have to.” Draco stopped her, his voice laced in concern. She shook her head.

“They need to know.”

“Why? Those three should know what happens under the Manor’s roof so why repeat it?” Draco asked, pointing at Mulciber, Rodolphus, and Antonin. None of them reacted to being in the spotlight.

“But they don’t know what happened to me. Like it or not, I am bonded to them as much as they are bonded to me. I am not telling them what happened to me out of spite or pettiness. I am telling them because they need to know who I am. Other than being the great thwarter of Lord Moldy’s plans, they know next to nothing about me.” Hermione defended and Draco looked at her, contemplating.

“It won’t hurt them to know, I suppose. What are they going to do with the information anyway? The sooner we break this bond, the better. I will be at the living room.” Draco said, stiffly. He shouldered past Antonin and left the kitchen. She bit her lower lip as the kitchen became deathly quiet.

“I am sorry about him. He...he doesn’t like talking about those days.” She finally muttered, smiling hesitantly at Abraxas, Orion, and the rest of the guys. She scoffed, looking away from them. “The chances our bonds breaking is relatively low, I know. I need to know more about what this bond entails. I need to know, if the bond is unbreakable, what is the next step? Where will you guys call home? Separate? Together? Do we need to go to Gringotts and register again? If so, and you guys have famous last names, the Ministry will be on my ass about it. What if you guys go to trial? How will that affect the bond? How close do we have to be to each other? What about Harry? Ron? The Order? What if they shun me? There is so much that we don’t know.”

Rodolphus walked up to Hermione and placed his hands on her shoulders. She looked up at him as he gave her a comforting smile and a squeeze to her shoulders.

“We will take this one step at a time. You will just make yourself sick by thinking about this all at
once. We will take this where it will take us.” Rodolphus said in a soothing voice. She nodded which prompted him to drop his hands. She had to held back the pout that was threatening to come out. She still liked his hands on her. Bellatrix wanted the Dark Lord over him? Now, she is thankful for that. If she had to, she would admit that it felt great that she had her former enemy’s husband as her bondmate. It was almost poetic justice.

“Okay, let me go change. I feel like talking about the past in my nightgown will be quite awkward.” she announced, putting her empty cup in the sink.

“Really? I don't think so. I quite like it like this.” Mulciber teased which made Hermione blush furiously. She opened her mouth to send back a rebuttal but couldn’t find any so she kept on opening and closing her mouth. Mulciber smirked at her reaction and left the kitchen.

“What a uncouth behavior that man has.” Abraxas said, his voice filled with disbelief. “And how strange of you to walk around...half naked...amongst the men.”

She gave out a gasp of shock. “This is half-naked to you? Mr. Malfoy, this wouldn't even be considered half-naked now a days. I wore this down because I need everyone, especially you, Mr. Malfoy, to get used to this.” she said, trying to reel her laughter in. I wonder what he would think if I wore my pink mini skirt , Hermione thought to herself.

“Get used to it? What do you mean?” Orion asked, looking confused and scandalized at the same time.

“You expect me to be covered head to toe, Mr. Black?” she asked, looking into his grey eyes deeply.

She assumed he saw something in her eyes. “...No?” he asked, hesitantly and she grinned at his answers. He relaxed at her smile, seeing that was the right answer.

“Good, I am happy we established that. See you guys in the living room in a few.” she said, smiling at the rest of the guys. As she left the kitchen, she heard Abraxas pipe up and say, “Bossy, huh?”

She couldn’t help the smirk coming up on her face at that.
With a peachy, floral wrap dress on and brown sandals on, Hermione descended down the stairs, the previous pleasant atmosphere gone. Dry-mouthed, she cleared the hallway with slow footsteps. The bravery earlier? Gone. Harry always said that she was an overthinker. That she creates so many scenarios in her head that she gets herself and maybe, Harry is right. She had to go with the flow. With a deep breath in, she entered the living room to see them sit there, deathly quiet. She eyed Draco who didn't make eye contact with her.

“Draco?” she called out, trying to stifle her ire. He looked up. “Come here; I want to talk to you about something.”

Draco got up and shuffled to her. She lowered her voice, “Like I said before, it is not an ideal situation but they have to know what they missed out. If you lost 2 years worth of memory, wouldn't you want to know what you have missed in those days? Good or bad?” He stayed silent. “Well?”

“Yeah, you are right.” he admitted, shaking his head.

“If you don't want to listen, you can go to my room and stay there until I am done.” she offered, placing her hand on his shoulders. “You don't have to be here.”

He stayed silent again, biting his lower lip. “No, I will stay. I will stay.” he said, shaking his head. “It just baffles me that you are willing to go through your worst memories ever possible for guys like Antonin or Rodolphus.”

“Yeah, as if I had a pick of dead guys lining up for me to choose from, right? It’s as if I wished for Antonin to raise from the dead and be bonded with me. Is that what you are saying?” she asked, angrily. She knew she was being unfair. “Why don't you actually go upstairs and wait until I am done here? Or I could put a Muffalito around us and stay down here? Me rehashing my past is not me being compassionate. They have the right to know.”

“Hermione, I am telling you I am staying downstairs.” he gritted out through his teeth.

“Then what is the problem?”

He looked like he is about to cry out in frustration. “I just don't want to see you hurt, okay? Is it that hard for you to understand? Why can't you just step back and ask yourself ‘what I am about to do, will it hurt me ’? Instead of being a Gryffindor all the time, have some self-preservation, for Merlin’s
“Sake!” he hissed angrily, trying to keep his voice down. Hermione’s face was slackened with shock. “Why are you looking at me like that? Have you never worried about yourself?”

“Harry---”

Draco interrupted her with a huff. “Don’t name Pothead in this. He puts you all in danger without even thinking and by luck he survives. By luck. You know I am right. He goes headfirst into problem without creating a plan and wonders why it never works out? But that is not even the problem. You don’t stop him and try to convince him. You will completely would give your life for him without even thinking about yourself. You never worried about yourself causing you to hold all this trauma in you and then you wonder why you get so many nightmares? You are smart, Hermione. Figure it out.”

He breathed out loud then looked around to see that he got an audience from the five men sitting in the living room. “What are you all looking at?” he asked, seething. With a wave of his wand, he applied Muffalito around them. He turned back to her. “Let say you said what happened during the Final Battle, what are you going to do when you get nightmares? You really have bad coping mechanism. What if Antonin or Rodolphus or Mulciber go back to their old tricks because they miss their Dark Lord?”

Hermione shook her head. She never really thought about it that way. She did always follow Harry around even if she did have second thoughts about what Harry wanted to do. “From the looks of it, they don’t want to be in that position again. And I have you, right? By my side? Because I know for sure that Ron won’t. Maybe Harry but Ron definitely won’t.” Hermione said, placing her hand on his shoulder. He seemed to puff up with pride when she admitted that she needed him then deflated when he heard Ron’s name.

“Weasel would rather destroy eight years of friendship for being friends with me. Imagine if he were to find out that you were bonded with them.” Draco said, shaking his head. “It doesn’t matter what he thinks. I will always be by your side.”

“Then let’s get the show on the road. The faster we get through this, the better.” Hermione said, smiling hesitantly. Draco acknowledged her with a nod, removed the ward, and walked deeper into the living room.

“Sorry about that. We had to clear the room on some subject.” Hermione apologized then looked around to see if there was anywhere she could sit. Mulciber scooted towards the end of the center couch, creating a space between him and Antonin. She nodded her thanks as she plopped down between them. Because of the thick thighs of Mulciber taking space, her thighs were pressed against his.
“Alright, let’s begin when our sixth year ended…”

By the time she was done, it was an hour later and the atmosphere heavy. She looked down at her exposed left forearm, hell, she removed all the glamour from her whole body. She could see scars poking out from the cleavage of the dress. She, and they all, can see the beginnings of Antonin’s purple scar in the valley of her breasts. Antonin’s eyes were zoomed on it and she couldn’t read what was going on in his head. He was blank. Actually, Rodolphus and Mulciber’s were also blank. The only ones who were free with their emotions where actually Abraxas and Orion.

“Horcruxes? He created seven?” Abraxas choked out, then shook his head. “The seventh one was an accident when he killed the Potters? And Dumbledore knew? How could he do that to Severus?”

“Dumbledore’s vision of the ‘for the Greater Good’ was very singular. He didn’t care how he achieved it. He made it look like he was on everyone’s side but once we found out the truth from Snape’s memories, he manipulated everyone.” Hermione replied back to Abraxas last question.

“What did you say about Regulus, was it true?” Orion asked softly. She reached over, he was sitting on the left side of Antonin, and grabbed his hand.

“Yes, what I said about him was true.”

“So, Potter had to die for the horcrux in him to be destroyed, right?” Mulciber said and Hermione nodded. “That means that Potter came back to life after?” Hermione nodded again which caused Mulciber to let out a bark of laughter. Everyone gave him confused looks. “Are you saying that Potter was still alive after Voldemort tried to kill him the second time? God, I wish I was there to see Voldemort’s pissed off face. He must have been so mad just seeing Potter standing there.”

Hermione realizing what Mulciber was getting at and now that she seems to look back at it, it was pretty funny. She began to giggle alongside with a chuckling Mulciber. If she could compare Voldemort’s face that day to comedic version, it would be in Hercules where Hades finds out that his minions were wearing Hercules’s merchandise**. When she made that connection, her giggles turned into full on laughter.
It seemed that it was only Hermione who got Mulciber’s joke as seeing that the rest of the occupants were staring at them as if they grew two heads. God, if Harry and Ron were to see her like this, almost leaning on the giant Death Eater, they would cut their ties with her. For some reason, it made her laugh more. They can’t possibly abandon her after eight years of friendship, eight years of fighting Voldemort together. Right? The question brought her laughter to an end. Anxiety rippled through her. She knew how hot headed those two were. There is a high possibility that they will cut ties with her. No more Sunday brunches.

“Well, I am going to write a letter to Sirius and I will be right back.” She said, hurriedly, cringing at how thick her voice sounded. She avoided eye contact with everyone. Without looking back, she headed upstairs, two at a time. She went to upstairs study room where her owl, Glace, a black, white and grey horned owl, was situated. Her dad really loves the owl so he wanted Glace in his study.

She hurried around the table. She accio’d a roll of parchment and a self-inking quill. She wrote:

Dear Padfoot,

I really do never write letters to you. I should change that. But that is not the point of this letter. Remember when I came over with no notice and stayed in the library for five hours, saying that it was for job references? I know that you know that I was lying. I am not very good at telling lies. Makes you wonder how I became friends with Harry and Ron.

Something big has occurred that I don’t think I am able to change, I fear. But I have to try. I want to let you know what happened because it concerns you.

However, I can’t come over if Harry and Ginny is there. I don’t want them to know as of yet. You can’t come over here for a while. It is a big problem. Please understand that the problem here is something I couldn’t have controlled.

Please, I need an answer pronto. Please, don’t tell Harry.

Love,

Hermione.

“Glace,” Hermione said, opening the cage, letting the bird hop out onto the table. He lifted his leg
and with a string, she attached the letter to his leg. “I want you to take to this Sirius and wait until he replies back, okay?” Glace hooted in response. Hermione opened the window and Glace flew out. As she closed the window, there was a knock on the door.

“Come in.” she said, expecting it was Draco and she heard the door open. She knew that someone will check up on her but for some reason, she didn’t want to greet them.

“It took me a while to find you upstairs.”

It wasn’t Draco. It was Antonin. She turned around fast to see him standing by the door, looking at her. “You took off pretty fast. I came by to see if you are okay to speak about it.” he said, walking deeper into the office. Hermione was shook. Of all the people, she didn’t expect Antonin to come check up on her.

“I...I think too much, that's my problem.” she admitted, lamely. It sounded lame to her ears even. “I know what Rodolphus said that take matters what is presented in front of you and not think about future problems that might not even happen.”

“May I?” he asked, pointing at the lone couch by the bookshelf. She nodded. “What did you overthink about?”

“About Harry and Ron. When they find out about this, they will abandon me without even hearing me out first. I know them. They are bunch of hot headed idiots that won't listen to reason. I know for sure they will abandon me and when they abandon me, rest of them will follow suit.” she explained and found it odd that she could easily speak about her issues in front of him like this. “It took me a long time to gain these few friends I have but they look to Harry first then me.”

She glanced away from the man, facing her back to him. “If they are your true friends, they will stand by you. Yeah, they will be mad at you but they will surely come around.” Antonin said with a clear and confident voice. She heard him get up, she heard his footsteps get closer; she could feel his body heat on her back. “Stop putting all these unnecessary stress on yourself.”

“Unnecessary -- how is this unnecessary?” she asked, whirling around, irritated. This is her long time friends he was talking about.

“When it is time to tell them, you worry about it then. Not now. Worry about pressing matters. You are just going to make yourself bald before you hit age 23.” Antonin further explained, raising his
“Yeah, you are right.” She admitted after few minutes of silence. She expected Antonin to leave after that but he went up to the bookshelf and started to peruse the spines of the book. She was getting the feeling that one-to-one conversation doesn’t end here. She could see the tension on Antonin’s shoulders. “Antonin, are you alright?”

She heard Antonin take a deep breath in at her voice. “When I explained to you why I joined the Dark Lord, it was not the full story. It was part of it but not all of it.” He said, slowly turning around. “You deserve to know. However, I won’t say it now. Like I said, we have more pressing matters.” He gave out a hesitant smile then made to leave for the room.

“When?” she called out, freezing the Russian at the doorway.

“In the near future, kotenyok.” He replied then gave her nod. Kotenyok? What’s that? He saw her look confused and smirked. He left a very confused Hermione in the office. She will ask him exactly what that means and she feels like she wouldn't like what it means.

Baby girl,

Keep on writing to me, Hermione. As much as I love Harry and Ginny, I love some variety in my life.

I knew it wasn't for a job opportunity. You lying is as good as Ron being bright...which is never. What happened Hermione? What did you get yourself into this time?

Harry and Ginny are leaving to meet up with Neville and Hannah for a whole day trip in an hour. Come over then.

Love,
Hermione stifled her giggle from the closer as she read the letter in front of the men. She cleared her throat and stared at Orion. “We will leave in an hour.” she notified. He acknowledged with a nod of his head. Orion was a personification of the word ‘cool’. He didn't look like he was going to meet with his son after so many years of being dead. He looked like he was having a pleasant day with his favorite glass of whiskey. She will ask him to teach her that technique of keeping yourself cool in dire times soon. She feels like she will need it.

Silence descended upon the room. Awkwardly, she looked around. “As we wait, what do you want to talk about?” she asked, restless.

“All we know about you is that you are the brightest witch of the age and you were the main reason for Voldemort's headache. From Snape, you are insufferable know-it-all --”

“That's right.” Draco interjected, nodding. Hermione scoffed at that.

“-- but quite a pillar of support,” Rodolphus continued. *Snape said that?* “Well, when the Dark Lord asked him about you, Snape said that to be insulting, not complimentary.”

*Oh.* “Makes sense.”

“We also heard that you were the one to lead Umbridge to the centaurs during your fifth year.” Mulciber added and she gasped.

“How did you guys know that?!?” she cried out, horrified knowing that people other than Harry knew what she did.

“Umbridge herself told the Dark Lord what you did. It was hard not to laugh. The Dark Lord *did* laugh. He actually laughed in her face.” Antonin said, gazing at the ceiling. “I hated that pink bitch so I took pleasure of the Dark Lord’s humiliation of her.”

Mulciber mocked Umbridge’s throat clearing which caused Hermione to erupt into a fit of giggles.
“Excuse me, you aren't talking about the Dolores Umbridge?” Abraxas asked, incredulous.

“Does she like pink? Resembles a toad? Has a voice that shatter chandeliers? Has a weird obsession with cats?” Hermione listed of the known attributes of Umbridge. “Gives out capital punishment as candy?”

If you were to see Malfoy lose their composure, you will remember it for as long as you live. They are very hard people to ruffle. So, to see Abraxas Malfoy visibly shudder was a momentous event. “Her? I tried my very best to avoid her but she always finds me. She even tried to convince my father for my hand in marriage with her.”

“No!” Hermione cried out in disbelief. Draco looked sick to the stomach. Mulciber and Antonin found it funny as they both laughed at Abraxas’s expense.

“Obviously, my father declined saying that he would rather I was a poof and not have kids than marry her.” Abraxas said, seriously. Poor guy, I wouldn’t even offer Fenrir Greyback that toad, Hermione thought to herself.

“Oh, yeah, I remember once finding you in the greenhouse. I knew you were hiding because you hated Herbology.” Orion said, smiling at the blond man. Abraxas looked away then back at Hermione, curiously.

“Why did you send her off to the centaurs?”

“First of all, she sucked at DADA. She only wanted to teach theories and no practicals! Especially when Voldemort came back to life? We had to create a underground club to teach ourselves. Second of all, her punishment and detention were cruel. She used blood quill on any students, even the first years. Third of all, she hated Muggleborns. Fourth of all, she used the Truth Serum on us. I could go on and on about it.” Hermione listed, fired up. “If I see her again, she will face centaurs again!”

She glared at Draco as she remembered he was part of the Inquisitorial Squad. Draco caught the glare and looked away, hurriedly, tops of his ears red. God, she thought she was over the hatred of Umbridge but apparently, she’s not. As she mulled over the conversation, she was suddenly reminded that before they were death eaters, they were boys, merely students.

“Do you guys have any stories about girlfriends that was...interesting?” she asked, leaning back, getting comfortable.
Draco groaned, shaking his head. “Come on, Hermione.”

“Look, we might as well get to know each other. So what if I want to know about wrong decisions and experiences, huh? I am married to these guys, technically.” Hermione defended herself, smirking. “It is sad that I don't have embarrassing history when it comes to relationships.”

Draco snorted so loud that he sounded like a horse. “You dated Ron Weasley. That's embarrassment, enough.” he said, effectively dropping the smile off of her face.

“I didn't even consider that a relationship!” she fought back, sitting up straight again. “We thought we would be good together and few months later, we broke up! Done deal.”

Draco began to laugh. “Who helped you out of the relationship, huh? Who had to sit through your crying session?”

Hermione could feel her cheeks began to burn, now realizing that all the room’s occupants were staring at her. “I mean, it couldn't be helped, huh? What Ron was up against?” Draco said, slowly, waiting for her to realize where he was going. When she did, she gasped.

“Don't you dare! Don't you say anything about that, Draco Abraxas Malfoy! Say one thing and the whole Malfoy line will disappear!” she hissed then noticing the shock in Abraxas’s face.

“Don’t. Say. Anything.” Abraxas added, quickly and sternly. “I just got here.” Draco acted like he was thinking about it, staring at the ceiling, rubbing his chin. Hermione couldn't take it anymore.

“Rodolphus, will you please hit Draco for me?” Hermione asked the said man with a sweet voice.

“As you wish, my lady.” Rodolphus said, his voice tinged with humor. Rodolphus turned to look at the boy whose laughter trailed off and was watching Rodolphus with cautious eyes. Rodolphus raised his hand in the air slowly.

“Okay, okay. I won't say anything.” Draco cried out quickly, leaning away from Rod.
“But I want to know.” Mulciber whined, giving Hermione puppy dog eyes. “We are attached and all.”

“Mate, that doesn’t work on her.” Draco piped in, “Her being a shrew and all.” Draco shrugged nonchalantly. Hermione stood up so fast that she almost dethroned Mulciber from his seat. Draco also got up equally as fast, the phrase ‘oh shit’ written all over his face. Despite her irritation, Hermione knew what Draco was trying to do: put her at ease. If angering her like he always does was putting her at ease, so be it. He pushed himself off of the couch then took a run towards the hallway. Hermione followed shortly, glad that she was wearing sandals instead of wedges she was planning to wear.

“Come back here! I will show you the shrew in me!”

“Orion.” Hermione may have whispered his name but it was quiet loud in the hallway leading to the back door. The rest of the group decided to give them space, that it wasn’t about them, or so that is what Antonin decreed. She was grateful for that insight. It seems that Antonin was filled with wisdom but how? He is still young according to the wizarding long age. He must have seen the world way differently than she did; way different than she assumed.

“Hmm?” Orion acknowledged, looking at her through his lashes. He is currently leaning against wall beside the sliding glass door.

“If - if you want to do this some other day, we can.” she offered, softly. Orion shook his head at the offer then sighed through his nose, slumping his shoulders, his blank face falling away to reveal a troubled expression.

“When Walburga kicked out Sirius when he was barely 17, we didn’t part in good terms. I was a coward, Hermione. Instead of siding with my own son, I sided with my father. I picked my father over my offspring.” Orion explained, slowly. She didn’t know if she was overstepping her boundaries but she did it anyway: she placed her hand on his shoulder.

“That was long time ago, Orion.” she began, rubbing his shoulders. “Despite having Harry, as far as he knows, he is the last one on familial line. Yes, he will be angry but he will come around. He is not going turn his back on another family member. Anyway, he will know that you are alive if he were to see the family tree at Grimmauld. You want him to find out that way?”
Orion looked stricken at that thought. “No, Hermione. Enough dallying, let us get going?” Orion said, his voice bolstered with determination. “Even if he did shout at me, I can ground him.” Hermione giggled at that, imagining Sirius in the dog house, pun fully intended. With a giggle and nod, Orion and Hermione left her family house through the backdoor and into the backyard.

“I will have to take you. The Fidelius charm is still on.” She notified and he nodded. He proffered his elbow for her and she slipped her hand through and clutched tightly at the surprisingly muscular arms. With the image in her head, she apparated with Orion out of her backyard with a tugging sensation behind her navel and landed in an alley few seconds later. She almost tumbled at her landing (she never gets it right) and landed on the floor if Orion hadn’t grabbed her by the waist to steady her. Like Rodolphus, his hand was warm through the thin layer of her dress. He immediately removed his hand and gave her a tight smile. He offered his elbow to again. She accepted it as they began to walk out the alley.

As they got closer to Number 11 and 13 house, she removed the paper with the address. “Read it in your head then the house will appear.” He nodded and did as she instructed. Despite coming here for a long time, seeing a house appear between 11 and 13 always amazed her-- always reminded her that how much magic she still have yet to learn. The impressed look on Orion’s face also cemented her feelings. They walked up the steps leading to the front door. Without any preamble or knocking (Sirius would raise his eyebrow if she chose to knock), Hermione opened the front door and walked into the home.

Orion looked around as he followed her, frowning here and there. He didn’t say anything as he eyed the frozen family pictures in the hallway or noted how worn down the carpeted floors of the hallway. Hermione could hear the glasses tinkling in the kitchen then turned around to meet Orion’s cautious eye. “I will bring him to the sitting room.” she whispered and he nodded, turning back to go to the designated room. With a deep breath in and a deep breath out, she turned back to face the kitchen. She walked towards it, her heart beating fast in her throat.

With another deep breath, she stood at the kitchen’s door step to see that Sirius was making tea --- with no shirt on. Hermione didn’t know whether to laugh or cry knowing that Sirius probably thinks this is some girl problem or something. She shook out her anxiety and squared up her shoulder. Avoiding it won’t make the problem go away, Hermione thought to herself, seeing that the phrase has turned into a motto.

“Hermione, I know you are standing there.” Sirius piped up, looking over his shoulder to meet the girl’s brown eyes. Hermione gave out a nervous chuckle as she walked deeper into the kitchen. “I am making some tea. Would you like some?”

Here goes nothing… “Make it two cups, Sirius.” she said, her voice not as a strong as she wanted to be. Sirius looked confused at her. “I’ve brought a...guest...with me.” When he heard that, he raised his head and sniffed the air, his animagus giving him the behavior of a dog. She knew he can smell
Orion on her by judging the puzzling look on his face. “Before I make you meet this guest, I will have to explain to you about the situation first.”

Sirius sighed then looked up at Hermione in concern. “What is it, Hermione? Just speak it.”

For some reason, her eyes prickled. She hated confrontation even though she liked to argue a lot. “Back in my last year of Hogwarts, I got a detention for staying out bed after curfew and drinking with Dr - a friend.” she corrected fast.

“Drinking?” Sirius echoed back, looking impressed. “For whatever reason?”

“A reason you wouldn’t condone and understand actually. Don’t ask me.” She said, still remembering how much Sirius hated Severus. She doesn’t know how Sirius felt about Severus now that he knew what the spy was really about and she feels like she couldn’t stand to hear Sirius belittling Severus. “My friend and I had to face whatever Mr. Filch dishes out. Turns out that we just needed to arrange his office without magic. Sounded simple but if you were to see his office...it took us three hours to have remotely look like an office.

“By midnight, all the work of picking up things without magic was making me sweat profusely. My friend told me to use a cooling charm and I did. What happened next isn’t something I could figure out. My theory is that my magick activated something.” She trailed off, eyeing Sirius’s reaction.

He looked confused. “Activated?”

Hermione nodded. “I knew it was activated because it sounded like heartbeats. I was the only one who could hear it. My friend couldn’t hear anything. Whatever it was, it was compelling me to find out, despite my friend’s opposition. I was already enthralled. I found it to be a chest in a middle of a confiscated pile way before we came to Hogwarts. When I got close to it, it sounded like multiple hearts and when I picked it up, it synchronized with my own heartbeat.”

“Hermione, you just picked it up?” Sirius asked, incredulous.

“I don’t know why I did that. I just picked it up. I never thought it would be cursed. I just had to pick it up.” she defended herself. Sirius looked unsure but didn’t say anything else. “I kept it with me till graduation, couldn’t find a way to open it...until yesterday.”
“What happened yesterday?” Sirius asked, his voice low and stern.

“My friend and I -- the same friend who I shared the detention with -- found out that you could open the box with blood magick.” she said in a rush, looking away from Sirius.

“What?! ” Sirius cried out. “The BOX has opened?”

“Yup.” Hermione said, popping the ‘p’ at the end, then pursing her lips guilty. “It was an accident! He and I were eating dinner when it toppled off the table. I went to grab it and it nicked my finger, drawing blood from it. That's how we found out that it takes blood magick to open it!”

“Who is your friend?” Sirius asked, reigning in his anger. I know the reason he is angry but I didn't even say anything about it as of yet!

“Do you really need to know that?” Hermione asked, causing Sirius to glare at her. She sighed.

“Dracomalfoy.” she mumbled, tucking her chin towards her chest, watching her fingers tangle themselves amongst each other. She feel the tears threatening to come up.

“Who? Speak up, Hermione.” Sirius asked, his voice controlled. She looked up at Sirius with watery eyes which made him soften up. “I'm sorry, baby girl. I don't want you to get hurt.”

“My friend is Draco Malfoy. Harry and Ron doesn't know. They will not know until I tell them.” Hermione said, stressing the ending. Sirius’s mouth dropped open then closed.

“I didn't see that coming.” he said, shocked. Hermione laughed, shaking her head.

“Me neither. He helped me out on figuring out my feelings for Ron in my last year. Next I knew, I have begun to consider Draco as my best friend. He helped me and I helped him. He just needed someone to be there because he was so lonely at Hogwarts. Harry and Ron wouldn't even consider him and still treat him as an enemy. I never saw him as a criminal, a git maybe, but never a villain.” she explained, remembering their first and only Christmas hang out. “Hopefully, in the coming future, I can invite Draco to hang out with the rest of us if my friendship with Harry and Ron pans out after this.”
Sirius looked shocked at the my last statement. “Of course they will be your friends! Why not?”

“When Ron finds out that Draco and I have become friends, he will completely drop me off as friend, let alone what will happen when he finds out about this.” she explained, biting her lower lip. “I don’t know about Harry or Ginny or Neville or Luna; they all look to him. If they see Harry cut ties with me, I am hundred percent sure that Ginny will, too.”

“Harry wouldn’t---”

“Harry would.” Hermione insisted, tears finally falling. “Harry is hotheaded, doesn’t think, he blames first then thinks, he attacks first then thinks. He will blame me for this situation when it was an accident.”

“I will talk to Harry when he finds out, okay?” Sirius asked, walking up to her, placing his hands on her shoulder and rubbing it. “Now, tell me what came out of the box.” Hermione became hesitant, a bout of cowardice running up her spine. “Well?” Sirius prodded, looking at her expectantly.

“People!” the words escaped her before she could stop. Sirius eyes widened.

“Come again?”

Hermione sighed, defeatedly. “Once it opened, people who have been previously dead was standing in my living room.”

It was quiet in the kitchen as Sirius stared at her with plethora of emotions going through his eyes. Anger, surprise, puzzlement, hope… “I thought they were apparitions but they are real.” Hermione continued.

Sirius snapped out of his trance. “Who, Hermione? Who would you willingly bring to this house? You wouldn’t bring anyone I didn’t know.” Sirius asked, urgently. Hermione swallowed the lump that was stuck in her throat.

“I will show you.” Hermione said, instead. She grabbed his hand and pull him with her. She could hear him swallow. She could feel the sweat that was gathering in his palm of his hand. She squeezed his hand in return. She looked up at Sirius and saw the similarities between father and son. It seems that he took most of his father’s genes by the high cheekbones, pale skin and beautiful black hair. He
got his father’s built too but more muscular.

Once they reached the doorway to sitting room, Hermione took a deep breath and looked up at Sirius. “You ready?” she asked, softly. He glanced down at her sharply and nodded. She took the decision of knocking before entering, giving Orion some time to gather himself. With another pull, she brought Sirius into the sitting room.

Orion was standing in the middle of the room, facing away from the two newcomers. Hermione heard the intake of breath from Sirius and watched shock and surprise animate through his face. Sirius let go of Hermione’s hand and she willingly dropped it. She took a step back as Sirius took a small step towards Orion who slowly turned around to meet the other occupants. His eyes sought out Sirius first then to Hermione then back at Sirius.

“F - Father?” Sirius called out, shakingly, disbelief in his voice. He turned to face Hermione. “You brought back my dad?” His voice was oddly childlike. She nodded slowly, eyeing the man. She couldn’t read what Sirius was feeling. Was he happy? Sad? Angry? He turned back to Orion who was standing with his hand clasped in front of him.

“You? Apologize? It should have been me apologizing, Siri.” Orion replied back quickly. “I didn’t support you for what you wanted. I...I didn’t do my duty as a father.”

“How could you support me when my dear grandparent aligned himself with the Dark Lord?” Sirius asked, incredulous. “How...how did you die?” The question was asked softly and hesitantly. As if he wanted to know but at the same time, didn’t want to know.

Orion’s eyes flitted to Hermione. She felt guilty for wanting to know, too. It seemed that there was a pattern in our bonded mates deaths: someone else did it to them. Who killed Orion? “Walburga poisoned me.” Orion stated simply, shrugging his shoulders, turning around to sit on the single seat
couch. Hermione gasped, tears threatening to come out.

“What?” Sirius exclamation was filled with pain. “When I came by, before I got thrown out, before my best friend died, mother said that you killed yourself because of Regulus’s death.”

“She killed me because I wasn’t buying what the Dark Lord was selling. I didn’t want Regulus to become a Death Eater but Arcturus and Walburga got to him before I could.” Orion explained, glancing down at his hands. “I couldn't even protect both of my sons.”

But your sons protected themselves, Orion!

Sensing that it was getting more personal, Hermione slowly backed away from the sitting room. Once out of earshot, she went to the kitchen to make more tea and decided to add bottle Ogden finest firewhiskey to the side. She leaned against the countertop, closing her eyes. Sirius didn't blow up like she imagined he would. He had grown in these past two years. After they had rescued him when they were 12, Hermione would see bouts of anger from the man but that could also he related to being cooped up in the very house he hated. “One prison from another. At least, this one has a working toilet.” Sirius had once said in their fifth year.

With the tray laden with tea and whiskey, she went back into the sitting room to see that Orion had switched his seating to sit next to Sirius. Their conversation revolved around Sirius’s arrest. Now, Orion was cursing Dumbledore’s name for not doing anything. Sirius has simply shrugged. “He could have done a lot more, in my opinion.” Sirius muttered, making eye contacting with Hermione. “Did she tell you about Regulus, our Reggie? What a lad, huh? I wish I could have talked to him or something! Regulus died with the knowledge of me abandoning him. I have let down everyone. What made me think that Peter being the Secret Keeper was a good idea? Oh yeah, no one would have looked twice at Peter to know the secret. It was my fault that James and Lily died.”

Hermione shook her head furiously. “How many times do we have to tell you, Sirius? You were not at fault. It's all Peter for being a cowardly asshole.” Hermione opposed vehemently. She poured tea for all three of them and handed Sirius and Orion theirs. “If James was alive or Lily or Remus, they all would be smacking your head until you see double. Peter betrayed you all. You didn't. You got framed for a crime you didn't do. It's you that has been wronged. You best remember that. If you are responsible, do you think Harry would speak to you, have Ginny be by your side?”

It was an argument she excelled at because it’s recurring bouts. Sirius stared at the curly haired witch who stood before him, her hands on her waist. “Bossy chit, aren't you?” Sirius finally said, a smirk pulling at end of his lips.
Hermione shrugged, looking smug. “You love me anyhow.” she said, raising her hand to rub Sirius scratchy chin. Unbeknownst to either Hermione or Sirius, Orion analyzed the behavior between his son and his bond mate and kept the theories to himself. “I am just glad that you cleared the air with your father on some issues.”

“I should give you a tour of the house. During the war, we tried to clean up the whole house. The elf head are gone, thankfully. Sadly, Walburga’s portrait is still fixed on the wall. Can't seem to remove it.” Sirius said, his voice filled with elation. “I’ll take -- wait a second.”

The sudden change in Sirius voice almost gave Hermione whiplash. Sirius had almost gotten through the door when he suddenly stopped in his path. He twisted around to meet Hermione’s eyes. He gave her a cautious look as he approached her slowly. In return, Hermione gave him a nervous and confused smile. What is he up to?

“Back in the kitchen” he began, his voice slightly high pitched, “you said that people came out of the box. People meaning more than one person, Hermione.” His voice turned grave at the end of statement, staring at the girl expectantly.

She widened her eyes in surprise. She had totally forgot about the situation because of reuniting the son and the father. “Oh. That.” she said, swallowing the accumulated saliva in her mouth.

“Yes, that.” he confirmed, nodding. Hermione eyed Orion who in return gave her a sympathetic look. She turned her attention to Sirius.

“Now, Sirius, my friend, let us not get mad here.” Hermione began, smiling. He didn't smile back and she let the humor drop from her voice. “Fine. Including your father, I have a total of five recently dead men all alive and breathing in my home.”

Sirius’s eyeballs almost popped out his eye sockets when she finished her sentence. “Five!? Who are they?!” he cried and before she could answer, he ploughed through, “Oh my God, Hermione! What have you done? You didn't bring back Voldemort, did you?”

“Sirius, calm down. Your Gryffindor is showing.” Orion tutted, shaking his head. “Ask what you want to ask. Properly.”

“I don't think you can scold me, seeing that we are almost the same age. You were 39 when you died.” Sirius protested and Orion didn't deem it worthy to answer. Sirius turned to face the curly
haired witch who was biting her lower lip. “Well, are you going to answer or not?”

“I am! It is still quite shocking to me, okay?” Hermione cried out, defending herself. “Just know that I had no hand in this whatsoever or it wasn't on purpose.”

Sirius stayed silent, waiting for her to spit it out. Hermione breathed out slowly.

“Orion Arcturus Black, Abraxas Malfoy, Orias Mulciber, Rodolphus LeStrange, and Antonin Dolohov. All alive and well.”

“And unmarked.” Orion added and Hermione looked impressed. But her impression was short lived as she watched Sirius forget to breath. His skin became pale then red then pale then it settled on red. He blinked as if he was trying to convince himself that whatever she said was a lie.

“Repeat that, would you?” Sirius stated, shrugging his shoulders then settling it for his arms crossed in front his chest. Hermione found that her mouth was dry but she couldn't move from Sirius’s glare. She could her eyes sting, warning her that she was about to start crying.

She repeated the names slowly and clearly.

“What?!”

Chapter End Notes

**it's the angry hades when he finds out that his minions are wearing Hercules merchandize.**
Chapter Seven

Chapter Notes

Hopefully you like Lucius's reaction. Despite reading a lot of fics concerning Lucius, I don't think I grasped his attitude. Maybe, with time with this fic, I will be more knowledgeable.

So, some might think that I am dragging the explanation about the box for too long. I mean, it's already about to be Chapter 8 and we still haven't talked about the chest. With all that is going on, I just couldn't find it myself to have the box explained by chapter five or six. There is lots of background info to put it into this fic so this fic can have a fundamental base. I wouldn't be able to grasp the emotions of having five dead men rise up and be bonded to a person, especially a person like Hermione, and have it done in one or two chapters. This isn't a three-shot fic. It's a long fic.

So I am sorry and not sorry at the same time at how slow paced this is.

On another fun note, THANKS FOR ALL THE KUDOS [i got six more to go to reach 100 kudos, omg] AND COMMENTS. I wasn't expecting it, really. I want to give out a heartfelt thank you to you all for giving this fic support and love. Hopefully you all stay with me till the very end (which I still haven't planned what that will be) and enjoy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sirius looked like he was about to faint. He kept on swallowing and choking on his non existent saliva. “Mulciber? LeStrange? Dolohov? Malfoy?” he repeated the names, spluttering and getting more high pitched. “W - w - why them?”

Hermione shrugged her shoulders. “We don't really know how they were chosen.” Hermione explained, sniffing, “We came up with a theory that the box itself chose wizards that closely matched my magical power. We aren't sure as of yet. Orion said that he might have something about the box in the library.”

“Of all the people who are dead, the box had to bring bloody Death Eaters?!” Sirius yelled, running his hand through his dark hair. “Why Dolohov? He tried to kill you!”

“I know, Sirius! I was there! I was the one dying! I don't have a faintest clue why it picked him but I am glad that it is not Amycus or Voldemort or Dumbledore! All of them are Dark wizards. I know.”
Hermione yelled back, breathing heavily. “They haven't attacked me or any of that sort. In fact, they have been very cordial with me.”

“Does Rodolphus know what his wife did to you?” Sirius asked, this time his voice little bit lower.

“Yes, he knows. He hated that bitch since he got married to her.” she replied back, going over to sit on the previously occupied couch. Sirius nodded, sympathetically. “The only man in that group that hurt me was Dolohov -- and I am scared of him -- however, he hasn't done anything as of yet to bolster it.”

“Hermione, you are talking as if they already have your trust. Do they?” he asked, quietly. Before Hermione could answer, Orion stepped forward and laid a hand on Sirius ’s shoulder.

“You are getting angry at a girl who had no power to choose in this situation. We came back to life for some reason. When someone who had done something so tremendously bad get a second chance in life, they will grab it. You would, too, Sirius.” Orion explained, giving a soft smile to Hermione. “I don't know what happened in these past few years but what I know is that magic will never let anything bad happen to its users.”

“But still…” Sirius protested weakly, pure concern in his eyes. “Since she was fourteen, she has been on the run from the guys and they all had one thing in common: kill the muggleborn best friend of Harry Potter. And now they are nice to her? Please, I may be a hotheaded but I am not dumb. They are going to wait until she lets her guard down.”

“Sirius, it's not like they died yesterday and came back alive today. Malfoy died around 28 years ago. Orion died seven years later, 1979. Lucius Malfoy was 20 when Abraxas died. Rodolphus died in my fifth year, a curse that the crazy bint launched for you . Dolohov died during my sixth year. I don't know about Mulciber.” Hermione replied back, doing the math quickly in her head.

“So?” he asked, obstinately. Hermione had to stop the eye roll from happening. Both Harry and Sirius are both thickheaded numbskulls when it comes to changing their views of the world. It seems that James Potter knew that his son was going to come out a stubborn kid so he thought to give him obstinate godfather as well. Brilliant.

“ So , Sirius, they have been dead for a while and - and- I think they got punished enough.” she answered, getting frustrated. She didn't even know where she was going with the argument herself or why she was even defending the former Death Eaters. “Look, we came here to inform you of your father’s rebirth, now we need to find a book or a scroll about this chest. Maybe, we can figure out how to get rid of this bond. The question is: if we were to find a way to remove the bonds, will
they...re-die? Go back to the underworld?”

“Good, that’s where they belong.” Sirius said, quickly.

“Your father will be one of them, idiot.” Hermione’s patience running thin. This is what got him arrested 12 years ago: his rash thinking and quick to judgement. Sirius looked like he got pied in the face, shock and disbelief. After a minute of silence as he looked at Orion, he sighed as he rubbed his face.

“Let’s go to the library. Do you know what the chest is called at least?” Sirius asked, sounding tired. Hermione couldn't stay mad at Sirius for too long for having tunnel vision. He was alive for both wars and the enemies had not changed at all. Maybe Hermione wasn't being a cautious as she should be but she felt safe amongst the revived men. Another manipulation from the bonds? She knew Sirius was being concerned for her and she loved him for it but the box has already been opened; she is already bonded to the enemies. She just needs to figure what this box entails.

“Impetum animi ligaveris and we are not going to head to the library; we will go to my study which I have locked.” Orion stated, turning around to facing the door. She knew what room he was talking about. Regulus’s room wasn't the only room locked, there was a room on the first floor that was locked and warded strongly. No matter what they tried, they weren't able to dismantle the wards, let alone the locking charm.

“What kind of wards did you use because during the war, we tried everything to remove it but it wasn't possible.” she asked, hastening her pace to match with Orion. Orion glanced down a little and smiled at her, smugly.

“My own creation, Ms. Granger. My study is my own and I didn't want the Dark Lord or his minions to be able to open it if the house were to be in the hands of the enemy.” Orion said, couldn't help but have his ego stroked, staring at the girl’s awed and curious gaze. “If you want, I can show you my thought process of creating the ward.”

“Yes, please!” Hermione replied quickly, totally amazed by the genius of the ward. She remembered how totally obsessed she got with it until Harry and Ron had physically remove her from the vicinity of the warded door. As the they delved deeper into the war, she had to let go of the curiosity of the mysterious ward.

They came upon the aforementioned door. Hermione could feel the ward brush against her skin, her magic. It was strong, sturdy, like any other wards but halfway through dismantling it, the ward itself confuses the invader, making them forgetful at what part of unlocking they were at. It was an
amazing display of magic and it always makes her feel like she was eleven again. She watched Orion remove his pure black wand that was tapered to a sharp point. Everything about Orion was dark which reminded that despite his gentle and sharp personality, he is considered as a Dark wizard. For some reason, it didn’t bother her at all.

Well considering, that she seen Dumbledore use light magic for bad things.

She watched as Orion raised his wand hand and with serious of sharp flicks and circular jabs the wards that was pushing against them slowly began to weaken. It took a several seconds longer to feel the ward fall away. By the end of the dismantling, Hermione was looking at Orion more appreciatively which Sirius caught. She felt Sirius lean in and whisper in her ear, “Can you not do that? In front of me? My own dad?”

Hermione blushed deeply, turning around to apologize to Sirius profusely when she stopped short at the teasing smirk. While still blushing, she glared at him then turned to face Orion. She felt Sirius’s arm snake around her shoulder and interlock above her chest, bringing her closer to his chest. “You know I am not mad at you.”

“You are not?” she asked, softly, her lower lip butting out involuntarily. Sirius shook his head.

“I am just mad that you are in this type of situation.” Sirius clarified, kissing her temple. He stayed silent and Hermione could hear his gears turn in his head. “So, Draco, huh? Harry is going to blow.”

Hermione gave off a humorless and desperate laugh. “Harry? What about Ron?”

“Just turn him into a toad or something. I don’t see it but if you see something in Draco, then so be it. You shouldn’t care what Ron or Harry thinks.” Sirius said, releasing her from his hug but squeezing her shoulders before letting go. She gave Sirius a thankful smile before facing forward to see Orion looking at them with a curious glint in his eyes. However, he didn’t say anything and opened his study door. Sirius and Hermione followed the older Black into his private study.

The furniture in the study matched the rest of the house’s furniture: dark. The wood of the desk still looked new as if it wasn’t locked for better part of 20 plus years, same with the carpets and the wallpaper. Surprisingly, there were no thick drapes to block out the light but a soft, grey gauzy type of material that slightly muted the sun but not fully blocking it out, giving the dark room brightness that the rest of the house lacked. It was as if the study room was in different dimension than the rest of the house.
Orion immediately went to his book shelves and started to peruse it. Hermione didn’t know what to do so she went to help Orion look for information about the chest. Sirius decided to look through the desk but came up short when the drawers wouldn’t open. “I had to lock it, just in case Tom could break into the room.” Orion answered the silent question emanating from Sirius. “I didn’t like the thought of some stranger whittling around in my office.”

“You really didn’t buy into his ideologies, huh?” Sirius asked, awed.

“I have no recollection of how he ensnared all of the Sacred 28 families to hand over their loyalties and wealth to a man who claimed to be the descendant of Slytherin himself. I am sure that most of the families was just using him to be the strongest family out of the rest but as evidence shows, he made a fool out of all of them; even ours. Now, most of the Sacred 28 names are dragged in the mud so deep it will take years for their name to be cleared out.” Orion hissed, pausing in his perusal of the books. “I told Walburga, I told Cygnus but they wouldn’t listen; they just did whatever our father told them to do. Now, our future generations will be shunned for the things their parents or grandparents have done.”

It was silent after Orion’s speech. It was already hard for Draco to find a job so he applied an internship under a Potion Master that lived in Hull (well the only master that would look past the Dark Mark on his arm). It pissed Hermione off that despite being backed by Harry Potter, Draco was getting shitted on. “It’s true.” Hermione whispered, glancing down at the paper weight that was the shape of a horse. “Draco was forced into servitude; Draco saved our life back at Malfoy Manor, Harry backed up Draco and his mom, but still, he still faces hardship just because of his last name. We worry about the ‘right’ side children when we don’t even consider the children from the other side, on how they were also victims of the war. Did you know that Millicent Bulstrode, one of my bullies, is in St. Mungos now with a severe head injury that she will most likely not wake up from. All because she didn’t want to follow the Dark Lord.

But do Minerva McGonagall or Kingsley Shacklebot or even me, talk about her welfare?” Hermione ended, feeling guilty of just considering Light is good and the Dark is bad, whoever is in the Dark should be vilified and forgotten about. Instead of saving Draco from the mission, Dumbledore let the boy stew in fear and paranoia of being caught, let the boy traumatize himself by seeing the failure of killing Headmaster. It also didn’t help that Severus was forced to sit by and watch his godson fall deeper into hell at the behest of the Headmaster, for the ‘greater good’.

After a pause in thinking about what she had said, Orion continued his search on the bookshelves. After few minutes, he shook his head and turned to face the warded desk. With a flick of his wrist, the wards fell down. He pulled open the bottom drawer first and reach in but he whipped his hand back out as if he was shocked. It seemed like it was another ward judging by the sheepish look on his face. Hermione just gave him a raised eyebrow. Paranoia seems to run in the Black family. With another wave of his hand, a hard cover came into view. Orion picked it up to see it was a thin and parchment was white, as if it was never been exposed to the air.
“This is it. This is the book about rare chests that has magical properties. This book should have something about the *impetum animi ligaveris.*” Orion said, excitedly. Hermione stood next to him, trying to read the book so Orion lowered it for her ease to read. Orion flipped through the book, pausing here and there to find it. After few minutes of analyzing, he brightened up. “Here it is!”

“BEFORE we read it, we need to go back and go talk to Lucius Malfoy. He might also have something to add.” Hermione interrupted quickly which made Sirius snap his head towards her, shocked.

“You are going to Manor? No, no, no.” he said, shaking his head.

“I know, okay? Draco and Rodolphus already ragged me about this but I have to do this. This isn't only about me; it's about them, too. Abraxas needs to see what happened to his family and he will need help to figure it out.” Hermione argued back which caused Sirius to put his head on his palms.

“Hermione, you stubborn, compassionate, little angel of mine,” Sirius began, “please, think about this. They can go by themselves to speak to Lucius. You don't need to.”

“Then that means I am still afraid. I am not afraid.” she repeated to herself and him. “The chances of breaking this bond is slim, whatever that uses Blood Magic is hard to break, so I will have to get used to stepping out my character.”

Sirius was silent for a second, tracing the grain of the wooden desk. “I am coming with you, then.” Sirius broke the silence after few minutes of speculation. “Do not to try to convince me to stay back.”

“I'm not.” she replied, clearly. “The more people around me, the better. I wanted to ask you but I didn't know how you will respond.”

“You know I will always have your back. Let’s go before Harry and Ginny comes back.” Sirius decided, standing up, summoning his shirt seeing that he was still bare chested. “I know how to get to your house. I will take Father with me.”

She nodded in agreement and three of them left the Grimmauld place. They went to the alley, making sure that no muggles were paying attention them. With the familiar tug behind their navels, they apparate from the alley and into her backyard. She eyed Sirius, knowing that enemies (former?) was in the house. She wondered what Draco did to keep them entertained. She opened the backyard door and slipped inside, the sound of the telly on and by the judging by the sound of it, it was *The*
She entered the living room, shortly followed by Orion and Sirius, to see Rodolphus and Antonin eating her crisps and Abraxas and Draco drinking something. Mulciber was doing nothing with his hands as he watched the movie. They all turned to see who came. They all zeroed on Hermione then realized there was one more person, zeroed on Sirius.

“What - the - fuck?” Sirius hissed, his eyes wide as galleons. “Nevermind. I am sure there are more weird things out there than seeing bunch of ass kissers of the Dark Lord watching telly.”

“Sirius!” Hermione cried out, frustrated. “If you want to leave so you don’t want to be amongst ass kissers, be my guest. However, if you want to see this through while trying to protect me, you better reign in your anger, or Merlin help me.”

Sirius stared at her, gobsmacked. “Well, I forgot about this side of hers. I would rather fight a troll barehanded, buck naked than fight with you, Hermione!” Sirius said, holding up his hands, immediately walking further away from her. She just rolled his eyes at his antics, already forgiving him. “I know what I said back at the house but it is still shocking to see Dolohov eating potato chips.”

“I am sure that Antonin is human and all humans love potatoes, Black. Let that man enjoy his crisps.” Mulciber said, giving a smirk at the man. “These moving pictures are great. Those machines, what are they?”

“They are not real, Mulciber. Muggles created them in the computer.” Hermione replied, taking some crisps from the bag that was laying between Rod and Antonin. “The question is: are you guys hungry? Do you want to eat before or after we visit Manor?”

“After.” Antonin said, standing up, taking the bags of crisps with him. He went to the kitchen and came back empty handed. “Have you guys figured out about the box?”

“I found a book in my study about it but I haven't read upon it yet. Ms. Granger believes that we should get the notification to families out of the way before we tackle this book.” Orion said, waving the book around. “I believe freshening up is in order.”

“What are you trying to say, I stink?” Hermione asked, affronted. Orion began shaking his head, becoming flustered.
“No - no, that is not what I meant! What I mean -” Orion stopped himself as he watched Hermione began to giggle then realized he got played. “It seems that I have been tricked.” The monotonous, serious remark made Hermione laugh even louder and Orion’s deadpan look was a cherry on top.

She was still laughing as she went upstairs, oblivious to wide eye looks pointed at her from all the men in the room. “Is she okay?” she vaguely heard Mulciber asked before closing the door to her room. Honestly, she needed that stress breaker laugh. All that tension and stress accumulated by talking to Sirius was bad, imagine how she would feel after she talked with Lucius! Wait, it was weird calling Mr. Malfoy Lucius, but what can she do? She both Abraxas and Lucius to think about so first name in her head, their surnames out loud unless told otherwise.

How will Lucius react to the fact that his father is alive? For all he knows, Abraxas is the reason they are in this mess (equally Lucius as well) and probably hates the man guts. How do she introduce Lucius Malfy to his dad without having panic attacks and being cool to his derisive, underhanded comments?! She will have to stand next to either Draco or Sirius -- maybe not Sirius. He was hotheaded as well; actually everyone in Gryffindor is a hothead, even herself -- actually, nevermind. Neville is not hotheaded or either Fred or George or Remus. Hermione wished that she had Remus’s advice.

Orion was right, she thought to herself as she stared at the mirror, freshening charm was severely needed. Her sweat at removed some of her base makeup but with click tap on her face with her wand, her make up refreshed itself.

A knock on her door warned her before it opened to reveal Draco. She smiled at him, invitingly. He closed the door behind him and shook his head. “Downstairs is weird. I could literally cut the tension with a thread.”

Hermione sighed, combing her hair thoroughly. “What made me think it was a good idea for Sirius to come? He wants to come with me because he doesn’t want me to go to Manor alone and here he is, making it difficult.” Hermione whined, reapplying her lip gloss. “I know they fought each other for two wars and feelings of hatred just doesn’t go away.”

“There, you found the answer. I don’t honestly blame Sirius to lose his control like that. It’s been an hour since he found out that his dead dad is alive, his god son’s best friend is bonded to his father and rest are his worst enemies -- oh, he doesn’t know about the bonded part? Oh, well and good, I suppose.” He broke off, sarcastically, Hermione wincing. “Of course, he is going to act like a prat! No one looks at the world through ice for heart lenses like you do, Hermione!”

“Ice for hearts? What do you mean?” Hermione asked, indignantly.
“Most girls would be crying and screaming in horror for being bonded to them! Here you are seeing everything through this detached behavior which sooner or later will come and bite you in the ass. Mark my words.” Draco said, crossing his arms across his chest.

“I can’t afford to be emotional, Draco. My parents will be home. If they find out that I am technically married to five men, how do you think they will react to that? So I need this thing figured out fast so if it doesn’t break, we will still have time to figure out where to live. Then I will cry.” Hermione explained, and abruptly she begin to laugh. Draco looked at her as if she finally cracked. “Remember the rumors that my own house made of me?”

Draco shook his head. “No? Surprising. Anyways, they made fun of me because I don’t get the attention of guys, only the ones who are desperate enough.” She described, seeing him wince. She gave a smug smile in return. “I got five guys attention on me now and all of them are powerful.” She winked at Draco who just rolled his eyes. After few more seconds of levity, she had to ask the big elephant in the room. “Enough about me. We will be going to be seeing your dad...how do you feel about that?”

She watched Draco through the mirror, watching emotions run through his face. The main emotion: uneasy. “I don’t know how this will go, Hermione. I don’t know how he will react to his dad or to you. I am in a total dark in this. I want you to stay by my side all of the time we are there. You hear? Stay. With. Me.”

“Yes, Draco. Hopefully, he will be manageable with me there.” she prayed, holding out her hand for him to take. “You stand beside me, too.” He grabbed her hand and squeezed it. He pulled her so she followed behind him for a while then let go of her hand, a simple message to follow him. It amused her that he would try to lead her in her own home but she let it slide.

They appeared back into the living room to see Sirius surprisingly talking amicably with Rodolphus with Antonin listening in. Mulciber and Abraxas were looking over her family pictures whereas Orion sat on her father’s favorite seat, hand clasped over his crossed legs, looking like a picture perfect Pureblood aristocrat.

“Let’s get going?” she offered and all of them nodded. “I am sure all of you know where Malfoy Manor is?” They all give her a deadpan look. She didn’t bother commenting on that look. “Let us go to the backyard.”

They followed Hermione as she moved through the house and enter the backyard and once all of them were out, she locked the door behind them. “See you all in few seconds.”
Draco walked up to her and kissed her cheek. She didn't miss the surprised looks from both Sirius and Abraxas. One after the other, they disappeared with a crack. Hermione was the last one to go, her hands clenched into fists, pressing against her thighs to ground her ever-present anxiety when it comes to the Manor. *It is just a house. That bitch is gone.*

With a deep breath, she disappeared with a loud crack.

Malfoy Manor was -- still -- an imposing manor. She landed gracefully behind her company who looked at her with no emotions in their eyes. She assumes that she wasn't the only one who has had nightmares about this place. The Manor was just as dark as the last time she was here but the gardens in front of the house was healthier and well-kept, a sign of improvement since the last time. Surprisingly, her panic attack didn't come as of yet, only a sliver of anxiety.

She walked past the men, giving them all a soft smile and stood in between Draco and Abraxas. Noting the pale tone of his skin, Hermione grabbed Draco’s hand and squeezed, hoping that it would ground him and give him strength. He looked over at her, his eyes wide then he blinked away the trance he was in. He gave her a hesitant smile. With a wave of his wand hand in a broad circle above his head, the ward fell away, the gates being translucent enough for the crowd to pass through them then solidifying again after they cleared away from it. She could feel the ward settle over her, enveloping her coolly, as if a cold towel wrapped around her.

As they climbed the stairs, the doors to the mansion opened inward, revealing two House Elves, both wearing lavender pillowcase with their names embroidered on them: Luchi and Lobby. When they saw Draco, they began to hop from one foot to another.

“Master of the house is here! Master Draco!” Luchi cried out, running forward to grasp at Draco’s index finger, it’s voice feminine.

“He also brought guest! Would Master allow Lobby to make tea for them? Or Firewhiskey? Wizards do love their alcohol.” Lobby wondered, slightly more reserved than his counterpart.

Hermione couldn't help but smile at the creatures display of wonder in their eyes as they looked up at Draco. He looked over his shoulder to meet her eyes and gave her a helpless grin. It is a mercy that it was Draco’s elves that opened the door, not Lucius Malfoy himself. Hermione can’t imagine the
most self-absorbed man like Lucius would open the door for anyone.

“Luchi, where is father?” Draco asked the female elf as the Lobby looked over his guests. His round, green eyes roved over the crowd and settled on Abraxas Malfoy. He froze, his big eyeballs became bigger. Lobby’s mouth opened and closed in shock and looked like he was about to faint.

“Hello, Lobby.” Abraxas smooth and deep voice animated the shocked elf. With soft pitter patter of his small feet, Lobby walked up to Abraxas.

“Old Master? Is that really you?” Lobby sounded like was about to cry. He attached himself to Abraxas’s leg. “It is really you. I’ve missed you. I will have your favorite concoction of firewhiskey and platter of spicy shrimp ready at once!”

“Master’s father is at his study, Master Draco.” Luchi answered as she gave a confusing look at Lobby. “Lobby, stop drooling over that man’s leg and help me arrange the drinks!”

Seeing Abraxas’s confused look, “She is my wife, Old Master.” Lobby explained, blushing. Abraxas gave him a prideful smile.

“Have the drinks at the study, Luchi, Lobby.” Draco ordered, a fond smile at his face.

“Yes, Master Draco! At once!” Lobby cried out and with snaps of their fingers, both Luchi and Lobby disappeared with a crack.

“They are so cute!” Hermione cooed, forgetting where they were. “I would expect cowering and hissing.”

“You are basing that judgement from Dobby, who was Father’s elf.” Draco said, walking deeper into house. Before she could respond, she accidentally looked over the path that led to that room to see it was walled up. She let go of the breath that she didn't know she was holding. She could feel sweat bead on her forehead as she slowed to a stop. Her hearing went down. Before a full frontal panic attack could come, she felt someone collide with her from the back which snapped her out of her thoughts. Large hands came down her shoulders to steady her. She looked over her shoulder to see it was Mulciber, looking down at her, with guarded expression on his face.

“Just keep on walking. It’s walled off.” he simply said, placing his hand on her lower back and
pushed her towards the way Draco went. She nodded, stutteringly. She forced herself from looking at the walled up area and focused on Draco’s platinum head, who had his head turned over his shoulder. He caught her eyes with concern in them. God, Hermione, you had faced Fenrir. You can do this. Don't show them that you are weak, she thought to herself, clenching her hands into a fist.

With Mulciber’s hand still on her lower back, she walked with the rest of the group who, thankfully, didn’t comment on her lapse of courage. As she stared straight ahead, and not give attention to the familial pictures who have been Silenced, she noted the fact of how large Mulciber’s hand were and hot they were. Bond or no bond, she likes them. She looked at the men surrounding her and to settle on Sirius who was walking beside Orion. His face was blank and cold; he looks just like his father at this very moment. As if sensing her eyes on him, he looked at her. Within seconds, the cold visage fell away to warmth and comfort which is the true Sirius Black.

She smiled back, feeling her strength come back to her, knowing that at least, Draco, Sirius, Rodolphus, and maybe Mulciber was here for support. She didn't know what is going through Antonin’s or Abraxas’s head but she for sure knew Orion had big issues in whatever related with the Dark Lord.

“What is the plan, Draco? You go in first or you take Abraxas with you or we just jump in and say ‘surprise, your dad is back! Oh, and your fellow cohorts’?” Hermione asked, walking faster to walk with Draco. He turned his head to look at her, amused.

“How...droll.” he merely commented at her and she shrugged. “No, I will go in first then I will call either you or Abraxas in.” We stopped before a large door.

“I am assuming, this is it?” Hermione whispered, biting her lower lip. She didn't know why she is whispering but the idea of Lucius knowing that she is here...would he hurt Draco? Draco nodded then squared his shoulders. She gave him two thumbs up for good luck and he answered it by flicking her nose, lightly. Not wanting be anywhere near the door, she went and stood next to Sirius who placed his arms around her shoulder, bringing her into his body.

“You okay?” he asked her, rubbing her shoulder. She watched Draco knock on the door and slip inside, leaving the door slightly ajar. Her eyes flitted to Abraxas then to the rest of the group.

“I am not the one you should be asking that but I am doing alright.” Hermione answered, throwing concerned looks over at Abraxas who was glancing around the walls of the manor he used to control. He suddenly looked at her, his piercing blue eyes connecting with the dark whiskey brown eyes of hers. He held no emotion in her eyes. Her heart went out to him, despite not knowing who he was. With an urge that she couldn't quell, she left Sirius’s side and went next to Abraxas. He followed her journey to his side without any flicker of emotion.
She reached out and curled her hand around his hand and he blinked, showing that he was apprehensive. She squeezed his unresponsive hand which made him squeeze back. “If Lucius is an asshole to you, I will turn him bald.”

Abraxas let out a laugh, shaking his head. “Or worse, I will turn it red.” she continued, seeing the tension on his shoulder go. He ducked his head away as he laughed harder at that.

“Of all things you can do to that man's hair, do not turn it red.” Abraxas’s said, chortling. “That would be so disturbing.”

Mission accomplished. Hermione felt smug and amazed at her way of giving support. She always felt that she fell short when it comes to support and emotions. Too much clinical thinking got her into trouble with her female cohorts by not being able to connect with both mentally and emotionally. However, she was able to calm a Pureblood patriarch down. She felt slightly accomplished.

Before she could say anything back, the door to the study, revealed Draco, his skin look stretched thin but relief was swimming in his eyes. “Hermione, you come in first.” Draco said and she nodded. She felt Abraxas squeeze her hand again then let go. She lifted up her chin, raised up her mental ward, and walked inside the office with false bravado.

Just to deflate at the sight of a curious Lucius Malfoy. By the looks of his refined clothes and a smirk on his face, Hermione had to remind herself that he was still in probation. Both Lucius Malfoy and Hermione Granger assessed each other. Despite not seeing judgement in his eyes, she also didn’t see joy in his eyes. She wasn’t expecting the Lucius Malfoy jumping for joy at the sight of her.

“Draco here explained to me what has occured. Quite fascinating that the box chose... you, of all people.” Lucius said, nodding his head at Hermione, in the manner of riling her up. She simple rose her eyebrow in question. “The very girl they were hunting have been trapped by her.”

“Technically, the Dark Lord trapped them, then killed them. I just resurrected them.” she amended and he agreed upon her words. “I didn't have any choice in the matter. It is surprising to me that you are not surprised that your father is back to the living.”

“No, I am surprised. Shocked, really. It is just that us Malfoys don't show our emotions that freely, Ms. Granger.” Lucius said, haughtily. Hermione had to quell the urge to laugh. Lucius sharp, light blue eyes zeroed in at her. “What I am curious about is why the chest chose you, of all people.”
“You mean, me being a Muggleborn and all that?” she asked, clearly and Lucius grinned.

“You mean, me being a Muggleborn and all that?” she asked, clearly and Lucius grinned.

“Of course, I meant that. You have five, powerful, Pureblood scions bonded to you, a very first magical lineage of your family. Compared to their magic that has been passed down from generations, your magic would be considered a babe amongst adults.” Lucius explained, steepling his hands under her chin. “I am not saying that your magic is weak. I have seen first hand how strong it is but how unguided it is. What I am trying to say is that your magic has no history like most Pureblood families do.”

Lucius paused, thinking over his words. Hermione couldn't handle the praise about her magical strength but she could handle the notion that Lucius Malfoy is smart. Before she could think any more positive thoughts about this man, the man raised his head with a curious glint in his eyes. “Maybe that’s why it activated. You have never had magical lineage before you. You are the first of your lineage. Your magic hasn't been tethered or added to by previous generation. As much as it pains me to say this, your magic is pure.”

A clearing of a throat back the attention that Draco is in the room with them. “We should bring them in, now. This discussion also have to include them.” Draco interjected before Hermione could return anything back. Lucius nodded and Hermione turned around to do the honors. They were talking amongst themselves when she opened the door. “Everyone, come in.”

She went back to the desk as Antonin, Rodolphus, Mulciber, Sirius, Orion, and Abraxas filed into the room. The once spacious room felt crowded and by the length of the torso that was pressing against her back, she knew it was Mulciber behind her. Unknown reaction: a blush was forming on her cheeks without her permission. I really need to ask Orion and Abraxas about their ways of blanking out their faces! She was acting like high school girls who got the chance to stand beside their crushes. How juvenile. It wasn't time to think about bodily reactions; it was time to give attention to the matter at hand.

Lucius eyed the very man that he was ‘shocked’ to find out was alive. He scrutinized his father’s face as he stayed behind the desk. “Father.” he acknowledged Abraxas finally with a nod.

“Lucius.” Abraxas responded back. Hermione swallowed, the room’s atmosphere was thick with tension. Now that both Abraxas and Lucius were in the room together, she could see the similarities of them both. Same facial structure, Abraxas’s even more pronounced, eyebrows and plump lips. Their eye colors were different, Abraxas’s being gray whereas Lucious being light blue, and as Lucius stood up, Abraxas was a tad taller.

Lucius eyed the rest of the group. “I welcome you all back to the land of the living. Now, enough of
Hermione had to hand it to Lucius. His poise and fluidity of going back to matter in hand despite seeing his dead father standing in front of him is astounding. Lucius stared at the girl as she floundered a bit.

"Ah -- yes -- um...Orion was saying that the box only opens when a family member of the person they are trying to bring back gives the blood." Hermione replied back, biting her lower lip. "I am sure that you and I are not related."

Lucius just chuckled. "Thank god for that; imagine me with that hair."

"I can show you if you like." she threatened with a smile. Lucius smiled back, just as threateningly. The room felt like it was charged as they both looked at each other.

"Back to the subject at hand," Antonin interrupted, Lucius staring at him with a blank face. "It was only reported that the person only gave his or her blood. There was no record that stated that the box was activated by them."

"That's why only the blood relative was the one resurrected?" Hermione asked, excitedly. It made sense in her head. If the box wasn't activated but it was only the person's blood that was offered, the soulbox would only have the person's blood to go by.

"If that is the case, why these men? I am sure there are powerful wizards who are dead but why these guy?" Draco asked, looking confused.

"It might be something to do with what you said earlier, Draco," Abraxas began, turning to meet his grandson's eyes. "Something to do with her magic."

"Like I have explained earlier, Ms. Granger, your magic is pure. Your magic itself, I mean. Not your blood." Lucius said and she heard Sirius hiss.

"You fucking dandelion! You still--"
“Sirius.” Hermione interrupted, smirking. “He is just trying to rile me up. Don't fall for it.” Lucius’s smirk became deeper. “So, by my magic being pure, these guys magic latched on to my magic.”

“I am sure that none of these fine men wanted to die and died with that feeling, making them restless. Suddenly, a way out appears, a way to being alive again. They see magic so pure, so different than the oily and disgusting magic of Voldemort that they couldn't help but latch on to it.” Lucius explained, his eyes staring at the parchment on the paper. He cleared his throat. “All conjecture, of course. We will have to discuss this more and this study isn't the right place. Draco, take them to the library. I will like to have a word with my father, alone.”

Hermione’s eyes went to Abraxas in concern. Abraxas caught her eyes and gave her a soft smile in return. Feeling the tugging sensation on her shoulder, she followed Mulciber out of the study, still staring at Abraxas over her shoulder. Her vision of him cut of when the study’s door closed behind them magically.

“Don't worry about him, Hermione.” Orion said, walking up to her. “He will be alright.” She nodded, hesitantly. She caught Sirius’s eye and he beckoned her over. She moved away from Mulciber who still had his hands on her shoulder, felt them fall away. She felt Sirius’ hand entwined with hers which brought her attention back to Sirius.

“I can't believe that Lucius! He still spouting that bullshit.” Sirius growled and she laid her head on his shoulder.

“I really don't care, Sirius. I thought he would be more violent, more scary. I thought he would hurt Draco for being friends with me.” Hermione said, eyeing the blond boy who was walking by himself in front of the group, the tension that was on his shoulder earlier gone.

“Maybe, it is a facade.” he said, shrugging. “How can he be so calm and civil when his house arrest is the very house Voldemort resided in? Has he changed? Does he hate it here? Does he love it here? You just don't know with that man.”

“Despite all that, we need his smartness to help us be clear about this object. He is smart, I will give him that. I really want to know what his take is on Haber's Law. You know?”

“No, I don't.” Sirius declined, then smirked, “Just admit it: you enjoy fighting with him.”

“I do not!” she cried out in defense.
“Actually, you like to fight with anyone. I remember those days poor Ron says something. Instead of letting him say it, you fight with him. What's the reason, huh? It gets you all hot and bothered when you argue? Or--”

Sirius didn't finish the sentence, couldn't.

Back of Sirius’s head burned after being assaulted by Hermione’s hand.

Abraxas and Lucius appeared at the library twenty minutes later, seeing the rest of the group lounging about with tea and alcohol served by Luchi and Lobby. Sirius and Draco had their heads bowed together, talking, each of them having firewhiskey. Hermione was nibbling at the cool cucumber sandwich and drinking her tea when the oak doors opened to reveal the father and son duo. She was currently sitting next to Antonin as she straightened up, watching the two regal and powerful men walk deeper into the library. She felt Antonin sit up straighter beside her and she felt that he threw his arm on top of the couch behind her. What made her sit beside him, she didn't know. He didn't complain, either.

Luchi popped up with more tea as Lobby carried fried shrimp. They both carried the set of trays towards Abraxas and Lucius and went along to create their tea. Lobby had a bright smile on his face as he served Abraxas. Hermione thought it was so cute that Lobby was so happy that Abraxas was back.

“Alright.” Lucius began, at the end his voice cracked. He cleared his throat. “Impetum animae ligaveris. Let calls it the soulbox for now. My father here says that senior Mr. Black here has a book about it and that we need more information about the box. We shall continue the discussion we had at my study.”

He was cold as if talking to his father didn't bother him. By the look of worry in Draco’s face, Hermione surmised that assumption was wrong. She didn't know the real Lucius, unlike his son. He is just very good at compartmentalizing. Hermione felt like they were missing someone, though. The grandfather, father, mother -- wait.

Where was Narcissa?
She couldn't think more on it when Antonin leaned closer to her, his shoulder pressing against her back. “You said that our spirits were grasping at anything to be back to the living because we didn't want to die in the first place.” Antonin began, his deep voice vibrated his chest which was transferring to her back. “They are many people out there who didn't want to die and probably have the magical power of Ms. Granger here so why us?”

Lucius shrugged. “First come, first serve, perhaps? I am not the right person to talk about spirit world, however. It is a sound speculation but it is just that: a speculation. Maybe you all have crossed paths with Ms. Granger here that was memorable enough for her magick to hold on to.”

She felt Antonin tense at Lucius words behind her and she knew exactly why. He did leave her with quite a memorable memory.

“I believe that assumption is wrong,” Mulciber jumped in, “I haven't interacted or fought or did anything memorable as of yet to Hermione. How would you explain that?”

As of yet?

Hermione snapped her head fast to look at Mulciber who was looking at her with a smirk. Once eye contact was established, Mulciber winked. Hermione couldn't help but blush at his uncouth behavior. She glared at him then looked away fast to see Lucius watching the silent interaction with distaste. She just rolled her eyes at his antics, looking away, trying to cool her warm face.

“That means that theory is out.” Lucius drawled, “So it seems that first theory is more promising. Surprisingly, the Malfoy line never had their own soulbox. The last family I know that has their soulbox is the Rosier’s.”

“Did all of Sacred Twenty-Eight have these soulboxes?” Hermione asked, confused. Lucius shook his head.

“They have been seen with families that were not stable and could have the potentially to die out. Like the Rosiers and Fawley. Two of Rosier children turned out to be squibs. I have no knowledge about Fawley’s soulbox. I know for sure the Blacks, Abbots, Greengrass, Lestranges, and Rowle never received or passed down their soul boxes. I don't know about the rest.” Lucius answered, sitting in of the leather couches.

“Isn't magical instability in pureblood families caused by inbreeding? And how do they have
soulbox? Who says whose magic isn't stable and gives them the soulbox?” Hermione asks, confused. “It just can't appear out of thin air.”

“Sadly, there is no documentation about the origins of the soulbox. I would love to learn about them as well.” Lucius said, regretfully, his scholarly soul coming out. “Inbreeding does lead to instability and squib creation.”

“The Blacks have been known for their in house relationship.” Orion piped in, shuddering. “Cygnus was actually forced to marry our cousin from our mother’s side.”

“No fucking wonder.” Hermione muttered under her breath and Antonin snorted quietly behind her. She turned her head to look at him to see his eyes filled with amusement. She gave an answering smirk back at him. Truth be told and it was hard to admit to even herself, she liked seeing him smiling.

“I will have to search the library for information but for now, we will have to rely on the book for information.” Lucius said, nodding.

“We should all eat first.” Sirius interjected, which made everyone perk up. “We will to discuss this with a full stomach because I don't know about you all, I am starving.”

“Same here. I really didn't have breakfast.” Hermione seconded, jumping to her feet. An idea popped up in her head and she beamed out an evil smile. “Where should we go? Probably somewhere muggle. Your poor pureblood sensibilities will be hurt.”

She smiled, cunningly. Rodolphus snorted again. “Come on, you guys liked the chicken fingers! We could get burgers this time.” Hermione urged, standing up. “It is fun to eat.”

“I am in. From the Grill of the Hill?” Sirius added, looking excited. Sirius looked like a happy and excited dog just right then.

“What is a ‘burger’?” Orion asked, innocently, then suddenly wished he hadn’t judging by the evil and excited grins of Draco, Sirius, and Hermione.

“A patty of meat with a slice of melted cheese on top.” Hermione said, walking closer to Orion.
“Crisp, cold lettuce, onions and tomatoes on top.” Sirius continued after Hermione, matching the slow steps of the girl.

“Sandwiched between two toasted bun, slathered with mayo and mustard.” Draco drawled just as they crowded the bewildered patriarch.

“With the sides of crisp and a soda, you will be in food heaven.” Hermione finished, her mouth watering at the thought. “Come on, Orion, doesn’t that just sound delish? A bite into it and all those flavors intermingling...just thinking about it makes me want to eat it now.”

“Alright! Alright!” Orion cried, feeling threatened. Hermione gave Orion a grateful and sweet smile. She turned around her heel to face the other men.

“Do you guys need any more convincing?” she asked, her voice overly sweet.

“No, ma’am.”
“If I wasn’t on probation and can walk freely, I still would not eat Muggle food.” Lucius is currently looking down his nose at the curly-haired witch who was removing wrinkles from her wrap dress. She looked up at the cold, blue eyes of Lucius and smiled sweetly.

“Makes sense. Since birth you have been fed with a gold spoon, you wouldn’t know the difference between soul and money.” she retorted back, turning up her smile even brighter. He mocked back her smile which caused her to let out a giggle. She cleared her throat “Do you want me to keep you updated about the box? Or do you not care?”

Lucius blinked owlishly at her claim. She knew that rest of the group (she can’t really call them ‘her men’ now, can she?) was waiting for her at the door of the library. Lucius cleared his throat. “I would be greatly appreciate if you can keep me in the loop, Ms. Granger.” Lucius said, bowing his head. “Despite this unusual circumstances and the air cleared of... misunderstanding that might take a while to digest, Abraxas is still my father.”

“Of course, I will not be letting my personal feelings come in between families.” Hermione said, smiling. “You sure you do not want me to send you a burger via owl?” His only answer was a derisive snort then shake of his head. He glanced back at her, looking hesitant and uncomfortable. He faced the group of men standing by the door. “If you would allow me few minutes alone with Ms. Granger, I am in need to speak to her about few crucial things.”

Sirius and Draco looked like they were about to protest but a simple shake of Hermione’s head stopped them. They agreed after a short while and few seconds later, the door closed behind them. Hermione looked up at Lucius, expectantly and curiously. What does he want to talk about? She watched him walk away from her, standing behind the couch as if he was hiding from her.
Lucius cleared his throat before saying, “Like I have said before, Malfoys aren't free with their emotions and when they are, it is to someone they trust a lot.” He paused to lick his lips. “However, I will make an exception today.

“It's been quite some time I have seen my son, Ms. Granger. I am at fault, of course. I will not be asking his forgiveness anytime soon, I assure. It would be a joke, wouldn't it?” Lucius looked at Hermione which the girl knew that the question was rhetorical and easy to answer: hell yes it would be too soon.

“In the path to look for glory, to further the glory I thought my father had taken, I have completely disregarded my son’s and my wife’s safety. I don't even know how Voldemort convinced me. When I was 18 and wanted to show what I was capable of, perhaps he manipulated me into believing that my magic was so potent that people will talk about it in future years. I should have known. I knew my father’s death was amiss.” Lucius said, his voice far away as if mentally he wasn't in the room. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes. “But that is not why I brought up my glory-seeking days.”

“Why did you bring it up, then?” she asked, softly, weirded out seeing the ever-so-cold Lucius Malfoy displaying emotions.

“I was really surprised when he told me that his best friend was you, Ms. Granger. Not because of you being muggleborn, I assure you. Because of your tumultuous relationship during Hogwarts since Year 1.” Lucius glanced at the girl who simple stood straight. “What was your reason?”

Hermione let out a exhale from her nose. “He has been spoiled twat for rest of my school years but he didn't deserve what happened to him under this house. I guess our friendship just happened.” Hermione explained, glancing down at the carpet. Lucius didn't need to know how painful 7th year was at the beginning for Draco. It’s in Draco’s power to let his father know.

“Draco seems...better. He can meet my eyes when we talk. We have a long way to go, of course. What I am trying to say is thank you for being by his side after I destroyed his life.” Lucius said, slowly. Hermione’s eyes widened in surprise. She wasn't expecting that at all. Of all the evils things he had done under the concept of glory and power, got tortured by the very guy he swore fealty to, despite all of that, Lucius Malfoy is a father. It probably was too late when he figured out that Voldemort was wack and a parasite and his son was in his crosshairs.

“Of course, Mr. Malfoy,” Hermione said, lamely, having no clue what to say in this situation. She never a parent thank her for being friends with their child. “I will be his friend until he says otherwise.”
Lucius nodded, quickly, and Hermione could see his face become its usual blank canvas. “That is out of the way. Shall we rejoin with the others?” Lucius asked, walking towards the door.

“That was quite hard for you to admit, wasn’t it? That you were in wrong?” Hermione called out, following the man and the said man paused in his steps. He was silent for a while then he looked over his shoulder.

“Like I’ve said before, this was an exception.” Before she could reply back a response, he opened the door, cutting off her reply. She watched Sirius do an impatient jig, shifting his weight from one foot to another. He paused when he saw her. Before she follow the men outside, she turned around to face Lucius one more time.

“Thank you for your help.” she said and he simply nodded. He nodded again to both his son and father, turned around and walked to the path that led to his study. She turned around and walked up to Draco who in turn decided that it was time to leave.

“What did you and father talk about?” Draco asked and Hermione could feel that everyone was listening into their conversation.

“Nothing of much importance. He had to clear the air about certain things. Nothing too worrying.” she said, waving her hand in the air to dispel any worries. He looked expectantly at her and in answer she smiled back at him. Whatever Lucius and her had talked about, it was their own business. Hermione is sure that Lucius wouldn’t like his personal business to spoken out loud.

“You are going to keep it to yourself, aren’t you?” Draco asked, dryly, squinting his eyes at the girl.

“Draco, I told you that you are a smart boy.” she said, patting his face. He moved his face away from her as he laughed and scoffed at the same time. “Let’s go. I am hungry.”

“We were waiting for you, princess.” Mulciber drawled then ducked away from her lunging strike, laughing. “Serious question, how will we get there?”

“I will take us there.” Hermione answered, going down the Manor’s step. She totally missed the dead pan looks that all the men threw at her.
“Yeah, I know that. How? Multiple apparitions can make you sick, you know.” Mulciber asked, walking beside her. She turned around to meet the expectant eyes of the group.

“I will drive you there. My parents are obviously not using the car. Meet me at my backyard.” She said, simply shrugging but internally indulging in their reactions. They all, except for Sirius, gave her confused looks. Sirius’s horrified face was the last thing she saw as she disappeared in front of their eyes with a crack.

She is currently unlocking the backyard door that lead into her house as the familiar cracking sounds. She turned to meet the apprehensive faces of each man, knowing that Sirius will say something about Muggle technology. “Sirius, you can’t be telling them about hazardous of Muggle vehicles when you ride a motorcycle.”

Sirius grimaced. “That is true, but I don’t carry around passengers now do I?” Sirius fought back following her through the living room and through the garage door, the rest of group following behind silently.

“I am attuned with my Muggle side as much as I am attuned with my magical side. I know how to drive, Sirius. My parents thought it was furtive of me knowing how to operate a vehicle. Are you in or are you out?” Hermione argued back, looking at the offending car that was parked innocently in the middle of the garage. It was the recent 2000 Ford Expedition in dark red. “It a good weighted car and less prone to accidents compared to a broomstick or a motorcycle.

“If I keep apparating you guys all over London, I will get sick. So, get out of your comfort and padded zone and let’s get going.” Hermione ended, placing her hands on her waist, waiting for their answers.

“I am starving. I don’t care.” Draco said, pushing past the hesitant men, heading to the car.

“You are sitting in the front, then.” she said, smiling at him. She turned to face the others. Antonin simply shrugged and walked towards the car, making Mulciber follow him. Rod followed a few minutes later, leaving Orion, Abraxas, and Sirius standing there. “Well, I am going to go. Stay if you wish but I hope some cold sandwich meats will appease your appetites.”

“Alright, damn. Quite evil, aren’t you?” Sirius said, hurrying to the car. Orion and Abraxas sighed, defeated, followed behind Sirius. They watched her open the door and followed suit, all shuffling inside the car. It would be a lie if Hermione said that she wasn’t enjoying this at all. She finally had the chance to bring pompous nature of pureblood down a notch. With a clicker that was attached to the visor of the car, the garage door opened. She turned on the car, put it on the reverse, looked
behind her and pulled the SUV out of the garage. Once a bit further away from the garage, she clicked the clicker again and watched the garage close.

“Here we go!”

“We have arrived, gentlemen,” she said, putting the car in park. She looked at her passengers to see that they were all looking out the windows; Abraxas looked little green on his face. “It wasn’t so bad, now was it?”

“I prefer broomsticks over this, Hermione. No offense.” Draco said, smiling guiltily. She frowned at that. She hoped that someone would like it -- that someone would step out their comfort zone.

“It is a big step, missy, from being staunch muggle haters to this.” Rodolphus interrupted, causing her to turn around to meet his eyes. “It will take time to get used to it and if we are bonded the way I think we are, we will have to get used it.” He directed the end statement to rest of the men. “Most of us are not appreciated in the wizarding society so we will be probably going Muggle at the beginning.”

He is right.

“Well, on that note, lesson number two of assimilating to Muggle ways commences.” she said, hoping out of the car. The men followed her up to the Grill at the Hill’s front door. As she opened the door, smell of fried food and burgers wafted out, curling around them in delicious sent. She heard Mulciber sniff and sigh happily.

“How many…?” the receptionist asked as she glanced up, her eyes immediately sought out Mulciber, him being the tallest. “I am sorry. How many?” she cleared her throat, pulling her eyes to the only girl in the group.

“Eight, please.” Hermione answered, giving her a polite smile. The receptionist nodded and walked away.

“This place smells amazing.” she heard Draco say behind her. A beginning of a smug smile appeared at the corner of her lips.
“Wait until you eat the burgers.” Sirius said, his voice awed and dreamy. It is weird to see how Sirius and Draco clicked but Hermione was glad. When she have to tell Harry and Ron about Draco, she will have Sirius on her side. *Hopefully*. The receptionist came back and grabbed eight menus. She told all of them to follow her. Hermione turned to look over her shoulder to see everyone, bar Sirius, looking around in wonder.

‘Here you are.” The receptionist, Amanda, waved a hand over a U-shaped booth. Hermione slipped in first, heading to the middle of U. Antonin and Abraxas decided to sit on the both side of hers and the rest followed suit.

“How about we start off with drinks? Soda? Beer? If beer, lager or ale? Red wine or white wine?”

“What goes best with burgers?” Orion asks, giving her a confused look.

“I would go with beer, more like a lager.” Amanda answered, removing her pad.

“I will have a pop and for the rest of these guys your best lager.” Hermione ordered and Amanda nodded.

“I will come back with your drinks and I will take your order. Our special today is pepper jack stuffed burger just to let you all know.” Amanda finished with a beaming smile then walked away. Everyone opened their menus and followed her actions to the burger menu.

“You can pick any of these burgers with the sides of either French fries, sweet potato fries, salad, mac n cheese, or don't even have a side.” Hermione explained then went back to perusing the menu. Hermione zeroed in the Ronin burger.

“I will get the Sweet N Spicy burger, spicy peppers and sweet caramelized onions sounds delicious.” Antonin said then looked over at Hermione, “Have you decided?”

Hermione nodded. “I will be getting the Ronin Burger.”

“Oh, I am going to get that, too!” Draco said, excitedly. Hermione threw a fond smile at Draco.
“I am just going to get the traditional burger.” Orion inputted, a twinkle in his grey eyes revealing his excitement.

“I am getting the Monster Truck Burger. Has two patties with lots of bacon.” Mulciber described, almost sounding childlike. Sirius noted that he was getting same as Mulciber.

“I will be getting the special.” Rodolalus said, placing his menu down. He gave her a soft smile before looking away, his eyes immediately drawn to the TV that was playing soccer on the screen. Sensing that the men on her left didn’t say anything, she nudges Abraxas’s shoulder.

“You finding everything alright?” Hermione asked when he glanced at her. He nodded. “Know what you want?”

“I am torn between the special and the Gavin’s Burger.” he muttered. “Both sound good but Gavin has cheese stuffed patty. Hmmm. Okay, a Gavin it is.”

Just at that moment, Amanda appeared with the tray of drinks being balanced on one hand. Orion’s eyes almost popped out of his head when he saw that. Unfortunately, Amanda caught the expression, too, and gave Orion a weirded out look.

“Sorry about him, Amanda. You see, they were raised as if they were princes of their land. They were taught that females are not that strong.” Hermione explained and Amanda nodded in understatement. Hermione kept her head straight, knowing that she was being glared at by every single one of them.

“Oh, definitely. We see lots of them coming around here. They know how to order?” Amanda asked, worriedly.

“Yes, we do.” Orion came in, throwing a glare at Hermione. “I would like the traditional burger with fries.”

“Monster Truck with fries.”

“Gavin’s Burger. No fries.”
“Ronin Burger. Lots of fries.”

“Sweet N Spicy with sweet potato fries.”

“The special with sweet potato fries.”

“Ronin with salad.”

“Monster Truck for me as well.”

Amanda said that she will be right back with their order. Once she was out of their hearing range, the men turned to look at her. She bit her cheek as Draco leaned over the table. “You think you are so funny, huh?”

“So funny that I have to wipe my tears, huh?” Abraxas said, leaning closer to her, his face not emotive or teary eyed. She moved away as he got closer, not realizing that she was pushing against Antonin’s upper arm. A chuckle escaped her lips which caused Abraxas to raise his perfect eyebrows then smiled evilly.

“Abraxas? If you please.” Abraxas said, smiling genially. She got confused as she felt Antonin shift towards her, her back pressed against his chest. Realizing about what is about to happen as she felt Antonin’s fingers under her ribcage, she began to apologize. She continued to apologize as he began to tickle her. She covered her mouth to mellow down her laughter. Abraxas smiled smugly as he watched the girl writhe in tickles. “Do you concede, Ms. Granger?”

"Yes! I am sorry!” She cried behind her hand, laughing. With a nod from Abraxas, Antonin dropped his hand from her sides. She jumped away from the Russian lest he continues as she controlled her laughter. Antonin had an amused smile on his face. In fact, everyone in the table except her looked smug, even Sirius, that traitor! She just glared at him then looked away, crossing her arm across her chest.

She stopped the urge to pout as rest of the men looked at each other with a self-satisfied grin. It took her five minutes to realize that her she laughed as her would-be killer tickled her. She will have to go back and think more deeply about it.
“Merlin be damned.”

That was the only phrase out of Abraxas’s mouth as the food was served. He stared at the steaming meat and shiny bun and unconsciously licked his bottom lip. Acknowledgment of Abraxas’s curse went around the table, each of them absorbed by the burger. Hermione could see the fried egg peeking out from under the bun. Mulciber’s and Sirius’s burgers were a sight to behold. Mulciber was currently staring at his burger with stars in his eyes.

“How do you eat this?” Orion asked, placing the napkin over his lap.

“By hand. You grab it like this…” Sirius said, demonstrating by grabbing his monster burger and brought it close to his mouth, “…and you just take a bite. It’s messy.” He took a bite, the sound of bacon and lettuce crunching sound went around the table. That convinced Draco and he followed suit, biting into his burger, bursting the fried egg on his way. The sound that came out of Draco was so sexual that Hermione blushed for no reason.

“Oh. My. God.” Draco said, after swallowing his first bite. “What are you all waiting for, the next Voldemort uprising? Eat!”

That shook everyone up and everyone went to grab their burger. “Yes, sir!” Hermione agreed then went to take the first bite of her burger -- and copied the same moaning that Draco uttered. Everyone at the table took a bite of their burgers and Hermione was tempted to throw up a silencing charm by the groans being elicited.

“How is it so good? How?” Orion asked, bewildered. And his was only the traditional burger. “It so... juicy.”

“It is something so primal about this, eating with your hands like this.” Abraxas continued, juice of the burger running down from the corner of his mouth. “Who decided to stuff cheese in the patty?”

“Amercians. Apparently, it is disputed that the burger originated from Hamburg, Germany, but some very people high in ladder decided that man in America created the burger.” Hermione explained, wiping her mouths. Sirius laughed out loud.
“You would also know the history of burgers.” Sirius teased.

“It was a random fact of the day in the newspaper mum and dad get.” she said, shrugging. “It’s good to be knowledgeable. Maybe you should open a book -- wait, do you even know what a book is?” Hermione looked confused at Sirius.

“Har Har. Hermione got jokes.” Sirius mocked, then actually laughed. “For once in her life, she removed that big rod that seemed to be permanently lodged up her backside.”

“Sirius!” Orion and Hermione gasped in surprise. Hermione retaliated back by throwing a French fry at Sirius which got stuck in one of his curls. Hermione began to laugh as Orion still looked flabbergasted.

“Sirius Arcturus Black, is that how you talk to the female persuasion?” Orion asked and Hermione snorted, then laughed till tears threatened to come over.

“‘Female persuasion’? What the hell is that -- just call us women, Orion, women!” she cried, chortling. Orion blushed, popping a fry in his mouth.

“I will have you know that in our timeline, women weren’t as...straightforward as you are.” Abraxas explained, “and not quite powerful. Well, actually, the classes they had received wasn’t stimulating as the boys schedule so we wouldn’t know if they were powerful or not. I only found out how strong my wife, Arabelle, was after our wedding.”

Hermione’s interest peaked that the mention of his wife but it looks like Abraxas’s wasn't going to delve into it as of yet. “At least you married by your choice.” Orion said, cringing. “I was forced into a corner before I said yes to Walburga.”

Sirius cringed at the mention of his mother and went back to eating his burger before saying, “Only time you will have to see her alive and talking is the portrait of her Grimmauld. If you want to piss on her, that would be amazing.”

“I'll...keep that in mind, thank you.” Orion responded, looking highly disturbed.

“I will watch, too, if you do!” Hermione joked, popping Antonin’s sweet potato fry. The said man looked at aghast that she would take food from his plate when she has her own plate of food! As a
revenge, he stole her fry.

“Interesting.” Rodolphus joined in, nibbling on a jalapeno, looking at her contemplative. “I didn’t know that you were into that. Which is totally fine by me.”

Hermione gave him a confused look. “What do you mean by that?” She noticed that both Sirius and Draco looked away at the same time, biting their lower lips, which roused her suspicions. Rod gave her an innocent look.

“I mean, everyone has some kind of kinks, you know? Like I knew one girl who wanted to be choked till she was about to pass out but you gotta let go before she does, and she goes off like a volcano. Urination kink is bit rare but if you like to watch it, go for it.” Rod said, shrugging then taking a bite off of his burger.

Both Antonin and Mulciber burst out laughing as Hermione’s cheeks burned. Draco and Sirius let their laughter go as well. Both Orion and Abraxas were flabbergasted. “I -- I -- I don't have an urination kink!” she almost screeched, grabbing the alcohol menu, leaned over and started to wack Rod with it. “I don’t!”

“We believe you, Hermione. Ignore these uncouth men!” Abraxas said, quickly, rubbing her back. Then he paused. “Is it real thing? People gets turned on if their lovers urinate on them?” His voice turned into a whisper.

“How would I know? I don't go around searching for rare kinks! But I am sure there are people who like that.” she relented, then giggling at the disgusted face of Abraxas. “You can't hate it when you haven't even tried it.”

“I will not try it at all.” Orion said, picking up his burger. “Can we not talk about urination as we are eating?”

Hermione reminded them that neither of them had Muggle money to take care of the bill when she had to interrupt the testosterone-filled argument on who will pay the bill. She reminded them multiple times but it looks like it went from one ear and out the other ear without any interceptions from the brain. She had to confound the two tables beside theirs as she noticed that they were getting too into their conversation.
“Enough!” she cried out after she threw up a silencing charm and warding charm wandlessly. “Yes, it is quite chivalrous to pay the check when there is a female in presence. Can I remind you that you came back to life yesterday? You haven’t even visited your Gringotts account. So, tell me how you will pay for this? Seeing that I am a Muggleborn and I carry Muggle money around with me alongside my Wizarding money.”

The men were silent, mulling over her words. “But I have Muggle money.” Sirius voiced popped out, softly. Everyone turned to look at him as if they were saying, what are you waiting for? Pay before she has to! However, Sirius knows Hermione. He knows her obsession to do everything on her own or else the wizarding world will continue to tell her that she doesn’t belong with them. “I will only put down for the tip, is that alright, Ms. Independent?”

Hermione thought about it. He wasn’t undermining her ability to pay for the food. He was putting his contribution in a different way. She liked it. “That’s my fine by me, Mr. Black.” Hermione responded, reaching for her wallet. “I am glad we have come to an agreement.” As Amanda came and took her credit card away, Hermione excused herself to the restroom.

Once she was out of their hearing range, Sirius quickly turned to face the curdled faces of both his father and Abraxas Malfoy. “One thing about Hermione, she doesn’t like to be taken care of. She will let you take care of her in her own terms. She feels like when someone else does a job that she can easily do, she sees it as they are undermining her.” Sirius explained, quickly. Draco cleared his throat.

“We have been telling her that she didn’t belong in our society since she was eleven. She was like ‘fuck that, the magic chose me so I do belong here’. She worked three times as hard as your average student. Hell, in her third year, she had a Time Travel machine so she can take all the subjects that year required. She threw everyone in her shadow in both intellect and magical prowess. However, she was by the book.” Draco continued, wiping the corner of his mouth. “She feared that she stepped a foot out of line, they would kick her out of the Wizarding world.”

“That fear was totally decimated during the war, while they were on the run.” Sirius piped in.

“Hermione is the type of person to decline a job offer because of who she is - the One-Third of the Golden Trio. She is a hard believer of ‘if you didn’t work hard for it, it will mean nothing to you’ type.” Draco surmised then took the last swig of his beer.
“If you do want to do a job that she clearly wants to do, explain why you want to do. Don’t just do it. She doesn’t not believe in ‘man of the house’ or any of that sort of thing. Basically, she hates everything that Pureblood’s are raised with.” Sirius ended his lecture by throwing a hefty tip on the table as he noticed Hermione coming out of the hallway. “She will not let you make decisions that concern her without her consultation. Best remember that.”

Hermione walked up to their table to see the table quiet and had a serious atmosphere around them. She frowned at that. Did she offend anyone because she wanted to pay the bill? Was she doing the thing where her clinical side came out and hurt feelings around them? It seemed not the case when Rodolphus saw her approach and gave her wide smile in return which lifted everyone’s mood up.

“Let’s get going?” she offered, picking up her card. They nodded, sliding out of the booth. I wonder what they talked about while I was away, Hermione thought, noticing the thoughtful and far away look in both Abraxas’s and Orion’s faces.

Once getting into the car, the realization that she will be finding about the real consequences of opening the box in just under 45 minutes began to settle on her. Draco was right; she was going through this process as if she was ghosting over it. When will she break down? When will she come to realize that it would be up to her to send these men back to the dead? She felt her hand shaking, she clutched the steering wheel hard to force the tremor away.

It was a quiet journey back, same as the journey to the restaurant. However, this time around, the atmosphere in the car was charged. Hermione assumed that they all knew what is going to happen once they all reached her home. It didn't take too long for them to reach home, it being one and no rush hour. Hermione hoped there were some kind of delay in the streets but a delay won’t help get rid of the problem; she will be facing the problem anyway.

She parked the car inside the garage and killed the car. She stepped out of the car, waited for everyone to get out of the car. “Meet me at the living room. I am going to get us something to drink.” They all agreed and parted ways.

With a flick of her hand, two bottles of whiskey and seven cups levitated themselves on the tray she removed. As she assembled them, she took a few, deep breaths. She can’t afford to puke now. She didn’t even hear about this chest! Maybe, it is not something that bad. If they aren’t able to re-die, what if they had to somehow establish the bond? She shook her head. No point in conjecture. No point in raising her anxiety up. With a squaring of the shoulders and a deep breath out, Hermione carried the tray laden with bottles and glasses to the living room to see the men sitting around the coffee table, looking at the innocuous black book that was sitting in front of Orion.
She set the tray down beside the book and popped the whiskey bottle open. She poured for each man manually then with a flick of her finger, she sent the filled cups to each of the men. Deciding to sit between Sirius and Draco, she mentally sat back and looked around the room and decided how weird it was. Sirius, the epitome and part of the original Order of the Phoenix, Hermione being part of the second generation Order of the Phoenix, the four Death Eaters, and two patriarchs from powerful houses. It couldn’t get any weirder than that.

*It could*, her inner voice piped in, *it could turn weird by Voldemort coming here and saying that Muggleborns are actually the superior race.*

“Alright. Open it and let’s get this over with.” Hermione said and Orion nodded, killing off his whiskey in one swallow. He opened the book to the right page and read:

> *Impetum animae ligaveris. Rare item, possessed by families with deep, rooted magic. Witches or wizarding that are first in the line of their magical lineage, with non-magical parents, it is said that their magic hasn’t been able to stabilize with the earth. It hasn’t been known for the box to open for them as of yet. It is acknowledged by scholars that these newly wizards and witches would not handle the resurrected wizard.*

*Impetum animae ligaveris should be used as the last resort, desperate measures like for instance of a family line dying out or the last bout of defense of the House. It is recorded that the chest is only been opened to further the line. The –*”

“Wait.” Hermione interrupted, confused. Orion looked at her from above the book. “To further the lineage? Like make babies with the resurrected men or women?” Sirius became stock still beside her. So did Draco. “I have to...you know...with you all?” The last words came out a hissed whisper, filled with horror.

“Let’s not jump to conclusion. It did not say it was *mandatory*.” Antonin jumped in, his voice panicked. “It just said that when people do open this chest it could be either for furthering the lineage or defense.”

“Oh, okay. Sorry.” she said, throwing a grateful smile at Antonin who simply nodded. Hermione was sure that if it were the case of mandatory for her being used as a broodmare, these men were also forced into the arrangement because of her clumsiness.

Orion cleared his throat and continued, “*However, once the chest is opened, the resurrected wizard*
or witch is soulbond to the person who opened the chest in however it was opened. There are two ways of opening: simply by blood or with blood and magic. The latter is very rare and unusual. There has been one instance of a witch in the Longbottom family that was forced to open the chest because her magic compelled her to or that is what she recorded.

Once the chest was activated, she could not leave it alone. She carried it everywhere with her, making the chest more and more synchronized with her magic. It was rumored that the Lady Freya Longbottom had resurrected two men from her line. However, there is no evidence of that sort being that Longbottom family was known to be great keeper of secrets.

It is possible to break the soulbond if the chest was only opened with a simple blood sacrifice. We assume that if the chest was opened with both the blood sacrifice and the activation of the chest by the host’s magic, it will not be breakable. In fact, with proven arithmancy algorithms, we believe that if the host tried to break of the soulbond with the resurrected, everyone will die, even the host, seeing that it is the host’s magic and blood keeping the resurrected alive -”

“Perfect.” Sirius whispered to himself, placing his head on his palms.

“- Being said that, the host’s magic will not be siphoned if the resurrected are to use their magic. However, because they are raised by the host’s blood and magic, it is said that the chest could subtly change the host’s and the resurrected attitude’s to each other to make living together more easier. That is the only similarities between simple blood sacrifice and the blood and magic sacrifice have. Because each wizards and witches have unique magic, the host who have opened the chest with magic will not have blood-related family members resurrected. The witches and wizards who have been resurrected by magic and blood are people with same strength of magic as the host, meaning different people that are not related to them. Records have shown that the chest’s soulbond goal is not about furthering lineage, however, the resurrected have been given a child of their own after being brought back alive.

“Word of warning: When the wizards or witches are brought back to life from the chest, they have to establish the weak bond between them, especially to wizards and witches who have been brought back by both magic and blood. The host will feel disoriented and will actually see the weakness of their magical attributes if it is not been established...” Orion trailed off as he continued to read to himself, a flush of red appeared on tops of his cheeks.

“What is it, Orion? What does it say?” Hermione asked, worried. She swallowed her fear and trudged on. “How do we establish our bonds now that we can’t break it?”

Orion look like he was struggling with his words -- as if the next sentence almost fried his brain. “Just say it, man! It is not like we all need to have sex at the same time to establish it.” Mulciber said,
causing Hermione to gasp in horror. “Not that I would mind.”

“Don’t say that! You will jinx it!” Hermione yelled, blushing at his last statement. If they all had sex at the same time, Mulciber would have to be in contact with the other men. He said that he wouldn’t mind so does that mean that he goes for both sexes? Hermione will have to one day and ask Mulciber if he is a bisexual. Not that she minds at all. When Hermione fights for equality of creatures, it wouldn’t make sense if she was against the anyone’s right to love who they want, now would it? However, now is not the time to think about that!

“What is it, Father?” Sirius asked, who had lifted his head from his palms.

Orion sighed. “To strengthen the bonds and not making both the host and soulbond wizards or witches, only a kiss lasting more than 30 seconds will keep the soulbond happy.” Orion finished, letting out a relieved sigh that everything was over.

Everyone was silent after the last sentence. They all looked around, seeing other’s reaction. However, Hermione is puzzled as she leaned back in her chair. Actually, not puzzled. More like confounded and bewildered.

“That’s it?”

Chapter End Notes

Okay, surprise!

I hoped you like this version of a soulbond. I am not too big of a fan of pregnancies and all that business, especially FORCED pregnancies so, I scrapped the idea.

Ooh, btw, I have LoTR fic in current works (really slow) want me to upload it here?
“What do you mean, ‘that’s it’? A kiss is quite personal, Hermione.” Orion asked, raising his perfectly shaped eyebrows. “What were you expecting?”

Yeah, what was she expecting? What Mulciber had said wasn’t far off from what she was thinking, to be quite frank. Realizing that she assumed the worst, Hermione blushed, embarrassed. She looked away, guiltily. “It - It is quite incomprehensible that a chest that could do this much only requires a kiss to satisfy it. I was expecting - I was expecting--”

“Something more devastating than a mere kiss.” Abraxas finished for the flustered girl and by her silence, they all surmised that it was the truth. “It is quite astonishing for me as well.”

“Thank you!” Hermione cried then shook her head. “Not to offend anybody - you guys are very good looking and fit - but I would rather just kiss than do anything more.”

“I would rather you did nothing at all!” Sirius hissed in anger, looking at the curly haired witch, standing up. “How - how are you not freaking out? You are bonded with these men by both magic and blood. These guys! Two years ago, half of these guys wanted to see you lynched! They may have not done it but they were associated with guys who raped and mutilated muggles and muggleborns. These guys served a man who wanted you on your knees because of your blood.” Sirius paused, breathing hard. “And - And- And you bear his scar.” Sirius pointed at Antonin. “You know what Mulciber is known for? He was their go-to-guy for information extraction. And you are talking about kissing them? The other two, one of them is my dad!”

Throughout the whole lecture, Hermione sunk lower and lower in the couch, tears brimming. But towards the end, profound anger rose and she stood up from her seat really quickly, her hands clenched into fists, tears beginning to stream down her face. “I didn’t ask for any of this! They didn’t
ask for this! I know who they are! I have fought them! Have you not been listening?! I can't break this!” she yelled, causing Sirius to flinch. She was breathing hard.

- “Hermione--” Sirius began, putting his hands out, palacating but she didn't let him continue. She stomped over shelves. She was seeing red, she couldn't stop.

- “You want to see me freak out?!” Without waiting for a response, she turned around and with a wide sweeping motion of her arms, she knocked down her grandmother’s gifted china set to the ground. The resounding crash was loud and satisfying to Hermione’s ears.

- “Hermione!” Draco yelled, causing the said witch to turn around to notice that everyone was standing.

- “What else you want to see? We all saw that the smartest witch in the whole world made a mistake! A mistake that she couldn't control! Should I take a bow or what?” she said, deathly quiet. “I am trying to make sense of a situation that spiraled out of control. Both parties of the bond are not quite happy about it, either. I am trying to be the logical mind out of this and yet you want to see me break down?”

- “Hermione, that is not what I--”

- “No.” It was Draco who interrupted Sirius. “It is what you meant, Sirius.”

- She couldn’t handle being here. She could feel them judging her, seeing her in this state of unrest. She had to show them that she is in control...that she belongs… but how? How can she when people undermine her? She shook her head to herself. She felt fingers on her wrists and she flinched, yanking her arm back. Hermione became guilty when she saw the shock and hurt in Draco’s eyes.

- “I - I want to be alone.” Hermione muttered and without any preamble or waiting for someone to respond, the distraught witch apparated straight from her living room leaving seven men gaping at the empty spot. It was quiet as the occupants of the Granger house mulled over at the drastic change of events. It was Mulciber who broke the tense silence that hung over their heads.

- “Black, you are a fucking twat!”
With a resounding crack, Hermione landed in the wizarding cemetery that was quite far off from the Ministry. With her crying in control and only reduced to sniffles, she walked down the bricked pathway towards the one grave that could always make her feel grounded. Leave it to a dead guy to ground her but when he was alive, he always helped her out. Always made her see things objectively. After few minutes of passing other graves, she slumped down on the soft soil in front of a polished white marble gravestone.

Remus J. Lupin

10 MARCH, 1960 - 02 MAY 1998

Mischief Managed

She tucked her knees under her chin as she gazed at the bronze lettering on the gravestone. With a wave of her hand, she cleaned the gravestone away from mist then she settled back on her knees. Now away from everyone, she could finally think in peace and maybe Remus could give her some insight from his grave. How? She doesn’t know but it has been a place where she could come and think or just away from the bustle of life; from both Muggle and Wizarding. She had found the silent presence of both living and dead Remus Lupin quite welcoming but she of course wished that she found comfort in the living Remus. He would know what to do.

Or would he react the same as Sirius did?

As much as a hothead he was - Hermione was surprised on how well he acted during dinner - she had to admit with Sirius that her circumstances weren’t ideal; that she really can’t be calm about what is about to happen. It affects her future just as much it will affect theirs. She could theorize or wallow or cry about this circumstance and it still wouldn’t change the fact that she will have to satisfy the bond. A kiss might be innocent (still shocking) but the question will be on the who she will be kissing. She would be kissing Antonin or Abraxas...Orion. Actually, every single one of them had some sort of connections with Dark Lord; hell Antonin, Rod, and Mulciber were part of his inner circle.

How could she kiss them?

If she doesn’t, her magic abilities will weaken. The book really didn’t describe what would really happen if she doesn’t kiss her bonded mates. Would she die from magic depletion? Would they die because her magic was weak? There wasn’t enough information and she couldn’t just jump into the
solution without having some sort of information to back her up. As much as the books gave information, it also put her more in the dark about the said chest. Like Lucius had said, there weren’t many records about the usage of the chest.

-Lucius!

She needed to tell him exactly what happened. Maybe, he will give her some insight. With a soft yell of ‘Expecto Patronum’, white-blue wispy form of her otter brightened the area. It chirped and trilled as it floated in front of her. With a clear voice, she recalled the information about the book in small but detailed summary. After the message was ready back to her from her otter with her voice, Hermione ordered it to go deliver it to Lucius Malfoy.

-Maybe she should have brought Draco with her to dispel this loneliness from her. Or give her some advice. To give her some assurance that the genial behavior from her once tormentors were true; that they want to live free from the control of the Dark Lord. What if they are able to do magic again or if the Ministry gives the A-OK for them live in the society and they go back to doing the very same thing they are known for? Yeah, maybe they won’t hurt her but what about other muggleborns or blood traitors? Will they attempt on Harry’s life again? If they say they won’t, could she take their word on it?

-What would Remus do? Who could she talk about this without creating a disaster? Harry and Ron and the Minister Kingsley will be the last to know about this, seeing that they are the biggest hurdles. Oh yeah, Mrs. Weasley, too, seeing that Antonin killed her brothers. Who could she speak to about this? Hermione ran her fingers through her hair and grabbed it by the roots. Her eyes fell on her beaded bag. Maybe something in it can give her a clue. She hurriedly loosened up the strings and began to rummage around it. Transfiguration book… McGonagall will die just hearing that her worst enemies are back to the living.

-Hogwarts: A History? NO! Bathilda Bagshot still gave her nightmares even though it wasn’t her but Nagini in disguise but still. She kept rooting through, seeing expired bottles filled with Polyjuice Potion (Severus will kill her through his painting) and the black bra she thought she lost (gotta clean that) when her hand stumbled upon Tales of Beedle the Bard. She fingered the corner of the book, staring at the weathered book and dog-eared pages.

-Dumbledore ... I could talk to Dumbledore about this, she thought to herself then groaned out loud, falling on her back, the soft soil cushioning her back. She stared at the faint bright spots of stars as her thoughts mulled over the space. Of all the people that could give her advice, it had to be him. Dumbledore knew that Hermione didn’t trust him as much as Harry did or the rest of the Order. He tried a lot to make her see his way. However, with knowledge of men in power in her muggle world, she knew that she should take his words with a grain of salt. She had the right to be angry at the old man. All those years of having the horcruxes on him, he had to mention at the last minute?
Who, other than Dumbledore, can help her with this dilemma? And only way she can speak to Dumbledore is at Hogwarts and she had to somehow find a way to keep McGonagall out of this. She sighed. That must mean that she has to lie to her favorite professor. Before she could ruminate more, a deep hoot sounded from above her. She looked around to see a huge, dark brown eagle owl flying towards her, it's great wings slicing through the still air of the cemetery. It’s red-orange eyes were focused on Hermione as it glided to the ground beside her. Attached to its scaly leg was a missive. It hobbled to Hermione and stuck the missive-laced leg out to her.

A single M carved into the wax indicated to her that it was from Malfoy. She knew Draco’s bird, a whitish gray Great Horned owl named Ignes, so she surmised this belonged to his father. The owl hooted at the displeasure of standing on one leg. “Sorry!” she whispered as she removed the missive from the huge bird. “Thank you.” With another hoot, it turned around and flew away with a jump. She watched it fly away, a sudden wish to be an owl rose up. She shook her head and opened the expensive stationary and read:

Ms. Granger,

It seems that your patronus really quite suits you but that is not the matter. What you have told me about the chest is quite troubling. I have found bunch of parchments hidden in the corner in the shelf of enchantment. Assuming that you are not home, shall I send these to your home?

Lucius Malfoy

P.S. I appreciate it that you kept me in the loop.

Hermione got up from her spot so quickly that she became dizzy. Lucius had more information about the chest? Oh, it is true that Malfoy libraries could rival any libraries! She send another patronus telling Lucius she will be coming over to his house. If this was a trap, Lucius could only do so much with his magic before it weakens him and he wouldn't do anything to her; he will do anything to keep his name out of the papers. So, she had no problem in going there by herself.

With a slight graze over Remus’s gravestone with her fingers, she apparated out of the cemetery and few seconds later she was standing before the gates of Malfoy Manor. Wait, she hadn't thought this through. How will she get past the wards? Nevermind. Hermione could see the gates become transparent, telling her the ward is down. She walked through it and went up the stairs two at a time. The door was already when she reached. Luchi was there by the foot of the door, smiling at the witch.
“Hello, Luchi. Will you take me to Lucius?” she asked the little elf who nodded her head. Hermione followed the elf towards the study, this time being good at not noticing the room. It was a short walk. Lucius Malfoy was sitting on high backed chair that was facing the window, a tumbler filled with whiskey clutched between his fingers.

“Master, Ms. Granger has arrived.” Luchi announced, then turned towards the girl. “Would you care for a drink?”

“Whiskey for me, Luchi. Thanks.” Hermione said then walked deeper into the room as the elf disappeared. She glanced at her watch to see it was 5 in the afternoon. How long was she at the graveyard? An hour? It didn't feel like it. Hermione wondered what the men at her house were doing. Was Draco searching for her? Sirius?

“Not the whole gang, Ms. Granger?” Lucius’s question brought Hermione back to the task at hand. She noticed that Lucius was watching her.

“Ah, no. It doesn't seem like a good idea lugging around seven men for one conversation.” Hermione said, walking over to sit on the couch. She gave out a defeated laugh. “I guess it finally dawned on Sirius that what was expected of me. Hell, it finally dawned on me, too. I felt like if I thought about this objectively and clinically, I won't be at all bothered by that I am bonded to three of the men who wanted me dead. Also, another fact, that each of the men are connected to me both magic and blood. I just needed to get away.”

Lucius looked like a deer caught in headlights. What could he say to the distraught Muggleborn witch who is technically ‘married’ to the men he served with under a genocidal man? He was at loss. The only woman he knew how to console was Narcissa and Narcissa is known as ice queen for a reason.

“Ms. Granger, if you will stop crying, it will be greatly appreciated.” Lucius said, clearing his throat. She turned to face the man who was looking away from her, uncomfortable. “What are your fears?”

“What if they start the pureblood nonsense again? They won't be able to hurt me but what about other muggleborns? What if they want to continue their lord’s legacy and keep me hostage? Or they kill Harry?” she listed off, counting on her fingers. “It makes me feel guilty for thinking like this but Sirius was right. Three of them were in the inner circle and one of them directly hurt me.”
“If that was the case, they would have already hurt you and began their killing. They will already would have killed Draco for betraying their Lord and Sirius for being a pain in the ass. Wouldn’t they?” Lucius asked, calmly. Like an owl, Hermione blinked at him as his words processed through her brain. Come to think of it, three men over 5’9 could have easily overpowered her, killed her two friends and escaped. They had all the opportunities to do so...but they haven't. Antonin didn’t even gloat about his scar or Rodolphus didn’t gloat about his wife’s work. None of them blamed her for bringing them back to life.

- 

“They got a second chance in living. Free from the man who played with their dreams and twisted it to keep them enslaved. Hell, Antonin already had begun to disobey Voldemort after the disastrous ministry attack.” Lucius continued, then stopped himself when Luchi popped back with Hermione’s drink and platter of assorted chocolates. She immediately went for one and her glass of whiskey.

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“It was surprising. Everyone was taken back by the first ‘no’ from Antonin. Given what happened to him while he was young, you would think he will say yes to anything to Voldemort. AND I can’t say what it is that happened to Antonin; he should be the one telling you.” Lucius said, shaking his head.

What happened to Antonin that made him so hateful?

- 

“It is quite disconcerting that you are...here and trying to find solace or advice.” Lucius said, after a while of silence. Hermione nodded, quite baffled herself.

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“That is very true. I don't think you would mince your words to keep me satisfied. I am sure you will do just about anything to rile me up.” Hermione quipped, a smile tugging at her lips. Lucius just smirked. “So, on to business, what are these parchment you speak of?”

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Lucius brightened at the subject. “It is quite faded from over time and poor preservation charms. I have been only make out few paragraphs but it looks like a excerpt from a diary.”

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“A dairy?”

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Lucius nodded. “From Elena Rosier around 1878 as it stated. I am not sure how or why we have it in our library. Come, follow me. It’s under protection and preservation charms and should be handled carefully.” Before they could do anything, the door to the sitting room opened to reveal a tall woman with long blond hair and with pointed face. She was wearing a gown that covered her from neck to ankle. Lace covered her neck and decolletage was shaped with a sweetheart style neckline and the dress fit snuggle on her narrow waist. Narcissa Malfoy looked regal and beautiful and cold as always.
Surprised flitted through her eyes as she saw Hermione sitting on their couch but as a true Malfoy, she collected herself and glided towards her husband. “What a surprise to find you here, Miss. Granger.”

—

“Hello, Mrs. Malfoy.” Hermione said, becoming highly uncomfortable. The lady eyed the curly haired witch with no outward emotion then gave her a small smile that didn’t reach her eyes.

—

“What is your purpose of visiting my husband?” Narcissa asked, looking at Lucius who was simply staring at his wife.

—

“I have a situation that I need Mr. Malfoy’s help in.” Hermione answered, smiling hesitantly, wanting to bolt to the door. She thought Mr. Malfoy would be more intimidating but it was not quite so.

—

“Oh, interesting. Well, I will be in the sun room if you need anything.” Narcissa said, smiling tightly, then turned around and left the sitting room without waiting for a response. Hermione let out a breath that she was holding in. It was silent in the room before Lucius cleared his throat.

—

“Let us continue to the library, yes?” Hermione simply nodded, hoping that she will not be able to meet with Narcissa. Ever. Again. She hurried to Lucius, slowly slipping her drink. With a second thought, she levitated the platter of chocolates alongside her as well. “For propriety's sake, I only skimmed through the passage. I feel like you should be the first one to read Elena’s diary.”

—

“Oh, you should have read it. I am sure you are curious as well.” Hermione said as they both walked into library. Despite it seeing it last time she was here, Hermione was still amazed at the sheer size of the library. All the books, waiting to be read! If she died and went to heaven, she prays that she comes here.

—

“I am curious. However, I thought the person who is actually afflicted with this chest should be the first person to read it or should he the one who choose to read with them.” Lucius said, walking towards a black podium that was not there earlier today. On it was a plain, leather journal that had seen better days but it is been 120 years old. It was open and parchment papers were yellowed to the point of resembling urine. There few passages that have been rubbed off or smeared but Hermione tried her best to read:

—

*I can't believe, of all the wizards who are dead, my ridiculous uncle is the one brought back to life. I used my blood and magic to bring him back and his first words were “Why is it you that I have to see first?”*...
...I will not kiss him! Keeping it in the family is the pureblood way, but...I don't believe that! He can go kiss someone else....

...something is wrong....my magic is not responding to me...sometimes my hands shakes when I hold my tea...I can see it happen to Uncle, too....

...it's hard for me to write. It is taking longer for me to write...I would have to drop the quill to give my hands a break...something is severely wrong....my breathing is labored...

I think I have to kiss him...or I fear death is not in the distant future but close...blasted chest! Blast father for his gambling...

I finally kissed Uncle (is it bad that I think he can kiss good??) It was if electricity zapped through me, I am so energized! I can feel my magic!

Hermione leaned back after reading the readable passages. Lucius was looking at her, expectantly. “I have to kiss them. All of them were raised by both blood and magic. If I don't kiss them, we will all die or both magically and physically weak where we can't even hold a pen.” she summarized, then backed away from the old journal. “I need another glass of whiskey but I know I have to return home and relay the information.”

“It’s not like you need to have sex with them.” Lucius threw out and she sighed, relieved, then began to laugh. “Why did I say that? God, you have to kiss my father !”

“I don't think any of us want this.” Hermione added, finishing the last bit of her whiskey. “If I hadn't bolloxced everything up.”

Lucius gave her a look that clearly said ‘ shut up’. “You can't control magic, you silly girl. No one can. Yes, you can read about it in texts and all, but that doesn't mean our texts know everything about it. There is no way in knowing what your magic will do so get over yourself.” Lucius said, raising his eyebrow at her to see if she will challenge him back. She tried to challenge him but he was right. It was out of her control when this whole shitshow started; the chest decided it will be her to bring back the men.

Deciding she was stalling, she let out another sigh and stood up. She turned to face the father of her
best friend; the son of her bonded mate. God, that will never sound normal to her. “It’s getting late, Mr. Malfoy. I shall take my leave. Thank you for helping me out with this.” Hermione said, smiling at the man. He may be infuriating but helpful. Lucius just nodded, standing up as well.

“Just keep me posted. You could document it and send it over for safekeeping.” Lucius said, walking beside her towards the front door. Hermione smirked up at him.

“You just want to read how I kissed your father.” she said, giggling which turned into full blown laughter at the disgust on his face.

“How’s blasphemous! Maybe, that is normal in the Muggle world but no one here likes seeing their son’s best friend kissing their own father.” Lucius said, then actively shuddered. She watched him square his shoulders and look away from her. “If the men do irritate you, you are free to come here, Ms. Granger.”

His statement shocked Hermione greatly. She stared up at the man who tormented for years and she didn’t know what to think of, actually. “I - I think I will take you up on that. I feel like my patience will wear thin sooner than I like so expect me every other day.” she said, her smile turning into a teasing one as Lucius groaned.

She left the man on his doorstep, grumbling to himself on why he offered his house as her sanctuary. She apparated back into her backyard but decided to enter the house a bit later. By tonight, she will be bonded to these five men. Why wait till tomorrow? All of them will get weaker as days go by. How will the kisses will be like? Mulciber, Rodolphus, and Abraxas have plush lips where as Orion and Antonin had regular lips. Would it feel off like as if she would be kissing her brother? Or would it be like kissing Krum? Or would it be totally different? It’s not like their is handbook on how to kiss death eaters or how kissing death eaters feel like, now is there?

A sudden image of her kissing Mulciber while sitting on his lap flashed in her mind. She gave out a startling gasp and blushed furiously. What was that?! Would she kiss Mulciber like that? She hid her face behind her hands, trying to cool her face down. She has to kiss five times...who will she kiss first? How will she decide? How will she feel? Oh god, what if they don’t like her way of kissing? God, only passionate kissing she ever done was with Krum and she wasn’t even good at it back then! Hell, she is not good at kissing now!
“Calm down, Hermione. It is just a kiss. A simple kiss. Nothing more, nothing less. You are sounding like a virgin.” Hermione muttered to herself. With a deep breaths and counting to 10, Hermione slid the backyard door open and stepped inside. She immediately heard Sirius shouting about that it was time to go search for Hermione.

- 

“It’s been four hours! Draco, you know where she could go?” Sirius cried out, concern lacing through his voice. “Man, I am such an idiot!”

- 

“We already established that, Black jr.” The familiar voice of Antonin, his voice low and threatening. “If you haven’t shouted at her, she would be-”

- 

“Don’t pretend like you care, Dolohov! None of you three are allowed to show that you care!” Sirius yelled back, “Like dogs you followed Voldemort’s commands to chase after a girl who didn’t have a hand in her birth, chased after my godson because that asshole was afraid of a teensy baby. Suddenly, there is no mark on your arm, it makes you good? Now...now... she has to live with you three. She will have to wake up to each day knowing that she is attached to very men who wanted to kill her. Hell, Antonin, you nearly did -”

- 

“I know what I did, Black!” Antonin hissed. “I have seen the scar. I didn’t know devastating that curse would be. I watched her fall. I heard her screams. I hear her screams everytime I close my eyes. Still do. Couldn’t get any sleep, couldn’t. But I do face the problems I create. I made the curse, so I also made the cure.”

- 

“You did what?”

- 

Hermione didn’t know when she appeared into the living room; all she knew that Antonin deeply regretted what he had done to the point he created a cure? Everyone jumped in shocked, turning around to face Hermione who was staring at Antonin in shock. “A cure?”

- 

Antonin’s cheek was flushed when he nodded his answer. “Obviously, I created under the guise of creating another spell for Voldemort. I was absolutely done with that man. Made me realize what that man made me with a promise of making me the best spellmaker out that. It still hurts here and there, right? It wasn't meant to kill but to maim. And it did maim. It still hurts, right?”

- 

“Every now and then. It will throb then I literally could feel my magic weaken.” Hermione described, slowly walking towards the man who graced her nightmares for far too long and apparently, she graced his as well.
“The scar itself is a curse. And it sustains itself by absorbing your magic once in a while.” Antonin explained and it as if everything clicked right in their rightful place. Whenever her scars pained or throbs, she didn't even want to do magic. “I can remove it from you.”

“Hermione, you can't let him do anything to you. What if he is lying?” Sirius jumped in and Draco came up to her.

“And he really can't do magic or else the Ministry will know.” Draco pointed out, biting his lower lip. “Antonin can teach me and I can do it for you.”

“If Antonin wanted to hurt us, he would have already.” Hermione argued back at Sirius then she turned to face Draco. “Wandless magic is untraceable and I want him to do it.”

“Why?”

“It is healing process for both of us. No more nightmares, no more scars. I have had these scars for far too long and if I could get rid of at least one of them, I would gladly ask anyone’s help.” Hermione said, softly, reaching out the grab Sirius’s hand. “They would have already killed us if they still thought that way before wouldn't they? Why wait for so long? Sirius, they are my mates now. If...if you are against it, we don't have to see each other again.”

Sirius scoffed, looking at her as if she is stupid. “Hermione, I am just mad at the situation you are in. I can't believe you would think I would break my friendship with you, you idiot.” Sirius said, scoffing more. Hermione kicked him on his shins.

“You are the idiot! Can't believe you think I haven’t thought about this!” she retaliated back and Sirius kicked her on her shins. She hopped on one leg in pain. “Ow!”

“You are an idiot for looking for the best in everyone!” Sirius said and yelped in pain as she kicked him back.

“And you are an idiot for looking at things black and white!” she yelled back but before Sirius could retaliate back, Draco jumped in between the two.
“What are you two, children?” Draco scolded and Hermione harrumphed but before she could explain, Sirius beat her to it. She glared at Sirius for

- “This how we deal when we are angry at each other: we fight. This is normal.” Sirius explained, glaring at Hermione who in return showed her tongue to him.

- “Sirius, I told you not to hurt females.” Orion piped in, standing up. Sirius turned to meet his father head on.

- “This is how we deal with problems, father. We just don’t stand there and throw veiled insult like you guys did back in the day.” Sirus argued then turned back to face Hermione who had her nose in the air. “You are an idiot.”

- “For what reason?” Hermione asked, confused.

- “Just because. It’s been awhile I called you that. You need to be brought back to earth, you egotistical–”

- Hermione let out a gasp of indignation. “I’m not egotistical–”

- “SHUT UP!” Draco yelled, causing Hermione and Sirius to jump in shock. Hermione faced her best friend to see him red in the face. “We have a problem here we need to fix and here you two are fighting like children ?!”

“Draco --” Hermione began but stopped when Draco glared fiercely at her.

- “You, sit down.” Draco ordered, his voice hard and low. She immediately listened. With her tail between her legs, she went around the coffee table to stand between Antonin and Abraxas. “I had quite enough! Sirius, if you are not going to behave like an adult, you can leave! Everyone, sit!”

No one questioned Draco as everyone sat back on their spot. Antonin adjusted himself on his spot in his couch, throwing his arm behind her, on top of the couch. They all watch Draco rub the bridge of his nose, then settled back on the chair he was previously sitting. His face began to turn back into his usual state. He took a deep breath.
“Before you all make out and have fun, Hermione, where have you been?” Draco asked, steepling his fingers then placing his chin on top of his fingers.

“I had to get away so I went to a place that I like to go to think. Then I went back to Malfoy Manor.” Hermione answered and Draco raised his eyebrows at her. “I couldn’t control myself. I had to kiss your dad.” Abraxas turned his head towards her. Sirius slapped his forehead. Mulciber snorted and Rodolphus and Antonin didn’t react.

“My son…?” Abraxas whispered, horrified.

Draco closed his eyes. “Hermione …”

“I am obviously joking. I am trying to lighten the mood up.” Hermione explained, “Atmosphere is kinda heavy, huh? Nevermind.” She sighed, “Okay, the real reason I went to Malfoy Manor is because Lucius found a journal of Elena Rosier of 1878 who opened the chest with magic and blood and I found out what happens when we don’t kiss.”

“What happens?” Draco prodded for more, his anger gone.

“Our magic, all six of us, magic and body will get really weak and I fear, death. Elena had kiss her uncle before her magic strengthened back. I think it is early for us, maybe that’s why we haven’t been experiencing it.”

“You grow weak until you die.” Draco repeated flatly. “Amazing. There is no way to break this bond without killing everyone in it. Great.”

“What is your plan, Hermione?” Orion asked and everyone faced her, looking at her expectantly. Hermione swallowed, her anxiety coming up. She knew what she has to do, to keep everyone alive. Oh, why is her morality so high?! It didn't even matter if her morality was low: if they died, she died. There isn’t any other way but only this.

“Why wait? Either Antonin curses me then we all kiss or we all kiss then Antonin cures me. Which sounds preferable? Either way I will be making out with five men.”
“We kiss first then Antonin can cure you. We will have stronger magic each of us.” Abraxas said then a pink blush appeared on his face. “We talk about throwing kisses around like its candy.”

“Isn't that big of a deal. Are you telling me that only woman you have kissed is Arabelle?” Hermione asked, incredulous, eyeing the handsome man.

“No, that's not it. I have kissed few, selected women. A kiss is more intimate than sex, in my opinion.” Abraxas defended himself.

“I think a penis inside you is quite intimate as well and has lingering consequences that can last up to 9 months.” she quipped back and Abraxas narrowed his eyes infinitesimally. He leaned closer, so close that she could feel his breathing on her lips. She felt her heart raise and a blush beginning to start from her chest.

“You don't think this is intimate? I very well think this is more intimate, don't you think so?”

A throat cleared. “Can you not do that in front of me?” Draco asked, his voice pained. Abraxas moved away from her, a smirk playing at his lips. Hermione glared at the man as she tried to calm herself down.

“She only kissed like two boys. We can chill with...whatever that was Abraxas was doing.” Sirius said, giving Abraxas a weirded out look.

“I kissed more than two men! I can kiss ten men.” she defended herself. Draco looked skeptical. “I can!”

“Then why are you blushing like a virgin?” Draco asked, smirking evilly.

Hermione couldn't find her words and she crossed her arms and harrumphed. She settled back deeper into the couch and looked away from her best friend. “I am sure your grandfather can teach me, Draco.” she replied back, winking, successfully wiping the smirk off of his face.

Antonin and Mulciber began to laugh out loud, even Orion was chuckling. Draco stood up, his nose in the air. “Tell me when you are done kissing. I want to be in the room when Antonin cures you.”
“I am going to leave, too. I don't think I can handle watching my father kiss my godson’s best friend.” Sirius also added, standing up. The two men walked out of the living room fast and she heard the front door open and close, leaving behind a tense atmosphere.

Hermione coughed. “It is a simple kiss, huh? No big deal, huh?” She sounded like she was trying to convince herself. “Let’s get to the matter. Who goes first? How do we choose? Do we use a hat?”

“Surnames alphabetically?” Rodolphus suggested, looking around to see reactions.

“Hey, I will be last in that category!” Mulciber protested then stopped himself. “No, it's okay. We should do it what Rodolphus suggested.”

Why did he pause like that?

“So, last names, Hermione? Is that good with you?” Orion asked, giving her a strange look, as if he was excited and blank at the same time. She was confused when it dawned on that if she took this route, Orion Black would be the first one for her to kiss.

“A - a - and where do you all want to kiss?” she asked, looking at Antonin who in return smiled at her.

“I think some privacy would be best, kotnyok?” Antonin said, his voice right by her years. Draco was right! This was too big of a bite for me to chew she thought to herself. But she was already here. “The kitchen?”

“The kitchen is fine.” She whispered, then she met Abraxas’s eyes who was blatantly looking at her lips. Orion stood up, reaching out his hand for her to take. She stared at him and he gave her a comforting smile. She slowly put her hand in his palm and he pulled her up. As he led her to the kitchen, she turned back to catch Rod’s eyes. He just gave her a smile.

Once they entered the kitchen, Orion turned to face her. “Can you ward so nothing can interrupt us?” Orion asked and she nodded. She put a silencing charm and a warding off charm. She felt his fingers circle around her wrist. She followed wherever he pulled. He stopped her and she felt the counter press against her lower back.
Orion grabbed her waist tightly and tugged upwards, telling her to hop on the counter. She did without protest. A sudden bout of shyness wrecked through her, causing her to tuck her chin in. *It is just a kiss but why does it feel like it more?* It felt forbidden. Is this what Elena was talking about when she said she liked her uncle’s kiss? She couldn't think further when Orion pushed her chin up with his fingers.

“I thought you kissed more men than two.” Orion said, teasingly. Hermione blushed at his statement.

“I did.” She said, “But this is different.” she ended with whisper as she watched him place his right hand on her neck which was slowly moving towards the back of the neck, tugging her forward. “I've never kissed a man.”

Orion leaned forward, his nose nudging hers away. He licked his lips, his tongue ‘accidentally’ brushing against her lips. That send out a thrill she didn't she would experience. She wanted more. Last time she felt this way was with Krum. But how? How could she feel this way when she just met him yesterday?

“Stop thinking.” Orion said, clearly watching. Hermione scoffed in indignation.

“You simply can't stop --"

He swooped in as he pulled her towards him, crushing his lips against her.
**Chapter Ten**

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a wild one, you guys. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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**CHAPTER TEN**

Orion’s lips may have been on the thin side, but Hermione is finding out right now that she didn’t mind that at all. He took control before her thoughts could right itself. His lips grabbed at her lower lip and he sucked and nipped at it. He let go of her lower lip and used his tongue to soothe the sting caused by the nip. Hermione gasped in surprise at that play of his lips and Orion took that as an opportunity to slither his tongue in. Hermione couldn’t help but kiss him back, putting her hands on top his shoulder, trying to explore his mouth as he was doing with hers.

- Orion knew how to kiss.

- A strange sensation appeared right behind her sternum. It felt like pressure was building up behind it and after few seconds, it popped pleasantly, making her toes curl unconsciously. She didn’t think much of it. Instead, she wanted more. She pulled Orion closer, getting rid of the empty space between them and kissed him back more. He replied back with more power, sliding his left arm around her waist and pulling her flush against his chest. Hermione’s hand automatically? unconsciously? ran through his long hair and she was compelled to tug him at his roots. Orion apparently liked that by the sound of the moan at the back of his throat.

- A voice in the back of her head was reminding that thirty seconds was long gone but Hermione ignored it. She wanted to keep on kissing Orion, wanted to keep on running her hands through his hair. How could Walburga hate this man? Did she not kiss this man on her wedding? Orion said that he wasn’t accepting of Walburga so he didn’t kiss her with passion. Why the hell am I thinking about Walburga?!

- The urge to take a breath came fast, instead of breaking the kiss, she tried to breathe through her nose but it was for no avail; Orion broke the kiss by a final suck on her lower lip. He let go of her lower lip and watched it bounce back to place. He breathed hard as he shifted his lips towards her jaw, she can feel the tufts of short breaths caressing her neck. His lips skimmed over a jaw as she felt his left hand squeeze her waist, softly.
What was that? She thought when the haze in her brain began to clear out. She barely know this guy and here she is, having the best kiss from him. She could feel her race calming down and her breathing slowing back to normal. Her arms were still around him, his hair tangled between her fingers. How could she like this first kiss? It should have been awkward, painful even, but the second his lips descended over hers, to her, it felt right. It was as if her lips were made to kiss his. And why wasn’t he moving away? Why am I not pushing him away?

Orion cleared his throat. “That was…” he trailed off, his lips moving against her jaw.

“Amazing.” Hermione supplied which made Orion push himself away from her to meet her eyes.

“Really?” he asked, then cleared his throat then said snootily, “I have known to be a great kisser.”

“No, that is not what I meant!” Hermione said, slapping his shoulders. “What I meant is that we both are literal strangers, our kissing should been more awkward, right? So, why did we keep on kissing?”

Orion frowned at what she was saying. “You are overthinking this. If you thought that kiss was too passionate, you should have stopped me.” He said, stepping back from her. Hermione was shocked at the sudden change of mood. “Did you want it to be horrible? I thought if I made it seem like I am fine with the idea of kissing, it would help you ease into it. I guess it didn’t.”

“No, that is not what I meant, Orion.” She said quickly, grabbing at Orion’s wrist. “I am glad that you want to kiss me...maybe I am overthinking this. I really don’t want to admit if this is the chest’s magic that you want to kiss me or you yourself as a being want to kiss me. But it has to be the chest magic. Why would you, in your own power, want to kiss me, a stranger? As you said, kissing is personal and you don’t do personal things with strangers. I am not saying that your kissing sucks. Your kissing is amazing and I want to do it again.”

Orion raised his eyebrow at the last statement as she blushed at her admittance. “We will have to talk about this all together after we all kissed you, Hermione. Overthinking before it even begun isn’t going to solve anything. Sirius was right; you think too much.”

“Well, Sirius can kiss this ass! This is new for me, for you, I need to know everything. I need to be-...” Orion stopped her lecture by another sweltering kiss. Before she could respond, he detached himself from her then smiled at her, softly.
“Stop trying to worry about things that haven’t even happened. For now, enjoy kissing. We will all learn about this chest together. You can’t put it all on your shoulders. We are part of it, too.” Orion stated, then stepped away. He was right; She can’t have her thoughts all over the place like she usually does; that’s why she gets headaches all of the time.

“It’s Antonin, next, right?” Orion asked, causing her to gasp in surprise. Obviously, the next person would be him. “Want me to call him in?”

“Er - yes. Please, thank you.” she said, waving her hand to lower the wards. Was she afraid of Antonin? After the confession of having a cure, she was, in reality, apprehensive. Not scared, but worried that he would hate kissing her. Whatever happened to him while he was young must have been so bad that it made him shift towards Voldemort, could it be related to Muggleborns? Was she scared that when she kisses Antonin, her nightmares will attack?

A throat clearing brought her back to current time. Antonin was standing in middle of the kitchen, watching her with unreadable eyes. She blushed to the fact she was caught daydreaming. She watched Antonin’s eyes flicker to her lips and stay focused on them. Her lips felt swollen from the enviograting kiss she received from Orion. He slowly stalked forward, like a tiger and stopped just before her, where Orion stood before.

Antonin sucked in a breath before saying, “I know that kissing me is not ideal--“

“Can you cure me or not?” Hermione interrupted, her eyes wide and filled with hope. He stared right into them.

“Yes .” Antonin answered and she felt her lips tug upwards and her shoulders relax.

“Then you kissing me is very ideal.” she whispered, then blushing at how...forward it sounded. Has she no shame? Before she could chastise herself, Antonin invaded her space, his scent of fire and roasted coffee surrounded her. She pulled her eyes up to meet his electrifying blue eyes. But she needed to know … “What about you? I know this is not what you want and I am not some busty Russian girl or Alecto Carrow or--“

“With all due respect, shut up .” he interrupted, placing his fingers on her lips. “It is quite unfortunate that you are stuck with me, but I am glad that you are not Alecto Carrow.” His eyes were on his finger, and it followed as the finger felt all the contours of her lips. “There was a time she walked up
to me with a metal stirring rod and told me what she can do with it. I promptly made an excuse and ran away.” He pulled at her lower lip, causing to open her mouth slowly. “And one time, she was holding her wand…” he trailed off, watching his own finger slip past her lips and enter mouth slowly. Her breathing rose up again as she felt his first digit over his finger caress her tongue then he slowly pulled out. “…that lady was demon and she thought she could turn me on but I was so turned off there was no blood in my groin.”

He repeated the motion, his eyes glazed and his voice husky. He was enthralled by her tongue as he kept massaging it. She felt her breath hitching, watching his pupils blow up to the point only thin ring of blue was left behind. He pulled his finger away and he watched it glisten then back to her lips then to her eyes. Hermione didn’t know what to feel but she knew she became aroused by his finger. “I - I - I don’t know what came over me, Ms. Granger. Why I did--” Hermione couldn’t take it anymore, grabbed the collars of his shirt, pulled him towards her, crashing her lips with his shocked and open lips.

It took him under five seconds to respond, grabbing the back of her head as he kissed her back, effectively turning her into a putty. She was sure most victims and their torturers don't kiss this way but for now, she didn't care. Feeling bold, she copied his previous movement with his finger in her mouth but this time with her tongue. His fingers tangled with her hair and pulled it which brought out an involuntary moan out of her lips.

The same feeling of pressure appeared behind her sternum, this time stronger than before. It popped, making her moan slightly louder. Antonin sucked on her tongue before he yanked his lips from Hermione’s. A groan of disappointment left her her lips without her permission.

With his other hand, he placed it between her knees and he pushed them apart. He stepped between her legs, grabbed her by her waist, pulled her closer, smashing her breasts against his stomach. She sucked in a shuddered gasp at the contact. Antonin caught the gasp and smirked. He yanked at her hair strongly, pulling her head back to rest on her shoulders. She realized that she was in his power and what power it is. Hermione is a strong woman with independent beliefs. She promised to herself that she will not be part of a plan that she has no say in or control in. But now…now she wants to let that control go.

“Again?” he asked, his voice husky and throaty. She nodded quickly, her hair tugging by still being in his hands. “Are you sure? You want me to kiss you again?”

“Yes, Antonin.” she hissed, licking her lips. His nose flared and descended upon her lips slowly. Once his lips barely touched her lips, she let out a whimper. Okay, okay, I am whimpering for Dolohov. What the fuck? Is this me or the chest? God, I could kiss Antonin all day. However, this kiss wasn't rough or long. It a simple kiss with a tongue swipe at the end before he stepped away from her, letting her hair go.
“You felt the pressure in your chest, too?” he asked, fixing his hair and clearing his throat. It took her five seconds longer to register his words and actions.

“Yeah. It felt good for me. For you?” she asked, trying to sound nonchalant. He nodded. She combed her hair with her fingers and corrected her dress. She slowly raised her hands to feel her lips; they felt hot and puffy. Antonin watched her movements as he fixed his jeans from the front. Her eyes followed his hands to see the straining of zipper and the shape of his... She blushed as she looked away. I...did that.

“I find kissing you quite fun, kotenyok.” Antonin said, walking closer. She gave him a confused look as he rubbed her lower lip again.

“What does that mean?” she asked, as she felt his hands lower themselves between her breasts. He pressed through the cloth to rub the scar he left.

“It means kitten.” he answered, following the scar till it stopped over her left hip bone. “This will be gone by tonight. It will hurt, though.”

"I don't care.” she said, grabbing his hand from her hip. “I just want it removed. If it done by tonight, I will kiss you again, as long as you want it.”

Antonin smirked. “I am holding onto that. I may not be a Slytherin but I still hold my deals down.”

She dropped his hands as he walked to the kitchen doorway. “You are not a Slytherin?”

He shook his head. “Ravenclaw.” he replied then waited for her to drop the wards. It makes so much sense that he is a Ravenclaw. That is not what she should be thinking about. What she should be thinking about how she reacted to Antonin. She should have been disgusted and scared, not lightheaded and aroused. She could feel the the faint thrum in her core. She should be mad at the situation but she was waiting for Rodolphus to come. How will he kiss? Would he be rough as passionate as Orion? Dominating as Antonin?

She watched the door that led to the living room and waited with baited breath for the stockier man to arrive. She removed her wedges and let it fall to the floor. Rodolphus walked in with a smile. A wave of her hand, she raised the warding up again. Rod combed his hair with his fingers as he
walked closer to her.

“Wow.” he marveled, grabbing her chin. ‘Look at those lips. Only two and this is how your lips are? I wonder how they will look like after we are done.”

“Orion and Antonin didn't held back.” she answered, blushing. “What about you? How will you kiss me?”

“I will show you.” he whispered, rubbing my cheeks with his thumb. They both leaned in to each other, gave a little a pause, then went the rest of the way. Soft. Sensual. Poetic. Those were the words that appeared in her head when they began to kiss. Such a drastic (and welcome) change from her previous kisses. There were no hair pulling or biting. It was just simple manipulations of lips and tongue that made her just as pliable like as she was in Antonin’s turn. The pressure build up again and she grasped at Rod’s shirt to stay grounded.

As the pressure popped, she felt the pleasurable feeling in her core, strengthening her arousal. She didn't realize the small moans that was erupting from her. She squeezed her legs to give relief to herself but it made it throb harder. Rod’s hand went to her shoulders then he grabbed her sides, right below the armpit. His thumb, however, lightly rubbed the swells of her breasts. She gasped at the sudden touch and Rod’s tongue took advantage. It might be a simple kiss but it was just as exciting as both Orion’s and Antonin’s kisses.

He removed his lips from hers softly then slowly stepped back, keep his hands were they were and kept on the rubbing the swells of her breasts. She should stop him but her body is literally singing. However, he dropped his hands and she had to find the will to stop the whine that was lodged in her throat to stop coming out.

“Do you need a break? You look like you need a break.” Rodolphus asked, his voice teasing. Gentle, my ass! He did everything on purpose! Rodolphus was the evilest of them all. He knew how turned on she is and yet! She growled, growled, as he walked away, chuckling. He literally played Hermione like a flute. How much longer? She felt tortured. She knew if she were to put her hand in her nether region, she would feel how engorged her clit would be. She wanted to sob out and touch herself but before she could even lift her hand, Abraxas came through the kitchen with confident steps.

Hermione tried to control her face. Oh, she must be looking so...scandalous, with red cheeks, puffy lips and messed up hair. Abraxas gave her a curious look as if she was some kind of painting to be observed. She watched as the curious glint in his eyes shifted to something else; something primal. He walked up to her and his immediate scent of musk and woodiness surrounded, elevating her arousal.
“You poor girl. Look what they have done to you...look what I will do to you.” He said, cooing, grabbing her chin with his gloved right hand (when did he wear gloves?) then the hand slithered down to grab her neck, softly. The leather felt good on her heated skin. Hermione swallowed, causing Abraxas to tighten his grip on her neck. A sliver of panic pierced through the arousal haze and to her curiosity, her pussy pulsed stronger. Her knickers were already wet, she could feel it clinging to her labia majora.

“Open your mouth.”

The order from him was a surprise that she followed through. Alright, another dominating man. Are all the men dominators? Before she could think further about the dynamic of the men she is bonded with, Abraxas grabbed her lower lip and pinched. “Such debauched lips. Filthy, even. How can I kiss them without getting other men’s saliva on me?” Abraxas observed and she flushed even more at his words. “You liked their kisses, didn’t you? You opened your mouth before they even got to you, isn’t that right? You sat just like this and received it, huh?”

His words should have angered her. How dare he talk to her like that? He made her sound like a wanton slut! But no, it didn’t anger her. Instead, to her horror, she felt her pussy leak more juice out. Her chest heaved in anticipation. “Open your mouth wider.” he ordered and she followed like a bitch she is. “Swallow their spit.” She did, a shudder went down her spine at the thought of their all mixed spit in her. “Leave it open.”

He raised his unoccupied left hand and pulled the ring finger, the pinky finger and the thumb towards his palm, leaving out his index and middle finger. He brought those two, gloved fingers to her mouth and pushed it in, mimicking the action of what Antonin’s did earlier. She caught the blue eyes of Abraxas and he smirked. “Suck, Ms. Granger.”

And suck, she did. She wrapped her lips around those gloved fingers and pulled her cheeks in, running her tongue around his fingers. “Again.” He growled, tightening his grip on her throat as she sucked on his fingers harder. “Again.” She sucked again and as she ran her tongue down the seam of the two fingers, the said fingers grabbed it and began to massage it. She could feel the saliva run down her chin and she scrunched her eyes in embarrassment. “Open those eyes. Such pretty eyes. Now, let go of my fingers.” She opened her mouth and she watched in horror/shame/arousal, his saliva-covered gloved fingers. Despite him having all the control over me, he had a faint flush over his cheekbones. As he was distracted by his fingers, Hermione’s eyes flitted to the fly of his pants.

It was tented.
She looked up fast, fear of being caught, when she caught the silvery gray eyes of Abraxas looking at her. She gasped in shocked fear when she realized that she had been caught ogling at his erection. An urge to apologize appeared but she held it in. Why should she apologize? It should been just kissing! She watch in amazement as he slipped his wet from *her* saliva, gloved fingers into his own mouth. She might as well throw away her panties; she could her vagina gush out fresh juice and she could feel it run down to her crack. *It was just kissing!* She felt mortified, aroused, out of breath, light headed and she still had yet to kiss Mulciber.

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“Please…” she unconsciously whispered, and Abraxas’s raised his eyebrow.
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“Please, what, pet?” Abraxas prodded, walking closer to her, smirking at her.
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*Pride? What is pride?*
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“Please, kiss me.” she asked, blushing, looking away from him in embarrassment. God, did she really say that? He felt his fingers on his chin and tugged to make her look at him again.
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“It is okay to ask for something, Ms. Granger. It’s is only considered polite. Do not feel ashamed.” he cooed, grabbing her face between his hands. “I honestly didn’t come in here to control you, Ms. Granger. Honest. However, when I saw you sitting like that, knees spread, lips debauched, hair messed up, something that has been hiding for a long time has woken up; I do hope you forgive me.”
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“*Yes! I forgive you! Please!*” she begged and he smirked. He crushed his lips onto hers and she responded back hungrily. His plush lips tasted like whiskey and chocolate and she shoved her tongue into taste him. He growled, pushed her shoulders to the point her shoulders and head was leaning against the wall. He crushed his body against hers. She knew he manipulated her instant of asking forgiveness but what does she expect from a Malfoy?
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This time, the pressure was so strong as it began to build so when it popped she fell away from him and cried out in pleasure. Malfoy moaned as well, telling her that he also felt the pressure pop in him. He kissed down her neck to shoulder and bit down, then lapping at to soothe the sting.
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“I didn’t know that was going to happen.” Malfoy said, as he lifted himself away, pulling her along with him until she sat upright on the counter. The dress’s shoulder strap was down her arm and his eyes zeroed on the top swell of her breast then he pulled his eyes away as he righted the strap. “Oops, it seems that I have marked you.”
“You don’t sound sorry at all!” she cried, trying to see the mark he was talking about. Malfoy smirked and god, he looked handsome when he smirked. She had no control as her hand lifted. Both Hermione and Abraxas watched as her fingers caress his lips. Plush and soft and yet it could deliver such orders.

“I will bring Mulciber and here is for hoping he take cares of you.” He said turning around and she let down the wards. Now, what will Mulciber dish out? She ran her hand down breasts and gasped when her hands touched her over sensitive nipples. She did it again and her eyes rolled back from the pleasure that was directly connected to her corner.

“Starting without me?”

She gave out a startling gasp and it took a second for her vision to straighten out. Mulciber was standing in kitchen with his arms crossed over his massive chest. He so huge...how can she kiss him? He will devour her. It took her awhile to remember to pull the wards up. “God damn, it is like they put you on a platter and handed it to me. Now, seeing how I am so tall and you are small, why don't you lay on the floor?”

“What?” she asked, her voice high pitched. Did she hear correctly? Did he ask her to lay on the kitchen floor? “Lay on it?” She got off the counter and she wobbled on spot. When was the last time she stood? She was so turned on that she could barely stand.

“Now, you have two choices,” Mulciber states, his voice normal as if it was an average day, bringing
her attention back to him, “We kiss and you bring yourself to cum or we kiss and I will help you cum. So, which is it?”

A relieved sob left her throat as she realized that her tortured body will find some relief. She could do it herself and only they kiss. As she looked at his hands, a question appeared in her head: *when was the last time someone else’s fingers made her cum?* And Mulciber’s fingers were thick, too! She doesn’t know why she is thinking about it when she already made up her mind.

“You... your hand.” she said, covering her face with her hands after her admittance. He removed her hand from her face as he smiled down at her.

“Through your knickers or without them?” he asked, his hands already tracing circles on her thighs, slowly moving them upwards.

“Without them.”

*What did I just say?!*

“You want me to remove them or you do?” he asked, his hands were so close to her knickers that she was sure that he could feel her heat and her juices on her thighs. “You are so wet and I am not even there.”

Feeling boldly, “You remove them.”

He didn’t wait as he grabbed the end of wrap dress and pulled up, showing off her wet knickers. Mulciber moaned as he traced the outer edges of her light pink knickers. “Look at that. Just from kisses? Those men tortured you, didn’t they? They didn’t give you any relief did they?”

She shook her head, mortified that she, herself, could see the shape of her lips through her knickers. “Let me help you with that, then.” he muttered, grabbing her underwear and yanking them down. She moaned as cold air hit her wet lips. “I am keeping this.” Her eyes opened in shock to watch him pocket her underwear. What will he do with her knickers? An image of him using it to wank off came through the forefront of her mind and if she wasn’t wet, she was gushing now.

Malciber spread her legs and she realised how open she was. She began to bring her hand to cover it
when he slapped it away. “Nuh uh, you are not going to hide it from me. The fact I am the one to see such a pink pussy…” he moaned, closing his eyes. Krum didn't even look at her private place. To see Mulciber gaze down at her with such apparent lust in his eyes made her feel so sexy. “That clit is waiting for it to be touched. If you could just see how its begging for it.”

“Orias! Please! I can't take it anymore.” she whined then biting her hands to stop her whining.

“But Hermione, I want to memorize it. When is the next time I will see it, you know?” he argued then she assumed he saw the pain in her eyes as he sighed. “Fine, fine. Throw away the wet puppy eyes.”

The first touch was not even on clit and her eyes rolled back in her head as pleasure ran through her. She didn't even see him lean in so when his lips touched hers, she gasped. She immediately ran her fingers through his buzz cut and whispered, “Orias" against his lips, he moved his fingers up and down her lips and circling her clit. He plunged his tongue down her throat as he moved his fingers faster and if she wasn't focusing on not passing out and kissing Orias, she would hear the slick sounds of her wet pussy and he wasn't even in her yet.

She humped his hand, trying to bring his hand to her clit but he kept on avoiding it. She made whiny noises but stopped shortly when his middle finger rubbed the opening of her vagina. She pulled Orias down until he was laying slightly over top of her. They both moaned in unison as Orias slowly sunk his middle finger into her.

“So tight.” he whispered against her lips. He began to pull his middle finger out then plunge it back in. He used his tongue to mimic his finger. She was gone. She couldn't think. All she could do was moan and hang onto him. It felt so amazing that she could feel tears at the corner of her eyes. Her breathing stopped when he added his thick index finger to mix. The stretch was slightly painful but the pleasure overrode it. This time, she could hear the sloshing of her sopping cunt. She should be mortified but currently, she didn't give a fuck.

The pressure began, this time it was almost painful. She scratched Orias back as he went faster with his fingers. As the pressure was at the highest point, Orias grinded his palm against her clit. She threw her head back and screamed as the pressure popped and alongside with her clit being stimulated, she climaxed so hard that her vision darkened. Orias moaned so loudly then crushed his lips with hers as his hands kept plunging and he curled them inside her to prolong the climax. Another bout of climax erupted from him hitting her g-spot. He slowed his hand to stop, keeping his fingers in as he detached his lips from her.

As their breathing calmed down, the whole kitchen room glowed gold then vanished. She shaking lifted herself to rest on her hands. She gazed at the middle of the legs to see how wet his hands were.
His fingers were still in her and the sight made her heart speed up a little bit. They both watched as he removed his fingers, his fingers covered in her climax.

“---you should clean it.”

That was the most tremendous climax she ever felt, even better than whatever Krum gave her. His felt like child’s play compared to this. She watched in fascination as Mulciber stuck his wet fingers in his mouth and suck them. “Doesn't it taste weird?” she asked as she removed her wand.

“No, you taste delicious. Have you never been eaten out before?” Orias asked, sitting on his ass, his pink tongue licking up her climax. She shook her head. “You are missing out. I can do it for you. Now.”

She shook her head furiously, blushing. Orias laughed as he got up. “I am just kidding. But the offer still stands.” He turned around to leave as he continued to lick his hand.

“Aren't you going to wash your hands?! You are going to walk out there with my juices all over your hand?!” she cried out and Orias grinned and nodded. He waved his hand and she felt her wards go down. “Hey!” But he was gone.

He is walking into the living room, licking her juices, in front of the other men. What if Sirius and Draco was back. Oh, no, she thought to herself and she cleaned herself with magic. How can I face them with them knowing that Orias made me orgasm?!

It was supposed to be only kisses!

Chapter End Notes

GOD.

I never wrote any sort of NSFW stuff so please be kind. I just wanted them to kiss, I swear. Than I thought a lot and I assumed that she would feel something after being so many times by such men with different techniques, you know.
Chapter Eleven

Chapter Notes

I am so sorry for the late upload. I have been dealing with family issues, school issues, and age pressure.

I hope you like it!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Living Room

The four men -- Mulciber was still in the kitchen with Hermione -- were sitting down and not talking to each other. Instead, they were deep in theirs head seeing that it was occupied by their bonding kiss. Orion was surprised at himself. Surprised at his appalling behavior when it came to kissing. He wanted to be a soft peck till thirty seconds were up but Orion is a man. To see a pretty witch waiting to be kissed (despite the horrendous circumstances) brings out a side of a man that should be tamed but wasn’t. He never kissed Walburga after the obligatory kiss during their wedding. Not even when they had to come together each time to consummate to bring heirs. However, a girl that could be the age of Sirius’s daughter got him to lose control? How?

Antonin knew that he could be a bit...domineering… in the areas of sexuality. Alecto Carrow was hooked after the first time they slept together and what a mistake that was. No matter where he was in the Manor house, she was there. She had to make whatever she was holding, whether it was her wand, a strawberry or even a metal stirring rod, very sexual. He had to sleep over at Yaxley’s room when she began to grace his bed without letting him know. He didn’t know he was going to be like that with Granger, the little girl he almost killed. He was almost in trance like state when he noticed her red lips, courtesy of Orion. He could still feel Granger’s lips on his and he was ashamed that he wanted to burst back into the kitchen and kiss her again. I don’t think that she will receive it well, he thought to himself. However, the promise she made of kissing if he cured her brought out a smirk on his face. She really doesn't know what she agreed to.

Rodolphus wanted to make their kiss sweet and nice and he did. As their kiss ran longer, her moans kept getting louder, he could feel his control over his lips loosen, his hands traveling and touching the swells of her breast finally broke that control. It had taken all his will power to separate himself from her. He had teased her; she actually growled. He felt bad afterwards but that quickly dissipated. Her kissing was totally different than Bellatrix and that is all he going to say about the wretched bitch of a
Abraxas, on the other hand, looked like a cat that had the most decadent cream in the world. He smirked to himself as he eyed the gloved hand that was in Granger’s mouth. How... amazing she looked, half-delirious with lust. Malfoys were commanding and he commanded her. How well she took his orders and he was surprised by it, honestly. She was prideful woman and she will not take orders from anyone. Despite the teachings from his childhood, that a woman should listen to the man, he found Granger’s willpower and independence quite refreshing comparing to his simpering wife. Oh, don’t get him wrong. He loved his wife and high-born lady behaviors but she always agreed with him. She was a smart lady and quite sensual but she never debated with him or kept up with him. She just followed him around. He couldn’t lie; it made him feel grand. Grand but he knew something was missing.

All four men waited with baited breath, knowing that Mulciber was the last one. Antonin and Rodolphus knew how Mulciber was like with women. Despite his profession of torture, female Death Eaters flocked to him like bees to flowers. His devil-may-care attitude could be the reason why they gravitate towards him or of his monstrous size of his body. There were speculation that he was a half-giant but Mulciber said that his ancestor were Vikings. They all wondered what he was doing with Granger and surprisingly Antonin felt jealous and disgusted at himself for feeling like that.

They all felt the wards fall and Mulciber walked out with a evil grin on his face. He is currently licking his palm to his fingers then he sucked around the fingers. That is not what caught the attention of the four men. What caught their attention was the wetness that was covering his hand partially. By the satisfied look in his eyes, every single male in the room made the connection: Mulciber, that asshole, made her cum!

“You didn’t.” Orion’s said, denying the fact what currently Mulciber licking his Hermione’s bodily fluids.

“I did.” Mulciber said, slumping down on the loveseat. “You guys should be ashamed of yourself. She was so aroused that one little touch melted her. I had to relieve her, you know.”

“So, why haven’t you washed it off?” Rodolphus asked, his face void of all emotions but all three of them have spent their lives together so each of them saw the flash of jealousy cut through Rod’s eyes. A person who didn't know them wouldn't have seen it. And Mulciber reveled in that emotion.

“And waste this?” Mulciber asked, he lifted his mostly cleaned hand. “She tastes good, by the way. Want to try?” He proffered his index finger to each of the men. Antonin’s nose flared up at the extended digit and his animal instinct won the battle of the wills. Antonin leaned forward and Mulciber pushed his finger into his mouth. They both made eye contact as Antonin sucked and
something weird flickered in Mulciber’s eyes at the action.

As the feminine taste washed over Antonin’s tongue, they both sat back down in their respective seats. “Have you have no shame?” Malfoy asked, staring at Mulciber askanced. Mulciber shook his head, grinning. “Why not?”

“That is a girl we all three chased after in the orders of a nose-less freak. The fact that she is willing to kiss us to keep us all alive is enough said. However, the fact that she trusted me enough to bring her to completion is too baffling.” Mulciber stated, finally cleaning his hand with tissue paper on the coffee table. “When will be the next time she will allow me anywhere near there?”

“She tasted good, too.” Antonin piped in but they all quieted down when the said girl came back into living room, looking cool and collected as if she hadn’t experienced a mind obliterating orgasm. She immediately threw a glare at Mulciber who just smiled at her innocently.

“I hope you all enjoyed yourself.” Hermione said in a low tone.

“We did.” Rodolphus said, nodding his head. She glared at him. “Oh, you didn't want me to answer that?”

“No, I didn’t! I am gonna choke you.” she warned, taking a threatening step closer.

“Honey, it would be me choking you.” Rod said, then smirked at the blush covering her cheeks. Before she could say anything, the front door opened, reminding all of them that they were really not alone. It seems that Hermione also forgot.

Hermione’s POV

Before she could act on her threat against Rod -- like was the previous good boy behavior all an act? -- she heard the front door open. Oh, shit! She forgot about Sirius and Draco who she can hear walk towards them. She began to feel guilty about liking those kisses but she shook her head to herself. I should rather feel disgusted instead of satisfied but I rather feel satisfied with them than feel awkward around them.
She watched as Draco’s platinum head popped into view then his whole body appeared as when he saw all of them were appropriate sitting down. Sirius followed behind him, looking like he was trying to be nonchalant and sucking a lemon at the same time. She gave him a soft smile at his behavior.

“You done kissing?” Sirius asked, stuffing his hand down his pant’s pocket.

“Yup.” she answered, popping the p at the end.

“You look quite normal for kissing five men.” Draco noted, nodding his head. “Being bound to five women that I really don’t know will make me quite off-putted if I had to kiss them.”

She blushed then squares her shoulders. “Why?” she asked “We got established that this what we need to do to keep the bond strong and ourselves quite alive. It’s not like they were sexual with me or anything. Just kissing.”

It sounded like she was trying to convince herself even though she knew that she had Mulciber’s fingers in her not too long ago. Draco didn’t look convinced at all and she realized that when they were alone, he will ask. How can she explains it to him? Oh, I was so aroused that I would allow any man to bring me to completion without caring who he was? She can see it going very well.

“Alright! If you all haven’t notice, it is getting quite late.” Draco began, eyeing Hermione in a way that was saying ‘this is not over’. “As much as I don't want this to happen, it is her decision to have the scar removed. First question: how long will it take?” He directed the question to Antonin who was smacking his lips for some odd reason.

“The casting of the spell will not take to long and the removing and healing the scar will take at least about an hour.” Antonin answered. If it weren't about the subject at hand, Hermione could find the scholarly voice of Antonin quite appealing.

“Second question: will it leave anything behind?”

“No, it will not.”
“Third question: how do you know?” Sirius asked, folding his arms.

“We had a traitor amongst us. Voldemort told me to use him for my experiments with this curse... to better it. It was two months after I inflicted him with the curse when I found the countercurse for it. It was gone under an hour.” Antonin answered, his words smooth, as if he was reading a book out loud.

“The final question,” Hermione piped in, worrying her lower lip as she caught eyes of the man, “will it hurt?”

“Yes, very much so, however, you won't be able to feel after few seconds.” Antonin replied, slowly.

“Why?” Draco asked, confused.

“She will pass out from the pain, that is why.” he replied back. “There is no other way.”

“Maybe, we shouldn't do it as of yet…” Sirius began but stopped as Hermione put her hand up.

“Would it be bad as the Cruciatius Curse?” She asked, feeling anxiety rise up.

“No, it will only pain where the scar is, mostly. It will feel like shock or that was what the traitor said when he was cured. He also notified that his magic finally settled.” Antonin answered, then walked around the coffee table to stand in front of curly haired witch. “If I wasn’t sure about this spell, I would not have brought it up in the first place. You know there is no painless way to remove a scar.”

“I - I know that. I - I am willing to go through with this.” Hermione said, looking at her former enemy. Antonin nodded, a grim look on his face. He looked at Sirius and Draco who were fiercely glaring at the Russian man.

“I know what I am doing. I really don’t care if you are against me but she is willing to get rid of the scar that I’ve caused and I will only listen to her. I will begin so if you please stand behind her. She will fall so you will have to catch her. I don’t want to add head injury and memory loss to injuries I gave her.” Antonin declared, throwing his glare back at the two men. Sirius and Draco shared a look with each other, having a silent conversation between the two of them. With a big sigh and dropping of the shoulders, the two went around Hermione to stand behind her. Sirius placed his hand on her shoulder whereas Draco put his arm around her waist.
“If he does something to you…” Draco hissed, his eyes narrowed to slits, “I will be the second Malfoy to go to Azkaban.” Hermione just gave him a soft smile.

“I won’t let you fall, darlin’.” Sirius whispered in her ear.

“So, what, I will be unconscious while I am standing?” Hermione quipped, sarcastically. Despite the situation at hand, Sirius’s lips pulled into a smile.

“Something to see, huh? I will take a picture, too.” Sirius quipped back, smirking down at her. After the needed levity, Sirius became serious and looked at the Antonin who simply nodded. The rest of her bonded mates stood behind Antonin and was gazing at the situation varied emotions playing on their faces. Orion had his usual blank face as he stood at attention, his arms crossed over his chest. Abraxas and Mulciber looked curious and apprehensive at the same time. Rodolphus looked outright worried.

Hermione caught Antonin’s eyes and nodded. I am ready. He walked closer to her until they were an arm apart. “I have to touch the scar.” He notifies, sheepishly. Hermione blushed and nodded her consent. She watched as he lifted his hand and placed right in valley of her breast. Her blush bloomed even more when she felt his thumb and pinkie graze the swells of her breasts.

He took a deep breath in and uttered with clear and sharply, “Podnimite etot proklyatyy shram.”

He said the spell in Russian?! I thought you could only do that with Latin! Before she could even think about the amazing way of spellmaking, a feeling of being submerged in ice-cold water resonated from scar area. She gasped at the feeling how the cold shocked her system. She felt her knees buckle as she suddenly couldn’t feel them. Sirius’s and Draco’s arms tightened as Antonin’s hand grabbed at her armpits. The cold feeling intensified, making it feel like the area was burning. It was not the same kind of burn of the Cruciatus Curse. This was like slow-burning, like as if someone put a heated blanket under her skin. She felt out of breath as the painful sensation of being burned slowly moving towards her hip.

Her vision darkened around the edges but to her it felt like she wasn’t going to fall unconscious. She found herself on the floor, her upper back supported on the legs of Sirius and Draco. Even though the burning sensation remained, she felt her breathing come back to her slowly. She eyed Antonin with confusion. “I thought -” she began, her voice cracked by being so raspy, she cleared her throat, “ - I thought I was suppose to faint. I thought it was supposed to be painful.”
Antonin cocked his head to the side. “I am quite...confused as well. I wonder why.” He said, gazing at her as if she a curious specimen in his experiment. Hermione half expected him to pull out a yellow, lined composition notebook and a black pen, noting down the discoveries.

“Maybe, it is because she is used to pain? Maybe it is not up to par with the pain from the torture caused by Bellatrix?” Draco theorized, his voice low. “And even then, she didn’t pass out.”

“I think that is it… when I think about it now, it just tickles me how irritated she was getting. I mean, yeah, it upped her power when she threw the curses at me but if I could travel back in time just to see how a muggleborn like me was faring against her attacks without breaking…I definitely would. I would also mention to her that her husband is a great kisser.” Hermione babbled, ending with an evil smirk. She caught Rod’s eyes who gave her an exasperated eye roll.

“Really, Hermione? I think this spell is making her delirious.” Sirius mumbled, eyeing the curly haired witch that is resting on his lap. “So, it will take an hour to get rid of the scar?”

“It could vary, honestly. One of you will have to check the progress of the scar.” Antonin suggested, then watched as Draco and Sirius became pale.

“Like remove her dress and look?” Sirius asked, swallowing

“Only the top part. I would do it but I don’t think we are to that level of intimacy. You guys are closer to her so you should be the one checking for her.” Antonin answered back then he eyed Hermione.

“There will be no levels of intimacy between you two.” Sirius growled, causing Antonin to narrow his eyes at him.

“It’s not up to you on deciding on what levels of intimacies we should or should not experience. It is between us and Hermione.” Antonin hissed, then cleared his throat. “Hermione…”

“Hmm?” Hermione said, lifting her head up to meet his blue eyes. Everyone realized that she didn’t hear a word during the argument between Sirius and Antonin. She was gazing at her ceiling with her head thrown back. Maybe Sirius was right; Hermione is probably delusional by now. They could see
the dazed look in Hermione’s eyes.

“Will you be able to check if your scar is going down?” Antonin asked, his hand on her bare ankle. *Weird, Antonin sounds so far away...* Hermione thought about it and nodded. She moved her hands to her shoulder straps and began to pull them down her arm before an arm caught her wrist, halting her in the process.

“Not here, Hermione! In the kitchen!” Draco cried out in shock. As much as he is a man and tits are tits, he wouldn’t be able to meet his best friend’s eyes knowing that he saw them, knowing that he saw them without her consent. Hermione whined as Sirius picked her up bridal style and took her to the kitchen. He placed the delirious girl on the floor, keeping her sitting up by making her lean against the cabinets below the countertop.

Sirius sighed through his nose. How did he get into this mess? If Remus was here, he would get such a lashing that his younger self would feel it.

“Okay, Hermione, you got to push the top of your dress down so you and I could see the scar.” Sirius said, hating himself in the inside for saying it. Maybe he should have let Antonin be the one to check the scar; he is the one who had the cure and all. However, the thought of a *death eater* looking at his godson’s best friend naked torso raised his hackles up. At the same time, Sirius was reminding himself that he, himself, is no better person to look at this godson’s best friend naked torso. Draco could help. Before he could turn around to call for Draco, Hermione pushed the top of her dress down, revealing a pale pink bra but that is not what caught his eye.

Blushing, he gazed at purple scar between her breast and below the bra band. He actually don’t know if the scar became smaller because she never revealed the scar to him in the first place. Hermione gazed down at her torso. “Aww, my tits are small.”

“*Hermione! Don’t look at your breasts! The scar! The scar!*” Sirius scolded, looking away from the scantily clad girl, rubbing his face with his hands.

“It’s smaller! Sirius, it is smaller!” The happy squeal of Hermione brought out an unwitting smile on Sirius face. “Okey dokey, I am going to go and kiss Antonin. Be right back.”

“What?!” Sirius cried out twirling around to see Hermione stand on shaky legs. “Sit back down, Hermione! You don’t need to kiss him!”
“I do… I do. You don’t understand that I could finally see my torso without trying to be reminded or to see how ugly it was… he is doing me a great favor. I can see my body now.” Hermione voice went from sing-song quality to serious tone. “You must think of me as a vain person to worry about scars.”

“No, I don’t. Honestly. I don’t, darlin’. Is your top back on?” Sirius asked, feeling guilty. I know I said I would support her but to see her surrounded by them...and now she is talking about kissing one of them willingly? Sirius felt like it will take him several days to come into terms that Hermione will be like a wife to his dad. No matter what, Sirius decided, I’ll stay by her side. As much as he loves Harry, Sirius knew that his godson was a pain in the ass just like his father was. It will take time for him to come to terms that his former enemies are alive but he will lash out first.

Hermione’s giggle brought Sirius out of his rumination. Sirius’s had to stop himself from turning around. “No, I don’t. I will pull them up now.” She said, her voice going back to the childish tone. “It’s on.”

He turned around to see her fully clothed, her eyes wide, staring at him without blinking. “Hermione, you just can’t kiss them willy-nilly.” Sirius said, walking closer to her. “You barely know them.”

“That is true…” Hermione trailed off, then pouted like a child. Despite the stressful situation, Sirius’s snorted at her behavior. A knocking behind them brought attention back to the opening of the kitchen. Antonin stood at the mouth of the kitchen, looking worried.

“How is the status of the scar?” he asked, walking deeper into the room. Was this worry or concern from Antonin fake? Hermione was right: they could have easily overtaken them. It could be that they really wanted to live free? Sirius began to doubt himself. I would be fucking relieved that I don’t have to follow a lunatic around anymore, Sirius admitted to himself.

“According to her, it is smaller than before. She is quite...delusional...as if she is high. Is this a side effect of the curse?” Sirius asked and Antonin shrugged.

“How is the status of the scar?” he asked, walking deeper into the room. Was this worry or concern from Antonin fake? Hermione was right: they could have easily overtaken them. It could be that they really wanted to live free? Sirius began to doubt himself. I would be fucking relieved that I don't have to follow a lunatic around anymore, Sirius admitted to himself.

“According to her, it is smaller than before. She is quite...delusional...as if she is high. Is this a side effect of the curse?” Sirius asked and Antonin shrugged.

“The traitor I did this on, was asleep throughout the healing process.” Antonin explained, walking closer to Hermione who was staring at the ground. He placed the back of his hand on her forehead then on her throat. Sirius didn't know to feel sick or worried about the happiness in Hermione’s eyes when she catches Antonin’s eyes.

“It has been only 15 minutes. We will have to keep a close eye on her. I am sure that nothing bad will happen. She is just... high.” Antonin said then jumped when he heard a snort from behind him. Both Antonin and Sirius turned around to see Draco and Mulciber. Draco had his wand out, an evil
I will take a picture of her and make fun of her whenever I want.” Draco chuckled then uttered the charm. A flash of light appeared from his wand. Draco cackled as he walked away. Mulciber followed the young boy’s movement before looking back at the two men.

“I thought he was against all of this.” Mulciber noted, looking puzzled.

“He is a Slytherin; he will take advantage of any moment that benefits him.”

It felt like surfacing from murky waters.

That's was how it felt to Hermione. Her head felt light headed but dense at the same time. Hence, the murky water analogy. Her neck had felt noodly but she knew it was in her head. However, she remembers every detail of the curing process - remembering how she flashed Sirius in the kitchen. She scrunched her eyes, mortified. Huh? Was her eyes closed this whole time? When did she close them? She knew for sure she didn't faint.

Something beneath her head shifted. She snapped her eyes open just to see gray and dark blue eyes looking down at her. She assessed her surrounding and groaned in embarrassment. She currently is in the living room, laying on top of Sirius and Antonin, specifically her head on Sirius’s lap and her whole body on Antonin and her feet on someone else.

“Did I faint?” she asked at the two peering men. Antonin shook his head. “Then how did I get here…?”

“You don't remember?” Sirius asked and Hermione shook her head. “You wanted to visit the dreamland so you ordered Mulciber, Antonin, and I to sit so you could lay on our laps.”

“I did not!” she cried out, blushing, horrified. A chuckle came from Mulciber at the end of couch.
“Your words exactly: *I want to dream so let me sleep on your laps. You were quite bossy, princess.*” Orias said, chuckling. Hermione covered her face with her hands.

“How embarrassing. I am sorry.” she apologized, sitting up straight. It made her realize that she was sitting on Antonin’s lap.

“Don't worry about it. It is better than you squirming in pain.” Antonin said, shaking his head. “We theorized that you have a great tolerance to pain that why it didn't bother you.”

Hermione nodded then brightened up. “I should check if my scar is gone!” She turned to face Sirius and blushed. “I am sorry I flashed you, Sirius.”

Sirius’s cheek reddened at the reminder. “It is quite alright, doll. Why don't you check yourself in the kitchen and come back?” Hermione nodded and got off from Antonin’s lap.

“Can I come to double check?” Orias asked, salaciously. Hermione gasped and smacked his head slightly. He just smirked. Antonin punched Mulciber’s shoulder. “Oi!”

She realized that Abraxas, Orion, Rod, and Draco was looking at her with concern on their faces. “I am alright you guys. I feel no pain. Draco, you come with me.”

“Hey, why can he go and I can't?” Orias whined, pouting.

“Because I said so.” she simply said, smirked. Draco got up and followed Hermione into the kitchen. She pulled up the ward and turned to face Draco, amazement on her face. “Wow, I can feel my magic run through me stronger. So, Antonin’s cure must have worked!”

Without waiting for his response, she pulled the top of her dress down to reveal her torso. She gasped in shock. The scar was *gone!* There wasn't a hint of it ever being there. Hermione grazed at the spot where her scar used to be. She felt tears welling up. “It’s gone, Draco!” She glanced up at her best friend to see his wide eyes. He walked closer to her, lifting his fingers to chest. “May I?” he asked, softly. She nodded her assent. His fingers were warm as his lightly rubbed the area. “It really is gone.” Draco pulled her into a hug. She clutched at his dress shirt as she burrowed her face into his neck.
“I am going to kiss Antonin.” Draco said, lightly, causing Hermione to laugh. “I am going to ask him to marry me.”

“I will have to compose a letter to Daphne telling her how it wasn’t meant to be.” she said, laughing through her tears.

It was silent before he broke it. “Hugging you while you are half naked is kinda weird.”

“Yeah, let us stop.” she said, giggling, disengaging from Draco. She pulled her top of her dress back on and wiped away her tears. “I am going to hug Antonin till his bones crack.”

Draxo just smiled. “I thought they would begin with their old tactics, you know? Obviously, Antonin have been scarred by what he did to you. If he hadn't, he wouldn't have give you the cure, right?”

“He is the most surprising out of all of them. Mulciber is from a different breed of humans. None of them had any problems with kissing me. Is it bad that I enjoyed kissing them? Is it bad that I don’t feel like I am in danger when I am with them? I don't think it is the bond reshaping my thoughts of them. It is too soon for me say that I trust them, of course.” Hermione stated softly, looking at Draco, guilty.

Draco sighed. “I think we are seeing them as they were before they gave their life to Voldemort. It puts a lot of things into perspective. The world isn't black and white as we were taught to believe. Young impressionable boys being told that they are unique by a strong wizard could change their ways of thinking, plus with what they have been taught during their childhood. All of them, except for Orion, are the evidence of what happens when you decide to put faith in a man who is all words.”

“Harry and Ron, too. They can't see that there were victims from both sides of the war. Harry was better in acknowledging it, but Ron… he is judgemental. I can see why though, Fred survived by the skin of his neck. He had to spend in St. Mungos for several months because from the attack by Crabbe, Sr.” Hermione added, then shook her head. “I'll cross that bridge when it comes.”

“Let's tell them.”

She followed Draco out of the kitchen to see everyone looking at her, expectantly. She cleared her throat. “Antonin? Come here, please.” she ordered softly. He looked at Sirius, confused, then walked
around the table to stand in front of the curly haired witch. “The scar...is gone.”

Smug satisfaction ran through Antonin as he smirked. Hermione can understand; when all of the people who were doubtful about the spell that you created but you know your spell does wonder, it feels good when you show them that they were wrong.

“Really?!” Sirius cried out and Draco answered him as Hermione stared at Antonin with gratefulness.

“Thank you.” she whispered before throwing her arms around Antonin, taking him by surprise. It took him seconds longer to wrap his arms around her. He smelled like warm cup of coffee and she loved it. They stuck to each other until Orion cleared his throat. “Oh, sorry.” she said, blushing, removing her arms away from his midsection.

“It’s late. Harry and Ginny will be coming back soon and I will like to be home before they do.” Sirius stated, glancing at the clock. “I should leave.”

“I know how hard this was, Sirius, but thank you so much for being here.” Hermione said, walking closer to Sirius and hugged him.

“No problem, girlie. I'm a letter away if you need some help. I can come over tomorrow, if you want.” Sirius offered, holding her hand.

“I will let you know if I need you, Sirius. I don’t know what the next step or how to move forward with this new development.” Hermione said, sighing. It was a lot but she got the main step done: securing the bond with scar removal as a bonus.

Draco cleared his throat. “I will need to go as well. I have to meet my potions master tomorrow at noon.” Draco explained then looked around the room. “I can stay if you want.”

Hermione shook her head. “No, I will be alright. Nothing to worry about here. Go. I will be fine. If they get too rowdy, I can take care of them.”

“Are you sure?” Draco asked, biting his lip.
“We will not harm Granger, Malfoy.” Orias interrupted, chuckling. “She is perfectly safe with us. We have no reason to harm her. Look where that got us last time? We were this close to eating devil’s ass before she pulled us out.”

“Disgusting.” Abraxas commented, scrunching his face at the last sentence. Orias simply shrugged as Rod chuckled. Sirius let out a laugh at that.

Draco still looked unsure. “Hermione -”

“Go already!”

“Alright, alright. Don't get your knickers in a twist.” Sirius said, causing Orion to reach out and smack Sirius on the back of his head. With a grumble, both Sirius and Draco kissed Hermione’s cheek and left through the back yard. Few seconds later, they heard the resounding crack of apparition.

It was silent in the house for a while as she came into terms that she was alone in the house with five men who she kissed like a madwoman. “So...uh...it is pretty late.” she stated, lamely, trying to fill the silence.

“Yes.” Abraxas noted, looking at the time. “Orion, you can take the guest bedroom since I used it last time.” Orion looked surprised at that then nodded his appreciation. With a wave of her hand, she converted the furniture into beds for the rest.

Before she could bid everyone good night, Antonin leaned towards her, his lips by her ear. “You promised me that you will kiss me as long as I want if I cured you.”

Hermione blushed even more. “I did, didn’t I? You want to cash in that promise now?” she asked, peaking at Antonin through her lashes. He nodded, smirking. God, why didn't I keep my mouth closed?!

“Then let’s go to my bedroom.”
Chapter Twelve

So, the college started and it is a crucial semester where I have to prepare for my entrance into my program so updates will be slow and I am sorry about that. Hopefully, it doesn't get you all angry and leave me :( 

I hope you all enjoy this chapter. It's long.

Orias, Abraxas, Rod, and Orion snapped their heads towards Hermione when they heard what she said. Hermione was chastising herself for not whispering it. They all looked shocked and bewildered at the suggestion. Mulciber sat up straighter and asked, “Oi, why is he going to your bedroom? Only two of us were upstairs but none of us have seen your room. I think this calls for a home tour.”

“Look, it was a heat of the moment when I promised Antonin this. Getting this scar removed is a big deal for me and Antonin delivered.” Hermione explained, skirting around the truth but by the suspicious glint in Abraxas’s eyes, she knew that everyone knew that she was hiding something.

“What was the promise?” Rodolphus asked, looking quite amused.

“Um - uh--” Hermione began, feeling she is in a spotlight.

“She promised me that she will kiss me however long I want.” Antonin finished for the flustered girl and he couldn’t keep the smug tone out of his voice. Orion and Abraxas didn’t react but merely nodded. Rodolphus shuffled around on his feet, his face blank. Orias, on the other hand, was emotive. His jaw dropped in shock then he began to clap furiously, smiling wide.

“Oh my god, Orias!” Hermione yelled in disbelief and irritation, running to him, and began to hit him, open palmed. He laughed as he blocked her attacks before catching one of her wrists with his big hands and pulling her down on to him, making her lay half of her body on him. He pulled her even closer by wrapping his arm around her waist. “Orias!”
“When will I get to kiss you as long as I want? Should I find a way to make you awed like Antonin did here, huh?” Orias said, his voice low and husky. Hermione blushed at his straight forward actions. “Hmm?”

“Hey, stop pawing at her, you big oaf.” Rod protested, grabbing onto Hermione’s upper arms and pulling at her. As she was lifted from Orias’s arms, their eyes connected. Hermione swallowed at the promise sighted in his eyes. Her face heated and she knew he will work towards what he promised: that he will kiss her as much as he wanted.

“If you are done salivating like a dog, we will take our leave.” Antonin said, causing Orias to laugh. “Good night, gentlemen.” With that being said, Antonin grabbed Hermione’s wrist and tugged at her gently as he began to walk towards the stairs.

“You didn't have to gloat like that.” Hermione murmured, climbing the stairs behind Antonin, staring at this long fingers that encircled her wrist loosely. Antonin snorted, looking back over his shoulder.

“We pureblood men tend to keep our feelings to ourselves but know this, all of them liked kissing you, especially Orias. For the matter of myself, when I like things, I actively search for it.” He explained, stopping at the foot of the steps, waiting for Hermione to lead. A blush warmed her face at the way he said it — so nonchalantly as if he was talking about the weather. Hermione surmised her behavior to her past experiences with Ron --who can barely keep his emotions in check long enough for them to make sense -- had made her naive to this type of answers.

“Did...did you guys speak about the kissing?” Hermione asked, slowly. Antonin shook his head. “Then? How do you know they all liked kissing me? Maybe, they just like kissing.” Hermione led him to closed door that was the barrier between them and her room. Before she could open the door, a thought materialized in her brain: she never brought a boy to her room but now, Antonin, of all people, is going to be the first. How bizarre. And bizarre it was when she realized that she wasn't apprehensive like she was when he was brought back to life.

“Like Abraxas said, kissing is intimate. They don't throw kisses around willy-nilly. They kiss because they intend to have something benefit them.” Antonin said, looking at her expectantly. “Well? Are you going to open the door or you want me to kiss you against it?”

“Don't be impatient! You will be the first man to ever step into my room so...it is kind of new, okay?” she hissed out, blushing from the combination of embarrassment and her naive reaction to his last words.
“Is your room... pink?” Antonin asked, his voice filled with horror. Hermione gave him a deadpan look in response. He chuckled as he pushed her out of the way. Before she could even protest, he opened the door to reveal her tidy room.

“Welcome to my abode, I guess.” Hermione muttered under her breath, sarcastically. He walked deeper into the room, looking at the pictures of her and her friends plastered around the wall. She followed behind him, feeling slightly self-conscious. “Do you like my room?”

“Oh, yes. It is so... you. I never expected you to have unnecessary things in your room and I am right.” he commented then he looked at her bed then back at her. He smirked at her and she raised an eyebrow in response.

“Get on the bed.” Antonin ordered, nodding towards the said object, something shifting in his eyes. Hermione swallowed as she slowly followed his command — wondering why she was following such order. She should take control, right? But at the same time why should she? All throughout her life, she thought herself as an independent woman with a mind of her own that is capable of making decisions who should have a hand on where her life leads. The fact of letting someone else do that for her doesn't sit well with her...but this wasn't decision making or planning or studying.

This simply was a kiss.

She crawled over her made up bed, then laid back on her pillow, watching Antonin watch her. If she could describe the way he was looking at her, it would be like a smug panther watching its prey run around in fright, knowing there was a no way out. With a smirk, Antonin got on top of the bed and crawled over Hermione's prone body until they were face to face. Hermione let out the breath she was unconsciously holding.

“I won't bite.” he said, chuckling, then began to place small kisses on her jawline. Heat began to waft from the area where his lips met her skin and she could feel her heartbeat race faster. He went even lower down her neck until it met her shoulder. Hermione moved her head away involuntarily, giving him more space to do what he pleased.

The first swipe of his tongue made her eyes flutter close. The first nip from his teeth opened them back again. “If I get a mark of some kind, Antonin, you will be bald.”

“Afraid to show the men downstairs about the things you let me do?” Antonin replied back, licking the stinging area to soothe it up. “What if I want to them to see it?”
“What is up with men and trying to own us? We are not some kind of object —” Antonin’s lips covered her lips before she could continue to lecture. Deciding on not succumbing to his kisses, she tried to push him off. Instead of budging away, Antonin used his other hand to separate her knees so he could settle in between her legs. When his whole body was flushed against her, Hermione gasped at the sensation. Antonin took advantage of her surprised gasp and slithered his tongue in.

She threw her arm around his neck, delving into his wavy hair as she gave back the same energy as his in kissing. She widened her legs even more, making it more comfortable for Antonin to lay on her. She was still wearing her dress when she felt the zipper of Antonin’s jeans press against her mound. Realizing that Antonin could very well take her right there caused her womanhood to pulse and juice up. She moaned as Antonin took a bite of her lower lip. She needed traction to get rid of this ache.

Placing her feet on the bed, she used them to move her hips against his, trying to make the zipper of his jeans rub against her clit. It didn’t take too long for Antonin to figure out what she was doing; he was intelligent, after all. “Just kissing got you all bothered up? Kitten…” he whispered against her lips, chuckling. “Let me help you out.” Before she could understand what he was saying, he drove his hips down against her rising hips, his zipper smashing against her clit. She gasped/moaned in immediate satisfaction.

“Antonin!” She gasped out as he drove his hips down again. How does this happen? Why is she so easily aroused? Instead of trying to stop this, Hermione opened her eyes and stared at the Russian man that was slightly above her. He was staring at her, heavy-lidded. He leaned down and kissed her before going back to his previous place.

“This was not meant to happen. God, you feel so good…” he whispered, take his right hand and placing it on her neck. Slowly, his hand descended down her torso until it came upon her breasts. She watched as his fingers lightly grazed her nipple, which was already rock hard. She gave out a shuddering breath as he applied more pressure. He paused in his movement then glanced at her, asking her nonverbally, if whatever he was doing was okay. She nodded fast and he grinned in victory. His hand descended on her left breast, covering it with his long fingers and he squeezed.

“Antonin…” she gasped out and she saw his eyes darken in response. She tightened her grip on his hair, pulling him towards her face. Their lips smashed furiously as Antonin began to tweak her nipple. Each pinch sends electrical shocks to her womanhood, which caused her wrapped her legs around his waist, making it even easier for him to piston his hips against her. She was soaked and she was sure that her juices were staining his jeans because of being panty-less.

“Hermione…” he whispered against her ear, hot tuffs of breaths making her ears warm. “I need to feel you. Let me touch your skin.”
“Yesss. ” She hissed, causing him to stop in all of his movement. She almost growled impatience when he grasped her dress at the bottom, shoved it up, taking her bra along with. He piled her dress and bra around her neck, leaving her naked from the collarbone and below. She watched his eyes pursue her body with such type of hunger in his eyes that it made her pussy clench.

“No panties?” Antonin asked, his voice husky.

Hermione swallowed. “Orias took them.”

“God bless that man.” Antonin said, his eyes zeroing on her chest. He rubbed the valley between her breasts. “No more scar. Just smooth skin.”

“Thank you, Antonin. As a gift…” she trailed off, feeling bold. She grabbed both his hands and placed them on her tits. “Do whatever you want, but not sex. Not yet.” Her aroused body said while her mind was like ‘wait, what’.

Antonin’s nose flared in excitement. “Of course. Whatever you want.” He replied back then began to massage her breasts. His head descended down to her chest and he began to kiss the valley between her breasts. It was symbolic. It made her heart clench. He began to kiss his way to her right breast, nipping along the way before his lips hovered over nipple. She watched his tongue lower down and lightly grazed the tip of the nipple. That simple lick caused such lightning flash of arousal that she whimpered.

He chuckled before he enveloped his lips around her nipple. Hermione laced her fingers behind his head and pushed him down on her nipple. She kept on whispering his name as he sucked on her nipple. Her core was throbbing so hard. She tried to relieve it by pressing against his jean covered erection. She sobbed out as he bit her nipple. “Antonin, please.” She begged, squeezed his hips with her shaking legs.

He removed his lips from her nipple and sat back on his haunches, gazing down at her flushed body. He knew what she was asking for and to see her trembling body, her bitten lower lip and wet tits made fresh blood run down south, he had to do something for both him and her. He glanced down at her womanhood which was shiny with her juices. He placed both his hands on her inside thighs and pushed them apart, seeing her cunt lips spread apart, revealing the pink flesh shiny with her juices.

“Anything but no cock?” he asked again, glancing at Hermione. Her face was red with arousal as she nodded, furiously. Slowly as if he isn’t believing where he is right now, his grazed her wet pussy lightly, causing her breathing to hitch. Feeling quite powerful that her satisfaction was in his power, his pressed his fingers even harder in her warm cavern. Her hitching breath made him rub his fingers
“Yes, Antonin.” She whispered his name, clutching at her bedsheets. He flicked her clit with his finger, causing her to cry out. He moved his fingers down until it hit the hole that has been winking at him for a while. Her body stilled as he circled his index finger around her vagina. “Please.”

He let out a loud moan as he sunk his finger into her. It was tight and spongy; warm and humid. Her vaginal walls contracted around his fingers, making him imagine how it would feel around his cock. He felt his cock weep out but he won't do anything. As he plunged his finger back in her, he realized this is what Mulciber also felt. He glanced up at her face to see her eyes rolled backward, her bottom lip pulled between her teeth. So responsive. He added another finger, opening her up even more. His dick fucking hurt. He used his other hand to palm his erection, grunting at the relief of being touched. He wished it was her hand.

Hermione opened her eyes at his grunt to see him rub himself through his jeans. Her pussy clenched around his fingers tighter as she realized that his erection was caused by her. She couldn't think anymore when he grazed that special spot in her vaginal walls. As she let out a low moan, Antonin added a third finger into her. Her eyes widened in shock at the feeling of the stretching of her hole. She, herself, never added a third finger! It made her cream more and she wondered how it would feel if he was using her hand instead of his own to rub himself.

“Antonin,” she sobbed out with great effort. The man paused in his ministration. She reached her hand out. “Let me do it. I want to do it.”

Antonin couldn't believe what he was hearing. “With jeans on or off?” he asked out, slowly moving his fingers back into a sopping cunt. Her juices ran down his fingers.

“Off. I never jerked off anyone.” she said, blushing at her boldness. He spelled his jeans off, leaving him with boxers on. He watched as her eyes were trained on her tented boxer, clearly could see the outline of the mushroom head. Right above where the head ended, there was a dark spot, where the boxers absorbed the precum.

He watched as her fingers slowly come nearer to the straining cloth. His cock twitched as if it sensed that relief was near. When her finger caressed the clothed cock, his eyes fluttered shut. When was the last time a woman touched him? When was the last time he had his fingers in a spasming cunt? A low growl left his chest when her fingers became confident as Hermione began to rub his dick up and down.

“Push your boxers down.” Hermione ordered and Antonin complied with one hand. He pushed
down the elastic band until his cock popped out, bobbing in the air between them. “Oh, my.”
Antonin wouldn't say that the size of his manhood was monstrous but it wasn't small and skinny
either. It was dark red, almost turning into purple. A fresh bead of clear precum clung to the hole.
The skin to skin touch made Antonin gasp in arousal as her fingers met the underside of his cock.

Feeling more confident, she ran her nail over the bulging vein that was underneath the cock. She
looked up to see Antonin watching her fingers, mouth open. She wrapped her hand around the thick
appendage, thinking to herself: try and imagine that in her . Her pussy clenched around his fingers
which snapped Antonin from his trance. “Oh, I left you alone, huh?” he asked out loud, pulling his
three fingers out then plunged it back inside. Hermione gasped at the intrusion again. As he pulled
his fingers, he pulled his hips back, causing his cock to almost leave her hand. As he plunged his
fingers back into her cunt, he pushed his cock into her fist, making Hermione realize that Antonin
was using her fist as a makeshift pussy. Her pussy.

“Oh, Merlin, Antonin…” she moaned out and Antonin leaned towards her until his mouth is by her
ears.

“Your pussy feels so good on my fingers. I wonder how great it would feel if it was my cock in
there.” He whispered then slammed his thumb down on her clit. She had to shove her mouth against
his shoulder to mute the scream of pleasure caused by the assault on her clit. Her inner walls clamped
down on his fingers which caused him to move his hand faster and harder and his hips matched the
pace of his hand. Her hand was wet with all his precum oozing out and made his pistonning smoother.
She felt the beginning of the tingles in her toes, causing her to move her hips with his hand, his
thumb circling the engorged clit. She tightened her hand around his cock as he plunged his fingers in
her faster, his thumb flicking her clit faster, her vagina making obscene noises.

Her orgasm had reached her lower back, causing her leg to began shaking. Her back lifted off the
bed as it began to gain momentum. Antonin’s hip movement was erratic, letting her know that he
was close to orgasming as well. “Antonin, yes, Antonin.”

“Say my name again.” He orders then he latches on to her neck, biting it hard which caused her
orgasm to explode.

“ Antonin! ” she yelled/whispered as white dots in appeared in her eyesight. Antonin's hips slammed
down and with a low groan, he began to ejaculate all over her body, covering her torso with white
ropes. His cock pulsed in her hand until it emptied itself.

As both of them calmed their breathing down, Antonin said, “I only meant to kiss.”
“I know.” she answered back. With a kiss on her cheek, Antonin's waved his hand, cleaning the mess on her body and spelling her pussy clean. “Thanks. There is no point in you going back downstairs so sleep here.”

“Can I remove my shirt?” he asked and Hermione nodded. After ogling at his bare chest, Hermione scooted over to make room for Antonin. She was going to regret this tomorrow. Or will she? It was not like she was drunk and got taken advantage of by Antonin. She fully consented and he asked permission. She was in total control of her mental faculties and she enjoyed it. She never let Krum cum on her, always thought it was dirty but surprisingly she liked it. She removed her dress and removed her bra as well. She could feel her eyes on her as she spelled her nightgown to her hand.

She wore it and went under the blanket and Antonin followed suit. it was weird because she never had anyone sleep on her bed ever and now she had a man with her.

“May I put my arm around your waist?” Antonin asked, looking at her expectantly. “If you don't want to, that is fine.”

“Why wouldn't it be fine? You had your fingers in me not too long ago.” she asked, incredulously.

Antonin smirked. “Yes, I know. But this would be more intimate. I need to know if it is okay if I can be intimate with you because I don't know when I will get the chance to do this again.”

Hermione blushed. “You...you want to do it again?”

“You have no idea how delicious you are, do you? I will be dreaming about this in the coming days.” he replied back and she hid her face behind her hands. “I know it is weird coming from me.”

“It is.” she admitted. “I, myself, can't believe I encouraged it, either. Not saying that I didn't like it. I loved it. And you are wrong.”

Antonin gave her a confused glance. “Wrong? About what?”

“I am not going to be regretting this.”
Jealousy was rare for Orias. He knew that girls come to him with just a flash of a smile and even a glare if the girl is into that or even guys (he wasn't exclusively attracted to one gender). But he knew there were girls he liked that didn't like him but that was cool with him. Sex was just that sex and he knows how to make women orgasm. So, when girls choose his friends over him, he doesn't care. In fact, he encourages his friends to say yes.

So, when jealousy ran through when he heard the Granger chit moan from upstairs, he didn't know what to do with those feeling. The rest of the men paused in their activities of getting ready for bed when the long, sexualized moan came out, all of them were attracted to that noise. Abraxas looked positively jealous before Orion erected a silencing charm around them.

What was Antonin doing? That moan did not sound like it was from a simple kiss. Orias enjoyed kissing Granger. He never kisses the girls he lays in bed with so kissing her was a fun experience. Having his fingers in her was surprising to say at least. He got the impression of Granger of having an iron-clad hold about her sexuality. Well, kissing five men can weaken those resolute defenses.

He settled down on his conjured bed and raised the hand that brought her into completion. Damn, he wishes that her sweet juices were still there for him to lick. Makes him wonder why he was so stuck up on her when he literally met her a day ago. Before he died, he had watched his Lord Fuckwart scream in rage because of the chit but he never came across the girl ever. Oh, he was curious. He had seen how Antonin changed overnight after the Ministry mishap and he had confessed that he was done hurting children.

“This is what we have come down to: from powerful scions to slaves. Child Killers.”

That confession had changed his outlook on the war and he realized that they were trying to kill children because his lord's ego was destroyed by a baby. And his plans weren't really going through because Granger seems to know but that rarely works. Potter was known for being a hot head and he is also known about ignoring his friend's advice.

He never realized how skinny and tiny she was. Well, mostly everyone seems tiny to him. She was petite with raucous curls and peachy skin. She looked...pure. He was always surrounded by women with sinful personalities, who knew how to use their bodies to get what they want. Granger was like an innocent lamb compared to them but the way she kisses tells him otherwise.

Merlin help him, Orias wanted to go upstairs and kiss her again, be in her again, and he doesn't know why. He never yearned for something and to hear what Antonin, his brother in arms, was doing with her...
He doesn't know what to do with the jealousy.

Her right tit was warm.

Her whole back was warm.

She felt something rod-like lodged right in the crack of her ass. Her eyes slowly fluttered open and glanced down at her torso to see Antonin's hand covering her right tit and she can bet her whole collections of pens that it was Antonin's manhood lodged in her ass and not a pole. She blushed furiously at the way her body seems to wake up at the feeling of the heavy appendage.

She cleared her throat. It is now two days and she was already being intimate with a resurrected wizard. However, she didn't feel guilty or there were no second thoughts about last night. It felt really good to her self-esteem that she could make a man cum with just her hand. She silently giggled to herself. She would have stayed in this position longer if it weren't for her bladder protesting to be empty.

She sighed and tried to get up but was hindered when Antonin tightened his hold on her body while squeezing her tit as a bonus. Her body tingled in response but she shook her head. Enough. She has problems to solve and the idea of being stuck in bed and being sexually satisfied may sound really amazing, she knew it wasn’t the time. The only thing she knew was Antonin and Mulciber know their fingers through and through. But she really needed to pee. “Antonin.” No response. “Antonin.”

A sharp inhale told her that he woke up. She looked over her shoulder to see him lift his head off the pillow, looking at her with bleary eyes. “Hmm?”

Hermione chuckled at the situation. “I need to go to the bathroom. I would like it if you disengage yourself from my tit.” She said, raising her eyebrow at him. It took him a second for the message to click in his head and nodded. With a final squeeze, he removed his hand and rolled away, facing the ceiling.

“Oh,” Antonin said, his eyes trained on her neck then gave her sheepish grin. “Oops.”
She tried to see what was on her neck but to no avail; she had to see it in the mirror. She got up and stretched, her body popping in the right places. She went to her vanity mirror and stretched out her neck, immediately seeing the purplish mark where her neck and shoulder met. “Antonin, really?” she asked, exasperatedly.

“What? When you are in the throes of passion, you can’t control what you do with your body.” Antonin responded back, his voice innocent and clinical at the same time. She gave him a blank look through the mirror which he responded back with a teasing grin. She simply shook her head as she went to the attached bathroom. “Uh...if you please, will you hurry up in the bathroom?”

Hermione gave him a quizzical look. “Why?”

Antonin glanced down at his lap. “I need to take care of this.” Her eyes followed his to see the bed sheet tented over his lap.

“Oh— oh, okay.” She said, hurriedly, her face warming up. She booked it to the bathroom and shut the door behind her. With a couple of deep breaths in, she went about to finish her morning routine. As she massaged the moisturizer on her face, she went to see Antonin reading The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkien. “That is a good book.”

“It sounds very interesting. I never paid much attention to nonfiction but may I borrow this?” he asked, lifting the book. She nodded her assent and he gave a nod of thanks.

“I am going down to make some breakfast. Coffee or tea?” she asked, slipping on some pajamas. He answered with coffee before heading into her bathroom. She went downstairs to see Abraxas and Rodolphus waking up, with Orion missing. Orias was awake but he was staring at the ceiling. He looked over when she walked in and gave her a wide, teasing smile. Oh, god, what now?

However, he said nothing, which made her confused. “Good morning.” she said, smiling at all of them.

“Morning, Ms. Granger.” Abraxas replied back, nodding at her.

“Morning.” Rodolphus.
Hermione laughed. “I think it is quite alright for you guys to call me Hermione now that we shared lips.” She noted, heading towards the kitchen. Abraxas smiled as if he was holding back a secret which made her more confused. “I...I am going to make breakfast. Any requests?”

“I will have whatever you are having.” Rodolphus said, smiling softly. She eyed Orias and Abraxas to see if they want anything.

“If you are making eggs, can you scramble it? I am not that big fan of sunny side eggs.” Orias asked, getting up from his prone position. She nodded and Abraxas shook his head. “What will you be making?”

“Pancakes and eggs.” she replied back, entering the kitchen. She felt a presence behind her and she looked over to see a looming Orias, smirking. “Yes?”

“You must have had loads of fun last night, huh?” he replied, walking closer to the kettle. He grabbed it and filled it with water from the sink. Hermione blushed at the mention of last night.

“I guess? Kissing is always fun.” She said, looking away from the towering man who invaded her space. He leaned closer to her ear and chuckled.

“It sounded like it was more than kissing.” he whispered and she snapped her head towards him. “Word of advise, princess, a silencing charm is normally in use if a person is in a sexual act with other people living in the same house.”

Orias laughed heartily as Hermione gasped, shocked. They all must have heard her moaning. “But don’t worry, Orion was a gentleman and threw up his own silencing charm.”

“Oh, no.” She said, putting her face in her hands. How could she be so stupid? How can she meet other’s eyes now? That is why Abraxas was smiling like that.

“I don’t know what it so to be mortified about.” Orias said, after a short while, enjoying the girl’s embarrassment. She removed her face from her hands and glared at him. “There is nothing wrong with enjoying carnal activities. Why should we silence ourselves? Like it or not, princess, we will be sharing our lives together and using a silencing charm seems quite childish, hmm?”

“Then why did Orion use it, then?” she countered back, mulling over his words. She always thought
the sexual acts should be private but this was a not a normal circumstance where she is with one boy and the rest of them were her friends. No, she was bonded with all of them.

“He came from a time where sexual acts should be behind locked doors so hearing you moan like that must have disturbed his sensibilities.” Orias explained, then he grinned at her. “So? What did you and Antonin do? I am sure there was more than kissing.”

Hermione flushed again. “Why do you want to know?” she asked, indignantly. Orias shrugged. “I always want to be attuned with my friend’s sex life.” he simply answered, shrugging his shoulders. “You going to tell me?”

Hermione struggled internally, biting her lower lip. I mean, they all heard it so there is no point in saying that it was only kissing. She sighed, defeated. With contemplation, she threw up a silencing charm. “It was only meant to be a kiss. Kissing gets you worked up, you know? So, he, like, settles over me and the zipper of his jeans was rubbing...you know...down there.” she explained, finding it really hard to say womanhood. “So, I got excited and I began to move my hips against his. He caught on and began moving his hips against mine. He asked me if it was cool for him to touch my breasts and I was feeling very thankful that he got rid of the scar so...I told him he can remove my dress.”

“Wait—wait, he saw you naked? Tits and all?” Orias interrupted with a disbelief smile on his face. She nodded and he threw his head back and groaned. “I didn’t even see your tits.”

“You were inside my pussy.” she said, dryly.

“Yes, I know. Great experience, by the way. But tits!” he cried out, petulantly. Hermione couldn’t help but grin at his antics. “Can I grab one now?”

“No, I am not in the mood.” she declined, slapping his hand away.

“Oh, so when you are in the mood, come to me, okay?” he stated, confidently. She shook her head at him. Unbelievable. Hermione was sure he has grabbed bigger tits than hers so why was he so gung-ho to grab hers? “Continue.”

“Apparently, he liked that I was panty free, thanks to you. Oh, and he blesses you for that.” She said
and Orias looked so smug that he could give Lucius a run for his money. “He played with me like you did but with three fingers and I helped wank him off. That’s it. Nothing more, nothing less. Satisfied?”

“You jerked him off? You? I seem to have a wrong impression of you, Hermione, dear.” Orias commented, thoughtful. “Did you let him cum on you? He likes that, by the way.” So, what, does Orias know everything about Antonin? Rodolphus? Do they sit around the dining table and tell them what they did sexually?

“Yeah, he came on me. And that’s not all he did.” she said, removing the glamour from her neck to reveal the hickey.

“My boy!” he yelled, reaching out to gently caress the hickey. “Already marking you up, huh? I got to hurry up.”

She reached out and smacked him. “No one needs to ‘hurry up’!” she scolded, which he laughed it away. “Anyways, we have lots to decide because today might be a turning point for all of us. I want us to be ready for whatever.”

Orias became serious, all teasing aside. His burrowed and Hermione swore his green eyes became darker. He straightened up to his full height, legs straight apart and arms crossed above his chest. Overall, a power stance. And she kinds of likes it. “What do you mean?”

“In order to figure out where to live and check out each of your houses, I will need to inform Kingsley about you five.” she replied, cracking the eggs and mixing it with milk. “I am sure that they put wards around your houses to track who comes and goes.”

“I will let the other’s know.” He said, his voice gruff. He left the kitchen in a few steps and she continued to make breakfast. Heating up two pans, she brought out the egg carton and bacon out for the sides.

She was almost done with breakfast when she heard someone clear their throat to announce their arrival. She looked over her shoulder to see it was Abraxas walking deeper into the kitchen. She placed the pancakes on a serving dish and scooped out the scrambled eggs on a plate for Orias. She turned back to look at Abraxas who looked deep in thought.

“Are you alright, Abraxas?” she asked, using her wand to clean the dishes.
“Orias mentioned the housing situation. Do we really need to tell the Minister about all of this?” he asked, curiously.

“If we don’t, it wouldn’t matter. One way or another, he will find out. He needs to know first before the Aurors. All five of you were connected with Voldemort. They will have you in a holding cell faster than ever. They will have me tried in front of Wizengamot for harboring you guys. Kingsley will know what to do.” she explained, seeing that the kettle was already done.

“What makes you think Kingsley won’t put all of us in jail by himself?” Abraxas countered.

“If there is one thing you need to know about Kingsley, he listens first, talks about options, then decides. Kingsley is a cool-headed man, unlike Crouch, or whoever was before him.” Hermione defended, grabbing pancakes and began to walk to the living room to see everyone settled in, even Antonin who was glaring at both Orias and Rodolphus. She asked Orion to make the coffee table bigger then placed the dish down. She turned around to see Abraxas carrying the scrambled eggs on one hand and bacon on the other. He smiled at her as he placed the dishes next to the pancakes. Well, I know whom I am going to kiss next.

Abraxas moved over for her to sit which she gladly accepted. Everyone began to dig into their breakfast. After a while of eating, Hermione deemed fit to bring up the subject. “The only problem I do see is how I can convince Kingsley that you three—,” she pointed at Rodolphus, Antonin, and Orias, “— will not be up to your old tricks.”

“First, we need to appoint a lawyer.” Orion stated, causing Abraxas to agree with him. “If Kingsley does make us go to trial, we will need a lawyer to represent us.”

“Where can we find a lawyer that is trustworthy and unbiased to represent us?” Antonin asked, looking around. “Abraxas, you are quite the businessman. You must know someone that could help us.”

“I will have to send an owl to Lucius to let me know if Erwin Buchanester is still practicing. He is a family lawyer who is quite... persuasive.”

“Wouldn’t he be really old?” Hermione asked, and Abraxas shook his head.

“Nothing comes in his way; not even his age. He may be around seventy but that doesn’t stop him...
when it comes to representing us.” Abraxas answered then paused. “Why don’t we think about situating in the Malfoy Manor?”

“No.” Orias and Antonin simultaneously answered quickly, and Rodolphus continued by saying, “So much shit happened in that house that I don’t think we could ever see that place in a different lighting. I don’t know how Lucius does it when he was the one who was tortured the most.”

“I think he will leave the Wiltshire Manor to Draco and move somewhere else. I would.” Hermione mused, biting her lower lip.

Malfoy’s shoulder slumped and feeling sympathetic, Hermione placed her head on his left shoulder. “Why are you so unwilling to meet with Kingsley?” she asked, softly.

“As much as this part of the world is new to me, I quite enjoy it. I may be resurrected two days ago, but I like it here. My only fear is that Kingsley will try to separate all of us. Sentimentality and you being a compassionate person aside, what will happen to the bond? We may have made it stronger by accepting and kissing, but…” Abraxas trailed off, setting his finished plate down. He does bring good points, Hermione thought, biting her lower lip.

“From what I know from time in school, Kingsley is a level-headed person. Is he still the same?” Antonin inquired, then shook his head. “Is he going to believe us that a box brought us back?”

“He is going to believe me.” Hermione declared, sitting back comfortably, pulling Abraxas back with her. “He will want to know about the box and he will go from there. None of you are going to Azkaban.”

Orias brightened up. “Can we all kiss you before you call Kingsley?” Orias asked then hurriedly continued, “What if all of this business takes time to settle, you know?”

“I do second his idea.” Orion backed up, smiling at Hermione who blushed. *When did I become so...easily swayed?*

“Antonin doesn’t get a kiss because he got two kisses yesterday.” Rodolphus declared and Orias nodded in agreement. Antonin glanced at the two with shock.
“What are you two, six years old children?” he shot back, shaking his head in wonder. Orias and Rodolphus just shrugged.

“It is not fair that you got to kiss her twice.” Rod complained, then crossing his arms like a petulant child. Hermione watched the banter as if she would watch a movie. She felt an arm drop around her shoulder to see Abraxas who was not even looking at her. He was wearing a smile as he watched the three men fight amongst themselves, his face leaning against his closed fist. He glanced down at her without moving his head and began to circle her shoulder with his index finger.

Her shoulder felt warm and she unconsciously snuggled closer to Abraxas’s side which made his arm around her go lower until settled on her hip. “Let’s get back to business, shall we? Hermione can kiss whoever she wants to.” Abraxas said loudly, interrupting the bickering. “If you really want to be kissed, kiss each other.”

“Okay.” Orias simply said before leaning towards Antonin with puckered lips. Antonin pushed him away, chuckling.

“Anyway,” Orion interrupted, his voice stern, “how will you be talking to Kingsley? Should we bring Sirius into this?”

“If Sirius is here, it will give a better view to Kingsley that an Order member backs you in this, Hermione.” Rodolphus continued, nodding at Orion. Hermione had to agree, too. If Sirius is next to her, then it should make it seem that these five are not dangerous.

“I think you should bring Kingsley here, Hermione. I don’t think things will go well if we were seen traversing through the Ministry,” Antonin brought up and she nodded; make sense. Maybe, directly floo to Kingsley’s office? Auror’s will come down faster than the speed of light. She threw her head back in defeat. Abraxas squeezed her hip in the result.

“Today is going to be a hard day, boys. I will send an owl to Sirius first….actually, I will also send a patronus to Lucius to let him in on this.” Hermione said, groaning. She wanted to throw a temper tantrum like a kid but she held herself back. Abraxas pulled her closer to his body and squeezed her waist.

“Everything will be alright, little cat.” Abraxas said, giving her a comforting smile. She felt warmed at that and nodded.
She wanted to snuggle more with Abraxas but when nature calls, you answer it. “If you let go of me, I can go pee, Abraxas.” she asked, sweetly. He nodded, dropping his arm away from her. She went to the bathroom down the hall and locked the door behind her, sighing at the impending doom that was coming her way. How can she convince Kingsley to let her stay with her men? She sat up straight on the loo, abruptly. Her men? Her men? When did that happen? She covered her blushing face in her hands, feeling the heat emanate from her face. It’s not like they call her ‘my woman’.

She finished her business, flushed, then washed her hands. Whose house will they decide to live in? Either Mulciber’s or Rodolphus. Come to think of it, Hermione doesn’t even know if Antonin is part of the Sacred 28. Doesn’t matter; he looks like one. Doesn’t act like one, though. She opened the door of the bathroom to see it was Abraxas standing there, smirking. She got confused.

“Is everything alright, Abraxas? Oh, you want to pee? I will leave, then.” She said, hurriedly. Why else anyone be in front of the bathroom, Hermione, you big dolt? Before she could get past him, Abraxas shot out his arm and curled it around her waist. “Huh?!” She yelped as he pushed her into the bathroom, following after her, before locking the bathroom door behind him. “Wha—”

“I really did like Orias suggestion.” Abraxas started and Hermione had to hold herself back from rolling her eyes at him. And here I thought that Abraxas was a levelheaded one. She watched as he caged her against the sink, the cool ceramic pressing against her lower back. “What say you?”

“If I kiss you, then I will have to kiss all of them to make it fair.” She protested, placing her hands on his chest as if to push him away. She didn’t.

“So?”

She blushed at his words. What does he mean by ‘so’? And why say it so carelessly? She has her dignity, you know… Abraxas didn’t let her finish her thinking when he grabbed her face softly, lifting up to meet his gray eyes. “I think we should kiss you and you kiss us whenever we want to.” he said, leaning closer to her face, their breaths mingling.

Hermione nodded quickly, liking the idea very much. He just smiled before placing his lips on her softly. She was not expecting such a soft kiss from him. What she was expecting was the same, dominating kiss from yesterday. She wasn’t complaining, though. She clutched his shirt as she returned the kiss. His hand went behind her head to hold her. A teasing swipe of his tongue across her lips made her open for the intrusive muscle. A low growl appeared from him which made her more pliable in his arms.

He let go of her lips and moved his lips down her neck until it met her shoulder. “Orias did say
something about a hickey Antonin left. There it is.” he noted, looking at the bruise left behind by Antonin. He kissed back up her neck before settling above her lips. Hermione couldn’t think. Every single man in that living room knew how to kiss… how can she survive? Before he could kiss her again, there was a loud knock on the door.

“What’s going on in there? Hermione? Abraxas? Are you watching each other poop or what?” The sound of Orias came ringing through and Hermione gasped, scandalized. Before even thinking things through, she pulled open the door to reveal Orias leaning against the wall. He smirked at her then looked above her head to see Abraxas. “Oi! Are you kissing in here? You shameless man, my turn.”

Before she could retort, Orias grabbed her hand and pulled her against his torso. He grabbed her hair and pulled her head back so her head was tilted back causing her to gasp. He took advantage of her mouth being open and descended his lips down on hers. How could he- he just do that?!

“Have fun, darling.” Abraxas sang as he left for the living room. Indignantly, she started to push at the quite muscular chest (that she found lovely) of Orias so she could kick Abraxas’s pompous ass but Mulciber pulled her closer to his body, making his jean’s button dig into her stomach. Oh, fuck it, Why am I fighting? She returned his kissing as she threaded her arms around his neck. Her heartbeat quickened as he bit her lower lip and rubbing her back. He detached his lips from hers when air was needed then smiled down at her.

“Wasn’t that just so fun? Let loose, Hermione.” He commented, kissing her cheeks as they both caught their breaths. “Now, that I got my fill, the others should not get it. You must be tired from all the kissing. I will make sure they all know, okay?”

Hermione’s mouth dropped open at his words. “That is so mean.” she said, shaking her head at him. Orias just shrugged, smirking, his green eyes flashing with humor and...something else.

“Don’t you have a rabid dog and the minister to owl? They wouldn’t even know we kissed.” Orias uttered, raising an eyebrow at him. She furrowed her brow at him.

“First of all, Sirius is not a rabid dog. Second of all, they know you so they will know you kissed me even if you didn’t tell them or so.” Hermione countered back, feeling smug.

“That may be true but at the end of the day; I got the kiss and they didn’t.” he said, then laughed as her smug smile fell off her face.
“I will just go kiss them, right now.” she said, stubbornly, and stomped off towards the living room. Orias crossed his arms and mused to himself how predictable this girl was.

“Thank me later, boys.”

Sirius arrived shortly after she sent off the owl. She made sure her lips weren’t swollen from kissing rest of the men, leaving Orion for the last, who took full advantage that he could kiss her longer. As she waited for Sirius to come, she hanged out in the study room, mulling over the past few days and what surprised her the most was how willing these men were when it came to kissing her.

They all wanted to kiss her. Not being the bond was compelling them to; they fight amongst themselves to see who gets kiss her first. Why, though? Was it because they were just grateful that she brought them back to life? If that was the case, why both Antonin and Orias would have their fingers in her if they were just simply grateful? Hermione began to laugh to herself. What was she expecting the answer to be? That all five men were miraculously in love with her after spending two days with her? Please, even Lavender won’t expect that much.

Maybe it is the fact that they haven’t kissed a girl in a really, long time sounded more probable than they actually liking kissing her, Hermione Granger. She wanted to speak to Draco about this (come on, Sirius would blow up if he heard her kissing them freely) but she wasn’t sure if he was busy with his mastery. Which brings her to another point: after she sorts out everything, what will she do job wise? She really hasn’t thought about her future since this whole thing began. Or how she will explain to her parents that she is going to moving out pronto? I can’t tell them I am sort-of married to five men, they will kill me. Hermione would just have to lie—again—to them.

“Hermione?”

She snapped out of her musing when Sirius voice’s called out. She snapped her head up to see Sirius standing at the doorway, his hand on the door handle. He was wearing a grey shirt that made his eye color pop out and black jeans that highlighted his thighs. She raised an eyebrow. “Looking handsome. Who you trying to seduce?”

Sirius smirked, tops of his cheeks turning red. He closed the door behind him and walked deeper into the room. “I always look handsome. I don’t seduce girls. Girls get seduced by just looking at me.”
Hermione outright laughed out loud. “Is that right? Is that how you do it? I remember, I spend a night over at Grimmauld’s and you had a girl over…”

“Hey, I told you to forget about it.” Sirius interrupted, and she rubbed her chin more as if she was trying to remember the night.

“I am sure the next day you saw me make tea, you said, ‘fuck, I forgot you were home.’ The girl you slept with came down as well, saw me, slapped you and said, ‘I knew I shouldn’t have been fooled by your looks’ then left.” Hermione finished, feeling quite smug.

“Not my best moments, I assure you.” he shot back, walking around the desk to kneel next to her, his face turning quite serious. “Tell me the truth, Hermione. How are you doing?”

“Overwhelmed.”

“Are they treating you good?”

“Yes, they actually are. They are trying to get some of the worries off my shoulders but you know me, if I can’t solve my problems by myself, I am weak.” she stated, shrugging. Sirius was impressed; Hermione was self-aware of her faults. “They all told me that worry about what’s going on now than worrying about what is going to happen in the future. It’s hard, you know? It’s not like I got bonded with saints.”

“Kitten, there is no such thing as saints. All of us, even from the ‘light’, ” he threw up his fingers as if he was doing the quotation marks, “we have done some shady shit. I have killed, Remus had killed. As hard for me to say it, but those people down there were manipulated and thrown so deep into a hole that they thought held all the answers, they couldn’t see a way out anymore.”

“Just like Harry and Severus.” Hermione mumbled, and the sight of Sirius alarmed face. “Think about it, Sirius, before you go batshit crazy about Severus. We saw his memories, you know? Like a stubborn sweetie you are, you never went to the viewing. However, for Harry, his first time viewing Snape’s memories was after he watched Snape die. Snape knew about the prophecy, Sirius. Snape knew that the Voldemort knew about Harry. Snape warned Dumbledore about what the Dark Lord was planning.”

“Dumbledore knew?”
“After it happened, Dumbledore found Snape holding on to Lily and Harry. Dumbledore manipulated Snape’s feelings into making Severus into a spy for the Light. Every time that Snape believed what Dumbledore was doing wrong when it came to Harry, Dumbledore would remind Snape that Lily didn’t die for Voldemort to win. Lily was Snape’s weakness. We always that he was there to see us be sabotaged by the enemy but he was there to protect us. When Harry’s broom was cursed by Quirrell in our First Year, Snape was saying the counter curse. We thought Snape was the one cursing Harry so we burned his cape and Harry fell. The second year, he was making the cure for petrified. The third year, he protected us from Lupin and Pettigrew. So on, so forth.” Hermione ended, trying to will the tears to stop.

“Dumbledore fucking knew?! And he still left Harry at the Dursleys even though Lupin was capable of taking care of him? I know for a fact oldie but goldie Minerva would have taken Harry in.” Sirius vented out, curling and uncurling his fist.

“Remus was doing some kind of undercover work for Dumbledore when it happened. And Dumbledore somehow convinced that Remus wasn’t able to take care of Harry by being a werewolf.” Hermione added, softly. “I can understand why Severus had to treat Harry like shit. Did you know that Dumbledore always knew that Harry had Voldemort’s soul in him? The more truths about Dumbledore came out, the more lost Harry became. Harry saw Dumbledore as a parental figure and to find out that Dumbledore was raising him to become a sacrificial pig destroyed him.” Hermione continued, unable to stop herself. This subject was still sore with her and it will always be sore for her. “Oh, Dumbledore knew that Draco was tasked with killing him and he didn’t do anything to help Draco out. He just watched a kid shoulder an impossible task and torture himself.”

Sirius was silent, his head laying on his hands. “That poor kid. Was I really that blind?”

Hermione shook her head as she placed a kiss on his curls. “He manipulated everyone, Sirius. Everyone. He was so good that we never questioned him.”

“James and Lily would have still be alive.” Sirius murmured, snuggling deeper when she went to hug him. “I wouldn’t have gone to Azkaban.” It was silent for a while then Sirius shook his head. “Bring Draco here, too. I will pen a letter to Kingsley and have you read it before I send it.”

Hermione nodded, shooting off her patronus to Draco, telling him to bring his ‘lily-white butt’ over to her house. She left Sirius in her study and went downstairs to see the men talking amongst each other. She didn’t make eye contact with Orias because she was still mad at him (was she, though?). “Draco is also coming and Sirius is writing the letter to Kingsley.”

“Are you alright? You seem like you were crying?” Orion asked, curious and worried. “Did my dumbass child make you cry?”
Hermione laughed at the nickname. “No, he didn't. We were talking about… revelations.”

“And I am not a dumbass.” Sirius said as he entered the living room, glaring at his dad. “Just got a patronus from Kingsley that he will be here in thirty minutes. Apparently, we caught him when he is actually free.”

“Is it bad that I hoped that he was busy?” she meekly said, settling on the ground, crossing her legs Indian style. Rodolphus chuckled at that and she slumped her head down. “Kings is going to skin me alive and place it in front of his fireplace at his work.”

“Kingsley is not *that* bad.” Sirius protested but before she could respond back, the sound of backyard door opening caught their attention. A few seconds later, a ruffled Draco came through the living room, wearing an expensive black suit that he looked dashing in.

“I had a meeting at work. Came home. Got accosted by Daphne.” Draco explained between haggard breaths.

Hermione smirked. “I can see why. You are looking quite dashing, Draco.”

The said boy blushed while smirking. “Thanks. Had a lucrative future client. and I had to reel her in. Anyway, forget about me. You decided to call Kingsley?”

“Already did, mate. We got to figure out their living situation before her parents come back to town.” Sirius stated, sitting on the ground beside her.

“Let’s assume that Kingsley won’t burst in combustion and actually finds a way to get them back to the house, people are going to know and they are going to *riot*.” Draco said, his eyebrows furrowing together. Hermione’s eyebrow raised in surprise.

“You are right...even if Kingsley and I forgive them, the rest of the wizarding population won’t. They will be burning my effigies.”

“They don’t need to know.” Antonin suggested, shrugging. “We just need to open up one of their houses and we can live in it.”
“That’s all well and good, mate, but someday you have to leave the manor, right?” Draco countered back, which stumped the Russian.

“We might as well get used to it. They will put us on probation for at most three years.” Orias added, then his face brightened up. “Oh, and by the way, just to let you all know, it was Kingsley who killed me.”

What?!” Hermione screeched in shock. “You tell us now?!”

“I don’t think he meant to, though. I deflected one of his spells and it made one of the pillars to fall on me.” Orias reminisced, then shrugged. “I don’t hold anything against him, though.” Hermione couldn’t believe it. How nonchalant can a person get? He is talking about his death as if he was telling her about a pleasant day he had back in the day. “And we obviously need him.”

A knock on the front door snapped their attention back to the reality. Has it been half an hour already? She stood up from her seat on the ground, Sirius following her actions, and slowly began to walk to the front door. “This feels way worse than the time I returned my parent’s memories back… oh, I didn’t tell you guys about that, huh?”

“Good thing you did, Hermione.” Orias said, causing the girl to look at him. “Voldemort had sent Fenrir and Bellatrix to kidnap your parents. He got really mad that you bested him again. Made me wonder, though. Why didn’t the Order to put protection around your family?”

“I wondered that too. So did Snape and Remus. Snape actually fought with Albus about forgetting about your parents.” Sirius added, angrily. “I got the feeling that Albus only cared for Harry's survival.”

“I also thought that, too, so I took the opportunity to protect them. Snape really fought for me?” Hermione asked softly, her lower lip wobbling. Sirius nodded, placing a hand on her shoulder. “Well, Albus never did care for Harry, seeing that he placed Harry with that awful family.”

The knocking appeared again, causing Hermione to start. “Well, here goes nothing.”

Sirius followed Hermione to the front door and she opened it, to reveal the tall Minister with a huge smile on his face but they could see the worry swimming in his eyes. “Hello, Hermione. Sirius. Imagine my surprise when Sirius letter came to my office and telling me that there is a problem that
“Ur… yes. Please, do come in. It’s… a big problem that I hope you have an open mind to help us solve.” Hermione said, stepping aside for Kingsley to come in.

“That is why they made me the Minister, Hermione. Tell me, what's wrong?” Kingsley said, walking into the foyer.

“It's better if I show you. It didn't mean to happen, honestly, Kings. I swear.” Hermione said, quickly. The jovial smile on Kings face fell, and replacing it was a serious frown. She felt like her throat was made out sandpaper with rocks stuck to it. Her palms felt clammy and she tried to wipe them away on her pajamas discreetly. She watched Kings round the corner of the foyer into the living room, stopping himself short when he saw the group. His face slackened in surprise to a point that he could give a cartoon character a run for its money.

Anxiety builds up in Hermione as she watched Kings turn to look at her, Sirius, then back at the occupants of the room. She was kind of surprised that he didn’t remove his wand at the sight of the Death Eaters. “Wh-w— what?!” Kingsley spluttered out, looking at Hermione with surprise. She didn’t know what else to do but…

“Surprise!”
You guys! I finally finished this chapter and I log back into AO3 and I see all of these comments!? I will reply to you all one on one, let me just post this!

There are people saying that they re-read this story... and I am like STOP! I AM EMBARRASSED! I love you all for staying with me despite the ridiculously slow updates. I have hit writer's block a bit but I got over it!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“Let me get this straight: you found a chest in Filch’s office, was activated by magic, and when you accidentally cut yourself on the chest, these men came out and are bound to you? And there is no possibility of breaking this bond because it was opened with both blood and magic?”

Kingsley was sitting on her dad’s favorite recliner couch as five men in question were standing in front of him. After the initial surprise of seeing his former, dead enemies standing in the living room, Kingsley calmed down and ordered Hermione to explain. All throughout the explanation, Kingsley didn’t interrupt, didn’t look at the men, didn’t pace around— he just simply listened to Hermione.

“You are right, Kings.” Hermione answered, conjuring a glass and a bottle of muggle whiskey from her dad’s alcohol cabinet.

“And you were not forced to open the chest by anyone?” Kingsley asked and Hermione shook her head. “How sure are you about them? All but two were in the inner circle of Voldemort. Even though there is no way to bring Voldemort back, they could take that position themselves.”

“As much as I love that you think we are powerful enough to be the next Dark Lord, Shacklebolt, I prefer not kneeling in front of a person every again.” Orias piped in which led to Antonin and Rodolphus to agree with him.

“Even if they desire it, they could have overpowered me and left, right?” But instead, they fight about who gets to kiss me .
Kingsley didn’t look convinced. “They could be waiting for the opportune moment.” he mused and Hermione sighed, glancing down at the ground. “I am surprised that you would take their words seriously, Hermione. And I am surprised that you are okay with this, Sirius.”

“At the beginning, I wasn’t okay with it but they really don’t have any intention of harming Hermione or the others. They all were amongst muggles several times. With the usual ignorance of muggles, they were all chill.” Sirius explained, shrugging, looking a bit green on the face and Hermione guessed that it was because of him taking the sides of his enemies.

“We don’t even know how the bond will react if she stays here while we are serving time in Azkaban, either.” Rodolphus said, transition to a subject that all plagued their minds.

“The public will want your heads on a platter if they find out that all of you are alive.” Kingsley countered back, taking a sip from his whiskey. “I will have to answer to them, first.” Kingsley sighed, rubbing his temples. “At least, you didn’t bring back Voldemort or Macnair. I will not be able to protect you when Molly finds out that her brothers’ killer is alive.” His eyes zeroed on Antonin who glared right back at the Minister.

“You could place a magic restrictors on us.” Antonin suggested and everyone in the room looked at him in surprise. “If it will appease the crowd that I am harmless like a first year, so be it. I do not want to face Azkaban ever again right after I come back to life.”

“I remember you were a little shit even when you were a first year, Dolohov.” Kingsley reminded the Russian who simply shrugged at the accusation. “What about you two?”

“I don’t see myself doing anything magical as bringing back the Dark Lord, so I am cool with it.” Orias agreed, sitting back on the couch.

“Don’t place it on either Abraxas or Orion, though. They didn’t contribute to the Dark Lord’s rise.” Draco added and Kingsley looked as if he didn’t believe Draco as he threw a dubious look at Abraxas. “When Abraxas found out that Voldemort killed Myrtle, he cut ties with him. In response, Voldemort killed Abraxas by forcing Dragon Pox on him.”

“Orion was totally against Voldemort; his wife poisoned him because of that.” Hermione continued and watching surprise flit through the Minister’s eyes then shook his head.

“Have you decided on how you will be informing Harry about this?” Kingsley asked, causing
Hermione to physically flinch at Harry’s name. “I don’t think he would be appreciative when his notified through the *Daily Prophet*.”

Before Hermione could find any response to that, Rodolphus cleared his throat. “What we just want is you to open up my house or Mulciber’s. We can’t continue living in Granger’s house.” Rodolphus said and something in Kingsley snapped. No longer looking like a peacekeeper, his face hardened up and threw a scathing glare at Hermione.

“*We*’? Who is this ‘we’?” Kingsley asked, crossing his arms across his expansive chest. “You will be staying with them?”

“I have been staying with them for the past two days, Kings, and Draco has been with me in one of those days.” Hermione fought back, becoming irritated at being interrogated. “I haven’t felt I was in danger, at all, since they came back to life. What if they actually want to live their life when Voldemort snatched it from them?”

“Last time I have checked, Hermione, they signed up to be his foot soldiers. Voldemort didn’t force them into servitude.” Kingsley argued back and Hermione sniffed, her chin in the air.

“No, he may have not, but he twisted their dreams to be use of him and him only. He gave them support as one does when they are looking for proteges and when they realized that they have becomes slaves to him, they couldn’t back out. I am not saying that every Death Eater wanted to escape — hell some of them thrived being under him — but these guys got the second chance they desperately wanted.” Hermione defended, angrily.

“You are humanizing them, Hermione! No matter if they were forced or not, they still did horrible crimes. Each of them have at least killed more than five people.”

“And so did we, Kings.” Hermione countered back and Kingsley threw his head back in shock. “How are we any different? They killed for their cause and we have killed for our cause. And if a genocidal, megalomaniac had a tight rein on you, you *had* to listen to him.”

“So, what, you are going to forgive Bellatrix?” Kingsley hissed back and the sudden name of the women she hated, she loathed, whiplashed her into silence. “You are going to roll over for them because they said they don’t want to be like that anymore? You are married to her husband.”

“Kingsley — *enough*.” Sirius growled, immediately bringing the silenced girl towards his chest. “I
know this is not ideal and you are angry… but do not make her feel guilty for being compassionate.”

“Compassionate for them? Where was that compassion when he hunted her down?” Kingsley asked, pointing at Antonin.

“Well, you should know that Antonin cured me.” Hermione lashed out, her voice watery.

“What?!” Kingsley spluttered out, then glanced at the Antonin. “Why?”

“I just had enough hunting down kids, Shacklebolt. I didn’t join Voldemort to become a child killer. Yeah, I was pissed off and Voldemort sensed that and he said that I will do what I plan to do if I worked with him. I thought…”

“We thought we would be fighting adults, Shacklebolt. Yeah, in the beginning, I didn’t care for much about hurting people because most of our enemies were adults. Then Voldemort got bested by a baby.” Rodolphus finished, then went to sit next to Orias.

“We are not asking you to roll over and show your stomach to us, Minister,” Abraxas began with a grim look on his face. “I had no idea that Tom Riddle would become violent. I realized a little too late that he had chosen me as his second in command because we were old money and he needed funds.”

“In order to open up any of your houses, I will be needing to speak with the Wizengamot.”

Hermione groaned out loud. “You got to speak to them? Some of them are there for so long that they might be actually dead but no one noticed it! They won’t understand.” Most of the men snickered, even Kingsley, at her words but then sighed.

“I don’t even understand how you already accepted them but then again, you are…you.” Kingsley said, shaking his head.

“How…eloquent.” Orion noted and Kingsley flashed an irritated glance at him. “Do you really need to speak to the Wizengamot about this?”
“If they find out that I kept this from them, I am impeached. It took a lot of convincing to let a young guy like me become a Minister. And now, you all need me as the Minister because I don’t know how this bond will react if I were to separate you guys. If I was anything like Crouch or Fudge or Scrimgeour, I would have already sent you to Azkaban. Want to test the theory out about what happens when we separate you guys?”

“So, you can arrest us if you find out it does nothing to us?” Orias piped up, raising his eyebrow. “Are you sure you are a Gryffindor and not a Slytherin?”

Kingsley cleared his throat. “Ravenclaw.”

Everyone gave the Minister a surprised look. “I was not expecting that. Gryffindor or Slytherin, surely. At least, he didn’t say Hufflepuff!” Sirius said, chuckling then paused. “Wait. You were the Head Boy when I was in my second year at Hogwarts!”

“How do you forget Kingsley?” Hermione asked, incredulously, looking at Sirius. “Kingsley is unforgettable.”

Sirius looked down at her with a sly smirk. “Unforgettable, huh? How?”

Hermione blushed and began to fret. “You know...he is tall. Very powerful personality fills the room, really handsome, too.” Hermione said, shakily, indicating to the Minister who shook his head at her, smiling softly. Hermione became somber and went to grab Kingsley’s hand. “You know I would never do this on purpose, right?”

“I know, Hermione. But —”

“Don’t they have rights, too? Other than Draco and Sirius here, most of them are powerful scions of powerful houses —” Rodolphus cleared his throat, effectively cutting Hermione off. She glared at him and he gave her an apologetic smile.

“We will give you reparations. Not to the Ministry, though. St. Mungos or Hogwarts or any orphanages. I am willing to pay.” Rodolphus suggested, looking at this fellow undead mates. “Well, Malfoy has been paying his part of the reparations.”

Kingsley sighed, again. “I will still need to speak to the Wizengamot, Hermione. They are in charge
of who gets magic dampeners and reparations. You all don’t need to come; only you Hermione. I will make the appointment soon. Hermione, they will be using the Truth Serum, just letting you know.”

“I am coming.” Sirius interjected. “And you can’t change my mind.”

“Same here.” Draco added, standing next to Sirius.

“That will work for her, actually. To have to powerful houses back her, no matter if one of them has done some questionable things, they are still fearsome.” Kingsley informed, rubbing his face. “You will have to explain exactly how it happened and what was the result. Any information you found about the chest, you will have to present. And you will have to convince them that these guys are not up to their old tricks.”

“Yes, Kings.” Hermione said, mentally creating a list.

“I will try to get the hearing as fast as tomorrow and I will personally visit Mulciber Manor myself to check it out.” Kingsley said, standing up, causing everyone to stand up as well. “I am sure your elves are looking after it. I will take my leave. Expect my letter shortly, Hermione.” He placed both of his hands on her shoulders and squeezed lightly. “I am on your side, Hermione, so hear me out — you got to let Harry know before this comes out.”

Hermione nodded, frightfully. “He will be mad, I know. But he will get over it. You are his sister.” Kingsley continued, then his eyes flitted to Draco. “Meanwhile, you have other friends you can fall back to. Maybe, these guys need someone to fall back to as well.”

With a nod to the rest of the guys, Kingsley apparated right there and then. Hermione let out a big sigh, dropping her tense shoulders. She went and fell on the recently vacated seat that Kingsley previously sat in. “It went surprisingly better than I imagined.” Abraxas noted, sitting back down. “It was not that bad.”

“I was expecting hexes.” Rodolphus added, running his fingers through his hair.

“He is the Minister; he can’t simply throw hexes around.” Orion countered and Antonin clicked his tongue while shaking his head.
“He was an Auror before he became a Minister. Even back at school, he had natural leadership.” Antonin explained then slapped his hands to his thighs. “I am hungry. What should we eat?”

“Want to go out and grab something?” Hermione asked, looking at each of the men expectantly. “Or just order pizza and chill at home? Sirius? Draco?”

Sirius thought about it and nodded. “We should just order food and discuss the hearing and maybe prepare for it?”

Hermione did not even want to think about the hearing. Kingsley was right; it was going to be an uphill battle with a major. Orion noticed her look of discomfort and gave her reassuring smile. “I think we should step out. Fresh air and all. The talk about the trial can wait. We should go and eat this ‘pizza’ out.” Orion suggested and Hermione threw him a grateful smile. He winked back in response, causing her to blush. She turned to look at Sirius to get his input when he was staring at her with disgust.

“What?” she asked, innocently, knowing that Sirius just saw the interaction between his father and her. Sirius simply shook his head with a roll of his eyes and nodded. He turned to look at Draco.

“Please, tell me you are coming, too. I don’t think I can handle being in the same room as Hermione and my father flirting with each other.” Sirius pleaded, causing Draco to laugh.

“I wasn’t flirting!” Hermione protested then jumped on Sirius, trying to rub his head with her knuckles. Sirius shouted his protest, trying to block her attack. Sirius reached his hand out to Draco who looked down at the two with amusement swimming in his eyes.

“Draco, help!” Sirius choked out as Hermione wrapped her forearm around his neck to hold herself on to him as Sirius tried shaking his body to get her off of him. “This freaking marmoset is latched onto me!

Hermione gasped, scandalized. “I am not a marmoset!” With a doubled effort, she laced her leg around his waist and interlocked them. Her left arm went around his shoulders and held on. Her right hand’s knuckle seemed to be a permanent fixture in his curls. Fighting back for few more minutes, Sirius stilled then stood up with her latched on his back. She let out a yelp of surprise. He turned to face the amused men.

“Let’s get pizza. I know the perfect place.” Sirius said, talking as if a lump of a bookworm wasn’t
“Do we have to drive there?” Rod asked, his face blank but his eyes were emotive; filled with amusement.

“No, we can walk there.” Sirius asked, and as Hermione tried to dislodge herself from Sirius. However, Sirius’ hands came up to grab her legs and hold them there. “No, you are staying right here, you monkey.”

“But!” she whined as Sirius chuckled.

“It is your punishment!” Sirius stated and Hermione pouted, making eye contact with Draco who simply shrugged his shoulders. Traitor! Seeing that she wasn’t getting out of this easy, she settled her chin on Sirius’s shoulder and sighed. The group left the house and began to walk down the street that led to the pizzeria.

“You think I will go to Azkaban for this?” Hermione asked after a short while of small talk. She felt Sirius freeze at the mention of the prison. “If they did and I didn’t, how will it affect the bond? Will we get sick? I will be having to talk to Crouch—”

“Crouch? Isn’t he dead? His son killed him during your fourth year, right?” Rod interrupted and she gasped.

“You are right! How could I forget that? Poor Harry found his body.” Hermione mumbled. “If that is the case, who is Chief Warlock now?”

“They haven’t appointed one yet. The only person that could temporarily take the seat is the Minister of Magic.” Sirius said, and she slumped down in relief. “Don’t be relieved yet. You still have to convince the rest of the Wizengamot, too.”

“They should all hurry up and retire.” Draco suggested, making Hermione giggle. “Do you think they will make you drink the Truth Serum?”

“With a case like this, definitely.” Abraxas spoke up, walking beside Sirius. “Obviously, they would want to know how this mistake happened.”
“We still don't know why the box chose me. Draco did magic in the room, too.” Hermione added, then sighed again. “This is going to be a mess. Kingsley is right, though. I need to let Harry and Ron know before they hear it from the *Daily Prophet*. I wish I know how to control my emotions like you guys.”

“I think you should tell them when we are not there.” Antonin inputted, “I don’t think they would appreciate seeing us there.”

“When should I tell them?” She asked, tapping on Sirius to let her down. He did, gently.

“As soon as possible, Hermione.” Orion said, placing his fingers on her wrist. Her skin warmed at the area. “No point in delaying the inevitable.”

“If they are your friends, they will take your side.” Orias added but she groaned at his words.

“You guys don't understand them as I do. Ron said that I was fraternizing with the enemy when I went to the Yule Ball with Krum! When he hears that I got three Death Eaters as my mates… he will never forgive me even though I had no control over this. I might even need to stun him. Harry—”

“Will blow his gasket.” Sirius finished then he turns to face Hermione. “But he will never abandon you. You are his sister. Always will be his sister. He will not talk to you for a while but he always comes around.”

“If Ron harms you, Hermione, I will harm him.” Draco warned, his voice dangerously low. “That being said, I will be there when you tell them. This might be the chance I can curse Weaselbee after all.”

“Don't sound so excited, Draco!” Hermione chided but couldn’t get rid of the fond smile on her face. “I think...I will call them today. Orion is right; I can’t keep putting it off. I don’t need worrying about that *and* the trial *and* the consequences.”

“There is a bar by the pizzeria I will show you guys so you can chill there when Hermione tells them.” Sirius suggested and they all made a sound of agreement. They got to the plaza just as he finished talking and decided to show where Gold’s Top Bar was located then went towards Leo’s Pan. They got the same reaction from the burger place where every worker’s eyes zoomed to Orias than to Hermione.
They got seated but this time Mulciber and Rod sat next to Hermione. As they all talked amongst themselves, Hermione slightly jumped when she felt Rod’s hand fall on her left knee. She pursed her lips but didn’t try to remove his hand or else the others will notice the movement. Seeing that he got no opposition, Rod began to rub circles and moving slowly inward and upward, taking the skirt with him, revealing her thigh.

“Rod!” She whispered, looking at the said man take a bite out of his pizza slice and trying to cut the cheese string with his teeth. He eyed her with mischievous as he wrapped his tongue around the cheese to sever it.

“Yes?” he finally asked, setting his pizza down to grab a large swallow of his beer. “Something the matter?”

“Something the matter’? Get rid of your hand, now!”

Rod leaned closer to her ear. “No. You are still thinking about the upcoming trial and Potter. Relax. Eat the pizza. What comes, comes.” Rodolphus said, his breath tickling the baby hairs by her ears. Before she could protest, Rod moved his hand fast towards the junction between her thighs. When Hermione felt his fingers press against her mound, she worried that the clacking of her teeth was loud enough to garner attention but no one looked. She focused on her pizza as he lazily rubbed up and down her slit. When it came apparent that she was wet, Rod didn’t change the pace or the pressure of his rubbing. He avoided her clit and she wasn’t sure if that is a blessing or a curse. If he touched it now, would she yell? Moan?

She opened her legs a little, inadvertently pressing her right thigh against Orias’s. Rod pressed little harder and she had to take a bite of her pizza to muffle the moan. Draco caught her eye and she just smiled at him. He raised an eyebrow at her.

Why are you so red in the face? He mouthed at her, eyeing her critically. Shit. She didn’t think about her outward reaction.

Lots of red pepper flakes. Hermione mouthed back, smiling at him. Draco simply nodded and went back to listening to Sirius speak to Orion and Abraxas. Hermione turned to glare at Rod who simply had a smirk on his face. He leaned closer to her. “I told you to relax, didn’t I?”

“Well, if you actually do it properly instead of teasing me, I will relax!” She hissed back then smacked her lip when she realized what she said was loud enough for Orias and Antonin to look at
“Everything good?” Antonin asked, and Orias laughed.

“Oh yeah, everything is good.” Orias answered and Hermione looked at Orias quickly. He knew?

“I am sitting next to you, princess. And I,” he said, smirking, his eyes going down to her lap, “can see everything.”

Hermione hoped that her face was blank as she internally screamed her embarrassment in her head. She just looked away, grabbed her pizza, and took a large chomp out of it. She gave Rod a side-eyed and glared. He shrugged as if telling her that ‘that it is not my fault that Orias looked’. Nonetheless, he removed his hand from between her legs and placed it back on the table. She almost, almost, cried out in protest but held herself back.

She looked straight ahead when she saw Sirius looking at her in horror. Why was he staring at me like that? Did I actually make a noise? Or did he hear—

Sirius’s Animagi is a dog.

When a wizard becomes an Animagus, they get the attributes of the animal they change into.

A dog’s sense of smell is way profound than a human and they can smell anything. Even arousal. Fuck me. What should Hermione do? Pretend that she wasn’t getting aroused? Blame it on the pizza? Hormonal imbalance? A Muggle Celebrity crush? Keanu Reeves does tend to make her panties fly…

It has been a while, Hermione mouthed at Sirius. Shit happens. For a second, he didn’t look convinced then he nodded as if he agreed with her. She took a big swallow of her wine to calm her nerves. “Whoa there, princess. Calm down.” Orias noted with a hint of laughter in his voice.

It took a whole lot of willpower to stop herself from stabbing Orias with her fork.
Dear Harry,

It's been a while, hasn’t it? I still don’t know if you are still planning the party. However, this is not what I want to talk to you about. I want to speak to you and Ron by yourselves; no Ginny. Something big happened and it is not my fault even though I caused it to open. Please, Harry, if you can, come to my parent’s home, pronto.

I know it is not enough information and I am sorry for that.

Hermione.

She almost didn’t want to give the letter to Glace but the bird didn’t care for her hesitancy. He sees a letter stretched out to him and snatched it out of her hand with his beak. He waited for further instructions with a contempt look. She told him and watched him fly until he was a dot. She went downstairs to check on the men to see them lounging about. What do you do when you come back from the dead and still considered a fugitive? Absolutely nothing. Her eyes landed on the stand that was holding the TV.

Absolutely nothing?

She hurriedly went to the TV, got to her knees and opened the doors to reveal several stacks of board games. She grabbed one that she knew that they will have fun and keep their minds (her, included) distracted about the trial. She closed the door and slowly turned around to meet the curious gazes from the men. “I know a perfect way to distract us if you are willing to play. A board game.”

“What is it called? I know we played Uno before.” Draco asked and she smirked, evilly.

“Monopoly.”

An hour later, Sirius and Rodolphus were at each other’s throats. Draco and Antonin are arguing on why the move Draco just did that — passed over the house that Antonin bought— was counted wrong. Unsurprisingly, the richest contenders were Abraxas and Orion. Mulciber is in jail and he found that quite funny. Hermione was already out despite the fact that it was she who boasted that she would win. How would she know that they could understand the rules that fast? She barely could keep her laughter in check at the bickering when she heard the tapping on her window.
As if a bucket of cold water was dropped on her, the laughter died away in her throat. Everyone paused in their actions as they all looked at Glace hovering over the window, a letter attached to his leg. She swallowed as she walked over to the window to let the bird in. Glace hooted and lifted his leg to her. “Well, here goes nothing.” Hermione said, ripping the letter and opening it.

She read out loud, “Hermione, whatever you have done, I will back you up. Actually, if you brought Voldemort back to life, I might just skin you alive. Ron and I will come at nine to your house. Don’t worry, we will figure it out.” She let the letter drop on the table and glanced at the time. It was eight. She was shaking. She watched her hands tremble and she tried to flex it away but it kept on getting stronger. She could feel the panic attack coming.

“Hey, hey, it will be alright.” Draco’s voice came from beside her before he enveloped her shaking form. “What happens will happen, Hermione. Don’t worry.”

“Sirius will be here if this Potter and Weasley kid gets out of hand. A good wallop to the back always straightened Sirius out.” Orion said, which caused her to let out a laugh.

“I can’t imagine Sirius being disciplined.” She mumbled, leaving Draco’s arms and went towards the table that held the unfinished game of Monopoly. “Might as well finish this game, huh?”

Sirius just laughed. “You just want to see me kick LeStrange’s ass.”

Rod scoffed, fired up. “Yeah, right. I will leave you in my dust just watch, Sirius.”

Obviously, it didn't matter if they left each other in the dust because Abraxas won fifteen minutes later. He leaned back as everyone became a sore loser and began making excuses about losing. Hermione made fun of Draco who tried to act nonchalant that he lost. He retaliated back by holding her down and trying to tickle her at the same time but she was bucking too wild for him to do the two things simultaneously.

“Want some help?” Abraxas asked but didn’t wait for Draco reply as he held Hermione down by grabbing her wrists in one hand and her hip with another. Draco chuckled evilly and began to tickle her. Her howling of laughter and the shouting of the men hid the noise of the front door opening. The table toppling over as Orias reached over to grab Rod’s collar concealed the noise of a glass bottle dropping to the ground.
“What the absolute fuck is going on here?”
The house became so silent that Hermione feared that everyone had stopped breathing. She stopped breathing. The unmistakable high pitch voice that ended with a crack at the end belonged to none other Ronald Bilius Weasley. She lifted her head high enough to see both of her best friends standing at the doorway connecting the foyer to the living room, peering into the room in horrified horrific shock. Draco slowly lifted himself off of her and Abraxas let go of her wrists. Everyone sat up straight and faced the newcomers.

“Hello, Ron, Harry.” Hermione began, her voice small. “A bit earlier than nine.”

“Ginny left bit earlier than I thought so we decided to come early, thinking that you were in some kind of danger.” Harry explained, then his eyes traveled across the occupants of the living room, his eyes widening at the dead men. “What is going on here, Hermione?”

“What in the blood hell — Antonin Dolohov!” Ron cried out, his voice breaking at the end, brandishing his wand at the mentioned man who simply raised his eyebrow in response. “What are you doing here?”

“Ron, calm down! I will explain —”

“Hermione, get over here, now! And Malfoy,” Ron hissed, his face turning red as he faced Draco, “obviously you would be here with him. I told you Hermione; once a bastard, always a bastard.” Draco barely reacted to his taunt. “What are you still doing there, Mione? Get over here!”

“Ron, let me explain!” Hermione cried out and when it seems like he wasn’t listening to her, she angrily cried out, “Expelliarmus!” Ron’s hand slipped out of Ron’s grip and she snatched it out of the air and if it weren’t for the situation, Harry would have been impressed. Ron looked shocked at her actions and he simply turned to face Harry who was staring at Hermione then his eyes caught Sirius standing beside Draco and Rodolphus.
“Sirius? Rod—Rodolphus?—He died in our fifth year, right in front of us… Why does he,” Harry pointed at Orion, “look like you, Sirius? Another Malfoy? And you… I have seen pictures of you… Mulciber! But… your picture was amongst the dead death eaters…”

“This is why you are here, Harry, Ron. This happened because of me.” Hermione said, keeping a wary eye on Ron who almost resembled a pressure cooker. “Back in our last year, I was bonded with a chest and three days back, I accidently opened with my blood and five people came out! Five, dead people!”

“What?! ”

“And I am bonded with them!”

“What?”

“Is that all you can say, Potter?” Draco drawled out, “Obviously, she didn’t mean it to happen. Her magic just activated the chest without her consent.”

“Why should we listening to you, Malfoy?” Ron seethed, splotchy with anger. “You should have rotted in jail with your father—”

“He is my best friend, Ron, just like you are! I would not have you under this roof if you can’t act the age you are!” Hermione shouted, fed up. “If you are not going to listen for the reasons why there are men here and only scrutinize Malfoy for something he had no hand in, then be my guest and leave.”

Ron spluttered in shock. “You are going to choose him over me?”

Hermione resisted from rolling her eyes. Being haughty right now will not bring good results. “I am not choosing anyone over anyone. He is one of my best friends, just like you and Harry are.”

Ron turned to face Harry. “Can you believe her? She chose an enemy as her best friend.” When Harry didn’t agree with him, Ron looked puzzled at the guilty expression that appeared on
bespectacled boy’s face. “Harry?”

“Sorry, Ron… I already have known about their friendship but I thought they were lovers… not friends.” Harry said and this time all Ron, Hermione, and Draco choked on their saliva simultaneously.

“What?!” All three of them shouted.

“How did you find out?”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Why would you think Hermione and I can possibly ever date, Potter?”

Harry sighed. This was not the appropriate time to explain all of these, seeing that the dead men were watching this all happening with amused smiles. “I quite frankly had enough of Ron’s whining about Hermione’s secret lover so I decided to once and for all, find out the truth so I can finally tell Ron to shut up. So, with the map and my cloak, I followed you to the library on the day where we all got our graduation robes. What I have heard made me think that you, Hermione, Malfoy, and Daphne were in a threesome relationship because you said you had a secret lover.”

Hermione couldn’t help it. It was uncontrollable. She tried to purse her lips, trying to push it back down but it was a failure attempt: laughter bursted out from her lips. Draco following shortly, throwing his head back then grabbed Hermione’s upper arm to prevent falling over. Harry blushed at his mistake. “It’s not that funny!”

“Son, it is.” Sirius said, softly chuckling. Mulciber and Rodolphus were chuckling but the rest of resurrected men kept silent, watching the whole scene.

“I can’t believe they still thought that!” Draco howled, face reddening from laughing so hard. “This is the best.”

A thought appeared in Hermione’s head that made ceased her laughter abruptly. She scrutinized Ron with narrowed eyes. “Wait, what do you mean by Ron’s whining? Why was he whining about my secret lover? You had Lavender.” Hermione asked, crossing her arms across her chest. Ron flushed
when everyone’s attention was on him. When he didn’t answer, Hermione prodded, “Well?”

“I thought… I thought that if I got together with Lavender, you would get jealous and come back to me.” Ron answered after some difficulty. The temperature dropped as Hermione tensed at his reasoning. “I thought that—”

“You thought that by dating a girl, who you compared Hermione to because she wasn’t giving it up to you, was a way to win Hermione back?” Draco asked slowly, looking at Ron as if he was slow. Even Harry was looking at Ron, shocked. “Mate, you really thought Hermione is the type of girl to go ‘oh, I am jealous, I want you back’? Weasel, you are something else.”

Hermione was thunderous. “You simply couldn’t accept the fact that we were not compatible to the point that you were using Lavender’s love for you as a weapon?!” Hermione screeched, flicking her wand to conjure a flock of birds that chirped and flew happily above them. Ron’s skin turned pale as he watched the birds flying. He knew what was going to happen. “What about now? You still expect me to come back to you?”

“No! No, after spending time with her, I began to like her! She is actually sweet.” Ron answered quickly, running further away from the birds. “Believe me. I was angry at you for not taking the next step but I slowly found out that we were not meant to be. Hermione, I really do love Lavender.”

After eyeing Ron critically for few seconds longer, she waved her wand, dispelling the birds away. “Fine. Now, are you going to sit and let me explain what happened or are you going to jump the gun again?” she asked and Ron shook his head. Harry bend over to pick up the fallen bottle and handed it to Hermione as they walked past her, giving a wide berth to the five men. Sirius clasped Harry’s shoulder who returned the gesture with a tight smile.

Once they settled down, they both looked at her expectantly. She took a deep breath in, catching Abraxas’s eyes. He simply nodded at her. “It was shortly after the beginning of the year when I befriended Draco. We slowly became friends, then best friends so when I tell you that if you even try to hex Draco or make him even feel guilty about walking freely, I will curse you like I did with Edgecomb. Remember her?” She warned and the two of them nodded. “We decided to hang out in the Room of Requirements because students jumped on Draco and his friends whenever they can. That’s how we became friends. I healed his wounds.”

“But why not go to hospital?” Harry interrupted, confused.

“Because I was in probation, Potter. I couldn’t fight to even protect myself. If I went to the nurse,
they will realize that I have been in a fight and they will send me straight back to Azkaban.” Draco explained and bless Harry, he looked disturbed at that fact.

“After a while, we began to drink together but not too much. However, when Severus’s death anniversary came around, Draco and I decided to drink our sorrows away and pay tribute to the man.” Hermione said, catching Sirius’s shocked eyes. “I didn’t tell you, Sirius, because I don’t know how you would react. We were leaving the Room of Requirement when Professor McGonagall caught us stumbling down the hallway, drunk.”

“It was funny to see McGonagall giving Hermione detention.” Draco commented, which caused Hermione to roll her eyes at him. “We were to serve Filch for our detention. We had to clean his office without magic.”

“After like two and a half to three hours of cleaning, I was feeling rather hot so I used a cooling charm. That’s when the chest got activated, through my magic. I was the only one that could hear the beating sound of the chest. I immediately knew where it was and for some reason, instead of casting a diagnostic spell on it, I just grabbed it. The beating synchronized with my heartbeat and next thing I knew, I couldn’t part with it. I carried that chest around me. I tried to put in my dorm but I became sick after two hours of being away from it. Three days ago, we found out that this chest opened with blood sacrifice.” Hermione concluded, waving her arm to the five men. “And here we are.”

“Three days ago? Three bloody days ago and we are finding about it now?” Harry asked, getting angry. “Why? Why did you head to Sirius but not to me?”

“I didn’t know what to do either! I just brought back dead people and one of them was Sirius’s father so I had to let Sirius know.” Hermione defended herself. “I knew you would blow up so I was afraid to let you know.”

“You were afraid of letting Harry know but you weren’t afraid of them?” Ron asked, pointing at the general direction of the men.

“Draco and Sirius has been with me all times and they haven’t given me the opportunity to be scared. They were respectful of my space, Antonin cured me—”

“What? What do you mean, ‘cured’?” Harry interrupted, gazing at the aforementioned man, who was not paying attention to them.
“He got rid of my scar.” Hermione answered, absentmindedly rubbing the area between her chest. She could see that Harry struggle with the reason of coming to terms that these men could actually do something good.

“So, we had to consummate the bond by kissing.”

Ron exploded. “You kissed them?! Hermione, they wanted you fucking dead and tied to a pole to remind other Muggleborns what they are to them and you fucking kissed them ?!”

“If I didn’t kiss them to establish the bond, we all will be dead! Even me!” She shouted back. “And for your information, they stopped coming after us after our fifth year. Rodolphus actually died right in front of us. Antonin began to go against everything Voldemort told him to do! Mulciber… was doing whatever Mulciber was doing!”

“So? They are still fucking monsters!”

“Are you really backing them?” Harry asked, horrified.

“You wouldn’t understand, Harry. Voldemort twisted their beliefs into something that would benefit him and him only.”

“Harry, check if she is imperius-ed.” Ron suggested but no one listened to him.

“When Voldemort first rose up, he was political. He charmed us all that he was the way to keep strangers out of our community. When I heard that Tom killed Myrtle, I told him I quit. Three days later, I was inflicted with dragon pox.” Abraxas explained, looking away. “By lying to my son, he ruined the Malfoy line. He explained to Lucius that this life of servitude was what I wanted.”

“Walburga poisoned me because I didn’t fall into the charms of Tom and gave my youngest son to Tom.” Orion said, looking away.

Antonin sighed. “When I decided to join, I thought we would be fighting adults. I had no problem fighting with adults. But when the second coming of Voldemort arrived after being bested by a baby, Voldemort’s victims turned into children. Bunch of children who should not have to fight the adult’s war. When I injured Hermione at the Ministry, I was beyond sick to my stomach. I immediately
created a cure but I was killed by Voldemort because I denied his missions for him anymore.”
Antonin said, shrugging. “So, when Hermione resurrected me, the very girl being the sole reason for
the cure, I immediately cured her.”

“My and my brother’s life was already signed to Tom by our father then I got married to Bellatrix.
Bellatrix corrupted my brother by using him to torture the Longbottoms—”

“Wait, so it wasn’t you who tortured Neville’s parents?”

Rodolphus shook his head.

Ron cleared his throat. “So he didn’t torture Neville’s parents. He tortured other people! Dolohov
killed my uncles!”

Feeling like the arguments have been on repeat all day, Hermione pinched the bridge of her nose to
quell the headache that was forming. “We are not saying that they are all saints and flowers comes
out of their ass, Ron. And we are not saints, either. I have killed people. Truth be told, I had fun
killing Fenrir. Did I change in your eyes? We all had the mistake of looking at this through black and
white. Each of us has been manipulated to fight in a war that really didn’t benefit either sides.”
Hermione said, shaking his head. “Even if Voldemort won, where would they be? Still slaves, still
soldiers. Do you really think Voldemort would care for them when he got what he wanted? And
Antonin is right: why did they expect us kids to solve the war?”

“The prophecy—” Harry began but stopped when Hermione hissed, eyes flashing with anger.

“Fuck the prophecy! Dumbledore already knew about it and he didn’t deem to see it fit to tell you.
You never wonder why?” Hermione cried out. “Dumbledore didn’t care for you, Harry. In fact,
Snape cared more about you than Dumbledore ever did. He just raised you to be the sacrificial pig.”

Harry looked pained at the mention of Dumbledore. “I know, okay? Both of our leaders were evil.”

“Voldemort twisted their dreams to be his slaves. Dumbledore twisted your emotions to be his
soldier.” Hermione continued on, slowly calming down. Ron glared at the men, then at Hermione.

“Why them? Why did you choose them? Why didn’t you bring back Fred or Remus?” Ron asked
“It wasn’t up to me to decide who came back to life. We theorized that it was my magic.” Hermione answered and Ron scoffed. “What?”

“Look at me, I am Hermione, my magic is powerful and unique that it could raise dead people.” Ron mocked, derisively. Hermione’s eyes widened at his behavior and hurt laced through her like a sharp arrow. She felt her eyes prick but she blinked fast to get rid of the tears. I cried too many times because of Ron; not anymore. She was so fast that no one moved from the spot as they all watched her strike Ron in his face open-palmed and all.

“So what that I am stronger? I didn’t choose to bring them back; the chest chose me as a vessel to bring them back! I can’t control on how much magic I have. Get it through your thick skull, Ronald, and, don’t you ever dare speak to me like that ever again!” she shouted then she was yanked away from Ron by Sirius who was silently fuming.

“Weasel, even that is going too far for you. I heard that you act first then think later but this shows that you don’t think at all.” Draco said, angrily, his pale face reddening, his hair wild and a mess. “This is something she couldn’t have controlled and you are putting your own shortcomings onto her? Talk to her like that again, Weasel, or else.”

“Ron, that was uncalled for. You really think if she had a choice on who to resurrect, she will chose death eaters?” Harry said, placing his hand on Ron’s shoulder. With his left cheek reddening from the slap, Ron almost looked wild at the thought that Harry and Draco agreed on something and before he could spew out his unfiltered thoughts, Orias interrupted by snorting.

“I think we are great catches, Potter.” Orias said, and winked at Hermione who threw an exasperated glare at him. She watched Orias’s eyes swivel to Ron, the smooth transition from amusement to a narrowed-eyed glare was breathtaking in her eyes. “As for you, Weasel, I knew Arthur Weasley back in my school days and I know for sure he didn’t teach you how to misbehave towards a woman. Just because you don’t understand something, doesn’t mean you have to attack her for it.” Hermione had found his threatening voice seductive, causing a shiver run down her back.

“Don’t speak about my father like you know him!” Ron hissed back then turned to face Hermione. “So, what happened after you kissed?”

“We had to agree on where to live. Obviously, I can’t have them staying here alongside with my parents. I mailed Kingsley. He came and offered his help after telling him what happened.”
Hermione answered at Harry, not wanting to speak to the insensitive Ron.

“Wait — agree to where to live? You are going to stay with them?” Harry asked, incredulous.

“We don’t know how our bonds will react if we are separated for too long. If we all think about it, they are married to me as I am married to them.” she answered and they flinched at the word ‘married’. It was the truth. Ron shook his head at her, disgusted at her. At the moment, she was disgusted with Ron as well. How could he think so little of her? After all they have been through?

*What did you expect, Hermione? Ron runs away first instead of facing the problems. Remember?*

Hermione exhaled slowly. “This was something I couldn’t control, Ron, Harry. Please, understand. I already spoke to Kingsley about this and I have to go to trial for this.” Harry froze at that and gave her a sympathetic look.

Ron looked at her as if she is dumb. “Well, yeah, you brought back dead death eaters. What did you expect? Roses and friendly faces? Of course, you will go through a trial and everyone will know what you have… *drugged up*.” Ron said, glaring at her men. She flinched at his vicious tongue. “Maybe, you can remove your big head out of your ass and see what the real picture is: they will use you for their gains. Harry, I am leaving first.” With that, Ron shouldered past Hermione and they waited until the front door opened and closed. Shocked, Hermione turned to face Harry who looked guiltily at her.

“I am not mad at you, Hermione. You just been dealt with a shitty situation. It is going to take me a while to accept the fact that they are dead people walking around, let alone them being Voldemort sympathizers.” Harry said then pausing. “You will realize that Ron will tell his mom that Dolohov is alive and it happened under your watch…”

“No more Sunday Brunch for me,” she summarized what he wanted to say. He nodded, rubbing his neck. “It is understandable. Molly didn’t like me after I broke up with Ron and probably thought I was a harlot...after this, she will call me the Harlot Devil.” She didn’t care much for the Weasley matriarch opinions of her but the rest of the family? She still misses them.

Harry looked away, sadden at the truth. “You want me to come with you to the trial?” Harry asked, looking at her expectantly. She wanted to cry. Despite the horrible situation, Harry is still willing to support her. *Unlike Ron*. Well, Ron ran on pure emotions, so she couldn’t really blame him for reacting like this.
“If you want. I got Sirius if you don’t want to come. It’s alright with me.” she answered, hoping that he would come. Harry nodded, walking up to her and clasping a hand on her shoulder.

“I will come.” Harry decided then sighed. “Give Ron some space. He will always come back. I have to get going as well. Sirius, you coming?” Harry asked, looking at his godfather. Hermione was sure that they will be speaking about this more without her being present. She worried her bottom lip. Harry turned to look at her then smiled at her hesitantly. She looked away from him. *Why did Harry grow up? I guess he had been grown up and it was me who still thought he was still a boy*, Hermione thought to herself. *Have I changed?*

“Yeah, let me say bye to Hermione and father.” Sirius said, after a while of deciding. Harry nodded, nodded to the rest of the men and walked out of the house. Sirius stared longer at the direction where Harry left then looked back at her. “I thought it would be Harry that would blow up. I knew Ron would but Harry has grown, huh?” Pride swam in his eyes.

“That Weasley boy has no tact.” Abraxas cursed, shaking his head. “How many times you have to tell him that it wasn’t your fault?”

Hermione chuckled, hollowly. “If it makes sense to you, it took me several times to let him know that I wanted to break up with him.”

Orias choked on his saliva. “Wait, you actually dated him? I thought that was a joke.” He asked, looking at her incredulous then gave her sympathetic smile. “We all make grave mistakes when we are young.” She rolled her eyes at his antics but agreed with him as well. *What made her see sense that dating Ron was a good idea? Was she that blind to Ron’s short fuse? Can she forgive Ron?*

“Hermione.” Sirius called, placing his hands on her face. She brought her eyes up to his mercury-silver eyes. “Don’t worry about Ron. I am sure if I were to see him again, I will be hexing him sideways to Sundays.” Her mouth quirked up at the muggle phrase. “Keep me posted about Kingsley’s reply. I have to get going. I will find out what exactly Harry is thinking. Okay?”

Hermione nodded, smiling at him, softly. “Okay.”

Sirius leaned and planted a wet, slobbering kiss on her cheek which made her squeal in disgust. “Good night, sweetie.”
“Ugh, Sirius!” she whined, wiping the saliva off of her face. Sirius just winked at her, clasped Draco by his shoulder and nodded at his father. Her shoulder slumped as the day’s emotional rollercoaster finally settled heavily on her shoulders. Draco looked guiltily at her and she just gave him a soft smile. “Go home, Draco. Daphne must be positively waiting for your arrival.” Draco blushed at her words then said his goodbye with a farewell kiss on her cheek as well.

After Draco and Sirius leaving, she faced the men then to the board game. “Another game?” she asked, hopeful. They all agreed and all of them huddled around the game. She sat next to Rodolphus who squeezed her thigh before accepting the allotted money that Antonin was passing out. Maybe this game will distract her from accepting that this might be the last time she will ever speak to Ron. All that poison spilling out of his mouth… what did she expect? That everyone that knows about this will be as supportive as Sirius?

Will this be the last time she will ever speak to Ron?

Her lower lip wobbled at all the memories of spending time with Ron flashed through her but she pressed her nails hard into her skin from crying. Why was she so sad that Ron would leave her? He always demeaned her, made her cry, didn’t realize that she was a girl till fourth year when the options for the girls were dwindling down for the Yule Ball, used Lavender to make her jealous, mocks her for wanting to learn, uses Lavender to make her jealous (again), makes her feel bad for having powerful magic — this list just goes on. So, why?

She had no answer to that question.

Surprisingly, Hermione held up her own against Orion, Abraxas, and, Antonin. Both Orias and Rod went bankrupt and they pulled themselves out of the game before getting into debt with Abraxas. Abraxas owned most of the houses but she own one of the richest plot and Orion just landed on it. She put her hand out for Orion’s money and he slapped it down with a pursed lips. She giggled at his behavior and leaned on his shoulder. He just smirked at her as he handed her the dices. She shook the cubes in her hand and let them fall on the middle of the board. Six… Picking up the hat totem, she counted out the spots and with growing dread, she fluttered her eyes up at Abraxas to see his eyes zoned on the spot that she was going to land with pure satisfaction glittering in his eyes. Her lower stomach twinges at the sight and she looked away from the satisfied snake, lest she be caught by the said snake.

“Come on, Hermione.” Orion urged, seeing her doom. “Can’t back out now.”

With a melodramatic sob, she landed on Abraxas’s well laid trap. Realizing the rent of the spot was
all she had in her hand, her head fell down as she placed all her money on the pale, awaiting arm. “It’s been a pleasure.” Abraxas said with a silken voice, mixing her money with his, smirking devilishly. She had a half a mind to wipe that smirk off of his face but Rod threw his arm around her shoulder and pulled her towards Orias and him.

“Welcome to the club where us peasants who cannot match the businessmanship of both Malfoy and Black resides. Antonin is going to lose soon, too.” Rod said, smiling at the Russian who glared back at him. With Rod’s arm around her shoulder, Orias also deemed fit to throw his arm around her shoulder.

“You held on good, princess.” Orias continued and she smiled at them, smug. “Oi, oi, no reason to be cocky about it. You lost as well.”

Hermione giggled. “At least, I didn’t lose twenty minutes into the game.” She said, smirking, feeling better than before the restart of the game. The hurt of Ron parting words were still there but the game gave her distractions from her feelings. She felt a pinch on her side and she squeaked in surprise, snapping out of her reverie. “What was that for?” She cried out, glaring at Orias.

“For being so cocky about losing and you thinking about Weasel.” Orias answered, looking at her with indescribable look in his eyes. “What are you thinking about him for? Instead of being reasonable, he mocked you.”

“Ron yells first then thinks. He didn’t mean anything by those words.” Hermione answered, quickly. Orias raised his eyebrow at her as if asking her ‘do you really believe that shite’?

“What I saw was a boy being jealous of your power and he lashed out. You are giving excuses for a guy who would go through questionable schemes to get you back with him.” Rod continued on, looking down at her meaningfully. Has she always been this short or is it just their presence?

“He reacts badly to poor news.” she fought back lamely. Even to her own ears, she can tell that she wasn’t that much convincing. The dubious looks on both of the men's faces. “Ron has been my friend since we were twelve. Harry and Ron were my first friends.” Albeit that Ron made fun of her and it had take a troll to gain friendship but who is looking at the technicalities here? This her friendship with Ron on the line here and these men are not helping her by revealing the things she hid from herself!

“I don’t know this Weasel as well as you do but I can see that we are hitting close to the truth, aren’t we?” Rod asked, leaning against the living room wall. “We are not saying to cut ties with him. We
just want you to see what we saw.”

“And you dated him?” Orias asked, incredulous. She blushed at the mention. “Why?”

“I had a crush on him since I was 14.” Hermione explained, feeling embarrassed. She switched to glaring when she saw Orias wrinkling his nose. “I thought he was cute…and the only boy who paid attention to me. I was buck-toothed with bird-nest of hair know-it-all since fourth year and I wasn’t exactly a catch.”

“Or so you thought. I heard about a certain rumor that a famous Bulgarian Seeker asked your hand for the dance.” Rod asked, grinning at her. She smirked back at him.

“It felt good seeing people be envious of me for one day. God, Ron was so mad that day. After the dance, he told me that I was ‘fraternizing with the enemy’ and made me cry. What he doesn’t know is that on that same night, I lost my virginity to Krum. And let me tell you,” Her voice lowered to a whisper, suddenly feeling naughty, making the two men lean closer to her, “Ron couldn’t measure up to Krum.” She winked at the men who whooped in answer, causing the three men playing look at them.

“What are you guys yelling for?” Antonin asked, looking confused.

“None of your business.” Orias said, turning Hermione around to have her back face the three men and both he and Orias continued with their arms around her shoulder, causing them to huddle close to each other. “Details, princess.”

“What is it there to say?” she asked, coyly. Rod narrowed his eyes at her. “Fine. Fine. I will tell you. I orgasmed three times to his one. He was so huge that the first half hour was just him stretching me out. I swear I was speaking Bulgarian that night. It was a night for firsts. I felt like I was nibbling on a pole. With all that being said, kissing Ron felt like I was kissing my brother and obviously, I am not going to be turned on by that.”

Rod laughed out loud as Orias smirked. “Admit it; you couldn’t get turned on because Weasel wasn’t Krum-like at all. He probably would pump three times, cum, then go to sleep.” Orias urged and she blushed at his crude wordings.

“Maybe for me, but not for Lavender. He must be doing something good if she is staying with him.” Hermione said, feeling bad that she wasn’t defending Ron like she used to. “Anyways, back to the
actual conversation we were having: I will be facing the Weasley family; my second family. I don’t know about Mr. Weasley but I know that Mrs. Weasley can be quite… vindictive when she has been slighted.”

“She will think this is a slight against her?” Rod asked and she laughed humorlessly.

“She thought that me breaking up with Ron was slight against her! I was lucky that the rest of the family was supportive and told me that they were surprised that it lasted that long. Now… I don’t think I will be having their support again.” She answered, straightening her back, feeling the pinpricks of tears coming at the edges of her eyes. She took a deep breath and clapped her hands, turning around, to see she had everyone’s attention.

She had to get out of here!

“I am going to bed. Can you transfigure your own beds?” she asked, staring at the light fixture in her living room to banish the tears from her eyes. Abraxas confirmed and she smiled at each of them, looking away when tears welled up and her vision became blurry. With a hasty good night, she left the living room, she began to climb the stairs. There was murmur in living room but she didn’t bother to hear what they were talking about. Hermione headed towards her room, wiping away hot tears. As she closed the door behind her, it met some resistance. With brows furrowed, she looked behind to see the obstruction just to see it was Orion holding his hand against the door.

“Yes? Is something the matter?” she asked, staring at the light fixture in her living room to banish the tears from her eyes. Abraxas confirmed and she smiled at each of them, looking away when tears welled up and her vision became blurry. With a hasty good night, she left the living room, she began to climb the stairs. There was murmur in living room but she didn’t bother to hear what they were talking about. Hermione headed towards her room, wiping away hot tears. As she closed the door behind her, it met some resistance. With brows furrowed, she looked behind to see the obstruction just to see it was Orion holding his hand against the door.

“Yeah,” Orion agreed and her shoulders slumped in relief. “Doesn’t mean I will listen to it. You are not sleeping alone.” Hermione watched in irritation and awe as Orion unbuttoned his shirt and let the shirt hang on her chair, revealing a smooth expanse of his chest. She continued to watch him run his fingers through his long hair, slipped under her comforter and then had the gall to pat the empty side
of her bed. She was shocked at his behavior.

“Orion — what the hell?” she sputtered out, facing the prone and way too relaxed man. Orion looked confused at her. “Why are you doing this?”

“You really expect us to lay downstairs while you cry by yourself to for something that you didn’t have a hand in?” Orion asked, his voice serious. A gasp got caught on it’s way in her throat and she swallowed it back down. She blinked owlishly at that. She did plan to do just that. But what she didn’t get is that the men downstairs and the one on her bed were worried about her. She can’t imagine the worried look on Orias’s or Antonin’s face. How can a person’s feelings turn 180? Or was this their true personalities before Voldemort came? “Change.” The one word brought her out of her thinking process.

She sighed through her nose. “Fine.” she said, relenting. She magically brought out the nightgown which was black with thin straps and ended right below her butt. She internally smirked at Orion’s uneasy face. She shrugged off her jeans and shirt and she almost laughed at Orion’s slackened face. She didn’t give him a second longer to stare at her body before slipping on the silk nightie. With magic, she cleaned her mouth then slipped under the covers with Orion. Orion’s body heat emanated and warmed her bare legs.

“Go ahead and cry.” Orion ordered, looking at Hermione who in response glared at him.

“I am not going to cry because you told me to.” Hermione replied back, facing the ceiling.

“So, you are totally okay with Weasley talking to you like that?” Orion asked, turning to his side, facing her. “You okay with there being a chance that you will lose Weasley?”

She couldn’t stop with the lump forming in her throat. She can talk shit about Ron all day but at the end of the day, Ron was her best friend. A tear rolled down her face. They had survived through lot of shit together; he had her back and she had his… a few bad personality traits shouldn’t end friendship over eight years. She herself had bad traits so she can’t act high and mighty. The tears were unstoppable.

She didn’t even fight when Orion slipped his hand around her waist and brought her closer to his chest. She pressed her face against his bare chest (his skin was so soft) and cried. “I don’t want to lose him.” she sobbed out. Orion held her tighter, rubbing her back slowly and firmly. His black hair fell on her face softly. She wrapped arm his waist to snuggle closer to him. “We have been through too much just to lose our friendship like this.”
“I am sure Harry will help him calm down with the help of Sirius.” Orion whispered, tucking his face into the hollow of her neck and shoulder. Hermione shivered as his hot breath caressed her neck. “You would probably get mad if I were to hex him so he should count his lucky stars.”

Hermione couldn't help but giggle at his words, calmed by his soothing hands. She lowkey wanted his hand to go lower and she bit her lip in contemplation. How can she do it? She knew it wasn't right time to do it (her friendship was on the line here) but she wanted to be distracted. She lifted her head and placed her lips by his ears just as she used her hand to lift the nightie till it uncovered her bottom. “Lower.”

Orion froze at her words. His hand still right in the middle of her back and she felt him swallow. Smiling softly, she reached behind to grab the frozen arm and dragged his hand down to ass which caused him to suck air through his teeth then dragged his hand back up spine. She let go while saying, “Please.”

Orion squeezed her closer to his body as he began to slide his hand down back slowly with light pressure. His fingers grazed her ass so lightly but yet her eyes fluttered shut and soft sigh escaped her lips. Emboldened with her reaction, Orion continued with his ministration, applying more pressure. Every pass on over the ass led to his fingers slightly digging in then letting go. Without her knowing, her breathing turned haggard. Her head fell back on his other arm, allowing more space between her neck and shoulder. Orion took a risk and placed his lips on her neck. She slightly moaned at that and he continued to kiss her shoulders.

She wanted more. She lifted her left leg and threw it over his legs which allowed her to move in closer. Orion grunted at this. He simply stopped rubbing her back and just continued to squeeze her ass. He dared himself and run his finger under the edges of her underwear which made her buck directly onto his swollen erection which was inhibited by his pants. Realizing that she was cradling him intimately, she moved her hips to make contact with the straining outline of his turgid cock. He moaned as he kept on kneeling her part bottom, his fingers moving closer to the apex of her legs. She pushed her ass out more to encourage his fingers to move closer.

The first light touch to her clothed center, Hermione shoved her face into his neck and moaned. With more boldness, Orion's hand slipped under the underwear and grabbed the fleshful of her ass then deeper. “Orion...” His name left her lips in a soft hiss and the name bearer decided to go in for the kill. He wordlessly erected a silencing ward. With a speed of a snake, he buried two fingers between her swollen lips. Hermione cried out at feeling. To feel how wet she was, Orion moaned with her. When was the last time he had his fingers buried in a girl? He didn't even do this with Walburga.

He moved his fingers through her lips, avoiding her clit. He remembered how she moaned when Antonin was here. Did he do the same thing to her? He stopped thinking when Hermione kissed the
column of his neck. In response, he grazed her clit lightly. The sudden intake of breath and widening of her legs made his dick twitch under his pants. “That’s right. Spread them.” he muttered against her ear as he grazed her clit once more. Her only response was a high pitch mewl.

His fingers were wet and they moved easily around. He barely paused before sinking his first two fingers into her. Her breath got caught in her throat and he pulled her head back just so he could see how she looks. Pink-hued skin, wet lips and dazed look in her eyes made him smirk against his will. He plunged his fingers in and her tongue came to wet her lips. His eyes followed the pink tongue. Without a second thought, he swept down and kissed her. She immediately kissed back deeply. He continued to kiss her as he sped his fingers, feeling her juices run down his fingers.

Addition of the third finger made her bite his lower lip and squishing her mound against his clothed erections, grinding her clit to give her some relief. The long moan that he swallowed made his hips buck. He increased his pace as he kissed down her jawline, towards her neck.

Her breath hitching, she sang, “Orion, Orion, Orion... I am so close.” He went back to plundering her mouth as he removed his fingers from pulsating core. She began to whine in his mouth in protest. He smirked over her mouth.

“Scream my name, darling.” he muttered and pinched her clit with his thumb and index finger. Her whole body tensed then began to shake as he rolled her clit around his fingers. “Cum, Hermione, for me, cum!”

Lightning flashes through her body as she exploded. “Orion!” she screamed as she orgasmed. He plunged his fingers back into spasming cunt, prolonging her orgasming. Dark spots appeared in her vision as she clung to him, her whole body shaking. As she calmed down, Orion placed a kiss on her trembling lips before pushing away from her.

He removed his wet fingers and unbutton his pants. With his wet hand, he grasped his throbbing member and pulled it out. Hermione lowered her head and with dazed amazement watched Orion pulled on his cock. He gazed down to see her juices cover his member and with both her gaze, he felt his own climax rising. Heat began to form at the base of his spine and moans left his lips. He squeezed his hand around his members and pulled, moving his hips against his fist, pistoning his hips.

“Let go, Orion. Come for me.” Hermione muttered. Heat traveled quickly to his groin and felt his balls tightening. With a shout and eyes fluttering close, he came so powerfully that he became dizzy. A squeak from Hermione made him open his eyes just to see his jizz cover her chest. He breathed hard as he let his limp cock fall. To see such a beautiful man like Orion orgasm, it seared the image in her mind. After few seconds of catching his breath, he magically cleaned them. He moved the
comforter over them and brought her closer.

“Distracted?” he asked and she nodded sleepily. “Good. Whatever happens, happens, Hermione. If Potter's word goes by, Weasley will come around.”

“I hope so. We have been through too much shit together. It can't fall apart like this. Or else I will hex Ron to the netherworld.”

“Poor kid.”

Orion didn't feel sorry for that twat at all. In fact, he would be fine with Weasley cutting of his relationship with Hermione but knowing that she cared for that red headed idiot, he will have to come into terms that he will have to be nice to the kid. That left a bad taste in his mouth.
HAPPY NEW YEAR from this slowpoke of an author! I am positively sorry about this super late update. I finished school and planning out my application to my program.

But the worst part was:
I had the worst writer's block known to mankind. And it wasn't procrastination that was holding me back from uploading but it was like "so far my readers loved my content so I can't put out a weak chapter when they waited so long' type of ordeal. And I couldn't accomplish that because I had a writer's block. I am still unsure if I want to write the whole trial out. Or skip it. Give me your thoughts as you scold me for being such a lousy author.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Something tickled her nose and she wrinkled her nose, willing it to go away. It went away and Hermione snuggled deeper into Orion’s arms who curled around her tighter. After few seconds, something tickled her nose again. Instead of wrinkling her nose this time, she tried to bat it away with her hand. When her hand didn’t meet anything, she settled back down again. Another few beats, the tickling sensation came back. With a growl deep within, Hermione opened her eyes just to see it was a quill centimeters above her nose. The hand holding the said quill was Orias who was beaming down at her, innocently.

“What do you want, Orias?” she asked, growled, glaring at the man.

“Oh, someone is not a morning person.” Orias teased then jumped away from the punch she threw. “It’s time to wake up, princess. It’s ten in the morning.”

“Ten?” she asked, groggily. Then the time registered in her head. “Ten?”

“I guess all the stress from yesterday made you tired, baby girl.” Orias said, putting away the quill and missing the blush that appeared on her cheeks from the nickname. “Tell Black to wake up.”

“I am awake. Don’t you have an inside voice, Mulciber?” The sleep-filled voice said from behind
her as Orion’s hand rubbed her stomach. Mulciber sat down at the end of her bed as he thought about his answer.

“No, I don’t.” He finally decided and Hermione couldn’t help but laugh at his words. Orion grunted, rolled over to his back, and yawned. He got off the bed and shuffled to the bathroom, running his hand through his long, black hair. “Want me to join you, Black?” The only response he got was the bathroom door slamming shut. Orias turned to wink at her and she giggled. He cocked his head to the side, got up, rounded the bed and replaced himself where Orion lay.

“Your bed’s tiny.” Orias noted, staring at her. She turned on the her side to look at him.

“You are like ten feet tall. Not my fault that my bed was made for normal people.” She joked, giggling. He raised an eyebrow at her teasing and was about to say something when her bathroom opened to reveal a fresh Orion who spelled his shirt to him. Orias and Hermione watched Orion get ready who eyed them back with an impassive face. He simply nodded at them and left the room, closing the door behind him. “A man of few words. Unlike you.”

“Yeah?” Orias asked, pulling the giggling girl towards his broad torso. He digged his fingers into her sides causing her to laugh even more. “Say that again, baby girl.”

Hermione became silent as she analyzed Orias who brushed his fingers on her lower back, looking back at her. “You know,” she began, hoping what was going to say next won’t offend him, “when I hear about Mulciber in the past and about his love for torture, I would not expect his behavior to be so… so… easy going or nonchalant. I would expect you to be like be-in-the-corner-and-brood.”

“I am a nonconforming type of guy.” He paused then shook his head. “I had to separate myself. I was totally fine with torturing in the first war but the second war, my victims slowly became younger and younger.” Mulciber said, a faraway look in his eyes. “How would they know what the Voldemort wanted? By middle of the second war, most of us had enough. Yaxley was this close to pissing Voldemort off just so the Dark Lord could kill him. We were all so tired. So I opted for more missions where I barely did anything in. I am really good at Occlumency — you have to be if you are the resident torturer — so it wasn’t hard to make up fake death scenes to appease the lord.”

He laughed and shook his head. “Look at me, saying my sob story. I chose that life and I got what I got.” He said, looking away from her, running his hand through his short hair. Hermione didn’t want to feel bad for Orias because he willingly joined Voldemort but at the same time, she couldn’t stop the flash of sympathy for all the men downstairs. One way or another, Voldemort ruined their childhood and lives with promises to strengthen the Pureblood traditions. She just could just imagine eleven year olds Dolohov, Rod, Orias, and Lucius laughing in the Great Hall after being sorted then she compared them to their future versions. A lump formed in her throat but before she could swallow it away, a graze to her nipple made her come back to present time.
She glanced down to see Orias’s finger hovering over left nipple.

She should fight it off. She just had his, Antonin’s, and Orion’s fingers in her in the span of four days. She should ward him off but she just watched as his finger’s become bold, and graze her nipple again. It didn’t take too long for it pebble. “You shouldn’t feel sympathy, Hermione.” Orias said as he circled her areolar lightly. “Why would you even feel sympathetic for us?”

Hermione licked her lower lips. “I don’t know why I feel like that. I should hate you but I can’t.” she answered, watching is index finger and thumb pinch her sensitive nipple, causing her to suck in her breath. He switched between pinching and rubbing and Hermione bit her lower lip to muffle the appreciative sounds. He left the tender nipple to pull down her nightie down until her breast was out in the open. “You are getting a second chance.” She sighed out when he engulfed her tit with his hand and squeezed.

“That second chance might be taken away.” Orias retorted back, continuing to massage her tit. “What if the bond doesn’t care if there is space between us? They will definitely lock us up.”

Hermione shook her head, “I will not allow it. Kingsley won’t allow it.” She said, leaning arching her chest into his palm, throwing her head back as the slow thrum of arousal began to get stronger. Orias took a chance to run his tongue along the column of her neck as he manipulated her breast. Sloppy kisses trailed down from her neck towards the sensitive nipple. She bit her lip in anticipation as his hot breath wafted over the puckered nipple. “Orias…” Once she uttered his name, his lips descended upon the waiting nipple.

A low moan left her lips as Orias’s soft lips and tongues played with her breasts. She bit her fingers to muffle the soft mewls and used her other hand push his head more closer to her breasts. He lifted his mouth away from her tit to ask, “What are you going to do, fight all of them?” He went back to lavishing attention to her tit.

“I will finally get the chance to set fire to those assholes.” she mumbled, rubbing his short hair. He pulled her on top his body, squeezing her sides as he feasted on breasts. He tugged on the rest of the nightie down to reveal the other neglected breast. He shifted to that one and her forehead touched the part of the pillow above his head. His hands traveled down and squeeze her ass cheeks, quite a reminiscent of how Orion did but rougher. He let go of bruised nipple and dragged her down to his face level, letting the rough texture of shirt rub against her sensitive nubs, stars flashing behind her closed eyes (when did she close them?), Orias swallowed her moans as he covered her lips with his.

She thought he would do something more but he simply laced his fingers together at the base of her spine and simply moved his lips. A lick at the seam of her lips opened them easily and his dexterous
tongue slipped in. In all honesty, she could kiss Orias all day and not worry about anything. The three times she kissed him, all three times she felt like she was melting into a pile of skin and muscles. Actually, kissing rest of the men were different experiences. Antonin was being thrown into pit filled with flames. Rodolphus being kissed in the cool rain. Abraxas was like a rollercoaster ride: all anticipation and the final plunge that led to lightheadedness. Orion was a mixture of cool and hot. And Orias? Orias was just … *something else*.

With his hand clutching her hair, he pulled her off of him with a yank. It was not too hard for it to hurt but it did the business. They both breathed hard, sucking in the oxygen that both of them stole from each other’s lungs. With a his free hand, he pulled up the fallen straps of her nightie to put it back in place. She sat up, straddling his hips, staring at Orias who gave her back a satisfied grin. **“You are so easy to kiss.”** he teased and she scoffed at that, even though knowing that she hadn’t said no at all since the first day of their return.

**“You want me to say no? I can.”** she asked back and Orias threw his head back as he laughed. She got off of him and crawled out of bed and shook her head.

**“I wonder how gentleman Orion Black reacted to that.”** Orias said, running his eyes up and down her body. God, she feels naked under his gaze. She smirked at Orias for her answer and Orias chortled again. Her bed squeaked as he got off of it and stretched.

**“See you downstairs?”**

**“Yeah. The boys are figuring out what to eat for breakfast. You are being a bad host, by the way.”** Orias said, and laughed again at her expression of disdain. **“You are our wife. You should be—”** He didn’t finish the sentence before ducking out of her room to avoid the hex. She simply shook her head and asked herself what made her allow Orias anywhere near her body. She brushed her teeth manually, staring without with seeing at the mirror.

Orias was right, though. She hadn’t been saying no to their advances at all. Hermione would like to think that she is a level-headed woman who has the power over her body but yet… the last part was destroyed by the events of the last couple of days with men she barely knew. It can’t be the bond… so what was it? Does she have an inkling towards dangerous men like Antonin or Orias? How far was she willing to go with them? Should she? Her body, her power but everytime she is in the room filled with them, it was their body, their power. She paused in her mechanical process of washing her face. Did she hand the reins of her body to them? She shook her head. **No, she didn’t**, she thought to herself, steely. If that was the case, she would have bedded all of them whenever they ask.

Even though they hadn’t.
What was it, then? What was it about her that made them want to touch her? She has B cup size breasts; her body wasn’t toned at all, she lost the muscles from all the running by… not running; her hair was no longer bushy but it still had volume and was hard to manage; she was on the short side; and she didn’t have a remarkable face like Lavender or Parvati or Ginny. She would be lying if she said that she wasn’t sad about shortcomings. She didn’t care much for looks when she was young; only studies and knowledge did. But as she entered fourth year, she started to wonder when no one really asked her out for the Yule Ball, not even Ron.

It hurt that Ron didn’t consider her as a girl. But she felt so damn good when Viktor Krum — Viktor Krum! — asked her out out of all his fangirls. That was it! She stood partially dressed in middle of the room as realization struck. The reason why she hasn’t been saying no is because those five men desired her — desired her enough to kiss and fondle. Those five strong, dangerous, handsome men desired her, the swot, the bookworm, the average.

*You are not thinking about the fact that they have been dead for a while and the only woman they seen is you?* Her inner critic said, shooting through her ego boost. *The bond doesn’t stop them for seeking pleasures outside.* *What makes you think that if Ron can choose Lavender over you, that these men will not choose another women over you?*

Her mood soured at that and she angrily pulled her legs through the holes of her jeans. She paused, yet again, at the action of putting on chapstick. *Why should it matter to her that they might choose another girl over her?* It is not like she is in love with them or anything. Bolstered by that, her bad mood was gone. Like them, she hasn’t been touched in quite a while so simple touching and kissing would arouse her.

*Simple touching? You had their fingers— SHUT UP!*

She sighed happily and checked if anything was out of place as if she just hadn’t argued with herself few seconds ago. She left her bedroom and went downstairs to see her men lounging about. “Good morning!” she said, walking through the living room. Abraxas peeked at her and smirked.

“You mean, good afternoon?” he corrected and she blushed at his smirk.

“What did you guys plan to eat?” she asked, looking at each men and her eyes caught the all knowing grin of Antonin who was sitting next to Orion who had his usual blank face. He wasn’t meeting her eyes though so she surmised that Antonin pulled information out of him. She threw a glare at the Russian who in response gave her full, blazing smile.

“We took the liberty of going through your catalogue.” Rod said, holding up the laminated paper.
“We all decided that we would like this French Toast, whatever it is.”

She nodded; French toast did sound amazing. “Eat here or go out?” she asked, leaning against the wall.

“Out.” Abraxas piped up faster than rest of the men. She nodded her assent and watched as they switched out their clothing when realization struck: they have been wearing the same clothes since they came back to life causing the gasp really loudly.

“How could I forget? Well, I can understand why I can forget but…” she mumbled to herself then turned around the men watching her with curiosity as if one would if they saw a rare animal. “I am going to take you shopping! You guys have been wearing the same clothes since you guys came back to life.”

Rodolphus sighed as she grinned evilly. “Let me guess… a muggle Diagon Alley.” he said slowly and she threw a kiss at him. He just smirked at her behavior, shaking his head. “It’s not like we can just walk into Diagon Alley and go to Twilfit.”

“You guys don’t have anything other than black?”

She stared at the five men who somehow color coded their wardrobe where every single one of them was wearing black. Even if they all looked handsome. She felt like a pink cotton candy in a midst of moon-less night. They all looked down at themselves and shook their heads. “How about purple, Antonin?” He just raised an eyebrow at her which she just smiled back, innocently.

“Black looks good on us.” Rod said, looking down at his attire.

“And no one will mess with us.” Orias stated, his thumbs hanging onto the pants belt loops. “And black makes my ass look great.” He turned around to prove his point and Hermione agreed with his statements.

“I can’t see myself wearing… colors.” Abraxas said, shuddering. She, herself, can’t see Abraxas wear color. “At the most, the color I would wear is red.” An image of Abraxas wearing a blood-red
shirt, black pants and black dragonhide boots appeared in her head and she almost licked her lips at the delicious image. “You are drooling.”

Hermione glared at the blond haired beauty. “You wish.” she retorted back, looking away after he winked at her. She removed her car keys from her purse and that is when they noticed the family truck on the driveway. They all looked like someone snatched their souls away from them as they walked towards the car. “It is not that bad. To be fair, that is how I feel when I ride the broom. And if the shopping center was close by, we would have walked, but seeing that it would take hours to walk there… I mean, I could apparate all of us there —”

“No, no, it’s alright. They are just being pussies.” Orias said, standing by the passenger door. “And I call this seat.”

Abraxas scoffed. “I am not being…a pussy ,” he said, looking scandalized at the word he just uttered, “I am just… apprehensive. It is not something I am used to. But I am willing to be used to it. I can’t be afraid of a car .”

“That’s my man, taking the bull by its horns.” Hermione said, slapping Abraxas’s back as on her way towards the driver’s seat. She heard Rodolphus tell to Abraxas how much of a kiss ass he is and Abraxas reminded him back that she brought five men back to life; that she is capable of doing everything. They all got in the car and she made sure that each of them put on a seatbelt.

Getting to Jenny’s was uneventful and this time around, the Purebloods made some conversation amongst themselves. Progress , Hermione thinks to herself. A tiny one but a progress nonetheless. Once they were settled in Jenny’s with the waitress flirting with Orion with a subtleness of a blind rhino, the reoccurring thoughts in her head came back. Could she really call these men hers ? She really couldn’t. They don’t think she is theirs, either, so why should she have some kind of possession over them? She shouldn’t be opening her heart this fast for these men.

But kissing them is so exhilarating.

Now that I think about it, I only kissed Rodolphus and Abraxas twice; I will have to rectify that . She glanced up from her plate to watch Abraxas snickering at Orion’s predicament as the the waitress finally left. Then she joked to herself: by tonight, who will she have on her bed with her? She giggled to herself at the absurdity which caused the man on her right, Antonin to look at her, quizzically. She simply shook her head at him, quizzically. She simply shook her head at him and got more comfortable. To Orion’s horror, the waitress came back with their drinks way faster than they all thought.

“Here you guys are, coffee all around and tea for you, mister. I made it especially for you myself.”
the waitress said, placing Orion’s tea reverently and grace that she hadn’t shown with others. Hermione had to hide her face in the crook of Antonin’s arm and back to muffle her laughter. “Is she alright?”

“She is fine.” Antonin said, his voice hinting that he was holding in his laughter. Hermione moved her head to peak at the waitress just to see the said woman walking away. Orion was currently glaring at Hermione which made her to laugh even more behind her hand.

“At least, we will know that if it doesn’t work out with me, we will know who he will be going after.” Hermione noted and Orion harrumphed, causing the men around the table to chuckle.

“Who said that things with you won’t work out?” Orion asked, grumpily. Hermione’s eyes widened at the statement. She cocked her head to the side, curious.

“Well, the bond hadn’t ruled out you guys going out and finding lovers, right?” she asked, nibbling on her lower lip. “Because I don’t expect you guys to kiss me and only me. I wonder what would happen if we kissed someone that is not bonded with us.”

“Maybe Orion can find out by kissing the waitress.” Orias jokes, causing Orion to glare at him with narrowed eyes. “But, princess, do you really think that if we get our home, that we will just go about and kissing every women we can find? Won’t you think that would be rude to you?”

Suddenly, her mouth turned bone dry. “Why would it be rude to me? It’s not like you guys had the choice of choosing who you are bonded with. I am the first woman you lot have seen for a long time and you guys had to kiss me so we can live… and that’s about it, right? Didn’t you guys have lovers before you died?” Hermione, shut up! Why was she pushing on this subject? She had to know that she wasn’t holding them back because of the stupid bond.

“Nah, all the girls I have been with just wanted to be fucked.” Orias said, crudely, taking a sip from his coffee as nonchalantly as one can possible be after talking about his history with women. “No one looks for a relationship with the resident torturer.”

“I had several side relationships because Bellatrix was busy —”

“Sucking the Dark Lord’s big toe.” Hermione interrupted, causing Abraxas to choke on his spit. Rodolphus laughed at her choice of words. “What? It’s true.”
“A mental image I didn’t need, thank you.” Antonin hissed and she slapped his thigh, giggling. Before she could pull her hand away, his hand descended upon hers and held her hand on his thigh. “But the point is, Hermione, that we like kissing you. You are very responsive.” He forced her hand to rub his muscular thighs. “I don’t think I will be getting over you.”

She blushed so hard that she felt dizzy and she tried to yank her hand away but Antonin’s handheld it firmly. “Now that I think about it, Antonin, you kissed Hermione more than you kissed Alecto Carrow.” Rodolphus remembered, eyeing Hermione’s hand movements on Antonin’s thigh and watching it as how Antonin pulled her hand higher and higher with heated gaze.

“Please, do not remind me of that woman. She got the tits and all but there was something demonic about her mouth—” Antonin explained but was cut off by Abraxas clearing his throat. “Sorry. But the thing was, even if I glanced at her, she got it in her head that I was irrevocably in love with her.” Hermione gave up on yanking her hand back and allowed Antonin to do whatever with it.

“Poor you.” She said, not sounding sorry at all. Antonin simply glared at her, playfully. “I could just imagine the hell you were in with a girl running after you.”

“Hol’ up. You have never met Alecto so you can’t make fun of Antonin of being traumatized. You had to see it to believe it. Antonin had to share rooms with Yaxley who hated Alecto to actually sleep because he was scared for his life that she will come and suck him so hard that his poor genital will fall off.” Orias defended and Hermione gave Antonin’s thigh a squeeze for comfort.

“I will tell you about my run-in with Dolores Umbridge.” Abraxas’s interjected but before he could continue, the waitress came with their food. Everyone looked at Abraxas, waiting. “It was in my fourth year of Charms. She sat next to me…”

Eating took a bit longer because they all sympathized with Abraxas’s misfortunes of gaining the attraction from Umbridge herself. Which somehow made Hermione think of how Abraxas looked in his Hogwarts. She had asked him but he told her that most of his pictures should still be in Malfoy Manor. After the whole trial business and if none of them were imprisoned, Abraxas vowed that he will show them to her.

And it was he who decided to sit up front when they were on the way to the mall. Hermione realized that she needed to get herself a dress for the trial. Show them that she is no longer a kid but an adult and these men are her men whether she likes it or not. They are connected to her as much as she is
connected to them. It is time to accept the fact that is their wife.

She couldn’t keep the pride from puffing up her chest at the sight of wonder in the men’s eyes as they gazed at the monstrosity the mall is. “I already know where to take you all so we don’t have to waste time and not overwhelm you guys.”

“Overwhelm? What is there to be overwhelmed—” Antonin’s words got cut off as the automatic doors opened to let out the loud noises from crowds of people, kids, and electronics. “Oh.” They all watched as kids ran around screaming, haggard parents telling them to behave for the umpteenth time. Teenage girls giggling as they walked past them, carrying multiple shopping bags. Music played from the speakers but it was barely heard over the thrum of the crowd.

“That’s like the moving staircase at Hogwarts.” Rodolphus said, pointing at the escalators as they followed Hermione. As they moved through the throngs of people, Hermione noticed how the men were grabbing attention from both women and men. The gall of the people these days! A group of women walked past, giggling, trying to catch one of the men’s eyes. Hermione covered her mouth with her hand and snorted. An arm was thrown around and checked to see it was Rodolphus.

“What are you laughing about?” He asked, looking down at her curiously. She simply shook her head; no need to inflate their egos. Rod gave her a look that made her second guess because a few seconds later, he pinched her neck. She yelped out more from shock than pain, jumping away from the crab-like fingers of Rod just to fall against Abraxas. She turned to look at him and apologized then glared playfully at Rod who looked at her innocently. Before she could retaliate, Abraxas’s hands came down on her shoulders to trap her.

“I have a question, Hermione.” Abraxas asked, rubbing her shoulder. “Why are those groups of Muggles staring at us?” He looked at the directions and she followed his gaze. The group of muggles consisted of equal amounts of men and women, holding clipboards and they were speaking and nodding appreciatively at each other. She gazed at the banner behind them and made the connection. She turned around to meet the curious gazes of the men. “They think you are handsome, hot, tall, and appropriate to show off their brand clothing. Meaning, they want you all to be their models. Maybe if things don’t work out that well in our world, we have something to fall back to in this world.” She explained and she gave them all an impassive look as their chest puffed up in pride.

“It’s not every day we are scouted, Granger.” Antonin said, running his hand through his hair then paused. “Well, we did get scouted but from a Dark Lord.” She simply shook her head at him then turned back around to walk towards the store she intended. Rodolphus walked next to her and she kept a close eye on him, lest he pinches her again. He showed her his hands that he means no harm but she has been fooled by this innocent act before.
“You are not going to talk to me?” Rod asks, pouting. “So I pinched… you can pinch me back.”

“You know, you act like you are very sweet and nice but then you true mischievous side comes out and makes me want to turn you bald.” She answered which made him laugh loudly, startling an elderly lady. “I am not joking.”

“Are you still mad that I left you hanging?” Rod asked, trying to tame down his laughter. “If it makes you feel better, I lost control when I grazed your tits. And I didn't want to scare you off so that's why I left you hanging.”

“I can’t help being aroused because I was being kissed by five men. So, not your fault.” Hermione answered, shrugging. “Obviously, I will get irritated if someone left me hanging but I don’t expect us to have vigorous sex right off the bat.”

“But you had no problems with have their fingers in you.” Rodolphus said, causing Hermione to blush at his words. She cleared her throat and smirked at him.

“Do contain your jealousy, Rodolphus. It is unbecoming. Hmmph!” She said, then turned away from Rodolphus with her nose in the air, creating a snobbish persona.

“Why should I be jealous when I know I am going to be next?” Rodolphus whispered in her ear. She raised her eyebrow at him in challenge and grabbed Abraxas’s hand who was busy looking away from the two.

“What makes you think you are next? I have already decided that I want Abaxas’s fingers in me by tonight.” Hermione said and the chain of events that led after that almost made her pass out from laughing really hard.

The hand she was clutching gripped her hand tightly as Abraxas snapped his head back to look at her, shocked and mortified. Rodolphus choked on his saliva as Abraxas admonished her, “You simply can’t just - just decide by yourself on who is going to be —” his voice went down really low to a hissed whisper, “ — inside you!”

“Why not? You don’t want to be inside me?” Hermione asked him, innocently. Abraxas turned beetroot red and clutched her close to his body.
“I will love to be in your body, my darling girl, but do you have to say it that loud?” he asked, whispering in her ear. She gave him a confused look.

“Say what out loud? That I want you inside my —” Hermione said, her voice loud and clear and Abraxas slammed his hand over her lips to stop her from saying anything scandalous. She couldn’t control the charade any longer and began to laugh at the haggard look on his pale face. Once he realized that she was joking, he let his arms fall as he glared at her. “You really are cute when it comes to sensibilities, Abraxas.” she noted, between laughs.

“I thought she was nice.” Orias asked from behind her which caused a new bout of laughter bubbling out of her. Abraxas was still glaring at her, his eyes stormy gray and furrowed brows made her insides clench. Okay, she must have some kind of fetish for this man because this man being angry was doing things to her that none of the men did. I wonder how he will be when he finally snaps or when he fights? Would it be weird if she were to masturbate to that?

“I am sorry, Abraxas.” She whispered, then leaned to brush her lips against his left ear. “I think you look ravishing when you are mad.” She left a kiss behind his ear then slowly moved away from him. His eyebrows were still furrowed but his eyes were dark and promising. What if she took too big of a bite and can’t handle Abraxas? Well, she was known for taking challenges head-on.

“Wow, she is like three seconds from jumping his bones. Look at her eyes.” Orias said and she jumped away from Abraxas and blushed indignantly at Orias who was smiling at her.

“No, I wasn’t!” she cried out, defending herself. Orion walked closer to her and put his hand up, his index finger and thumb barely touching.

“Little bit.” Orion said, smiling at her. He walked past Abraxas then paused. He looked at at the blond man and said, “Don’t worry. She is quite exquisite.” Her mouth dropped open in shock as Orias stood next to her, putting his forearm on top of her head and made a ‘huh’ sound.

“I didn’t know Black was like that.” Orias noted and Hermione made a sound of agreement. As she watched Orion stand next to Abraxas, the way he stood and leaned one weight on the dominant foot… all of it reminded her of Sirius. For a man trying to get away from his family, Sirius brought along some few traits with him. She softly smiled to herself then shrugged off Orias’s arm off of her head.

“Let’s continue.”
Her mouth was on the ground. The employees’ mouths were on the ground. They all watched the five men strut around in front of the ceiling-to-floor mirror. Hermione had decided that they all needed to dress smartly for the trial and to him Giuseppe Wears. She was kind of surprised that the men were okay with wearing muggle clothing to the Ministry. It took them a full hour and a half to settle on what they wanted. And in front of her was the result of it.

The men of hers were decked out in full three-piece suits. Each of the suits was tailored to fit their bodies and Hermione was salivating in her seat. Antonin wore a navy blue three-piece suit with ease and he looked like he was seconds away from signing a huge contract as a CEO. Orias chose full black ensemble and he straight up looks like a sexy mobster. Orion, oh sweet baby Merlin, chose a light gray suit that just honestly made her insides clench. Rodolphus chose a simple black suit with a white shirt and blue tie and he looked positively dashing. Abraxas, however, wore a dark red/maroon suit that clashed with his pale hair, making him look so handsome, delectable, panty-wetter, and a person who could be the Fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse, Death.

Hermione cleared her suddenly dry throat. “Are you going to a trial or a fashion show? Who you trying to seduce?” she asked out loud, noticing few people entering the shops just to watch the intimidating men check themselves out. They were attracting too much attention.

“We want to intimidate them without them knowing that they are being intimidated, Hermione.” Abraxas answered, fiddling with his tie. “We will not be thrown around like simpletons. We are families that have deep roots in the community.”

“It is time for us to remind them that despite the choices we have made, our power still determines who get to sit in those seats.” Orias continued then he chuckles. “We are still powerful enough for them to cower in their seats.”

“We should find a similar dress for you, Hermione.” Orion said, nodding at the worker that he was done with his suit and to pack it up.

“No, not a dress.” Hermione corrected, smirking. “I will be wearing a suit as well. Can’t let you all have the fun turning their heads. What is one more act against society?”

“Yes, that will make them pay attention to you. Good strategy. I was part of the generation that
believed that women’s plight wasn’t on par with their counterparts. I knew that magical strength is universal but the thought of women, our wives, and daughters, fighting… Obviously, I was wrong.” Abraxas explained, looking at her seriously. “Why I am bringing up my ignorance is that I am betting that there are few members of the Wizengamot who are just like this.”

“With Umbridge gone, I do believe that you won’t have any problems with your blood.” Antonin said, shrugging off his suit. “Hopefully not.”

“I want this trial to be done and over with.” Rod intervened who was already dressed back into his original clothes. “I just want to go home and just walk around freely without having either a Dark Lord or the fear of being sent back to prison hanging over me.”

Antonin and Orias looked at their buddy with barely concealed shock. It was the rawest confession either of them had given. “Well, the Dark Lord is dead and this trial will be won, Rodolphus. You can bet on that.” Hermione promised, her words strong and without a hiccup. She got off of the chair and signaled one of the workers to grab the suit and take them to the register. “I will win this trial.”

“ We will win this trial.” Abraxas corrected and she nodded, smiling. She paid the triple-digit price tag of the suit and sending a sorry mentally to Harry who had signed her into his Gringotts.

“Excuse me?”

They were at the food court of the mall, filling up their famished stomachs. It already has been four hours since they got here and it was around five in the evening. Hermione was getting sick and tired of girls brazenly coming up to the men to chat with them. She wasn’t jealous, she really wasn't. What she was so annoyed about is how they can just walk up to a group and try to entice them to join them instead.

“We were wondering if we can take pictures of you?”

“No. Don’t you know privacy?”

It was night time when they all reached back home. They all slumped down at the couches, mentally
tired. I forgot to mention that shopping at the mall tires you both mentally and physically. After a few seconds of laying about, Hermione decided to make tea. Before she could even get up, her living room brightened up with a Patronus in the shape of a panther. Everyone became alert and watched the panther prowl around before sitting on its hind legs.

It opened its mouth and Kingsley’s voice appeared. “I tried to push the trial for tomorrow morning but the Wizengamot are rattled to the point of a frenzy. Your trial is set for in an hour for now. Eat something before you go because you will be there for a long time.” With the message delivered, the panther yawned and dissipated. It was silent in the living room for a while, all contemplating that their fate was already going to be decided in a coming few hours.

“Allright. I am going to shoot off a Patronus to Sirius and Draco only to let them know.” Hermione decided, after a few seconds of the shock wearing off. “There must be food in the kitchen; grab some.” She removed her wand and shot off her Patronus, the message brief and short. She went into the kitchen to cut a chunk of smoked gouda cheese from its wheel and nibbled on it as she sorted out her trial clothes.

She went up to her room with her clothes and sat on her bed, hanging her head low. Despite having few unreputable men attached to her via a soul- and magic-bound, in these few days, she had grown attached to them. She had not known when or how but she considers these men in favorable terms and she doesn’t know how to deal with herself if the outcome of this trial leads them to prison. She is sure that the Wizengamot members will have her ingest Veritaserum and what she will say under the influence. What if she implicated these men to jail? What if she goes to jail for bringing them back to life?

She shook her head. She can’t think like this.

With a strong inhale and squaring of her shoulders, Hermione got ready by wearing a black business skirt that ended above her knees, a white dress shirt tucked into the skirt, a black blazer buttoned over her shirt and pair of black heels. She twirled her hair into a low bun with few tendrils coming out of the bun. A simple lip gloss and shimmer over her cheekbones, Hermione was ready for the trial. She left her room with the opened chest just to see that Sirius and Draco were already there, dressed for the trial.

But no Harry.

Sirius saw the stricken look in her eyes. “Hey there, sweet girl.” Sirius announced her, pulling her into his chest, his familiar scent calming her frayed nerves. *Harry is not here? He promised.* “Everything will be okay.”
“Hope so. Because after this, the whole magical community will know that I resurrected dead people… Molly Weasley will be the person leading the witch hunt. Give her one more reason to hate me.”

“Don’t worry about her. She is not your concern as of yet. You have to worry about the trial for now. I don’t think it will be too bad because Kingsley will be moderating it but they will make you take the Veritaserum.”

“Merlin, I hope they don’t ask me embarrassing questions like if I really turned into a cat in my second year.” Hermione mused out loud, walking in further to check out the dashing men. She went up to Antonin to correct his tie then did the same thing for Rodolphus and Mulciber (who had to sit on the couch for her to do so).

Draco snorted as Mulciber asked, “Wait, you turned into a cat?”

“Yeah, she did. The second year of school time, the Chamber of Secrets had opened. Potter, Weasley, and Hermione here all thought that I was the one who opened because they believed that I was the Heir of Slytherin which I took it as a compliment, by the way.” Draco said, smiling at Hermione even though her back was facing everyone, looking at her family pictures. “So, they thought they will change into people that are close to me and try to siphon information out. Hermione prepared the polyjuice potion and everyone grabbed the hair of the person they are changing in to. So, Harry and Ron changed into Goyle and Crabbe but Hermione didn’t check whose hair she grabbed. Instead of Millicent’s hair, Hermione grabbed Millicent’s cat’s hair.”

“Oh, dear.” Orion commented, his voice already shaking from holding his laughter in.

“She told me she had the tail, the ears, the fur but she stood up like a human and was still wearing her school uniform.” Draco finished, causing Mulciber to roar in laughter. She really couldn’t get mad at them because she brought it upon herself for reminding Draco about the story. She just harrumphed but couldn’t help but get rid of the smile that was pulling at her lips.

“It’s not that funny!” Hermione yelled when Mulciber kept on laughing. Abraxas patted her shoulder on his way towards Draco. Sirius cleared his throat.

“It’s time we all leave. I converted your fireplace into a Floo by the green light from Kingsley.” Sirius announced, wiping away the light atmosphere. Hermione nodded and went to stand next to Sirius who looked down at her with a soft smile. He lifted his hand and grazed her cheeks with his fingers. “I guess Harry couldn’t come. He wasn’t home when your Patronus came.”
Pain lanced through her heart as she swallowed the lump that appeared when Harry was mentioned. “It’s alright. I can’t ask him to drop everything to help me, right?”

Sirius glared at the ground. “But you had to drop everything to help him, right? He couldn’t come for a best friend who barely asks him for help?” Sirius hissed out, then looked away. “He promised —”

“I am sure Harry didn’t realize the trial would be this soon and he has Ginny to take care about. I am sure Harry would drop everything if Ginny wasn’t pregnant. You can’t blame him, Sirius.” Hermione interrupted, trying to believe her own words.

“Yeah, she is pregnant. She didn’t give birth yet. Weaslette can take care of herself for two hours.” Draco intervened, placing his hands on her shoulders. “There is no point in crying about him, Sirius. We have to go.”

Sirius nodded, haltingly. Hermione stood on her tiptoes to place a kiss on his clean-shaven cheek, feeling so much love for the man she once couldn’t stand. She settled back down and stood straight. “Draco will go first, then you all will follow, with Sirius in the middle and me at the end. Once we all are through, I will place a Notice-Me-Not charm on all of us so we won’t get hindered by busybodies and Aurors.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Rodolphus answered, nodding. Hermione didn’t bother giving him an answer. Instead, she directed Draco to stand in front of the fireplace and held the pot filled with Floo ashes. Draco winked at her, grabbed a handful of the ashes, stepped inside the fireplace and yelled “The Ministry” as he threw the ashes down. Her whole living room lit up emerald green before going back to darkness.

It didn’t take for too long when it was her turn. She took a deep breath in and let it out slowly. At least Umbridge is not there. Fudge is gone. Crouch is dead. You will be okay. She grabbed a handful of the ashes and Flooed out of her house and right into the arms of a waiting Abraxas.

“Thank you.” she said, correcting her footing. She squeezed Abraxas’s hands before continuing her way to the front just to see Harry Potter tucking his dress shirt in his pants, looking haggard. Her mouth dropped open in shock and in disbelief. She glanced at Sirius who also looked surprised and proud, his previous anger and disappointment gone.

“Harry…?”
“Sorry, Molly wasn’t letting me go and when I got home, I saw the note Sirius left behind and I hurriedly dressed and came.” Harry said, trying to comb his hair back with his fingers. “You can’t imagine trying to let go of Molly when she has her claws in you… Hermione, why are you crying?” He had finally looked at her best friend to see her eyes welling up.

“I thought you wouldn’t come…” Hermione answered, wiping her tears away as she walked closer to her best friend. Harry placed his hands on her shoulders.

“Didn’t I tell you I am coming with you? Did you really think I would abandon you?” Harry asked and this time, Hermione let herself cry. She really thought Harry would abandon her. “You are always there for me whenever I did a mistake so it is my time to be by your side.” She let Harry pull her into hug and she cried into his neck. Hermione didn’t know how much it hurt when she didn’t see Harry in her living room. “You are my sister, Hermione. I will hurt Molly’s feelings for you. Now, stop crying and charm these… why are they dressed like they are about to start modeling? ”

“You like it, mate?” Mulciber asked as Hermione began to laugh through her tears. “I think I like them on me, if I do say so for myself. Makes my ass look great.”

“Yeah, mate, those buns are absolutely fuming.” Harry said, sarcastically. Hermione laughed even harder, wiping her tears away. Harry simply winked at her then froze. “Oh, I forgot to mention. Don’t be mad.”

“What is it, Harry?” Hermione asked, her eyes narrowing at him who began to chuckle nervously.

“So, you know how Ron is when he is furious? Yeah, so he was acting off during dinner and Molly asked him why he was being such a twat to his family… Hermione, Molly knows. Ron couldn’t keep his mouth shut and he blurted out everything. That is why I couldn’t leave because I was trying to calm Molly down with the help of Mr. Weasley and Ginny.”

Molly already knew?
I have noticed something: I get Kudos around two in the morning. I don't know if it's A03 just informing me late or something lmao.
Here is a new chapter. Not too many sexually charged scenes, unfortunately, but next chapter though ;)

I would love to get a beta to read this but I don't know how that works sooo.... let me know.

I have this crazy story idea popping in my head. It's another soul bond story but its multi-universe thing...I don't know. Should I post it?

[EDIT: NEW STORY POSTED]

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“This has been an unusual situation with unforeseen consequences. We have murderers walking about with no Dark Mark’s so we just let them go?” One old guy Hermione couldn’t recognize said, scoffing. “Over my dead body!”

“I believe experiencing death for longer than two years is punishment enough. We can obviously have seen the results of beliefs being twisted a couple of years back. Let us not forget that you, Lord Vandersloot, had the same beliefs. If you can change, why can’t they?” Amelia Bones attacked back, still throwing her punches.

“Ms. Granger here had shown us multiple of times on what a capable witch she is. I don't think this was planned or orchestrated. I think I can assume Ms. Granger is done with the war? Hmm?”

“She brought back Death Eaters! She should face time!”

“Face jail time for something she couldn't control? Instead of punishing her, we should look at her magic prowess. She brought back five men!”

“I am telling you. A witch is a witch. One smile from one of them and she will turn into a Death
Eater. What if she gets a bright idea from her super intellect and brings back Voldemort, huh? I don’t think she could but with the help of the strong men, she could.”

What? Did they think of her such a weak-hearted, head-in-the-clouds type of girl? Oh, it was Cormac McLaggen’s father. Make sense.

“Your sexism is showing, McLaggen. Ms. Granger can outperform you in spells. I have seen her fight.”

“You are partial to Ms. Granger, Minister Shacklebot. No offense. What I am trying to say is can she be level headed and control her men?”

“I think Ms. Granger can be allowed to keep these men in check. You say all these things, McLaggen, but you got to remember these men are from families that line your pockets. And let me also remind you that you are speaking to the Minister and respect is in order.”

“We really don’t know this bond works. What would happen to them if we keep them separated? It is a soul bond so being separated will hurt both parties.”

“Laura Flure is correct. If we separate them, and Ms. Granger does get hurt, we will have to address the crowd on why one of the saviors is injured. We just began rebuilding the Ministry.”

“Surely you are not suggesting we just let them go?! There are families out there that had been affected by Dolohov and what do we answer to when they ask where is their justice? No, no, no—”

“As much as I hate agreeing with you, Daven, I must say some restrictions should be applicable.”

The trial took more than three hours. True as they guessed, the Truth serum was used and it tasted like bitters on her tongue. Thankfully, no one asked her embarrassing questions and was straight to the point. She was the one chosen to sit on the marble chair provided and her men stood behind her. Sirius, Draco, and Harry all stood in the witness box. The members were shocked that Harry supported Hermione, even Sirius.
The result:

They all will get to live in Orias’s house. Antonin, Orias, and Rodolphus will be visited by seasoned Aurors with unexpected visits so there should no wards around the house. They also got magic dampers which they allowed without resistance. Only the three Death Eaters got them. They had taken the chest into their possession, citing that will study it and send it back to the rightful owner.

As they watched the grumbling Wizengamot members walk through the doors, Kingsley jogged to them. He looked worried. “Apparently, it got out that there are resurrected men walking about so… expect company.”

“Oh, that's fucking great! Not only I have to deal with a crazed Weasley Matriarch, I have to deal with the press and other people? Fantastic! Great. I kind of wish I was dealing with Voldemort to be quite frank with you all.” Hermione said, covering her face to hide her panicked face.

“Even Mr. Weasley can’t forever control Mrs. Weasley.” Harry noted while running through his hair with his fingers, messing it up even more than before. “What do you want to do, Hermione?”

Hermione knew what to do but doesn’t mean she would want it to happen. She breathed in and let it out slowly, trying to calm down. “I have to meet with her. Get it over and done with. At least, I am surrounded by Aurors. If worst comes to worst…”

“Don’t worry. It won’t come to that.”

“We also have to worry about the press that would most likely come from all the rumors that are probably spreading around.” Abraxas brought up and Hermione nodded, biting her lower lip. Mrs. Weasley or the press? Which is the least likely to give her trauma? The press, more likely.

“We should head back to your home, Hermione, and plan the next move.”

“I will go ahead and visit Mulciber Manor. I will disable the wards and let the house elves know that their master is alive. I would like if you guys are situated in the manor by tomorrow evening.” Kingsley added and all of them agreed to the plan.
As they walked down the hall towards the elevator, people had lined up to see the procession. Phrases like ‘It's true! They are all alive!’ to ‘How did this happen? It is always the smart people’ to ‘Wow, Sirius Black looks so much like his father’ and her favorite ‘Abraxas Malfoy is so beautiful’.

Once hidden inside the elevator, Hermione let out a quiet sigh and looked around to see the reaction of only a few people of the mass they are about to encounter. All stone-faced except for the pure anger in Sirius and the sympathetic look in Harry. Harry squeezed her hand in reassurance. She felt the protective aura from Draco radiating from behind which made her realize that she was safe with all these men around; that no one can harm her.

When the elevator stopped, someone grabbed her other hand. To her surprise, it was Rodolphus intertwining his fingers with hers. The dampening bracket around his wrist felt cold against her skin and she curled her fingers around his. As she looked forward, she caught the dark eyes of Antonin and he winked at her. She narrowed her eyes at him just as the doors opened.

And she wanted to close the doors immediately.

Molly Weasley stood feet away from the elevator with the rest of her family standing behind her. And she looked murderous. Hermione watched as Molly’s eyes zoomed straight to Antonin. She wordlessly erected a ward around Antonin and she watched Antonin stand straighter at the feeling of the ward around him. Molly looked back at Hermione and took a step closer. Mr. Weasley lifted his hand as if to stop his wife.

“How dare you, Hermione?” seethed out Molly through clench teeth. Hermione flinched at the fury dripping from Molly’s words. Hermione glanced at Ginny, her best friend Ginny, to see that Ginny looked sadly back at her. “How could you bring him back to life?”

“Mrs. Weasley, I didn't have any control on choosing who is resurrected.” Hermione defended, pushing past Abraxas and Orias to stand in front of them. “I had no control, please, believe me.”

“I really thought you were smart, Hermione. Why would you open up a chest that you clearly didn’t know anything about? Now — now, my brothers’ killer is walking around free. I opened my house for you since you were twelve and this is how you treat me?” Molly hissed out, causing Ginny to groan out loud. Just starting in her third trimester and her belly really out in the open, Ginny wobbled to her mom.

“Mom, this is not something against you! Why do you always think that Hermione hates you?
Obviously, in normal circumstances, Hermione won’t bring back the dead. I am honestly surprised that she just didn’t pack her bags and went back to the muggle world.” Ginny said, then grabbed her mom’s hand. “And even if she could bring back the dead willingly, why would she pick the very guy who hurt her?”

It seemed like Molly Weasley didn’t hear her for she didn’t acknowledge her daughter’s logical answer.

“Well, I am very glad that Ron got his head straight and stopped dating you, Hermione. I wonder what hell you would be putting him through next. You are not welcome when Ginny gives birth—”

“Harry and I will be the one deciding on who will be there when our son is born, mom. Not you.” Ginny interrupted, her voice hardened to steel. “I would really appreciate it if you didn’t monopolize my baby when he is still in my womb.”

“Molly, leave it alone. What can you do?” Mr. Weasley jumped in, putting his hands on his wife’s shoulder. Molly glared at her husband then back at Antonin.

“I will tell you what I will do.” Molly said and the battle-hardened Hermione Granger knew that tone. She was in between Antonin faster than Molly wiping out her wand to point towards the said man.

“Mrs. Weasley!”

“Molly!”

“Mom!”

Harry and Sirius stepped up in front of the resurrected men and Molly’s eyes widened at the sight of her son-in-law. “So, destroying Ron’s life wasn’t enough for you. You had to take my Harry as well, huh?” Molly sounded hysterical.

“‘My Harry’? What the fu—” Sirius began before Ron interrupted him by coming to stop next to his mother.
“Mom! Hermione didn’t ruin my life whatsoever, in fact, she pushed me to Lavender! This is beyond crazy. If you hurt Antonin, you are going to hurt Hermione!” Ron cried out, apprehensive. “It was she who broke up with me. I am pissed that she brought back Death Eaters but… I don’t want to see her hurt.” Ron turned around to meet the hard gaze of Hermione. “You know how I get mad… It just came out.”

Hermione wasn’t in a forgiving mood. She felt someone touch her lower back and from the placement of the finger, she knew it was Antonin. “I can protect myself, Granger.” Antonin whispered to her, sounding kind of miffed.

“If you haven’t noticed, we have a crowd of onlookers and press.” Hermione whispered back, bringing the attention that this whole debacle was going to be in the newspaper tomorrow by the looks how the thick the crowds have become around them. “If you, of all people, start using magic… everything we just accomplished today will be gone and you have a magic dampener on you and Ministry-provided wands. If for some reason they don’t hear about this, they can look at the history of spells your wands used.”

Antonin was silent for a bit then sighed. “You are correct. My bad, kotenok.” Wow, it feels great when people agree with me, Hermione thought to herself. She went back to focusing on the scene in front of her. She knew that Molly would be mad but to blame Harry’s future downfall on her was just plain bizarre...

“Molly… we should go home and sort this out.” Mr. Weasley coaxed, rubbing his wife’s arm. Molly looked like she wasn’t going to budge at first then let out a sigh, dropping her wand arm. Hermione followed suit.

“If you are the ‘smartest witch of all time’ figure out a way to send them back.” Molly said, holstering her wand in her dress pockets, turned around to walk away. She paused when she noticed two of her children were not with her. She turned around to see Ginny standing next to Hermione. “Let’s go, Ginerva. You don’t have to show sympathy to a witch who did a crime.”

Hermione watched Ginny roll her eyes before turning around to look at her mother. “She didn’t do a crime! It’s alright, mom. You go on ahead. And take Ron with you. I will be staying with Harry for an undisclosed amount of time.” Ginny called out, glaring at her brother. Ron simply winced and followed his parents back to the Floo station, the crowd parting for them. Ginny turned around to face Hermione who looked close to crying then to men behind her.

“I see that death treated you all good.” Ginny commented, letting her hand rest on top of her swollen
belly. Hermione let out a disbelief snort at her comments. “Have you already begun exploring them?”

“Ginny!” Hermione cried out, scandalized, as Orias let out a bark of laughter, breaking apart the tense atmosphere with his boisterous laugh. Everyone’s shoulder slumped down, realizing that there is no immediate threat.

“What? I am saying if I didn’t have Harry and I had five men bonded with me, I would have already begun the night of debauchery. What are you waiting for?” Ginny said, ignoring the raging blush on Hermione’s face. “Well, you aren’t as straightforward as I am, so I think that is the answer.”

Hermione simply shook her head. “I thought — I thought it would be worse than this.”

“You thought you would have to take down mama Weasley, huh?” Ginny asked and Hermione nodded. Ginny eyed Antonin who eyed her back with no emotions in his eyes. “I mean, I could see why you would think that. I actually also thought that, to be quite honest. She didn’t even shoot a dancing legs jinx at him”

“I love you, Ginny, but I would have preferred if your mom did decide to fight. Now, I will have to walk around Diagon Alley with my wand out — wait, nevermind. This whole thing is going to be in the Daily Prophet tomorrow and I don’t know how the community would react.”

“Probably violently. We should leave and let’s talk about it more back home, Hermione.” Draco said, eyeing the crowd warily. “Anything could happen now and Weaslette here is quite pregnant.”

“Would you look at that, Harry. Malfoy actually —”

“Nevermind. Let’s leave her to the wolves.” Draco interrupted, flashing an irritated glance at Ginny. Draco walked up and grabbed Hermione’s hand. “We probably have to go back to Kingsley’s office to use the Floo Network so we can avoid this.”

“Nope. He went to check out my house.” Orias reminded all of them and Draco growled out loud. Hermione could see the panic setting in Draco’s eyes and she squeezed his hand, giving all her support.
“We have to go through them. This is going to be our ordeal for a couple of weeks so let’s get used to it now.” Hermione said, leaning her head against Draco’s shoulder, totally missing the critical eye of both Harry and Ginny, the latter’s eye widening in surprise at the display of affection between Draco and Hermione.

“When—” Ginny began and Harry shook his head.

“I will tell you all later.”

Hermione turned to her men. “You all ready to go?” she asked, trying to keep her voice strong. They all nodded and they all somehow formed a circle around Hermione and Ginny (seeing that she was pregnant) and they headed towards the Floo stations, where a horde of onlookers blocked their way.

“Make way!” Harry called out, immediately making the crowd part for them. Hermione could catch bits and pieces of the talking coming from the crowd and they weren’t good. She simply kept her eyes forward.

“Ms. Granger! Ms. Granger!” A balding man stepped out of the crowd but stopped in his step by the menacing glare thrown by Abraxas. “Er… Did you do this for attention? I mean, these days we have been speaking about Harry Potter’s heir and you felt left out? Is this it?”

Hermione wanted to facepalm herself but Ginny immediately grabbed the twitching hand. “What will your parents say?” An unknown voice from the voice called out, a man’s voice that sounded very familiar. “What will they say when they find out that their only daughter is whoring herself for attention?!”

The collective horrified gasps from the crowd amplified Hermione’s shame. A few seconds later, Hermione realized that she still had supporters in the crowd when some of the supporters started shouting at the whoever shouted that vile thing. “Ms. Granger ain’t like you, McLaggen! I heard you had an intimate encounter with the Head of the Record Keeping just so you can hide your father’s affairs!” Hermione glanced at the Ginny who looked back at her, murderous.

“Cormac McLaggen said that?!” Hermione hissed out, her shame forgotten, replaced with anger. “I am going to rip his golden pubes out, one by one!”

“Well, I am going to push a needle through his pee hole! Where is he? Hermione whoring herself out? Is he projecting himself onto you? Harry, detain him!” Ginny hissed and Harry winced, looking
at his wife guiltily.

“I simply can’t misuse my position as an M.L.E officer because he chose to use those words. It’s all under the Freedom of Speech Act.” Harry answered, shrugging. Ginny growled in frustration then brightened up then dissolved into a smile that could make a cat jealous. “Ginny, what are you planning? I can’t have you leaving this circle.”

“Oh, I am not. But I have delicious news.” Ginny comforted, then pointed her wand to her throat and chanted, ‘sonarus’. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” Ginny’s voice resonated loudly over the group of onlookers, causing silence to envelope them, “He may call Hermione a whore, but at least, she is clean. Whoever shagged Cormac since his graduation, please get yourself tested because several girls who had dated Cormac during school time became infected with STI. Thank you for listening.” She ended the charm and smirked at Hermione and the group shocked silence then counted down on her fingers from three. Three. Two. One.

A couple of girls screamed in horror which caused the group of onlookers to turn to the offending man, shouting. Hermione caught Cormac turn deathly pale as the crowd surged around him like crashing waves and pure satisfaction ran through her. “Let’s go while they are distracted.” Sirius said, his voice filled with laughter. Hermione’s group power walked to the Floo stations and everyone called out Hermione’s house.

After a few seconds, everyone was standing in her living room, some were chuckling and some were not. Hermione was not but she had a smile on her face. Ginny looked proud and Harry was chuckling with his head on Ginny shoulders. “If he hadn’t opened his diseased mouth, none of that would have happened.” Ginny defended her actions.

“You have a knack of riling people up, Mrs. Potter.” Orion noted and Ginny smiled, nodding.

“It’s the Weasley blood in me.” Ginny said then sighed, wobbling over to Hermione’s father rocking chair and slumped down on it, her hand on her belly which prompted Hermione into action. She magicked multiple glasses of water and alcohol and everyone settled all about the living room.

“I thought it would be worse.” Hermione finally said, breaking the silence. “Other than Cormac vile comment, I expected more anger or hatred.”

“It is only the first day.” Sirius reminded her and she nodded, biting her lower lip. “Make sure to have your wand ready whenever you go out, even if it is only the muggle world.”
“At least, you do not have to walk around eggshells, knowing that you had to keep us secret.” Antonin pointed, sipping his whiskey. “The faster we move into Mulciber’s Manor, the better.”

“We also have to discuss what we tell your parents, Hermione.” Harry reminded her and she groaned out loud.

“Wait, Hermione, you are moving in with them?” Ginny asked and Hermione nodded, looking at her reaction. “Hmm.”

“Hmm?” Hermione prodded.

Ginny shrugged. “Well, I am sure the Manor is big and there will be five men just walking about… a lot of things could happen. My suggestion? Brew contraceptive potion, pronto.”

“GINNY!” Hermione cried out, hiding her blushing face.

“What? Look, I love being pregnant and all but having sex while you have a big bump is kind of awkward, so, my advice: have lots of fun before you plan to settle down,” Ginny continued on, causing the men who were not her bonded mate to groan out loud and the men who were bonded with her to look at Hermione with blushing amusement. “What? The war is fucking over. You never thought about how a man from the other side would do in bed?”

“No, I haven’t thought that.” Hermione asked, covering her flaming face with her hands but glaring at the innocently smiling Ginny through her fingers.

“No? Not a teensy little bit?”

Hermione paused to think about it. She guessed that pause was too long to cause Draco and Harry to snap their head towards her. “Okay, okay. There was one… but I won’t say his name!”

“There was one, really? I was joking.” Ginny noted, giving Hermione a surprised look. “Who is it?” Rodolphus, Antonin, and Orias looked particularly interested in her answer.
“I am not telling you.” Hermione said, then shook her head. “What if I was lying and you are got suckered into my joke and now all of you will spend time thinking about who I was thinking about.” She looked around to see everyone reaction to her impromptu trickery.

None of them looked convinced.

“Who was it, Hermione?” Draco asked, looking at her with a raised eyebrow. “We won’t look down on you.”

Hermione sighed, looking at Antonin then to the rest of the team. “It was him!” Hermione cried out, pointed at Antonin, who in return gave her a look of shock. Actually, everyone had stopped breathing.

“Why?!?”

“Sexually?”

“Come on, you guys! I literally almost died by his curse… his own hand-made curse. Of course, I am going to be curious!” Hermione defended, standing up. “That spell must have been so intricate to make and… and I don’t know how he made it and I wanted to know! And I do like my men intelligent.”

“Leave it to Hermione to have a crush on a man who almost killed her because he was smart!” Ginny said, flabbergasted.

“I didn’t have a crush on him! I justed wanted to know how he created the curse, simple! I didn’t diddle myself with his image in my mind, thank you very much!” Hermione shouted, causing Orias to laugh boisterously. “What are you laughing at?!?”

“Please, Hermione, never say ‘diddle’ in front of me.” Sirius begged, throwing his head into his hands.

“I am very pleased.” Antonin said which caused Hermione to retaliate by throwing her TV remote
Ginny had to leave after a while, saying that she needed to check on her mother. Harry decided to go with her to be the buffer between his wife and her mother. Sirius decided that he was going to go home as well, saying goodbye to Hermione and to his dad. A wave goodbye to the rest of the men made her believe that the relationship between the “heroes and villains” was underway to something better. Draco had to leave for the Malfoy Manor to update his father about the trial from his view before the *Daily Prophet* gets to him.

It was still around the seven in the evening and they all decided to hit up the same place where they got chicken fingers. This time, however, they wanted to eat in the restaurant. They all freshened up (Hermione switching to normal jeans and shirt) before leaving the house. She walked slowly, thinking about what she was going to say to her parents. *I have got an opportunity to research about bonds and reasons why these men were linked with Voldemort? No, they would lock her up in the basement.*

*Hey, mom, I am finally feeling the feelings that I should’ve had when I was back in school and I want sex 24/7 so I enlisted five men — NO.*

*The truth? Help, I resurrected men and now I am sort of married to them and now I have to stay with them?*

Hermione felt at the end of her tethers.

“You are thinking too hard again.”

She snapped out of her thoughts from Antonin’s voice. She realized that she was lagging behind and saw the men were looking at her with concern. “Ah, I didn’t realize I was walking slow. Sorry!” Hermione apologized, guiltily. She turned towards Antonin. “You are right, though. Now I am trying to figure out what to say to my parents. The truth? They would hunt you all down. Their little girl married to five men? It is going to be a disaster.”

“You should just explain everything to them. I don’t think they would appreciate it if they found out in other forms that their daughter is married, right? They know that marriage works differently in the magical world?” Antonin said, shrugging.
“Yes, they do. But they don’t know anything about resurrections or soul bonds like this. They are going to hate me.” Hermione groaned out, raking her hair with her fingers then she let out a huff of laughter. “You are right about one thing, Antonin. I am going to go bald.”

Antonin chuckled at then slapped her shoulder, not hard enough to hurt. “You are jumping to conclusions, kotenok. You don’t know how they will react. Worst case, they will stop talking to you but I don’t think they will hate you. They forgave you for erasing their memories, correct?”

“After a while, yes, they did.” she answered, seeing his point. How did she get so far in life with so many fears of what-if, what-could thoughts all throughout her life? She really thought she was a voice of reason amongst Harry and Ron (and she was) and here she was, unreasonably scaring herself with a rare possibility that her parents might hate her or shun her. “Why is that you are the voice of reason all of the time?”

Antonin shrugged, grinning. “I have to be or else you would be lost in your head forever.”

Dinner finished in two hours because most of it was of them talking about the trial and how they think Lord Vandersloot should just retire before he croaks. Orias, the jester, had asked for a pen (she had to explain how to make it work without an ink well) and drew Vandersloot with balls for a chin on a napkin, causing the rest of the table to laugh loudly at that. It was a great thing to have humor in such trying times, Hermione decided. She can’t overthink things that is out of her hands, so she should fill with humor.

The thing was: Hermione wasn’t funny at all.

She watched in amazement as Orias pulled jokes after jokes about Vandersloot and thought to herself: how is it that Orias can pull jokes out that fast and it was a struggle to even create one joke? Maybe, she was too serious. She still thought about it when they all returned home and she went upstairs to change. Seeing that it was only nine in the evening, she went downstairs to check on the men to see them in different forms of undress.

Both Abraxas and Orion had their shirt off, showing off their pale skin and toned bodies. Antonin had removed his pants and only wore boxers and his dress shirt. Rodolphus had left his shirt unbuttoned and was slipping on a pajama bottom. Orias only had his boxers on and Hermione looked away really fast when she could see the outline of his manhood through his boxers. GOD, he was huge! How can he fit it inside a man or a woman?! They were all looking at her (Orias looked smug) frozen in their acts of changing.
“Why are you guys changing together?” Hermione asked, blushing.

“Because we are men.” Rodolphus answered slowly as if speaking to a little child. “Why change in the bathroom when our bodies look the same?”

“That is a good point. Huh. I mean, I do the same with Ginny when we shared a room together. I just know that there are some men out there that are weird about seeing other men’s bodies.” Hermione answered. “I came down to see if you guys are tired or if you want to watch something or plan out what we are taking to Orias’s house.”

“Why don’t you look over my way, princess?” Orias teased, causing Hermione to blush even more. “Is there something… scaring you?”

“Oh, shut up, Orias.” Rod said, laughing. “We all know that you have a big cock.”

“In front of a lady!” Abraxas admonished, hurriedly dressing into his sleepwear. “Sorry, Hermione, these uncouth men!”

“It’s alright, Abraxas. I shared a tent with two boys. Nothing happened between the three of us in the tent.” Hermione said, stressing the last sentence. She watched the rest of the men finished dressing and Hermione had to admit to herself: thank Merlin that they were the ones who came out alive. Imagine if she was soul bonded to Dumbledore or something. She had to calm the urge to gag at the image of Dumbledore undressing.

Wow, I must be really stressed if I am thinking about Dumbledore undressing.

“You know what? I am just going to lay in my bed until sleep comes. You guys can have an orgy or whatever men do.” Hermione said, turning around and about to climb the stairs.

Orias laughed loudly from behind her. “You heard her, Antonin, open those legs.”

Hermione laughed out loud as she heard the sound of skin being slapped. “Shut the fuck up, Orias. I will remove your eyelashes if you come near me!” Antonin cried out and the men’s laughter boomed through the house. They were still laughing as Hermione closed the door to her bedroom behind her.
“That Orias, man.” she mumbled to herself as she walked into her restroom. She was still chuckling as she got out of the restroom, freshen and clean-faced just to yelp in surprise to see Abraxas in her room, his chest bare and his pajamas riding low on his hips.

“Oh, forgive me, for barging. You weren’t answering.” Abraxas said, startled by her startled yelp. She just chuckled as she walked closer to the man.

“Do you need something?”

“I was wondering if you will allow me to sleep next to you.” Abraxas asked, bowing his head. Wow, formal. “You see, it’s been quite a while since I slept beside my wife and it had kept me bereft. I wanted to ask earlier but I didn’t want to seem that I want sleep next to you for sole purpose of giving you satisfaction in bed.”

Her heart went out to Abraxas. Of all the men, Abraxas was the only one who was happy with his wife. I wonder if he misses her, Hermione thought. “Alright. Come on.” she answered, walking around her bed, pulling the comforter back. Abraxas and Hermione slipped under the comforter and stared at each other. He had a soft smile on his face that made her heartbeat faster than normal.

“Thank you.”
Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Notes

Just to let you all know, I hit 300+ pages on my docs on this story. I wish I had this drive for college papers.

New chapter, a new journey. This chapter and the following future ones are going to hard to write because I am trying to figure out which direction this story will go. I hope you enjoy this one!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

What do I do in this situation?

It was middle of the night when she stirred from her sleep. She didn’t remember when she fell asleep but all she remembered was light gray eyes. What brought her awake was the heavy arm draped around her waist, a rod lodge against her bum and pair of lips on the spot where her neck met her shoulder. It didn’t take too long for her body to react to sleepy seduction of Abraxas Malfoy. However, she didn’t know if he was awake or asleep. Should she go back to sleep?

But how could she if Abraxas was mapping her skin with his hot lips? She shifted her head to give him more room to kiss — wait, he is asleep so should she even encourage him without him knowing? His skimmed over her neck, his breath warming her skin. She unconsciously settled deeper into Abraxas’s arms — wanting more. But how? She couldn’t simply just wake him up and ask him to pleasure her! This man was a nobleman back in the day and expected women to act a certain way.

Hermione would assume that Abraxas would be simply aghast if she was the one who made the first move. But at the same time, Hermione believed that he wouldn’t turn her away because he was learning that his time and this time was totally different. She was sure that he was still unconvinced about her magic even though it was her magic that brought back five men. So what can she do to convince him that she is magically adept?

The arm that was draped over her waist began to wander as if it had a mind of its own. It rubbed small circles on her stomach and she watched it advance higher and higher. The sudden inhale from behind her was the only warning that Abraxas woke up. A soft groan against her neck and his hand paused on its track to her chest which caused her to pout. An ‘oops’ came from his lips and he shifted his hand away from her stomach. The word, the simple word, from such an aristocratic man,
made her giggle, making the said man freeze behind her.

“You are awake?” he asked, groggily. “Hope I didn’t wake you up with my wandering hand.”

“No, it didn’t.” She answered, truthfully. Abraxas sighed in relief. “However, it is your hard on that is lodged in my backside that woke me up.”

Abraxas froze at her words and she felt him shift back to look down at their waist level. She smirked as he whispered, “Oh, shit”. He made the move to separate himself and Hermione grabbed his hand to stop him. “Hermione?”

Hermione flushed as she said her next words, “I like the feeling.” She waited with bated breath for Abraxas next move. The atmosphere was tense and quiet. She shuddered out a sigh as he slid his hand back on her waist and pressed himself closer to her, making her feel exactly how hard he was. He placed his mouth to her ear as he moved his hand upwards to grab her breasts. “No bra, huh?” his voice was low and throaty and just from that, her insides clenched.

“Too restricting.” she mumbled, pushing her ass against his pulsating member. Abraxas chuckled at her words, pushing hips in tandem with hers.

“My wife wasn’t the type to initiate our sexual endeavors. Well, in those days, if the husband wanted it, the wife gave it. It was otherworldly if the situation was reversed.”

“Are you disgust by my behavior?” she asked, moving her hands slowly past his and travel down to her juncture. It was hot between her legs and a tenderly touch to her sensitive lips with her own fingers made her mewl softly.

“No, no. It is quite… refreshing. I can’t do all the work, you know.” Abraxas murmured, tucking her shoulder under his chin so he could watch her fingers. Liking what he is seeing, he pinched the pebbled nipple through her nightie. The sound that came out from her lips delighted him, she assumed, because he began to pinch in rhythm. The slow dance of their fingers together had made Hermione into a puddle of sensitive nerves.

So, when Abraxas decided to move, it shocked Hermione enough to open her eyes, sluggishly. He rolled her onto her back and he loomed over her. His eyes were the only ones glowing in the dark as he watched her face. He grabbed both of her arms and pulled it over her head. With magic, he tied her arms to her headboard and she tried to move her arms but there was no give from the magic. He
watched as Hermione licked her lower lip, breathing hard and anticipating Abraxas’s next move.

He leaned down and lightly brushed his lips over hers. He licked her lips lightly but moved away when she attempted to deepen the kiss. He sat up, not putting his full weight on her legs. Hermione struggled a bit — she has never been bound before and seeing that Abraxas had full control of her body made her feel a plethora of feelings; anger, helplessness, but the strongest was surprisingly arousal. She remembered Ginny talking about how equal she and Harry are in bed, talking about dom and subs. Hermione really thought she would lean more towards a dom but here she finds out that she was a sub!

She would have speculated more if it weren’t for Abraxas placing both of his hands on her shoulders. She bit her lower lip as he slowly dragged his hands down, completely avoiding her breasts and down her stomach. She actually felt offended that he avoided her sensitive tits but bit her tongue when his hands got closer to her mound. With her jaw dropping in shock, she watched Abraxas completely avoid the area that she wanted him to touch and let his hand travel down her legs. He paused, his fingers barely touching her shins then began to move back up, repeating the same path with light fingers.

By the fourth time down her body, she was high strung with arousal. She let out a whine of frustration, trying to buck up between Abraxas. “Abraxas, please!” she cried out, straining her back as if it would force Abraxas’s hand to touch her at least.

“Please, what?” Abraxas prodded and she glared at him: how could he be so evil? “Not with those eyes, my sweet girl.”

She closed her eyes, trying to will her frustration away. Her eyes flared open when she felt his lips at the corner of her mouth. Once he caught her eyes, Abraxas whispered again, “Please, what?”

“Touch me, please or just kiss me.” she mumbled to him, her eyes slightly watering. He looked like he was thinking about it. “Please, sir.” Now she was begging?! She watched his gray irises swivel to meet her browns and smiled at her in a way that made her feel like she fell into his trap. She wanted to think more but once he touched his lips to hers, all thoughts were obliviated. He forced her mouth open with his and kissed her roughly, making her moan. After a few more seconds of the battle of the lips, he disengaged himself from her lips. Her lips felt swollen. With a wave of his hand, she felt the silencing ward fall around them.

“Don’t want to be rude and wake them up.” Abraxas noted, looking down at her, thinking. “What do I want to do with you? Hmm.” He rubbed his chin as he analyzed her. Hermione didn’t know what to think — how to think. All she knows is that her womanhood was connected with his eyes. Every time he looks at her as if he was trying to piece her together, her internal muscles clenched around nothing and she feels the familiar ache of wanting to be filled.
For now, he was toying with her.

“You see, Hermione, back in my day… I couldn’t do all of this stuff with my wife. It would be frowned upon and her father would have killed me — or at least he would try to. I was kind of hesitant to try it with you; not sure how you will react.” Abraxas explained, rubbing her sides, underneath her nightie. “You know how conservative it was back then? I couldn’t even ask my wife for a blow job or vice versa without her screaming. Believe me, I loved her but I wanted more.”

“That is really sad.” Hermione said, feeling genuinely sad.

“So, I have decided to try something. I am sure you will like it.” Abraxas said, brightening up. With a wave of his hand, she was fully naked under his gaze. She squeaked at the sudden change of appearance and she felt her nipples harden at being exposed to his eyes. “No wonder Dolohov had fun.” His eyes roved all over her body and she flushed under his eyes.

He shuffled off of her, bit her right nipple on his way and she moaned at the delicious pain. He separated her legs wide enough for him to lay between them, his head precariously close to her junction. “Abraxas, what are you doing?” she asked, her face heating up with embarrassment. He was so close that she could feel his breath on her lower lips. Thank Merlin she decided to shave this morning.

“Doing exactly what you want me to do.” He answered, moving closer. “Spread your legs, darling.” It took few seconds for her to decide if she wanted to listen to him. The throbbing in her cunt actually decided for her. She spread her legs even more, looking down to see him licking his lips. “You are already this wet? Just from rubbing? How responsive.”

His fingers spreading her lips apart made her inhale sharply. “God!” she screamed out when she felt his tongue touch her. She slammed her head back onto the pillow and lifted her hips closer to his face. Abraxas pulled his tongue back and tsked which caused her to growl in frustration. He lifted both of her legs and placed them on his shoulders and laced his fingers together over her hips to hold her down. He swiped again with his tongue and moaned, the vibration of his sound make her shudder more.

“Merlin, you taste good.” he complimented then he went back to eating her soul out from her pussy. He sucked on her labia, slightly nipped her clit, you name it, he did it. Hermione was seeing stars and her moaning turned into small cries. She squeezed his head tighter to body and his name left her lips repeatedly.
“Oh, my fuck — yes!” Hermione cried out, lifting her head to watch the scene to notice that Abraxas was looking up at her, the pupil of his eyes blown so wide that all she could see was ring of gray around them. She became even wetter as she tried to keep their eye contact intact. Hermione was really glad that his first time eating out a pussy was hers. His tongue probed at her hole and she was chanting, “please, please, please” and when he answered her pleas by pushing his tongue in, she let out a drawn out moan.

“Sing for me, Hermione. Let me hear your voice.” he whispered then pushed his tongue back in. Thank Merlin that he put up silencing charm or else the rest of the house would hear how loud slurping noises and her cries. He moved one hand to circle around her clit as the heat of her climax began to build.

“Oh, god. Oh, god!” she cried out. “I am gonna — I am gonna—” she let out a high pitch whine when he replaced his tongue with his two of his fingers. His tongue licked at her clit as he began to pump his fingers out of her. She went crossed eyed. Her vision darkened. “Abraxas… Abraxas! Harder!” She moved her hips with his fingers, trying to impale his fingers deeper into her body.

“Cum for me, Hermione.” He growled out, pinching her clit with his lips so hard that she instantly snapped.

“Abraxas!” she screamed as he continued to plunge his fingers and eating as she climaxed, prolonging. Her whole body undulated with heat and lightening and she felt her cum run down her buttcrack. As her climaxed died down, he slowed down and slowly removed his fingers from her sensitive hole. She breathed hard as she watched him sit back on his haunches, putting those two fingers that were in her in his mouth. He snapped his fingers and her hands were free. She lifted herself up with shaky hands and crawled over to sit on his lap.

“I hope you enjoyed.” she whispered, wrapping one arm around his neck. Abraxas smacked his lips and gave her sinful smirk.

“I did. Very much so. You taste magnificent.” he said, wrapping his arms around her waist. She pressed her mound against his straining erection hidden by his pajamas causing him to moan.

“What about you?” she asked, her lips moving over his.

“Just your hand for now. I will tell you when later.” He answered then pressed his lips against hers, this time softly. Her hand went in between them and went under the elastic band of his pajama to find out that he was going commando underneath. He was thick and heavy in her palm and a grunt of approval was all she needed. It didn’t take long for him to ejaculate but the way he whispered her
name so reverently as he pulsed his cum all over her hand made her blush.

As they both relaxed from the climaxes and felt their sleep making a reappearance, Hermione looked over at her time to see it was three thirty in the morning. Abraxas saw it, too. “Huh. Pretty late.”

Angrily, Hermione slapped Abraxas on his arm. “Of course, it is late! You really missed your wife, huh?” she asked, rolling her eyes. She laid down, facing him.

“I did miss her initially. Then I woke up to my erection pressed against your delectable derriere and… here we are.” he explained, pulling Hermione closer to him by her waist. “I will be waking up with your taste in my mouth.”

Waking up was a struggle. It was around seven in the morning. She groaned then tried to go back to sleep. She remembered what happened in the middle of the night and she covered her flaming face. I can’t believe I just let that happen. Hermione never realized how good it would be seeing that last night — early morning? — was her first time receiving oral sex. Abraxas had a sinful mouth that his wife never even got to experience.

Was it bad that she felt… giddy that it was she who gave him that experience and not his wife?

Seeing that she wasn’t able to go back to sleep, she sat up, causing Abraxas to groan out for being disturbed. “What time is it?”

“Seven.”

He groaned again. “Go back to sleep.”

“I can’t. I always wake up around this time. You go back to sleep and come down whenever. I am going to make coffee, read a book and plan out on what we should do today.” Hermione explained and he grunted, snuggling deeper into her pillow. A sudden urge to kiss his temple overcame her and she leaned down to do it. Once she had done it, she lifted herself to see that Abraxas was looking at her. She blushed at her strange behavior and got off of her bed. She rushed off to her bathroom and pressed her back against the door.
What was that?

She wasn’t catching feelings… was she?

Maybe his temple looked delectable. Makes sense. That was it.

After freshening up, she came out to see Abraxas sleeping on her bed and her eyes focused on the slightly open mouth of his and remembered where those lips were four hours ago. She felt a familiar curl of arousal in her lower belly and she left her room really fast. Oh boy. Oh boy. He was dangerous. Well, all of them were dangerous but… he was dangerous sexually. Actually, all of them were sexually dangerous as well. How did Abraxas’s wife survive him? An image of Lord Abraxas Malfoy sitting at the head of a dining table with work parchments surrounding him flashed through her mind and she swallowed to relieve her suddenly dry throat.

“I need liquor, not coffee.” she mumbled to herself, going downstairs to see the rest of the beautiful sleeping male specimens on their designated beds. Rodolphus caught her eye seeing that he flung his comforter to the ground, revealing that he was sleeping with only his bottom pajamas on. Interesting; Hermione didn’t know that Rod grew chest hair. Not that she gets turned off from it — Krum had chest hair as well — but surprised because she always thought that Purebloods were not hairy at all. She couldn’t help but run her hand lightly through his thick hair on his head.

She snatched her hand away when he wrinkled his nose and darted into the kitchen. What the fuck was that? First the kiss to the temple, now running her fingers through hair? She couldn’t really be catching feelings. No. No.

His hair was also delectable.

They all woke up — sans Abraxas — around nine. She could hear them yawning and greeting each other from her dad’s office room. She felt like she didn’t need to see them; she was seeing them for straight five days and in those four days, she had four guys in her body. Abraxas, Antonin, Orion, and Orias… the only person left was Rodolphus and she felt guilty that he was the last. She has to rectify that — wait, why? All the endeavors with the men happened on accident so…

Nevermind. She was going to rectify it.
She heard the sound of someone climbing the stairs. She placed her book, straining her ears to hear who exactly it was climbing. She heard a door slam open and “Good morning, sunsh — oh, it’s you, Malfoy.” She smacked her head as she laughed at the disappointment in Orias’s voice.

“Get out of here, Mulciber! I had a late night!” She heard Abraxas growl out and Hermione groaned, knowing that Orias won’t leave him alone.

“Late night, huh? How so?” Orias asked, predictability.

“I don’t lick and tell, Mulciber.” The reply from Abraxas was dripping with such smugness and arrogance that it made her blush. No response came from Orias as she heard her door close and the sound of heavy footfalls stopped before her office door.

The door banged upon as Orias yelled, “What did I just find out, princess?”

She couldn’t control her smile. “That Abraxas was intimately introduced to my womanhood? Yes.” she replied, placing her bookmark to hold her place in the book before closing it. “Late night shenanigans, you know.”

Orias pouted, causing her to laugh. She walked around her desk to reach him. She grabbed his collar and pulled him down to her height. “Don’t worry; you will have your turn.” she promised, kissing his cheek. He stood up straight and winked at her.

“I do love promises, sweet cheeks. I will keep that promise in mind.” Orias said, tapping her nose then left the office. As she went around her desk to continue reading, a thought stopped her from advancing. Since they have arrived, Hermione never got any traumatic nightmares from the war. None filled with Bellatrix or Voldemort. Or scenarios on what would have happened if Harry didn’t kill him. She slumped down on her chair when the realization hit that she was having the best sleep in the world in these last five days. How?

Was it the men?

But… it doesn’t make sense. Antonin took part in the majority of her dreams and now… she wasn’t even dreaming. Maybe, her brain is stalling and it work again after a week or so? Hope not. She liked waking up with seven hours of sleep — this early morning tryst didn’t count — these days. So she made a decision so unlike her that Harry might need to check her into the Janey Thickney ward in St. Mungos and that decision was not to question this miracle. Whistling, she picked up her book.
to continue to read when she realized that she needed to feed the men.

“Oh, snap!” she cried out, standing up again. “I need to get groceries for breakfast.”

She let herself in her room to see Abraxas sleeping on his back, his arm covering his eyes. The domesticity of the view made her heart beat faster: *this would what would look like if I only had one husband*. She hurriedly went inside her closet to switch out from sweatpants to jeans and long sleeved mustard shirt. She was grabbing her purse and coming out of her closet when she saw Abraxas sitting upright, looking groggy.

“Muckleb, that bastard.” He grumbled, getting off her bed. He noticed her standing in front of her closet and his eyes traveled down her attire. “What are you dressed for?”

“Got to get groceries before I make breakfast. There is already a fresh batch of coffee made downstairs or… maybe the rest might have taken it.” Hermione said, shrugging, grabbing the keys to the truck. “You be nice to Orias.”

He grumbled at that, squeezed her shoulders as he moved past her to get to her bathroom. She just shook her head and left for downstairs to see the rest of the men drinking coffee and tea, a bunch of assorted biscuits on the serving table lay between them. “Morning. Where are you going?” Antonin asked, nibbling on a biscuit.

“I am about to head to the grocery store. Rod, you want to come?” Hermione asked, looking at the stocky man, expectantly.

“Hell yeah, sugar. Let me switch out the shirt and be there.” Rod answered, getting up from his seat. *Sugar*?

“There was an American movie on the TV.” Orion supplied after seeing a confused face. “The main character called his girlfriend sugar.” Maybe, showing them movies was a bad idea? If one of them can go without saying ‘hasta la vista, baby’ that would be great. She couldn’t imagine that phrase with a posh British accent would come out with the intended effect. She giggled to herself as Rod came out wearing a white button-up shirt and black jeans.

“See you in an hour,” Hermione called out, the men waving goodbye at her. As she walked towards the garage, Rod asked if they were taking the car and she nodded. He bonded to the passenger seat and got in. “What you in the mood for?”
“Eggs Benedict,” Rod replied and Hermione looked at him, blankly.

“I don’t know how to make that.” she answered, seriously. Suddenly, Hermione felt guilty of not knowing how to make breakfast other than pancakes and bacon. Which opened a whole new problem for her: she won’t be able to cook homemade food all the time because she doesn’t know that many. But they will be shifting to Orias’s home and he has elves so she doesn’t need to learn how to cook?

But this is one of the things that Hermione can’t do… and she wants to know how to cook. Ginny explained to her that it was therapeutic.

“Eggs, then?” Rod asked, smiling, but Hermione shook her head; kind of miffed that there was a thing that she doesn’t know.

“No, I will learn how to make it.” Hermione said, fire in her eyes.

Rod chuckled. “You really don’t like not knowing things, huh?” he asked, causing Hermione to blush. “You don’t have to know every single thing, Granger. No one is going to look down on you.”

Hermione shrugged, biting her lower lip. “It is easier said than done. When someone asks me for something, I have to know the answer. Not knowing the answer makes me feel inadequate.” Hermione replied back then was amazed at herself for 1) admitting her own problems out loud and 2) that it was Rod she told that, too. “Both Antonin and Orion told me to relax… but it is a lifelong habit I formed. It will be hard to break.”

“Inadequate? You are juggling five men at a tender age of 18 or 19, you stood up to your ex-boyfriend slash hopefully ex-best friend’s mom, went to war, survived my wife and Antonin, looked at the Dark Lord in the eye, came up best in studies at Hogwarts, can somehow live with the fact that you’re friends with The One Who Annoys… and not knowing how to make eggs benedict makes you feel inadequate?” Rod asked as if she was crazy. Now that he put it like that, Hermione did wonder if she was crazy. “Because of us you went through hell and yet, you can look me in the eye and admit your weakness is something quite amazing.”

Hermione swallowed around her dry mouth. What does one say to that? She did go through all that. A normal person would. She decided on the different route “If I think about it, we never clashed or fought before.” she asked, parking in the grocery’s parking lot. Once out of the car, Rod jogged up beside her.
“We didn’t, did we? I think we exchanged curses at the ministry before, of all people, Bella killed me.” Rod said, thinking out loud, following other customer’s action and taking a trolley.

“I wouldn’t know. You all were wearing masks. But Bella was mad that she killed you. She went crazy and doubled up on shooting curses, blaming us for her bad aim.” Hermione said, shrugging. “I was on the ground half of the of time because of her. This was before Antonin marked me.”

“You think Bellatrix was mad because I had died or because she missed whoever she was trying to kill?” Rod asked as they went into an aisle with pancake mixes. Hermione thought about it.

“Well, she was trying to kill Sirius but he ducked and you were in the spell’s path.” Hermione reminisced and Rod rolled his eyes as if it was obvious. “What?”

“She always hated Sirius and she will take whatever chances to kill him; the one time he gets close enough for her to kill and dodges her spell… I can see why she lost her marbles. Thank Merlin I was already dead.” He said, shaking his head. “I honestly can’t believe that my father thought Bellatrix and I would be perfect together. I already had some—” He stopped himself when Hermione snapped her head towards him. “Forget what I just said.”

“No, I won’t!” Hermione denied, making Rod face away from her. “Rod, there was someone else in your life, wasn’t it?” Rod bit his lower lip, looking pained. “Please, let me know.”

“Why?” Rod asked, sharply, and Hermione was taken back. “Bellatrix and Voldemort took everything away from me but this secret is the only thing I own.” Hermione softened by his reasoning. She grabbed his hand and squeezed.

“You think I will broadcast it to everyone I know that the ‘scary’ Rodolphus LeStrange has fallen in love before?” she whispered to him. When he didn’t answer, Hermione squeezed his hand. “I won’t ask until you tell it to me yourself. I just wanted to know because… all I ever thought of Death Eaters that they were scary people who want me dead and I have followed the white and black lifestyle. Like we are the Order of the Phoenix so we are the good people and you guys are the Death Eaters so you must be the bad ones. We only scratch the surface and don’t realize that those people had normal lives, crushes, grades. Obviously, there are some Death Eaters out there that was meant to be a Death Eater.”

“Macnair and Nott Senior.” Rod added, looking slightly green in the face. “I will tell you when I am ready. You would think you could move on after all these years.” He shook his head, embarrassed. She just smiled at that and let his hands go. They finished with the shopping and went back to the car to unload the groceries. Rod helped out, finishing the job faster. As she turned around to return the
Hermione yelped out more in shock than pain, turning around to face the offending man. He had such an indulgent, smug smile on his face that she simply rolled her eyes at him, rubbing her stinging asscheek. Returning back to the car, she poked Rod sharply on his side and laughed, flinching away from her prodding fingers. Before she could get into the driver seat, she felt him wrap his fingers around her upper arm and pulled her backward, making her back collide with his chest. “Rod!”

“What?” he mumbled against her ear. “Are you worried what people might think? Who cares? First of all, they are muggles. Second of all, I can hug my wife however I want, don’t you think?” Her face warmed at the mention of her being his wife then remembered her promise in the morning. This time is good as any time, she convinced herself. She turned around in his arms and glanced up at her husband. Just thinking about that word was making her blush. She put her arms around his neck and pressed closer.

“I could easily crush you if I put my whole weight on you.” Rod commented and she had to give him that point. “So…” He nudged chin up, giving him the space to kiss the side of her neck. “What will you have me do? You had their fingers in your body already… I don’t know what Abraxas did…”

“Maybe Abraxas didn’t do anything. He is a gentleman, after all.” Hermione sidestepped the issue even though her face would have given her away.

“So, you are saying that Abraxas Malfoy, who barely touched his wife when he was alive, wasn’t tempted by you sleeping next to him?” Rod asked, moving her shirt sleeve over her shoulder so he could nip at her shoulders. Hermione shuddered at feelings his lips and hands on her body. She would think that she would get used to this but since the men had appeared in her living room, she had turned into a live wire. I don’t think I would ever get used to this attention, she thought to herself. “Well?”
“Well, if you can count touching me while sleeping, then yeah, he touched me.” Hermione answered, truthfully. Well, a half-truth is still the truth. However, Rodolphus wasn’t buying her answer like she hoped he would as he eyed her distrustfully. “You don’t believe me?”

“No, I don’t. Because I haven’t touched my wife —” he shuddered at the mention of Bellatrix, “ — since our wedding nuptials and all I want to do right now is... find out what makes you tick and you are telling me that Abraxas only touched you? Yeah, and Voldemort was actually a nice man and we all just misunderstood him.”

Hermione giggled at his sarcastic remark. “Okay, okay. It wasn’t planned because it happened while I was sleeping. He just got a taste, that’s all.” Rodolphus leaned in and kissed her fully on the lips for a few seconds before lifting himself off.

“Just a taste? Where?” He asked, pressing his whole body down against hers. “Tell me he ate you out. He is a man of stature and they love delicacies.” Before she could lie, her whole face turned red and she looked away. Delicacies? Is he comparing her cooch to foie gras? “So he did eat you out!”

“Shut up, Rodolphus! So what if he did?” Hermione cried out trying to hide her face in his neck, breathing in his scent of something so male that she can’t put her fingers to it. “He said that his wife wouldn’t let him do sexual favors like this so… I took his oral virginity, okay?”

Rod just laughed out loud. “‘Virginity’! Oh, man, don’t let that proud man hear that!” He chortled out, lifted up to find her blushing face. “How did it feel to have his tongue in you?” Hermione covered her face with her hands. Why does he want to know? “I know there are few women out there that don’t like it.”

“Truth be told, this was my first time, too.” Hermione said, shrugging. “I thought I wouldn’t like it and Krum didn’t like going down either. So… when Abraxas did it, I have become a new woman because of him.” He let out a bark of laughter at her choice of words, making her giggle, too. “Why? Do you like it?”

Rodolphus just smirked at her question, kissed her long and hard to the point that her lips throbbed, then got off of her, leaving her hungry for more. She noticed that she is left unsatisfied whenever it is Rod’s turn. Was he holding back because he likes to see her suffer or because he still has feelings for the person he was in love with a long time ago? She sat up, looking at the man in question, who was fixing his clothes.
“As much as I love this conditions, I am getting quite hungry. We should go home and make some breakfast.”

Breakfast was underway. They all settled around her family dinner table, chattering amongst themselves. Hermione had made french toasts, eggs, bacon, toasts, tea, and coffee. With the help of Rod, who actually likes to cook, cooking breakfast didn’t take so long. Orias made fun of her swollen lips but when she finds out that her lips were not swollen, Orias laughed at how he easily found out that Rod kissed her. So she gave him burnt bacon but he ate that as if he liked it. Defeated, Hermione gave him crisp bacon and sat down between him and Rod.

It was almost domestic. Almost.

If it weren’t for the Daily Prophet sitting in the middle of the table like a shrine, everything would be good. Her eyes kept on flitting to the big, bolded, capitalized title: **GRANGER THE NECROMANCER** and the smaller title below it: *WHY ISN’T SHE IN PRISON YET?* The picture below it was of her standing in the middle of her men, looking straight ahead. She knew that the Daily Prophet was filled with crooked reporters, the queen bee herself Rita Skeeter residing there, but calling her a necromancer? Really?

“A cute necromancer.” Orias had said when they all read the title together. She didn’t want to hit him early in the morning but she just glared at him. “Let’s be serious, though. You went through so much shit for these guys and they call you a necromancer?”

None of them had an explanation from the easy 180 turn from the community but what did she expect? She was an outlier, a muggle-born — a smart and strong muggle-born. Did she expect people to start respecting her kind immediately after killing Voldemort? No, she didn’t but she would have hoped that they slowly believe that she belonged with them. At the same time, she doesn’t think this turnabout is about her blood but her attachment to Harry.

“We will also need to go to Gringotts to get your deed back, Orias.” Hermione said, looking at the tall man. He looked unbothered at her statement. “Is there no other way to get into Gringotts other than the front doors?” She knew the answer to the question but she hoped for something to change. *What I need to do is figure out a way to protect myself and my men from the rest of the wizarding community but how?* Acting like a Malfoy would not be enough and taking Draco out to the hostile environment… no, Hermione won’t let Draco go through that. She can’t pull Harry out from his job and she asked Sirius help way too many times.
A knock on her window aroused her from the deep recesses of her cluttered mind with a shock. They all looked over to see it was an owl with letter M emblem hanging from its neck. A ministry owl. Orion got up, seeing that he was closest to the window, and opened the window doors. The owl soared flawlessly and landed in front of Hermione, cocking his head to the side, lifted his leg holding a thick roll of parchment, and hooted. An answering hoot from Glace came from upstairs. She removed the parcel from the owl’s foot and offered a piece of bacon to the owl. The owl snipped it up from her fingers then jumped up to take sail out of her house.

“Looks pretty dense.” Antonin commented as Rod moved Hermione’s plate for her to place the rolled up packet of parchments. There was a candle wax holding everything close so she snapped the seal and with a zap, the parchments laid flat on the table, no crinkle or curling up; perfectly straight.

“That’s a deed to my house.” Orias said and indeed it was. “The first one is the first creator of the Mulciber manor; Urdarian Stein Mulciber. I guess Kingsley took out the middle steps of all of us going to Gringotts. Seeing that the manor falls to the direct heir, which is me, I will have to sign it.”

Hermione let out a sigh of relief, seeing that she can put off fending off the crowd for a day. A letter was also included with the deed. She opened the seal to see it was a letter from Kingsley saying that to be ready by four and meet him at Grimmauld’s place. They will have a portkey to Mulciber Manor ready for them there. She relayed the message to the rest of the group. “Last time I was at the place is when we raided it.” Antonin answered and Hermione winced at that. If she was second faster than Yaxley, they would have still been hiding there, instead of running through the forests.

“I am sure the Mother Black didn’t scream when you raided.” Hermione quipped, looking at Antonin with pursed lips. Antonin gave her a hesitant smile.

“She did scream — at the beginning. She began to stop when we were shouting each other’s last names. Said something along the side of ‘finally, some form of decorum’ but I don’t remember that well.” Antonin explained, looking away from her. Orion cleared his throat.

“Like you guys eloquently say, that bitch was batshit crazy.” Orion seethed out causing Hermione to let out shocked laughter at the curse words from such aristocratic lips which made the whole table laugh. She got up, laughing, as she rounded the table to Orion’s side. She kissed his cheeks before heading into the kitchen. She loved it when Orion talked bad about his ex-wife. She grabbed the kettle and brought it back to the table.

“Well, we have seven hours till we have to meet with Kingsley. What do you want to do?” Abraxas asked, looking around the table. It was silent for a while with few exceptions of sounds of sipping tea. Other than moving into the Manor, Hermione didn’t have anything else planned. Maybe, she should look for a job. What was she going to do at the Manor all day? She was sure that the Manor
had a library but would she going to spend every day in there?

Yes.

Hermione sighed at her own predictability. That isn’t the point, however. She wasn’t the type to live off someone else’s money, no matter if they offered. *I am sure that these men will offer*, Hermione thought, eyeing the men sitting around her table. All of them are blue blood, old money. Their family’s magic is deeply rooted to the ground for generations and their banks were endless. She would live so comfortably but to think of just staying the manor, doing nothing made her skin crawl. What did Narcissa Malfoy do before the war? Hermione will do her best to never be in the same room as the Malfoy Matriarch. Maybe she will have to talk to Daphne Greengrass about her mother’s jobs or her job. What was the role of a wife in a pureblood matrimony?

Antonin clearing his throat brought her back to the current subject. “I don’t know about all of you, but shockingly, I am quite pleased with these muggle clothing. As much as I love robes, I don’t need to wear it over this.”

“Is that your way of saying that you want to visit the mall again?” Hermione asked, raising an eyebrow at Antonin who nodded. “I mean, walking around the mall will be a great time to waste around so what the rest of you think?”

“Let’s go.”

The mall was fun. Each of them holding a soft pretzel, Hermione couldn’t believe that she had four (can’t count Antonin because his past is unknown) aristocratic men eating food with their fingers. Pretzels aren’t messy, she gets that, but to see how they accepted to eat with their hands made her so excited. Antonin got jeans and a couple of shirts. Abraxas liked dress pants a lot so he got several of that. Orias said that he will have to check out his wardrobe at his home before. Rodolphus liked his robes more, touting how he was such a traditionalist, making Orias smack the back of his head.

It was around two in the afternoon when they were done with shopping and there were two more hours to go. They all sat in her car as they plan what to do next. Orias joked about an orgy but both Hermione and Abraxas smacked his head for it. “We should just go home and drink tea, take a nap, or something. What do you do when you are this close of being ostracized by your own community?” Antonin commented after the laughter died down.

“I read.” Hermione quipped, smiling at the man. “I know a thing or two about ostracization.”
“Most of time you were studying so obviously you were reading, ostracization or not. Next!” Rod retorted back, wiping the smirk off of her face. Thankfully, they were still in the parking lot of the mall so she could easily turn around, reach over to the backseat and tries to whack the offending man but he kept on dodging it. “What we should do is find lunch! We are hungry, Granger!”

“You can starve, Rodolphus LeStrange!” she cried out, trying not to laugh at Rod’s predicament.

“She said your full name. You are not eating anything!” Orias backed her up, laughing. After a few seconds of having fun, Hermione settled down, clearing her throat.

“For lunch… how does sandwiches sound? Something light so we don’t feel to groggy while we move to the Manor?” Hermione offered and they all agreed with it and of course, Orias asked if they sold alcohol there. She simply rolled her eyes at his childish grin but laughed outright when he pouted when he got his answer. “We will drink at you manor, Orias. Don’t worry.”

Sirius was at her home when they all returned from lunch. He was sitting on her father’s couch as they all stumbled into the living room, scaring Hermione to the point of screaming. Sirius jumped up at the loud noise as well but settled back when Hermione glared at him. “Sirius! If you were planning to drop by, you should have let me know!”

“But how could he when we were with muggles?” Orion jumped in, defending his son. Sirius nodded at his father for the right answer. Hermione simply rolled her eyes at his childish grin but laughed outright when he pouted when he got his answer. “What are you doing here, Sirius?”

“Kingsley notified me about the plans. I just came here to see if you needed help packing up or anything.” Sirius explained and she gave him a soft smile. “Even though you are great at magic, Hermione.”

“You were just bored. Admit it.” Orias said, looking at the man, expectantly. Sirius shook his head, looking absolutely tired all of a sudden. All the humor went away from Hermione and she immediately sat on the armchair. Sirius looked almost guilty when he met her eyes.

“I didn’t want to say anything because you will blame yourself for this.” Sirius admitted which made Hermione bite her lower lip. What now? Sirius let out an exasperated and angry sigh. “Molly Weasley has been raining hell since she left the Ministry. Why she didn’t go to her home, beats me,
but when I came home after being with you, my living room was a mess. I have no love for the house but that house was going to be for Harry and Ginny and their kid. I have no patience for this childish behavior because I am the only one that can do childish behavior, okay? So, Ginny came home to see me and Molly fighting and it was *GINNY* who kicked her mom out of the house.”

“Well, yeah, it is Ginny we are talking about. She is passionate about things she cares about.” Hermione commented but shook her head. “I am sorry you had to go through that, Sirius. I knew I should have warned her about coming close to us.”

“See? This is why I didn’t want to tell you. You will try to take the blame to yourself.” Sirius said but she wasn’t listening anymore. *I think it’s time to speak to Molly Weasley*, Hermione decided, running her fingers through the thick, luscious curls of Sirius. *And remind her that they may have hurt her family, nonetheless, they are my men.* Sirius cleared his throat then glanced up at Hermione. “Want help?”

Hermione nodded. “You can take care of Glace while I pack up my clothes.” Sirius nodded, heading to the stairs. She watched him climb the stairs, her face impassive then looked over when she felt someone beside her. Abraxas stood next to her, looking at her expectantly.

“What are you thinking about?”

“I think it's time that I spoke to Mrs. Weasley.”

Kingsley, Ginny, and Harry stood in the living room as one by one, the resurrected men walk out of the fireplace. followed by Sirius and Hermione. Ginny nodded to each of the men while she gave Hermione a hug. “I read the Prophet this morning, Hermione.”

“Of all things, a necromancer? Do they look like they are under my control?” Hermione asked, exasperatedly.

“I am under your control, Granger.” Orias pipped in between the two girls before heading towards Antonin. Hermione’s jaw dropped as Ginny burst out laughing, clutching her burgeoning stomach. Orias turned his head and threw a wink at her before pulling Antonin into a conversation.
“I am so mad that he was a Death Eater!” Ginny giggled and Hermione had to give her that point. “Anyways, I have decided to come to the manor with you, Hermione.”

“I am surprised Harry didn’t blow his head off at that.” Hermione said, surprised. Ginny looked at her coyly.

“He did at the beginning… but I convinced him… nicelly.” Ginny admitted, grinning salaciously. Hermione raised her eyebrow at Ginny and before she could ask for details, Kingsley cleared his throat to grab everyone’s attention. “I will tell you everything. Later. You should think of taking notes.” Hermione responded by slapping Ginny’s arm.

“Everyone is gathered here. So the wards are down and the house is ready for living again. It has always been ready because Mulciber Manor has loyal elves.” Kingsley began, his voice booming. Orias looked smug at that then whispered about Tipsy health care. Orias has an elf name Tipsy? Hermione didn’t believe it. Tipsy? Yeah, right. “Before me is a portkey and it will activate in one minute so everyone, get ready.”

The portkey was a muggle shot glass and she gave Sirius a deadpan look. Sirius simply chuckled. “You couldn’t find anything smaller than this, Kings?” Sirius asked, sarcastically. Kingsley didn’t respond but threw an exasperated glare at the Black heir. Everyone touched some part of the glass after Harry placed multiple cushioning charms on his wife.

“Ready in three, two, on—”

She should be used to Portkeys by now; should being the operative word. However, that was not the case. After few seconds of her internal organs being squeezed through a loopy straw, she landed on the paved ground of bricks on unsteady feet. If it weren’t for the heavy hands of Orias on her shoulders, she would have landed on her ass. Ginny groaned, holding her stomach. “Our son did not like that at all!” she complained to Harry who was clutching her close to him. “He can gain leg muscles with all that kicking.”

“We should hurry in so Mrs. Potter can take a seat.” Orion suggested which prompted Kingsley to move towards the humongous castle’s door. Hermione’s mouth dropped open at the sheer size of the house. It was entirely made out of stone walls and the staircase leading to the castle was made out white marble with thin black veins running through it.

“Muckle family has been living in this grounds at the same time the Malfoy has, maybe even longer.” Abraxas informed the star-struck witch. “I am sure there are few archives of the two families meeting in the libraries. I shall ask Lucius to find it for me.”
“We all will get lost in there! If we have kids, they will get lost and once they are found, they are fully formed adults!” Hermione cried out, causing the men to laugh outright. “What does one do with a castle?” Even though it was a miniature version of a castle and she was probably blowing it out of proportion, Mulciber Manor was huge!

“I will make sure you won’t get lost, princess. You will love Tipsy.” Orias comforted, causing Sirius to laugh.

“You don’t have a house elf named Tipsy!” Sirius protested, laughing.

Orias grinned. “Look, I got Tipsy when I was five years old and I heard my dad saying something and the word ‘tipsy’ came up. I apparently liked it and named my nanny elf Tipsy.” Orias explained, causing Hermione to laugh at the cute explanation. After they got up the marble stairs, they all watched the manor door bang open. Five House Elves stood at the mouth of the manor as Orias walked away from the group towards them.

“MASTER IS HERE! MASTER IS ALIVE!” The four of the five elves screeched together and began to run towards the hulking man. Hermione and the rest of the gang stood, open-mouthed, and watched as four house elves launched themselves at Orias. They all grabbed onto his body and hugged him fiercely as the fifth elf, a female one, slowly walked towards Orias.

“Master Ori, welcome back.” The female elf said, bowing.

“You don’t sound so excited to see me, Tipsy. What’s up with that, huh?” Orias commented, trying to stop an elf from covering his face.

“I am actually quite furious with you, Master Ori!” Tipsy said, placing her hands on her waist, looking unblinkingly up at Orias. Hermione was amazed that Tipsy could talk like that to her master, especially to the Lord of the Manor. Most elves she knew were sniveling, quiet, and obedient. “Because you died in the first place! I couldn’t even clean the attic because your nursery things were in there!”

“Master made Tipsy cry!” One of the elves said jumping off Orias. Orias bend over to pick Tipsy up.

“I didn’t mean to die, Tipsy.” Orias’s soft voice made Hermione’s heart stutter. Tipsy’s big eyes welled up with tears and she sniffled. “I am here, aren’t I? And look who I brought? My wife.”
“Wife?” Sirius echoed, flabbergasted, looking at Orias as if he grew three tails. “Bond mate, maybe, but a wife? I don’t think so.”

Hermione ignored her friend as she walked closer to Tipsy. “Hello, Tipsy, I am Hermione Granger.” she introduced herself to the elf who was giving her a critical eye. Tipsy sniffed then glanced back at Orias then back at Hermione.

“Hello, Mistress. We know who you are. We bonded elves know when changes happen to Mulciber manor and its residents. We knew before the large man told us that Master Ori is alive.” Tipsy explained, hopping off of Orias and landing perfectly on her feet. “We are not aware of the other men that you are bonded with.”

“We can see the bonds!” one of the four elves said, hopping up from one foot to another. “Strong Mistress. Strong Mistress.”

“And what are your names?”

“Bipsy!”

“Kipsy! Kip is fine!”

“Lipsy!”

“Ripsy!”

Everyone turned to look Orias who looked offended. “I only named Tipsy. These four liked the way it sounded so they changed their names.” Orias defended himself then glanced at Tipsy. “Is the manor ready for us?”

“Yes, Master. We have cleaned the house till it shined! Dinner is ready when you order us so.” Tipsy explained, turning around to lead the group to the house. As they got past the huge doors and inside, the interior amazed Hermione. The ceiling held a humongous chandelier which twirled very slowly. Two stairs spiraled to meet together at the second floor with a statue of a stonemason in the middle. She could see how a manor like this suited for Orias — it was made for people like him: tall,
imposing, and strong.

“Master?”

The timid voice of Tipsy brought everyone’s attention to the female elf who was staring up at Orias who, for the first time Hermione had met him, looked serious; deathly serious. “I wasn’t able to clean Lady Mulciber’s room. It’s warded off and only people with the bloodline can open it.” Suddenly the whole atmosphere became cold and stifling. Hermione watched the tall man freeze at the mention of Lady Mulciber.

“Bipsy, Kipsy, Lipsy, and Ripsy, take the bonded to their rooms. Tipsy, take me to mother’s room. We all will convene together for dinner.” Orias ordered, his voice low and serious. Orias grabbed Tipsy’s outstretched hand and they disappeared with a pop. Orias sudden change of emotions and the urgency made Hermione assume that Lady Mulciber wasn’t a very nice lady. Suddenly, Hermione had wished that Orias didn’t have to face it alone.

“Come on. Orias can take care of himself.” Antonin’s voice came from behind her, making her jump in shock, snapping out of her reverie. “And Orias knows that we will tell you all about Lady Mulciber.”

“Oh.” Hermione said, looking at the Russian wizard. “I want him to tell me, though. I think it would be appropriate if he explained it, right?”

Antonin didn’t look too convinced with that. “He is one of the greatest people I know who can compartmentalize his feelings and thoughts so deep that we really don’t know what he truly feels. Voldemort couldn’t even do that even with the help of Occlumency. Orias is the master of Occlumency, other than Severus. Probably even better.”

Antonin’s words rang through Hermione’s head as the elves led the five people up the stairs. Sirius, Kingsley, Ginny, and Harry were taken to the sitting room for refreshers. The Orias she knew … was he the real Orias? Who is the real Orias? Hermione had to come to like the devil may care attitude of Orias… but what if she doesn’t like the real Orias? Hermione didn’t know how to feel… does this information make Orias a complete stranger to her?

Once everyone but Hermione got their rooms, the four elves led her to room at the end of the hallway. “The West Wing belongs to Master Ori. All of the rooms in this wing is for his friends. This room is Master Ori’s room.”
“Why are we—” The elves didn’t let her finish the sentence before they opened the doors. The room was cold and spartan. The bed was covered with white comforters and the carpet was grey with a black rug in front of the bed.

“Mistress will have the power to decorate the whole house. You can do as much as like seeing that this is your room as well, Mistress.”

Hermione stopped in her footsteps and turned around to face the four elves. “My room? I thought this was Orias’s room?” she asked, confused. The elves gave her confused looks in response.

“Mistress, you are Master Ori’s wife! Master’s room is your room, Mistress. Husband and wife. Husband, wife.” Lipsy answered, looking at her as if she was the slow one. Hermione’s mouth dropped open.

“I have four other husbands attached to me and it is quite unfair to them—”

“Mistress, their rooms are your rooms as well. You are their wife. Husband and wife. Husband, wife.” Kipsy explained as if he solved all of her problems. “Don’t worry, Mistress, I will tell Tipsy to make a schedule for you to who to sleep with!”

“Er— no, thank you.” Hermione hastily said, shaking her head. “The only person who can decide who they can sleep with is me! Not Tipsy or Ipsy!”

“We don’t have any elves named Ipsy.” Bipsy said, confused then turned to look at Ripsy. “Do we?”

“No, we don’t, Bipsy. Who is Ipsy, Mistress?” Ripsy asked, looking at Hermione. “Are we getting a new elf?”

“No, we are not getting a new elf named Ipsy! What I am trying to say is: I want my own room!” Hermione almost screamed but willed herself not to. The four elves looked at her and sighed in relief.

“Oh. Why didn’t you say so, Mistress?”
Chapter Eighteen

OMG. SO MANY THINGS HAPPENED FROM THE LAST UPDATE TILL NOW. I don't know where to begin. Can you believe this story has been nominated in the 2019 Enchanted Awards in the category called: Shaken, Not Stirred Award (Best Action/Adventure Storyline). And it went all the way to the finals and is now a Runner Up? I really don't know how to thank you all for nominating and voting of this story. Like, I am flabbergasted. Trying to picking up my jaw. You guys might think I am being quite dramatic but there is something I wrote that people enjoyed so much that they voted for it. I want to thank every reader, guest or member, for commenting and leaving kudos. It means the world to me.

Next on my list is to thank Mykela for beta-ing this chapter. I finally got a beta, you guys! It's so funny that the word 'beta' in Hindi is 'son'. She did a fantastical job and reading and fixing up my mess. If you guys want Mykela to beta for you, let me know so I can message her.

Without further ado, Chapter Eighteen!
I will also like to thank the Granger Enchanted team (where you can find them on Facebook) for creating these banners.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN!
After the elves showed her an assortment of rooms on the same floor as the men, Hermione picked a room that was a bit further away. It mimicked Orias's room but it was slightly smaller. Put emphasis on ‘slightly’. Even though she has the power to decorate, she didn't know how to. She wanted to keep the castle like the way it is but make her room her own. She will have to borrow some type of catalog of design and furniture. However, she knew she wanted a bookshelf and a study desk in her room and she knows that Mulciber Manor had its own library but… her books are her books. Hermione can’t imagine her Jane Austen books amongst wizarding books.

Before she could sit on her bed, there was a knock on the door. “Come in!” she cried out and not a second later, Antonin and Rodolphus walked through her doorway looking refreshed. They looked around her room then looked at her while chuckling to themselves. Hermione frowned. “What?”

“You would pick a room for yourself. Didn’t want to share with all of us?” Rod asked, amused. Hermione let out a huff of exasperation.

“Look, I am not going to change beds every night because I am your wife. It would be such a hassle. And it is written nowhere in the book that I have to sleep with a bond mate all of the time. And it will be my prerogative on who will sleep with whom.” Hermione explained, giving the two men a strong smirk. The two men looked at each other then laughed out loud, causing the smug smile to drop off her face. “Why are you laughing like donkeys?!?”

“I have never realized how funny you are, kotenok. ‘my prerogative’.” Antonin remarked, walking to her bed to sit on it. Hermione rolled her eyes at his words. “However, that is not what we are here for.” The sudden change of inflection in Antonin's voice gave her a pause.

Hermione raised one of her eyebrow in question. “We are here to tell you about the relationship between Orias and his mother.” Rodolphus answered her voiceless question. Hermione immediately sobered up, feeling slightly anxious. Antonin patted the space next to him and she dropped down next to him. Rod pulled up a cushioned, lounging chaise with magic to sit in front of them. “Before we start, I will have to explain on how child rearing was back then in Pureblood families. Back in the day, and probably is still relevant these days, it is always left for the man to be strict while the woman to be nurturing to an extent. We can’t raise kids with emotions, you know.

It is a lots of rules and regulation. Manners for family dinners, public dinners, business dinners, even funeral dinners. How to sit, how to walk, how to talk, how to woo — all taught by their fathers. The mother’s job was to feed them, clothe them, also teach them manners, schoolwork, be their emotional support — well, for some families. Despite our father’s cruel way of upbringing, Rab and I were sort of held in check by the softness of our mothers. Before Voldemort, before Bellatrix, Rab and I were your regular school boys but that is a different story.”
Antonin cleared his throat. “Orias never received that from his mother. Surprisingly, his relationship with his dad was good before he died when Orias was ten. Lady Mulciber was as cold as these stones. She had no motherly bone in her body at all. We all assume that he is like this nonchalant type because he had to raise himself and get used to the fact he is his own mentor. I remember back when we were in our Second Year in Hogwarts, he came over to my house to hang out. You should have seen how he reacted when my mother, not an elf, came in and handed us snacks.

I didn’t think much of it. Orias didn’t comment on it. But it was our fourth year when it came to light about the situation back at his home. Lady Mulciber was known for her disliking of her widow status so she brought men home. Nothing wrong with that. However, she really didn’t care much for what the men did to Orias. We were all changing our clothes from uniforms to bedwear when we see all these bruises on his whole back and back of his thighs. When confronting him about it, most people would hide the cause; Orias didn’t hide it. He said it like it was the most normal thing ever.”

“Probably was the most normal thing for him.” Rod supplied and Antonin agreed with him. Hermione swallowed, trying to get rid of the lump that was formed in her throat. She felt stuffy and her eyes were burning from the unshed tears. “He got used to the fact that no one cared about it and he began to compartmentalize everything.” Rodolphus continued, his voice void of emotions. “He didn’t give his opinions about anything because in his head nothing ever mattered. He never liked a girl or a boy but we know that he doesn’t care which gender he fucks — he just fucks. By the fifth year, everyone knew from every House to not to expect any commitment from Orias. He learned from the best, I suppose.

“So when someone actually paid interest into him, Orias couldn’t help but be enthralled by that person. And you guessed it, it was Voldemort. He finally found someone who could understand him. A person who had the same, maybe even worse upbringing than him… that was like a beacon for Orias. He was the first one out of all of us to join the Voldemort; the first one to get the Mark. He was so proud of it that he showed it to all of us as if he just became an adult at the tender age of 16. Imagine his anger when he found out it was his mother who told Tom Riddle about him.”

The whole room was silent for a few minutes, the atmosphere became even heavier. Antonin sighed heavily then cleared his throat. “He was so angry. So angry. Here was a guy who acknowledged him and just to find out that it was through someone else’s suggestion, especially from someone who never cared about him. Tom Riddle set him straight, obviously. We never realized it but Voldemort trapped Orias when he was in his most vulnerable moment and gave him his first mission.”

Hermione choked and yelled at the same time, making her throat hurt.“ At 16?!“ Hermione cried out, flabbergasted. The two men nodded, solemn. “Was Voldemort that impressed or did he just grab at anyone joining him?”
Rod shrugged. “We don’t know.”

“He was the first of us to join and the first one to break. He wouldn’t tell us what his missions were but we knew it was something bad and getting worse. We could actually see the changes. I joined in my seventh year because of circumstances. Rod had been offered up by his father at the summer vacation between sixth and seventh year. There was a moment of clarity for him after graduating. However, his mom telling him that he was a mistake and how she hated him was the last straw.” Antonin trailed off, running his fingers through his long hair.

“That is why he turned out to be such an effective torturer. He didn’t care about anything anymore… or that is what he made all of us believe. When the Second Wizarding War finally began, we all noticed that our victims were getting younger and younger. Orias couldn’t bring himself to find information from the victims so he put fake memories in his head so when Voldemort rummaged around his head, he will not be killed for saving the hostages. He made sure to make a pact with Severus to release the captured while “killing” them. They used obliviate.”

Here she thought that evil was born but no, evil was created — either by force or by choice. “Do you think Orias will be mad if I burn down Lady Mulciber’s room?” Hermione asked, her voice low and dangerous. “If she had shown just a little love for Orias, he would be so different.” He would be so emotive. Her eyelashes were clumped with tears and she sniffled. What was Antonin’s story? The real story? Was it just as horrible or even more?

This felt like as if someone had thrown a bucket of cold water on her. She doesn’t really know who her men are and what they have suffered through. What were their vulnerable moments that Voldemort grabbed to control them? Did they all start off as innocent, misguided boys? Abraxas had admitted that he used to share the same ideals as Voldemort but stopped when it got violent. If it hadn’t gone violent, how would Draco be? Lucius? If Orion was more opinionated about being against Voldemort, would Regulus still live? She hadn’t thought about all of this. But how could she? Since she was eleven, she has been fed the whole black and white aspect of the war from adults. Dumbledore may have spoken about love and all, but had he taught them to look at both sides of the Galleon? No, he hadn’t.

“Who is the real Orias, then?” Hermione finally asked the dreaded question that had been growing at the back of her head.

“We like to believe this version of Orias is the real one but we really don’t know. Maybe, with time, away from all the abuse and control, he will show himself.” Rod answered, shrugging. “The question is: would we accept that Orias?”

Antonin cleared his throat. “The Death Eaters began out like brotherhood. We supported each other.
I finally felt like I belong after everything had happened. However, when Voldemort’s mental prowess began to deteriorate and began to move away from the cause, the Death Eaters were out there for themselves. It felt like a battle there and every fighter was waiting for something to happen, so they could immediately protect themselves. Of course, they were few outliers that we didn’t want in our group despite them being already in there. Macnair, Greyback, Jugson, Rookwood. These men were uncontrollable, unpredictable. They would make simple missions into really messy ones. I am not trying to humanize what we have done in the name of ‘purity’, Hermione. I am just trying to say what we wanted from the beginning was vastly different to what we got at the end.”

“No, it just — makes me think about how I was brought up thinking that evil was born. In Voldemort’s case, that statement could be true. We just never thought about the other side—”

“Why should you?” Antonin interrupted, his voice sharp and his eyes sharper. Hermione reared back in shock. “We all had really bad childhoods but it doesn’t change the fact that Rod and I were sent out to kill you and Potter. Bunch of kids who were threatening the ideas of Voldemort and we willingly followed him. Don’t try to erase what we have done to you, Granger. Lots of people have died under my wand, by my own creations. You could try to say ‘he is like this because his mom beat him up’... you are just giving an excuse to yourself to make it easier to accept that you are married to us.”

“I — I —” Hermione stuttered out then paused. Was she, though? Was she trying to make excuses to come into terms that she is attached to these men? That she has live with them for the rest of her life? She swallowed, despite her mouth being dry. “I just want to live with all of you without trying to look over my shoulder. You guys got second chances to live, to breathe without feeling like there is a boot on your neck, gain your dignity back, revive your houses. I am not trying to erase what you all did. You cured me, Antonin. If you were still the same Dolohov from back then, you wouldn’t have even made a cure, let alone cure the one person who survived your curse.”

Antonin looked away. Hermione continued, “If you think if I was scared of you, do you think I would enjoy your kisses? Or continue allowing you to kiss me after the sealing of the bond? Since you five have been brought back, I haven’t for a single second felt in danger. I mean, I should but I don’t and I trust my intuition. My intuition never did me wrong.”

All three of them became silent after her speech, thinking. “I think we should all go back downstairs. We have people waiting for us.” Hermione stood up, wiping away wrinkles on her clothes. “I accepted who you are. I have kissed you. I am married to you. From now on, you will live a better life. There will be people who hate you for living while some don’t. People die in war. I have killed people and yet I have being paraded around as a ‘hero’.”

“You didn't choose to kill. You killed because you had to protect yourself and your loved ones.” Rod argued, shaking his head.
Groaning in frustration and begrudgingly admitting that they were right, Hermione scrambled around to find a counter-argument. It was a moment to get her mind straight. “So, do you want to kill people now?”

“No.” Antonin answered quickly. “Killing people won’t change anything. I have learned that the hard way.”

Hermione glanced at Rod. “And you?” Rod shook his head. “Do any of you guys want to overpower me and go out there and kill people for circumstances they have no hand in?”

“The only time I want to overpower you is when we are in bed together, kotenok.” Antonin said, his voice low, husky, and dangerous, his eyes flashing. Hermione flushed so hard that she bet that if she were to turn herself bald, her whole head would he red right about now. She shook her head and glared half-heartedly at the Russian man.

“I am trying to be serious here!” Hermione snapped, curbing the urge to stomp her feet like a little girl. Antonin simply smirked at her while Rod simply stayed silent at their exchange, his eyes not focusing on anything, far away from this whole conversation. “It may be wishful thinking on my part but I want all of us to stay together, you guys to experience life without having a sword hanging over your head. Right now, the wizarding committee doesn’t know what to do with the predicament I inadvertently caused so the most natural thing for them to do is to lash out. We just have to learn how to keep our cool. And convince Orias that he has a healthy support system.”

Antonin chuckled. “Easier said than done. He is the most stubborn man you will ever meet.”

Feeling like she was being challenged, Hermione placed her hands on her hips and sniffed. “I will have you know that the most stubborn person I have ever met is me, boys. If he is going to be trouble, then I will make myself a nuisance until he gives up and accepts my support.”

“At least you admit that you are a nuisance. It’s very difficult for hard headed people like you to admit that they have faults.” Rod commented, standing up while throwing her a teasing smirk. Hermione gasped at his choice of words. “Don’t worry; I find your hard headedness quite endearing.”

“Oh, that’s very well and good because I am not planning to stop anytime soon!” Hermione fought back, taking a threatening step towards Rod who in return took a step towards her, minimizing the
space between them.

“I don’t think you *can* even stop being hard-headed,” Rod replied back, his eyes glinting with amusement. Hermione was confused at the weird change of conversation. It started as heavy and stifling to argumentative and now…back to normal bickering? Before she could reply back, Antonin stood up between them, forcing Hermione and Rod to take a step back to avoid getting hit by the broad shoulders of Antonin. “What’s the deal, Dolohov?”

“‘Dolohov’, hmm? Suddenly switched back to last name basis, Granger?” Antonin asked, amused. Hermione flushed at the husky quality of his voice. “I had to interrupt because you guys were this close to jumping each other’s bones. As much I love watching people have sex, I am quite thirsty. Shall we head back downstairs?”

Rod nodded, following the Russian towards the door of her room. Hermione shook her head and began to follow the two men when Antonin’s words sunk into her brain. *Does he like to watch people have sex?* Like a spectator way or a stalker way? Hopefully the former and not the latter. An unbridled image of Antonin watching while she is in the middle of a sexual activity flashed through Hermione’s head, making her flush red.

Okay, maybe being watched might not be bad as it sounds.

Kingsley was still present as the three entered the sitting room. Sirius, Harry, and Ginny were all sitting down, drinking tea and eating snacks, talking amongst themselves. As Hermione walked deeper into the room, she saw Abraxas and Orion standing by the fireplace, having a glass of firewhiskey in their hands. Ginny saw Hermione first and waved her over. “Knowing you,” Ginny began, after swallowing, “you made a fuss and asked for your own room.”

Hermione didn't want to huff but she did anyway, giving herself away, causing Ginny to let out a peal of laughter. “I am not going to jump from one bed to another every night!” Hermione defended, slumping down next to Ginny. She leaned over to make her a cup of tea as Antonin sat next to her. “So, not to be rude or anything, but why are you guys still here?”

“I think we are waiting for Mulciber to come back to sign the deeds. I am here as a witness. Ginny and Sirius are here for the hell of it. Which brings me to my next question: why isn't Malfoy — err, Draco here?” Harry asked, correcting himself when Abraxas looked at him. Hermione made her tea as Harry spoke.
“He had to meet his potion’s master and plan his wedding with Daphne. I can't keep on asking him to be by my side all of the time.” Hermione explained, shrugged. “He has a life, too.”

“And I can decide what to do with my life, Granger.”

Hermione almost dropped her porcelain teacup at the sound of Draco’s voice. She turned around to see him wearing full black robes that were somehow quite reminiscent of Professor Snape's wardrobe but not quite as voluminous. His blond hair was combed over and held there by magic, him finally abandoning the gel back in the fourth year. He held a briefcase with him which he set down by the small desk by the window. “Draco! I thought you had—”

“I did and I just came back. Daphne took her sister to France for ‘sisterly bonding’ but truthfully, it is more of Daphne interrogating Astoria about her new boyfriend.” Draco answered, walking around to hug Hermione. He glanced around the sitting room and sniffed haughtily. “If my mother saw the decor of this house, she will lose all her sensibilities.”

“I like it. It's so… broad, open, historic vibes. Strong and sure… very Orias-y.” Hermione defended, looking up at the high ceiling with a huge chandelier hanging by magic in the air. “It's not too crowded actually.”

“I am glad my house is to your liking, princess. If not, I have several summer houses down the coastlines.” The voice that she had been waiting for came from behind them and as nonchalant as she can, she turned around to see the hulking man standing by the doorway, Tipsy right beside him. “My sweet childhood home, pretty isn't it?” Now knowing exactly what happened to him in this house, Hermione’s throat clogged up. She knew that he was fishing for a reaction and Hermione thinks that she failed at concealing it. She felt someone step on her toes, snapping out of her trance. She glanced at the offending shoes to see it was Antonin. He gave her a pointed look.

“I really like the… stones.” Hermione replied, lamely, trying to fill up the silence that followed. Orias glanced at her for a few minutes then looked away. Fuck me. Antonin shook his head and looked at her with pity. She knew she failed miserably. How long will it take Orias to corner her and question her?

“Anyone hungry? I am fucking starving.” Orias continued, rubbing his shaved head. Hermione stole a glance at Tipsy to see her eyes red-rimmed. She wasn't hungry. Not after hearing about the abuse, Lady Mulciber (that fucking bitch), or that twat Voldemort but she cleared her throat and nodded anyway. Anything to help distract Orias.
“You have to sign the deed first, Mulciber.” Kingsley reminded and Orias nodded. In a matter of seconds, a sharp flourish of a quill, Orias Mulciber was a proud owner of Mulciber Manor. Hermione watched as Orias magicked away the dead so fast that she knew that ink didn't even dry. “I will take my leave. I am sure I will have lots of officials waiting for me to speak about this predicament.”

“I think it's time for us to leave as well. I want to go home and take one hour bath.” Ginny said, getting up, also followed by Harry and Sirius.

“I might as well go with them.” Sirius explained then walked up to Hermione to hug her. “Enjoy your new home, I guess.” She just gave him a tight-lipped smile in return.

I hope I can. With a wave to the three, she watched them disappear through the Floo. She turned to face Orias who was watching her with an unreadable emotion in his eyes. She cleared her throat, unable to keep eye contact with Orias. She internally scoffed at her cowardice. How can I show him support when I can't even meet his eyes? So much for her big words. She raised her head again to meet his eyes head on. “I thought you were hungry.”

A smirk pulled at his lips. “Tipsy, we are ready for dinner.”

The dining room was silent except for the clinking and scraping of knives and forks against the plates. Dinner was a roast duck with caramelized onions, roasted vegetables, dark red wine, and Hermione could say she was having a great time. She could if it weren't for the heavy atmosphere hanging over them like a guillotine. She turned her head slightly to watch Orias eat with a small smile on his face but it felt cold. It wasn't the same smile she saw whenever he was bothering her in her room. Hermione turned to catch Antonin's eyes then Draco who was taking a rather long sip of his wine.

She grabbed her wine glass to do the same, trying to keep herself occupied. Abraxas and Orion had finished eating and was simply watching the situation, looking confused. Orias cleared his throat, it sounded so loud that Hermione jumped on her seat in surprise.

“So, Granger, tell me,” Orias began, placing his fork and knife down, then took a sip from his wine, then glanced at said girl, “what did you think about my childhood?”

Forget about cornering, he just straight up asked like he really didn’t give a shit about it. Hermione
looked around the dining table to see everyone looking at her expectantly, especially the surprise and concerned looks in both Antonin and Rodolphus eyes. “Pretty shitty, actually,” Hermione answered, glancing back at Orias who in return raised an eyebrow at her. “I have a half a mind on finding Lady Mulciber’s room and throw fiendfyre at it. What do you think? Should I do it? Because no more. Orias. No more being taken advantage of.”

Orias’s eyes flashed with anger. “You will not touch my mother’s room, Granger. I will do it.” Orias fired back, sitting up straight.”And I was never taken advantage of!”

“No?” Hermione attacked back, pushing her empty plate away from her. “So, you are saying that you wanted to torture those kids when Voldemort asked you to? So what were those words you had said? Ah, I remember. You said: ‘you couldn't torture those kids because they were kids, they didn't know any better’ — was that all a lie? I mean, you didn't care about your own life, so who cares about other people’s lives? You had a shitty childhood, so who cares about—”

Orias stood so fast that his seat toppled over backwards. The loud noise made everyone jump in their seats. “I never did hurt those kids even when I was asked to! That wasn't a lie. In the beginning, I didn't care who I hurt because they were my age. Voldemort made me feel like I belonged and I was enjoying that until I—”

“Until you were in too deep when you realized you were being taken advantage of.” Hermione finished, standing up. Orias glared murderously at her but didn't refute her words. “When was it? When did you have doubts about the ‘support’ Voldemort gave?”

Orias didn't answer. “Well? If you weren't taken advantage of, then you should just answer the question.” Hermione prodded, a small voice in her head warned her about pushing his buttons.

“The first few missions wasn't anything too bad.” He answered, finally. “It was more about intimidating and being sent out as an enforcer to remind people that Voldemort is still prevalent. This is before the Order of the Phoenix was even created. Potter, Black, and Lupin were sharing the class with me, who was already a Death Eater. It was a time period where people knew about Tom Riddle and knew he was dangerous but… they didn't know how much of a danger he was. They lived their merry life, ignoring the growing power of Tom Riddle. They needed to be reminded. I was the reminder.

“I can intimidate even back then. So, when intimidation didn't work on the public, Voldemort taught me the Unforgivables, forgetting that I was part of the Sacred 28. We all been taught about the Unforgivables. I was hesitant on torturing at the beginning but when his wand was turned to me, I quickly understood what my position really was. After a few more missions of watching families puke themselves from the pain, I wanted to rethink about my support for Voldemort and wanted to speak to mother about it. However, I had found out exactly how Voldemort knew about me. Mother dearest basically handed me to Tom Riddle to finally get rid of the burden she never wanted.
So, I did what I always did: compartmentalize. Now, those pesky feelings of being weak and pathetic for torturing was gone. I didn't care. I didn't care that I knew I was being taken advantage for my anger. I just knew that world out there was cutthroat and will crush a weak person. Because of my natural powers of occluding, I was the best candidate for being the residential torturer. So, yeah, I knew I was being taken advantage of and I didn't care. Happy?” Orias finished, throwing a scathing smile at Hermione.

Hermione shook her head, her mouth suddenly dry. “No, I am not. I am not happy that it was your own mother that led to your breaking point. I am not happy that the only approval you have got is from the snake-faced bastard. I am not happy at all. I am not trying to make you rehash your past because I think you deserve it. I don't. I am not going to sugar coat and say you never killed someone or that only reason you killed was that Voldemort told you to. You killed people, nonetheless. But you started to realize that this war was not fought for the primary reason. It was a war between two prideful masters and all of us were their chess pieces.”

Orias snorted, looking down at her. “I am not some charity case for you to work on, princess. I am not a House Elf or a werewolf so don't even think about trying to ‘free’ me. That boat has sailed a long time back.” he said, waving his hand, his anger slowly but surely disappearing. He bends over to pick up his chair then put it back in the right place. He turned to face the witch, his brow raised up in a challenge.

“Charity case or not, I don't leave people behind until I am fully satisfied. So, get used it.” Hermione said, challenging him back. Orias smirked at the chit's willingness to butt heads with him.

“I don't want your support or whatever weak, Gryffindor shit that is.” Orias shot back, causing Hermione to walk closer to him, fire in her eyes. She didn't care about the height difference, she maintained eye contact with the hulking figure of the man.

“Too bad, you are getting it anyways.” Hermione said, poking his hard chest. Orias took one step closer to her, causing her chest to rub his stomach.

“I thought they were fighting? Why do they look like they are about to make Orias junior?” Draco asked, confused and looking a little green on his face. Hermione threw a glare at him to shut up, making Draco face his plate instead.

“Yeah?” Orias asked, looking at her expectantly, his hazel eyes shadowed, which were flickering from her eyes to her lips then back up. Hermione swallowed, feeling warm all over the place. She licked her lips then nodded. “How will you help me out?”
“Just by staying with you. That's all. If you will have me, of course.”

She was interrupted again as the rest of the members stood up, waved awkwardly at the two of them then left the dining room, leaving the two people by themselves. They practically ran from the dining hall but had closed the door behind them softly.

“So, what, how will you plan to do that?” Orias asked, looking curious. Hermione reached over and grabbed Orias's hand and brought it closer to her body and squeezed it.

“We will take care of Lady Mulciber's room, seeing that I am the current Lady Mulciber. We need to make this house a home for all of us to live in. And I can't have that horrible woman in this house. Unless you object?” Hermione planned out, dropping his hand. Orias was silent, his hands were clenched into fists. “Don't you want to be free from your mother?”

“I am free from her.” Orias hissed out through clenched teeth, rolling his shoulders.

“Then? What's holding you back?” Hermione asked, trying to catch his eyes. She watched in awe at how he glanced down but looked at her through his eyelashes, anger blazing through them, hot enough to feel it on her skin. *Okay, so an angry Abraxas isn’t the only person that can make her panty disappear.*

“Nothing is holding me back. I am just thinking of ways to destroy the room without destroying the house.” He replied back, making her smile softly. “I didn’t know you had it in you.”

Hermione smiled at him, softly. *She, herself, didn't know that she had it in her. Trying to convince former Death Eaters that they have got a second chance is quite hard. She really can't ignore that is what they were… but what is she to do? Ignore them and stay in her room? That wasn't like Hermione Granger at all. “I already told Antonin and Rods, that all of you are getting a second chance in life. It doesn’t erase what you did in the past and that there are people who are out there for you blood… but both sides have killed for the ‘Greater Good’. We all were raised by masters who really didn’t care much for us but for the future and will do anything to get what they need. No matter how many pigs they have to sacrifice. The only difference was the one side wanted to the extermination of a group that had no control about their blood. And the other side said that they will protect everyone but coincidentally forgot that these muggle-borns also had families.”* Hermione answered, bitterly.

Orias was silent for a while, simply staring at her which was making her flush slowly. After a few
minutes of standing in silence, Hermione broke the silence by asking, “Have you decided on how you will cleanse this house?”

Orias inhaled then gave her a devilish smirk. “You know, I have decided. However, why don’t we visit that wretched heathens room tomorrow because right now, I am in a mood for dessert. All these fighting made me crave something sweet. What do you say?” Orias asked really fast. It took Hermione a few seconds to organize her thoughts from such a bizarre change of subjects that she simply nodded. With a wave, the dining table cleared out, taking the smell of food with it.

“What kind of dessert are you in the mood for?” Hermione asked, thinking that she was feeling more of a sorbet than ice cream when suddenly, hands grabbed at her waist, pulled her up on the edge of the dining table and deposited there. “Hey! Orias! What are you up to?”

“You asked me what kind of dessert I am in a mood for… and it’s you.” Orias answered, shrugging, causing Hermione to flush at his casual tone. How cheesy! “And you were kind of bossy tonight so I have to tame you down.”

“Huh? What? ‘Tame me down’?” Hermione said, dumbly, then shook her head to clear up her jumbled brain. “Hold up — we were just fighting —”

“Yeah, so?”

“Don’t you think we need to figure out answers to our problems?”

“We did, though. We planned it. We are just postponing it to tomorrow. I am emotionally drained and I need energy.” Orias summarized, pouting. Hermione crossed her arms and raised an eyebrow, disbelieving him.

“Oh, really? And where will you get this energy from?” Hermione asked and wished she hadn’t when Orias threw her the most decadent smirk since she had met him. “Oh, would you look at the time, it’s past my bedtime. I should go.” Hermione almost scrambled off of the table if it weren’t for Orias caging her in with his two arms beside her.

“It is only eight, princess.” Orias reminded her, stepping between her splayed legs. He grabbed her hair and pulled her head back. She sucked in a surprised gasp but deflated when she felt him rub his nose against her jawline. “Why don’t we cleanse this table for now? I know this hands-on technique that could repel the bad energy out of here.”
“Is that right? And what is this ‘hands-on’ technique you speak of?” she asked, feeling breathless and weak in his arms. She snaked her arms around his shoulder and brought herself closer to the ever-changing man. Orias chuckled at her movements and she could understand: a few seconds ago, she wanted to leave and now… she wants whatever Orias is going to do to her.

“Let see…” Orias trailed off, kissing up her jaw until he met with the tender spot right below her ear and latched on. The shiver that ran up her spine was so strong that she felt goosebumps erupt. He chuckled at her reaction, slightly nipping her weak spot then softening the sting with his tongue. He sucked the spot hard enough to hurt but kissed the pain away. He left the area to travel back up her jawline, towards her lips.

Hermione opened her lips automatically, waiting for him to hurry the fuck up. She huffed at irritation as he paused at the corner of her lips. He let out a laugh, pulling slightly away to catch her glaring eyes. “I thought you had to sleep, princess… we can continue this—”

The dining hall room burst open. Hermione squeaked in surprise, immediately drawing her wand, turning in her spot to face the commotion with her wand aimed. However, it was just Draco with both Abraxas and Antonin grasping at his robes. Draco looked blotchy with spots of red on his cheeks and his eyes wild. “What’s wrong?” Hermione cried out, jumping off of the table.

“Something happened?! Did we get targeted?!”

Draco cleared his throats and harrumphed, crossing his arms across his chest. “I just thought you were taking too long in there with him and I thought you might needed help… convincing.”

Hermione dropped her jaw in shocked then dropped her wand, exasperated, as Orias laughed. “The fact that you could help her convince me is quite hilarious, dear Malfoy. However, that is not quite true now, is it, Malfoy Junior?” Orias asked, looking at Draco knowingly. “You thought we were fighting and you came into interrupt.”

“Draco…” Hermione trailed off, tiredly, at the resigned face of her best friend. “Come with me.” She turned to face Orias who eyed her, expectantly. “We will finish our talk later.” she said, which made him smirk. She turned around to face a sheepish Draco, grabbed his hand, and pulled him out of the dining room, past the Abraxas and Antonin, into what seemed like a sunroom with tall windows that looked directly at the backyard. This room would be so beautiful in the morning but there was a mystery lurking about the room in the night time. However, that is not what she was here for.

Hermione sucked in a breath and said, “I thought you understood —”
“Yes, I completely understand the situation but… you were taking a long time with him by yourself.” Draco interrupted, looking at her expectantly. “When I came in there, for some reason, it looked to me like you were kissing.”

Hermione blushed. “Not yet.”

“You were planning to?!”

She let out a huff of irritation. “Draco, I can kiss whoever I want. I can kiss Alastor Moody and you still can't have a say about it.”

“But—” She raised her hand to stop him which made him growl out in frustration. “Hermione!”

“They are my husbands and I am their wife. I am allowed to kiss them. What do you want me to do? Stay away from them and treat them like strangers?” Hermione asked, shaking their head. “And… I like their kisses. Your grandfather knows how—”

“Please, for the love of Merlin, do not finish what you are about to say.” Draco pleaded, causing her to giggle at his dramatics which made him poke her nose in response. “I just can't comprehend that you can kiss them just like that.”

“Because you are not the one being kissed.” Hermione explained, shrugging. “I just can't wrap my head around to live as a married couple without touching each other or anything of that sort. I brought them back to life…. I am not going to ignore them because who they used to be.”

Sighing, Draco looked up at Hermione with a defeated expression. “So, okay, maybe, I overreacted,” he admitted and she raised her eyebrow. He cringed at the moment. “Not ‘maybe’ but definitely overreacted. But, on to the next point, what are you trying to do with Mulciber?”

Hermione hung her head, knowing this conversation would come up. “He is not some pet project for you to take on, Hermione. You barely know this guy and you want to fix him?” Draco asked, aghast. Hermione shook her head while letting out a big sigh. “No, really, what is your plan? Do you even have a plan? Or is it one of those take-it-as-it-comes type?”
“Mulciber had a shitty life—” Draco snorted at that “— in this house. We all are going to be living in this house. And he never had proper support… he got his validation from a man who didn't give a shite about him… now he has a chance to gain power back in his own way, in his own right.” Hermione said, looking at Draco, imploringly, hoping he would understand.

Draco smirked. “Did you practice that speech in front of the mirror?” he asked but yelped really loudly when Hermione shot off mild stinging hex at him. “Sorry! Sorry!”

Satisfied with the punishment, Hermione cleared her throat. “What my plan is to be there for him. It may not be much but it is something.” She paused, then decided to take a seat on one of the two-seater couches. Draco followed her example and slumped down next to her. “This whole thing is… so much. So little time to figure stuff out. I still have to figure out what to say to my parents. Then I have to figure out what I should do to keep myself occupied. What do I do? Do I just sit in the Manor all day and do nothing? What does one do with five husbands? I will go just about crazy staying here but I have to adapt.”

Draco bit his lower lip, thinking. The two best friends sat slumped together, looking out of the windows just to see three deers bounding over the low fence, seeing that the manor’s backyard bled into a forest. Hermione watched as the biggest deer out of the three sniffed it way closer to hedges filled with flowers, it’s ear knocked back, the other two following the example of the leader but more carefree, seeing how young and spindly they were. Suddenly, from the forest, a huge deer with huge antlers appeared under the moonlight, looking so regal and majestic that a breath was lodged in Hermione’s throat.

“What’s Potter doing there?” Draco asked, which made Hermione snort. “He finally left Weaselette and found his true calling?” The snort turned into full blown laughter and Draco joined in, their laughter scaring the family of deer away. Why was that so funny? Hermione thought to herself as she tried to bring control back to her body. “Alright, that is enough from Draco the Clown.”

“I do like Draco the Clown.” Hermione quipped and Draco knocked his shoulder with hers.

“I am sure you do. You like anything that would bring me shame.” Draco said, sniffed, causing her to giggle again. The atmosphere had lightened up. “Why don’t you do Potions Mastery with me?” Hermione gave him a surprised look. “Why are you looking at me like that? Besides me, you were best at potions. Severus would never admit that but it is true. I can talk to Master Bracci for you. If not, I can ask Zabini to get you an interview with the DMLE.”

Hermione didn’t speak for a while. She was good in Potions and Runes so the offer to be in Potions Mastery program sounded amazing. Draco already had a head start, seeing that he was already in the program by the half of the seventh year of Hogwarts. Working in the DMLE could bring her closer to Harry and Ron but it didn’t sound as appealing to as Potion’s Mastery. “Think about it then let me
know. It’s a bit far from here but I think it’s worth it. The lessons, the hands-on training… you could be a teacher or we can open up—”

“I am in, Draco.” Hermione interrupted, causing Draco to gape in shock.

“Already decided? No three day research period and notes before saying yes?” Draco teased but threw up his hands in surrender when she glared at him. “Are you sure? Taking a Mastery is not a simple matter.”

“I know Draco. That is why I am taking it. Have you ever known me as a person who takes the easy way out?” He laughed, agreeing with her. “Will you speak to Master Bacci about me?” Hermione asked, and Draco eyed her with mock derision.

“No, I was planning on dropping you on top of him and tell him that I have a found a new pet for him to take care of.”

She was smug like a cat with cream.

That was how Hermione would describe herself feeling as she watched her best friend try spells after spells, trying to change his bright blue hair back to its normal white blonde characteristics. After his last tease (when did he get so sassy), Hermione concluded their talk with a special jinx created by the Weasley Twins. She sipped her tea as Draco turned around to face her with a petulant glare. Hermione had to keep herself in line just from that glare so she cleared her throat. “Look, it will go away in few days and it is a great look on you. Right, Rodolphus?” Hermione said, looking at the man beside her for back up. Draco switched his glare to Rodolphus who nodded his head.

“I would keep it if I were you.” Rod added, placing his teacup down on its saucer. “The blue brings your eyes out.”

“Is that right?” Draco drawled out, putting his robes on. “I will have you know, Granger, that I will be meeting with Daphne’s parents tomorrow.”

“Oh.” Hermione replied, trying to keep her amusement in check. “I am sure they will appreciate the new look.”
Draco picked up his briefcase with stilted movements. “Oh, I am sure they will be impressed by
Draco the Clown.” He retorted back, causing Hermione to finally break out in laughter. “Ha-ha,
laugh at me. I am very happy that I could bring joy to your life, Granger! I will be seeing you!” With
a dramatic harrumph, Draco left the Manor with a flourish, making Hermione laugh even harder.
Rod was also chuckling before he cleared his throat, making Hermione control herself.

“Maybe, you should continue your talk with Orias. As much as he fought back, he didn’t say no.”
Rod said, causing Hermione to bite her lower lip. Rod was right but at the same time, Hermione
knew that she shouldn’t have forced him to a corner in front of other men and talk about his issues.

“Maybe, I should stop putting my noses in someone else’s business.” Hermione contradicted. “It
wasn’t my place and he is not my pet project.”

“If he didn’t know that, then he would have reacted way more violently than this. Sometimes, you
have to step on some few toes to make them realize something.” Rod explained, wisely. “You would
know if you encroached his privacy. You will feel it across the globe if you allow my dramatics.”

“That bad?”

“Remind me not to tell you what he did with Crabbe Sr when he made a pass at Mulciber’s past. He
is good at compartmentalizing but he is also good at remembering.” Rod said, shaking his head.
“Voldemort was ‘quizzing’ Crabbe on why he didn't attend meetings for two weeks. Guess what
happened next?”

“Should I feel sorry for Crabbe Sr?” Hermione asked, looking at him, curiously.

“No. He deserved every inch of that Crucio.”

__________________________________________________________

“Come in.”

Hermione had knocked on Orias’s door after Rod’s prodding. She opened the door enough to stuck
her head through. Orias was laying on his bed, staring at his ceiling but he turned around to meet her
eyes. He waved her over and she walked deeper into his room, suddenly feeling out of sorts. Why
did it feel like walking on extra sharp eggshells?
“Set young Malfoy straight?” Orias asked, smirking which widened at her nod. “What can I do for you?”

Hermione bit her lower lip. In for a penny, in for a pound. “Want to talk?” she asked, fiddling with her thumbs. Orias cocked his head to the side, drilling her with those hazel green eyes before closing them, laying his head back down.

“Yeah. Come on over.” He said, waving his hand over. Removing her flats, Hermione climbed up on his bed with a bit of an effort seeing how high the bed is. She sat down next to him, crossing her leg Indian style, facing him. He still had his eyes closed. “I never asked you to be my therapist or some shit.”

Hermione dropped her head. “I know. I just wanted to help and I go up to a point where it dawns on me if the other side wanted my help at all.” she explained, guiltily. She peeked through her eyelashes to see what his reactions were. He was looking at the ceiling, his face blank.

“I am sure you know why I am so hesitant about accepting your help. The only person who wanted to support me was a dark lord keen on having his way. I thought he appreciated me but he only cared about my magic and my vaults which Lady Mulciber readily handed over to him.” He said, causing Hermione to cringe slightly. How will he trust her now? “However,” Hermione glanced up at him to see him smirking at her, “I wouldn’t mind you doing your best.”

Hermione blinked owlishly at him causing him to let out a huff of laughter. “Why? You were so adamant on not—”

“Nah, I just had to remind myself that not everyone is like him. I also remembered that I had my friends with me who were with me since school. And I didn’t have a cute girl like you worrying over me.” he said, winking at the end. Despite the serious atmosphere, Hermione couldn’t help but blush at his words. “And —” He suddenly reached out to wrap an arm around her waist to haul her over his body until they were pressed chest-to-chest.

“Hey!” Hermione protested, trying to wiggle out of his iron arms.

“ — and we haven’t finished this talk.” Orias finished, grinning mischievously at her. “We will worry about my lack of support tomorrow and continue with the task at the moment.” Hermione merely chuckled at his joke, still felt quite uneasy on how unworried he seemed. Is he occluding even now? Was all that talk just to divert her? But what did she expect from Orias? After twenty plus
years of trusting only himself to suddenly cry and be happy that she came along to help him? Even she wasn't that stupid. It was going to take a long time for him to “heal” — she really didn't know what she was doing.

“Hey, pay attention, princess. My feelings will be hurt when I am kissing you and you are not even acknowledging it.” Orias whined, pouting. Hermione gazed down at him and gave him a soft smile. *However long it will take, I will be with him*, Hermione promised to herself. Without any further ado, Hermione leaned forward to press a soft but yet unyielding kiss on his lips. It didn't take him too long to answer her kisses back with more vigor and energy. His strong hands roamed all over the back before he switched their positions with ease. Hermione gasped at the sudden movement, seeing him hover over her, their noses touching each other.

“Stay with me tonight?” He asked, looking right into Hermione's eyes. “Don't worry, princess, I will not have you fully tonight. What say you?” It didn't take her too long to think when she already knew the answer.

“I will stay with you.”
Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Notes

Surprise! A fast upload. I hope you are alone reading this. I tried my fucking best. I didn't beta this because I want my beta to be surprised as well! So, if my beta sees all the mistake, sorry boo!

Alright!
Fancast!
Let me know how you imagine the men to be like. Tell me your own fan-cast down in the comments! Who is your Antonin, Orias, Orion, Abraxas, Rodolphus, Hermione, Draco, etc!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

It wasn't even a second after she told Orias that she was staying over that he magicked her clothes away.

"Hey!" She protested weakly, swatting at his chest. He let out a laugh. He leaned back to glance down her body in a slow, searching look, taking the sight of her flushed chest all the way down to her junction. She flushed even harder at his perusal before settling his face down on her neck. She sucked in a sharp breath when he flicked his tongue at the hollow of her throat. Was the room hot? Or was it just Orias's heat bearing down on her, making sweat collect at the area he just licked.

"I said I won't have sex with you tonight but I did not say that I am not going to do anything with you." Orias said, his lips touched the sensitive skin of her throat. She was sure he could feel the strong beat of the heart whenever he grazed her jugular vein. "Are you okay with that?"

Hermione swallowed, thickly. *Was she okay with all of this after the whole, depressing talk?* "I am okay with this." She answered, firmly. Maybe, they need to christen this house some other way and Hermione firmly believed this was the way. "So," she cleared her throat, "what is the plan?"

Orias lifted his head to meet her molten gold eyes with his and she could only see the hazel-green ring around the pupil. "Plan? I know I want something of me in you but we will see how to plays out." He growled out then reaching high to place his lips on hers with such ferocity that she had to
pull back to give relief to her burning lungs and stinging lips. He didn't stop there. As he trailed down biting kissing down her jawline towards the back of her right ear — she leaning her head to give him space — his hands began to wander down. His hands weren't light as Antonin but heavy with intent to feel every single part of her body.

Hermione knew where his hands were going but still couldn't help give a small moan of appreciation when his huge hand covered her breast. Her boob looked so tiny under his hands that for a second she felt uncertain that he would be turned off. But that fear was taken care of when he let his blunt nail scratch her nipple before he twisted it. "Oh." She let out a breathy moan. He didn't stop his assault to her chest as he sat upright, cradling her legs between his.

"Looking quite decadent, princess." Orias commented then smirking at how she flushed at his words. "So easy to blush… has no one ever complimented you?"

Hermione blushed, this time in embarrassment. "Does saying something about my intelligence count as a compliment?" She asked, looking up at him. Orias's raised eyebrow was the answer to her question which made her shrug her shoulders. "The only person that complimented me in school was Viktor Krum. I was Ron's last choice to be his Yule dance partner—" She stopped when Orias tsked.

"We are not going to talk about that rat while we are naked, princess." Orias said, putting his hand up to ward off her next words. Hermione just snorted at his behavior then noticed the unbalance quality about them.

"You are not even naked." Hermione noted, harrumphing. "Why am I the only one naked?"

"Because you got tits and I don’t?" he asked as if it was the most obvious answer at the moment.

"But you got a nice body." Hermione protested, reaching down to tug on the end of his shirt, indicating that she wanted it gone. "Remove it without magic." She placed her hands back on her stomach, caressing it slowly and she watched Orias reached behind his neck to grab the mouth of the shirt and pulled.

Hermione watched, enthralled, as his muscles bunched artfully as he pulled the shirt over his head. His abs aren't prominent like on models but she could see the formations of them. His whole body was broad at the top then tapered down to strong hips. He threw his shirt over his shoulder then smirked down at her. "What do you think?" He joked but watched as Hermione leaned up to trace his torso with her finger, from throat to the soft hair trail that went past his jean’s. She couldn't help but sit upright to place her lips on his pecs, feeling it flex under his skin.
He has placed his hands on her hips as she continued to explore his chest with her lips, taking in his scent of mint, feeling out of breath for some reason. Once her teeth caught the muscle that connected the neck to shoulder, Orias let out a gasping laugh, leading him to raise his hands until they covered her breasts. It was intimate, the whole atmosphere felt intimate which Orias had never felt. He was the type of man to woo, fuck, then go. There were no kisses, no soft caresses, and obviously, there wasn't an urge to let the other party take control like Hermione is doing now. He couldn't see her face because of her riotous curls hiding her face and she became more obscure as she delved deeper into his neck, her arms around him, hands splayed over his back.

He had to admit that her tits were not as big as his usual conquests — but no, this was not his usual conquest — but perky with dusky rose areolas that caught his attention back when Orias had shared her bed at her parents' house. He let out a shuddering breath when her teeth nipped at the weak spot below his ear — and enough is enough.

Hermione felt the full body shudder under her fingertips before she felt his hands reach around to grab her curls to pull her head back. "How long are you planning to kiss my neck when I am up here, princess?" he asked but he didn't give her a chance to answer by crushing his lips against her, forcing those dainty lips to open for his tongue. He pushed her down until she was laying on the bed again with him hovering over her. Distracted by the dazzling and eye-crossing kiss, it took few stuttering seconds to pull herself from the daze to realize that Orias had spread her legs wide open.

"You did promise me a taste, darling. And you are known to be a keeper of promises." Orias reminded, sliding down until his head was close to her womanhood. She sat up on her elbows to look down at her body. "You good with that, Granger?"

She simply nodded, biting her lower lip in expectation. He simply smirked, lowered his head to kiss across her hip bones, then lower to her mound give fluttering kisses, then moved lower to blow cool air on hot, wet lips, making her toes curl at the movement then—

He kissed her inner thigh instead causing Hermione to groan out in protest. She could feel Orias teasing smirk on her thigh which made her attempt to squeeze her legs. "Orias, please. You are right there." She whined out, her core throbbing, her juice leaking but he wasn't where he needs to be!

"I am, aren't I?" Orias teased, licking the area where her thigh met her hips. So close and yet so far. "I have heard that patience is a virtue, is that right?"

Hermione growled, legitimately growled at his words. "If you don't do something, I will ask someone else to finish your work." Hermione threatened, glaring at the man between her legs. Something flashed through Orias's eyes then he gave her a slow smile.
"Is that right, princess?" He asked in a tone of voice that made her fully alert. *Maybe, she wasn't fit to giving out ultimatums as of yet.* Before she could do anything, Orias had brandished out his wand to tie her hands above her head and each leg tied to each bottom bedpost, keeping her spread-eagled. "I will finish my own work tonight, princess. If you wanted a threesome, we can decide later. But now… I am to do with you as I please."

Hermione struggled against the magicked ropes in hopes that they will give out. When nothing happened, she began to chuckle hesitantly. "I was joking. You know that, right?"

"Mhmm." Orias agreed even though he didn't believe it. "Now, can I go back to tasting you, princess? Despite being tied up, you are still aroused. Look how wet you are." He was sitting on his heels, between her spread out legs. She felt exposed. Everything was out in the open and she should be mortified but no, she wanted more. He didn't pocket his wand away. Instead he placed it on his lap as if he still has plans for it. "As you know, as an information gatherer, if you may, I know exactly how long it takes a person to tick or how to make them tick. I had several women in my life long career and there is a different sort of pain especially for them."

Hermione felt her throat turn dry as a desert. "Different sort of pain?"

The excited smirk and the wild look on his face kept her on the edge and apprehensive. She didn’t know what kind of *sex acts* Orias was into and here she was, spread out as a turkey ready to be roasted. She tried to swallow to relieve her dry throat but there was no moisture in her mouth. Her heart pulsed faster at the constant state of arousal/alertness. The not knowing, not having an announce of power — her way of living right now was dictated by Orias.

“Oh, yes, different kinds of pain that have the most, easy solution. Don’t worry, Granger, I won’t hurt you that bad.” Orias said, which made her eyes widened at the word ‘hurt’.

“You are not into blood play, right? Because if so, I want out right now!” Hermione asked, rapidly. Orias wrinkled his nose in disgust.

“Urgh, no. Granger, just no. When I say hurt, you will understand in a few seconds. Only bodily fluids I want to see on your body is your pussy juice and my cum. And saliva. No blood, no urine, no shit.” Orias clarified, suddenly serious. He watched as Hermione sagged in relief at his words then paused.

“Shit?” she echoed and Orias simply shrugged which she followed by nodding. “People like weird
things, I suppose. There was a kid in my class, Finnegan. He loved his toes sucked.”

Orias sighed through his nose as he pinched the bridge of his nose with his non-dominant hand. “Why are we talking about everything but this?” he asked, his voice low and dangerous. Hermione tried to shrug — she herself didn’t know why she knew what Seamus liked — but her arms being tied in a way made it hard to move her shoulders. “Have you ever been in a constant state of arousal?”

“I am now.” Hermione quipped, causing Orias to smile at that. “But before… no. I just wanted to be over with. A quickie rub.”

Orias shook his head. “When it comes to pleasure, especially self-pleasure, it needs to to be slow. Your arousal needs to start up small, build it up until you can’t handle anymore, then you let go. The orgasm is so powerful, so strong that you blackout just from pure pleasure. Have you ever brought yourself to up to that level? Or has anyone?”

“Krum, I think. Well, after my third orgasm, I think anything would have pushed me over.” Hermione answered, thinking. Feeling her arousal starting to dim away, Hermione said, “So, are we going to do this or—” She broke off with a sharp yelp when Orias’s hand shot like a snake towards her pussy to pinch her clit. The slowly ebbing away arousal returned with a full force of a tsunami. She let out a sharp cry, her head thrown back in shock. Letting go of her clit, his fingers rubbed the area around it, collecting her arousal all over his fingers. She moaned as he rubbed the opening of her vagina slightly pressing it but not enough for him to enter. She clenched her teeth as those fingers rose up again towards her clit but he let her breath out when he didn’t touch the sensitive nub.

“Oh, don’t come until I tell you to.”

She snapped her head back up at this command. How is that possible? As if reading the question in her eyes, Orias simply laughed. "Prepare yourself." was his only warning before his fingers grazed lightly over her sensitive nub. Her vaginal muscles clenched around empty space every time his fingers would get close to the opening but would leak open whenever he shied away. His thumb circled around her clit couple of times before swiping at it once and each swipe made her cry out in pleasure.

She almost sobbed out of relief when she felt his index and middle finger prod at the entrance. *Come on, come on, one push*, she begged in her head. He removed his fingers away from her again and she threw her head back, letting out a defeated groan. How many times had he done this? He barely touched her with a few exceptions of swiping at her clit but she was gushing like an overflowing fountain. "Orias, please—" Her words cut off with a sharp intake of breath when his two fingers plunged into her body.
She let out a relieved wail as Orias pulled his fingers back just to plunged them back in again. "That's what I am waiting for. For you to beg. At this very moment, your pleasure is in my control." Orias hissed out, watching his fingers move. His words should have infuriated her. She would have lied to herself if she said that she didn't like being controlled. "Fuck, you are tight. How long do you think I have to prepare you for my big cock, hmm?" He shoved a third finger to join the others. She let out another wail as he picked up his pace.

Hermione felt the orgasm accumulating at the lower end of her spine. Sizzling tingles ran from her core to her toes and she could feel her walls fluttered around this pistonning fingers. "Uh uh uh, don't come. I can feel your walls getting tighter. Shit if my fingers felt good, my tongue would feel better, huh? Do you want that? Princess, look at me."

It took a while for her to understand his command before she lifted her head to catch his eyes, feeling drunk. “I am going to eat you, princess. Do you want that?” Orias repeated the question, seeing how unbelievable aroused she was. None of the girls he had been this… way. He had to clench his teeth to stop himself from finishing in his pants. “So?” He prodded by punctuating the question with a thrust of his fingers. Her walls were spongy, swollen, begging to be filled.

He was onto her when Hermione whimpered out a weak 'yes, Orias'. His head hovered over his slowly pistonning fingers, looking at the glittering pink cavity of her sex. With a flat tongue, he licked from bottom of her slit to her clt, tapering at the end to focus on the burgeoning nub. Her sobering wail made his lower stomach heave, his balls tightened. He licked around his fingers, gathering her juices with audible slurps, having her tangy arousal explode in his mouth. He removed his fingers from her whole to Hermione’s voiced displeasure but she stops groaning when he replaces his fingers with his tongue.

“Yes, Orias! Yes!” Hermione cried out, literally going cross-eyed at the wafting pleasure caused by his tongue. Her orgasm was at the brink of exploding but with such will power, she held it back.

“You taste so good, princess.” Orias murmured against her labia before removing his tongue from her orifice. She closed her mouth to hinder the urge to yell ‘no’. As he waited out of reach, her orgasm slowly ebbed away. “Good girl. Now for round two.”

Round Two?

She didn’t have time to think about it again when Orias placed his tongue in her hole again, slurping loudly as he tried to shove that muscle deeper into the canal. With his hand, he pinched her clit once, twice — her orgasm roared again but she had to clench her teeth to keep it at bay. By now, it started to hurt. Now, she knew exactly what kind of pain he was talking about. Anyone would spill their
darkest secret just to let go.

He backed away again, chuckling at the scrunched up face as if she was in pain. “It’s alright, baby girl. After this last round, I will let you come as much as you want. But first —” He paused, snapping his fingers to magick the ropes away, making her instantly curl up to soothe her sore limbs.

“Spread your legs, princess. I am not done with you yet.” Orias ordered, grabbing his wand. She would have eyed his wand warily if it weren't for the blood roaring past her ears or her whole body feeling heavy but she complied nonetheless. His huge left hand grabbed her right thigh and pushed, spreading her legs to his liking. "Swollen and pink. Just how I like it. Pay attention, princess, here comes the fun part."

Curiosity overpowering her arousal, Hermione lifted her head to see how splayed open she was to him, like a suckling pig about to be carved. Her attention on her displayed body was cut short when the Orias, master of pain, lifted his wand. Hermione swallowed her saliva, the sound audible in the real quiet room. With a smirk that could rival any snakes she has known, Orias cast silently but surely, "Vibratio."

The wand didn't do anything but the look on his face told Hermione to be alert. *Vibratio* meant ‘to vibrate’ and Hermione knew enough about muggle sex toys to know what he was about to do. Her whole face flushed. She wanted to close her legs just because of his smile but his hold on her right thigh kept her from doing so. "You trust me, right, princess? I will never harm you.” He reminded, softly. “This is all about leading up to the ultimate pleasure. Trust me.”

He looked vulnerable right there as he sought out her assent. Her answer was to relax her and give him a smile that she hoped to convey her true feelings in the matter. “I trust you, Orias,” she verbalized her assent and the smile that she pulled out of him was come worthy itself. Still, she hitched her breath as she watched the wand come near sex, most specifically her clit. *Oh shit*, she thought to herself, biting her lower lip in anticipation.

“*OH, FUCK!*” Hermione yelled out loud when his wand touched her clit. It was exactly what she thought. Instant, exploding pleasure burst through her body making her writhe like a spasming snake. Her chest heaved and she immediately grabbed Orias’s hand to try to pull the stimulation away from her sex but he held own. Her orgasm rose like furious fiendfyre, burning through her veins and blood, trying to burst out. She choked back a sob as she tried to hold her orgasm but this time her body wasn’t listening to her this time. “Orias! Orias! I need to — I need to come! I can’t stop it!” She begged, cried, hoping he would listen.

He removed his vibrating wand away from her gushing pussy quickly before jumping on her with his mouth latched onto her labia, his tongue working its way back in. She wrapped her legs around his head and clutched his head and pushed his face against her, moving her hips to rub herself on his
The simple order was needed and a pinch on her clit with his teeth made her scream out, her whole body snapping and shaking at the power of the orgasm. Her legs tightened as she shot her come right into his tongue, his moaning prolonging her strongest orgasm she ever had. Another pinch made stars burst behind her eyes and —

Hermione snapped her eyes open with a sharp gasp. She found herself facing the ceiling, laying on top of the black covers of Orias’s bed. Did I fall asleep? Before she could ask herself more question, the bed shifted beside her. She turned to her side to see Orias, sitting upright against the bed frame, his legs bare, pulling at his monstrous cock slowly and lightly. “Awake, princess?” he asked, smirking like a pleased cat.

“I blacked out, huh?” she asked, her body soft and pliant after the mind-obliterating orgasm she just experienced. Her three orgasms with Krum felt like little pop rocks compared to what she just received. She still felt wet down there, giving her the reason that her blackout wasn’t that long.

“You orgasm like a fucking goddess. By the way, I had to repair that light fixture. Your magic went completely haywire. What a wondrous sight.” Orias said, making her blush. Her eyes traveled to his tumescent manhood and unconsciously licked her lips.

“What about you?” Hermione asked, her tone breathy as she watched his thick fingers pull the skin back. “After what you gave me, I should reciprocate right. It isn’t right that I am the only who gets to be pleasured.”

Orias let out a burst of choked laughter, husky and low, which made something curl in her lower stomach. Again? Nuh-uh, behave yourself, pussy. “Is that right? You asking for a taste?” he asked, letting go of his cock. She nodded, looking at him through her lashes. “Come here, then, princess.”

She got on her knees and hands, surprising that none too long ago, she felt like she had no bones in her body. She crawled over slowly, catching Orias eyeing her tits as she stopped between his muscled thighs, eye level with the monstrosity. “Tell me, am I bigger than that Krum?”
“Loads bigger. I don’t think I can put it all in my mouth.” Hermione answered, making Orias puff his chest out in pride. She reached her hand slowly to touch his cock lightly which made it twitch and bob over his stomach. It was hot to the touch, his skin silky but moved around easily as if it covered something hard. Her hands looked so tiny as she grasped it in her hand, causing him to let out a grunt, which spurred her even more. She began to pull down and ended the upward motion with a twist at the mushroom head. Her eyes flitted to Orias whose eyes were hooded with pleasure and desire, catching her eyes. He licked his lips which made her more sure with her hand job. “I never gave a blow job before so sorry if I suck.”

“I am your first cock to taste?” he asked, surprised. His cock grew even more at the sound of that. “I am pleased.”

“I know. I can feel it.” she teased which made him roll his eyes. “I don’t know how I can fit this in me.”

“Fuck, princess,” he groaned out loud, clutching the bed sheet, “you want me to fucking come right now? I thought you wanted a taste?”

“Sheesh, this is just round one.” Hermione teased which made him laugh even louder. A bead of clear liquid oozed out of the hole and she followed her urge and lapped at the clear liquid. Slightly salty but not unbearable which made her confident with her next lick around the mushroom head. Orias let out a small moan. Hermione tongued the large vein at under the cock and followed it down to the base with suckling kisses till she hit the testicle area.

_I have to thank Ginny for the detailed how-to suck cock she told me back in the Gryffindor common room_.

With a flat tongue, she licked all the way up until she ended at the top and she tongued the small hall that was beginning to ooze out more pre-cum. Lubricated enough, Hermione sucked the mushroom head into her mouth, shuffling closer to make it easier for her. Suddenly, fingers laced through her curls, softly scratching her scalp. She took this as the indication of taking Orias deeper, hollowing out her cheeks as she went deeper. _Mind the teeth, Hermione_, Ginny’s voice appeared her head and she heeded, closing her lips over her teeth. Thank Merlin she made her front teeth smaller back in Hogwarts.

“That’s good, princess. Take it slow. Nice and easy.” Orias said, his voice breaking here and there, which made her curling sensation at the bottom of her stomach stronger. She went slowly went down before the head hit the back of her throat. She wasn’t even halfway close so she used the rest of her hand cover the part she couldn’t reach. She sucked in her cheeks as she rose, her saliva running down his length to lubricate even more for her hand. “Yessss .”
She went down again, pushing her hand up then rose up, pushing her hand down. She did this several times before he started to apply pressure on her head. Preparing herself, she went down again but this time she tried to push lower, trying to control her gag reflex. After a couple of inches down, her gag reflex won and made her throat clench around his cock.

“Fuck!” he cried out as she pulled herself off of his cock, breathing deeply. Saliva and pre-cum stuck to her lower lip as she caught her breath. As she waited for her breath to catch up, she used her left hand to grab his balls light and shifted them around, feeling pleased as Orias’s eyes literally had his eyes rolled back to his skull.

“Good?” she asked, demurely. He simply nodded, looking at her, smiling. She went back down again ready to deep throat him. Going past her limit again, Hermione moaned, making the vibration of her throat surround him. She knew he liked the way he grunted and tightened his grip on her hair. She felt his balls rise to tuck themselves against his cock and his base began to swell.

Hermione knew he was going to come so she double her sucking efforts, using her tongue, even a little of her teeth and he liked everything by the way he was moaning and grunting nonstop. She took a deep breath and pushed down on his cock even though her jaw was beginning to hurt but she looked past it. She pushed past her limit yet again and forced his cock even further in. This time she purposely swallowed. Both hands curled in her head and both legs clench tighter as his base began to swell up even more.

“Fuck I am going to come.” he warned, “Shit, if you keep swallowing like that, princess — I — oh, fuck — I am going to shoot down your throat!”

That’s the plan!

With a grunt, he pushed deeper into her throat. Her eyes widened in shock and immediately placed her hands on his straining thighs as her gag reflex just had about enough of her foolery and began to flex around his girth to push him out. Tears formed at the corner of her eyes as he yelled as time. “Fuck!”

Hermione felt his cock swell then explode in her mouth, his cum shooting down her throat in thick, ropey strings. Her eyes rolled back as she felt her pussy tingle again at the feeling. It felt like forever as the last spurt of cum went down her pipe. Slowly and mindful of her teeth, Orias pulled himself out of her mouth, his cock glittering with her saliva. She swallowed the remaining cum in her mouth, wiping the spittle from her swollen lips by the back of her hand.
Orias breathed deeply as he grabbed her upper arms to pull her on top of him, his half-hard cock pressed against her thigh. “Damn, that was fucking brilliant.” He said, grinning widely. “Look at those lips.” He used his thumb to rub her lower lip before pulling her into a rough and sensual kiss. She was surprised that he would kiss her after she sucked his cock but kissed him back nonetheless, his hands coming up to cup her jaw. His thumbs began to massage it, knowing it worked overtime to fit his manhood in her mouth.

“I hope my first time was okay.” she said, pulling away from him, feeling insecure. Orias just simply laughed. “I am serious! My first ever cock I suck had to be the biggest one I have seen —”

“Baby girl, you did amazing. Why don’t you just come into terms that my cum is in your belly right now.” he commented, placing his hand on her stomach.

“Orias! Shut up!” she cried out, blushing at his embarrassing comment, trying to get away from him but he pulled her back towards him and caged her to his lower back.

“If you keep on wiggling that ass, sweetheart, I might have to use your throat again.” he warned which made her pause, feeling his cock press against her ass, causing her to shiver. “All those beautiful experiences made me sleepy. You?”

“I was going to go back to my room . . .” Hermione started weakly but stopped herself when Orias let out a laugh so hard that she snuggled deeper into his pillow to hide her face.

“Yeah fucking right. What a funny girl you, Granger.” he said, laughing, pulling the comforter over them. “What makes you think I am going to let you go in the morning without tasting you again?”

Chapter End Notes

11 Pages of smut on Google Doc.
I can't believe it. I hit Chapter Twenty! And I have all of you to thank for! Now, you have to forgive my lateness in updating because I am applying to programs which have different entrance exam and your girl's anxiety to be prepared takes over.

I got to thank Myklela again for beta-ing this chapter.

**MAKE SURE TO READ THIS:**

Before we begin this chapter, this chapter will mention TW: rape. I will write a warning before and after so you who wish to skip it can do so with this symbol : [TW]

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
Who I see as Orias Mulciber.

*make sure to read the author's note above.*

CHAPTER TWENTY

Hermione woke up wet and aroused.

There was a tongue in her. She lifted her blanket high enough to see Orias’s head between her legs, the muffled sound of slurping became clearer. The sight of his tongue making appearances made her moan out loud. “Good morning, princess.” Orias mumbled against her lips, causing her legs to tighten around his head, her head falling back.

Hermione choked out the words, “How’s breakfast?”

“Sweet and tangy.” Orias responded back fast, making Hermione roll her eyes. “I woke up with my cock between your thighs and you rubbing against me. You should be glad that I can control myself better than any other man.” After saying that, he went back to his feastings, making her toes curl to the point of them cramping.

“Oh, fuck.” she muttered to herself, not knowing if she is saying that for his words or his active tongue. “Oh, Jesus Christ.”

She felt Orias paused in his ministrations. She peeked under the comforter to see him looking up at her quizzically. “Who is this Jesus Christ?”

“Ah, the pleasured, sleeping beauty has woken up.”
Hermione paused in the entrance of the dining room to stare at Antonin who was smirking at the brim of his teacup. All four men were already situated around the dining table, a vast array of breakfast foods between them. She harrumphed and walked around the table while keeping her eyes forward, trying not to catch anyone’s eyes. “Good morning.” she announced, her seat magically pulling away from the table for her.

“Morning, Hermione.” Abraxas answered, unfolding his napkin to place on top of his lap. “I do hope you ignore this beastly man. What she does in the night is not our business.”

Hermione threw a grateful smile at the blond man. “Thank you, Abraxas. I see that there is some kind of manners left in this house.”

“But I really do hope you silence the room next time. As much as I love to hear you scream, it is not fun when I am trying to sleep.” Orion added, looking at her expectantly. Hermione gasped, blood draining from her face.

“Orias did silence the room! I can’t believe you heard me scream past the wards.” Hermione said, scandalized. How could she meet their eyes right now… Damn it, Orias! She was sure that he silenced the room… or did he trick her? She wouldn’t put past Orias to trick —

Rodolphus burst out laughing. “You actually screamed?”

“Huh?” Hermione sounded, snapping her head up, confused, then she stared at Orion who was simply looking at his plate, his lips pulled into his mouth. “But Orion said that he heard me —” She stopped herself when she realized that she had been played. She glared at the long-haired man as Antonin burst out laughing. Even Abraxas was chuckling, his head tucked to avoid looking at the irate woman. “Orian! You tricked me!”

“Hermione —” Rodolphus chuckled some more, “— you are married to four Slytherins. How did you fall for that? What did Orias do to make you scream?”

“Don’t you worry about that, DOLPHIE. You will have your turn soon.” The booming voice of Orias came from the mouth of the room. Everyone turned to face the barely dressed man. He only wore pants and house slippers. In better light, his body looked even more amazing. “Stop drooling, Hermione. You tasted me yesterday. Insatiable girl!”

Hermione gasped, horrified, at being caught. “Orias, I am not drooling! Can you not talk about our…”
“Why? At least half of these men have tasted your sweet nectar.” Orias asked, looking confused and amused at the same time. Shocked into silence, Hermione watched Orias pile eggs and sausages onto his plate. He pierced a sausage with this fork and lifted it towards her. “Sausage?”

“No, thank you.” She muttered, glaring at the man. He simply shrugged at her before popping the whole link in his mouth. “Why aren’t you fully dressed?”

“I figure what we are going to do today may contain some fire. I just don’t want my fine clothes to catch on fire. Princess, you got to change as well.” Orias explained, spreading jam on toast. “Wear your nightie.”

Blanking for a couple of seconds, Hermione raised an eyebrow at the tall man. “Why in the world would I wear my nightie when there will be fire involved?” she asked slowly and incredulously. “How would that protect me?”

Orias shook his head, nonchalantly. “No, it won’t protect you but you will be a great sight to look at. Wear the sheer one.”

“May I join if she does wear the sheer one?” Abraxas asked and Orias consented with a head nod. Before anyone could further talk about her change of clothes, Hermione scooped up whip cream with her spoon and threw the condiment towards Orias’s head. It landed and stuck with a wet splat on top of his eyebrow. Orias simply smirked before magicking the whipped cream off of his face.

“Honestly, princess, if you wanted to eat cream off of me that bad, there is a tool I have —”

“Don’t finish that sentence!”

The mood as Hermione and Orias climbed the stairs had become somber and serious. Lady Mulciber’s room was located in East Wing known as the Granite Wing. Apparently, Lady Mulciber and Lord Mulciber slept in different wings which told Hermione exactly how their marriage was like. Orias had slept in the same wing as his father and still continued to sleep thereafter Lord Mulciber’s death. Hermione kept a close eye on Orias’s clenched fists.
And those closed fists became tighter as they passed portraits which reminded Hermione that she hadn’t focused on portraits in her wing. As they walked past the portraits, one caught her eye, seeing that it was one of the few which had gilded frames. A lady with weathered skin, permanent frown lines, and cold dark eyes peered down at them as they paused in front of her. The lady kept silent as Hermione noticed dark red hue peeking amongst the abundant gray hairs that were pulled into a high bun. Heavy set jewels adorned her neck and fingers. She wore a high neck black and green gown that made her look even more severe. The frown on her face deepened into a sneer.

“Princess, meet Lady Joan Mulciber nee Carrow.” Orias introduced, smirking.

“Carrow? You are related to the Carrow Twins?” Hermione asked, surprised. Orias nodded, shrugging.

“I don’t go announcing that they are my cousins and that my mom is their aunt or whatever. I already have a stigma of my own. Add that I am related to the Carrow twins? I will be next monster parents will come up with to scare their kids with.” Orias admitted, shaking his head. “At least, I got my father’s genes in me. Imagine me looking like her.” He pointed at his mother who flashed a glare so filled with hate at her son that Hermione flinched. She was half expecting that wretched witch to come out of her frame and choke her son. The need to set fire to everything that Lady Mulciber owned grew stronger.

“Why isn’t she speaking?”

“Oh, I silenced her. She loves to hear her own voice. You know the best thing?” Orias asked, walking closer to the picture to grab hold on the frame. Lady Mulciber sat up in her seat, alarmed, at Orias behavior. Hermione could see the lady move her lips, asking ‘what are you doing’ over and over. “The frames aren’t stuck to the wall with a Permanent Sticking Charm.” With a snap and a lift from his heels, Orias removed the gilded frame from the wall easily and he let it fall to the ground, making Lady Mulciber fall off of her cushioned seat.

“If you will magically lift her?” Orias asked and Hermione followed suit by waving her wand to lift the frame. She could see Lady Mulciber struggle to keep her balance, her mouth open in a silent scream. Dark pleasure ran through Hermione seeing the wretched woman scared, the same feeling she got when she stuck Skeeter into a jar or curse that one girl during her fifth year. Maybe, there was another reason why the box chose Slytherins and Death Eaters for me, Hermione thought to herself, wryly.

It didn’t take too long to reach Joan Carrow’s room with the frame floating in between them. Her room could have been easily recognized by the emerald bejeweled door handle. The two doors were
tied together by a bow made out of green ribbon. As she got closer to the door, Hermione could feel the power of wards trying to push her away. “Tipsy,” Orias called out calmly. Within seconds, Tipsy popped right beside them, wiping her hands in her small apron. “Remove the wards.”

Tipsy eyed the painting of screaming mistress before snapping her fingers. The oppressive feeling immediately vanished and the green bow slowly unraveled itself before it, too, vanished into thin air. Orias flicked his fingers causing the doors to open inwards to reveal a sunlit room. He turned to look at Hermione who in return gave him a small smile and nod. The two stepped inside the room, the air not stale for being empty for more than 10 years. Tipsy did say that she and the other elves had cleaned up before all of them have arrived.

Everything was kept as it was. Half-used perfume jars still littered the vanity table alongside brushes and powder pans. The bed was a soft beige color and carpet is — what do you know — green. Bit on the nose, hmm. Hermione looked around the room to see where to begin when her eyes settled on the closet. She looked at Orias who looking around the room, unperturbed. “Want to start with the closet? Maybe we can donate something to the orphanage.”

“She would hate that.” Orias commented, looking thoughtful. “But… if you were an orphan, would you want anything from this lady? I would rather be naked.”

“True…” Hermione trailed off, put off. “So, burn them?” Orias nodded, smiling excitedly. With a snap of her fingers, Hermione opened the closet doors to reveal a huge array of gowns and robes, mostly black and gray with varying splotches of color here and there. On the door hung her ostentatious display of jewelry that made her cringe, reminding her that she got married into five filthy rich families. “What about the jewelry? That is lots of money.”

“We can either sell it or keep in my Gringotts bank. Most wives will have jewelry handed to them from their husband's mother but I will spare you.” Orias explained, grabbing the floating hangers and throwing them in the center of the room. He grabbed a stone gray ring from the padded box. It was thick and minimalistic; it looked like a band of stone. “However, this… this we will destroy.” He threw the offending ring over his shoulder.

“Why?” Hermione asked, turning around to see that the ring lay innocuous amongst the fine dresses. “Why is that ring need to be destroyed?”

“Her wedding ring. These pieces of jewelry can be sold and melted down but that ring… it was given to her by my paternal grandmother… and she ruined it.” Orias sneered, making him appear lethal and dangerous before smoothing away his furrowed brows. “My grandmother loved stoneworking as well as my grandfather and his father and his father before him. She had created several of them, each imbued with her magic to make them smooth as marble. If you touch it, it feels like marble instead of stone. If you were to give the ring to a curse-breaker and tell them to see the
magic that was used to create it, you will see her signature in it.” Orias answered, his voice going softer the longer he spoke about his grandmother. Seeing that this was his first time showing true emotion, Hermione felt something bloomed in her chest for this man. Not knowing what to do with the newfound feeling, she turned around to walk back to the ring.

Orias really must have loved his grandmother. “You have a picture of her? Your grandmother?” Hermione asked, picking up the ring, almost dropping in shock at how smooth it was. The stone was so smooth that it felt like marble. How was this possible? How do you make porous stone into a polished marble? This is a piece of craftsmanship and Orias wants to throw it away? Joan Carrow must have shitted on everything that Orias had loved. Hermione threw Joan Mulciber’s ring back to ground hard before turning back to walk back to the closet.

“I will show you a pic of her after we are done with this room. Which reminds me… mother dearest has a favorite china set that I will love to destroy. I couldn’t even touch them. We will have to ask the elves to bring it out.” Orias promised, stepping back to look at the barren closet. He cocked his head then looked over his shoulder at her. “Stand back, princess. Don’t want you to get hurt.”

Hermione took several steps back. Orias rolled his shoulders, his shoulders and neck muscles bunching and rolling as he did so. He grasped the doors of closet and with a powerful grunt, he pulled the door of the hinges. Pieces of wood fell to the ground as Hermione gasped at the sheer muscle power of Orias. He settled the broken door on the ground before doing the same with the other door. Open mouthed, Hermione watched Orias took apart the closet like it was nothing. After five minutes of taking drawers out of their sockets, ripping the padded cushion from the base or whatever he can simply destroy by hand lay on top of the clothes.

He turned to look at her, a faint flush over his cheeks.

“The bed?”

It was two hours after the two completely ripped the whole room apart. After the initial shock, Hermione joined him on destroying the fabrics as well as the furniture. The bed was the most fun. They had ripped apart the posts before jumping on the base to break it apart. It didn’t take too long to break seeing how heavy Orias was. The next was the vanity table and Hermione had to tie Orias down because he was threatening to splash the flowery and way too sweet perfume at her. Regrettably, they also found old correspondence from Joan Carrow’s former lovers.

Orias tried to read it out loud but after the third letter, each of them had to keep the bile down at how… raunchy it was. He immediately incinerated them and asked to be clean magically. There was a period where he laid Hermione down on the ground to steal her breath straight from her lungs which left her lips stinging.
All throughout this act, Joan Carrow was screaming silently but fell silent as she watched the two kiss in front of her.

After two and a half hours were up, they stood in front of the huge jumble of mess with the portrait of Lady Carrow on top, facing the ceiling. The whole room looked bare and empty. There was a knock on the door which brought their attention to Abraxas and Orion. “You guys did destroy this place. I remember Joan Carrow during Hogwarts. Shrewd and cruel, kept her nose up so high we all could see the pea-sized brain of hers. All of the girls didn’t want to share the dorm with her. Cruel, cruel.” Abraxas said, walking slowly into the room.

“Dorea Potter, or Dorea Black, had set Joan straight after she found that Joan was using first years as her target practice for boils and acne curses. And when I say about setting her straight, Dorea challenged Joan to a wizarding duel — quite unheard of back in our day — and Dorea wiped the floors clean with Joan.” Orion continued, looking wistfully. “She was such an amazing cousin. Strong and opinionated; surprising for a Slytherin.”

“I remember how half of the school was in love with Dorea afterwards. Everyone got jealous when they found out that she was engaged with Charles Potter.”

“Wait… Harry’s grandmother is your cousin, Orion?” Hermione asked, surprised. Orion nodded.

“She was Arcturus niece.”

“I am surprised that Arcturus allowed Dorea to marry a Potter.” Orias commented, shocked. The Black patriarch shook his head.

“Oh, no. Arcturus was against the marriage but his father — my grandfather — told him to shut up basically and explained that the Potter family was a powerful family to get attached to. Even if they were blood traitors. In the level of craziness, Pollux was better than his son. I don’t know how. I think the craziness skips around. Cygnus got the crazy, I didn't. Bellatrix got it but not her sisters. Walburga was definitely out of the sane loop, the poster girl of crazy.” Orion explained, fingering the torn drapes. “Well, what’s next?”

Orias brightened at being reminded. “Tipsy!” he called out, and the elf popped into existence second later. “Take this mess out to the stone pit. I will be there shortly. Make sure Lady Mulciber’s portrait is on the top.” Tipsy nodded, snapping her fingers to make the pile disappear. Orias turned to meet everyone. “I don’t know if I should wear my ceremonial robes or what.” He shrugged. “It would be
rude if I was half-naked—” He couldn’t finish his sentence as he burst out laughing.

Hermione simply rolled her eyes at his behavior. In rare times that Hermione accepts a fact, that is totally against her way of living, these past two hours reminded how sometimes chaos is cathartic. She always liked control. She knows that her friends know that — hell, they have been at the receiving end of her bossy and controlling tirade. But letting go in nonsexual events was just as amazing as the sexual events. She felt lighter since she first arrived at the house. She felt lighter since all of the men got resurrected. Maybe, she should continue destroying things to make herself feel better.

“So we are going to burn it or what? You should ask one of the elves to bring your mother’s favorite china set.” Hermione asked, bringing everyone’s attention to the topic at hand. Orias smirked at her before heading towards the door.

“You can tell the others that they are welcome to join the fun in the backyard. Come on, princess, I will carry you.” Orias dictated, causing the girl to raise an eyebrow at him.

“Why? I am perfectly able to walk by myself.” Hermione asked, confused before stepping past him to get out of the room. She heard Orias chuckle behind her before stepping in line with her. She turned her head over her shoulder to see Abraxas and Orion following us. She peaked at Orias through her lashes but his face was as blank as before. She wasn’t expecting a sudden change in personality immediately — she knew this will be a slow process. Hell, he was willing to work with her or else the past two hours wouldn’t have happened.

Orion and Abraxas didn’t have to walk far to find the other two men, seeing that they were sitting in the sunroom, drinking tea. They glanced up at entourage before getting up to do the same, each carrying their own cup of tea. A thought appeared in Hermione’s head which landed a problem to her ever-growing problem pile. Now that they had their magic limited, what can the men do to pass their time? Obviously the Ministry won’t give them a job there; definitely not Diagon Alley. Neither Hogwarts nor Hogsmeade. Maybe Abraxas and Orion can continue being on the seats of Wizengamot but the rest were former Death Eaters.

Maybe something muggle?

Before that, they all have to sit down together to talk about their futures seeing that Hermione is almost ready to grab hers. They all had arrived at the backyard and all the talk about the future went to the back of her mind, seeing a huge stone pit — normally for a bonfire — filled to the brim with Joan Carrow’s belongings. Tipsy went the extra mile to make the portrait hung in the air with magic. They all could see the furious frown lines on her face, hate-filled eyes zoning in on Orias. A shudder went up Hermione’s spine. How could someone hate their own creation so much? Who hated their kids more — Walburga or Joan?
“Tipsy, also get her favorite china.” Orias ordered which made Tipsy glance up at the giant then pointed at the set of china on the ground. “Oh, you already got it? Tipsy, you are getting drunk with me tonight.”

Tipsy looked almost offended at his words. “Young Master, I will not be drinking with you.”

Orias pouted at that before Hermione slapped his arm. “Stop terrorizing that poor elf. Throw the china and let’s burn it.” Hermione reminded, making him nod. They all watched him walk over to the tea set with determination before picking up the whole tray. He went to the pit before stopping abruptly. Orias turned around to meet everyone’s gaze on him. He had a mischievous smile as he stared at Hermione before looking at the rest of the men. Oh, I don’t like this, Hermione thought, worriedly.

“Anyone who gets a headshot with the teacup will be told about how I made Princess cum yesterday.” Orias declared, using magic to multiply the tea set, creating several identical china tea sets. Immediately, Antonin stepped forward, heading towards the tea set while Hermione floundered about to pick up her fallen jaw off of the ground.

“Orias! My orgasm is not table talk!” Hermione protested, stomping her foot as Rod walked forward as well, an excited gleam in his eyes.

“There is no table so… no such thing as table talk. I am sure they all would love to know.” Orias defended his decision which rendered her speechless. By then everyone but the Black patriarch had joined up with clown named Orias. Hermione turned to meet Orion’s shifting eyes with a glare. He already looked guilty and interested at the same time.

“Orion, sweetie, you are not really thinking about playing this game now are you?” Hermione asked, sweetly, watching Orion winced at her word choice. After a while of gathering his thoughts, he straightened up, turned to Hermione and shrugged.

“Love your threats and all, but I do like hearing how my wife cums so pardon my curiosity.” Orion explained, shoving his hand into his robe’s pockets, walking towards the awaiting men. She tried to be angry — tried — she couldn’t stop herself from blushing at Orion calling her his wife. Hermione knew that she was their wife but to see them acknowledge her as their wife made her feel strangely uplifted. She shouldn’t be this excited, right… Does this mean that they are okay with Hermione being their wife? And not some bombshell that could go hand in hand with these powerful men?
Well… Hermione has been told that she was powerful but when she thinks about it, she is known for being a know-it-all or book smart whereas Harry is legitimately powerful. Yeah, book-wise, he is alright but if he was tested on magical usage, he would have been leagues ahead from her. She learned that the hard way during the war — that she didn’t have time to open up a book to look up a spell while she was fighting. She tried to hone her magic to be perfect that she had trouble time thinking of spells on the spot. The bottom line was: she survived. That is all that matters.

Hermione may be book smart but she knew how to plan. Now… if Harry could have just listened to her plans or her worries, they would have had successful outcomes… but if she honestly asked herself… when do things go according to plan? Never. You can plan all you can but you still don’t know what obstacles can appear to destroy it. That was life. It is a hard pill to swallow.

Bunch of laughter pulled Hermione from her sudden philosophical thoughts to see that the men had already begun their game. Apparently, Abraxas made it hard by making the tea sets heavy and they created rules that they are not allowed to use magic to get a headshot. Meanwhile, Joan Carrow was screaming as porcelain cups filled with tea smashed against her paint job. Hermione watched Orias looked like he was having fun.

“Tipsy, bring me a chair, please. This is going to take awhile.”

Rodolphus had won the competition.

The winner cheered and fist bumped with Orias as the rest groaned in defeat. Abraxas had removed his robes midway through the tossing competition whereas Orion kept his on, both looking out of breath. Antonin had his robes and shirt off, showing off his olive toned skin and fit body. Hermione, on the other hand, was simply sitting on the conjured chair, nibbling on smoked gouda cheese.

As everyone conceded defeat with Rodolphus, they all began to trek back towards the amused girl. Hermione cleared her throat. “I wonder if Rodolphus will let you all know.” She said, her voice light and teasing. Orion simply scrunched his nose at her while Antonin simply huffs.

“I have no need. I know how you taste, Hermione.” Abraxas replied, shrugging. “What I don’t understand… what is Rodolphus going to do with that information?”

Antonin snorted. “Oh, I don’t know, Malfoy, how about self-pleasure?” He said, causing Abraxas to roll his gray eyes at him.
I know by first hand — I am sure these two also knows — that you are quite delicious, Hermione.” Abraxas began, causing the said girl to flush at his compliment, “so what I am not understanding is why everyone but Rodolphus had shown affection towards you. What’s he going to do with that information when he is not going to do anything with you? I am sure you are glad for having a break from all of us through Rodolphus… but what is stopping him?”

Hermione knew she shouldn’t feel hurt by the rebuffs from Rodolphus when it comes to sexual pleasure because she knew the real cause of it: he still thinks about his true love. But she is a normal woman with feelings and it’s bound to hurt when a great looking guy doesn’t want to be pleased by her. Which in itself is shocking because Hermione has other four men to step up where Rodolphus lacks. It was all twisting conundrum that Hermione didn’t want to look into so she settled her side with this: “Rodolphus will come when he wishes to. All of you guys came to me in your own power. I have never forced you to do anything you didn’t want to.”

Before Antonin could say anything, Orias howled before snapping his fingers, making the whole pile and tea-drenched portrait of Joan Carrow explode in furious flames, the fires cracking and popping loudly at the sudden quietness of the backyard. Hermione watched Orias breath deeply in satisfaction before pulling her eyes to screaming Lady Mulciber as tongues of flames licked all around her frame, melting the paints, making the lady melt along with the paints.

Hermione could understand why some wizards went dark more clearly now.

“...the whole lighting fixture blew up because of how hard she came. Man, that was a sight to see. In the whole sexual history of my life, that never happened to me. You? Have you ever made a girl cum so hard that her magic destroys the furniture?” Orias asked, looking at the black haired fellow. Orias had pulled the winner of the contest to the side after toasting his mother’s belongings. Rodolphus, on the other hand, simply shook his head at the man’s words.

Orias looked at Rodolphus for a few seconds. Rodolphus knew that glint in his eyes — they all shared living quarters with each other in the war. Orias wanted to know something and he will do whatever he can to get what he wants. However, he didn’t ask any questions. Rodolphus simply eyed the man back, trying to appear nonchalant to the king of nonchalant. It didn’t work because Orias snorted, shaking his head.

“Whatever is holding you back from accepting princess as your wife, resolve it now.” Orias said, making Rodolphus stand up straighter in surprise. Was he that translucent with his avoidance? “I
“That’s not it!” Rodolphus hurried up to clear up then he let out a frustrated sigh. “There is a different reason.”

“Whatever it is, it is in the past. Leave it in the past. You figure your shit out. I am going to try to convince her to give me a kiss. Should I even ask? I ate her out, she sucked me off — I think we went past that behavior.” Orias said, winking at Rodolphus before walking away from the man but he wasn’t even listening, not even noticing that he was by himself.

How could he do what he wants with Hermione when he feels guilty for even liking someone else other than Eliza Hartwell?

Eliza. A Hufflepuff student who was a year younger than he was when he was in Hogwarts. The difference between her and Hermione was sharp. Hermione had wild brown curls that didn’t seem to listen to their owner whereas Eliza had pin straight blonde hair; Eliza was paler than Hermione and he had to admit that Hermione’s slightly peach toned skin seemed appetizing; Hermione’s lips were thinner than Eliza; they both shared brown eyes but Hermione is more honey brown whereas Eliza was more dark hickory brown.

[TW] Rod couldn’t help but compare the two, despite knowing that these two girls were different from each other. Also, the fact was Eliza was dead. Rod thought he got over the pain of losing the very woman who he opened his heart to. He went through a lot of shit just to keep her hidden but it didn’t matter, Voldemort found about Eliza during his routine mental checkup (Rodolphus didn’t know that Voldemort knew) way after Rodolphus got married to Bellatrix. The Dark Lord had sent his worst man, Macnair, to take care of the problem while Rodolphus was out on another mission. Rodolphus had heard about Eliza’s death a few weeks after when he had accidentally stumbled upon Walden Macnair gloating about how the ‘mudblood Hartwell bitch squealed’ when he showed her how a ‘true man feels like’ to Rookwood and Crabbe Snr.

Everyone knew that Macnair and Rookwood loved to play with their victims before they killed them and that Crabbe Snr loved to hear all the exploits. Rabastan and Antonin were the only ones who knew about his love for Eliza and despite being in the inner circle, they didn’t even know what the Dark Lord had planned. Rodolphus didn’t even dare confront Voldemort, but he knew that the Dark Lord knew that Rodolphus had found out about his discrete mission. Rod would catch his Dark Lord gaze at him with a pleased smile pulling at the corner of his lips. Rod was grateful that once faced with trauma, the mental walls grew stronger to hide how he really felt about Eliza’s death.

She was his first everything as he was hers. Their first kiss, their first true love, her first time, so on so forth. So, knowing exactly what Macnair was capable of, Antonin and his younger brother (when he was in a period of clear-headedness before his mind breaks again) had found the once stoic man
on the floor, drunk and crying. That night was the first time his younger brother had hugged him since Bellatrix had helped break his mind at the event Longbottom’s torture. Antonin knew that Rabastan would spill the beans when he went back to usual craziness so he had obliviated the younger brother before sending him back to do whatever he does. [TW]

Everything was taken from him. His family had taken him away from Eliza, Bellatrix had taken away his happiness, the Dark Lord fucked him over ten times before he did his final attack: killing Eliza would make him more obedient — as if he wasn’t fucking obedient before! Apparently, after Macnair was done with Eliza, he burned her body so Rodolphus didn’t have anything left behind of hers to keep. He felt his throat constrict at the thoughts of Eliza.

He turned back to see his soul bond mate who was simply hitting Orias on the head with a napkin while laughing. Could he open himself up again especially to the woman who his ex-wife had tortured? She was a caring sort of type of woman despite the fact that he tried to injure her during her fifth year when she was just 15 — the same age that he had taken Eliza’s first kiss. What would Eliza think if she was alive and she found out that he tried to kill a fifteen-year-old girl? Was it his punishment to be tied again to a Muggleborn?

Could he ever get over Eliza? Will he ever stop blaming himself for not protecting Eliza better? Kissing Hermione felt like he was betraying Eliza… he knew it didn’t make sense. She was dead; Hermione was not. Despite all of that information, Rodolphus couldn’t just forget about Eliza in the past and move on to Hermione. Still, it wasn’t fair of him to continue avoiding Hermione and not explain why he is unable to give the satisfaction she needs. Rodolphus didn’t see a problem; she had four other men to help her out.

And he only had Eliza and now he has no one. How can Hermione understand what he went through? Would she say, ‘I am sorry that you went through that.”? As far as he knows, she hadn’t had anyone she loved die because what she believed in. She probably had people she cared about die in the war — who hasn’t — but did she have her lover ripped apart by a man because she chose to fall in love with a person with blood as not same as hers?

Rodolphus clenched his shaking left hand into a fist as he watched his soulmate turned her head to look towards him. How can she look at him when he had Eliza’s blood on his hands? Should he tell her? How will she look at him when she knew he was the reason that Eliza died?

Can he trust her to keep it to herself?

He shrugged his sudden onslaught of sorrow off of his shoulder before walking back towards the group, pretending that everything was fine; that he didn’t kill someone he loved. That he was fine. You would think being under the servitude of a mad fucking man would give you thick skin. Rodolphus scoffed to himself. It was his own fault for thinking he can create a future with someone
that his faction, that he was forced to join, hated; that everything was going to fine and dandy after the Dark Lord reign supreme over inferior creatures. It didn’t go through his head that Eliza fell under that category. Surely, the Dark Lord would allow him to love, right? He had foolishly thought that right before he was carted off to be Bellatrix’s husband.

He had remembered Eliza’s face when he told her that he was engaged for political means. He remembered making love to her the night before he got married. He remembered being drunk at his own wedding but being such a perfect pureblood scion, he acted like he was okay with the marriage but all through the night, even during the first the husband and wife dance, he thought about Eliza and Eliza only. He had almost puked when he had to share the bed with Bellatrix for the first time — he had to turn her over to avoid looking at the crazed bitch.

As he got nearer, he caught Antonin’s eyes who looked back at him impassively. He looked away from the knowing eyes of the Russian before settling for the worried ones of Hermione. He gave her a comforting smile before settling down beside her feet, feeling her eyes on him throughout the whole movement. “Do not worry, Hermione,” Rodolphus said, his voice normal, filled with teasing, learned from the years of being under control, “I was just simply thinking about Orias’s words about your… completion.”

Hermione blushed as she rolled her eyes. Eliza blushed easily as well — *stop*. Hermione is not Eliza…. She will never be Eliza. “Did you at least have fun hearing it?” she asked, looking at him expectantly.

“I am a man, of course. I am going to enjoy it.” He answered automatically, making her laugh. Her laughter was more bell-like compared to Eliza — *stop*. “Now that we burned your mother’s shit, what are we to do next?”

“I was actually trying to figure out what you guys will do in your spare time.”

As he stared at her thoughtful eyes, a cruel thought appeared in his head like a monster that had controlled him.

*You will never be like Eliza, Hermione. Never.*

Chapter End Notes
Turned out pretty sad, huh, but now we know why Rod is being like this.
Chapter Twenty One

Chapter Notes

Hey, guys! It's me, Charred.
I would like to apologize for such a late update. It seems like I have been apologizing a lot as of late. I got accepted into a nursing program and just began my first semester. I have so much online homework and in-class assignments that writing this story and my ABO story had taken a back seat. However, it is in the backseat, NOT FORGOTTEN. My updates will be really slow. I am so sorry in advance.

I wanted to beta this chapter but it took so long for me to finish it and I don't want to keep holding it off even though it would be lots better. If you have grievances of my late uploads, I am sorry. I know I have loyal readers here and I am disappointing them by being so slow. I will try to update as fast as I can but in all honesty, my nursing program comes first. I hope it doesn't offend you. I am not trying to.

Just remember, I love everyone who had taken the chance to read this story and I appreciate everyone for leaving a kudo, a comment, or neither at all. I don't mind. I just want you all to have fun.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter Twenty One

Rodolphus had lied.

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Hermione Granger is a girl who was in tune with her intuition and she knows when a person is lying to her. She watched with a critical eye as Rodolphus laughed at whatever Orias said, not paying attention to Antonin who was watching her. She knew that Rod was hiding something from her and she desperately wanted to know what — who — was holding him back. He did say that he would tell Hermione about his first love but when? She had already encroached in Orias's personal space without permission… and that was only about his mother.

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How would Rodolphus react if she were to put her nose in his personal business about his first love? The first person who Rod had opened up to, probably had lots of first times with… Hermione had to be careful around him. She also had to accept that maybe, just maybe, they would just stay friends. The book never said about loving the bond mates and she barely knew her men, let alone fall for them. But she knew… that it took her a while to come into terms that these men were her men.

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But that didn't mean it had to be "romantic" or "sexual". It could also mean friendship. So, Hermione will support Rodolphus as a friend until he seems her trustworthy of his secret and he could only do
that in his own power. At the same time, why should he tell her? What was she to him? Yeah, she brought him back to life but they barely know each other. Despite Abraxas's view of kissing, it was just that: kissing. You didn't have to spill whatever secrets you have just because you kissed them.

Hermione felt her shoulder being nudged. She brought her attention to Antonin who was looking at her with curiosity. "What are you thinking about?" He asked, waiting.

Hermione shrugged, thinking fast to cover her thoughts about Rodolphus. When a pressing thought rose up, she sat up straight. "Now that we got situated, what's next?"

"Next? Like about the future?" Antonin prodded and she nodded. He shrugged. "I don't imagine job opportunities are open to us ex-Death Eaters. At least, not very soon. I was thinking about hitting the Mulciber libraries for charm books. I am sure you have been told that I am quite proficient in charms, spellwork — so I am sure I am bound to find something for me to study. It is quite interesting creating spells from scratch because sometimes things do not go the way you want to."

Intrigued, Hermione looked at him hopefully. "Do you think I can sit through some of your sessions?" She asked, excitedly.

"It might be dangerous." Antonin warned and she shrugged, the idea already taking hold of her mind. "Alright. Maybe, I can teach you how to create a spell." She literally hopped in her seat at the prospect of learning more about magic. "But we will start from small steps."

Before she could respond back, Hermione felt someone leaned against her back. She looked over her shoulder to see it was Orion who looked curious. "Why are you so excited, Hermione?"

"Antonin might be able to teach me how to create spells! We were discussing what are our next steps now that we are situated. I was thinking about what you guys will do now. We were discussing what are our next steps now that we are situated. I was thinking about what you guys will do now."

"I was thinking about heading over to Lucius to inquire about our business." Abraxas offered, shrugging. "Maybe he will deem fit for me to join."

"You really think that Lucius will say no to you now that he knows about your truth? One thing I know about Malfoys that they have a strong sense of family." Hermione answered, seeing a spark of hope in Abraxas eyes. "If I were you, Abraxas, I would go. You and Orion had missed out on your
sons' lives."

“What about you?” Antonin asked, glancing at her. “Putting you under my tutelage sounds pretty amazing if I do say so myself... but it’s only temporary.”

“Potions Mastery.” She answered, nodding at the shocked expressions of the men. “I had asked Draco to put a word for me to his Master and I am just waiting for a response.”

“They are allowing women into this field?” Abraxas asked, looking impressed. Hermione nodded, smiling. “I remember when Severus got asked to be an apprentice when he was in his fifth year. I was already succumbing to the Dragon Pox.”

“Youngest Potions Master in the world.” Hermione added, feeling proud for some reason. “If it weren’t for his... surly personality, I am sure he would have lots of female students frivolous attention.”

Orias chuckled. “I think that is precisely why he had a surly attitude.”

"I bring out the reason of my astonishment because, in my time, there has been a rise of sexual harassment towards women so they had to advise the future female students to look for other callings.” Abraxas noted, gravely. Hermione gasped, horrified. "I believe things must have changed if Draco offered to study with him."

"I remember the news. Gruesome. The whole ordeal fed the belief that females aren't able to do further studies by being so 'appealing' to their male counterparts. Bunch of shites. It is just the men’s reasons to bring out their evil intentions.” Orion added, rolling his eyes. Hermione cringed at that. “I don’t think you should worry because Draco would be there.”

She eyed Orion. “You mean ‘I will be there’?” she asked, expectantly. Orion nodded, smiling while looking at Abraxas for help who seemingly was interested in the blades of grass. She simply let out a huff of laughter before standing up. "I am going to go to the library to find some Potions book to read. Antonin, you coming?"

The said person nodded his head, standing up as well. "Orias, don't go sniffing around Hermione's underthings while we are gone.” Antonin remarked casually, turning away from the group to walk back towards the house. Hermione paused at her movements.
“Wait, what?” Hermione asked, looking back towards Orias who in turn was glaring at the back of Antonin’s head. The sentence finally registered in her head before she narrowed her eyes at the offending man. “Orias!”

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“As much as I love them, I don’t go sniffing around it! I promise! Antonin just likes to create problems! Why would I sniff when I had the real thing yesterday?!” Orias immediately defending, causing Rodolphus to laugh uproariously. “We were having such a good conversation, too!”

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“I thought you would take this time to agree with Antonin and yet you are defending yourself…” Hermione trailed off, narrowing her eyes further in suspicion. Orias simply rolled his eyes and simply sat back down. “And you wouldn’t care if I found my panties in your room.”

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Orias shrugged. “You will find all your underwear all accounted for. Antonin, on the other hand, though… why do you think he brought it up and blame it on me when he is all but disappeared?” he said, raising his eyebrows. Hermione turned around to see that Orias was right, Antonin was gone. Had she been played? Was it actually Antonin who did the crime? Was there a crime? Were they pulling her leg? “Only underwear I have of yours is the one I took during our bonding, princess. Remember?”

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“Wait, you took her underwear?” Abraxas asked, shocked and… intrigued? Orias nodded, smugly. Abraxas turned to look at Hermione then nodded. “Nice.”

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Remembering, Hermione blushed, looking away embarrassed before turning a glare towards Orias. “I want it back, Orias!” she yelled, forgetting for a second about the awaiting Russian.

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Orias shook his head. “Nope. It is mine now. I claim ownership seeing that I removed it in the first place with your permission, of course. I do hope you remember.”

- 

Instead of admitting that he was right, Hermione turned around and walked away. A girl has her pride, right?

Antonin had already placed several books concerning charms in front of him when Hermione appeared at the doorway of the library, finally finding it after a few minutes of walking around aimlessly. Remembering the conversation in the backyard, she simply walked up to Antonin with her hands on her hips. He barely lifted his head to meet her eyes. “Yes, kotnyok?” he asked, expectantly.
“Orias said that it was you rooting around my underwear.” Hermione stated, staring at him.

Antonin smirked. “Why should I root through your intimates when it is right here in front of me?” he asked, his eyes flickering down to her junction before rising to meet her eyes, smugly. She gasped in surprise. She intended to control the conversation and he just snatched it out of her hands with such a brazen statement. She nodded sharply once then twisted in her heels to head towards the library, distinctly feeling eyes on her back. She heard him laugh which made her cheeks burn. How can he say things like that so freely?

Antonin: 1  
Hermione: -3

She magicked five relevant books on potions before settling down beside Antonin who made some room on his desk for her. Thanking him, she opened the first promising book, unrolled a parchment roll, removed a quill from its stand. The room was silent with the exception of quills scratching. This is what she needed. Something she knows, something to ground her. These last few days were so hectic with planning, exploring her sexuality that Hermione felt like she hadn't sat down and did something for her own. She was glad that Antonin didn't talk as he studied. She got so used to Ron's whinging and Harry's restlessness that she found a way to study with all the noise around her.

She peeked at Antonin through her lashes to study him as he researched. His face was furrowed, his lips moving with the words he read. His dark hair hung loosely around his face and she could see a few slivers of silver littered around it. He was intelligent, she knew that, and she wanted to know how his brain ticks with new information. Hermione looked away, not wanting to be caught staring, and her eyes settled back on the paragraph.

*Best time to harvest Nogat petals is under the new moon when their parental flowers’ leaves open up to reveal the young bud...*

But she couldn't read further as her eyes kept on going back to 'parental'. The word repeated itself in her head several times when it finally clicked in her head. A familiar sense of panic rose up in Hermione as she counted the days. The best way to count is by sadly with the men she slept with. Hermione's face colored at that thought. She counted on her hands... Draco, Antonin, Orion, Abraxas, Orias... *I have two days to figure out what to do or how to explain to my parents about this whole mess!*

“I can hear your lungs stop working. What's wrong?”
Antonin’s sharp and low voice cut through the haze of panic surrounding Hermione causing her to swallow her saliva before looking at him. “I have two more days to figure out what to say to parents. I have till Tuesday…”

"Just say the truth." Antonin responded and he held up his hand when Hermione opened her mouth, an obvious protest. "Listen to me. This is not something you can lie to your parents and hope it will wash over. They have to know the truth. They will not get it. They will be mad at you. But you would still be able to talk to them, be with them. If you lied to them, you would live a double life of being single in their eyes and being married in our eyes. What happens when they realize that you are actually married without you telling them? Even though I don’t know how that would happen. Maybe Rita Skeeter will go to interview your parents. Do you want them to find out that way?"

Hermione was silent in his speech, the growing dread in acknowledging that Antonin was right. “Start from the beginning. How you came upon the chest, how it got attached to you, what it entails, and how we came to be, kotenyok.”

“What if they hate me?” Hermione asked, weakly, tears coating her lashes. “I had to endure them ignoring me after I got their memories back for months. This will make them hate me for years!”

“You don’t know that. I would have done anything to get my own mother to talk to me but after she found that what I was during my first stint in Azkaban, she vowed to never speak to me ever again. After the… incident… in my home, my own mother told me that I became just like the men who haunted her dreams.”

Hermione knew that whatever incident he was talking about was the reason for him joining the Death Eaters. Would he be like Rodolphus and tell her to wait? Whatever the incident was, it had to be dark seeing what Antonin’s mother had said. “I will take your word for it. I’ll — I will do it.” Hermione finally responded, laying her head on his shoulder. He stilled before relaxing.

“I will tell you what happened after you tell your parents.” He stated, his voice somber and chin tucked to his chest. “I will tell you what happened. I am not like Rodolphus. I am not a coward.”

Hermione took a sharp breath in, sitting up straight to face the Russian. “Rodolphus is not a coward for withholding personal information! It is never written any book that each resurrected man has to be intimately involved with the resurrector. He can say or not say, it matters not to me.”

“No?” Antonin prodded, making Hermione hesitate. “That’s wild, really. I thought being bonded with you would have been really bad because of what we have been through but that is not the case. I found that I really like being bonded with you.”
Eyes widened in surprise, Hermione gaped at the honest words from Antonin. He, of all people, liked that he was bonded with her? “Are you sure about that? It’s only been five days and it is quite amazing to be—” Hermione began but stopped herself short when Antonin snorted in amusement.

“When Voldemort was pointing his wand at me, I accepted death. Shit, I have been struggling so much just to survive that dying was quite easy to be frank. I knew that with what I have done, it was straight Kiss for me after the Voldemort lost so I didn’t beg.” Antonin explained, looking back to his book he was studying. “Many people wished me dead and I am sure you had as well,” Hermione blushed, suddenly feeling guilty, which made him smirk, “which I wasn’t mad about. After being recruited to his regime, I knew I wasn’t going to be people’s favorite. So color me surprised when I woke up alive again, standing in the living room of the very girl I almost killed.

“I thought this was hell. I am going to spend in the room with you a girl who I regretted hurting. Then I get another shock of my proklyat life. That you felt uneasy in my presence but you had forgiven me because you think being dead was punishment enough for my crimes. I honestly thought you were foolish—”

“Hey!” Hermione protested, blushing even more. This was heart-to-heart she wasn’t expecting. For obvious reasons, Hermione had always thought Antonin to be cold-hearted, maniac, pining to kill her but this guy was really straightforward in what he feels but not an emotional kind of way — more like robotic kind of way.

“How could she forgive me like that? Then I offered to heal you and you just took it without going through my head, seeing if there was an ulterior motive. You had already put your trust in me and I couldn’t find myself to mock you for that. When I kissed you, I thought you would be afraid of me but you just straight up opened up for me. Then the whole night together in bed — it was so different. I got so used to people flinching from me that you being receptive to my touches was refreshing. So, I like being bonded to you.”

Throughout his whole speech, Hermione was flabbergasted. To hear what she was feeling straight from the man who used to hate her was quite frankly so alien, Hermione didn’t know what to do. She settled back down on her seat as Antonin avoided looking at her. This wasn’t a love confession. This was more of a confession from a man so starved for human touch that he willingly opened himself up to a person he barely knows.

Hermione cleared her throat. “I like being bonded with you, too.”

It was Antonin’s time to be surprised. “Interesting. I thought you would just tolerate my presence.” He replied, looking at the blushing, giggling girl beside him.
“I thought you would hate me for forcing you to bond with me even though I didn’t force anything.” Hermione said, raising her eyebrows at him. “I just think you are handling things wonderfully.”

Antonin smirked. “You thought I would go wild?” She nodded, guiltily. “I can see why. As I have said, I have no Dark Mark, I am walking around with no Dark Lord breathing down my neck… I am fine where I am.’

“But you are just as trapped with me as you were with Voldemort.” Hermione tried feebly to… what? Convince them that being bonded with her bad? Why was she so pressed to know what they are truly feeling? Did Hermione believe that they are just showing her they are comfortable but they really are not?

“Unless you begin ordering me around to make you the next Dark Lord, I am not trapped with you.” Antonin answered, “As you said, it’s only been five days and it takes longer than five days to get used to being alive again.”

“So, you will have no problem with me kissing you right now?” Hermione asked, boldly. Antonin’s eyes widened in surprise. “I mean, we don’t really need to. What if I get like an urge to kiss… would that be acceptable?” He did say that he found me delectable. “Surprisingly, I don’t find your presence at all intolerable. I thought I would… but I really don’t. Neither for Orias or Rodolphus.”

Antonin chuckled. “Then you can kiss me whenever. I am not stopping you.”

“I am not kissing you right now, though. I have got a problem to solve.” Hermione denied, shaking her head. She stopped herself from giggling at the disappointment look on Antonin’s face, still trying to figure out if this Antonin was really the same Antonin who scared her in her nightmares. An ex-Death Eater, a grown man, the most serious man she had ever met, sat pouting in front of her. However, she really likes to indulge herself. Hermione leaned closer to his face, his scent of spicy citrus filling her nose, and pressed a kiss on his lips.

Antonin immediately kissed back, opening his mouth a little to deepen the kiss. Before it became too wild, Hermione disengaged herself from him and sat back down to her usual place, her heart beating really fast at the intimate moment. She could still feel his lips on hers and she had to fight the urge to touch her lips with her fingers. I really do like kissing him.

Hermione took a deep breath, cracked her knuckles, removed a fresh parchment roll and re-inked her quill. “I will organize how I will explain to my parents. Startup slow …” Hermione mumbled to
herself, making Antonin shake his head to himself.

Draco had come over during dinner time. Orias complained that he should send a letter beforehand. “What if she and I were naked?” He had asked. Hermione sent a hex that made his nostril hair grow uncontrollably, making the rest of the men to laugh at his misfortune. Draco had made Rodolphus shift his chair down so he could sit next to Hermione. Draco flashed a dazzling smile at his best friend before throwing a wave to the rest of the group.

“How hungry?” Hermione asked, waving her hand over the laid out of food.

“Famished. I just returned from Master Bracci. I have discussed about you entering as his apprentice. There are three in total now.” Draco answered, grabbing a spoonful of mashed taters and gravy, a slice of prime rib, and roasted vegetables on his plate. “Antony, Keiser, and me, of course.”

Hermione nodded but nonetheless confused. “Why are you telling me this?”

“Because Master Bracci expects you to know about who works there and several potion histories before you talk to him.” Draco explained, slowly smiling as he watched the sentence register in Hermione’s head.

“Oh!” Hermione shouted, clapping her hand over her mouth. Draco began to smile full-on at Hermione as she hopped in her seat excitedly. “Are you serious, Draco?!”

He nodded. “It took a bit of Malfoy reasoning to make him accept an interview with you.”

“Like a bribe?” Hermione asked, horrified. Draco raised his hand to retaliate but she moved away, giggling. Straightening up, she beamed up at her best friend. “So, what do I have to learn? Review? What do I expect out of this interview? What potions will he be asking?”

Draco pulled out his wand and with a few flicks of his wand, his briefcase opened and a rolled parchment flew out of it. Catching it, Draco turned towards Hermione. “This contains all you need to know before the interview.”
“Thank you, Draco!” Hermione squealed happily before engulfing her best friend into a tight hug.

“Oof, Hermione, leave some of me behind for Daphne, will you?” Draco said, his voice strained as Hermione squeezed him too tight. Hermione let go of him and dropped the scroll right into her beaded bag. “So, what is going with the bonded life.”

“I showed Hermione that she can sing.” Orias piped up fast. Draco looked confused as Hermione colored in embarrassment. Before she could shoot off a hex, Abraxas did it for her and yelp of pain assuaged her soul. “Sorry!”

“I don’t want to know!” Draco yelled, putting his hand up, his cheeks reddening. Hermione glared at the tall man who simply winked at her. “But in seriousness, what’s up?”

“Well, they all planning what to do with their future, that’s all. I think Abraxas wants in on the family business. Orion wants to get back in Sirius’s life. Antonin is going to teach me how to create spells. Orias… is being Orias. I have no clue about Rodolphus.” Hermione summarized, pointing at each of the men as she talked. Draco looked at his grandfather with interest who simply nodded at him.

“I think that is manageable. Why don’t you visit father? He can catch you up on the logistics of the company. Despite our dirtied name, we are still pioneers when it comes to business and there are people who want to do business with us.” Draco said, looking down at his plate before shoveling scrambled eggs into his mouth. "Go for it, Abraxas."

Abraxas nodded. "I will leave after breakfast." He decided, sipping his tea. "I will ask Lucius to let me see the company ledgers and see where we are at."

As they all finished dinner, Hermione ran through her mind what she needed to prepare herself for the upcoming interview. She waved bye to the men, Draco deciding to stay behind to peruse the library for his next potion project. Once in her room, Hermione snapped off the wax seal on the rolled parchment and hastily unrolled it. She read through it, saying that her interview will be in a week’s time seeing that Master Bracci will be out of the country by tomorrow. She looked at the list of requirements when her eyes stopped at one particular item. A compass. The drawing tool kind, not the tool of direction.

Why would she need a muggle tool for potions?
Or was it muggle? Or it’s neither and simply is just a tool. “Didn’t I have one?” she mumbled out loud. There was a phase that she went through between the third and fourth year that she wanted to learn how to draw. After several tries and Hermione tried but it seems like there are some things that she can’t do. For one of the projects, a compass was needed. She remembered that she had stored it away in the attic to make room for the upcoming year’s book. She groaned out loud, knowing that it was another trip back to her parents’ house.

Seeing that there was no reason to delay, Hermione quickly pulled on some jeans and went to collect Antonin. “Want to come with me to my parents' house? I forgot something.” She asked hopefully to the man who was immersed in a book. He simply nodded before closing his book. Hermione watched him run his fingers through his hair before getting up. He looked at her before something behind her caught his attention. She turned around to see that it was Orion.

“Where are you going?” Orion asked, stepping away from the door so Hermione and Antonin can pass.

“I forgot something at my house. You want to come with us?” Hermione asked, looking at him expectantly. Orion nodded, smiling softly. “Hold my arm then. We will apparate directly to my backyard.”

“I am sure he knows how to get there. You should just want to hold his hand.” Antonin teased, causing Orion to laugh, blushing.

Hermione spluttered. “So what?!“ she cried out, defending herself. Antonin laughed at her behavior before weaving his arm around hers. She simply rolled her eyes before she felt Orion’s arm around her as he shuffled closer to her. “Ready?” They both nodded. She closed her eyes, visualized the backyard of her childhood home and spun the three of them out of Mulciber Manor.

Not too second later, Hermione, Orion, and Antonin landed in her backyard with a pop. Two-person apparation always leaves Hermione with a troubled stomach but she didn’t give it to much of a thought when she realized that the kitchen’s light was on. “Did I leave any lights on before leaving?” she asked out loud but got her answer when she saw the lights flicker as if two people passed the light source.

Was it a robbery in happening? Hermione immediately removed her wand, anger pulsing in waves throughout her body, her body priming itself to fight. The shadow flashed quickly and the backyard door was yanked open to reveal two people. She forgot to even aim her wand before the familiar brown curls caught her attention. She dropped her wand in shock as she gazed at the two people who gazed back at them in shock and anger. She felt Antonin freeze right next to her but she didn’t acknowledge it… couldn’t acknowledge it.
“Hermione, dear, if you would please explain to us why the house was dark when we had arrived and why your room is not there anymore?”

Chapter End Notes

It seems like this chapter is really short, too.

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