Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered
by smutty_claus

Summary

Luna is curious, and Hermione is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Notes

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See the end of the work for more notes

To: serpenscript
From: Your Secret Santa

Title: Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered
Author: Ginny___Weasley
Pairings: Lucius/Hermione, Draco/Hermione, Lucius/Draco/Hermione, and mentions of a few others.
Summary: Luna is curious, and Hermione is in the wrong place at the wrong time.
Rating: NC-17
Warnings: Non-con, BDSM, enslavement, violence/torture/disturbing content. No incest, despite what the pairings might imply.
Author notes: Huge, HUGE thanks to my beta, A, who was gracious enough to do me the
awesome favor of helping to make this story the best it could be. I don't know where I'd be without you. Thanks also to r_becca for her patience with me, and for her kindness toward me.

serpenscript, you requested a dark fic with plot, character development, and quite a few kinks that I worked very hard to incorporate into this gift, including those that don't need warnings. I truly hope you enjoy it. Happy holidays.

Archiving: Originally posted here.

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"That's the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard, and that includes Crumple-Horned Snorkacks, Resurrection Stones, and all the other rubbish I've heard this year," Hermione announces as she sits in the Ravenclaw common room.

The moment Harry told her Ravenclaws had to answer confusing and nearly non-answerable questions to enter the room, Hermione had been eager to try it; that bit of information hadn't been in Hogwarts, A History. Luna had been kind enough to lead her to the common room.

Luna smiles serenely and shakes her head. "No, Hermione, it's true. Daddy told me so."

"Oh, well if he told you..." Hermione pets Crookshanks. She remembers the last time Luna's father had insisted on something that wasn't, and it didn't have good results.

"It's here in this book he sent me," Luna goes on, oblivious to Hermione's sarcasm. She sits on the arm of Hermione's chair and holds the book in front of her. "See?"

Hermione doesn't so much as glance at the page. "Luna, there is no spell that allows anyone to change the past." The very idea is ludicrous. Hermione likes Luna, but this side of the Ravenclaw always bothers her. Hermione is a girl of knowledge, logic, and book smarts. Mr. Lovegood told her she is narrow minded, and perhaps she is, but she likes that about herself. She's practical.

Luna, however, is a girl of wisdom, and at times, a far too open mind. Practicality doesn't figure into her reasonings, and it often leads to great frustration, but only on Hermione's part; Luna is unflappable.

"It's not changing the past," Luna explains. "It just lets you see what might happen if the past was changed. Daddy says it's like a Pensieve for things that never happened. He says you can stop anytime you want."

It's Hermione's turn to shake her head. "That doesn't make sense."

"Sense is not an indicator of truth," Luna says calmly, taking the book back. "Nothing You-Know-Who did made sense, but it's true that he did it."

Hermione has no argument for that. Instead of responding, she looks around the room. It's full of a quiet she hasn't heard in the last week, since Harry had finally destroyed Voldemort. In the aftermath of the battle, there have been celebrations, cleaning up, grief, funerals, and general chaos. Hermione likes being secluded at Hogwarts while the Wizarding World settles. Most of those who bear grudges against Harry have left, taken out of school by their parents. Those who remain are quite polite, if not downright nice. It's a shocking, but welcome, change.
They get reports of what's happening in the outside world. Kingsley is settling into his new role, despite objections from a few factions. Death Eaters and their sympathizers are still at large. Some, like the Malfoys, have been captured, interrogated, and released because Narcissa colluded with Harry and spared his life, and neither she nor Lucius fought against Harry in the battle at Hogwarts. Others, like the Carrows, are in Azkaban. And yet others remain unaccounted for. Hermione doesn't think she would like being out there at a time such as this.

"I like your common room," Hermione says at last. "It's different from ours, but... Luna, what are you doing?"

Luna is walking a circle around the room, flicking her wand to light floating candles.

"I'm trying this spell," Luna answers. "Michael asked Cho what she thought would have happened if You-Know-Who won. She said she didn't know. I'm going to find out so I can tell her."

"I can tell you what would have happened," Hermione responds. "We'd all be dead."

"I think You-Know-Who would want to keep some of us around. It would be very lonely for him to be all by himself here, wouldn't it?"

Hermione doesn't even try to argue. She knows there's no point. Instead, she asks, "Why are you lighting candles? To cast a spell, you only have to flick your wand and say the incantation, unless it's a potion."

"This is different. Daddy says it has to be-"

"Are you sure he didn't make this spell up?"

Luna giggles. "No. My mum invented spells." Her already protuberant eyes get wider. "I wonder if she helped with this one. She died before I could find out what her last invention was."

"Oh." Hermione shifts in her seat. She doesn't know how to respond. After what feels like a long silence, she says, "Erm, Luna, how did your mum... I mean, how did she..."

"One of her spells backfired." Her tone is matter-of-fact.

"Oh," Hermione repeats. "I'm sorry."

"It's not your fault. And I'll see her again."

"Maybe," Hermione starts speculatively, then stops. After what she'd said, Luna will think she's making fun of her, instead of trying to comfort her. Then again, Luna never seems to notice when people make fun of her. "Maybe you can use that spell to see what would've happened if she'd lived."

Luna smiles. "Maybe. When I'm home with Daddy, we can try it. He'd be very happy to see her again." She looks back at her book. "Here's the incantation. Would you like to say it?"

"Oh, no," Hermione says, biting back the skepticism in her voice. "You do the honors."

Luna's smile widens, and she begins reading from the book. The words are in no language Hermione has ever heard, which only hardens her conviction that this is utter nonsense. She lets Luna continue, however, hoping that when it fails, she'll have to accept that Hermione is right. It had taken Harry and Ron a long time to learn that Hermione knows what she's talking about. She can wait a few more moments for Luna.
As Luna speaks, a soft wind begins to blow. Hermione frowns and looks toward the windows. They're all closed. The wind picks up, and Crookshanks meows and curls in closer to Hermione. Luna's hair is blown about her face, obscuring it from Hermione's vision, but Luna doesn't seem to notice. She continues her chant. The candles go out and the room begins to shake. Having never experienced an earthquake before, Hermione grabs on to her squirming cat and huddles deeper into her large chair. She doesn't know what's happening, and she doubts Luna has any idea what she's really reading; clearly it isn't simply a spell to see the world differently.

"Luna!" she calls, but her voice is lost in the din of the now-howling wind. "Luna, stop it."

Luna looks beyond excited and Hermione isn't surprised. So much of what Mr. Lovegood says is such unadulterated rubbish, Luna must be thrilled to find something that works; that she doesn't have to hunt for to prove it exists as she says it does. Hermione, however, is nowhere near thrilled. She's terrified. She can't imagine what Luna is conjuring up, and has no intention of waiting to find out.

Crookshanks is digging his claws into her arm, trying to run away. Hermione holds him tighter, and gets to her feet. The tower is rattling as though it might break free of the rest of the castle, and Hermione wobbles while Crookshanks hisses and scratches at her. She approaches Luna, afraid she'll lose her balance and fall over.

"Luna!" she shouts, but the other girl doesn't hear her.

Hermione walks closer until she's near enough to grab Luna's arm. As she does, something white-hot shoots up her arm, her vision goes fuzzy, and all is silent.

The next moment, Hermione is aware of a dull throb in her head. Her mouth is dry and her muscles are sore. She opens her eyes and finds she is in a torch-lit room, lying upon the cold, stone floor. She sits up, supporting herself with one arm. Her vision swims, her stomach twists, and she's sure she's going to be sick. A moment later, the feeling of sickness is gone, and she's able to get a good look at her surroundings.

She's in a windowless room with one door in the far corner, and one opposite it. There's a large four-poster bed that takes up most of the space, a fireplace, and a wardrobe against the wall. Most disconcerting of all is a small coffin, hidden in the shadows beside the bed. Stomach still turning, she stands up and proceeds toward it. Lifting the lid, she finds it's empty, with darkened patches on the wood as though it had been stained.

Swallowing, she shuts it and walks toward the door in the corner. On the other side, she finds a bathroom equipped with a sink, tub, toilet and mirror. The sink is black with a gold rim. Dragons twist upward from the surface, their mouths open to allow water through. The tub is large; four of the tubs at the Weasleys' could fit inside this one. There's a showerhead. It is also a dragon, though this one twists from the wall. This room is also windowless. She closes the door and feels a cold draft of panic settle in.

Trying to remain calm, she tries the other door. It's locked. She pulls her wand out of her robes and says, "Alohomora." It doesn't budge. Her stomach begins to writhe like a dying snake, but she's unwilling to panic. She's faced more trying circumstances than a strange room with a locked door.

"Luna?" she calls. "Are you here?" She receives no answer. "Crookshanks?" she tries.

There's a small, muffled meow in response. Getting to her knees, she checks under the bed. Crookshanks is backed against the wall, hissing, his hair standing on end. Hermione knows if she reaches for him now, she'll get a severely scratched hand, arm, and possibly face for her trouble.
"Luna? Where are you? What is this place?" The silence makes her fear worse. She closes her eyes and tries to Apparate, but it's as if there's a wall all around her; she can't leave. Her heart hammers in her chest and she finds she's having trouble breathing. Something has clearly gone wrong. "Oh, Merlin, what's happened?" she asks of no one. "That _stupid_ spell... I told her... LUNA!"

"I have told you not to shriek in my house," says a cold, drawling voice.

Hermione whirls around, and her stomach sinks into her feet. Standing just feet away from her, a calm smile on his face, is Lucius Malfoy. She steps back, stumbling over her feet in the haste to retreat. Malfoy's smile turns into a smirk. Then, as he takes in her attire, his eyes narrow.

"Where did you get that?" he asks.

Hermione looks down at her nightgown, then back up at him. "Are you kidding? This isn't the time for... Don't you want to know what's happened?" Then, the shock on her brain wears off enough for her to process what he'd said. "Did... Did you say we're in your house?"

"Answer me," he says, stepping closer, his voice hard. "Who gave that to you?"

"Wh...Why am I here?" she asks, her insides turning to ice. What has Luna done?

Malfoy pulls out his wand and points it at Hermione in one smooth motion. "This is the last time I'm going to ask."

Hermione's heart misses a beat, and her first reaction is to draw her own wand. Malfoy's eyes widen in unmistakable shock, and his wand wavers. Hermione thinks back to what Luna said about the spell; that they could stop it any time they wanted. She decides now is a great time to do that.

"_Finite Incantatum._"

Nothing happens.

Panic seizing her chest, Hermione repeats, "_Finite Incantatum. FINITE INCANTATUM._"

Malfoy waves his own wand, and hisses, "_Expelliarmus._"

As Hermione's wand flies out of her hand, she curses herself for not thinking of it first. It reminds her of first year, when she forgot that she didn't need wood to make a flame and save her friends.

Malfoy points his wand in the direction Hermione's disappeared. "_Accio wand._"

It soars into his hand, and he examines it. After a moment, he reaches inside his robes and produces one identical to it, inspecting them side-by-side. Hermione's heart jolts, and she unconsciously steps forward, her hand reaching for her wand. Malfoy is unconcerned; before Hermione makes much progress, he waves his wand at her, and she's lifted from the floor and sent backwards, colliding with the stone wall beside the locked door. She barely has time register what's happened when he waves her wand. A white light zigzags from it, hitting the wall and leaving a smoldering black scorch mark inches from where Hermione has fallen. He does the same with the other wand, with identical results.

She rises to her feet, not daring to approach Malfoy again. "L...Listen," she says with as much steel in her voice as she can manage. "You can't hurt me. The Ministry pardoned you for being a Death Eater. Don't go getting yourself into trouble now. They'll lock you in Azkaban again for sure."
Malfoy laughs. "The Dark Lord will not care for the injuries of a Mudblood."

Hermione frowns. Malfoy clearly must have lost his mind when Voldemort lost. He’d spent so long supporting Voldemort, and then trapped in this same house with the murderous sociopath that when his side lost, Malfoy's hold on reality disappeared.

Unless... Her head spins as she tries to come to grips with the other possibility. But no. Luna's spell didn't work. That's all rubbish and fantasy. It's impossible to change the past. "Maybe you didn't hear," she says, moving away from the wall, "but Harry killed your Dark Lord. We all saw it."

Malfoy quirks an eyebrow. Holding up Hermione's wand, he demands, "Where did you get this?"

"It's mine," she answers. Gesturing to the one he took from his robes, she asks, "Where did you get that copy?"

He beings walking toward her. Though Hermione wants nothing less than to be near him, she stands her ground, her chin raised defiantly.

"I removed this from your possession," Malfoy states. "Yet somehow-"

"That's my wand," Hermione interrupts. "It's never been away from me. I was certainly never stupid enough to lose it in the battle at Hogwarts. And you didn't fight, so you can't have gotten it from me."

When Malfoy speaks, his tone drips condescension. "I expected you to go the way of the Longbottoms and that fool Lockhart, pet. I had no idea it would happen so fast. The Dark Lord disposed of your pathetic excuse for a hero, and without him, you easily fell to us."

His expression hardens. "Now, you will answer me."

Hermione swallows. She's seen insanity before, and it's never manifested itself this way. As much as Hermione wants to deny it, Luna's spell seems to have worked. She's in a world where Voldemort has won, and she's trapped in Malfoy's house, at his mercy. How else can she explain her sudden appearance in this foreign room, Malfoy's possession of her wand, and his complete lack of worry for what might happen to him?

Fear such as she hasn't known since she and Harry escaped Voldemort at Godric's Hollow twists her insides like a hand of fire, trying to pull them out through her mouth.

Even with her fear, fury flares inside her chest for the Longbottoms' sake. She doesn't mind Malfoy insulting her; she'd dealt with it for years with his son and it doesn't affect her anymore. However, she does mind him insulting Neville's parents, making light of what the Death Eaters did to them, belittling their sacrifice.

Impulse battles common sense. Any logical person would not provoke an armed Death Eater, and Hermione is nothing but logical. But her anger outweighs her fear, and she will not allow Malfoy to cow her. She's a Gryffindor; she won't be afraid. Malfoy can't get away with it.

"Keep your mouth shut about Neville's parents, Malfoy. They're better people than you will ever be."

The words are barely out of her mouth when she feels pain such as she's never experienced before. It latches on to every part of her being, curling around her skin, muscles and nerves, and pulling them apart. It's like fire inside her body, burning her organs and turning her insides black. Only when the Cruciatus is lifted does she realize she's fallen to her knees, screaming for it to stop.
When she opens her eyes, she sees that Malfoy has moved closer; he's standing feet from her, his wand pointing at her chest. She looks up at him, unable to articulate all the things she wants to call him. She survived more rounds of the Unforgivable with Bellatrix, but she has no intention of repeating that experience.

"I confess, I'm disappointed. Draco told me you were intelligent." He adjusts the aim of his wand so that it points at her head. "I thought teaching you once would be enough."

A retort flies into her mind, and she opens her mouth to voice it. Then, thinking better of it, she closes her mouth and says nothing.

"On your feet," he orders.

She hesitates, but does as he commands, using the wall behind her for support. With his wand, Malfoy gestures toward the locked door.

She glances at the door, then back at him. Something tells her she doesn't want to know what's on the other side. "No. I want to know what happened to everyone else."

Malfoy does not grant her a response. He repeats the motion with his wand, and Hermione weighs her options. She can stand her ground and suffer the Cruciatus again, or she can do as he says. Perhaps there's a way out through that door. She decides it's better not to make him angry again. Without taking her eyes from him, she inches toward the door, keeping one hand against the wall to guide her. When she feels the handle, she stops.

Keeping his wand trained on Hermione, Malfoy approaches the door as well. Hermione's heart feels as though it's stopped beating, and she can't breathe, but Malfoy doesn't notice. When he is only a few feet away, he points his wand at the door. A white light glows behind it and it swings open.

The smell of burnt flesh, human waste, blood and vomit assaults Hermione's nostrils, making her gag. She coughs and fights the urge to be sick, turning away to try and block out the stench. Malfoy grabs her wrist, pulling her around and into the room. Seeing what's there only magnifies her need to be sick.

Inside, it's spacious, but appears cramped because of the many devices placed throughout the room. Farthest away from where they stand, near three closed doors, is a wooden contraption with ropes and gears that make it look like it expands and contracts with a series of pulleys. Beside that is a chair with a triangular point protruding a foot into the air. It, too, has ropes hanging above it. Next to that is a cage suspended from the ceiling, with metal rods stretching from one side to the other. There's more, but she stops looking, afraid of what she will see next. However, she can't ignore those things closest to her: chains hanging from the ceiling, and a short table with red stains and four shackles - one at each corner - just in front of her.

Malfoy is still holding onto her wrist, and when she tries to back out of the room, he drags her forward, toward the hanging chains. Hermione twists her arm, trying to break his grip, but he only grabs tighter. His touch makes her skin crawl.

"Let me go," she orders, trying unsuccessfully to dig her heels into the smooth floor. With another pull, she says, "Get off me."

Malfoy is unperturbed, keeping his hold on her as he pulls one of her wrists upward, securing it to one of the chains. Hermione throws all her weight in one direction in the hope of breaking free. When she fails, she swears, sliding the fingers of her free hand underneath the metal and twisting
her wrist to worm it free.

Malfoy wraps his fingers around Hermione's free hand, and Hermione fights harder. When her chained hand doesn't stretch enough to allow her to fight with both hands, she bites Malfoy's arm. Malfoy jerks his arm free, inspecting the damage. It's minimal; Hermione didn't even break skin. He takes hold of her wrist again, and, despite her struggles, secures it inside the other chain. Hermione throws her weight backwards, but the chains have no give. They pull her muscles taut, allowing no slack whatsoever.

"If you don't let me go," Hermione begins, but even before she finishes, she knows it's an idle threat. What can she possibly do? She tries a different tack. "You're not happy that Voldemort won. You're still under his control. What if... What if you could live your own life and not worry about him anymore? If you let me go, I can help you." It sounds stupid, she knows. But she also knows she needs to find Luna and get out of this place. If sounding stupid is the price, she can pay it.

"Not happy that the Dark Lord won?" He looks amused. "Not happy that the world is finally becoming as it should be? Not happy that the Muggle waste that-"

"Wouldn't you rather not be afraid of him anymore?" Hermione interrupts. "And I know you don't want Draco to suffer, either. At the battle, you weren't fighting for Voldemort. You were looking for your son. Wouldn't you rather that you and Draco and Narcissa could-"

A sharp blow across her face stops her speech. Her right cheek and part of her lip are stinging, and she can taste the coppery tinge of her own blood. She tries to bring her hand down to touch her face, but the chains aren't long enough.

"I have warned you, have I not, about uttering that name?" His voice is low, and his eyes are glinting in a way she hasn't seen since third year when Sirius tried to kill Pettigrew. It's a mix of anger and something feral that pushes Hermione's heart into her throat and chills her spine.

"Wh-Which name? Voldemort? Draco? Or Nar-"

His hand closes around her throat, painful, but still allowing her to breathe. "Are you so naive as to think that causing yourself more pain makes you stronger? Braver? Is this a pitiful attempt to make yourself into a martyr?"

"I...I don't know what you're talking about, Malfoy."

His hold tightens before he releases her. "Then I will refresh your memory."

He walks behind her, and Hermione cranes her neck as best as she can. She watches as Malfoy walks toward a black cabinet she hadn't noticed before. He opens it, peruses the contents, and then makes his selection. She can't get a good look at it as he walks back to her, but she can see enough to tell it's a whip. It whistles as it sways with Malfoy's movement. She tries so frantically to pull free that if she saw anyone else doing the same, she'd have thought they were having a seizure. If Malfoy notices, he doesn't remark. Instead, he places his wand at her neck, just above the top of her nightgown. He runs it along her back, and the fabric of her clothing rends in two. There's a pause in which he doesn't move, but Hermione continues her fitful struggles.

"Healing charms," he says, one hand caressing her back. "And..." Malfoy presses the wand against her knickers. "How?"

Her arms are getting tired, but she persists in trying to get free. She's panting as she asks, "How... How what?"
"Very well," Malfoy says, sliding his wand around the waistband of Hermione's knickers, and then down between her buttocks. It tears as easily as the nightgown did. As he pulls the article away from her body, he says, "I will teach you not to play these Muggle games."

The harshness of his voice makes her stomach twist. "Listen to me," she says, her voice shaking despite her efforts to keep it steady. "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you're asking me, Malfoy."

"First," he begins as he steps away from her, "a lesson in respect."

Before Hermione can say anything else, she hears the whistle of the whip and feels it slice into her skin, from her left shoulder blade to her right hip. She chokes on her scream as what can only be fire licks the trail left by the whip. Malfoy doesn't strike again until the pain completely recedes, and when he does, it's in exactly the same spot. The flames dig deeper, swirling inside her skin, scorching her. This time, Hermione's scream echoes in the room, and she remembers the agony she endured under Bellatrix's wand. The third blow comes, the fire burns muscle from bone, and her cry sounds like nothing that should ever come out of a human being.

The tears have run to her collarbone before she realizes she's crying. She wipes her face on her arm and tries to stop. It's impossible not to cry, but she doesn't want to give Malfoy the satisfaction.

She hears him make a strange, choked sound. It's as if he's trying to stop a moan from escaping.

The fourth and fifth blows are so bad, she thinks she might be sick all over herself. The sixth causes darkness to push at the edges of her eyes, threatening blackout.

"Stop," she pleads. "Please, stop."

When most of the pain is gone, and all that's left is a stinging agony, Malfoy speaks. "Who am I?"

Hermione doesn't think she heard him correctly; she decides the pain is making her hear things. He can't have asked what she thinks he did. Lucius Malfoy isn't having an identity crisis. It doesn't make sense.

Sense is not an indicator of truth.

She forces Luna's voice out of her head; this is no time to think how Luna thinks. She doesn't know what answer Malfoy is looking for, and even though she's in pain such as she has rarely experienced before, she's angry. She coughs, and something thick forces its way into her mouth. She spits it out, refusing to look closely at it, and says the first thing that comes to her mind.

"You're Lucius Malfoy, a kind man who is just about to let his prisoner go."

The whip strikes again, this time in a diagonal line beside the first. She swears this time it pierces deeper, and hurts far more. She screams, and it occurs to her that perhaps she's spent too much time around Harry and Ron; she was never such a smartass before she met them, and this is why; it only led to bad things.

She anticipates the next strike, and twists as much as her restraints will allow, but Malfoy still slices, unerring, in the same spot as the previous blow.

"I'm sorry," Hermione cries. Her nose is clogging and her breathing is becoming labored. "Stop it. Please, stop it. It hurts. I'm sorry. Stop."

He lands four more strikes before he pauses again. "Who am I?"
She isn't sure what answer he's looking for. She wishes he would just tell her what he wants to hear. Since he isn't forthcoming with that information, she searches her memory of him and tries to think of what he wants.

"You... You're..."

"What are you?" he asks.

*What am I?* she repeats in her head. And it occurs to her what Malfoy wants her to say. "I..." She coughs, the words catching in her throat. She remembers how she'd said them proudly not long before, but that was to her friends; it was different now. She thinks she hears Malfoy readying the whip again and decides that the pain of saying what he wants is nothing to the physical pain. "A Mudblood," she bites out. "I'm a Mudblood."

"Yes. And what else?"

She thinks hard, keen to avoid another strike. Her contact with Lucius is almost non-existent, and she resorts to thinking of things Draco has said, even to her brief encounter with Narcissa. She comes up empty; Draco rarely called her anything more creative than Mudblood, and nothing Narcissa had ever said seems relevant now.

She takes too long to respond, and Malfoy whips her again in a diagonal line beside the second. It feels worse on unmarked skin. She can't help the screams that issue from her as she feels the fiery lash of the whip tear open her skin, ripping the tissue inside apart with each blow.

"Oh, *GodStopPleaseNoMakeitstop.*" She's all too aware that she's babbling, that he probably doesn't even understand her, but she doesn't care. It hurts too much.

She's stopped counting how many times the whip hits her. She isn't even sure she feels it every time, or perhaps she's feeling it even when nothing is touching her, such is the pain. A thin layer of sweat has formed from her fighting, and she's losing the energy to continue. When Malfoy stops this time, she doesn't stop crying for it to end for several moments. When she's silent, Malfoy speaks.

"What are you? To whom do you belong?"

The pain makes Hermione's brain fuzzy, but she still works out what he means. It's obvious now what Malfoy has been getting at. He called her his pet when he first entered the room, he has her wand, he talks of giving her orders for what she isn't to do in his house, and she's clearly a prisoner. She realizes she didn't process it before because she never thought Voldemort would take prisoners once he was the clear victor of the war. She'd always assumed that Voldemort's victory meant her immediate death.

Desperate to avoid more pain, Hermione answers, "You." She can always fight him on it later.

"Who am I?"

She asks herself what Malfoy would want her to call him. He's an arrogant, pure-blood racist and, judging from his son's utter lack of creativity, mundane. She comes up with two options and tries to quickly narrow it down. He'd have given her something obvious, something that made him feel superior while, in his mind at least, degrading her. There's only one choice.

"You're... You're..." It's like offal in her mouth, but she says it anyway. "You're my master."

"Who?" he repeats.
She doesn't know if he really didn't hear her, and she hesitates before answering. "You... You're...my...master," she finishes, making a face.

"Again, without hesitation, or I'll beat the defiance out of you. Who am I? What are you?"

Hermione's heart twists and she answers, "You're my master. I'm your..." What does he want her to say? Pet? Slave? "Pet," she finishes. The pause while she thought of which term to use lasted only a fraction of a second, but to Hermione it feels longer. She hopes Malfoy doesn't think so as well.

"How are you to address me?"

This seems redundant, but she answers, "As... my master?"

The whip slices into her skin again. Over her cry, Malfoy demands, "Without hesitation. How are you to address me?"

"As my master," she says quickly. "You're my master. I'm your pet." She hopes it's enough to satisfy him.

There's another pause. Then, "How did you heal yourself?"

Hermione frowns, still twisting in her chains as the pain continues to throb in her back. "Heal myself?"

"You choose to continue these games, then. Very well."

Panic overwhelms Hermione as she screams. "NO! Wait. Please. Just... I didn't."

"The scars did not simply fade away. My whip would have seen to that."

"I... didn't," she repeats. It's the best she can do, short of telling him the truth. And that will surely earn her another beating for being a smartass in Malfoy's eyes.

It's not a good enough excuse for Malfoy.

When the whip cuts into her skin this time, it's across her arse in a straight line that makes her jump in her attempt to get away from it. It stings as much as the strikes on her back, and this time, Malfoy doesn't let her rest between blows. This time, they come in rapid succession so that she hardly has time to move in one direction before he strikes from another. She's begging him to stop, but she's unaware of which words she's using. All she knows is the pain and the desire to stop it.

Malfoy stops, and when he speaks, Hermione can hear him panting from the exertion. "The truth," he orders, his voice hard.

"It is the truth," Hermione insists between great gasps for air. "How...How could I... have?" She coughs again, spits up the phlegm that's formed in her mouth and throat, and takes another rasping breath through her mouth. "You didn't give me anything to make a healing potion with."

"Who healed you?" he asks.

She tries to think quickly. None of her friends would do; she knew that if she couldn't get out, they couldn't get in, and there's no reason Malfoy would believe they'd healed her wounds and then left her there. None of her enemies would do, either; they wouldn't help her. She has little option, but she still can't tell Malfoy how she came to be there.

The silence goes on too long for Malfoy. Hermione hears him drop the whip, but feels no sense of
relief. There's another silence, then footsteps as Malfoy moves closer. He walks around to stand in front of her, the silver glint of a knife or dagger in his hand.

"Perhaps," he begins, sliding the blade under the top of her nightgown, "this will loosen your tongue." He cuts the fabric away from her body, and it falls to the floor in pieces. With his free hand, he grabs her breast, holding it still while he brings the knife up to the nipple, poising it to slice.

"Malf..." She catches herself as something gleams in Malfoy's eyes. 
"Master, I mean. Please." Her words begin to come in a rush. "I'm telling you the truth. I don't know how I'm healed, or where these clothes came from. I just woke up and... and they were in the wardrobe. Someone... Someone must have brought them in while I was asleep."

Malfoy smirks. "Do you think me foolish?"

"No. No, of course not. But unless I did it without a potion or a wand, neither of which I have, how could I have healed myself? We can't conjure clothing, so even with a wand, I couldn't have done it."

Malfoy looks thoughtful for a moment. He stares at her, then relinquishes his hold. With a wave of his wand, the chains shorten, stretching Hermione even tauter, forcing her to her toes and magnifying the pain in her back and buttocks. Without a word, he leaves, exiting through one of the doors that doesn't lead to her room.

She doesn't know how long he leaves her there. All she knows is that the muscles in her arms, back and legs are aching worse than all the Cruciatus curses she's ever experienced combined. She can't move; it makes the pain worse. She can't remain still; it makes the burning even greater. Her cheeks are damp from the many times she's cried, stopped, and started again. A thin layer of sweat covers her body.

One of the doors across the room opens and Malfoy comes back. She notices he's changed his clothes, as though he's planning to go to a formal engagement. She expects him to say something, to hurt her; she doesn't know why he left before and she isn't confident her torture is over. When he waves his wand and releases her from the chains, she's so surprised, she loses her balance and falls to her knees.

Her arms and legs burn worse in response to the sudden change of position and blood flow. She can feel the pulse in her back as the blood pumps through it. She's barely collided with the ground before Malfoy pulls her to her feet by her hair.

Pushing her in the direction of her room, he says, "Into the bath."

Hermione welcomes the idea of a bath. She's filthy, and she expects the hot water will soothe her muscles. Though she's unsteady on her feet, she wobbles back through the room and into the bathroom. She doesn't hesitate to walk to the tub and turn the water on, hoping she's picked the correct direction for hot.

She turns to look in the mirror, wanting to know just how much damage has been done. Her back is covered in livid red, purple and blue bruises. She had been certain that fire was burning away her flesh, but it's still there. Damaged, but there. Her arse is red and welted. She looks away, back toward the tub, and finds Malfoy standing behind her.

"What are you doing?" she asks, bringing one arm up to cover herself.
He looks unamused at her question. "Into the bath," he repeats.

Her mind is so fuzzy, and she's so tired, she's sure she's misheard him. He can't expect her to bathe while he just watches. She stares at him, but makes no move to get into the bath.

Malfoy's eyes narrow. "If I have to direct you once more-"

"I'm getting in," Hermione interrupts, deciding she heard him right, after all.

Malfoy does not move, and she inches past him, careful not to turn her back or do more than glance at the tub to be sure she doesn't fall into it. Sticking her hand underneath the tap, she finds the water is icy cold. She turns it the other way and replaces her hand under the stream to judge when it's warm enough. After several moments, she feels no change. Glancing at Malfoy, she decides she doesn't have time to wait it out. She looks down, trying to figure out how to stopper it; she sees nothing that would allow her to do so.

As if sensing her intent, Malfoy says, "A shower. I'll not have filth clinging to you more than it already does." As soon as he finishes speaking, the water stops flowing from the tap and begins pouring from the showerhead.

Hermione closes her eyes and wills herself not to rise to the bait. Her situation is bad enough without making it worse. She opens her eyes again and climbs into the tub.

The water feels like it's freezing her lungs, causing her breath to come in shallow gasps. She backs away from the spray, but, realizing that it will provoke Malfoy, she stands back under the flow. Trying to control her breathing is difficult; she can do it without gasping as though she's dying, but she shakes and can only hyperventilate. She turns her back to the water, hoping that the cold might reduce the welts and bruises. Instead, it stings and burns, and she moves away again, unwilling to experience more pain.

It's enough to propel Malfoy into action. He closes the distance between himself and the tub, grabs Hermione by the back of the neck, and drags her back under the water, letting her go before it touches him so he remains dry. Hermione skids backwards, colliding with the wall. When she tries to push herself out of reach of the water, she finds she can't. Malfoy's wand is drawn and pointed at her, and no matter how hard she fights, she can't get away from the water.

It pounds against her back, buttocks and legs. It flows over the top of her head, down her front. She's still struggling to breathe, and she can only move her head just enough out of the water to gasp in another lungful before the deluge covers her again.

After several moments, she feels something hard and rough scratching at her. She can only see so far when she opens her eyes, but she can tell it's a washcloth, or perhaps a brush of some sort. Because she can see no one around her except Malfoy, who is still outside the tub, she knows it's operating on magic. It's scrubbing her, ridding her of the sweat and tears. Yet she doesn't feel any cleaner. When it rubs her back and arse, it hurts so much that she yelps, but it doesn't stop until Malfoy decides she's clean enough and moves on to her legs.

When it scrubs at her chest, she tries to grab it and make it stop, but she can't move her arms. She's forced to stand still while it cleans her breasts, stomach, and then pushes between her legs. She's never felt so violated, and she isn't sure if she's crying again, or if it's just the water still flowing over her head. However, when Malfoy stops and the water is turned off, she isn't crying. She climbs out of the tub quickly, as though staying means she has to endure it again.

Hermione is shivering, though the air is warmer than the water was. Her breathing is still erratic,
but becoming normal. Malfoy picks up a towel, but makes no move indicating he's going to give it to Hermione. She decides she has to walk over and get it, probably Malfoy's attempt at a power game. Having no desire to stand naked and wet in what she knows will be a futile attempt to get him to move first, she walks over to him and reaches for the towel.

He pulls it out of her reach. "Remain still."

He begins to dry her off, and Hermione knows it isn't an act of kindness. It would have been kind to leave her to clean up in peace, to give her some privacy. Malfoy is trying to violate her further, and she knows it. And, she suspects, he knows that she knows it.

Hermione grabs his arm. "Wait. Please."

He locks eyes with her. "Let go."

Hermione tightens her grip on the towel, and then reluctantly releases it. It's better to submit than to be tortured. She has to bide her time until she can figure out how to get back to her world, and dying now won't help that goal.

Malfoy continues his task, moving the towel slowly over Hermione's body. At her back, he's gentle, careful to avoid aggravating her injuries. When he reaches her breasts, he rubs her nipples with more force than is necessary. She clenches her fists to stop herself from grabbing him again; she's certain he won't let her defiance pass a second time.

She tries to distract herself with other things. Where is Luna? Can she get them back home? Malfoy had two identical wands, one of which had belonged to her. How'd he get the first one? He was surprised that Hermione had clothing and showed no signs of his previous punishment. What happened to the Hermione he thought he had captured? Could she now be in Hermione's world, just as confused as she is? She wonders if Malfoy would tell her where the Luna of his reality is.

"Spread your legs."

Hermione shakes herself out of her reverie. "What? Oh, no," she says, her heart jolting. "Let me do it. Please."

"I won't tell you again."

She wants to say that's good, and that it meant he would stop touching her, but she's learned her lesson about mouthing off to him. A giant lump has formed in her throat. She tries to swallow it down, but her mouth is dry and won't cooperate. She weighs her options and decides she'd rather not face the whip or one of the devices she saw in that room. And she figures that even if he was to torture her again, in the end, he'll clean her up again and she'll be right back where she is now. If she survives. Biting her lower lip until it hurts, she spreads her legs.

When Malfoy places the towel there, she tenses and nearly shuts her legs. He rubs the rough surface over her cunt, watching her face as he does so. She looks back at him, staring him down, unwilling to show shame for what he is doing to her. He doesn't stop even after she's dry, and she can feel him applying pressure on her clit through the towel. She swallows, bites her lip harder, but still doesn't look away. After several seconds, Malfoy moves on.

"Wait for me in the other room," he says when he finishes.

For a moment, Hermione doesn't move. Then, she pushes past him and enters her room. Crookshanks is nowhere in sight, and she feels a pang of concern for her cat. He doesn't know what's happening, but hopefully knows better than to show himself to Malfoy. Or, perhaps he's just
asleep, unaware that anything is wrong. She's just about to look under the bed and check when Malfoy enters.

Wordlessly, Malfoy crosses to the wardrobe and pulls the doors open. He selects something from inside and gives it to her. It's a corset, blue with silver brocade. There are laces that run the length of the back, and it looks too small for her.

Malfoy is clearly expecting her to put it on. Though she doesn't want to, Hermione reasons that it will at least provide her with some modesty and slips into it. Her judgment was right; before it's even laced up, it's too tight on her.

"Turn around."

"I'm not wearing this," she states. "You must have something more appropriate."

Malfoy observes her for a moment, then says, "I don't believe I want to keep using the same spell. I seem to recall Severus teaching us one of his own devising." He looks as though he's trying to remember. "Ah, yes. The Sectumsempra curse."

Hermione's insides turn to water. She remembers what Harry told her it did to Draco and, even in the hands of someone who might be able to control it, it doesn't sound appealing. "Oh, Merlin. No. No. I'm sorry." She turns her back to him, but watches him over her shoulder.

He looks pleased. "You've heard of it, pet. That's good. You won't forget, then, what damage I can inflict upon you." He closes the distance between them. "Face forward."

Hands clenched into fists, Hermione does as she's told, bracing herself for what might come next. She feels the laces on her back as they tighten, securing the corset to her. It worries the welts there, but it's nothing as bad as she was expecting. As the corset grows more and more snug, she finds that her breathing is restricted. She's unable to expand her chest to inhale normally, and she's forced to suck in all the air she can through her nose and mouth. It gets tighter and the injuries on her back begin to protest, burning against the rough material being forced against them.

When it stops, she waits a few seconds to be sure it won't continue. She hears Malfoy's footsteps retreating, and decides he's done. It's only then that she looks at herself.

Her breasts are pushed up and together, rising above the top of the corset. Only her nipples are completely concealed. Hermione gets the feeling that if she exhales too much, they might pop out. It doesn't fall low enough to cover her as she had hoped.

Malfoy's footsteps indicate he's returning, and she stops fidgeting; somehow she knows he'll have a problem with that. Both hands come around and rest against her neck. For a moment, she thinks he's trying to strangle her, but instead, she feels something thin and cold on her skin. A second later, his hands disappear to the other side of her neck and something clicks into place.

Unable to stop herself, Hermione reaches up to see what it is. It feels like a collar she might put on Crookshanks to keep fleas off. She turns back to face Malfoy.

"I won't wear this," she says. "I'm not an animal."

"I'm afraid you have no say in the matter. You will wear it because I want it to be so."

"No, I won't." She reaches behind her and tries to find the clasp. To her dismay, all she feels is the thin what she assumes is metal. It's smooth, with no latches or discernable way of removing it. Slipping her fingers between it and her skin, she tries to pull it off. When it doesn't work, she
swears. "Take it off. You have no right to-"

"Right?" He raises an eyebrow. "I have every right, pet. You belong to me."

"No, I..." She pauses, realizing that line of attack won't work and would probably earn her another whipping. Or worse. She decides to appeal to the only thing she knows Malfoy cares about; purity of blood and keeping impurities away from him. "Why would you even want me? I'm a Mudblood, remember? I'm sure Narcissa doesn't want me in your home."

Malfoy brings his wand up and lowers it again in a slashing motion. Hermione cries out as a cut opens on her cheek, a thin spray of blood splashing on her face and neck.

"If you say her name again, pet, I will remove your tongue."

Hermione cradles her injury. It isn't deep, but it is bleeding. Heat rises to her face, and she can feel blood pulsing beneath the wound. She refuses to let it distract her; after all she's been through over the years, the small cut is nothing. She doesn't understand why Malfoy is reacting to Narcissa's name that way, but she refuses to lose this opportunity. "Draco doesn't want it, either."

"It is not your concern what my son does and does not want. Now, remain still."

He grabs on to her arm, and before she can try to pull away, she feels the familiar uncomfortable sensation of Apparation overwhelm her. When the pressure is released, she sees they are in Hogsmeade, though it has transformed since her last visit. She blinks a few times as her eyes adjust to the sudden bright light. Locked in those windowless rooms, she had no idea what time of day it was.

It is no longer deserted, nor is it crawling with Death Eater guards. People are bustling in and out of shops, which are mostly the same as when she was a student at Hogwarts. Zonko's, Honeydukes, the Hog's Head, The Three Broomsticks and Scrivenshaft's are all still there. However, there are other shops now. Shops that look like they belong in Knockturn Alley. She hasn't time to get a good look at any names before Malfoy is pulling her inside The Three Broomsticks.

The place that had been the gathering place for so many Hogwarts students is beyond recognition now. It used to be a warm, welcoming place, but now it, too, resembles an establishment Hermione would expect to see in Knockturn Alley. It is full of people she recognizes as Death Eaters and Death Eater sympathizers, and others she doesn't recognize at all. The tables are all pressed against the walls, and the windows are covered in dirt.

When she sees how crowded the pub is, Hermione tries to hide herself behind Malfoy, but no one gives her a second look as he leads her to a table in the far corner. As she passes through the room, she realizes why. There are at least a dozen others dressed in more revealing clothing than she, though she only knows a few of them.

Seamus Finnigan is kneeling on all fours in front of McNair, a large ball gag in his mouth. His legs are spread to the point that he looks barely able to support himself. Something that looks like a tail is hanging from his arse. It's the only thing he has on. McNair's feet rest on Seamus' back, and each time the Death Eater moves, Seamus wobbles, his soft cock swaying with each movement.

Hermione turns her head away in disgust and spots another familiar face. Cho Chang is with a female Death Eater Hermione has never seen before. Cho is dressed in only knickers, her hands bound tightly behind her back so that her breasts are thrust forward. She sits on her captor's lap while the woman nonchalantly fondles one of Cho's breasts as she talks to the three people with her at her table. Tears run down Cho's cheeks, and she's saying something, but Hermione isn't near
enough to hear it. Whatever it is makes the four people laugh, and Cho becomes more distraught.

Malfoy sits in a chair with his back to the wall, joining Crabbe Sr., Goyle Sr., Greyback, Travers, and, to Hermione's horror, Draco. She hovers, unsure of what she's supposed to do, and unwilling to take punishment in front of Draco. It's enough that she's been humiliated this day. She doesn't want to make it worse by being tortured or worse in front of her old rival.

"Pity I couldn't have her," Greyback comments, eyeing Hermione with a predatory look. She stares back at him, unwilling to look away and let him think she's afraid. His gaze drifts downward and Hermione inches away, toward Lucius. "She's got a rash."

Hermione frowns as Draco snickers. It takes her a moment to realize Greyback is talking about the results of the whipping.

"Honestly, Fenrir," Travers says, "it's a miracle that marble you call a brain doesn't roll right out of your head." Clearly he's figured out what the welts are.

"She does," Greyback insists. "Look." He reaches for Hermione's waist, and Hermione gasps and pulls away, nearly falling over Lucius in her haste to get away from Greyback. She pushes herself back to standing and tries to blend in with the wall in a way similar to how Harry said Merope behaved in Bob Ogden's memory.

"You will keep your half-breed hands away from my property," Lucius says. To Hermione, he adds, "On your knees, pet."

She looks around at the people at the table. Only Draco seems amused. He watches with a sick glee as Hermione sinks down, careful not to rest her weight on her arse; it's still sore.

"Nice, tender piece of flesh the Dark Lord granted you," Greyback comments. "Wish I could get my hands on her."

A wave of nausea washes over Hermione. As Greyback's insinuations from the night he and other Snatchers captured her, Harry, and Ron come back to her, she bites out, "Don't you mean filthy, disgusting paws?"

A general chuckle of appreciation issues from all but Lucius. He grants Hermione the merest half-glance, but it's not enough to allow her to read his reaction.

"You want to teach your girl better manners, Malfoy," Greyback grunts.

"You're one to talk," Hermione shoots, unable to stop herself. "Drooling all over me like you keep doing. Do you think that's polite?"

"Silence," Lucius says. "Pet, you will hold your tongue in the presence of your superiors. Greyback, keep your carnal desires to yourself. Now," he says, turning to Travers, "what is this about?"

"The Dark Lord wants to spread his campaign, now he's got this territory under his control," Travers explains.

"So he said the last time he called us," Lucius remarks.

"Yes," Travers agrees. "And of course he will need a few of his most faithful to convince those who need it."
"I've volunteered, Father," Draco puts in.

"And let me guess," Lucius interrupts. "Greyback has offered his rather brutal services in hopes of finally earning a Mark."

"I may be brutal," Greyback cuts in, "but at least I didn't lose the Potter brat in the Ministry."

"That's true," Lucius agrees, his voice calm. "You had him captured and bound, and he still managed to elude you. A far more humiliating defeat by far." He turns back to Travers. "Crabbe and Goyle here are going along to make up for their son's failures, I assume?"

"And Draco is going to make up for his father," Greyback argues.

Hermione is listening, trying to make herself as aware of what Voldemort is planning as possible. However, when she sees a flash of red hair and a familiar face in the crowd, she feels a twist of anxiety severe enough to distract her. She glances at the men at the table. Lucius and Greyback are engaged in a debate over who is the greater disappointment. Deciding they won't notice her absence, she crawls away from the table slowly, moving first one knee and then, when no one calls her back, the other. She continues until she feels it's safe enough to stand up, and then she follows one of her favorite Weasleys into the loo.

Ginny is wearing an outfit different from anyone else's in the pub. Hermione isn't exactly sure what it is. It's a sheer white. It looks longer than her typical shirts, with a low cut neck. Were it not for the cut, she would think it was an old shirt. If it were longer, she might say it's a dress. But as it is, she can't give it a definition. It falls to her upper thighs, but when Ginny moves, it threatens to expose her modesty. Her skin is visible through the fabric, but not enough to get a clear view of her body. The most anyone can see are flashes of Ginny's milky-white skin tone.

Her friend stands with her head bowed, eyes closed, gripping the rim of a sink. She looks as if she's about to be sick.

"Ginny?" Hermione says softly.

Ginny's eyes fly open and she spins around. Upon seeing Hermione, she relaxes. "Hermione. It's good to see you."

Hermione smiles. "Oh, you have no idea. What's going on?"

Ginny gives her a puzzled expression. "What do you mean?"

"What is this?" She gestures around the loo. "I mean, this place. This isn't how it was supposed to be."

"Tell me about it." Ginny crosses her arms, leaning against the sink. "I never thought Voldemort would win. I mean, I thought it. I just never expected it. And Rodolphus is just as much of a slimy bastard as I thought he would be. I can't believe I was forced to marry that-"

"'Forced to marry'?” Hermione interrupts, incredulous. "What are you talking about?"

Ginny looks even more confused. "Are you feeling okay? Or as okay as you can given the Malfoy situation."

"Ginny," Hermione says, walking a few steps closer to her friend. "I need you to tell me everything that's happened since the battle. What changed... I mean... happened... What happened that Voldemort won?"
Now, Ginny frowns. "What are you doing? Why would you ask me to relive all that?"

"Because this isn't the way it happened. We didn't lose. But then Luna cast a spell her father told her about and now-"

"So wait," Ginny says, holding up a hand. "Are you trying to say that Luna made this happen? Luna is... She's different from the rest of us, but she doesn't have the power to-"

"Ginny, please," Hermione begs. "Tell me everything and I promise I'll do the same. Please, hurry. Malfoy's going to notice I'm gone soon."

Ginny considers her for a moment. Then, she takes a deep breath and says, "Voldemort gave us an ultimatum. He gave us one hour to send Harry out and bury the dead. If Harry didn't go, he was going to come in himself. I was helping bring in the dead and injured. Fred..." She swallows hard, tears glistening in her eyes. "We lost Fred... Most of the rest of the family was with him. Nobody saw... But then he was probably under that damn invisibility cloak. Neville said Harry told him that he needed to kill Nagini, but he swears Harry said he wasn't going to turn himself over to Voldemort."

Hermione nods to show she's listening. So far, this matches what she already knows.

"Harry lied," Ginny goes on. He went into the forest without telling anyone. Voldemort killed him. He made Hagrid carry Harry back, told us all that Harry was trying to run away, but no one believed that. We all know Harry would never be such a coward. Voldemort got rid of the Houses at Hogwarts. It's all Slytherin now. After that, there was a lot of chaos. Neville stood up to him and killed Nagini. There was a massive battle. You, me and Luna were fighting Bellatrix when Mum came around and killed her."

Ginny pauses. There is a tear sliding down her cheek now.

"Voldemort was furious. He tried to kill Mum, but Harry blocked his curse. He'd actually survived the killing curse. Again. I don't know how he kept doing that. Or why he couldn't do it one last time." She looks away for a moment, then says, "He and Voldemort had a big battle in the Great Hall. Well, a big talk where they walked circles around each other. In the end, they cast a spell at the same time, and Harry was dead."

When Ginny doesn't seem like she's going to continue, Hermione asks, "How are you married to Rodolphus?"

"After it was all over," Ginny says softly, a tear sliding down her cheek. "After Harry died, and Voldemort and his Death Eaters had rounded up everyone who hadn't managed to get away... Voldemort killed Mum for what she did to Bellatrix. But Rodolphus is a Death Eater who has been faithful to him, and Bellatrix had never given him an heir and he wants one so badly. To prove his virility, you know. He wouldn't have a half-blood. He wanted a pure-blood. And since my mum killed his wife, and because I was her only daughter, Voldemort thought it would be a fit repayment to give me to Rodolphus."

"Oh, Ginny," Hermione says, a pang of sympathy and pity welling in her. "I'm so sorry."

"It was Rodolphus' choice to marry me. He said he wouldn't have his heirs born to a slave. I fought him, but I didn't have a choice. Voldemort runs the Ministry now. There aren't any laws on my side. And if I didn't, he would kill Dad."

She looks at Ginny's clothing. "But, if you're not a slave, why are you wearing that outfit?"
"Rodolphus doesn't think I'm as good a bride as Bellatrix. I am a blood-traitor, after all. It's his way of trying to make me feel inferior while still making others treat me as an equal because, in his eyes, the way they treat me reflects on him. He's pathetic enough to think I let what I wear decide my self-worth."

Hermione doesn't want to know the answer to her next question, but she needs to. "And everyone else?"

"If by that you mean our friends, it isn't much better for them. Neville's gran was taken. It took four Death Eaters to do it, but... They say they'll kill her if Neville doesn't do what Voldemort wants, but Neville says his gran told him not to worry about her and to do what's right no matter the cost. He's on the run, one of the few of us who managed to escape. But he's not hiding. He took his cue from Dumbledore. He's trying to build a resistance to Voldemort outside of Britain. We can't communicate much, obviously, but we've still got those Galleons you made. Rodolphus doesn't know about mine, so I've been able to keep in touch."

Hermione feels a rush of pride at that news. Not everyone has been beaten back. And for Neville, of all people, to be the leader of the resistance against the darkest wizard ever to walk the earth makes her proud to know him, to have been his friend back when he cowered at the sight of mean professors. It's laughable now, to think he was ever afraid of Snape. Now, when he's standing up to sadistic Death Eater professors. Now, when he's standing up to Voldemort. He's come a long way, she realizes.

"Draco has Luna," Ginny continues. "I don't think he wanted her. In fact, I think she unsettles him, she's so ethereal and he's really not. But, according to the law, he owns her."

"Does he live with Lucius?"

"No, he lives in London somewhere. Luna is usually with him."

"Then why isn't she with him now?"

She shrugs. "I don't know. Draco doesn't exactly keep me informed of what's going on in his house. And Luna hasn't used the Galleons for a while. I think Draco may have realized she had it and taken it from her. I can't be sure, though."

"Or else she doesn't know to use them. If she came here by accident like I did, she won't know that she can reach you through them, will she?"

"What are you-"

"What about everyone else? Are we all just prisoners or outlaws now?"

"No. Not all. Voldemort wanted to punish those closest to Harry: Neville, Luna, you, me, my family. All pure-blooms and half-blooms are free, as long as they don't have a close connection to Harry and don't oppose Voldemort. Those that don't fit both of those criteria are either sent to Azkaban, or a Death Eater gets them. Most of the Muggle-borns are dead or in Azkaban. You're one of the rare exceptions."

"But why? I was one of Harry's best friends. Why would Voldemort spare me?"

"Because Lucius asked him to."

The bottom falls out of Hermione's stomach. "Why in Gryffindor's name would he do that?"
Ginny eyes her. "What is this, Hermione? Why are you acting like you don't know all this?"

"Ginny—"

"No." She shakes her head. "Not until you explain yourself."

Hermione doesn't have time to argue. As quickly as she can, she explains her story, starting from Voldemort's death and going right up until this moment. "And then," she finishes to an open-mouthed Ginny, "Malfoy made me put this corset on, snapped this collar around my neck, and brought me here. He was arguing with Greyback when I snuck away to find you."

Ginny stares at her in silence. She opens her mouth, closes it, opens it again, and shuts it once more. Then, she says, "I've heard of people going crazy in captivity before, but—"

"I'm not crazy. Listen, who's more logical than I am? Who's less likely to believe this rubbish than I am? I swear to you, it happened just like I told you. And I can get us back there, but I need to know where I am now so I can fight against it."

"What do you mean you can get us back there? The way you tell it, only you, Crookshanks, and Luna came through."

"I don't know anything for sure. She might have changed the entire world. She might have sucked us into an alternate dimension. It might be that we're here and different versions of us - the ones that belong in this world - are in our world now. I have to talk to Luna and get her to fix this. But before I can get to her, I have to know what I'm up against."

Ginny shakes her head in disbelief. "You sound just like her, talking about all this far-fetched stuff like it's real." She sighs. "But so what if it isn't? I want out of here as much as you do. How can I help?"

"You can start by finishing the story. Why did Malfoy save me?"

Ginny sighs. "After Voldemort won, a few of his followers decided to take immediate action rather than wait for his orders. Like I said, it was really chaotic, people were running everywhere. The Malfoys were actually running away, out of the Great Hall, like they were afraid or something. But, I guess it makes sense now. You said Harry said Narcissa said he was dead when he wasn't, right?"

"Yeah. But what's that got to do with Malfoy saving—"

"Well, they were running away, right past us. One of the Death Eaters saw you and he must have recognized you because he aimed the killing curse right at you. You saw it coming and ducked. It hit Narcissa instead."

Hermione gasped. "But then why would Malfoy save me? Wouldn't he want me dead?"

"He asked Voldemort to leave your punishment to him. Voldemort wanted to kill you, but Malfoy eventually convinced him to do what he wanted."

"And that must be why he loses his temper if I say her name. He blames me for her death."

"Exactly. In his mind, you killed her."

Hermione feels inappropriate humor at the situation. Usually, she's the one explaining things to everyone else. It's strangely funny to have the tables turned.
"After Rodolphus got me and Malfoy got you," Ginny goes on, "all the Death Eaters started making requests, promising they could punish their captives much better than Azkaban could. Voldemort granted some, denied others. And since people have realized they have a shot at legally owning their enemies, some pure-bloods and half-bloods have joined Voldemort's ranks, doing whatever he tells them to in hopes of getting a prize."

"That's sick." All humor is gone.

"It works, though. Most pure-bloods and half-bloods stay out of his way because they don't want to end up like us. A few, like Neville, still oppose him, so if they get captured, they can be offered to those Death Eaters who are doing a good job. But so few of his enemies are still in Britain that human prizes are rare. So the Death Eaters work even harder to please him and... You can just imagine what that means for the world."

Her stomach twists in anxiousness. She has to know about Ron. "What about the rest of your family? What happened to Ron?"

"I don't know. I wasn't there when Voldemort decided his fate, and Rodolphus won't tell me."

Hermione's throat closes, and she can't breathe. Was Ron... No, she won't think it.

"Bill and Charlie are gone. They're helping with the resistance. I haven't heard from them. Percy and George were given to Death Eaters. I don't even want to think about what's happening to them."

"Do you ever see them?"

"Only if they're out with their owners. I can't see them on my own, though."

"And Hogwarts?"

"School for the Dark Arts, now. It's a Death Eater training camp."

Hermione's heart sinks. She expected as much, but it is still horrible to hear.

"So what are you going do? How are you going to fix it?"

"I need Luna to fix it. One of those Galleons to keep in contact with the rest of you wouldn't hurt. But I'm sure I don't have mine anymore."

They fall into silence for one long moment. Then, Ginny looks as if she's been inspired by a sudden idea. "George has his Galleon. I bet he's got Fred's too. If we could get that one-"

"But how? George isn't stupid enough to carry it around with him, and I can't just waltz into a Death Eater's house and have a look around."

"No, but I can. George was given to Dolohov. He's friends with Rodolphus. The next time Rodolphus visits, I can insist on going along."

"Do you usually?"

"No. Why would I want to be around those people? But he's very concerned with his image these days. I can use that against him. Tell him it would be bad if I never went along because it would look like I don't support him. I don't, but that's another matter."

"I'll be certain to inform Rodolphus of your unhappiness."
Malfoy's voice sends a cold chill down Hermione's spine. She had neither seen nor heard him enter. How long had he been listening?

"I can do that just fine on my own," Ginny answers. "How long have you been eavesdropping?"

Malfoy smiles. "I think it's time you returned to your husband."

"Don't order me around, Malfoy. You have no authority over me. I'm your equal, remember?"

"A Malfoy and a Weasley will never be equals."

"For once, I agree with you," Ginny shoots. "And yes, that was an insult. If Draco is any clue, you Malfoys are slower than a concussed troll."

Malfoy's hand looks like it's itching to grab his wand. "You want to be careful what you say."

"Or what?" she challenges. "You'll curse me? Try it. I still have my wand. And I don't think you want to make an enemy out of Rodolphus by attacking me."

They stare each other down, like dogs over territory neither is willing to cede. It is Malfoy who blinks first.

"Come, pet. We're leaving."

"Don't call Hermione that. She has a name."

"What I do and don't do with my property is none of your concern."

"If you want her to do something, use her proper name and ask. You're not better than she is, you coward."

"Coward," Malfoy repeats, as though it's a full sentence.

"Yes. Picking on someone half your age, not even being brave enough to arm them when you use curses against them. You're pathetic. I'd bet anything that once you got free of Voldemort, Narcissa would have left you anyway. Anyone with as much pride as she had would have been ashamed of you."

This time, Malfoy does grab his wand. Hermione rushes to stand between them, her back to Ginny. "Don't."

"Don't bother, Hermione," Ginny says. "I'm not afraid of him."

The door to the loo swings open and Cho enters, followed by the Death Eater Hermione had seen her with earlier. Hermione decides she's one of the new ones Ginny told her about.

"What's this?" the woman asks. She looks at Malfoy. "I think you're in the wrong one, Lucius."

"Yes," Malfoy agrees, regaining his cool exterior. He pockets his wand and grabs Hermione's arm. "We're leaving."

"Let me go," Hermione says, twisting her arm to loosen his grip. "Don't touch me."

The woman eyes Hermione in a way that makes Hermione think of Greyback. "I don't think I've met her before. Ever considered sharing? Or a trade?" She gestures at Cho, whose eyes are bloodshot. "This one here likes to cry. I know how you enjoy that."
"Are all of you Death Eaters so perverted?" Ginny demands.

"Aren't you one?" the woman asks.

Ginny laughs. "Not in this world or any other. I'd never be that weak."

"How can you be married to one and not be one?"

Malfoy is clearly growing bored. He tightens his hold on Hermione, who is still struggling to get free, and begins to pull her away.

"Don't touch me, Malfoy," Hermione repeats. She punches him once in the stomach before he catches her arm. A moment later, the familiar pull of Apparation whisks her away.

They land back in her bedroom in Malfoy's Manor. She's still struggling with him, determined to get free. Now that she knows what's happened, now that she's no longer lost and alone in an unfamiliar world, she feels some of her old confidence returning. It was always based on knowing everything, on being the best. When it was taken from her, she was wrong footed. Now she has weapons with which to fight back. Ginny is on her side, and, as part of what Luna said comes back to her, Hermione knows what Luna did wrong. She's sure she can fix it.

"Let me go," she screams. "Get your hands off me!"

They continue to wrestle; her to get away, him to gain control. After a few moments, she falls, landing face-first at the foot of the bed. It's sturdy beneath her, but gives a little when she lands. She feels Malfoy settle his weight on her back as he wrenches her right arm behind her back, pinning the left to the bed. He's panting from the effort of trying to fight her.

"I think," he whispers near her ear, "it's long past time I truly show you your place."

"What does that mean?" Hermione demands, trying to buck him off.

"You belong to me, pet. You have nothing that isn't mine. If I wish to touch you, I will. And if I wish to take you, I will do that as well."

It's like ice in Hermione's stomach. She tries even harder to buck him off, but he's too heavy. The fabric of the corset scratches her back, and the tightness of it constricts her breathing too much to allow her to fight much longer. She continues trying to free herself, but with less strength.

Malfoy brings both of Hermione's arms above her head, holding her wrists down with only one of his hands. Hermione can feel the corset unlacing, feel herself breathing in deeper and deeper breaths.

"Stop it," she says, renewing her struggles. "What would Narcissa say?"

He doesn't respond. As the corset separates from her body, he releases her arms, tangles his fingers in her hair, and moves off of her, to one side. She tries to scramble away, but succeeds only in making her hair feel as if it's being pulled from the follicle. Malfoy pulls her toward the head of the bed, and she uses both hands to try and loosen his grip. Instead, he tightens it, pushing her forward until she's nearly against the headboard. Only then does he release her.

Hermione swings one arm around, elbowing him in the face. He groans and covers his nose, and she takes her chance to get away. Before she's gone a foot, however, he catches her, wrapping his arm around her middle and pushing her to her back. She kicks out at him, simultaneously trying to grab his neck. He evades her kick, but she secures her hands around his throat and starts to squeeze.
He brings his hands up to try and loosen her grip, but she squeezes tighter and says, "Not so fun on this end, is it?"

Malfoy releases her, letting his hand travel along her side, coming to rest at her breast. Instinctively, Hermione brings her hands down to protect herself. She realizes a second too late that it is a mistake. Malfoy wastes no time in pinning her right wrist to the right post on the bed. Though she continues to kick and swing her left arm, he produces his wand and casts a spell, binding her hand in place. She waves her free arm around, trying to make it difficult for him to repeat the action, but he catches it and binds it to the left post.

Hermione swears. "Let me go. What do you think Narcissa would think of this?" She knows she's risking another whipping, but prefers that to the thought of rape.

Still Malfoy doesn't rise to the bait. Instead of losing his temper, he says, "What would the Weasley boy think, I wonder. I imagine it was one of his fondest wishes to see you displayed like this." Running his hand along her thigh, he continues to muse. "Or have you already parted your legs for him, pet? Already given up your virtue to the first eager cock to show interest?"

"Shut up," Hermione bites out, shutting her legs as tightly as she can, crossing them at the ankle. "Just keep your mouth shut."

"No matter," Malfoy says, positioning himself at the foot of the bed, near her feet. "I shall know soon enough."

Malfoy takes hold of Hermione's ankles and begins to lift them apart. She tries to keep them firmly together, but he separates them, spreading her legs wide enough to create a space for him, and settling in before she can close her legs again.

"Don't you touch me, Malfoy. I mean it." She tries to worm her hands free of the magical, invisible bonds, but has no luck.

He smirks. "I hardly find you threatening, pet."

His head dips lower, and Hermione twists her waist, trying to angle it away from Malfoy. She has no idea what he's doing, and isn't eager to find out. He places his hands on her hips, pressing her down onto the bed and making it impossible for her to move away. A moment later, she feels his lips against her cunt. She gasps and redoubles her efforts to get away, but Malfoy is unperturbed. She can feel his tongue pushing into her, licking inside her.

"Stop it," she commands, tears of frustration and humiliation forming in her eyes. She tries to close her legs, but it has little effect.

Malfoy's hands move from her waist, and she can feel them on her inner thighs, pulling her open as he licks deeper. His tongue moves slowly, as though he's trying to memorize the inside of her cunt by the touch of his mouth alone. When he withdraws, she thinks he's honoring her demand, but instead of stopping, he licks a slow path up to her clit and takes it into his mouth.

Hermione begins to writhe in a futile effort to free herself. She expects him to bite her, but he only sucks. The rhythm is so gentle and persistent that she feels her clit swelling.

"Stop it," she repeats, still trying to push away. "Please, stop."

His sucking becomes firmer and faster, and she finds her hips are moving of their own volition, rolling up into his mouth. She pulls at the bindings, hoping to slide up and away from him, but it does no good; the more she fights, the more intently he sucks. Reluctantly, Hermione stops.
fighting.

Malfoy continues his oral attentions for another few moments before pulling back. When he looks at her face, he smirks, and it reminds Hermione of the many times his son had also done that.

"Tears," he says. "I find them quite arousing."

"You would, you sick bastard," she bites out.

He licks at one of the stray tears, then kisses her jaw gently in a line up to her ear. Whispering, he says, "The Weasel cried more, when I had him."

Hermione's stomach sinks, and for a moment, she forgets to fight to get away. "You... You're lying. Voldemort wouldn't..."

Malfoy traces one finger down her chest, over her stomach, resting it at the entrance to her cunt. "The Boy Who Lived's faithful sidekick," he muses. "A much sought-after prize. A much used prize. There's not a Death Eater in the Dark Lord's service who hasn't tasted the boy." He licks the shell of her ear. "Shall I tell you about it?"

"Shut up, Malfoy. Just shut your filthy, disgusting mouth."

"He fought. At first." Malfoy pushes his finger into her cunt and begins to thrust it inside her. "Just like you. He kicked and punched, bit and scratched, tried to run away." As he inserts another finger, he continues, "I bound him on all fours to a table. His freckled arse, taken so many times already, displayed to me, like he was begging for it."

"Stop it," Hermione demands, turning her head away. She doesn't want to hear about Ron's rape. "Stop."

"He swore," Malfoy goes on, adding a third finger. It starts to hurt, but Hermione refuses to let that be known. "He cursed, struggled, threatened. He was proud that he was unbroken."

"Malfoy," Hermione starts. He spreads his fingers inside her, and she squirms, trying to find a position that makes the pain recede. "Just do what you're going to do. Don't tell me about Ron. Please."

Fingers still pumping inside her, Malfoy uses his thumb to stroke Hermione's clit. He presses his mouth to her breast, the tip of his tongue lapping quickly at her nipple in a way that reminds Hermione of a cat. It's as if her nipple and cunt are connected; she feels her hips rise to meet Malfoy's rhythm, and when he angles his fingers up and pushes them deeper, she's horrified to hear a moan escape her lips.

"Such a willing whore," Malfoy says.

"Willing? Are most of your willing partners tied up and begging you to stop, Malfoy?"

"None beg as deliciously as the Weasel," he tells her. "I used my fingers to open him, used his own spit to lubricate him. So many cocks buried in his arse, and still he was so tight. When he finally realized no amount of squirming or swearing was going to spare him, in fact, would only arouse me further, he took to bargaining. As though there's anything of more value than a pureblood arse-"

"Better than Narcissa?" Hermione cuts across him, hoping that if she can anger or distract him, she can make him stop. "A blood-traitor's arse is better than your wife? The woman you're supposed to have loved? Before she was stupid enough to betray Voldemort, I mean."
Malfy adds a fourth finger and opens them wide inside her, increasing the pressure of his thumb on her clit. She whimpers and curls her legs up in reflex, but cannot close them. He presses his lips to her ear, and she turns her head away.

Keeping his mouth on her ear, he whispers, "He offered up everything he thought I would want. Unfortunately, he had no material possessions that were more appealing than the physical pleasure he could provide. I pushed my fingers in deep, until he began to keen and push back against me. His cock began to twitch, and I coaxed it along, stroking it with the gentlest of caresses. It rose in mere moments. He began to cry, swearing and cursing and demanding I leave him alone. I could see the shame in his eyes."

"It... It would take... more than... you... to make Ron... ashamed," Hermione says. The pain from his ministrations hasn't disappeared, and each time he angles just so, she can feel a rush of something that feels wonderful that she's determined to hide.

Malfy nips at Hermione's earlobe. "When I took him, it was slow. I pushed my cock into his arse, and he pleaded for me to stop." Adopting a voice that was supposed to be a mockery of Ron's, he went on, "Malfoy, stopohgodnostopSTOPplease. I'll do anything. ANYTHING." He kisses her neck and regains his usual tone. "I didn't fuck him outright. When I thrust against the spot that made him keen and moan, I stopped. Instead, I rocked against it, stroking his cock the whole time. It was hard and weeping, and still he tried to deny his arousal."

"With you... it isn't... difficult," Hermione bites out.

Impersonating Ron again, Malfy says, "Don't touch me, you sick fuck. I hate you. I hate you so much. It's a spell, that's what you've done. You know it'd never happen without one." Returning to his normal voice, he continues, "Just another Gryffindor slut, too proud to admit what his enemy could bring him to. When I did move, it was just as slow, just as methodical. In." He pushes his fingers in more deeply. "And out." He pulls his hand almost completely out. "In and out, over and over again, until he was sobbing. Until he begged me."

She waits before answering, wanting to be sure she doesn't let loose another moan, or give him any reason to taunt her. "Ron would... never... beg you for mercy."

"You misunderstand, pet," Malfy says, a grin playing at his lips. "He didn't beg me to stop. He begged me to fuck him faster, to let him climax." In his imitation of Ron's voice, he adds, "Please, God. Malfoy, let me come. Please, I can't take it anymore."

At last, he removes his hand. Hermione's cunt is sore, her clit throbbing, but she can feel the pain receding. With his clean hand, he turns her face toward him. Before Hermione can fully process what he's doing, he kisses her.

She protests, but her words are lost on Malfoy's mouth. She tries to turn her head away, but he's holding her steady, trying to force his tongue into her mouth. At first, she resists. Then, as an idea happens upon her, she relaxes her jaw and allows his prying tongue in. As soon as it is, she bites down as hard and fast as she can. Malfoy's cry is muffled, and she bites down harder. When she can taste his blood, she lets up; she has no desire to bite clean through and find that half of his tongue is in her mouth.

Malfy sits up and spits onto the floor. Hermione can't see just how much blood there is, but Malfy is looking angrier than she's yet seen. She expects him to strike her, to hurt her in some way. He doesn't. Instead, Malfy straddles her, the rough fabric of his clothes scratching her skin. She can feel his erection through his trousers, and her stomach turns in disgust.
Panic seizing her chest, Hermione tries the first thing that comes to her mind. She hopes she can play on Malfoy's desire to maintain his public image. "You don't want to do this to a Muggle-born. What would the Death Eaters think? What about Draco? What about Narcissa?"

He unzips his trousers, and Hermione looks away. She doesn't want to see it, doesn't want to accept her fate. Not yet. She can see him moving, probably, she realizes, removing himself from his trousers.

"Don't," she pleads. She can't bring herself to promise not to fight him, or to behave. And she knows he won't believe her anyway. "Narcissa wouldn't..." She stops. Continuing to bring Narcissa into this was probably only making him angrier, and likely only going to add to her suffering in the long term.

She looks back at him to gauge if he even cares at this point. As she does, her eyes can't help but wander downward. Until this moment, she's never given a single thought to Malfoy's sexuality, but now she has no choice. She hopes all his posturing was just overcompensating. When she sees his cock, she decides to stop hoping for good things to happen.

Malfoy is very well endowed, and she knows it's going to hurt when he enters her. Hermione wonders if this is Malfoy fully erect, or if he's going to grow bigger. She doesn't think she can accommodate him if he does.

Malfoy takes hold of her legs, angling her so he can enter her more easily. She moves her waist, trying to make it difficult for him, but it's not enough to deter him. With one thrust, he's inside her. She was right; even though he'd prepared her beforehand, it hurts as her cunt is forced to stretch around him. She cries out, and it echoes in the room. Before she has any time to adjust, he wraps her legs around his back, allowing his cock to slip in deeper, and she whimpers in response. He doesn't move, but she shifts, trying to find a less painful position. The more she moves, however, the more it hurts. She stops.

He grabs her hair with one hand, pulling her neck back and revealing her throat. Hermione can't see him any longer, but she can feel his mouth at the hollow of her throat. He kisses it, then licks at it in earnest. It tickles, and she tries to lower her head, but Malfoy won't allow it. She doesn't laugh, but her breathing becomes shallower. She continues trying to pull away and Malfoy bites down, his teeth painful on her tender flesh. Her struggles make the tug of his teeth worse, and she stops fighting. The bite relaxes and turns to kisses and licks again. Though her body is shaking from the effort to remain still, Hermione does not fight. When he bores of that activity, Malfoy relents.

He releases her hair and moves his attentions lower, claiming the nipple of one breast in his mouth. He licks at it until Hermione can feel it tugging at her cunt again. It is now that he begins to move, thrusting inside her with the same slowness he said he used with Ron. He takes several seconds to pull out and several more to push back in. She almost wishes he would do it fast, just to get it over with.

Hermione remains still, waiting for the pain to recede; it doesn't make sense for her to keep hurting herself to get him to stop. It feels like a short eternity before the pain disappears, and when it does, she finds her body rising up to meet him again. She tries to stop, to will herself to remain still and flat against the bed, but after a few seconds, her hips begin to move once more. Her cunt seeks out his cock, not caring who is inside it, only that what he's doing feels good. The rest of her body and brain screams that this is wrong, sick, and not what she wants, but logic and truth is giving way to one primal sensation and Hermione isn't sure this is a battle she can win.

She doesn't bother pleading with him to stop anymore. She knows it's useless, and sees no point in adding to her humiliation. However, she can't stop squirming beneath him, trying to make the
experience frustrating enough for him that he gives up. It takes less than a minute for Hermione to again use the only weapon she knows she has against Malfoy.

"If Narcissa saw you having..." She winces; she can't be sure, but it feels as if Malfoy has changed his angle and it hurts. "Having sex with a Muggle-born, she'd be so ashamed of you. If Draco... Do you think he'd want to be called your son? Even he took a pure-blood."

Malfoy locks eyes with her and makes a great show of licking her nipple deliberately. Then, he adjusts himself so that he can whisper in her ear again, using his arms to support him as he hovers over her. He continues to move inside her, deepening his thrusts, but not quickening them.

"It's not as simple as you would have it be, pet. You see, every time you look at me, or think of the Weasley boy, or experience any kind of arousal, you will remember what I took from you. You will remember how I brought you to orgasm with the gentlest touches and kisses, how you craved release, and how you came for Ron's rapist. That is a far better torture than whips and chains."

"It's... That's not true."

She can't see his face, but she can almost hear the smirk in his voice when he says, "If Ron saw you fucking me, and enjoying it, what would he say then?"

"I'm not..."

He changes his angle again, and Hermione closes her eyes, trying to remove herself from this place and from what's happening to her. She remembers reading how sometimes it worked to get people through traumatic events.

However, she decides it's a myth because, no matter how hard she tries, Malfoy is impossible to ignore. He continues to thrust into the same spot, increasing his speed every few seconds. Hermione's legs tighten around him, her cunt needing more, despite her brain's efforts to tell it otherwise. When Malfoy again licks at her nipple, the very tip of his tongue teasing it, she feels her cunt clench as waves of untold pleasure wash over her again and again.

When it's over, she's exhausted with no energy to speak of, but Malfoy is still thrusting. It makes her cunt tingle, but there's nothing like it was just moments ago. With a grunt, Malfoy comes, and she feels the sick sensation of his release filling her. She doesn't know how long it takes for him to empty himself, but when his orgasm passes, he kisses her softly on the mouth in a mockery of intimate affection, and pulls himself out of her.

Hermione's cunt is sore, and she can feel her pulse beating in it, not painful enough to call it throbbing, but still painful. She tries to pull herself into a ball, but, with her restraints still in place, it proves difficult.

Malfoy lies at her side, and, stroking her face, asks, "What are you? To whom do you belong?"

She turns her head away, now more disgusted with herself for what she's about to say, but it's better than giving him a reason to rape her again. Through gritted teeth, she answers, "I'm your pet. And, as you just went to extremes to prove, everything I have belongs to you."

He's silent for a moment. Then, he says, "It's a start." He moves away, and she looks to see what he's doing. Pulling his wand from his robes, he waves it at her arms, and the restraints release her. "On your knees," he directs.

Hermione sits up, but doesn't move from the bed. Confused, she asks, "Why?" Then, as she realizes what he wants, she swallows hard and scoots backwards. "No. Please."
He raises an eyebrow. "Shall I give you a taste of what the Weasley brat experienced, then? Shall I take your arse as well?"

She glares at him, and he holds her gaze. It isn't much of a choice, she knows, but it's easier to convince herself it is one. With one option, she can convince herself she has some control, however minute. Not looking away, she slides from the bed onto the floor and rests on her knees.

He says nothing, but closes the space between them. Seeing his cock up close makes the bottom fall out of Hermione's stomach. She's rarely laid eyes on anything so revolting. It is covered in white-blonde hair that fails to hide the blue veins that run the length of it. Something - she isn't sure of the technical term - is poking out of the skin at the tip, a thin fluid leaking from it. There is a strong scent wafting from the entire area of his groin and, when he moves just a little to one side, his cock sways and the she can smell a stronger scent coming from his balls.

Her mouth goes dry, and she wants nothing less than to do this, but she refuses to beg again; she's given up enough of her dignity for several lifetimes. However, she can't stop a tear that slides down her cheek. As she brushes it away, she sees Malfoy's cock twitch and harden. The bastard is getting turned on.

"Take me in your mouth," he orders.

Hermione shoots another glare at him, then, slowly, opens her mouth and closes it around the very tip of his cock. When she does nothing else, he pushes his hips forward, forcing himself to the back of her throat, and making her gag. She leans back, but he grabs her head, holding her in place. Her throat is trying to force him out, but he remains in place, his cock growing and hardening still more in her mouth. She expects him to fuck her face, but he doesn't.

"Are you waiting for instructions?" He sounds amused. "Suck."

She can't believe she's doing as he asks, but her only other option is to remain there, his cock in her mouth, doing nothing. She's not sure which is more humiliating. Hesitating only for a moment, she begins to suck, trying to keep her mouth open wide enough to prevent herself from choking on his gagging width. She uses her tongue to try and push him out, but it doesn't work, and only seems to make him more aroused. Her jaw starts to hurt before Malfoy reacts to her attentions, tightening his hold on her head and increasing the speed of his thrusts. She stops sucking, thinking Malfoy won't notice anyway. He continues to rock into her mouth until he comes, forcing her head toward his pelvis and holding her there.

Hermione coughs, and Malfoy's come slips out of her mouth and down her chin. When he pulls out, she continues to spit out his release, rubbing her sore jaw. Anger flares like fire inside her. She's never been so debased and degraded. Even Draco and Snape's insults for six years combined could never have made her feel this humiliated, like the perpetrator truly did see her as subhuman. She realizes her taunts and jibes aren't working, that she's doing nothing but making things worse for herself. She decides it's time to fight back in a different way.

"Disappointing," he comments. "You're in much need of training."

"And you'll be so happy to do it, right?" Hermione bites out. She spits again. "Good. I hope you do."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. It is. Because you'll have to live with it."
Malfoy smiles. "I'll not lose sleep over this."

"You should. Narcissa will never forgive you. You've disgraced her memory."

Malfoy's smile vanishes. "I hardly think my wife would care for the hardship of a Mudblood whore."

"Maybe not. But I saw enough of her to know that she wouldn't take lightly to her husband having sex with a Muggle-born. Especially not one who you think killed her."

"My son greatly exaggerated your capacity for seeing into the nature of things, pet. You will never be able to escape the knowledge of what you've done, of what you felt, and of who made you feel it. Every time I take what is mine, you will remember this night and, if you ever see your beloved Weasley again, you will know what you did the night you heard of his rape."

"That works both ways, Master," she says, adding a sarcastic stress on the last word. "Because you'll always remember what you did to the person who is responsible for your wife's death, of the pleasure you got from me. Every time you see her portrait, or hear her name, or see her son, you're going to remember what you did. And you're going to know that she would never have accepted that it was torture me and forgive you, any more than you would forgive her for fucking a blood-traitor like Sirius, or a half-breed like Greyback, or a half-blood like Snape for any reason."

Malfoy's hand tightens on his wand, and Hermione's stomach turns, though her anger does not fade.

"But," she says, "if you're so eager to make me do it again... Just imagine what Narcissa might say if she were lucky enough to see us." Steeling herself, she leans forward and takes his cock in her mouth once more, sucking on it firmly.

He brings his hand to the back of her head, and she thinks he's going to keep her there until he comes. Instead, he pulls her away, pushing her back so her head collides with the bed frame. Her world is a painful blur for several moments and, when it clears, she sees Malfoy standing over her with his wand drawn. He's replaced his cock in his trousers and zipped them up.

"You can kill me," she says, heart racing against her ribcage. She'd expected this might happen, but didn't think Malfoy would go through with it. "Won't change the truth."

"Kill you? I'm not going to kill you. I would never grant you that mercy."

Inside, Hermione feels a tiny surge of triumph. She knows that, because Malfoy saved her, he must have a different opinion on death than Voldemort. She'd hoped that, even with her goading him, he still did.

"Then what are you going to do?" she challenges. She considers listing options, then decides not to give Malfoy any new ideas.

"On your feet," he orders.

Hermione watches him for a few seconds, then does as she's told.

"Severus was not the only Death Eater who invented spells. Rosier had a keen mind as well. Coupled with an intense need for total control... It led to some interesting incantations."

Though her heartbeat has picked up once more, and her breathing is becoming shallower, Hermione tries to appear as impassive as she can. She doesn't like the unknown, and whatever spell
Malfy is about to cast is not likely to have been in any book she's ever read. Even if she had a wand, she probably wouldn't be able to fight it.

She waits for Malfoy to continue. Instead, he waves his wand.

A flash of color, and Hermione's world goes black.

When she wakes, everything is still shrouded in darkness; she can't see anything. She tries to wave her hand in front of her face, hoping she hasn't gone blind, but finds she can't move her arms. She tests her legs, but they, too, are frozen. Something wooden rests underneath her, and when she tosses her head to look around, she finds that her nose brushes the top of another something rough and wooden. It's then that she realizes Malfoy has put her in the coffin. There's a dull throb in her head, and something constricting her torso. Has Malfoy put the corset on her again?

"Bastard," she whispers.

No sooner are the words out than a terrible pain shoots through her body, starting in her abdomen and flowing out. It's like an electric shock that burns her nerves in several waves before disappearing. She doesn't know if she screamed or not, but she's moaning in pain now.

"F*cking bastard."

Again, the current flows through her, worse this time, like lightning strikes under her skin and muscle. It's worse than the fire she felt when he whipped her, and there's no way to decrease the pain. When it stops, the pain doesn't go away. Her skull is throbbing, her body feeling scorched from the inside out. She decides it's best to stop insulting him.

Instead, she thinks of escaping, of getting back to her own world. As soon as she does, she's going straight to Kingsley and having Malfoy locked up in the most secure cell in Azkaban.

As the thought comes upon her, the constriction at her torso tightens and warms to burning, delving underneath her skin and spreading to her arms and legs. She can't breathe or scream, and the odor of singed hair and skin begins to fill the coffin. It lasts at least a minute before it stops.

Her mouth is dry and she's panting for air, but she doesn't dwell on the consequences of Malfoy's newest sadistic game. She can't. She has to get out of this. Somehow.

She thinks back to what Malfoy last said to her. That Rosier invented the spell because of his need for total control. It sounds like Malfoy to Hermione. She thinks and re-thinks the statement, trying to find a clue. Finally, her brain catches what might be the most important word: total. Total control. And, judging from what keeps happening, that includes words and thoughts.

Unbidden, her thoughts stray to the many ways she'd like to kill Malfoy for this.

And, she realizes too late, the mere thought activates the spell. The pain is so great, it threatens blackout, and she wishes she would just stop feeling altogether as she's heard can happen in moments of extreme agony. She remembers reading how the victim becomes disconnected from the pain, and she wonders why in Gryffindor's name that hasn't happened with her.

She lies still, deliberately keeping her thoughts away from Malfoy or freedom. She focuses instead on the twelve uses of dragon's blood, the ingredients of the polyjuice potion, the rules of Quidditch, the facts contained in *Hogwarts, A History*, and anything else she can to prevent herself from thinking something that might trigger more pain.

She dozes, but doesn't sleep.
An indeterminate amount of time later, she hears movement in the room. Footsteps approach the coffin, then the sound of wood grating against wood tells her the top is being removed. Though the room is dim, the sudden light hurts her eyes and she squints up at the figure hovering above her. She expects to see Malfoy, but instead she notes the distinct bat-like ears and bulbous nose of a house-elf. It chatters at her, but she finds she can't understand it. From the moment it helps her from the coffin, her life becomes a blur.

It's brought her food on, it says, Malfoy's orders. She doesn't realize how hungry she is until she's started in on the plate Malfoy sent to her. The elf leaves and she eats, and the next thing she knows the elf returns with more food and takes the empty plate. Though it feels like only a few seconds, she knows more time has passed than that. After the third visit, the elf insists she gets back in the coffin, saying Malfoy will hurt it if she refuses. She doesn't want to, but after all her efforts with S.P.E.W. she knows she can't say no. The following morning, it lets her out again.

It's a routine she's forced into, for reasons she can't fathom. The time passes, and nothing varies. Because of her blackouts, Hermione has difficulty keeping track of the days. She has no idea how to judge time, and stops trying. Occasionally, she thinks that if someone were to try and teach her Occlumency, she would have no trouble mastering the art; the few times she has the chance to think and remember her thoughts, she's had to keep them firmly away from Malfoy and anything to do with him. Under the circumstances, she thinks shutting her mind to emotion would be easy work.

After some time, Malfoy visits her again. She exits the bathroom to find him waiting near the bed. She can't imagine why he's come after so long, but she doubts it's because of anything directly to do with her. Though she's managed, for the most part, to not think about him, hurting him, or escaping and then hurting him, she's had a few slips, but nothing she considers serious. For moments, they stand in silence. Then Malfoy, growing either bored or impatient, motions her to him. She hesitates only an instant before walking toward him; she doesn't want to trigger his spell.

"You're learning," he states.

She says nothing.

He tips her head up with one finger and kisses her. She doesn't try to fight him off, but neither does she return his affections.

"Or perhaps not," he says when he pulls away.

She still says nothing. She understands what he's doing; he's trying to test her.

"On your knees."

She watches him, trying to decide if she should remind him that Narcissa wouldn't be pleased. Then, she remembers the pain the spell would inflict on her and chooses not to. Silently, she kneels.

"That was a very nice attempt at clever, what you did before," he tells her. "Using my wife against me." He frees his cock from his trousers. "But, as those of your blood and station tend to do, you forget that our minds are not as mundane as yours. The simple act of intimacy means nothing. It's the reason for it. The purpose. And if the purpose is putting a Mudblood in her place, it is more than justified. More than forgivable."

Hermione frowns. Is he trying to convince her or himself?
"Your place, pet," he continues, "is precisely where you are now. At my feet, doing whatever I demand, for my pleasure alone. You may use your mouth on me."

Hermione feels sick. The way Malfoy talks, it's as if he thinks it's an honor. Wanting to bide her time until he releases the spell, she swallows, leans forward, closes her mouth around his cock, and shuts her eyes. Without waiting to be told, she starts to suck. She can remember how, when she used her tongue to try and force him out before, it worked to get him off faster. She slides her tongue along the underside of his cock, sucking as firmly as she can.

His cock starts to twitch and swell, and she shifts and opens her mouth wider so as not to choke on the width of it.

"Touch me," he orders.

*Touch him?* What does that *mean?* He can't expect her to touch... No, she doesn't want to feel *that* in her hands. She decides to just suck faster.

Electric pain like lightning pushes through her body, and she starts and gasps, inadvertently taking more of him into her mouth. His cock, already hard from her attentions, hardens more. She knows that if she continues to ignore him, it'll just happen again, and will probably be worse. Deciding she can do what he says, and still not do what she doesn't want to, she raises her right hand to his thigh and rests it there. Technically, she *is* touching him.

Grabbing her hair and pulling on it, he snarls, "Pleasure me with your hands."

The movement causes his cock to slip halfway out of her mouth. She stretches her jaw and takes him in again. Her hand slides up his thigh to his balls. She isn't sure what to do, so she rubs her palm over them, stroking them as best she can while still maintaining minimum contact. They move at her touch; she thinks they're retracting into Malfoy's body. Deciding that can't be a good sign, that she might be hurting him and the spell would hurt her, she stops.

He starts to rock into her mouth, and she stops actively pulling him deeper, instead using her tongue to stroke him on his way in and out. If he notices, he doesn't say anything. When he comes, he again holds her in place. She tries to pull back so she can spit, but he only holds her more firmly.

"Swallow."

She remains still. He can't be serious. He *can't.*

"*Now;*" he growls.

Apparently, he *can.*

With him still in her mouth, it's not easy, but she swallows what she can, the act causing her to pull him in deeper. Once she's completed her task, he releases her and she, in turn, releases him.

They're quiet for long moments, and Hermione decides that a new plan is in order. She thinks quickly, trying to come up with a ghost of an idea, something substantial enough for her to work from, but vague enough that the spell won't activate.

"I understand," she says before he can speak.

"Understand what?" He's panting and sounds as if he's very tired.

"I understand that Harry is dead and that I would be, too, if it weren't for you. I understand that you
didn't do it to spare me, but to punish me and that I..." She hesitates, but she knows if she wants this to work, she has to say it. "I deserve it. I'm a M... a Mudblood whose place is wherever you say. I'm sorry. I won't fight you anymore." She pauses. Then, with the taste of offal in her mouth adds, as humbly as she can, "Master."

She doesn't look at him. She remembers that Harry told her that he overheard Snape and Draco talking about Bellatrix teaching Draco Occlumency, and how she'd assumed that meant all Death Eaters were trained to some extent. She doesn't want Malfoy to see how blatantly she's lying.

Malfoy watches her; she can feel his eyes on her. The silence stretches painfully long.

"Stand up," he says.

Hermione still doesn't look at him as she gets to her feet; she keeps her gaze fixed on the ground and hopes Malfoy sees it as a sign of humility.

He watches her, then says, "I trust you've figured out how this spell works. If you lie to me, I will know."

"Of course. But I am not lying, Master." She tries to inconspicuously brace herself for the shocks of pain, but they don't come. She wonders why, but isn't foolish enough to question it.

He takes her chin in his hand and presses his lips to hers. Though her stomach churns in disgust, Hermione moves her mouth against him, parting her lips to allow his tongue to enter. He makes a thorough job of despoiling her mouth before releasing her.

He moves, and Hermione realizes he's drawing his wand. She braces herself for whatever he's going to do to her, but feels no pain. Instead, there's a flash of color, and the tight constriction around her middle is gone.

"I expected it would take far longer to break you," he says with a tone of great smugness. "I should not have assumed so much of a Mudblood."

She says nothing, but to test the waters, thinks of how badly she's going to mutilate him when she gets free. Nothing happens. The spell has been lifted. Now, she needs to get rid of him to allow herself time to formulate a real, solid plan.

"M-master," she says softly, "I haven't slept since the last time you were here. With your permission, I'd like to get some rest."

"No," he answers. "I would much prefer to use you again. On the bed," he orders.

Hermione looks from him to the bed, her insides writhing. She hadn't expected that. Malfoy notices her hesitation.

"Ah." He smiles. "Did you think you could fool me, pet? Did you truly believe you could lie to me, and I would be ignorant enough to trust you?"

"I didn't lie," Hermione answers, her voice weaker than she'd like. She inhales deeply and says, "I'm your pet to do with what you want." With as much confidence as she can, she marches to the bed and sits in the center.

Malfoy looks a mixture of surprised and impressed. "Lie back."

Having expected that, Hermione doesn't hesitate, but lies back and watches him, waiting for her
next instruction. Malfoy, however, does not give her one. He crosses to the foot of the bed and tilts his head to one side, his eyes slowly raking over her body. She watches as he inspects her, as if he's appraising some dark artifact he found in Knockturn Alley, deciding if it's worth his time and trouble. His gaze lingers on her mouth, her breasts, and the tangle of hair between her legs.

"Spread your legs," he whispers.

She inhales and makes herself do it.

"Touch yourself."

Hermione balls her hands into fists and closes her eyes. If she refuses now, she doesn't know if she'll get another chance to do... Whatever it is she's going to do. She isn't sure what it is, but she knows that if Malfoy thinks she's unbroken and will fight him, he's never going to give her the freedom she needs to put any plan into action. Though her arms feel like lead, she lifts one hand and places it on her cunt. Mentally trying to deny what she is doing, she slides two fingers inside and begins to fuck herself.

"Yes," he hisses. "Faster."

She's dry and it's uncomfortable, but she increases her pace. Though she feels nothing aside from the humiliation of being forced to do this, she allows a moan to escape her lips and she raises her hips as she fucks her hand.

"Stop."

She does, removing her hand from inside her and opening her eyes to see what he'll do next.

Malfoy walks to the side of the bed and takes her hand in his, bringing it to his lips. Eyes locked on hers, he extends his tongue and licks the fingers she used, moaning as if it's a great ecstasy. From her hand, he kisses his way up her arm, to her shoulder, lowering himself onto the bed as he does so. It's all Hermione can do not to cringe away.

At her shoulder, he moves to her neck and she tilts her head back. It's the only time so far that she can move away and have it interpreted as cooperative. Thinking it would work well to convince him if she participates, she cradles his head with her hand, but does nothing more.

He continues his trail of kisses down her collarbone and chest, coming to a pause at her breasts. He closes his mouth around one nipple, first sucking, then biting at the flesh, after which he licks it as if to soothe. Her cunt responds to the stimulation, growing wet and clenching around nothing. He maintains this pattern until it starts to hurt equally bad when he is licking as when he is biting.

Her fingers tightening in his hair, and she whispers, "Please." She decides he can take that anyway he wants, because she's not saying anything more.

He takes it as encouragement, transferring his attentions to the other nipple and resuming his pattern until that one is just as sore. She can't help but squirm each time his mouth makes contact, but she doesn't ask him to stop, keeping in mind that that would ruin everything. Instead, she shifts her hips, partly because her cunt is aching for something to be inside it, and partly to distract him from her breasts.

It works, though Hermione isn't sure if that's a good thing. With a final bite, Malfoy moves higher until he is able to kiss her again. Hermione does the only thing she can - she closes her eyes and wills herself to believe it is Ron. But it doesn't work; Ron and Malfoy are nothing alike. When Malfoy's tongue enters her mouth, she flicks hers back against it. Her response is feeble, but it is a
response, and she hopes it's enough to do because she doesn't think she can put more passion into it.

Malfoy is moving, and Hermione knows why. She forces herself to be still, to not shut her legs against him. Once he is free of his trousers, he pushes himself inside her, never breaking their kiss. When he begins to thrust, Hermione forces herself to be in another time and place; if her brain won't do it of its own accord, she's just going to have to do it herself. She thinks about the Yule Ball, the time she impersonated Bellatrix in order to steal Hufflepuff's cup, the Tales of Beedle the Bard. As she's getting to the end of one of the stories, she feels that familiar rush of pleasure and allows herself to return to the present. She wraps her legs around Malfoy's waist and pushes herself up to meet him until those brief rushes of pleasure become overwhelming, and she collapses in exhaustion. Moments later, Malfoy does the same.

He's breathing heavily on her face and neck, and she tells herself not to move away, that she didn't submit to this just to muck it all up now. She reminds herself that she might not get another chance. When Malfoy recovers, he rolls off of her and sits on the edge of the bed, staring at something Hermione can't see.

Unsure if she should say or do anything at this moment, Hermione whispers, "Thank you, Master. I did not deserve to have you."

His head jerks up and he glares at her as if she's done something wrong. Wordlessly, he tucks his cock away and leaves.

When Hermione is sure he isn't returning right away, she goes to take a shower. The water is still icy cold, but without Malfoy there, she's able to take her time and clean herself up. After drying off, she re-enters her room, glances at the bed, then turns her back to it and settles down in front of the unlit fireplace. The room and floor are cold, but she'd rather be there than be warm on the bed Malfoy raped her on.

She curls into a ball and thinks until she has what she considers a solid, foolproof plan.

The next weeks pass with only sporadic visits from Malfoy, which suits Hermione fine. The house-elf continues to bring her food, but her blackouts don't reoccur. Now that she has her wits about her, Hermione wonders if the previous food had been drugged. The thought makes her sick.

After each meal, Hermione insists on keeping the plates, glasses, and silverware. It's obvious the elf finds this odd, but it doesn't argue with her. When she has a pile of dishes as high as her waist, and she's sure it's been days since Malfoy last visited, she begins to smash them. Swearing, she throws a plate onto the floor, a glass against the wall, breaking everything she can. She's halfway through the pile before Malfoy arrives, looking supremely unamused. Before he can speak or curse her, Hermione drops a glass onto the stone, marches up to him, and slaps him as hard as she can.

"You bastard," she hisses. "How could you?"

His gray eyes darken, like storm clouds just shy of spilling their load.

Eager not to give him too much time to react, Hermione balls her hands into fists and punches at his chest.

"You keep doing this," she whines. "You come to me, you honor me by... Then you leave me here all alone. For days. It isn't fair." Grabbing his robe at the collar, she pleads, "Don't leave me again.
Malfoy looks disgusted. He extricates himself from her hold, and grabs her wrists as if to make sure she doesn't touch him again.

"No," Hermione says, trying to wrench her hands free. Because they are standing in such proximity to one another, she has only to take half a step forward and lean up to kiss him. She does so forcefully as she continues trying to pull her hands out of his grasp.

He releases her hands and instead pushes her back. She stumbles, but does not fall.

"Mudblood whore," he spits.

She approaches him again, thinking of how she might never see her parents, or Ron, or Harry again, of how she might be trapped in this horrible excuse for a life forever. It's enough to bring tears to her eyes, which is exactly what she wants. "Please, don't tell me no. Don't make me wait any longer. I can't." The tears spill down her cheeks, and she sniffs.

As she expected, Malfoy can't avoid the physical reaction the sight of her crying causes. He doesn't push her away again. Instead, he grabs her upper arms and pulls her toward him, taking her mouth in a passionate kiss. She lets him, returning it with all the enthusiasm she can in order to maintain her charade. She wraps her arms around his neck, pressing her body against his. His erection is obvious against her stomach.

Hermione lets one of her hands travel down Malfoy's body. She pauses at his lower abdomen, and then, deciding she may as well go all out, cups his cock in her hand through the fabric of his clothing and gives it a gentle squeeze. Malfoy growls and spins her around, pushing her against the wall. He fucks her there, with one of her legs wrapped around his waist, the other just slightly above the floor. The stone is rough against her back, but she pretends not to care, pretends she's only interested in him and in making love to him.

When they both climax, Hermione assumes he's done; he usually storms out after fucking her. This time, however is different. He kisses her, and as he does so, he walks her backwards toward the bed. Her legs catch at the edge and she falls width-wise across it. She isn't even fully on the bed when he fucks her again. She makes herself pretend to enjoy it, kissing him, stroking his back and pleading with him to fuck her harder, faster, oh yes right there, please, please don't stop, oh yes, yes.

After the second time, she presses her lips gently to his forehead. "Do I please you, Master? Better than..." She makes a show of being hesitant to complete the question, then says, "Better than... certain others?"

Malfoy, who is lying beside her, grabs her by the throat, sitting up, but not allowing her to do the same.

"You dare to compare yourself to her?"

She grabs his hand, but doesn't try to pull it away. "I... I didn't mean to be disrespectful. I only meant... Are you happy with me?"

He tightens his hold, and Hermione tightens hers. "Happy? With a filthy Mudblood? A vile, useless bit of waste?"

"I'm... I'm sorry," Hermione says softly, letting herself seem hurt. "I... I should have known better."
Malfoy releases her. He says something she doesn't quite catch, then spins around and storms from the room. Hermione smiles. She can use everything that just happened. She remembers a Muggle movie where one woman tells another that there's nothing so irresistible to a man as a woman who is in love with him. If she can pretend to be interested in a loathsome arrogant, git like McLaggen, if she can pretend to be Bellatrix, then, she decides, she can pretend to be in love with Malfoy. She just hopes she doesn't vomit while she's at it.

Usually, it's days between visits. Malfoy takes at least a week and a half to come again. When he does, Hermione is sitting against the fireplace, thinking of her next move. She glances at him as he enters, then hugs her knees to her chest, and turns her head away.

"On your feet, pet."

She rests her forehead against her knees and does not move.

"Did you hear?" Malfoy demands. "Stand up."

She shakes her head. "No," she says weakly.

"No?" he repeats, sounding like he may be smiling. "Are you going to attempt to stand up to me now? To fight back? Have you grown eager for the taste of my whip once again?"

She looks up at him. "What do you want from me?" she asks softly. "I want to please you, but I can't. No matter what I do, you're only ever going to see me as a Mudblood. As... less than human."

"I see you as you are," Malfoy states. "And you are nothing."

"Then why are you here? To punish me again? Fine. But I want you to know that I treasure my time with you. It's not a punishment to me. And... And if I have to... I can imagine that you see me as at least as good as... as her."

Malfoy looks revolted. Perhaps Hermione's strategy was not as well thought out as she had figured.

"I will say this to you only once," he tells her. "If you ever utter such obscene, disgusting sentimentalities in my presence again, you will beg for the soothing sensation of the Cruciatus before I am finished with you. Do you understand?"

Hugging her knees tighter, she nods. So much for that idea. "Yes, Master. I understand." She takes a shaky breath. "What is it that you need from me?"

He frowns. "What?"

"Well," she says, confusion evident in her voice. "You're here. You must... need something."

He looks wrong footed. "No. I don't need you for anything."

He goes as abruptly as he came, leaving a confused Hermione behind him. She doesn't understand what went wrong. It worked when she pleaded with him not to leave her. Perhaps confessing affection was the wrong move. Perhaps Malfoy only wants her to want him, but not to feel for him. She made a mistake in judgment, and she isn't sure how she's going to fix it.

That night, or what she assumes is night - it's after the third meal the house elf brings her - she curls into a ball in front of the fireplace and falls asleep on the cold, hard floor. When she wakes, however, she's on the bed, on top of the blankets. It confuses her, but she decides she must have gone to the bathroom during the night and climbed into bed without thinking.
Malfoy does not visit that day, and Hermione again chooses to sleep on the floor. Again, she wakes on the bed. This time, she has no handy explanation. It happens twice more, and on the fifth night, Hermione decides to find out what is going on.

She curls up in front of the fireplace, makes her breathing rhythmic, but fights off sleep. After some time, she hears the door open and footsteps cross over to her. She remains still, keeps her breathing normal. Malfoy picks her up; she recognizes his smell. Suddenly, she's sick to know that she's been near him enough times to be able to do that. He sets her gently on the bed, on her back.

Hermione fights to keep her face impassive, though she wants to frown. Why has Malfoy been moving her to the bed night after night? She feels his hand caress her face, slide down her chest, over the outside of her thigh, and then to the inside. It's becoming a trying task to feign sleep through this, but she knows she can't let on that she's awake.

His hand continuing to trace Hermione's inner thigh, Malfoy gently kisses her forehead, her lips, and her neck. For some reason, he doesn't venture lower. He inhales deeply, and lets it out slowly and audibly. With a final kiss on her lips, he stops. Moments later, Hermione can hear his footsteps retreating, hear the door open and close. She waits, and when she's sure he's not returning, she sits up and stares at the closed door.

She can't get over how foul that was. That Malfoy would molest a sleeping form night after night was low, even for him. She feels the need to take a shower, but before she moves, a realization comes upon her.

Slowly, a smile spreads across her face.

She's got him.

Because of the cold showers and the constantly cold room, Hermione begins to get sick. She coughs and sneezes all day, and even the house elf keeps its distance from her. Her head hurts, her muscles are sore, and she shivers uncontrollably. She decides to avoid the shower until she's healthy again, but that means she's covered in her own germs and snot, and it's not pretty. Or, she realizes, likely to help her get better any time soon.

After three days, she gives up and goes to shower. She finds that the water is hot, steaming the mirror within seconds. She looks around the bathroom, as though expecting someone to jump out and explain, or to tell her it was all a joke. When no such thing happens, she decides not to look a gift horse in the mouth and accepts that Malfoy has either made a mistake, or grown tired of her coughing on him in her sleep.

She notices items that haven't been there before. Upon inspection, she discovers they are lovely-smelling bath soaps and shampoos. This she has a harder time explaining away as Malfoy simply wanting her to be well so he doesn't become ill. Her stomach swoops as she realizes just how much in her grasp she has him.

When she's done with her shower, she feels cleaner than she has since before Luna's spell went wrong. The towel she uses to dry herself is clean, fluffier than her last one, and warm. She's still sick, but she feels marginally better.

The wardrobe in her room is open when she enters. She looks around, expecting to see Malfoy standing nearby, but he's nowhere in sight. Frowning, she crosses to it and peeks inside. There is an array of differently colored robes, but no other clothing. She's disappointed, but as it's better than nothing, she chooses not to complain and puts one on.
Malfoy still doesn't visit her, at least not while she's awake. Even after she's over her illness, he does not come. One night, while waiting to see if he'll come, she falls asleep in her robe. When she wakes, it's open and she's on her back with her legs slightly spread, though she knows she fell asleep on her side, with the robe shut.

She begins to go stir crazy with the silence and solitude. The house elf doesn't speak to her unless conveying an order from Malfoy, and she's desperate for some sort of substantial contact. She wants to get out of that prison, find Luna and get back to her own world. And she'll never be able to do that unless Malfoy visits again.

Just when she thinks she can't take the quiet for another instant, Malfoy comes. Hermione, who has had more than enough time to prepare for this moment, wastes no time in acting on her plan.

"Master," she says, greeting him at the door. "I've been so anxious for you to come. I wanted to give you a proper thank-you for your generosity, even though I don't deserve it." She rushes on before he can say anything. "When we're... together... you always do all the work." Placing her hand at his waist, she continues, "I beg you now to allow me to please you, with no effort on your part." The speech sounds rehearsed because it is, but she thinks Malfoy will get off on it just the same.

Malfoy frowns. "I have told you, a Mudblood could never bring me pleasure. You are an object to be used, and nothing more."

"Yes, Master. But, please, let me try. You... You can use me, without working hard for it." She isn't sure that makes sense, but it's out of her mouth now and there's nothing she can do about it. She tries to make her eyes pleading, but she can't see them, so she isn't sure if she looks pitiable, or just crazy. Trying to salvage this attempt, she rises to her toes and kisses the hollow of his throat. "Please?" she whispers, exhaling against his skin.

He makes a sound she's never heard from him before, and nods. Her heart begins to beat faster. This is it. If she screws up now, she won't get another shot.

Her hands move to the top of his shirt, undoing each button one by one, kissing the skin as it is revealed to her. When each button is undone, she slowly slides the shirt from his body, running her hands over his arms as she does so. Something inside his shirt makes a noise as it connects with the floor. Because Malfoy never exposes more than his cock when he takes her, this is the most she's ever seen of him. His arms and chest are more muscular than she thought, well-defined, but not something one would expect to see in those Muggle body-builder competitions. It explains how he's able to best her in physical confrontations so easily.

She cups the back of his neck with one hand and kisses him, her other hand circling around his nipple. Using his distraction to her advantage, she steps on his shirt until she feels the cylindrical shape of his wand in one of the pockets. She makes a mental note of where it is. She steps back without breaking their kiss, encouraging him to follow her to the bed. When she feels it at the back of her legs, she walks turns a half circle so that Malfoy is nearer to it than she is. Now, she pulls back just enough to speak.

"Lie down. Please."

He does, and it shocks her. She doesn't think she ever truly expected him to listen to her, nor did she ever expect to have this control. Perhaps, in Malfoy's twisted mind, this was just another way to show his victory over her. She knows he'd never admit she had any power over him.

She lies down beside him, tracing her hand over the crotch of his trousers. Something tells her she
should say something, but as she can think of nothing to say, she remains silent. When she feels his erection, she scoots down the bed until her head is level with his waist. She unzips his trousers and frees his cock. It's half hard already, but she doesn't immediately take it fully into her mouth.

First, she licks it in long, slow strokes from base to tip. He hardens as she does so, but she intentionally keeps her licks as slow as she can. When fluid begins to leak from it, she cleans it up with her tongue, and then delves between his thighs and takes one of his balls in her mouth. As she sucks on it, it begins to retreat closer to his body, as it had done when she touched it. She stops, fearful that she might be hurting him. However, when he moans and lifts his hips, she realizes that it doesn't hurt him at all, and resumes mouthing him.

When he groans, as if frustrated, she stops, instead taking him fully into her mouth. That elicits another moan, but this betrays nothing but pleasure. She sucks down to the root as firmly as she can, and his buttocks clench as he thrusts himself deeper into her mouth. This is all she needs. She stops, dragging her lips along his cock in a great show of slowness.

"I want to show you something," she says as she stands. She moves as gracefully as she can to the spot where his shirt has fallen. Turning to face him, she makes it seem as if she's going to remove her robe. Knowing she only has a second to do this before Malfoy catches on, she bends down, grabs the shirt, and goes straight for the wand.

Because of his erection, Malfoy is not as swift as she is, and she sends a stunning curse at him. He freezes on the bed, unable to move. Quickly, she crosses back to him and does the best she can to cover him up. Hopefully, the house elves will just think she's hiding under the blankets.

Wasting no time, she hurries back to the door that leads to the torture room. Predictably, it's locked. She tries every unlocking spell she can think of before giving up and shouting, "Bombarda!"

The spell blasts a hole in the door around the knob, and Hermione is able to swing it open. The force of the explosion startles Crookshanks, who darts out in front of her, into the torture room. Picking him up, Hermione weaves through the devices in the room and goes for the door in the center. She has no reason for choosing it except that it's as good a door as any. She has to blast this one open as well, but in the hallway it leads to, she sees no more obstacles. She hurries down the corridor, down the first flight of stairs she comes to, makes a decision as to whether to go left or right at the bottom of the stairs and keeps going.

Malfoy's house is like a maze, with twists and turns that could lead anywhere. She picks anything that takes her down, figuring eventually she'll be on the ground floor. For once, luck is on her side. She arrives in the same room Greyback and the other Snatchers had dragged her, Harry and Ron into who-knows-how-many-months before. The place is empty, except for a house-elf scurrying to clean something up. Hermione doesn't pause, but goes straight for the front door. It opens for her - Malfoy probably never expected she'd get this far and saw no reason to magically seal it - and Hermione finds herself on the front lawn.

She makes a beeline for the iron gates and only when she arrives there does she realize she doesn't know how to get out. She grabs it, shakes the bars, and swears. Then, she remembers the wand and tries to blast the gate open. It doesn't work. Panicking, she glances back at the house to see if anyone is in pursuit, then turns back to the gate.

"Let me OUT!" she demands.

As she has seen before, the iron bars turn into a mouth. In a harsh voice, it questions, "On what authority?"
"On..." She searches her mind. Would a gate know that Narcissa is dead? "On the authority of Narcissa Malfoy, mistress of this house."

The gate takes a moment to react, and then swings forward to let her out. As soon as she is clear of the property, she Apparates away, with Crookshanks clasped tightly to her chest.

She finds herself in the Forest of Dean. She and her friends had good luck in this place once. She hopes it will happen again. She quickly walks a circle around the place she's landed, casting the same spells that kept her, Harry and Ron safe for all those months. For the first time, she's able to relax and just think.

Ginny said that Luna is with Draco, and that Draco lives somewhere in London. London is a huge, sprawling city that could have changed in any number of ways since she was last there, especially given that Voldemort now controls the area. She isn't sure what to do, apart from Apparate around aimlessly until an opportunity presents itself. But she didn't care for that much before. She sees no reason that will change now.

She stays put for hours, thinking of and dismissing so many plans that she loses count. The only semi-feasible one she thinks of is going to Mr. Lovegood and demanding that book. But he'd been taken to Azkaban in her reality, released only when Voldemort fell. There is no sure why to know he will be at home.

Near her hiding place, she hears footsteps and voices. She doesn't move, but doesn't worry. If Ron couldn't find her and Harry when he knew where they were and what spells they used, no one looking for her now will be able to do it, either. She sighs. This must be what a living nightmare feels like.

There's a bright flash of light all around her. As it fades, Malfoy steps into the area, his face a mask of anger. Crookshanks yowls and darts into the darkness. Hermione gasps and leaps to her feet, pulling his wand and pointing it at him.

"Keep away from me, Malfoy, or I'll hex your bits right off."

"You really don't want to go around threatening your betters," says a drawling voice Hermione recognizes as Draco's. She feels him poke his wand into her back. "Now turn around, real slow, and give me the wand."

"Okay," Hermione says. She turns slowly, and faces him. When she raises the wand as if to give it to him, and he reaches out to take it, she jabs it in his eye, and pushes past him, running deeper into the forest.

Behind her, Lucius shouts, "Stun her!"

Hermione falls over and blacks out.

When she wakes, it's to find herself naked in the torture room, on the wooden contraption she noticed her first day here. The ropes pull her arms and legs taut. She isn't in any pain, but she isn't comfortable, either. Looking around, she sees Draco standing beside his father, watching her with a look of great amusement.

"Nice try," he says. "Guess you didn't think about that collar. It tracks you wherever you go."

Hermione feels supremely stupid. She'd thought the collar was only a symbol. Never once has she wondered why Malfoy hadn't put it on before, from his point of view, strange things began to happen, nor has she wondered why he had done it just before he took her from the house.
"Yes," Lucius agrees. "And now we will find out where, exactly, you thought you were going."

"Away," Hermione answers. "As far as I could get."

Malfoy points his wand at the ropes and they tighten, stretching her limbs in four different directions. She cries out, fighting to pull her arms and legs back toward her body, but the ropes have no give and she is stretched until her joints feel just shy of dislocating.

"Once again," Lucius says. "Where were you going?"

"Bet it was to find Longbottom," Draco speculates. "She wants to join his resistance. Or tell him how to run it."

"I don't know where..." But Hermione decides not to protest. "Yeah. He's managed to hide okay until now. I thought I'd be safe with him."

"I think Granger fancies herself Longbottom's new girlfriend," Draco says. "She always did have the urge to cozy up to the heroes of war. Weasley was never going to be enough for this slut."

"That's enough," Lucius says with a quelling look at his son. To Hermione, he orders, "Tell me the truth."

"I did," she answers. Lucius watches her for the space of a second, then flicks his wand again. The ropes tighten and pull at her body. Her scream echoes around the room as her left leg is pulled from its socket. It hurts worse than anything she can remember experiencing, worse than the Cruciatus, worse than Rosier's invented spell. Tears spill down her cheeks, and she is aware of nothing except the pain.

When the ropes cease their task, Lucius speaks again.

"This is the final time I'm going to ask. Then, I will become more inventive with your punishment. Where were you going?"

"I... I... don't.... know," Hermione pants through clenched teeth. She closes her eyes in an attempt to block out the pain. "I just wanted...to... to get away. I didn't have... have a plan."

Lucius muses over her response. Then, he asks, "What do you think, Draco? Is it possible this over thinker for once did not think?" The tone of his voice tells her it's a rhetorical question.

Draco answers anyway. "No. The Weasel is the one who doesn't think."

"Please," Hermione says. "I'm telling...the truth." Her left side is on fire, and she's not looking forward to having the process repeated three more times.

"I say let me have her," Draco suggests. Running one knuckle over her cunt, he states, "I can get the truth out of her."

"Don't...touch...me," Hermione commands. She doesn't try to twist away, knowing it will only injure her more.

Lucius considers Hermione, then considers his son. "I suppose you've earned it, now that you've proven yourself to the Dark Lord."

Hermione's stomach twists. She doesn't like the sound of that. Before she can question it, however, Draco leaves, walking to the other side of the room. When he returns it's with a whip similar to, but
larger than, the whip Lucius used on her.

"Not... much... better than... you were at Hogwarts, Draco."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Draco challenges.

"Still... a coward."

She expects he'll rise to the bait, start complaining or ranting. Harry told her about the scene on the tower, when Draco couldn't kill Professor Dumbledore. She hopes he'll remember that and falter once more.

Instead, Draco sucks thoughtfully on the handle of the whip. Once he's coated it in his saliva, he says, "I still won," and places it at the entrance to her cunt.

Hermione eyes it; it's large. Not as large as Lucius is, but still big enough to cause her discomfort. She braces herself, refusing to beg for mercy. Begging Lucius is one thing, but pleading with Draco is quite another. She feels it pushing into her, fast and hard until Draco can't push it in any deeper. It hurts, but she bites back her scream, instead inhaling swiftly and chewing on her lower lip.

Draco fucks her with the whip handle, each thrust in painful, each pull out easier. Hermione can't hold her silence any longer. She begins to whimper, but still refuses to beg. She can feel the tears behind her eyelids and fights to keep them from spilling. It's the last thing she needs.

"Look," Draco says, pulling the handle out of her. "Her blood really is filthy."

She hears footsteps, then silence. When she opens her eyes, she sees Lucius frowning at the handle, which glistens with her blood.

"That's enough, Draco," he says. "There are other ways to punish a whore. Take her into the other room."

Lucius releases the ropes and, surprised, Hermione falls from the contraption onto the floor.

Draco is the only one who laughs, using his own wand to levitate her into the next room. There, he deposits her on the bed. She wants to run, or fight in somewhere, but her current injury makes that quite impossible.

Turning to his father, Draco points to Hermione's leg and says, "Can you fix that? It's no fun if she can't fight back."

Lucius raises an eyebrow. "My son captures one of the most wanted fugitives, yet is ignorant of basic charms and incantations." He does not lecture beyond that, however, instead crossing to the bed, taking Hermione's leg in his hand, and using his wand to force it back into place.

It hurts as much going in as it did popping out, and Hermione screams again. However, instead of growing worse, the pain recedes, and it's only a matter of moments before Hermione is ready to fight or flee, though the rational part of her says she can't get far with two armed Death Eaters standing in her way.

In the end, it doesn't matter. As soon as Lucius has moved away from the bed, Draco pounces, straddling Hermione and pinning her in place. She swings her fist around, catching him on the jaw. Angry, he grabs her arm and holds it against her side, doing the same to the other before she can hit him with that.
"This is good," he says, leaning down so their faces are only inches apart. "I want you to fight me," he tells her. "And I want to hear you scream."

She spits at him, a big glob of phlegm connecting with his face. He wipes it off and looks at it as if to be sure of what it is. His suspicions confirmed, he wastes no time in backhanding Hermione so hard her head whips to one side and rings from the force of it.

She sees Lucius watching her. Not watching them, or Draco, but her. His expression is closed, utterly unreadable. She has no time to dwell on it, however. Draco places a hand at her throat and squeezes, not hard enough to cut off her oxygen, but still forcefully.

He places his knee between her legs, which are shut tight. Pushing his weight down on her, he pries them apart, creating a gap large enough for his free hand to worm inside.

She grabs the hand at her throat and tries to pull it off, but he tightens his grip while simultaneously sliding two fingers into her cunt. In response, Hermione holds him tighter.

"Get off," she demands.

"In good time," he responds, sliding two more fingers inside her. "If you're as good a whore as I think you are," he adds.

After the abuse of the whip handle, his hand hurts. She moves her hips, but it doesn't stop him from adding a fifth finger. She can feel him closing it into a fist, and her waist jerks involuntarily from the pain of it. When he pumps his fist into and out of her, she screams; she can't help it. Draco closes his eyes and smiles, continuing to fist her as she screams in time with his pumps.

"Fight me," he growls.

She doesn't know what he expects her to do, but she doesn't want to play his stupid game anyway. She decides against hurling an insult at him while he's got her in this position. Though she doesn't want to lie still and take it, she can't think of any other alternative until Draco withdraws his hand. It takes him several minutes to do so.

"I'm going to fuck you now," he states. "Try to run, try to fight me off. It'll only make it more satisfying for me."

He slides off the bed. Hermione's cunt is pounding, and she isn't sure she could run straight if she did try to move. She closes her legs in an attempt to ease the hurt, wondering if Lucius would try and stop her if she ran for it. Looking over at him, she sees that he hasn't moved or changed his expression at all. Just maybe, he wouldn't care.

On her other side, Draco is divesting himself of his clothing. Unlike his father, he removes his trousers and shirt before returning to the bed. Hermione sits up, deciding if she's going to be raped by Draco after everything she's been through, she's going to fight as hard as she can, even if that's not very hard at all.

She holds out his hands for his neck, trying to strangle him. He catches her arms and they wrestle, Draco with more strength than Hermione has. When Hermione thinks she's got enough of the upper hand to at least get away, she lets him go and turns to run.

Draco's hand snakes around her middle, pulling her backwards and down on top of him. She tries to pull away, but the movement of her legs makes her cunt hurt, and Draco is on top of her before she can.
"Wait," she says. "Remember how much you didn't want to work for Voldemort? You-"

"That was a long time ago, Granger," he says, adjusting himself so that his cock could enter her easily. "Don't live in the past."

When he fucks her, it's as hard and fast as everything else he's done. She tries to fight him off, but twisting with him inside her only causes more pain. He holds her arms above her head so she has no real chance of winning. Despite herself, she begins to cry in earnest. She can't stop herself; the pain and humiliation combine with her helplessness and the tears flow like they did the day of Professor Dumbledore's funeral. She turns her head to one side, accidentally toward Lucius.

He's still stoic, but when he sees her face, he looks away from her to Draco. After a moment, he returns his gaze to her.

Draco is well endowed, just like his father. However, Lucius is wider and Draco is longer. Unwillingly, Hermione notices how different Draco is from Lucius in this regard. If it were Lucius, she doesn't think they'd have gotten this far yet; he likes to take his time. Hermione wonders what Lucius thinks of Draco's impersonation of a deranged canine or hyperactive rabbit.

As if reading her thoughts, Lucius speaks at last. "Stop."

Draco stops while still inside Hermione. He looks at his father in surprise.

"You need much training in the intimate arts," Lucius says, approaching the two. Coming to a stop beside the bed, he begins to undo his trousers.

"No," Draco whines. "I earned this."

"Which is precisely why you must enjoy it completely." Lucius joins them on the bed, taking one of Hermione's legs and pulling her wider to make room for him.

Hermione can't believe what's happening. Nightmare is too tame a word for what this is. Humiliating is not strong enough. She wishes she could curl into a ball and die.

Lucius positions himself beside Draco, his half-hard cock already squeezing into Hermione's cunt. Hermione screams and can't help but try to worm away. The pain rips something inside her, makes her choke on air like she's gagging on the agony. She makes a futile attempt to beat them back, but each grabs an arm and pins it to the bed.

"Now," Lucius says. "Slowly. Like this."

He begins to move, dragging himself into and out of her with such slowness that, at first, she's not even sure he's moving. Draco, looking supremely unhappy to be taught this lesson in this way, pouts, but joins in his father's rhythm.

Still crying, Hermione snifflies and tries to wipe her face on the pillow. Then, to her mingled shock and relief, the pain begins to go away. And so does every other sensation. She can see both Malfoys are still fucking her, but she can't feel it. Lucius leans down, brushes his lips against her ear, but she isn't aware of feeling that, either. It's as if she's watching it happening to someone else from their point of view. This, she realizes, is what those trauma victims were talking about.

Neither Malfoy notices she's no longer with them. They continue their painfully slow momentum until Draco stills, an expression Hermione has never seen before on his face. He pulls out of her, but Lucius doesn't. Once his son is clear, Lucius increases his pace, fucking Hermione until he comes. Then he, too, withdraws from her body.
Hermione wants to curl up, to provide herself some measure of protection, but she's too sore to move. Instead, she lies still and hopes that they will now leave her alone.

"Where were you going?" Draco asks.

Hermione had forgotten that was the reason for all this.

"Go... fuck yourself, Malfoy," she bites out.

"Let's turn her over, Father," Draco says. "Give her a taste of what her boyfriend goes through."

"Oh, God," Hermione moans, the tears starting afresh. She can't take much more of this. "No. Merlin, no. Please, don't."

Draco reaches for her arm, trying to turn her onto her stomach.

"That will do, Draco," Lucius says. "I will take it from here."

"But-"

"I said no," Lucius cuts across him. "Leave."

"You called me here," Draco says, accusation in his voice. "You asked for my help."

"To retrieve the girl and my wand. I have both. Your job is done. Leave."

Draco opens his mouth as if to argue, closes it again, collects his clothing, and leaves.

Once his son is gone, Lucius looks at Hermione. She knows she's a sight; covered in sweat, blood coating her inner thighs. He cups her face with one hand, surprisingly gentle.

"Go clean yourself," he orders. "Do it quickly and come back here."

"I c... I can't move," Hermione says.

"You will go clean yourself, or I will do it for you."

Unable to bear the thought of yet another violation and still more pain, Hermione carefully rolls herself from the bed. Her legs are wobbly when she tries to stand, and she supports herself on the nearest bedpost. Taking small, cautious steps, she makes her way into the bathroom and shuts the door.

The hot water from the shower soothes her sore muscles, but does not relax them enough to allow her to clean with great speed or efficiency. When she tries to clean between her legs, the mere pressure hurts too much for her to continue. She does the best she can, dries herself off, and returns to the other room.

Malfoy is waiting for her. He's changed his clothing and is now in formal wear.

"You will come with me," he says, "and you will do whatever I ask of you without hesitation, and be grateful for any action I may take. If you disobey me in any way, I will rape your precious Weasley and castrate him at the point of climax. And I will make you watch when I do. Have we an understanding?"

Hermione nods, seeing no point in arguing unless she wants to go back into the torture room or be raped again. "Yes."
"Come here."

She walks to stand beside him, the movement still painful. He wraps an arm around her shoulders, and moments later, they've Apparated away.

When the feeling of being forced through a tube disappears, Hermione finds herself once again in Hogsmeade. It's dark out, but she thinks she can see dawn approaching. All the stores are dark and closed. She isn't sure why Malfoy has brought her here again.

He sets off up the road, and Hermione realizes they aren't here to visit a shop. Malfoy is going to Hogwarts. Stomach twisting, Hermione follows behind him. They make their way up the road and toward the castle gates, which, Hermione remembers though it seems like a lifetime ago, are guarded by winged boars. She can see, however, that the boars are no longer there. Instead, something thin and motionless floats above the gates, and it isn't until they are almost at the gates that Hermione sees what it is.

Harry's body is strung up like a trophy over the entrance to his former school, the site of his greatest defeat. It's encased in an orb not unlike what Voldemort used to carry Nagini around in toward the end of the war. Harry's expression is fixed, but Hermione can't tell what it is. Perhaps surprise, or pain, or both. Did dying hurt? Did it hurt when Voldemort did it?

Her stomach convulses and she's sure that if she had anything in it, she would be emptying it onto the ground at that very moment. It's sick and morbid, and something only Voldemort would take pleasure in doing.

Malfoy leads them onto the grounds and toward the castle doors. The lights in the castle are out, except for the flickering candlelight issuing from the Great Hall. He mutters a password, and the doors open to admit him. Without hesitation, he passes through the Entrance Hall and into the Great Hall.

The room is full of people milling around. There's a small buzzing sound as everyone engages in their own private conversations. The tables have been pushed against the walls to make room, reminding Hermione of the night Sirius broke into Gryffindor Tower and everyone had to sleep in the Great Hall; the tables were arranged exactly the same way. Hermione sees several familiar faces: Seamus, Cho, Lavender, Parvati, Percy, George, Hannah Abbot, and Zacharias Smith. All are next to Death Eaters, apparently having chosen to defy Voldemort rather than submit to his new regime. Seamus and Cho are in much the same position as they were when Hermione last saw them. The others are no better off: barely clothed if at all, some with objects inserted into them, or gags in place or, in Smith's case, mutilated body parts. While Hermione feels self-conscious at being naked in this room, at least she can try to comfort herself with the knowledge that she's physically whole and not alone.

Remembering her orders, Hermione stays close to Malfoy, while still keeping an eye out. With so many people here, it's likely Ginny, Luna or both will be here as well.

Abruptly, the buzzing noise stops. Looking around to see what caused it, Hermione spots a thin, pale, ghostly figure with gleaming red eyes standing at the front of the hall, looking down over them as Professor Dumbledore had done for so many years. The only light on him comes from the candles, casting him alternately in shadow and dim light. Hermione stares at him, clearly alive and well. It's surreal; she vividly remembers his dead body, carted out of the Great Hall so as not to dampen the celebration of victory.

He begins to speak in his high cold voice, holding everyone at attention. Hermione uses this opportunity to skim the hall for Ginny or Luna. She sees flashes of red hair, but she knows it could
be anyone; while all the Weasleys have red hair, not all red heads are Weasleys. So absorbed is she in finding her friends that she doesn't realize that Voldemort has stopped speaking until Malfoy is moving through the crowd, toward the front. Reluctantly, Hermione follows, trying to stick close to Malfoy in an attempt to guard what little modesty she has left.

He takes the space Voldemort has vacated, holding their audience captive. Hermione continues trying to stand behind him; she has no desire to be the center of attention. Malfoy turns to her, a strange glint in his eyes.

"On your knees, pet."

Hermione feels sick. After what he's just put her through, he can't be about to put her through more. He just can't. She'd like to argue, but remembers his words, and gets to her knees. Wanting to be something more than a simple victim this time, she does not wait for him to remove his cock from his trousers, or for him to order her to. Instead, she reaches for the button, undoes it, and pulls his cock free of her own accord. Then, closing her eyes, pretending she's not being watched by who knows how many people, she wraps her mouth around it and begins to suck.

*It's an ice lolly,* she tells herself. *It's just an ice lolly and you're home in your room eating it, studying Transfiguration. You have to get through this, for Ron.*

She's been through this so many times that she hardly notices the tell-tale signs that Malfoy is about to climax: the increased rate at which he rocks into her mouth, his painfully tight hold on her hair. It's only when he withdraws that she realizes it's over. Then, it occurs to her he hasn't come. She understands what he's doing a split-second before it happens.

He comes all over her face, neck and chest, the warm spurts of release coating her upper body. She coughs, but doesn't spit, wiping the come from her mouth. The room is silent, as if waiting to see what she does next.

Coughing once more and knowing better than to anger Malfoy right now, she says, "Thank you, Master."

The room erupts in cheers. She supposes she said the right thing.

"Impressive," comes Voldemort's voice. The room falls silent. "I confess, I did not think you capable of it."

Hermione is only half listening; now that everyone is focused on Voldemort again, she can try to find her friends.

"I live to serve, My Lord," he states. "The Mudblood bitch is fully broken, just as I promised."

"That's nothing," calls a rough voice from near the front. "I've broken the Weasley boy."

Hermione's heart jolts and she peers into the crowd, desperate for a glimpse of Ron.

"Shut up, Fenrir," someone else says. "You haven't broke im! You need the Malfoy boy just to help you catch im!"

"No, no," Voldemort says, sounding absolutely delighted. "Come. Show us what miracle you have worked."

He makes a gesture at Malfoy that is apparently a dismissal, because he moves off with nothing further, Hermione in his wake. Malfoy is disgruntled, as he often is after any sort of intimate
interaction with Hermione, but Hermione couldn't care less. She watches the front, waiting to see Ron. Instead, Greyback drags Bill behind him.

Hermione's heart twists and she feels a pang of sympathy. She's never gotten to know Bill well, but she's always liked him, and he was certainly there for her after she, Harry and Ron escaped Malfoy's home during the war. She's a bit surprised Draco could help subdue Bill, but reminds herself that things have changed. She doesn't want to see what sort of perverted display Greyback will put on, so she turns away, weaving her way through the crowd without Malfoy who, if he notices her absence, doesn't care. He stands talking with Rodolphus.

Stomach lurching, Hermione looks for Ginny to be near him. She sees that Ginny had the same idea she had; the younger girl is leaving the Great Hall, shoving people out of her way if they don't move for her. Hermione waits a beat, then follows. She sees Ginny outside the hall as she's headed downstairs.

"Wait," Hermione calls, hurrying to catch up.

Ginny starts, then turns. "Oh. Hello, Hermione."

There's a silence, which Hermione breaks. "I'm sorry about Bill."

Ginny shrugs. "Here." She pulls out her wand and waves it at Hermione. Moments later, all of Malfoy's release is gone. Then, Ginny removes her traveling cloak and hands it over.

"Thanks," Hermione says, wrapping it around herself. "Are you okay?" she asks. Ginny seems a lot more sullen than when they last met.

"Fine. It's just... I wanted treacle tart, so I'm going to the kitchens."

"But... you hate treacle tart."

Ginny looks on the edge of tears. "Just come with me. Please?"

"Of course." Hermione falls into step beside her, wanting to ask if she'd seen Luna or gotten one of George's galleons, but not wanting to seem insensitive.

They make their way to the kitchen in silence. Inside, they find the house elves in sour spirits. They react to Hermione and Ginny's sudden appearance as Dobby reacted when he thought he'd done something wrong; it's as if they're trying to jump out of their skin. When they see who it is, however, they relax. They stay in their corners, in the shadows, and don't offer any help or greeting. Hermione feels sorry for them; she wishes she could have taken S.P.E.W. farther. She'd been hoping that, since Voldemort was no longer a threat in her world, she could bring it to Kingsley's attention.

The four tables are in place down here, and all are empty. Hermione and Ginny sit at the nearest one.

"What's wrong?" Hermione asks.

Ginny is silent for a moment, staring at the surface of the table. After what seems like forever, she says softly, "Rodolphus got his wish. He's getting a pure-blood heir."

Hermione's heart sinks. She isn't sure what to say. What can a person say to comfort their best friend who is pregnant with a hated enemy's child? "God, Ginny. I'm so, so sorry." Hermione hugs Ginny. "Is there... Is there something I can do?"
Ginny shakes her head and pulls away. "I've already threatened to kill it. Rodolphus will kill Dad if I do. I thought that once the spawn is hatched, he'd let me go, but he plans to keep me around."

Ginny holds her head in her hands. "I saw Luna up there. I asked her to meet me down here. If you two are leaving, I'm going with you."

Hermione's heart lifts. "Luna is here?"

"Yeah. With Draco. She'll be along soon. What did you do to Lucius?"

Hermione blinks, trying to keep up with the rapid change in topic. "Excuse me?"

"You got him to change his mind."

"I... did? What?"

"When Voldemort told him he had to prove that he was punishing you - breaking you was the term - better than Azkaban, Malfoy was on to Rodolphus about how it was easy, and how he was going to... Well, rape you, in front of everyone. He... made some really crude remarks I'm sure you don't want to hear. What he did out there was pretty tame, compared to what he was saying."

"He doesn't want anyone to know."

Both girls jump at the sound of the new voice. Hermione looks around and sees Luna, looking the same as the last time she saw her, entering the kitchen. Upon seeing Hermione and Ginny, Luna brightens.

"Hello, Hermione. Ginny told me you made it through, too. It's really different here, isn't it?" She wanders over to the nearest house elf. "Can you show me where the pudding is? I really want some just now."

"Luna," Hermione says, hurrying to grab Luna and pull the younger girl to sit beside her and Ginny. "Where is that book? Why haven't you ended this spell?"

"I don't have the book," Luna says calmly. "Daddy sent it to me after Harry won, remember? I think that since Harry didn't win, he never sent the book."

All the oxygen seems to leave the room. "Then... Where's your father? Can't you ask him for it?"

Luna nods. "I did. But he's in Azkaban and they don't let prisoners get post there."

"Then how did he... Oh, right. They let your father out after Voldemort was dead." Hermione thinks hard, trying to come up with away around this unforeseen obstacle. "Okay," she says slowly. "What about the store or the person your father got the book from?"

"I'm not sure where he is," Luna answers as an elf gives her a large bowl of pudding and three spoons. She gives one each to Hermione and Ginny. "Daddy met him near London and he sold Daddy the book."

"Near London?" Hermione repeats, setting her spoon down. "That's not much of a help."

"What's the man's name?" Ginny asks, tapping her spoon against the table.

"Artemis Ethelbert," Luna says, taking a spoonful of pudding.

"Are you sure?" Ginny demands, looking pale.
"That's what Daddy said."

Ginny swears. "Death Eaters burned his home three days after Voldemort won. He died in that fire. If the book survived, the Death Eaters have it, but the Daily Prophet said absolutely everything was destroyed."

"What?" Hermione demands. "No. NO! That's not possible."

"No, Hermione, it's true," Luna confirms. "I tried to find him, but his house is all ashes and he wasn't there."

"Didn't you read how to reverse the spell before you cast it?" Ginny asks.

"Daddy said it was in the book. I-"

"So you were going to find it in the book when you were ready to reverse it?" Ginny interrupts.

Luna nods. "Daddy said it was just a spell to see how things would be. He didn't say it would change anything."

After the last few however-long-she's-been-stuck-here, Hermione thought nothing could make her feel any worse. It turns out, this was one of the rare occasions she has been wrong.

"So... So what do we do, then? We can't stay here. We just can't."

"We could try to find Neville," Luna suggests. "We could join him."

"Unless you can spell this collar off me, I can't go," Hermione says. "It lets Malfoy track me wherever I am."

Ginny produces her wand and tries. Nothing happens. Both girls swear.

"You could try asking him," Luna says, taking another bite of pudding. "He might let you go."

Ginny rolls her eyes. "Have you actually met Lucius, Luna?"

"Not formally. But I've been watching him. He really cares about you, Hermione." She looks thoughtful. "Maybe too much to let you go."

Hermione and Ginny exchange looks. Hermione can't believe her ears. "Did you see what he did to me up there? Did you happen to notice all the scars I've gotten from his beatings?"

"Ginny said he changed his mind. It was because he didn't want to hurt you."

"What do you-"

"You're walking strangely. If he'd done what he said he would, he would have hurt you more."

Hermione looks at Ginny for help. She's already upset, and is afraid she'll hurt Luna's feelings if she says what she's thinking.

"Luna," Ginny says, "Malfoy doesn't care about Hermione because she's a Muggle-born. He hates her."

Luna shakes her head, taking another bite of pudding. "That's what he wants everyone to think. He's afraid they'll find out."
Ginny sighs and shrugs. "I tried," she says to Hermione. Then, to both of them, she asks, "Is there anything we can do? I mean, is there any chance of us getting that book and changing things back?"

"If the Death Eaters took it, then we'd have to go through all of them to find out which one has it now, and hope it's one who likes one of us so they'll hand it over," Hermione says. "Even then, we could be wasting our time because it might have been destroyed in the fire."

"So," Ginny says, slumping back. "We're fucked."

"If I can get this collar off, I like Luna's suggestion. We should go join Neville."

"I can't," Ginny tells them. "If I leave, Rodolphus will kill Dad. I have to stay."

"Well, I wouldn't leave you," Hermione says slowly. It's not that she doesn't mean it, but that she doesn't want to face the idea of staying with Malfoy.

"I'll stay, too," Luna says, sliding the bowl of pudding over so it was closer to the center of the three of them. "You are my only friends."

Ginny looks thoroughly depressed, but takes a spoonful of pudding and eats it anyway. Hermione looks between the two of them. During school, Luna ate pudding while waiting for her belongings to be given back to her. It was like a calm acceptance, or a wait-and-see approach. Or maybe she just liked pudding. Hermione is trying to decide which is the case here.

Hermione doesn't see any better choice than to stick close to her friends. She doesn't see any worse price than to be Malfoy's prisoner. It's a horrible decision: she can keep looking for a book she may never find, that may not even exist anymore, that she may not get the chance to search for because she's Malfoy's property and he's not likely to let her out again, or she can accept that life as she knew it is over and done with and she has to learn to walk in a new world.

She looks at her friends again. She takes a bite of pudding.

End Notes

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