

These Bars Between Us

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These Bars Between Us

by [CarolineSedgefield](#)

Summary

Harry Potter is dead. The war rages on. Death Eater Draco Malfoy is imprisoned, bored, and angry. Despite the irresistible distractions provided by Order member Hermione Granger, he vows to escape. But what happens when he does?

Notes

This is the first piece of fan fiction I've ever written – it's also the first smut – and I had so much fun with it. No beta readers, just my constant re-reading and editing.

This is most definitely a Dramione story – though the tags include some additional pairings for our favourite duo, I felt they were necessary to round out the narrative and provide some much needed perspective as to who our characters are, and who they become through the epilogues.

Note, I'm not British, though I did my best to make it so – I'm sure a few Canadianisms/Americanisms may have slipped through.

I hope you enjoy it!

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

Part 1

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Prologue

I've lost count how many days I've been here. Sitting. Staring. Building walls in my mind. Layering brick after brick. Mortar in between. Another layer. Higher and higher I build my walls. Layer upon layer I keep building. And when I'm done?

I start all over again.

Brick one. Brick two. Brick three. Layer on the mortar. Brick four. Brick five. Brick six. Another layer of mortar. Brick seven. Brick eight. Brick nine. Mortar.

On and on it goes, building walls that are far thicker and stronger than the cell I currently find myself in. It's not a proper cell, really. It was improvised at the end of a drab, narrow hospital green coloured room. Bars installed from ceiling to floor, cutting off one end of the room to imprison me. Inside my makeshift cell? Not much. A metal camp bed with an impossibly thin mattress. A sheet (singular). A pillow (thin). And a bucket (let's please not discuss the bucket).

And, of course, a shit ton of wards to contain me and suppress my magic.

Beyond my cell there's a small window facing east and providing this awful room some natural light every morning. I can just see the blue sky, clouds, and a bit of greenery. Leaves. Sometimes they blow in the wind, and I can spend hours just staring at them. Watching them flutter and turn. Comparing the shades of green from one side of the leaves, to the other. I never hear the leaves in the wind. The window is always closed. The air always stagnant.

The rest of the room — the part not comprising my cell — mostly consists of storage. Boxes and crates, piled to the ceiling, surrounding the walls and forming aisles in the middle of the room. It's where they put things that have no use. No purpose.

Like me.

I'm not sure how long I've been here now. I lost track some time after about four weeks.

I'm bored.

So. Fucking. Bored.

There are 18 vertical bars closing my cell off from the rest of the room, and 3 horizontal ones bracing them down the centre. That makes 76 quadrants. There are 54 floor tiles in my cell. I can't quite see how many there are outside, but the space looks roughly double the depth of my cell, so I'd guess 108 floor tiles out there, making 162 tiles in total.

Within my direct line of sight there are 214 boxes, and 4 wooden crates. Each crate face is 12 boards high, framed with four more boards and one diagonal cross brace, and held together with 20 screws. If I presume each of the four faces is constructed the same, with a top and bottom excluding the cross brace....that'd make 288 boards, 136 framing and cross braces and a total of 448 screws.

Nobody comes in here. Not really.

I mean, yes. I'm given food twice a day. Someone comes in daily to refill a basin of water with which to wash, and to perform a less than satisfactory scourge on me from a distance. It's not enough. Not nearly. I've been wearing the same clothes since my capture. And while I've always bought the very best clothes a galleon can buy, not even high quality garments can withstand constant wear for over four weeks. They're worn, stained, and overall grimy. I feel like shit. I'm sure I look like shit, too.

What I wouldn't give for a shower and a change of clothes. And a shave. Fuck, I could really use a shave. I'm fully bearded at this point.

I ruined any chance of that, though.

The Order has protocols in place when coming near or into my cell. With wands trained on me, I stand with my back facing the bars furthest from the door. I put my hands through the bars behind me, and someone binds them. Only then does anyone come in to vanish the contents of my bucket, refresh my basin, and drop off a meal. Only once my cell is closed and locked again, and everyone a sufficient distance, are my hands released.

Within days of my initial capture I took advantage of an Order member who came a little too close to my cell without following the proper protocols. I reached through the bars, got hold of his arm, pulled him towards me, grabbed his head between my two hands and snapped his neck. He didn't even have a chance to protest. It was quick and easy.

I did it again a few days later when some careless bint got too close bringing me a tray of food.

I'm now told it's the reason they can't risk taking me out of my cell to shower.

Fuckers.

Because of their incompetence, I have to sit here in my own filth?

I hate them.

Every fucking one of them.

I guess I'd had some vague notion once Potter was dead, they'd all just go away and accept defeat, what with their beacon of hope gone. Instead, they regrouped. Got organised and continued fighting in his name. They turned the git into a bloody martyr and now here we are, eight years later and we're still fighting.

Well, no. That's not true. I'm not doing anything. I'm just sitting here. Staring. Counting. And occluding.

I'm occluded so deeply sometimes I'm barely conscious. It's the only way to prevent myself from going completely crazy. To stop losing my mind from boredom and isolation. I sort through my memories and organise them. I bury anything too personal, and build walls around any strategic information I hold as an officer in Lord Voldemort's army. Layering brick after brick. Mortar in between. Another layer. Higher and higher. My goal is to reveal nothing. To provide nothing of use to the Order.

They'd targeted me, specifically. Someone among the Order's idealistic fools confused me with the terrified child I once was. The one who cried in the bathroom. The one who couldn't follow through and cast the killing curse. Who refused to identify his peers.

They thought it was a sign of some redeeming quality. That I was waiting for an opportunity to be a good person. For someone to believe in me. To be a good man. They thought once I was given the chance I would do the right thing.

That might have been true then. But not now. I'm not the same person. I don't cry. I do follow through. And I've killed more people than I can count. Truth be told, I enjoy it. I take pleasure in the act. I like to get my hands dirty – the more painful and bloody it is, the better. I no longer worry about redemption or right and wrong. It's a matter of survival. My survival. And right now that means staring, counting, and occluding.

Part 1

Chapter 1

On a day like every other in this shithole, after finishing what passes for breakfast, I'm sitting on the floor cross-legged in front of my bed occluding – I've gone deep today, looking back at fucked up childhood memories and sorting them into mildly traumatic events, moderately traumatic events, and severely traumatic events.

And that's when it happens. Just as I'm pondering my father's berating me for not making it into Slughorn's awful club in 6th year (a mildly traumatic event that one – as if I didn't have something more important to occupy my mind back then?), something different happens. I hear voices entering the room when everyone would normally be avoiding it like the plague. I can't see who it belongs to just yet – they're blocked by the piles of rubbish stacked almost to the ceiling.

“And how long has he been here?”

Fuck. Me.

I haven't heard that voice in years, but I'd recognise it anywhere. It's as swotty and irritating as ever, with just a hint of underlying superiority and know-it-all-ness.

“Erm, it's approaching 2 months now” someone mumbles.

Two months? I've been sitting here doing nothing for two FUCKING months?

“And you've learned nothing?”

“Nothing” says someone else.

“Nothing at all?”

The mumbler responds, “Our interrogations proved fruitless. We tried everything short of an unforgivable, but nothing worked. We threatened him. Tortured him. Kept him awake for days. Withheld food. We even had our best legilimens try reading his mind. Nothing.”

The other voice continues, “After a while we gave up, and just let him be. Figured the isolation might work in our favour.”

“And did it?”

The voice sighs. “No. He's mostly catatonic, now. Not sure he's even there half the time.”

“Catatonic? What do you mean?”

“See for yourself,” says the mumbler.

There's some shuffling, but I remain seated where I am, keeping my walls strong, staring straight ahead, and not acknowledging them. Then the three of them come into view. The mumbler and the other one are regulars in my daily routine. And then there's her.

Granger.

While obviously older, she looks largely the same as back in school. Her brown hair is still wild and unruly, but the curls are less frizzy. More controlled. More defined into spirals and coils than bushy masses.

She's skinnier too. All angles and bones. Her chest is mostly flat, as is her arse. It's a shame, really. Much as I'd never admit to it, I used to enjoy watching her from behind in a pair of muggle denims. Now? The denims are still there, but there's much less to admire. All of her clothes appear to hang off her. Like she's not really wearing them. Then again, maybe it's just her choice of clothes. Besides those denims she can barely fill out, she's got on a plain black t-shirt and some awful red, burgundy and gold tartan shirt.

The biggest change by far, is in her face. It's strained. Pinched. Weary. In contrast to her hair that's gotten darker, her face has gotten paler – the freckles that used to smatter her cheeks and nose are all but gone, leaving her looking less like Granger, and more like someone else. I sometimes used to wonder where else she might have freckles....on her shoulders? Her breasts? Her thighs? Now I only wonder if there are any freckles left at all.

Then there's her eyes. They're still big and golden brown, but lack the innocence and hope they once had. They're hard now. Calculating. And tired.

She stands there for a while looking at me, frowning. Evaluating. Those penetrating eyes narrow a bit, taking everything in.

"He's not catatonic. He's occluding. Deeply."

"He's what?!"

She sighs, as if she's tired of being the smartest person in the room.

"It means he can build barriers around his thoughts. Compartmentalise and protect them so no one can gain access. It's why your legilimens couldn't find anything. It's also why none of the other methods used to extract intelligence worked. A really good occlumens can compartmentalise emotions, and even pain – it's as if they're watching it happen to someone else, not themselves."

She stops and watches me – considering what she's learned, and probably the ineptitude of the others in the room.

And that's when I break my vacant stare and look directly at her – she gasps, but maintains eye contact. We watch each other, neither one of us willing to look away first. After a few minutes, I give her the classic Malfoy smirk. That small change of expression communicates more than I could ever say. It tells her I'm better than her. Smarter than her. More capable

than her. It tells her even though I'm the one in the cell, that I have the upper hand. I'm in control.

And she knows it. They all do.

It's why they've left me here, not knowing what to do with me. Their morals are too high to do anything too sinister to extract the information they need (fucking pussies), but they can't let me go. So instead I just sit here. Doing nothing. Biding my time, waiting for someone else to forget their protocols (it's happened once more – do they ever learn?) or an opportunity to escape.

She finally looks away, clears her throat, and asks "What does he do all day?"

"Nothing," the mumbler tells her. "He just sits there."

"Well, you can't just let him sit there 24 hours a day. It's inhumane."

Ahh...there she is. The champion of the downtrodden. Who would have thought I could ever be a cause worthy of her attention? Maybe she'll come up with an awful acronym for me too. DICK – Draco Is Completely Knackered.

"What would you have us do?" asks the other voice.

"Well, he can't just sit there. At the very least, you could give him something to read. A shower wouldn't hurt, either. A change of clothes. Some time outside..."

She trails off, seeing that I'm *still* looking at her.

The other voice is talking again. What's his name anyway? Fletch? Fletcher? Fletchley? He's telling her they can't let me out of my cell. That it's too risky. Too dangerous. That I've already killed three Order members, and it's just not worth putting anyone else in harm's way. But she's not buying it. Saying if the proper protocols are followed there's no way a single wandless wizard can be that big of a danger to multiple armed members of the Order. That they should be more than capable of handling something so simple as allowing a prisoner a shower.

I've never liked Granger more than at this moment. If only because I'm so desperate for a shower.

I don't get one though.

I do, however, get a book.

Three days later, Granger storms into the dingy storage room looking all self-righteous and tosses a massive tome towards my cell. It lands with a loud thud just outside the bars.

I look at her and say, "What's this?"

They're the first words I've spoken in days. Possibly weeks. My voice feels rough from disuse. Weaker than I'd like, but at least it's full of contempt.

"It's a book," she replies.

Obviously.

I stand up from the camp bed where I was sitting, put my hands in my pockets, and look down at it. Then I look at her with my vacant occluded eyes. I don't make a move to pick it up.

"It's to help occupy your time," she says.

I remain silent. Staring at her. Clenching my teeth. Saying nothing.

Honestly, though? Deep down, behind everything I'm hiding with my occlusion, I'm desperate to pick it up. To have something – *anything* – to do. I'd read shampoo instructions at this point, for fucks sake. But I don't want to give Granger the satisfaction of helping me. So I don't.

I just stare at her until she sighs, turns around, and walks away.

I leave it there for two more days. Two excruciating days.

I can't see the title and I refuse to look at it. I won't even go close to it. I refuse to show any kind of curiosity or interest in it whatsoever. Just to irritate her, and to spite myself, apparently.

On the third day, she comes in dragging a chair behind her. It's one of those old school wooden chairs, and the sound it makes dragging across the floor is like nails on a chalkboard.

I'm sitting on my bed, leaning against the wall and lift an eyebrow at her.

She ignores my silent question, places the chair in front of my cell – out of arm's reach, of course – and sits down, crossing her legs in worn out denims and a pair of bubblegum pink high tops on her feet. Honestly? Does the witch even know how to dress herself? She looks like a child.

She looks at me, and waits, crossing her arms over her black long-sleeved shirt. The bitch obviously knows I'm desperate to look at the book, that it's only a matter of time before I give in.

I just don't know what she expects? For me to show gratitude? Fuck that.

I look back at her, expressionless.

“Are you even going to look at it?” she finally asks.

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t need your pity, mudblood.”

I spit the words out. I can’t stand that fucking look on her face. It’s smug and sorry at the same time. Bitch.

She narrows her eyes, and starts chewing her bottom lip, maintaining eye contact. Waiting.

I spend the next hour looking at her lips. Examining them in detail. She hasn’t got a particularly defined cupid’s bow, but they’re full, pink, and slightly chapped. She chews the bottom one relentlessly. Pulling at the dead skin with her teeth. As much as I wish she’d just put on some lip balm, I can’t stop staring, and find myself wondering if they’re soft.

And then? She cracks.

She huffs and runs a hand through her messy curls, then gathers them up, and twists them into a messy bun on top of her head. She holds it there a moment, looking down at herself, thinking, before she reaches into her back pocket, takes her wand, and stabs it through her hair, holding it in place. Irritated, she uncrosses her legs, leans back in her chair, pulls on the hemline of her shirt, and practically shouts “Okay, I get it! You’ve got exceptional self control. Now would you just look at the book already?”

I sigh, making it obvious that unlike me, *she* lacks self control.

Then I very deliberately get up off my bed, and head towards the bars of my cell and the book. I bend down, reach through, grab it, and pull the massive....textbook? through.

“The fuck is this, Granger?”

And there it is. There’s a glint in her eye and laughter just bubbling beneath the surface. This is the moment she’s been waiting for since she tossed that book at me three days ago.

“It’s the year one Muggle Studies textbook” she says smugly. And with that, she gets up and starts heading out. Just before she’s completely obscured by boxes (honestly, *what the fuck* are they storing in here, anyway? I’ve never seen anyone come to fetch anything), she turns and tells me,

“When you’re done with that, there are 6 more levels.”

What a fucking cunt.

I read it, of course.

By the time I'm on the 4th level textbook, we've got a basic understanding – I make it through all seven of these bloody textbooks, and then she'll provide something more interesting to read.

I'm desperate for something more interesting to read.

Because muggles? At least how they're portrayed in these books? Seem like incredibly dull and dimwitted people. I'm beginning to agree, in a more ideological rather than purely political sense, with Voldemort's desire to subjugate them and put them out of their misery. I'm fairly certain that's the exact opposite of what Granger intended with this little experiment of hers.

When she arrives with the 5th volume, I can't help myself. I engage.

"Granger," I say.

She looks at me, startled. I haven't addressed her since she threw that first book at me.

"You're a mudblood. You grew up with muggles, didn't you? Are these....books..." I sneer and wave my hand lazily over the latest, implying they barely deserve the title "...even remotely accurate?"

Her head tilts to the side, her curls cascading over her shoulder. While she takes a few moments to consider my question before responding, she pushes up the left sleeve of her jumper, scratching absentmindedly at the scars on her forearm. Mudblood. I can read it from here, as if they were carved into her skin yesterday.

"Yes...and no." She sighs.

I raise my eyebrows and wait for her to elaborate.

"The recorded events all happened, the historical figures existed, and the objects and technology that muggles have invented and that are described within the books are all accurate. But their interpretation is naive, at best." She pauses before she continues.

"These textbooks suffer from the same biased opinions that muggle anthropological texts have traditionally suffered from when describing indigenous peoples. They treat their subjects – muggles, in this case – as the 'other', as somehow foreign and completely different from us....and in doing so, create a divide between muggle and magical that's entirely artificial.

The fact of the matter is, we have far more in common with muggles than we have differences.”

I watch her closely for a few moments, digesting what she’s just told me.

“So these textbooks you have me reading – presumably to open my eyes to see how innovative and resourceful muggles are – are, in fact, doing the very opposite for me by painting them as ‘others.’”

“In fact,” I continue, “these books only seem to reinforce the arguments the Dark Lord has been making all along. That muggles are violent, barbaric creatures who waste their talents and technology to find crueler and more sophisticated ways of killing each other.”

“Or,” I add as an afterthought, “to be lazy. They deserve to be enslaved and ruled by their betters. And as far as I’m concerned? These books only help prove it.”

I nonchalantly lean forwards on the bars of my cell, getting as close to her as I can, to ensure she sees my smirk.

“So? Year five, next?” I ask, almost smugly.

Much to my delight, I *don’t* get year five.

Instead, Granger looks at me thoughtfully for a few moments, then goes rummaging through the tiny beaded bag hanging around her shoulder, sticking her whole bloody arm inside, and pulls out a box set of books.

She pulls her wand out of her back pocket and tells me to step back from the bars, and put my back against the far wall.

“This isn’t protocol, Granger.”

She looks up at me, surprised.

“Are you planning to bite the hand that feeds you, Malfoy?”

“Hasn’t stopped me before,” I drawl as I saunter to the back of my cell. And I mean it. I *have* killed Order members who are trying to feed me. Though, admittedly I didn’t bite them.

She looks at me again, considering. There’s something about the look on her face. I can’t quite place it.

“I don’t think you’ll hurt me,” she finally says.

“No?”

“No.”

And with that, she slowly makes her way to my prison, checks that the book set won’t make it through the bars in either direction, and starts removing and placing each individual book just beyond the bars, in my cell.

I could reach her in two steps. Grab her wrist or arm — both of which make their way into my cell repeatedly. Or her hair or her throat, as she crouches next to it. It would be just a matter of seconds, and I could pull her up against the bars, wrap my hands around her neck, and break it. She’s so small and frail, it’d be like breaking a bird’s neck. It would be so easy. Too easy.

I can’t say I’m not tempted. To kill Potter’s golden girl. The brightest witch of her age. Dead.

The Dark Lord would be pleased. Very pleased. After Potter, Granger is the next best symbol of the resistance. It’d make my capture worth it. Justified, even. I’d return in honour, rather than disgrace.

My breath hitches, my muscles flex and I start to move towards her. Just ever so slightly.

I stop abruptly. Breathe in deeply.

Sweet fucking Salazar...what is that smell?

It’s a combination of vanilla, coconut, and something else....it smells good. In fact, it smells bloody amazing. After weeks...no, months of sitting in my own filth, this new scent is enough to make me lightheaded. I close my eyes, and just breathe it in. Until I realise.

It’s her.

Oh nonononononono.

I lurch back against the wall, trying to get as far away as possible from that delicious scent of....is it cupcakes? and her. Fuck.

Fuck, Fuck. Fuck .

She straightens up from her position just outside my cell, pulls at the hemline of her horrendous knitted jumper, and gives me an almost playful look that says ‘I knew you wouldn’t hurt me.’

I get another whiff of heaven.

I start frantically layering bricks around my olfactory senses. Blocking them off, and preventing me from acknowledging anything that just happened. The walls go up, I calm down, and focus instead on the four books that are now piled just inside my cell.

“So....” she begins as she takes a few steps back, “...this is probably one of the most famous muggle fantasy trilogies in the world.”

“There are four books here, Granger,” I state matter-of-factly.

“Yes, I know.”

She looks annoyed.

“The first book isn’t part of the trilogy. It was actually written as a children’s story, but provides important context and background to the trilogy — which was not written for children, coincidentally.”

“Okay. Read the kids book first, then the trilogy. Got it.”

“Okay.”

“Okay.”

We look at each other for far too long. She shifts her weight from one foot to the other. Plays with her hair. I lean back against the wall and put my hands in my pockets.

“Well, then...” she says. “I’ve got to get going.”

This is far more awkward than it should be. I should have killed her.

She spins around and starts walking away, then stops and turns before she’s enveloped by boxes. She almost looks shy.

“Let me know what you think....it’s one of my favourite series,” she says.

And then she’s gone.

What the fuck is a hobbit?

It’s about two or so weeks before I see her again.

I’m lying on my bed, napping more than reading, with the last book in the trilogy propped open against my chest, when she walks in.

She's wearing a drab khaki jacket over an equally drab button-up white shirt. And denims. Always with the bloody denims and trainers.

She looks flustered. Her cheeks are pink, her eyes bright, and her hair is almost crackling with magic. For a (very) fleeting moment the thought crosses my mind that, despite her terrible wardrobe, she looks rather attractive. Or she would be, if she gained a few pounds.

I shake the thought out of my head and sit up, casually leaning against the wall, observing her, as I close the book and place it by my side. Then I wait.

She paces back and forth a few times, before she drags her school chair a few feet back from the bars, and sits with a huff. She looks at me. She looks at the book. She looks back at me.

"You're *still* reading?" she snaps. "It's been weeks. I thought, with all the time you've had, you'd be done by now."

I raise my eyebrows.

She huffs and cradles her head in her hands, elbows on her knees. She's mumbling under her breath, and shaking her head.

"Surely it's not my slow reading that's got you in such a state, Granger."

She sighs, and looks up.

"No. It's not," she admits.

"Bad day?"

I hope she says yes.

Say yes.

"Yes, actually."

Yes.

"One of our safe houses was compromised last night. We lost people. We lost intelligence. It was a disaster."

Good. I hope that arsehole Shacklebolt was killed. I fucking hate him. Or Lupin. Bloody disgusting half-breed.

"And in the midst of this disaster, you decided to check up on my reading."

"What? No...."

She drags her hands through her hair and pulls on the ends...it's impossibly long when the curls are straightened.

“The crisis is over. The survivors have been relocated, we’ve upped our security measures in our remaining safe houses, and I’ve just finished up a meeting with McGonagall.”

McGonagall is here? How come I’ve never seen her?

“I figured I’d stop in and see how you were faring.”

She looks at me with...what is that? Maybe hope in her eyes?

She needs a distraction.

Then almost under her breath, she adds “...though I did expect you’d be finished by now.”

I cross one leg over the other, and pick up the book. Looking at it. Trying to determine if I should tell her the truth.

It can’t hurt, can it?

“You’re right...” I finally say. “I’ve already read through them all once. Only I decided to start over again after discovering that I had...” I hesitate here, and scratch at the scruff on my neck, “...I had misunderstood a few key points.”

She sits up, her brows drawing together.

I elaborate, “The author named two important characters with such similar names, that I spent almost the entirety of my first reading thinking they were the same person.” I pause, look at her, then admit, “I was completely confused.”

Her eyebrows shoot up.

“I mean, really,” I continue. “Sauron and Saruman?! By the time I realised my error, I was already well into the third book. I finished, but finally decided I might get a better overall feel for this supposed ‘best fantasy series ever,’” I make air quotes here “if I knew what the bloody hell was actually going on.”

I finish and look at her, nonplussed. I uncross my legs. Run my hand through my hair. Keep staring at her.

She spends a few moments looking at me. Many emotions pass over her features before one wins out. Incredulity.

“Malfoy, are you telling me it took you *three* books to realise they were two different characters?! ” she asks. There’s a definite glint in her eye.

“Yes.”

And, apparently, that does it.

She bursts out laughing, and I’m simultaneously overwhelmed with conflicting thoughts.

Like, why did I just tell her I didn't understand something? And that it took a *really* long time for me to figure it out? It makes me look like a fucking idiot. And did I do that to make her feel better? I think maybe I did. And finally, why in Salazar's name does she look so stunning when she's laughing? Have I never seen her laugh before? I went to school with her for six fucking years, and I never saw her laugh? Her whole face is lit up. Her cheeks are pink and round and her eyes are bright and...happy? She's smiling, and fuck me if I can't help but stare at her mouth...

Thankfully, she interrupts my reverie, and brings me back down to earth.

"So you've read all the books, then...what do you think?"

I run my hands over my face, scratch at my beard, while I try to formulate an answer. I know she said it's one of her favourite series...but at the same time...who gives a fuck.

"Well, it all felt a little contrived," I start, "the depictions of good versus evil were too drastic and obvious. Nothing is ever that clear cut...the only character I really liked was the human in the fellowship, and that's because he was conflicted and inherently flawed. He was both good and bad....though I dare say he should have just murdered the hobbit and taken the ring."

"You're serious?"

"I am."

She stares at me for a long while, but says nothing.

"Look. You're forgetting that while *you* may relate to the fellowship and its lofty goals – which is clearly the author's aim... *I* relate to the other side. The big all-watching eye, the desire for power, the blatant disregard for human life."

I maintain my eye contact, and note the playful glint is entirely gone. I think she's disappointed.

Huh.

"Plus, Tom Bombadil has got to be the most annoying character I've ever had the misfortune to spend three chapters reading."

And just like that, the glint is back.

It would be overly dramatic, and a definite exaggeration, to say that Granger has changed my life. But in a limited way she's at least made it marginally better. My incarcerated life, that is.

I mean, I'm still stuck in this shithole.

The food is still inedible. The air is still stagnant. I'm still isolated. I'm still filthy. And I'm still shitting in a bucket (I thank the gods daily it's charmed).

But at least now I have some reading material.

And every few days, the mudblood stops in to drop off something new, and to collect and discuss the last book I've finished.

Every single book, though, has been a muggle one. I can't figure out if she's still pushing some kind of agenda, or if it's just easier knowing I've never read any of them.

Some of them have been terrible. Like the four sisters during the American civil war? I didn't finish that one — honestly, who does she think I am? Her girlfriend? It bored me to tears. I didn't understand the point of the guy that turns into an insect, and I threw the third Shakespeare play right back at her, refusing to read any more of his works. I'm not in fucking school anymore, I've no desire to decipher every fucking line I read.

My favourite by far is by some French bloke, about an imprisoned aristocrat who escapes and gets revenge on his enemies. Really? Is Granger trying to give me ideas?

When I asked if I could hold on to that one, she gave me a half sort of smile (*why* does she keep smiling at me?), and then agreed.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced include:

J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings trilogy

Louisa May Alcott's Little Women

Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis

Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo

Chapter 2

I'm lying on my bed, tossing and catching an apple to pass the time before I finally decide to eat it. I never thought I'd be reduced to entertaining myself with my food, but here we are.

I'm on my thirty-sixth toss without dropping it (can't drop it — it'd bruise, or even worse, roll out of the cell), when I hear the door to my storage room open, and Granger's footsteps approaching.

When the fuck did I start recognising her gait?

I toss the apple for the thirty-seventh time. The thirty-eighth. Thirty-ninth.

She clears her throat.

Fortieth.

I look at her, then back at the apple. Toss it again.

Forty-one. Forty-two. Forty-three. Forty-four. Forty-five.

I take a bite out of the apple, and swing my legs over the side of the camp bed as I sit up and look at her, waiting.

She looks different today. I mean, she's wearing almost the exact same clothes she always wears — plain top, blue denims, some form of hideous footwear — but there's something else going on with her. Like she's bursting with...something. Excitement? Anticipation? I can't place it.

"I have a treat for you, Malfoy."

"What am I? A fucking dog?" I hiss.

I focus on eating my apple, and ignore her. I hate surprises, I hate her for having one, and I hate myself for wanting to know what it is. Thank Merlin I've got my apple.

I very deliberately eat everything but the stem, while she watches patiently. Waiting for me to finish.

"Are you quite done?" she asks, her head tilted to the side.

"Yes."

"Good. Because I have something for you."

"Another book?"

She pauses and looks at me closely. "Do you still consider books treats?"

Fuck, I'm pathetic. I shift on my bed and frown at her. I don't answer the question.

She takes pity on me and doesn't pursue it (just kill me now), reaches into her shopper, and pulls out a towel, which she neatly folds and places on the chair she usually sits on during our book reviews. I stand up abruptly, and take the two steps to the bars of my cell, holding on with both hands as she now has my full and complete attention.

And the bitch knows it.

Next, she very deliberately takes out a pair of grey joggers, a black t-shirt, boxers, and socks, and places them all in a neat pile on top of the towel.

"What is this, Granger?"

My voice is strangled. I can barely get the words out. I really *am* fucking pathetic.

She looks at me, places her hands on her hips and smiles. Really smiles.

"You're getting a shower," she says happily.

I run my hands over my face, checking I'm awake and not dreaming. I lean into the bars of my cell.

"Don't toy with me." I beg.

Fuck, I'm the most pathetic creature that ever existed. But the thought of taking a shower, an actual fucking shower, and getting clean? Of clean clothes on top of it all? It has me ready to cry, I'm so fucking desperate. And it shows.

And she sees it. But rather than gloat, her eyes soften and she says, "I wouldn't do that. But there *are*..." she hesitates, "...conditions."

"Anything." My forehead is leaning on the bars at this point.

"On the way to the washroom, your hands will be bound behind your back. Your feet will also be tied, with just enough slack to walk. There will be at least three Order members accompanying you, with their wands trained on you the whole way there.

"Once in the washroom, you'll be accompanied and watched at all times, by an armed member of the Order, to ensure you don't try anything. You'll have eyes on you the entire time."

At this point, she stops, and...blushes?

"Nobody was willing, so I volunteered," she says in a smaller voice, a definite hint of embarrassment lacing her words.

I let that sink in for a moment, while I observe the blush staining her cheeks and creeping up her neck. Oh shit. *She's* shy.

“Listen, Granger… whatever it takes to get clean. It’s fine. I don’t care.”

“Okay then. I’ll be right back.” She turns on her heel and leaves.

I keep holding on to the bars, watching the empty space she just vacated. My grip is so tight my knuckles have turned white. It’s as if they’re grounding me. Like if I let go, it’ll prove the last few minutes weren’t real. I keep checking that the pile of clothes and the towel are still there.

When Granger returns she’s with Fletch-Fletcher-Fletchley, that other shitstain who’s always mumbling, and.....Salazar’s balls. Is the universe trying to test me?

It’s the fucking weasel.

I’d really *really* hoped he was dead.

I stand up straight, and start building walls around the intense desperation I feel, ensuring none of it is visible. There is *no* fucking way that arsehole is going to see me beg. He may be cleaner than me right now, but there’s no universe in which that blood traitor is better than me, and I can’t – no, I won’t – give him the opportunity to lord a fucking shower over me.

“Bloody hell,” the weasel says. “I needed to see it to believe it.” He lets out a low chuckle, adding, “Oh how the mighty have fallen.”

He’s clearly enjoying this. A little too much, by the looks of it. I’m going to eviscerate him when I get out of here.

But first? I need a fucking shower. So I bite my tongue, say nothing, fortify my walls, and stare at him as blankly as I can through my occlusion, not giving him the satisfaction of knowing he’s getting under my skin.

“Ronald, be nice...” Granger says under her breath to him.

Yes, Granger. Keep your pet in line.

Looking at me, she says, “As we discussed?”

I nod once, turn around, and place my hands behind my back. I hear an Incarcerous, and feel my hands bound tightly. A second time and my feet are bound, more loosely so I can walk.

The cell door is opened and I slowly shuffle out, four wands pointed in my direction.

Granger and the shitstain take positions in front, walking backwards to keep their wands trained on me. Fletcher? (Fletch? Fletchley?) and the weasel take the rear. As we slowly make our way towards the storage room door, I hear the git whisper, “Please try something, Malfoy.”

I don’t pay attention to him.

Instead, I keep my focus on where we're going. We're exiting the storage space and entering a faux-wood panelled hallway, with tile flooring. I'd been stunned when captured, and woke up in my cell. I've never been anywhere else in this place. I need to pay attention. I note how many doorways are in the hall, and what side they're on. There's something that looks like a foyer at the very end of it, as well as a staircase going up to the left.

As we pass an open door I peer inside – it's a small galley kitchen. Two witches inside. Outlets on the burnt-orange tiled walls, shiny metal contraptions on the formica counters, and a knife block. Remember the knife block. Three doors down from my storage room, on the left.

We keep going, and as we approach the stairs there's another open door to the right. This one is unoccupied, and appears to be a study. Shelves line the back wall, and a large wooden desk sits in front. Lots of random chairs. On the other walls are maps, with pins and notes and pictures. This has got to be where Granger had met with McGonagall....there's strategy happening here. Remember, the last door on the right.

We turn left and go up the stairs. They creak. The wallpaper running along their length is some gods awful psychedelic pattern that gives me a headache just to look at it. I focus on my steps instead. I count fifteen of them. There's an open window somewhere, and I can hear a breeze. Birds chirping. Voices distant in the background.

I can see now why they were so hesitant to bring me up here. It feels like a very long way from my cell.

We're in the upstairs hallway, which is covered in an atrocious pale yellow carpet the colour of piss, and stop about halfway down. The weasel pokes my back with his wand, hard. Definitely on purpose.

To my right is an extremely small and outdated washroom. The tile is mint green and pink... the toilet, sink and tub are also pink. It's the most beautiful room I've ever seen in my entire life.

"In we go," Granger points with her chin.

To the others she says "I'll let you know when we're done."

Weasel catches her by the arm and whisper yells "Are you sure about this? You can't trust him."

"It'll be fine," she says.

I look the weasel in the eye and sneer before I turn my back on him and make my way into the small washroom. The tub is straight ahead under a window. Toilet and sink to the left. Towel bar on the right.

It's already crowded, and I'm the only one in here.

Granger walks in behind me with her shopper in one hand and wand in the other. She gets awfully close – far too close for my comfort – as she manoeuvres herself around the door, and then finally closes it.

“It’s a little small in here,” she apologises.

“It is.”

I feel like I’m looming over her. She’s very short. Well over a foot shorter than me. I’d never noticed how tiny she is before. I’ve never been this close to her. She smells like heaven.

Stop it.

I pick up hints of coconut and vanilla again....as well as a slightly floral scent. I find myself leaning in towards her.

Stop.

Stop smelling the fucking mudblood.

She reaches around, brushing her arm against me, and places the shopper on the toilet seat. I stop breathing.

How long can I hold my breath for?

“Turn around?” she asks, completely unaware of the fact I’m about to asphyxiate myself.

Once I’m turned around, I start breathing again, and she removes me of my binds.

Then she perches on the counter, and leans back on the wall next to the mirror and sink. Her wand is out, but she’s not pointing it at me anymore. I wouldn’t say she’s relaxed, but she’s not on high alert, either.

I very intentionally turn my focus off of her and her glorious aroma, and on to the tub. My hands are shaking in anticipation as I turn on the water to start warming it up. Keeping my back to her, I peel off my shirt, trousers, pants and socks, leaving them in a pile on the floor, then flip the water to the shower and climb in.

As I do so, Granger quietly casts a shield charm to prevent the water from splashing out – I’m not allowed a shower curtain.

The feel of the water on my skin is both foreign and glorious. Gods it feels so good. Like, *so fucking good*. Like thousands of little raindrops kissing my skin. I moan in pleasure, and don’t bother to care how it might sound.

I spend a minimum of fifteen minutes just standing there, luxuriating in the spray. I turn myself around slowly, very deliberately, ensuring every part of my body has its turn, and gets the chance to enjoy it. I’ve all but forgotten there’s someone else in the room with me. That there’s no shower curtain. That I’m on full display.

I couldn't give a shit.

Let her look.

I find the shampoo on the edge of the tub, lather up my head and beard, then rinse for far too long. I do the same with my body, ensuring every last inch of me gets cleaned, from my head to my feet. I'm sure it's all rather indecent. When I'm done, I spend another few minutes just standing there again. Enjoying it. Feeling the water run down my body. Watching it spiral down the drain.

With much hesitation and a definite pang of regret, I turn the water off and for the first time since climbing into the tub, I look at Granger.

She's staring at me.

All of me.

Every inch.

That much is clear.

She releases the shield charm so I can reach out of the tub and get my towel, and then I dry myself off, fully aware that she's *still* staring. Like, *really* looking.

I'm not embarrassed.

On the contrary, I'm rather confident about what she sees.

I step out of the tub, dry off my feet and pull on my new boxers and joggers. They're not good quality. They're a little too loose, hanging on my hips. Nothing like I'm used to, but they feel spectacular. I mean, they're clean.

As I do so, Granger manages to stop staring, clears her throat and says, "There are scissors, a razor and cream here, if you want to take care of that beard."

I do.

I forgo putting on my new t-shirt and look in the mirror for the first time. Fuuuuuuuck. I really do look like shit.

My hair appears to have gotten darker — it's maybe very light blond now, instead of the almost platinum silver blond the Malfoy's are renowned for. It's long, too, brushing my shoulders and falling into my eyes. My blond beard is fairly full, but has grown unevenly. I scratch at it absentmindedly while I assess myself.

Surprisingly, I'm not *too* scrawny. I mean, I've always been slim, but never skinny — though my wide shoulders have typically given the illusion I'm smaller than I actually am. But now, I've got virtually no body fat on me, and my muscles are more defined than they've ever been. I have an actual six-pack. It shows that, in addition to occluding and reading, I've done my best to exercise in the confines of my cell.

But I look tired. Worn. And even paler than usual if that's fucking possible.

I glance at Granger and catch her looking at my chest.

"Sorry," she says. "I didn't mean to stare."

I tilt my head. Be my guest, Granger.

"Where did you get those?" She's referring to the many thick jagged scars that slash across my chest and stomach, creeping up to my neck. The smooth scar tissue is even lighter than my already pale skin. For a moment it looks as though she wants to reach out and touch them. Touch me.

For a split second, I want her to.

Desperately. Inexplicably.

She doesn't.

"Most are thanks to your best friend, Saint Potter."

Her big brown eyes widen.

"I never realised that curse caused you so much damage."

"It nearly killed me, Granger," I say harshly.

She shakes her head, "Harry said it was bad, but I never dreamed it was *that* bad."

I look at my reflection in the mirror. Looking at her looking at me.

"It's a dark curse, Granger. What did you expect? They're all bad." I pause. "Honestly? It's one of my favourites to cast. Painful, lots of bloodshed. Looks terrifying. Everything a Death Eater could possibly want."

At that reference to my employment she looks down at the mark on my left forearm. We both do. My Dark Mark looks harsh and ugly, standing out starkly against my fair skin.

I reach for the scissors.

"Those are charmed to prevent drawing blood," she points out.

"Ok. I'll try not to get too stabby then." I smirk at her in the mirror before getting started on my beard. It takes awhile to get it as short as I need it, then I lather up the cream, and begin shaving.

I'm pleased to note I'm beginning to look a lot more like myself. I could never claim to be a good looking man, but I'm not bad either. The pointy features I bore as a child squared off as I got older, and left me with what could best be described as a Roman patrician air. My eyes –

usually silver – are a rather dull grey at the moment...though that's my occlumency at work, keeping me more detached than usual.

I finish up, rinse, and rub my hands over my smooth face, admiring my work. Not bad.....but really, it never mattered to me how I looked. That was never important. My name, and the number of galleons in my vaults? Now that's a different story.

"Feel better?" Granger interrupts my musings.

"I feel fucking fantastic."

"Well, there's a marked improvement, that's for sure."

"Yeah?" I look her in the eye, rather than through the mirror. "What kind of improvement? Do I look good, or merely better than the mess I was an hour ago?"

I'm slightly mortified when I realise I'm flirting. With the mudblood.

Salazar Slytherin, what the fuck am I doing?

She looks me over, from head to foot, and then nods her head in approval as she tries to hold back a smile and says, "You look good."

She looks good, too.

Fuck.

I run my hands through my hair, and onto my neck, noting a slight flush in my cheeks. I busy myself by turning and grabbing the black t-shirt, and sliding it over my head.

"What would you like to do with those?" Granger tilts her head to the pile of dirty worn out clothes on the floor.

"Burn 'em."

She nods.

As she slides off the counter, I literally have to stop myself from reaching out and helping her down – what the fuck was that? Did I almost put my hands on her? Then she casts a patronus – an otter – and tells it to fetch the other Order members to help escort me back down to my cell.

I guess the treat is over.

Granger and I head into the hallway.

"I need to bind you again, Malfoy," she reminds me.

Right. I forgot all about that. I nod and place my hands behind my back, and she casts another Incarcerous on my hands and feet.

The others arrive, and everyone takes their positions. This time Granger and shitstain are behind me, leaving Fletch-Fletcher-Fletchley and the fucking weasel facing me. Fantastic. I get to end my day with him in my face.

We slowly start making our way back to my cell.

“I don’t see much improvement,” the weasel sneers. “You still look like a dirty ferret to me.”

I grind my teeth, and try to remember I’m wandless, bound, and have very limited movement.

“I don’t know why Hermione argued for you to have this. She said it was inhumane to treat you like that. But Death Eaters aren’t human. They don’t deserve to be treated like them,” he taunts.

I crack my neck.

“They’re monsters. You’re a monster. And you deserve to be caged like a monster, Malfoy.”

I bite the inside of my cheek. I taste blood. It’s metallic.

“She’s wasting her time with you,” he spits out, “You don’t deserve it.”

And that’s it. I’ve had it. I don’t know if I’m insulted because he doesn’t think I deserve to be treated like a human, or that I don’t deserve Granger’s time, or because he’s insulting her judgement. It doesn’t matter. I take a few short quick steps forward and slam my forehead into his face. I hear his nose crack at the same time as I feel a sharp pain in my back.

And then everything goes black.

I’m half on, half off my bed when I’m Rennervated. It’s like they just threw me into my cell after my stunt with the weasel.

They probably did, actually.

As my eyes focus and I push myself onto my feet, I hear an almost urgent tapping noise. Confused, I look over myself, then around, looking for the source of the noise. Eventually I turn completely around to find Granger standing outside my cell.

Her foot is tapping, her hand is on her hip, her hair is crackling with magic and her wand is pointed directly at me.

Ah. She’s angry.

If I know that look on her face, and I think I do, she's actually livid.

Shit, this is going to be fun. I throw up some walls and try desperately not to smile.

"I hope you're happy with yourself," she says, as she puts her wand in her back pocket, and starts pacing. Her trainers squeaking on the tiled floor every time she pivots and changes direction.

"Well, that depends," I drawl. "Did I break his nose?"

I lean nonchalantly against the bars, watching her as she walks back and forth. She stops and looks at me with incredulity.

"Yes, you did," she shouts.

"Then yes."

"Yes?"

"Yes. I'm happy with myself."

She huffs at me, resumes her pacing, and begins collecting her hair, piling it on top of her head. She finds her wand again, and stabs it through the curly knot, keeping most of it in place. A number of tendrils fall out, and frame her face quite fetchingly.

I like her upset.

She's fiery. Sexy.

Arousing.

I want to fuck her.

I want to fuck the mudblood.

This is new.

"Malfoy, how could you? I told them you wouldn't pull anything," she continues in an accusing tone, bringing me back to reality.

"I don't know what possessed you to make such a statement. I never promised anything of the sort," I reply.

What does this bitch expect? That a shower would wash away the evil?

She stops again, her arms falling to her side, looking at me.

"I thought I could trust you," she says quietly. Sadly. She looks disappointed. Dejected. Betrayed.

Well shit.

I can't decide how I feel. Bad that she's hurt? Maybe a tiny little bit. Do I regret breaking the weasel's nose? Absolutely not.

I would do that again, in a heartbeat.

I grab hold of the bars and look her squarely in the eyes. " *You* can trust me, Granger. *They* can't."

She takes a sharp intake of breath, and asks in that small voice of hers, "What?"

I push off the bars and take a step back, maintaining my eye contact. It takes me a few moments to formulate a response.

I sigh and gently say, "I wouldn't intentionally do anything to hurt you." I take a breath, and add more harshly, "As for the rest of the Order....I'd kill every last fucking one of them if I could."

She keeps those big brown eyes of hers trained on me, looking lost and confused.

"But why not me?"

"Because," I shrug, "you give me treats."

And then – I don't smirk or sneer – I genuinely smile at her, I think for the first time ever.

I can't sleep.

I keep flashing back on the events of the day. Of my shower. Of Granger watching me so intently. Watching all of me. Of her eyes. Her stained cheeks. Her lips.

The curve of her hips.

Stop.

She looked so innocent and bewildered when I said I wouldn't hurt her. And when I mentioned the treats? Her eyes lit up with delight. I can't get the look of them, of her, out of my head.

She's beautiful.

No.

She's a mudblood.

Wait.

Can't she be both?

I sigh, as my mind wanders back to the moment she almost reached out and touched me. How close we were as we tried to move around that small bathroom without colliding into one another. How, up close, I could see those faded freckles spread out across her cheeks and nose. The smell of her hair.

I feel a twitch in my joggers.

Oh gods.

There are 4 wooden crates in this storage room. Each crate face is 12 boards high, with four boards framing it, and one diagonal cross brace. There are 20 screws per side. If I assume that each of the four faces is constructed the same....

Aww....fuck it.

I reach into my pants, and grasp my increasingly hard member. I think of her face. Her freckles. Her wild curls. Her big brown doe eyes. I move my hand up and down my length. Her breasts. Her arse. I continue stroking myself, imagining what it would feel like to touch her between her legs. To run my fingers between the folds of her cunt.

I start pumping faster, rubbing and teasing my tip with my thumb.

I think of her laugh. Her smile. How her whole face lights up. Glows.

I get rougher. Pulling and squeezing at my length. My breathing gets ragged.

I think of being near her. In her. How wet and warm she'd feel on my cock.

Fuck. Fuck. *Fuck*.

I stroke myself faster, and feel my legs start to tense. I let out a long strangled moan, and I'm done. Breathing deeply. Catching my breath.

That's when reality hits me.

I just masturbated to Hermione Granger.

Fucking fuck.

I also came in my only pair of pants.

Fucking amateur.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I don't see Granger again for a few days.

And it's honestly a relief, because I need that time to get accustomed to the fact I'm tossing off nightly to thoughts of her.

When she finally does arrive, I'm sitting cross-legged on my camp bed occluding, building crenellated castle fortifications just for her. I need to keep her safely behind these thick new walls, and completely compartmentalise each aspect of her. It's the only way I can look her in the eye without getting embarrassed. Or hard.

Pussy.

She doesn't interrupt me. Rather, while waiting for me to finish, she pulls up her chair, sits, and starts looking through her bottomless beaded bag. Eventually she emerges with a book, which she flips through patiently, reading passages here and there, and smiling.

Properly secured against any stray thoughts, I train my focus on her, and notice she's pulled her chair up *within* arms reach of the bars of my cell. Interesting.

"Granger," I say in greeting. "What have you got there?"

She looks at the book in her hands, and rubs the cover fondly.

"It's my very favourite book."

I raise my eyebrows.

"I'm not sure you'll like it," she hesitates, drawing her brows together. "I know some of my selections have been rather...hit and miss."

I lean forward, my elbows on my knees. "Well, now, I really liked that book about the futuristic dystopia with the totalitarian government. They were really onto something."

"Malfoy!" she exclaims, looking positively scandalised. "That book was meant to be a cautionary tale, not an instruction manual."

"I'm serious. The whole big brother idea kind of felt like something the Dark Lord could really get behind. You'd better hope he never reads it, or he won't just be implementing mudblood registration acts."

"You're joking."

"Am I?"

“That’s just it. I don’t know.”

I don’t know either. I said it to rile her up, but now I think about it, I really do think Voldemort could get some interesting ideas. I get up off the bed, and come to lean on the bars, changing the subject.

“This book of yours,” I nod towards the book in her lap. “If you don’t think I’ll like it, why do you want me to read it?”

“Well, I actually wanted to share a different book with you today – the most famous book by that French bloke you enjoyed so much, but I can’t find it...”

“You mean to tell me it’s lost in that bag of yours with the illegal undetectable extension charm?” I say while raising an eyebrow.

She blushes.

“It’s *very* useful,” she insists a little too adamantly. “But it’s not here. I think I must have left it at the Burrow.”

“The Burrow?” I ask, “You mean that hovel the Weasley’s call a home?”

She gives me a look that’s meant to make me feel like an arrogant prick. I *am* an arrogant prick, though, so it doesn’t work.

I run my hand through my hair. “Do you leave a lot of your things there?” I ask, not feeling an ounce of irritation or jealousy.

“I guess I do....I mean, it’s like my home.”

Like her home.

Awesome.

I sigh, close my eyes, and rub my hands over my face, scratching at my whiskers. “So. You and the weasel?” It comes out slightly choked.

Smooth, Draco.

She looks at me strangely, her head cocked to the side. I can’t help but notice how her curls move and sway around her. How her red blouse makes her cheeks look pink. How she licks her lips, leaving them wet and moist. Finally, she asks, “Why do you care, Malfoy?”

“I don’t.” Liar.

“Well, since you *don’t* care,” she looks at me pointedly here. What a cunt. “It won’t matter to you that Ron and I are just friends....there was a time I thought we might be more, but,” she pauses, “...it never came to anything. It all just got too hard after Harry....” and then she trails off completely.

After that bloody wanker was killed.

I decide, *again*, that a change of subject is in order.

“So you’ve brought me this book instead, even though I might not like it. Why?”

She shakes her head, as if clearing it of memories, then grasps the book in her two hands. “I’m not sure,” she admits. “I guess I’ve just really enjoyed getting your perspective on the books you’ve read, and discussing them...”

“And this is your favourite, so you’d like to discuss it, too.”

“Yes.”

I reach my hand through the bars. “Hand it over.”

“If you don’t like it...just leave it at that, okay? Don’t go ruining it for me?”

“I promise.”

She looks hesitant as she holds out the well loved book, like she’s not sure she wants to be without it. The cover is worn, and it’s obvious just looking at it, it’s been read over and over again. I reach out the last few inches to take it, and as I do, our fingers brush against one another.

I feel a sudden jolt of energy and the crackle of magic. I grasp the book and jerk my hand back, as if I’ve been bitten. Burned. I look up, and see she’s staring at her own hand, still extended between us, with a confused look on her face.

She felt it too.

“I...I....I ha...” she stammers. “I have to...to go.”

I want to tell her to wait – I want to touch her again and feel that intense surge of heat, and magic, and....something else. Yearning. Need. Desire.

But before I can say anything, she’s already gone.

I hate the book.

I spend the next few days re-reading it, and trying to come up with something positive to say about it.

When she finally returns, she grabs her chair with a flourish, turns it around and straddles it, leaning forward on the backrest.

“So? What did you think?”

Her eyes are bright, her cheeks flushed, and her hair looks windswept as it cascades over her shoulders, with a slight preference to her right. She must have just arrived.

Gods, she looks lovely.

I’m sitting on the floor in front of the bed, legs stretched out straight in front of me. My feet almost touch the bars. I take a few minutes to gather my thoughts, looking down at my hands, clasped in front of me.

I apparently take too long.

“You hated it,” she concludes, an edge of accusation and disappointment in her voice. I don’t dare look up at her again just yet.

“I didn’t hate it.” Liar.

“Then you didn’t like it.”

I sigh, still trying to formulate my thoughts. Why the fuck is this so hard?

Because you don’t want to disappoint her.

Since when did that become a thing? Since when do I care how the mudblood feels?

Since you want to fuck her. Since you started jerking off to thoughts of her nightly.

“Well,” I look up at her, and run my hand through my hair, “I think we’ve established by now that I’m more of a revenge or dystopian novel type...and this...” I reach under my bed and take the book in my hands, rubbing its well worn cover, looking at it. “This is definitely not that. I couldn’t get myself to care for the story.” I look at her, again. “I mean, five sisters looking for husbands?”

“I guess you’re right. It was a bad choice...” Fuck, her voice is wavering.

“But,” I say quickly, “after reading it a few times, I got to realise...”

“Wait,” she interrupts me. Climbs off her chair, and sits on the floor directly in front of me, cross-legged. Her knees touch the bars of my cell. “How many times did you read it?” she asks, grabbing hold of a bar with her hand.

“Three.” Liar.

“Why?”

“So I could discuss it with you,” I say while shrugging.

It's when she noticeably exhales that I realise she's been holding her breath.

She smiles, looks at her hands and absentmindedly says, "I could *never* get Harry or Ron to read it even once...Harry made it through the first one or two chapters. I don't even think Ron made it past the first page."

"Of course they couldn't finish. Those fuckwits were practically illiterate," I say scornfully.

She looks up. Looks slightly exasperated.

"As I was saying..." She leans back on her palms, hanging on my every word. "Though I couldn't get into the story, I *could* appreciate the writing. Particularly the author's portrayal of her characters."

"How so?"

"It's very clear how you, as the reader, are supposed to feel about each character. The author does an excellent job of ensuring we react to each of them exactly as she wants us to.

"For instance, the misunderstood aristocrat. Even though it's made abundantly clear that every character in the book absolutely despises him, you're left feeling ambivalent...until of course you see him in his element, and start to understand him, his motives, and his failings."

She's eating this up.

"The scoundrel is smarmy from the start, and you can't help wondering why nobody else sees it, the youngest sister self-entitled and *so* irritating, and that sycophantic reverend? I mean, I've never wanted to Avada a character more in my life."

She's grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"And what did you think about Lizzy?" she asks.

"She was bold, intelligent, independent, and witty," I pause and look her in the eye. "She reminded me of you, Granger."

And that's done it. I could tell her *I* killed Harry Potter, and she'd still be smiling at me. I can't take my eyes off her.

"I have to admit," she says blushing, "I always wanted to be like her."

We continue to discuss the book for hours. It's the longest conversation we've ever had, and by the end of it, we're sitting back-to-back on the floor. The bars between us.

What I don't tell her, of course, is that the basic premise of her favourite book hit way too close to home for me....the Death Eater who, despite his better judgement, has fallen for a mudblood.

I'm so royally fucked.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced include:

George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four
Alexandre Dumas' The Three Musketeers
Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Granger's back the very next day.

"I have two treats for you!" she declares upon entering.

So this is a thing now.

We have a thing.

I stop doing my sit-ups, and rest my elbows on my knees, looking at her. She's empty-handed, but I spy that little beaded bag of hers around her shoulder.

She comes and sits on the floor next to my cell, as she puts her whole fucking arm into the bag. When she pulls it out, she says "Ta da!" and has an old trade paperback in her hands.

"I stopped by the Burrow last night and found it," she elaborates. "I suspect you won't like it as much as the story about the count, but it's definitely more up your alley than a bunch of sisters trying to marry well."

She scrunches up her nose and passes the book through the bars. I reach and take it, accidentally on purpose making sure our fingers touch. Pausing. Feeling the spark. It's not as shocking or unexpected as last time, but still hot. Burning. Intriguing.

"Thanks, Granger."

She watches as I reluctantly pull the book back through the bars, take a look at it, and then place it under the bed. I resume my position leaning my arms on my knees, clasping my hands together, and look back at her. Waiting for the next treat.

"Next up..." she says with a flourish, and she almost disappears inside her bag.

"Granger, are you actually inside your handbag?" I ask. Really, the extension charm she's placed on it is truly impressive.

She peers at me over the edge and smiles mischievously. "Not entirely."

She's so fucking cute. It's sickening.

Finally, she emerges with two items. First she passes me a small mirror, mentioning, "It's charmed not to break or shatter." And second, a Dopp kit. "You're getting a little rough around the edges, and I thought you might like to shave. It's the same kit from upstairs. Charmed not to break skin. You can use the water from your basin."

I rub my hands over my face and beard. She's right. I *am* getting scruffy, and scratch absentmindedly at my neck, considering.

"Since you're handing out treats..." I trail off.

"Is there something you need?"

"There is, actually..." I hesitate, before continuing. "I mean. Obviously I could use another shower, but..." I pause, then rush through the end of my request, "...but a few pairs of extra pants would be great."

Her eyebrows shoot up.

"The boxers you got last time would be fine," I add.

I'm so embarrassed by my request I duck my head into the crook of my elbow, hiding my face. "I fucking hate asking you," I mumble into my arm.

I can feel her looking at me, and honestly? I wish the earth would open up and swallow me whole. I've been reduced to asking Hermione Granger for pants. *Pants* for Salazar's sake.

I've hit a new low.

"Another shower might be a hard sell after the incident with Ron. But as for pants. Of course. You shouldn't even have to ask for something so basic. It's deplorable how the Order has been treating you. Consider it done." She's so matter of fact about it. Like it's a total non issue. But then she makes a face.

"What? What's with the face?" I ask.

"It's just....why now? We've been talking for ages. How come you never asked before?"

I scratch at my beard again, considering how honest I should be. "Because Granger....ages ago there was no fucking way I would have asked you. I'm barely comfortable asking you now. And..."

"And?"

I shrug. "I came in my pants. My daily Scourgify helped, but didn't do a great job cleaning it."

"I'm sorry, what?!" she says incredulously.

I shift closer to the bars so I'm right next to her, hold on to them with one hand, and look her directly in the eye. "I came. Jizzed. Ejaculated. In my pants." I look down at my crotch for emphasis.

"Oh. My gods..." and she covers her face with her hands. Mortified. Her cheeks immediately flushed pink. "I can't believe you just told me that," she exclaims through her fingers.

“Oh come on, Granger. Don’t be such a prude.”

“I am *not* a prude,” she says very defensively. Which definitely means she is.

“Sure, Granger. Whatever you say.” I remove my hand from the bars and lean back.

“Don’t patronise me, Malfoy.”

“Alright, then. You’re not a prude. Prove it.”

“Prove it?”

“Yeah. When’s the last time you had sex? Or at the very least, pleasured yourself?”

She hesitates. “I...I can’t remember.”

“You *can’t* remember? Come on, Granger, you can do better than that.”

“And I suppose you can?”

“Yes. I tossed off last night. And the last time I shagged? Daphne Greengrass. About three days before I ended up in here.”

She’s beyond blushing at this point – her face is decidedly red. I’m really enjoying this.

“I can’t believe we’re talking about this.”

“There’s nothing to be embarrassed about,” I say candidly. “Sex and masturbation are completely normal and healthy activities.” I’m totally trying to provoke her now.

“Yes, but still...to...to talk about it...” she wavers.

“But still? That settles it, then,” I say.

“Settles what?”

“Your homework,” I smirk. “In addition to getting me pants...get yourself off. At least once. And report back.”

She lets out a nervous laugh. “Report back?”

Please , report back and tell me you touched yourself at my behest.

“Yes, you know...talk about it,” I smirk again.

She stares at me for a while. Long enough to make it uncomfortable, but I don’t break my eye contact. She takes a deep breath, and finally says, “Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yes.”

Well, alright then. It's clear the little swot can't resist any kind of homework assignment.

As for me? I have to shift my position on the floor to prevent my erection becoming noticeable.

I spend the next few days reading my latest swashbuckling adventure, imagining Granger touching herself, and beating off.

When she next returns I've just finished shaving. It's nice being able to look somewhat like myself again on a regular basis. To be able to do something about my stubble when it gets itchy.

I wipe my face, ridding it of any stray shaving cream, and look at her expectantly. "So?" I ask as I move to the bars and lean my shoulder against them. "How did the assignment go?"

She immediately blushes, and scrunches up her nose. "The first part of my assignment..." she pulls a shopper out from behind her back. "...was very successful."

Opening it up, she pulls out not only several new pairs of boxers, but new joggers and t-shirts as well. I greedily reach out for them, place them on the bed, and immediately pull my current t-shirt off, replacing it with a new dark grey one.

I can't help noticing her eyeing me as I do so. I give her a smile, "You're a fucking saint, Granger."

Then I turn my back to her and pull off my joggers and pants in one swift motion.

"Malfoy! What are you doing?!" she exclaims.

"What does it look like I'm doing?" I say over my shoulder. "I'm changing."

"I'm *right here.*"

And not turning around, I note.

"It's not anything you haven't seen before," I tell her matter of factly, as I get a new pair of navy blue boxers on, turn around to look at her, and ask raising my shoulders, "What's the problem?"

She seems to have been rendered speechless.

Her cheeks are flushed. Her eyes bright. Her hair completely wild. She's breathing deeply. Her chest visibly rising and falling...the chain of her necklace, peeking through the neckline of her green blouse, catching a little glint of light every time she inhales.

I swear on Salazar's grave, if there weren't bars between us, I would take her this very second.

Instead, I resume my position leaning against the bars. In my boxers. It seems to fluster her.

I quite like her flustered.

"So," I say quietly. "What about the second part of your assignment?" And look at her expectantly, my head cocked to the side.

She gives herself a moment to collect herself, clears her throat, and moves closer to me, mirroring my position outside my cell. She's right next to me.

I can't help myself.

I reach out and grab one of her spiral curls, pull it straight, then let it go. Watching it bounce back into place. I've wanted to do that for months.

She watches my hand intently as it lingers near her face for a moment, before I pull it away and cross my arms against my chest. She looks back up at my face.

"How did you fare?" I ask gently, realising this is a touchy topic for her. "Did you even try?"

She tilts her head. "I did."

"And?"

"And what?"

I can't believe this bitch. It's an effort not to roll my eyes.

"Did it feel good?" I ask.

"Sure."

"Sure? I'm not asking if you want a side of fries with your order here, Granger. Did you get yourself off?"

She sighs.

Sooo....no.

"It's not that simple, Malfoy."

"Explain it to me."

She runs her hands through her hair, collecting it, and pulling it off her neck for a moment — gods, her neck is so long and white, I want to lick it — before letting it spring back into place. Which is everywhere, really.

She looks up at me, looking exceedingly uncomfortable, lowers her eyes and says, “I can’t stop thinking. Ever. Even for that. While I may genuinely be trying to pleasure myself, there’s at least a half a dozen other things fighting for my attention.”

“That *is* a problem,” I say, thinking... “How did you used to stay focused in class?”

She looks up. Surprised.

“In class? I never had problems concentrating in class...or in school, in general. It’s a more recent thing, I think. What with everything going on in the world, in the war...when I’m alone I just can’t focus.”

“I take it the Order doesn’t provide much structure?” I ask.

She shakes her head. She looks equal parts mortified and equal parts lost to be admitting a failure of her precious Order.

I mean. This is Hermione Granger. Brightest witch of her age....but she’s a rule follower — she needs some fucking structure. A goal to work towards. Parameters under which to operate. And from what I’ve observed, the Order is definitely not a source of any of that. No set rules. No operating manual. No certainty.

Most of the time it seems they’re flying by the seat of their pants.

Fuck me. She’d fare better as a Death Eater. There’s order. Hierarchy. Clear rules. Clear goals. Clear repercussions for success or failure. The certainty provided is dark, but it’s there.

“Right. So let’s give you something more concrete to focus on, so your brain can stop working and going on so many tangents.”

“How?” She sounds so vulnerable. I wish I could reach out and hug her. That’s not true. I don’t want to just hug her.

“Clear instructions,” I tell her.

“And where am I going to get instructions for....for....?”

“Go on. Say it.” I gently tease. She really is such a prude.

“...for getting *off*,” she whispers.

“From me.”

She looks shocked. “I am *not* doing that in front of you!”

I think about this for a minute...looking at her. At my cell. At the storage room.

“You don’t have to do it in front of me,” I conclude. “Do it behind me.”

She looks at me, unsure. Waiting for me to explain.

“We’ll sit on the floor. Back to back, against the bars. That way you’ll feel me move if I try to look. Which I won’t.”

“Promise?”

“Promise.”

She shifts her weight from one foot to the other, considering.

“What if someone comes in?”

“Apart from mealtimes, nobody comes in here except you. We’re nowhere near dinner.”

She’s clearly nervous.

I don’t blame her. I’m asking her to step far outside her comfort zone. I retreat inside my occlusion to hide the desire in my eyes. To prevent her seeing how fucking desperate I am to do this for her. With her.

“Wait. Now?” she asks.

“There’s no time like the present, Granger.”

I watch her closely. She holds onto the bars of my cell with both hands, and breathes in deeply, then slowly exhales. She does this a few times, as she attempts to subdue the panic, fear and trepidation that’s written all over her face.

“Okay,” she mumbles, more to herself than to me. “Okay,” this time more firmly.

She sits down, her back against the bars and her knees up against her chest. “I’m ready.”

Fuck.

Am I?

I sit down on the floor settling against the bars, my back up against hers, legs stretched out in front of me. She adjusts her position, now that I’m here, and leans her head back. It hits just below the nape of my neck, her curls almost engulfing me.

I can feel the tension radiating out of her.

Right. That's where we start.

"Alright, Granger. First, you've got to relax," I say calmly.

"I don't relax," she replies tightly.

Sweet Merlin.

"I'll help. Just focus on me. Listen *only* to me. As soon as that big brain of yours starts trying to interfere, focus on me again. Okay?"

"I'll try."

"Let's start off breathing slowly," I say quietly. "Focus on the breath going in and out of your lungs. Match my breaths, Granger. Feel them in my back, and match them."

"And then what?"

"And then nothing. What did I say, Granger? Focus on me. Right now we're breathing. That's all we're thinking about. Breathe in and out."

I demonstrate with very deliberate breaths.

"Breathing," she says sceptically, like it's not something her body does naturally.

Her breaths are rapid. All over the place. It's like I can hear her thinking. Panicking.

I keep breathing slowly. Loudly. So she not only feels, but also hears each breath I draw in and release.

Eventually her breathing slows down. A few minutes more, and it's matching mine.

"That's good, Granger. Very good. Keep focusing on just your breathing."

We sit there breathing together for another couple of minutes before I break the silence.

"Now," I say quietly. "Place your hands on your breasts. Gently massage them and circle your nipples with the tips of your fingers." I pause, and give her a few moments. "Are you doing it?"

"Yes," she breathes.

"Good. How does it feel?"

She lets out a little huff. "Tickles a little, actually. Maybe tingles?"

"That's good, we can work with that. Are your nipples hard?"

"Uh huh."

“Good, now reach under your shirt. Move your bra out of the way, and do the exact same thing that makes you tingle, but touching your nipples directly.”

Her breathing hitches.

“We’re still breathing slowly,” I remind her.

I feel her curls move as she nods her head, and her breathing evens out again. I pull up my legs, and rest my forearms on my knees. Rub my hand through my hair.

“Now pinch yourself. Squeeze your breasts. Roll your nipples between your fingers. Find something that causes a flutter in your stomach, a reaction between your legs.”

It takes a few moments, but I hear a shift in her breaths. They speed up a little.

“Have you found something you like?”

“Yes,” she says breathily.

“What are you doing?” I can’t help asking.

“Rubbing little circles around my areolas, then rolling my nipples between two fingers,” she details in an almost dreamlike fashion.

Gods, yes. I feel a twitch in my boxers.

“Good girl. Keep it up,” I instruct, and count to thirty – honestly the longest thirty seconds of my life – then continue, “Now unzip your denims, and slide your hand into your pants.”

I feel her moving behind me before I hear the short zip of her denims.

“I want you to slide your index and middle fingers through your folds, down to your slit.”

“Okay.”

“Are you wet?”

It takes a moment before she whispers, “I am.”

“How wet?”

“Very.”

Fuck I’m getting hard. I breathe deeply, and attempt to shift my position without disturbing her.

“Okay. Slide your fingers back and forth through your folds, collect some of your arousal and pull it up to your clit.” I can feel her arm moving back and forth, “Now I want you to find what works best for you again. Let’s start rubbing in circles. Softly. How does that feel?”

“It feels nice.”

“We’re not going for nice, Granger. Rub harder.”

I hear her breathing speed up.

“Sounds like you prefer some pressure.”

“Uh huh.”

“Good, now let’s try rubbing up and down instead of in circles. Remember, do it hard.”

She gasps. “Keep it up Granger, good girl,” I encourage as I feel her head fall back onto my neck, her back pushing against the bars, against my back.

I reach into my boxers and grasp my increasingly hard cock. I tease the tip, as I provide Granger her next set of instructions, a little breathless myself.

“Now, slide down and insert your index finger into your slit.”

I hear her inhale roughly.

“Move it in and out. Make sure you keep the palm of your hand against your mound, and use it to rub and add pressure to your clit.”

I feel her adjust, and after a moment or two, her breathing shifts. She’s moving her arm faster, and starts making little moaning noises in the back of her throat.

Oh gods.

I start stroking my length in time with her moans.

While she continues pumping her finger inside herself, I feel her free hand searching, the one not currently inside her pants.

“Granger, what are you doing?” I ask, as it reaches back.

“Your hand,” she says between gasps, “...give me your hand.”

I adjust the grip on my cock, and reach behind myself — not looking as promised — feeling for her hand. Our hands meet just on her side of the bars, and she grasps desperately, squeezing tightly.

Her breathing starts to become erratic. As do her movements. She’s started bucking her hips.

“Hold on, Granger. Keep going. Don’t slow down. I want you to add a second finger inside yourself.”

I feel her shift slightly again as she follows my instructions. I get rougher with my cock, rubbing harder and faster, as I tell her to do the same, “Now move faster. Rub harder.”

She lets out a little cry, “Oh gods, Draco.”

“Keep it up.”

“I don’t know if...” she sounds unsure of herself. Maybe even a little scared.

“You can. Don’t stop,” I encourage her.

Her grip on my hand tightens, and she starts moaning. Fuck me, I wish I was looking at her. I wish it was my hand in her pants making her moan.

“You’re doing so well, Granger. Almost there.” My voice is strangled. I’m going to come. I pull my cock out of my boxers, keep stroking it, faster and faster.

“Draco,” she pants.

Fuck. Fuck. *Fuck*.

Her head is pushing back on me. I lean my own head back – fitting perfectly on top of hers like a puzzle piece, and release, groaning inwardly so as not to distract her from her purpose. Her goal.

“Keep going, Granger. Don’t stop.” Her whole body is shaking with the effort. She’s panting heavily, and then....I hear her cry out. It’s equal parts pleasure, equal parts surprise.

And then we’re both just sitting there, breathing heavily, leaning back against one another.

“Was that as good for you, as it was for me?” I finally ask.

“That was....that was the first time...” she trails off.

“The first time you climaxed?” I clarify.

“I mean, it’s felt good before...but...but never like that. It’s like I always stopped before I was able to reach the end.”

“Why didn’t you stop this time?”

“Because you told me not to.”

“Good,” I say.

I’ll make you come every fucking time, Granger.

“I can’t believe we just did that,” she breathes out. I can feel the curls on her head brushing against my shoulders as she shakes her head.

I can’t believe it either.

She starts moving, getting up from her position on the floor, and turns to look at me. I make sure I’m put away, stand up, and grab a pair of joggers. After putting them on, I turn to face her, smiling.

“Believe it, Granger.”

Everything is different now. I can't stop thinking about her heavy breathing. Her moans. The way she cried out when she came. The way she said my name.

She called me Draco.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced:

Alexandre Dumas' The Three Musketeers
Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo
Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It's a few days before I see her again.

I don't know how to act.

All I can think about is making her come again. Only this time, I want it to be my fingers inside her.

It turns out to be a moot point. She can't stay.

She stops by to perform a stronger than usual scourify on my clothes (and myself) and drop off some new books. She tells me she won't be back for at least a few weeks.

"What's going on, Granger?" I ask.

She sighs, "I've been recruited to help set up a new safehouse."

"Did you lose one?"

"We did." She's looking at her feet – at those awful bubblegum pink high tops – deep in thought.

I nod, narrow my eyes. "How's the war going, Granger?"

She looks up abruptly. I can see the wheels turning in her head. Calculating. Trying to decide what to tell me.

"It's not a trick question. I've been stuck in here so long, I have no fucking clue what's going on outside these four walls."

She nods her head slowly, as if making a decision.

"It's not going great."

"...for the Order..." I guess.

She avoids my eyes and nods again.

Well, this is interesting.

"You understand I can't get into details with you..."

"Of course."

The disappointment must show on my face.

"They've tried to recover you, you know," she says quietly.

"Granger?" I ask sharply.

She steps closer to my bars, and whispers, "There have been at least four attempts to retrieve you. Two attempts have resulted in us losing safehouses. There are Death Eaters permanently stationed outside this one....it's really only an extremely strong fidelius charm keeping them out."

This is...news. I rub my hands through my hair, and over my face. Thinking. Looking at my Dark Mark.

All this time, I thought my people had given up on me. My mark hasn't burned once since I was captured – I'd assumed it was because I'd been written off.

I was wrong.

Fuck.

It's probably the wards suppressing my magic that's prevented the Dark Lord from summoning me. Communicating with me.

I look back up at Granger, and see a strange expression on her face. Regret? She looks unsure of herself. Vulnerable. Like she's wishing she hadn't told me.

Gods, she really is beautiful.

I could reach her in two steps. Grab her wrist or arm...her hair or her neck. It would be just a matter of seconds, and I could pull her up against the bars, wrap my hand behind her neck, pull her as close as possible, and kiss her. It would be so easy.

I'm not sure what's holding me back.

I decide to go for it.

A few quick steps and I'm reaching through the bars, roughly grabbing a handful of thick curly hair at the back of her head, and pulling her towards my cell. Towards me. Our lips crash between the bars. My magic reacts to hers, sending shocks and waves of desire all through my body. I reach through with my other hand, and place it on the small of her back.

It's a messy kiss. Desperate. Our teeth clash together. I run my tongue over her lips, then push into her mouth, feeling her teeth, her tongue.

I can't get enough. She tastes so good. So sweet. I want to devour her. Swallow her.

Her hands reach up and grasp my shoulders, her fingers digging into me, pulling me closer. Our hips hit the bars as we try to get as near as possible to one another. I release my grip on her hair and back and reach for the waistband of her denims, about to undo the button, when someone calls out,

“Hermione?”

Fuuuuuuck .

She jumps back, wiping her mouth, looking completely panicked.

I back away from the bars slowly, calmly, putting my hands in my pockets, as footsteps approach. Moments later, the fucking weasel comes around a pile of boxes saying, “We’re ready to go.”

“I’ll be right there, Ron,” she says shakily.

The weasel looks between us, his eyes narrowing. I mean, it’s obvious something was going on. We’re both flushed and breathing heavily. Granger’s lips are swollen.

“We’re leaving now , ‘Mione.”

“Ok, I’m coming,” she says.

She looks at me, touches her lips with her fingers, then turns on her bubblegum heel and leaves.

She’s left me an interesting assortment of books to keep busy while she’s away.

There are a few vampire novels. I’ve met actual vampires, and they’re a broody, depressing sort – so I have trouble getting into the sexy mystique muggles have created about them. That being said, I prefer the 19th century novel written like journal entries, where the vampire is an actual villain. The modern one, purporting to be an interview, annoys me...the characters are filled with too much angst, the heroes of the story are either too morose or too dashing, and it’d be so much easier if they’d all just come out already.

Another, also written in the form of a diary, is clearly based on Granger’s favourite book. I mean one of the main characters has the same name as the aristocrat she finds so irresistible. It’s definitely not my thing, but is a quick read and good for a few laughs.

Yet another one of her selections pits good versus evil, quite literally after a plague wipes out most of the population. Once more, Granger has seemingly underestimated my predisposition towards evil – the life described in Vegas seems far more interesting than that living on a farm in the middle of a cornfield. But what really bothers me, is that the book is solely focused on America. I couldn’t help wondering, what was happening elsewhere?

Once I get through them all, I pull out my favourite about the escaped count exacting revenge. I’ve lost count how many times I’ve read it.

I miss her.

I'm half reading, half sleeping when I hear someone enter the storage room. It isn't Granger's quick gait. It's a longer, loping one.

I remain where I am – lying on my camp bed – keeping my favourite book open on my chest to save my spot, waiting to see who it is.

Bloody fucking hell.

The weasel storms into the room and immediately starts pacing in front of my cell.

I sigh, dog-ear the page I'm on – it occurs to me for a split second Granger might not appreciate me folding pages in her books, but if that were the case she ought to have provided me bookmarks – set it aside, and sit up. I build a few new walls around my feelings and thoughts, especially with regards to Granger, and then look to the git, waiting, with my now deadened eyes.

It takes him a while to formulate his thoughts.

He is rather slow and dim-witted, after all.

He stops abruptly and looks at me. Accusations reflected in his eyes. He's breathing deeply, like he's already worked himself up into a state, though he hasn't even said a word yet.

"What did you do?" he spits out.

"Do?" I ask innocently, raising my eyebrows. "What could I *possibly* do? I'm locked in a cell," I drawl and look around, gesturing at my enclosure.

He tries again, "Then what did you say to her?"

"To whom?" I ask, knowing bloody well who he's talking about.

"To Hermione," he shouts. "She isn't the same. She spends all this time talking to you, and now she's different. What did you do to her?"

"Different how?" I ask calmly.

He resumes his pacing, running his hands through his garishly-coloured hair. Honestly. It isn't even ginger. It's...actually red.

"How?" he repeats.

"Yes, *how*?"

"I mean....she's always spoken up for those who've been mistreated..." he's still pacing in the narrow room. He's practically spinning in circles. It's making me dizzy just looking at him. I look down at my hands instead. "...and at first that's all I thought it was. Prisoner's rights, and all." I can still see his movement in my peripheral vision. Gods, I wish he'd stop moving.

"But then something happened. Something changed. She stopped talking in generalities about how it was inhumane to isolate a prisoner, or to deny them basic necessities...it became about *you* ." He stares daggers at me here. "About how *Malfoy* needed something to occupy himself, how *Malfoy* needed stimulation, how *Malfoy* needed a shower, and a change of clothes. She was even trying to get you outside at one point, saying *Malfoy* needed fresh air."

She's right. Some fresh air would be great.

"*What did you do?*" he repeats, and he finally stops his pacing.

"I don't know what you want me to say, weasel. I didn't *do* anything, or *say* anything to manipulate her. She's far too smart to fall for anything like that. All I did," and here I look at him pointedly, "is read the books she brought for me, and discussed them with her. That's it. That's all."

"That's all you've done all these months?"

"Yes." No.

But I'm not about to reveal to the weasel I helped Granger have her first orgasm. Or that the last time I saw her, was the first time we'd kissed.

"I don't understand."

"Well, it's quite simple, really," I say with disdain. "I read books," here I pick up my book, and open it to illustrate my point, "and then we have conversations about them. You know, a back and forth discussion in which ideas are shared."

He looks at me with unconcealed hate.

I fucking hate you too, weasel.

"It can't just be that," he says under his breath.

"Maybe it isn't," I concede, shrugging. "Maybe she saw my huge cock in the shower, and it changed her forever." I smirk, lean back against the wall, and cross a foot over my knee.

"*You fucking arsehole!*" the weasel shouts, and steps within arms' reach of my cell.

I'm on him in a flash.

Up off the bed, I grab his arm through the bars, pull him in close, and wrap my forearm around his neck tightly, choking him.

His hands are scrabbling at my arms, my face, the bars, as he desperately tries to breathe.

“Granger’s a big girl, weasel, she can take care of herself,” I hiss into his ear.

I just need to squeeze a little tighter to completely block his airway. Or twist to break his neck. I hesitate. Granger would never forgive me if I killed her pathetic excuse of a friend. I spend an agonising few seconds trying to decide what to do. Gods, I want to kill him. I’m desperate to kill him.

I hiss in frustration, and then against all my better judgement, I let him go. Back away from the bars.

He falls forward onto his hands and knees, gasping for air.

“You’ll regret this,” he chokes out.

I already do. I should have killed him.

Later that afternoon weasel and four of his friends return, petrify me, drag me out of my cell, and beat the ever living shit out of me.

I spend the next few days hovering in and out of consciousness.

When I finally come to, I feel something touching my face. I panic, sit up abruptly, and back myself into the wall, wincing and wrapping my arm around my chest. I can hardly breathe. Pain radiates through my body, starting in my chest and shooting down my extremities. My head is killing me, pounding, like someone’s taken a pickaxe to my frontal lobe. I press the heel of my hand to my forehead.

Fuck, I hurt.

I really fucking hurt.

“Shhh, it’s ok.”

I shudder as I feel hands on my arm. They’re gentle. Caressing.

“It’s just me,” says an angel in a soft and soothing voice.

I relax slightly under the angel's touch, and try to clear the cobwebs from my brain. My eyes come into focus, and I see it's her. My Granger. She's sitting on the bed next to me.

My body completely relaxes, and I slump back against the wall.

"Granger..." I mumble.

"I'm just cleaning some of your wounds," she tells me, still using that soft angelic voice. I look around my cell, and see a basin of bloody water. A few washcloths. "They just left you there, wounds open, caked in blood." She's still speaking soothingly, but there's an edge to her voice now. She's upset. Maybe angry?

"You should lie back down," she says softly as her hands start to guide me. "Your ribs are damaged – two are cracked, and a number are bruised."

I look down to discover I haven't got a shirt on. My torso is covered in blue and purple welts, actual boot-shaped bruises among them, and numerous lacerations.

Fucking weasel.

I comply and lie down, taking in short ragged breaths.

She gently brushes the hair off my forehead, her hand lingering a little longer than warranted, and resumes her ministrations, dabbing at me with the washcloth, then taking it away and rinsing it whenever it's covered in blood.

I'm guessing my face looks about as good as the rest of me.

I close my eyes, and focus on her touch.

It's so gentle.

I've almost drifted off to sleep when she speaks.

"I've heard Ron's account of what happened," she lets that hang for a moment as she rinses and wrings out her washcloth again. The sound of the water dripping into the basin seems loud, not far from my ear. She turns back to me and continues, "I'd like to hear yours."

I can only imagine how that arsehole tried to spin this.

"What is there to tell?" I sigh. "Your weasel friend stormed in here making accusations and demanding answers." Fuck, it hurts just to talk. I continue more carefully, "He didn't like my responses, and got careless. He came within reach of my cell. I grabbed him. Choked him. Let him go."

"*You* let him go?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

“Because Granger...” I look at her exasperatedly, “I figured you’d be upset if I killed him.”

“You let him go *for me?* ” she clarifies.

“I did....” I look at her, my eyes hardening, “but I won’t do it again. If I get another opportunity, I *will* take it.”

She pauses. “Finch-Fletchley says you were petrified when they beat you.”

So *that’s* that arsehole’s name.

“I was.”

She huffs. She’s definitely angry.

Good. I hope she rips Weasley a new one.

She continues cleaning my wounds. Her touch gentle and calming. I drift off again, imagining her telling the weasel off...maybe even hexing him on my behalf.

At some point, I feel the bed shift as she gets up to leave. I’m too tired to open my eyes or acknowledge her. Thank her. She gently brushes the hair back from my face again, and then there’s the softest of sensations on my forehead.

She kissed me.

Much to my dismay, I don’t get any more Florence Nightingale moments with Granger.

She remains on her side of the bars, and I mostly remain in my pathetic excuse for a bed, breathing gently so as not to exacerbate the pain in my chest.

But she comes daily and we talk.

We talk about books we haven’t had the chance to discuss yet, and books we’ve already discussed, rehashing old arguments and opinions. We talk about what makes a good book versus a bad one, touching on everything from plot, narrative devices, characters and writing style.

For the very first time, we talk about the past. We talk about Hogwarts and house rivalries. We argue about what constitutes a good Slytherin, Gryffindor, or Ravenclaw. We agree on what makes a good Hufflepuff. We discuss our professors, disagreeing on who was the best, but both in complete agreement that Trelawny was definitely the worst, with Binns a close second.

She tells me she used a fucking time turner in third year to make it to all of her classes. She really is a swot.

We agree to disagree about quidditch, and Potter's seeking skills.

Things get personal when we discuss our grades. I tell her how my father would beat and berate me for coming in second to a mudblood. I confirm that, yes, my father really was as awful as he seemed, and is even worse now. And that my mother has only ever just stood by and watched him be evil to everyone, including me.

She tells me she Obliviated her parents, and sent them away to protect them.

I confirm it was the right thing to do. That she spared them. That Voldemort had, in fact, tried looking for them.

The look on her face is equal parts terrified and relieved at this news.

We don't talk about what's happening in the war right now, nor do we get into our individual roles in it. I know she's an important part of the resistance. She knows I'm a fairly high ranking Death Eater.

It's the elephant in the room.

The fact we remain on opposite sides.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced:

Bram Stoker's Dracula

Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire

Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones's Diary

Stephen King's The Stand

Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When I'm mostly mobile again Granger walks into the storage room with a towel draped over her arm.

I jump to my feet and grab hold of the bars of my cell, leaning forward. "For real?" I ask, maybe a little too excitedly.

"For real," she confirms. "We just need to wait for Justin."

I frown, "Who the fuck is Justin?"

"Finch-Fletchley?"

I raise my eyebrows, asking what he has to do with anything.

"He'll be watching you this time," she explains.

Fuck.

"Why?"

"Because. Apparently your huge cock is too overwhelming for me to handle," she deadpans.

Oh.

Without Granger distracting me, my shower is really all about getting clean. Which I need. As good as her industrial-strength scourgify is, nothing beats actual soap and water in large quantities.

Finch-Fletchley is patient and allows me to enjoy the hot water for as long as I want.

He keeps looking at me strangely, though.

Either *he's* overwhelmed by my cock, or he's feeling guilty about the beating — the bruising still very much apparent, though faded, on most of my body.

I'd guess the latter.

Bloody soft Hufflepuff.

Without all the sexual tension, it all goes rather quickly. I'm back in my cell within 30 minutes.

When I arrive there's a book and a note waiting for me on my bed.

Granger's been called away to deal with a 'situation' as she puts it, and won't be back for a few days.

She's left a book as compensation.

I have no fucking clue what this book is about.

When Granger reappears three days later, I'm irritated. In fact, I'm beyond irritated. I'm angry. I'm actually fucking angry.

She catches on as soon as she sees the look on my face, and asks, "What's wrong, Malfoy?"

I give her a sneer that harkens back to our days at Hogwarts. One that implies I hate her being so smart. Knowing so much. A look that implies I hate *her*. That I hate all mudbloods. That they're a bloody pox on my existence.

She frowns.

"Did something happen?" she asks, worried.

"No." Yes.

Her stupid bloody book has reminded me how different we are. That we come from two completely different worlds, and that I don't, and can't, understand half of what goes on in hers.

Fucking mudblood.

Fucking muggles.

“Something must have happened,” she says quietly, coming to lean on the bars of my cell.

“*What is this?*” I hiss, holding up the book she’d left for me. “Were you *trying* to make me feel like an idiot?”

“What? I don’t understand...”

“*You* don’t understand? Granger, I don’t even know what a bloody hitchhiker is, and it’s in the fucking title. The whole book was nonsense, about fucking spacecrafts and supercomputers...” I trail off. I feel stupid for being upset about it. But at the same time, I feel betrayed, too.

“Oh, Draco...” she says.

“No,” I interrupt harshly. “Don’t ‘Oh Draco’ me now.”

“Malfoy, then.” She pauses, collecting her thoughts. “It never even occurred to me that science fiction is a muggle invention....that it doesn’t really exist in the wizarding world. I didn’t mean to point that out, or make you feel stupid.

“It’s just I got called away, and wanted to leave something for you to read, and that was the first book I came across in my bag that wasn’t some nineteenth century story about marrying well.”

I don’t say anything for a while, and just look at her. She looks to be genuinely sorry. Contrite. Worried, even, as she breathes deeply, her eyes darting back and forth, taking in my eyes, my clenched jaw, the fists balled at my side.

“You read a lot of those books, don’t you?” I finally say, more petulant than angry. I can’t stay mad at her. She’s too fucking innocent.

“I do,” she admits, trying to hide a smile.

I sigh, and move closer to her – reaching out and pulling one of her curls. Maybe a little harder than I should.

“Say you’re sorry,” I order her.

“I’m sorry, Draco.”

“Say you won’t give me any more...what was it called? Science fiction?” I pause and she nods, “...science fiction novels again.”

“I promise not to give you any more science fiction novels. Ever.”

“Or nineteenth century slags trying to find rich husbands.”

“Those either.”

Now she's totally humouring me. I can see she's trying not to laugh.

"Bitch."

And now she does start laughing.

What a cunt.

Why is she so fucking irresistible?

I grab a handful of curls at the base of her neck and roughly pull her closer to me, reaching through the bars with my other hand to cup her cheek and caress it with my thumb.

I look her in the eyes, lower my head and gently kiss her on the lips, then slowly lick them, from side to side. She lets out a small gasp of pleasure, and I use that opening to push into her mouth, kissing her more harshly. More urgently. Relishing how sweet she tastes, running my tongue along hers.

I pull her head back by her hair, baring her throat and run my other hand down it, caressing that graceful and fragile neck I so recently considered breaking, holding it in my hand, then turning and angling it so I can kiss the delicate skin through the bars, licking under her ear, making her shiver. Trailing my tongue down its length, and biting where her neck meets her shoulder. Leaving teeth marks, causing a sharp intake of breath.

My lips move back to her mouth, while my hands explore her curves. I run them over her breasts, rub my thumbs over her nipples until they're hard, and then down to her hips. I reach around, and grab her arse, kneading it, squeezing it and pulling her right up against the bars, getting her as close to me as I possibly can.

She's breathing deeply now. A flush creeping up her chest, neck, and onto her cheeks. Her freckles standing out with the change of hue.

I break off our kiss and look at her. She's so fucking gorgeous. So perfect.

Never breaking eye contact I go back to holding the back of her neck with one hand, and reach down to cup her core with the other. She leans into me as I start rubbing. Back and forth. Over and over again, with increasing pressure over her denims.

She whimpers, and closes her eyes.

"Look at me," I order.

She opens her eyes again and watches me.

I run my hand over her jawline, lean back into those luscious lips and kiss her desperately. She's leaning into the bars, leaning towards me. Breathing hard. Fast. Her cheeks are flushed, her eyes dilated, and her lips swollen.

She wants me as much as I do her.

Gods, yes.

Desperate, I reach for her waistband through the bars of my cell. Undo the button and zipper on her denims, and push my hand in roughly. She holds onto the bars with both of her hands, knuckles turning white, as I feel her for the first time. As my fingers slide over her mound of curly hair, then into her soft satiny folds, and finally to her very core. Her head falls back.

Oh fuck.

Fucking fuck.

She's so wet.

Slick with desire.

I sigh into her mouth, kiss her again, and run my fingers back and forth through those soft silky folds, collecting her arousal, then find her clit.

She's panting slightly, a moan caught in her throat.

I lean down, kiss her collarbone, and make a trail of nips and kisses up to her ear, and say into it, "I'm going to make you come so hard, Granger."

She groans in anticipation, her hands running up and down my arms, over my chest, my shoulders, to the back of my neck where she entwines her fingers in my hair.

I experiment with my fingers, finding the right degree of pressure to apply between Granger's legs. It takes a moment, but then she's groaning into my neck, her hips bucking on my hand, as I continue to rub back and forth over her clit vigorously.

The bitch likes it hard. Rough.

"Oh gods, Draco," she cries out, as her grip tightens in my hair, pulling it, as she pushes herself — her cunt, her clit — into my hand as much as she can.

"Hold on, Granger."

I insert my middle finger into her slit — it's so incredibly wet and warm — and start to slowly move it in and out. Angling the heel of my hand to ensure it maintains friction and pressure on her sweet spot.

She's so fucking tight.

I can feel the muscles in her walls contracting on my finger, as she grips my neck desperately and tries to ride my hand faster. I increase my rhythm to match, and watch as she grabs onto the bars once more, her breathing hitching, as waves of pleasure start shooting through her body.

"Just a bit longer..." I say, and I insert another finger, causing her to gasp. I increase the pace, pumping my fingers in and out, curling to reach a particular spot on her front wall, trying to

keep up with the frantic bucking of her hips against my palm.

“Draco...fuck. *Draco...nghhh,*” she groans as she goes up on her toes, grabs at my hair, pulling my mouth down to hers to first kiss, then whimper into it as her walls begin to clench tightly on my hand. She comes, moaning and trembling to a finish, still breathing the same air as me. She stays there a moment, her mouth mere inches from mine, before she moves back and rests her forehead on the cell’s bars, gasping for breath.

As I extricate my hand from her pants, her knees buckle — I reach out to steady her, “You okay?” I ask.

“Excellent,” she says quietly, still out of breath.

Me too.

I bring my hand up and smell it. Smell her. She watches shyly as I tentatively lick one of my fingers. Then pop the whole thing in my mouth. Tasting her. Gods, she tastes incredible.

I want more. I *need* more.

Meanwhile, she backs away from the bars and starts putting herself in order and zipping up her denims.

“What are you doing?” I ask, maybe a little more harshly than I’d intended.

She looks up, confused.

“I’m not even close to done. Take those off,” I gesture to her denims.

“Off?”

“Off,” I confirm.

“Okaaaay,” she says hesitantly, very slowly unbuttoning her denims, shimmying them down over her hips, and finally pulling them off – along with those fucking pink high tops – and leaving just a pair of white cotton knickers. They’re practical, and so typically Granger. I love them.

“Those too,” I nod at them.

There’s a definite blush that starts creeping its way up her neck and onto her cheeks. This is what’s embarrassing? It’s like I didn’t just have my fingers inside her cunt. Like she didn’t just ride my hand to climax. She hooks her fingers into the waistband and pulls them down, too.

I sigh, and just look at her for a moment, standing there in a white t-shirt, and nothing else. She crosses one ankle over the other, as she fiddles with the hemline of her tee. She’s clearly shy to be on display like this – of the fact her hemline doesn’t hide the bush between her legs. It’s like she’s trying to distract from it, angle herself so I don’t see it, when in fact it’s utterly

captivating. Everything about her is so petite and perfect. Except for that curly hair on her head – *that* is big, and wild, and unruly – like it has a mind of its own.

“Now get over here,” I finally say.

I reach out, and pull her right up against the bars, run my hands over the skin on her hips, her buttocks, her lower back. I can feel the magic between us thrumming and accumulating the more I caress her. The more my skin is in direct contact with hers.

She sighs in contentment.

My hands continue around her waist, and onto her stomach, up under her t-shirt to cup her breasts. I pull them out of the cups of her bra, so I can touch them directly. Rub her nipples. Circle her areolas. Roll her nipples between my fingers, making them hard. She holds onto the bars, and watches me the whole time, her eyelids hooded, her lips slightly parted.

I lean down and kiss her, running my tongue over her lips gently. Then kiss my way across her cheek, to her temple, then move over to her ear, where I whisper softly, “I’m going to eat you now,” then nibble her earlobe. She lets out a little whimper and nods her head, angling it to provide better access to her neck. I move her hair out of the way, then lick and nip my way down to her collarbone.

I get down onto my knees and place both of my hands on her behind, pulling her as flush as possible against the cold steel. Then I pull her leg through to my side of the cell, and hook it over my shoulder. She holds onto the bars above my head.

I dip my nose and inhale right from the source...smelling her musk. It’s intoxicating. I lean in and drag my tongue through her already swollen folds from back to front, slowly.

Deliberately.

“Ooohh...” she sighs.

She tastes so fucking good. I’ve been on a bland prison diet for months, and the taste of Granger’s pussy is like a fucking explosion of flavour.

My hands still on her arse, I do it again, running my tongue over her slit, before I move up, and tease her clit. At first with my tongue, licking and flicking it, and then gently with my teeth. She starts breathing heavily, and one of her hands comes down to grab a fistful of my hair. “Draco...” she says as she pulls tight, and I start sucking on her. Her legs shake. She’s completely fucking dripping. I pull her closer still, lapping at her desire, drinking her up, insert my tongue into her slit. Going in and out. Sucking at her sex.

“Oh Draco....” she moans and removes her hand from my hair to get a better grip on the bars as her hips start moving. Moaning in pleasure with each breath she takes, she pushes her cunt down and fucks my face. I keep my tongue on her clit, nibbling and sucking on it, as I release my grip on her arse to bring one hand down and insert my fingers into her slit, and pump, keeping time with her bucking hips.

“Don’t stop,” she pants. “Harder, *oh fuck...*” Her words are strangled as I push my fingers deeper into her core, and alternate between sucking on her clit, rubbing it roughly with the flat of my tongue, and biting it. Her whole body starts shaking, as her cunt clenches hard on my fingers. Her breaths are short and rapid and her hips buck erratically. Finally she lets out a long drawn out moan and comes on my face. She leans her forehead on the bars between us, panting.

I remove my fingers, and continue to lap at her desire, cleaning her up, letting none of it go to waste while she continues to lean against the bars, completely out of breath, a light sheen of sweat on her brow.

The lower half of my face, in comparison, is completely covered with her fluids.

I caress her buttocks, the back of her legs, then leave a trail of kisses on the inside of her thigh before removing it from my shoulder, and gently guiding it back through the bars.

I stand up, twine my hand into her curls, pull her face to mine, and kiss her squarely on the mouth.

She makes a face, and pulls back, “Draco! You’re positively covered in...in...in...”

“You?”

She bites her lower lip, and looks at me shyly. She’s still holding onto the bars of my cell, wearing only her white t-shirt, her gorgeous mound still on display.

I kiss her again, my hands wrapping around her waist, caressing her back.

“You taste bloody fantastic,” I tell her.

She lowers her head down between the bars to rest her forehead on my chest. My hand travels up to the back of her neck, and into her curls once more, massaging her scalp.

I rest my chin on her head, and say softly, “You’re all mine,” with a possessiveness that surprises even myself.

When Granger returns the next day, she’s looking shy. Unsure of herself.

I lean my elbows on the horizontal support bars of my cell and watch her intently. I’m not occluding. I’m not hiding anything. The desire in my eyes on open display.

She sees me watching her and blushes.

“Granger...” I greet her.

“Draco...” she replies.

Fuck, I love the sound of my name rolling off her tongue.

As she nears my cell I reach out and take her wrist, relishing the sparks that emanate from where our skin touches, and pull her towards me, using my free hand to grab those wild curls of hers, tangle my hand in them, and bring her lips to mine.

I kiss her long and hard, then release her. Backing up into my cell.

“What brings you back so soon,” I ask, placing my hands in my pockets.

“You,” she says simply.

I can’t help my stupid grin. I’m such a fucking idiot.

“And this...” she takes a small paperback out of her back pocket. “I came across it last night and thought you might enjoy it. It’s another dystopian view of the future. Thugs, prison, awful state-sponsored rehabilitation programs...”

“Sounds right up my alley, thanks.”

She passes the book through the bars.

“A warning, though....” she hesitates, and maintains her hold on the book, “...the author uses a bunch of made up terms as slang. It takes *at least* a few chapters to catch on to what they mean. It’s normal for readers to go back and start over...”

“You’re afraid I’m going to freak out, again, aren’t you?”

“The thought did cross my mind,” she admits.

“I seem to recall it all ending rather well for you,” I smirk.

“Yes, well...” she blushes again, looks down at her hands. Twisting her fingers together. “I’m supposed to go talk to McGonagall.”

I nod.

“Okay, then. Thanks for the book.”

A few hours later, McGonagall herself blesses me with her presence. What the fuck did I do to deserve this?

She walks in looking like she's got a stick up her arse, peering down her nose at me. She looks exactly the same as she did back at school. Haughty, pinched, overdressed. Literally, overdressed. She's got tartan robes on top of plain ones, on top of gods knows what, topped off with her trademark pointed hat. For fuck's sake, it's a little much, even for her.

"Mr. Malfoy," she says.

I stand so she has to look up at me instead, place my hands in my pockets, and lean against the bars of my cell. Tilting my head I say, "Minerva."

She bristles at the informality of my greeting.

"Yes, well," she begins, as she makes to wipe dust that isn't there from her robes, "I'll come straight to the point."

"Do."

"It has come to my attention that there is a..." she stops, searching for the right word, "...a sort of *attachment* that has developed between you and Miss Granger....that you share a fondness for books."

This bitch is not here to discuss books. I secure my walls as I wait for her to go on.

"It can't have escaped your notice that the only Order member to show you such a degree of kindness and consideration is, in fact, a muggle born?"

"Are you asking if I know Granger is a mudblood?" McGonagall stiffens at the use of the derogatory term. "If so, then yes. I'm well aware of her blood status."

She looks at me for a long while, her eyes narrowed, trying to read me.

Was it her bright idea to target and capture me? I narrow my eyes right back at her.

"Do you not see the irony," she finally continues, "that the only person to show you compassion, is the very one most targeted by your Dark Lord's policies of blood supremacy and purity?"

She's shown me a little more than compassion.

"Get to the point, Minerva."

"The point is, Mr. Malfoy, do you want to see Miss Granger — possibly the most famous muggle born of all — harmed if the Order falls?"

"What makes you think I care what happens to Granger?"

"I think you care very much what happens to her, Mr. Malfoy."

How the fuck would she know if I care?

And that's when it hits me.

The Order set this whole thing up. Me. My shitty accommodations. Granger. Her pathological need to help anyone who's being mistreated. Motherfuckers. This was the plan all along...

Do they know how well it worked?

I grab hold of the bars of my cell, and look at her with dangerous eyes. "Understand this," I hiss, "whatever you *think* you've accomplished, it *only* applies to Granger. I don't give a *fuck* about the Order, about mudbloods, or the freedom and equality you're fighting for. If you think for one minute that pushing Granger and I together would make me see the error of my ways, you are sorely mistaken."

"All you've done is convince me you're no different than Voldemort. You're a conniving manipulative bitch who'll do whatever it takes to get her way, no matter who it affects. You may think you have the moral high ground, but I assure you...the way you've been using Granger? Shows you're just as cruel and ruthless as the very best of Voldemort's Death Eaters."

I'm practically shouting by the end of my tirade, and hit the bars on my cell to drive the point home.

Fucking cunt.

"My, my, Mr. Malfoy," she sounds very pleased with herself. "Your depth of feeling is even greater than I had hoped." She actually smiles at me, "You're in love with her, aren't you?"

I roar in fury, and hit the bars again with the heel of my hand.

Because the bitch is right.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced:

Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Anthony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange

Chapter 7

I spend the next few days agonising over whether to tell Granger or not.

Does it change anything? Would she be angry to find out her precious Order has been using her to try and get to me? To get the information I possess? To get me to turn traitor? Or would she forgive them, all in the name of the greater good?

The whole thing makes me sick.

I spend all my time occluding again. Obsessively. Not to build defensive walls or fortifications, but to organise and examine my thoughts. To look at them from all angles, hoping it'll help me see the way forward. It makes me distant. Detached.

I'm sitting on the floor in front of my camp bed with my legs stretched out. I'm entirely inside my head, when I hear a faraway voice. I think it's calling my name. It's barely noticeable. Small. Almost as if I'm underwater.

"Draco?"

It gets louder, more insistent. It's like a buzzing in my ear. It's annoying. I swat at it instinctively.

"Draco? *Draco!* "

I blink, resurfacing...look around and take in my surroundings.

I'm still on the floor. Granger is directly in front of me leaning into the bars of my cell as far as she can, her arms hanging through. Was she snapping her fingers? Clapping her hands? She's looking at me, somewhat alarmed.

"Where were you?" she asks, her tone worried.

I rub my face a few times, clearing away the cobwebs, and then run my hands through my hair. I pull up my knees, and rest my elbows on them as I finally look at her, still not saying anything. What should I say? Your Order is using you? Manipulating you? Us?

"Draco? Are you ok?"

"I'm fine, Granger," I reply unconvincingly.

She looks at me sceptically.

“Really?”

“Really.”

I stand up, take the two steps to the bars and take her hand. I kiss the inside of her wrist, where her skin is so thin and soft, where I can see the colour of her veins underneath, then rub my thumb into her palm.

“You’re still occluding. Deeply.” It’s not so much a question, as a statement. Perhaps an accusation.

“I am,” I admit, my voice still distant.

“What’s happened? Why are you hiding from me?” She sounds vulnerable. Hurt.

“Not from you, Granger.”

“You’re sure?”

“Yes,” I look into her eyes, positive my blank expression isn’t helping reassure her one bit.

“But something *did* happen?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes.”

“Will you tell me?”

“Not yet.”

“When you’re ready?”

“When I’m ready.”

“Okay, then...” she reaches up, placing her hand behind my ear and tugs, pulling my head down to her level, running her hand through my hair and placing her lips on mine. I focus on how smooth they are. How her tongue softly explores the contours of my mouth, teasing it open. How she tastes both sweet and somewhat bitter, like tannins. Like she had a pastry with a cup of tea not too long ago. “Can I help get your mind off whatever it is that’s bothering you?” She reaches her other hand between the bars, places it on my cock and starts rubbing.

I breathe into her mouth, “Granger...”

“Just come a little closer to the surface for me,” she asks. She leans back and looks me in the eyes intently, worriedly, waiting to see some expression return to them. I knock down a few walls, returning to myself just enough to show a minimal amount of feeling and expression. It seems to satisfy her. She smiles and pushes down my joggers, pulling out my member. Caressing its length.

Fuck, yes.

I hold on to the bars, and watch her. My gaze alternating between her hands on my increasingly hard cock, and her face. She's concentrating. Focused entirely on her task. On me.

She runs her fingers back and forth lightly, from base to tip, teasing the end with featherlight touches, before rubbing it harder with her thumb. I sigh in contentment, and cup her chin with my hand, move it up along her jawline to her ear, and finally grab a handful of curls, twisting them around my fist.

As my cock hardens, she wraps her hand around it, and starts pumping. Steadily. Deliberately, dragging my foreskin back and forth, and ending each stroke by once more teasing the end. Running her thumb over it, collecting my precum, and spreading it, as she moves her hand back down my length, to the base.

It feels so fucking good.

"Faster, Granger," I beg. I can't stop watching her small hand as she continues to run it up and down my straining cock.

She speeds up, and I pull her face to mine. Pull her by her hair. I need to kiss her. Taste her while she pleases me.

I groan into her mouth.

"That feels so good," I breathe.

She grabs the back of my neck with her free hand. Kisses me deeply, her tongue delving into my mouth, then licks my lips. She brushes her nose against mine, then lets go of me. Backs away and gets onto her knees.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck .

"Get as close as you can..." she instructs as she manoeuvres my hips right up against the bars, my member projecting out between them on her side. She takes hold of it, looks up slyly through her eyelashes, smiles and almost laughs, "It's a good thing you've got such a huge cock..." then leans forward and proceeds to lick the length of it, from base to tip.

Sweet. Fucking. Salazar.

I hold on to the bars with both hands, keeping my hips pushed as close as possible. She takes me into her mouth, and begins sucking. Pumping back and forth. Licking intermittently. I can't get enough of seeing my cock in that beautiful mouth of hers. The sight of her lips taking me in, surrounding my girth.

"That feels so fucking good, Granger..."

She stops for a moment, catching her breath. She uses her hands to rub, caress, and tease me. She leans in, moves my t-shirt up, and kisses down my abdomen. Licks my navel before returning her mouth to my member, swallowing as much of it as she can, sucking more forcibly and grazing me with her teeth.

“Fuck,” I choke out, leaning my forehead against one of the bars of my cell.

She speeds up, and I start to buck my hips – I try desperately not to force myself too deeply into her mouth, worried I might choke her – but oh gods does it feel good. As I feel the tension in my whole body increase, somehow she takes me even deeper. I swear I must be hitting the back of her throat.

“Granger, your mouth is so fucking amazing...” I gasp, and tangle my hands in her hair again. Holding tight. Pulling and pushing with her thrusts.

Encouraged by my praise, she holds onto the back of my thighs, and sucks hard while pressing and dragging her tongue against the underside of my cock. I warn her, “I’m going to come...” and she gives a brief nod, acknowledging my words and the tension filling my legs. My whole body. She keeps her lips firmly around my cock, and holds me there as I thrust into her mouth one last time, hiss, and spill my seed into her mouth – I feel, rather than see, her swallow. I take a deep, shuddering breath, and relax, and in doing so move back and away from the bars, from her, and her mouth.

I breathe deeply. Give myself a moment to catch my breath. Put myself away. I build my walls back up — I’m not ready to be myself just yet. To be honest with her.

Detached as I may be, I still want to make her come. Make her cry out my name.

“Stand up, Granger,” I order. My voice cool. Leaden.

She stands and I reach through the bars, grabbing her by the waist of her denims, pulling her towards me. I’m rough. She slams into my cell, attempting to catch herself. There’s no foreplay, no tenderness. I look her in the eye, mutter “Mine,” under my breath, then kiss her hard, forcing my tongue into her mouth as I undo her zipper and shove my hand into her pants.

She’s completely wet. Just dripping with desire.

“You enjoyed sucking my cock, didn’t you?” I breathe into her mouth as I roughly insert two fingers into her slit and start pumping, rubbing the heel of my palm against her clit. She gasps.

“Answer me,” I command.

She holds onto the bars, her breaths ragged as she endures my assault on her cunt, and replies, “I enjoyed it.”

“You enjoyed *what*?” I ask again, looking her in the eye — I know my eyes and voice are dull and distant again, but there’s an underlying heat that’s desperate to not only dominate her, but also please her. To get her off. I curl my fingers, searching her front wall, looking for her g-spot.

She leans into me, her head on my chest, whimpering.

My hand stills and I whisper in her ear again, “What did you enjoy, Granger? What made you so wet?”

I wait for her answer.

She looks up at me, her eyes lidded, her hands grasping my t-shirt, “Your cock,” she whispers. “I enjoyed sucking your cock,” she finally, obediently, replies.

“Good girl,” I say, and firmly rub my fingers on her clit, back and forth, before returning them roughly inside her, pumping hard. She moves her hands to my shoulders, gripping me tightly as she starts bucking in time with my thrusts. I push my fingers deeper, inserting a third and almost lifting her off the ground as she rides my hand, moaning against my chest, whimpering my name over and over again.

“Come for me, you dirty bitch.” It’s a command, given as I push my tongue back into her mouth, kissing her harshly, biting at her lower lip. I lick along her jawline, to her ear, and down the long length of her neck, grazing my teeth against her before finally biting down on her shoulder. At the same time I reach around her with my free hand, grab her arse, and pull her hips closer to me. Thrusting my fingers deeper, pumping hard and unrelentingly

I taste blood as she cries out, reacting to the pain I’ve inflicted and the pleasure overtaking her. Her whole body starts shaking. I hold her tightly, supporting her around the waist, and continue to fuck her with my fingers. I nuzzle my face into her neck, and bite again.

“Oh, oh, oh...” she cries out each time I plunge my fingers into her. I want to hear her scream. I want to hear her lose control. I maintain my rhythm, and increase the pressure of my palm, grinding it into her pelvis as hard as I can.

Her breathing becomes ragged. I lean down and bite her once more.

She lets out a low primal moan. It’s like nothing I’ve ever heard before. She grasps my shirt, bunching it up tightly in her fists as her inner walls start clenching on my hand. She cries out loudly. Moving her hips frantically in time with me as she comes, riding my hand into ecstasy.

When her ragged breathing starts evening out, we both slow, then eventually stop.

I pull my hand out of her pants, and absentmindedly lick it clean.

She catches her breath, runs her hand through my hair, looks up at my dead again eyes and timidly asks, “Is it really so bad?”

“It is,” I reply with no emotion whatsoever.

It doesn't take long for Granger to notice I've stopped reading the books she brings.

I'm retreating into my occlusion more and more each day, increasing the distance between us. In addition to examining the Order's duplicity and what, if anything, I should reveal to Granger, I'm also trying to reconcile my feelings for her.

In some respects, I have no doubts at all.

She's intelligent, kind, and compassionate, as well as bold and beautiful.

So fucking beautiful.

I can't take my eyes off the smattering of freckles across her cheeks and her nose. And those few that run over her shoulders, and dip down onto her chest? They make me want to explore every inch of her body, looking for more, counting them.

I can't stop putting my hands in her hair. Those wild, unruly curls that seem to defy the rules of gravity. I want to tangle and wrap my hands in them. I want to plunge my face in her hair, and breathe in its heavenly scent. Nuzzle up and breathe in where her hairline ends, just behind her ear.

The way our magic interacts – the sparks I feel every time I touch her – is absolutely exhilarating. Addictive. *She* is addictive. The taste of her mouth, the saltiness of her skin, the tanginess of her arousal...I can't imagine living without any of them.

I crave them. I crave her.

I crave a mudblood.

A fucking mudblood. With fucking muggle parents, and no magical ancestry whatsoever. Like, *where the fuck* did her magic come from? It's accidental. An anomaly. A fucking abomination.

Am I really in love with her?

Is that even possible given our history? Our backgrounds? Our views?

Because no matter what the Order thought would happen if we...what was the term Minerva used? Formed an attachment? Well, it hasn't.

I mean. It has, insofar as Granger is concerned. But that's all. I don't want her to get hurt, nor would I do anything to intentionally hurt her. But I'm not about to embark on some heroic suicide mission against everything I believe in because I've started fucking her. Love – if that's what this truly is – may be a powerful emotion, but it hasn't made me feeble-minded. It hasn't changed who I am, or the reality in which I live.

I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, a new man.

Far from it.

I'm still Draco Malfoy. Pureblood supremacist. Death Eater. Wielder of dark magic. Servant to Lord Voldemort.

None of that has changed. None of it will. Not for love. Not for Granger.

It's who I am. Who I'll always be.

Which brings me back to my original dilemma. Do I tell Granger how the Order has manipulated her? Us? Could *she* ever turn on the Order for what they've done?

I don't think so. In fact, I know so.

She's still Hermione Granger. Swot extraordinaire, the brightest witch of her age, Gryffindor, one third of the golden fucking trio, best friend to Saint Harry Potter, and integral member of the Order of the Phoenix. She is who she is, too.

If I'm not willing to turn on my own for her, why would I expect her to do it for me?

Which means we're fucked.

No matter if I'm really in love with her – or just in lust – no matter what she feels for me (do her feelings even run as deep as mine?), we are still and will always remain, mudblood and pureblood.

Like I said. Fucked.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

This sense of impending doom – for whatever this is between us – leaves me in a strange kind of limbo. I want to distance myself from her, occlude deeply and place her in a closed box on the top shelf of a locked closet. But at the same time my desire for her has increased exponentially. It's like I know I'm going to starve, so I intend to gorge myself on her for as long as I possibly can.

And I do.

I'm as all over her as the bars of my cell permit.

I don't want to talk about books anymore, our days at Hogwarts, or discuss what makes for the perfect shower. I don't want to think about the fact I'm lying to her through omission every single day.

I want to kiss her. I want to finger her. Taste her. I want to feel her mouth on my cock.

I want to fuck. Like, really fuck. I want to penetrate her. I want to feel her inner walls squeezing my cock. I want to come inside her.

Desperately.

It's a matter of survival. Being with her is now the only time I'm not occluding myself into nonexistence.

She's my lifeline.

It's late. I had my last meal some time ago, and I'm trying to access my magic. Circumvent the wards on my cell. I've always been complete shite at wandless magic, but going months on end without a wand has left me a little more in tune with the magic I inherently possess.

I can't unlock my cell, or anything, but I'm hoping for maybe an accio? A wingardium leviosa? Something light? Like a wand maybe.

A wizard can dream.

It's at that moment Granger walks in. I don't normally see her this late in the evening – the light from the setting sun reflects off her skin. My breath catches just looking at her. It's like

she glows golden.

“Granger, you’re here late,” I observe.

“I just got out of an Order meeting,” she says by way of explanation.

“Everything under control?” I always keep my questions vague when it comes to Order matters, knowing she can’t, and won’t, provide any details.

“I think?” she replies. “There’s been a slight hiccup in one of our initiatives...nothing insurmountable, I don’t think.”

She looks at me and her eyes narrow, “What were *you* up to?”

“Nothing.” Liar.

Just as I haven’t shared the Order’s deceit with Granger, I haven’t told her I’m trying to tap into my magic, either.

I walk over to the bars, and reach out my hand. She takes it – our magic interacting and sending a jolt of electricity up my arm. I pull her in, spinning her so her back is against the bars, against my chest. I collect her wild curls, and move them aside, so I can run my nose against her neck and hairline, breathe her in. Place little kisses down her neck, then lick my way back up, behind her ear, before kissing my way back down to her shoulder and biting it gently. She lets out a little gasp of surprise.

I release her curls and snake my hands through the bars, running them over her waist and stomach, settling on her hips, drawing little circles with my thumbs. “I like you being here late,” I say into her hair.

“Hmmm...” she answers, leaning her head back onto my chest, enjoying my caresses.

I make my way up her torso with one hand, and start palming her breast and running circles around her nipple, while the other reaches down and rubs her centre, putting pressure where the seam of her denims is thickest.

She sighs again, and leans back into the bars, into me. I look over her shoulder and pull up her jumper, run my hands over her soft skin, caressing it, and pushing her bra up and out of the way. The skin on her breasts is milky white and her areolas dark pink. I caress and massage them. Squeeze them. Her nipples are hard. Almost sharp. I pinch and roll them between my fingers, and she whimpers in response.

I leave one hand on her breast, while the other makes its way back down, slipping into her pants. I slide my fingers through her curls down below, and find my way to her soft folds, and down to her centre. She’s already wet. I collect her arousal and rub my fingers back and forth over her clit.

I run my tongue up her neck again and she lets out a soft groan. I feel my erection growing, pushing against her backside.

“Oh, Draco,” she gasps. “Put your fingers inside me.”

“No, Granger. I want to try something different tonight,” I whisper into her ear, before placing kisses behind it, and all the way down to her shoulder, which I graze with my teeth again.

She shivers, and reaches her hands back over her head to run her fingers through my hair.

“What’s that?” she asks breathlessly over her shoulder.

I pull my hands out of her pants and out from under her top. Take a few steps back, and place them in my pockets.

Feeling my absence, she pushes off from the bars, takes several steps and turns around to face me. I look at her for a few moments, my eyes full of desire.

“Take off your denims,” I instruct, “and knickers.”

“Okay,” she says, smiling, and leans over. First unlacing her trainers and removing them along with her socks. Then she stands back up, and wiggles her hips as she slowly, teasingly, slides her denims and knickers down to the ground, and steps out of them. Once done, she looks back up at me, one eyebrow raised.

“What next?”

“Take off your jumper – I want to look at you. All of you.”

She blushes, but nods and obeys. She pulls it over her head and throws it down to the ground with her denims. Reaches behind her back to unclasp her simple white bra, letting it fall to the top of the pile.

And there she is. Standing naked in front of me, in all her freckled glory.

Sweet fucking Salazar.

“You’re beautiful,” I tell her, staring. Ogling her appreciatively.

I’m not sure she believes me. Her posture is uncertain. Uncomfortable. It’s like she wants to hide herself, but is forcing herself not to.

I take my t-shirt off saying, “You might want to cast a contraceptive charm.”

Now that gets her attention. Granger’s eyebrows shoot up – we’ve never needed one before, having only had oral sex or mutually masturbated. But she bends over — I can’t help but appreciate her naked bottom in the air — and rummages through her beaded bag for her wand. She finds it and casts a charm on her abdomen, causing it to glow momentarily.

“Done,” she says, and drops her wand on top of her pile of clothes, and looks at me expectantly.

“Come on over here, and get on your hands and knees,” I tell her.

Understanding dawns on her, and she approaches the cell, lowering herself onto her hands and knees, looking over her bare shoulder at me, smiling, anticipating.

“How do you want me?” she asks.

“Back up.” I take her ankles and guide them through the bars, getting her arse right up against the cold steel. It provides excellent access to her centre. I run my fingers through her folds to check she’s still wet, and find she’s slick with desire. I lick my fingers.

I can’t believe we haven’t done this before.

I bend down, inhale deeply, and run my tongue along the length of her – from slit to clit. She gasps in shock.

“You taste so fucking good, Granger.”

I return all my attention to her pussy and eat her as if I’m starving. I lick her soft swollen folds, running my tongue back and forth, dipping it slightly into her sex each time, and then moving beyond. Coming so close, but never quite reaching her other hole, teasing that I might lick it. She’d never admit it, what with being such a fucking prude and all, but based on how she reacts – how she moans and gasps and moves herself – I know it’s something she’s curious about. Something that titillates her. I fondle, rub and pinch her clit, and slide my greedy lapping tongue into her beautiful cunt, and then suck on it, on her delicious juices.

She’s making sounds I’ve never heard before, mewling as she bucks her buttocks back, against the bars of my cell and my face.

I could live here. Between her legs. Her smell, her taste. Everything is so perfect. So delectable.

But at the same time, there’s an increasing urgency between my own legs as my cock throbs with want. I’m so desperate to get inside her. I can’t wait. I get up and remove my pants, then am back on my knees behind her.

“I’m going to fuck you now, Granger. Hard.”

“I can’t wait, Draco,” she pants, looking over her shoulder. The desire in her eyes matches mine, as she moves one of her hands up to fondle her own breast.

Fuck me, I can’t get inside her fast enough.

I rub my fingers over her slit again. Up and down. Collecting her desire, and rubbing it over my length. Then I line myself up with her, and gently push into her core for the first time. We both moan as I enter her. Stretch her. Slowly. Carefully. I push into her. A little more. Then even more, again. And finally, with my hands on her hips, I push myself all the way up to the hilt, fully enveloped by her silky wet and warm cunt. It’s pure fucking bliss.

Granger groans as I fill her up, pushing herself back against me. I sigh in contentment, and stay still for a moment. Breathing deeply, and just relishing the sensation of being inside her.

I hiss through my teeth, and begin moving my hips. Back and forth. Slowly at first, but increasing the pace as we adjust to each other. To me inside her. To her depth. To my girth. To the feeling of the bars between us. I keep one hand on her behind to steady myself, and reach the other around to find her clit. It's a little awkward, but worth it as Granger starts panting and bucking, saying "Oh, oh, oh," as I start thrusting more rapidly. Pounding my cock into her.

I can feel the bars of the cell hitting my hips on every single thrust, and I think it's increasing my pleasure. The fact that I am finally, *finally*, inside my girl, despite the circumstances, despite these fucking bars between us.

I feel the walls in Granger's centre beginning to squeeze and contract, and the tension in my body increases.

"Hold on," I gasp. Beg.

"Oh Draco," she breathes, "you feel *so good* inside me."

"Fuck...it feels so good..." I barely manage to get out.

"*Harder*, Draco," she moans, as she leans her head down on her forearms on the ground, quite literally presenting herself to me, like some amazing sexy feral animal.

My mudblood. Mine. My dirty little mudblood.

I speed up, pushing harder, deeper, my rhythm becoming frantic, those fucking bars bruising my hips. "Yes, yes, yes," she breathes with each thrust, as she pushes back into me and convulses, her cunt tightening, as she climaxes on my still hard cock.

"Nghhh..." she grunts. "Draco...." she cries out in a strangled voice. Getting back up onto her hands, she arches her back, riding her climax out.

Gods, yes.

"Granger," I moan, and I grab hold of her hips with both hands. I'm gripping so tightly I'm leaving bruises on her skin. I push as deeply as I can with each thrust, desperate to feel every glorious inch of her. She pushes back against me, and I swear I'm penetrating her so deeply, I'm hitting her cervix.

She leans back down onto her forearms, and sighs, "Deeper, Draco. Deeper. Come inside me."

It's all I want. It's all I've ever wanted.

I thrust frantically, so deeply, I feel I'm going to impale her. Then finally, everything tenses. Once, twice more, and I groan as I finally, blissfully release inside of her.

I come to realise that as much as I hate lying to Granger, I hate being numb more.

I decide not to tell her about the Order, pull back on the occlusion, and allow myself to enjoy our time together. I mean, so what if I'm a prisoner of war? If I've been manipulated into falling in love with a mudblood? I'm fucking the brightest witch of her age. I should take advantage while I can, because I bloody well know it won't last.

I start reading again. Exercising. Practising accessing my magic.

I also pay closer attention to the comings and goings of the Order. Who's on Draco duty on what day, and when. I look for, and find, patterns.

I pay closer attention to Granger, too. To whenever she mentions Order meetings, safe houses, and incidents. I don't ask for details, but note her mood – I can read the witch like an open fucking book – so I know if the Order has suffered a loss or won a victory.

I also attempt to engage with my jailers. Finch-Fletchley is the most amenable and talkative. Maybe stupid? Typical fucking Hufflepuff, they're too trusting. He's gone and told me enough information about the Death Eater watch that is *still* stationed outside the safe house to start piecing together a few potential identities. Combined with the morsels I manage to get out of Granger and shitstain, and I've got a pretty good idea who's out there, where they're stationed, and when.

Most importantly, I start talking to Granger again. Really talking.

We continue to discuss books – even though she promised not to, the bitch slips in *another* 19th century English novel about finding a husband – though admittedly this one already has a wife locked up in his attic. It's a fairly dark and bleak tale, and I much prefer it to any of the others she's given me to read. She also shares a novella about a presumably innocent man sentenced to life in prison – who has an ingenious, albeit very long-term plan, to escape.

Again with the jailbreaks...is she trying to tell me something?

Granger's on another late night visit.

I spend far more time than is probably healthy with my face buried between her legs. Licking, sucking and lapping her up. I mean, *how* does she taste so good?

Afterwards, we talk.

We lie on the floor, each of us on our respective sides of the bars, holding hands. Intertwining our fingers. It's terribly cliché, but I can't help it. Apparently, in addition to losing my mind, fucking a mudblood, and possibly even being in love with her, I've become a sentimental sod, too.

It all starts off innocently enough.

We talk about our favourite foods. I tell her mine is treacle tart, and she tells me it's a dessert and not a food. She also informs me it was Saint Potter's favourite, too, then goes off on a long tangent about how similar we were (I honestly want to bludgeon her – or myself). She, on the other hand, doesn't have a single favourite food, but rather ranks the Hogwarts welcoming feast as her favourite meal.

I'm not surprised to learn her favourite candies are sugar quills. Swot. While I don't have a favourite now (what am I, twelve?), I tell her I used to love pepper imps when I was a child, so I could breathe fire and pretend I was a real dragon.

She gets a sappy sentimental sort of look on her face at that revelation.

When we get on to our favourite smells, she takes us down memory lane to Slughorn's first class in sixth year where he had a cauldron of amortentia out. She smelled freshly mown grass, new parchment, and, apparently, the weasel's hair. I almost gag in disgust. She confirms grass and parchment remain favourites, but assures me his hair would no longer make her top three. She won't hazard a guess as to what would replace it. I tell her mine is the heavenly scent of her cunt which, incidentally, I can still smell on myself. She tells me it doesn't count.

I disagree.

We talk about our childhoods, and compare the differences between growing up muggle versus magical. She explains television and movies to me, and I bemoan the fact muggles are so ill-educated they can't pick up a book and use their imaginations for entertainment...she tells me she understands my point of view, but that I really don't have a leg to stand on until I see one. Apparently there are some very good movies and television shows.

That's when we get into dangerous territory. Speculation. What ifs. She gets on her side, resting her head in her hand, and looks at me, still playing with my fingers through the bars of the cell.

"When you were a child – what did you want to be when you grew up?" she asks.

"Granger..." I scoff. "It was never a question of what I wanted. I was the Malfoy heir. It was decided long before I was born that I'd become Lord, and take over the running of the estate and its assets. Just like every other Malfoy before me."

She looks at me, unimpressed. "But surely there was a time, when you were small, that there was something you wanted to do?"

I chuckle.

“No, Granger. From the moment I was born it was made very clear to me I had no choice. That was the one and only future available to me.”

“Oh...” she sounds sad to hear this.

“What did you want to be, Granger? Before you knew you were a witch?”

“Oh, that’s easy.” she says. “I wanted to be a barrister, then move into politics and eventually run for Parliament. I wanted to make the world a better place.”

Of course she wanted to make the world a better place. Fucking goody two-shoes.

“*That’s* what you decided as a child? To be a politician? You didn’t want to be a...what are they called? A doctor?” I pause, thinking. “A tooth doctor like your parents?”

“A dentist,” she corrects me. “No...I think there might have been a time, when I was really small, that I wanted to be the tooth fairy, though.”

“The what?!”

She smiles, “It’s a make-believe character meant to make losing teeth less scary for children.” I look at her, with a blank expression on my face, waiting for her to explain. “Children place the teeth they lose under their pillows at bedtime, and the tooth fairy comes to collect them when they’re sleeping, leaving coins in their place.”

I stare at her for a moment, frowning, trying to decide if she’s being serious. “That’s fucking terrifying, Granger.”

She laughs.

“Fucking muggles,” I say, shaking my head in disbelief.

She looks at me, hesitating... “Did you never dream of something you could do, if you weren’t the Malfoy heir?”

I sigh. I hate this kind of thinking. *I am* the Malfoy heir. Have been since I was born. There was never any point in dreaming of something else. But I try to humour her.

“A potions master might have been nice,” I say. It seems to satisfy her. She nods, thinking.

“A professor?” she asks.

I shrug.

“You’d have been scarier than Snape,” she teases.

“Definitely. I wouldn’t let those little fuckers get away with any of the shit you and your pals got up to,” I smirk.

I'm sitting on my bed, staring at the spoon I lifted off one of my meal trays.

I've been using occlumency to help tap into my magic. Instead of compartmentalising and building walls, I've been exploring every fucking memory I have of how magic works, of instances of accidental magic when I was a child, of learning how to control it, of channeling it through a wand. The wand channels *my* magic. The magic that is *already* in me. It makes it easier to tap into, but it does not create it. It's already there.

I can feel it.

It's how I can feel the magic surrounding my cell. The wards that have been placed to suppress it.

But I'm becoming accustomed to the chains that bind me. Adapting, maybe? Finding new ways to reach the magic within me.

I close my eyes and breathe deeply for several minutes. I focus on the spoon, digging deep inside myself, breathing steadily, occluding, searching my mind. I find my source of magic within myself – it's blocked. Walled up by suppression spells. I examine the walls, and their construction, and then methodically tear down and destroy each and every one surrounding it. Releasing it.

I open my eyes, still slightly unfocused, still heavily occluded.

The spoon is floating.

I keep practising.

The wards are still in place, of course. I can feel them blocking access to my magic. But I've found a back door. It's clumsy, circuitous, and laborious for me to open, but I know it's there. I need to keep working at it. I need to learn how to access it more easily. Fortunately, nobody knows what I'm trying to do. Everyone just thinks I'm occluding. I mean, I am, in a sense.

Besides, fuck what they think.

Granger included.

Sure, we're talking and fucking, and it's amazing. But I'm still a prisoner. I'm still stuck in this fucking cell. And though she's making it bearable, I don't kid myself. Love will not conquer all. One way or another I need to get myself out of here – without her, or her help. That much is certain.

Our story is destined to be a tragedy.

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced:

Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre

Stephen King's Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

We're sitting on the floor, back to back, talking. Granger has resumed her new favourite game of asking 'What if.' I fucking hate this game.

"What if you hadn't been sorted into Slytherin? What house do you think you'd have been sorted into?"

I roll my eyes, happy we're not facing each other.

"That's easy. Ravenclaw."

"Why?"

"Because I'm too mean to be a Hufflepuff, and I'd rather die than be sorted into Gryffindor."

"Death over Gryffindor?" she asks.

"Absolutely." I don't elaborate.

"Hmm," she thinks loudly, clearly disapproving of my answer – fucking Gryffindor – before she continues, "What if you hadn't received your mark in sixth year?"

"That's not a fair question, Granger."

"Why?"

"Because," I hiss, "I was given the mark as punishment for my father's failures after *you* and your friends broke into the department of mysteries."

"Oh Draco, I'd never really thought of it that way..."

"Of course you didn't," I say bitterly. She and Potter never considered the consequences of their actions. Selfish bitch.

She continues, following a train of thought, "I mean, if we hadn't broken into the Ministry that night...there wouldn't have been a battle. Sirius wouldn't have died. Your father wouldn't have gone to Azkaban. The world wouldn't have known that Voldemort was back yet...everything could have been different."

"Or delayed. It was only ever a matter of when – not if – Voldemort would reveal himself and I would get the Dark Mark..."

"But if you hadn't gotten it so early...if Voldemort hadn't been revealed at that time, then maybe you wouldn't have been tasked with killing Dumbledore...."

I sigh. I feel like I'm doing that a lot, lately. "Next question, Granger."

"Alright, then. What do you think..." she hesitates. Starts over. "What do you think you'll do...after the war is over?"

Are you fucking kidding me?

"Seriously, Granger. What point is there in speculating?"

"Humour me," she says. "Please."

"Well, what outcome are we imagining for the end of the war? Because it'll make a bloody big difference in what I'll be doing."

"If the Order wins," she whispers.

"If the Order wins I suspect I'll be in very similar circumstances to the ones I'm in now. Awaiting trial for war crimes, of which I will most definitely be found guilty of. Then off to Azkaban for life. Probably the Dementor's kiss."

"I don't think a ministry rebuilt by the Order will be employing dementors..."

"Oh great. Just life in Azkaban, then."

I really fucking hate this conversation.

"And if Voldemort wins?" she asks meekly.

I sigh, rubbing my hands through my hair and over my face, feeling my stubble. I pull up my knees, rest my elbows on them, and shake my head.

"If Voldemort wins...presumably I'll fulfil my destiny. I'll become Lord Malfoy when my father dies or retires, run the estate, manage our investments, and find some simpering obedient pureblood slag to marry and create another heir with."

I look back over my shoulder to see if she's satisfied with my answer.

She moves her back away from the bars, and turns to look at me. I sigh, and reposition myself to face her.

"A pureblood?" Her voice is strangled. Her face hurt.

"If Voldemort wins? Yes. It won't be an option. I'll have to carry on the Malfoy line. 'Purity will always conquer' and all."

"Purity *what*?"

"It's our family motto, Granger."

She's twisting her hands in her lap. She hates my answer. She shouldn't have asked.

“What about me?”

Oh for fuck's sake.

“Granger. If Voldemort wins, you’ll either be dead, close to it, or gone. On the run. Somewhere far away, I should hope. America, maybe.”

“America?”

“Yes. Voldemort doesn’t currently have the resources to invade them. His campaign there is purely an ideological one.” I pause...reach out and take her hand, caressing her knuckles with my thumb. “You should go there now. Fuck the Order. Leave. Save yourself before things get worse.”

“What makes you think they’re getting worse?”

“Because you didn’t ask one follow-up question if the Order should win,” I say.

“So you would be satisfied to never see me again?”

“If it meant you were alive? Yes. Absolutely.”

“You’re serious?”

“I am.”

Her face falls.

I can’t fucking believe this bitch.

“Granger, if you’re looking for some hero to blindly ride into a losing battle and fight for you...it’s not me. I am *not* that guy. If Voldemort wins, I will continue to be his servant, just as I am today.” I let go of her hand and thrust my left arm through the bars, forcing her to look at the Dark Mark staining it. My voice is harsh when I tell her, “This is for life, Granger. Until either Voldemort or I die.”

And that’s done it.

Tears are streaming down her cheeks.

I hate this.

I mean, what the actual fuck was she expecting me to say? She knows I hate this fucking game. That I don’t care to speculate on what could or should happen. I’m a realist. The reality is, there is no fucking way she and I could ever be together in a world run by Voldemort. Not in any capacity she could live with, at least.

I take her hand in mine again, and resume caressing her knuckles.

"Granger, I'm sorry if I've upset you...I just...I can't participate in dreaming about what could be...it's not something I do."

I reach up and wipe the tears off her cheeks with my thumb.

"It's not worth crying over. I'm not worth it."

"You are..." she insists.

"No," I stop her. "No matter the outcome of the war, I'm one of the villains of this story. I'm a pureblood, a Malfoy and a Death Eater. And this..." I gesture between her and I here, "it doesn't change anything."

She continues to look and sound visibly upset.

I reach up, and gently pull a curl straight, letting it go and bounce back into place. Then, more roughly, take a fistful of curls bringing her nearer to the bars, pulling her head back, and exposing her neck.

I lean in and lick the exposed skin. From her collarbone up to just under her ear, where I stop and start kissing, tracing my way along her jawline.

She's still sniffing a little, but her breath is catching. Distracted. Aroused.

Good.

Let's change the fucking subject.

Still holding her hair, I pull her up to her knees, and kiss her harshly. My mouth is insistent against hers, demanding entry. She lets out a light whimper, and I push my tongue in. Exploring the inside of her mouth, devouring her. I return to my attack on her neck, nipping and biting my way back down to her shoulder. Biting harder once I get there. Marking her.

I release her hair, and place my arm around her waist, pulling her as close to the bars as I can get her, while my other hand roughly unfastens her denims, and pulls them down to her knees.

I'm breathing deeply. I'm a combination of aroused and angry, intent on making her forget that bloody conversation we just had, and fucking her senseless. I push her knickers aside and thrust my fingers deep inside her. I collect her desire as I pull out, and drag it to her clit, rubbing it firmly, and watching her face transform from that sad pathetic look she had just a few moments ago, to one of desperate, lustful, need.

Yes .

I let go of her. As I go to remove my joggers and pants, I tell her brusquely, "Cast a contraceptive charm, Granger. Now."

She nods, leans over and fishes her wand out of her bag, casts the charm, and then drops it. I'm temporarily distracted by the sight of it, carelessly thrown aside. I shake my head, and

pull her back to me, both of us still on our knees. She's removed her knickers for me, allowing me to resume running my fingers through her folds, and into her sex without any obstacle.

Gods, I love how wet she gets for me.

She reaches through the bars, and takes my cock in her hand, caressing it, running her fingers gently up and down. She looks up at me, then grips it more firmly, pumping my foreskin back and forth.

We're both breathing deeply into each other's mouths. Breathing each other's air.

"Take your shirt off," I whisper huskily and I rip open her blouse, sending buttons everywhere, bouncing across the floor.

"Draco!" she exclaims.

She's not upset, though. She's too busy watching me as I remove my t-shirt. Eyeing my chest. My muscles. My scars. She slowly pulls her blouse off over her shoulders, and then unclasps her bra. Now we're both fully undressed, I grab her waist and pull her back to the bars. To me. I desperately try to pull her close enough so that I can feel as much of her skin against my own, even with the cold steel between us.

I hold on to her hips, and lean over. Take her breast in my mouth, alternating between sucking and licking it. Flicking her nipple with my tongue. Teasing it with my teeth. Biting lightly. Biting slightly harder. "Ooh," Granger moans, and her hips buck forward, searching for my hand or my cock to rub herself against – she finds a bar instead. Starts moving up and down, rubbing her pussy against it, spreading her desire all over it.

Fuck. Me.

Is it strange I'm so aroused by the sight of her rutting against the bars of my cell?

She's such a dirty little bitch.

"Keep going, Granger. Let me watch you." I back up to get a better look. It's really fucking hot. She's got her head thrown back, her curls wild. She's holding onto the bars with both hands, her hips pushed out, her beautiful wet cunt rubbing up and down over the bar, giving her that rough friction she loves so much, causing her to cry out.

I reach down and grab hold of my cock, rubbing my length, and teasing the tip with my thumb, as I watch my dirty filthy mudblood pleasure herself.

She's groaning. Speeding up.

I move back to the bars. To her, and reach down and around her bottom to shift her position over, to place my cock between her legs and replace the bar. She's already got a rapid pace going, as she slides over my length a few times, choking out "I want you inside me, Draco..." I'm only too eager to oblige.

I line my cock up with her slit and thrust inside her, deeply, all the way until it's just the bars between us hitting our hips. Reaching around, I put my hand under her bum and lift her up, improving our difference in height, rhythmically pumping in and out of her core. My other hand finds its way into her hair, pulling her into a deep kiss.

She breaks away from my lips, watching me intently. She runs her fingers through my hair and finally cups my face with her hands. She stares into my eyes, into my soul, as her walls start clenching around my cock. She's so fucking tight, so fucking glorious.

"Come with me," I whisper.

"I'm coming," she breathes, and as she arches her back and groans, my body tenses and I release into her. Into heaven itself.

Granger is off on another mysterious mission from McGonagall. She's been gone close to two weeks, and I'm back to tossing off regularly, practising my wandless magic, reading, and dare I say charming the mudblood Finch-Fletchley? Poor Hufflepuff. I think he's so starved for attention he's like a dog responding to positive reinforcement. Even from the blood purist.

I'm convinced I can get him to pass a message to the Death Eater's outside the safe house. To help me get out of here. I'm positive the pair stationed outside on Monday through Thursday are Theodore Nott and Vincent Goyle. They all know each other. We were all in the same year at Hogwarts together.

Theo has always been an approachable, easy-going kind of guy. Shy, even. Not even slightly intimidating, even with his Death Eater mask on. And Goyle is a fucking idiot. Loyal to the very end, but stupid. So also approachable in his own way, as well. It actually feels doable. Possible.

In return for Finch-Fletchley's help, I'll do what every Malfoy has done to every problem they've ever encountered for all of time. I'll throw galleons at it. Give the mudblood enough to get out of Britain. Out of Europe. Set himself up abroad.

The idea of getting out of here has me buzzing with excitement. An interesting side effect of which is that I'm also buzzing with magic.

My clumsy back-door access to the magic within me, bypassing the suppression wards on my cell, has grown stronger. I can summon it at will. I can levitate items. Accio them. I can't quite manipulate them enough to move something I can't see – like the internal mechanism of a lock. But I'm working on it.

What's surprisingly less difficult than a lock, is the human brain. I've begun using legilimency to skim the surface of my jailer's minds – nothing too deep or they'd notice. But

just enough to confirm some of my observations. Suspicions.

I've confirmed, for instance, that things are not going well for the Order.

Good.

I still want every last one of these fuckers to die. Except Granger. And maybe Finch-Fletchley if he proves willing to help me.

I've also confirmed most of the Order members tasked with my care are terrified of me. They also know I'm fucking Granger, though don't understand why she'd stoop to such lows.

I mean, I agree. Why the fuck would Harry Potter's golden girl debase herself with Draco Malfoy?

But it also adds a new complication to my escape plan – I can't risk any Order members stationed here to get caught and reveal my entanglement with Granger. One way or another, I'll have to ensure they all die.

I'm sitting on my camp bed reading one of Granger's most recent selections. It's....a difficult read. I can't put it down. It's another diary, but this one is real. A posthumous publication from a young girl written while she and her family were in hiding during the muggle second world war. Because of her religion.

Fuck. Muggles are terrible, awful people.

The irony of my revulsion to the policies that necessitated her family go into hiding, and the blood purist reality I live, is not lost on me.

I'm lying on the floor, levitating an apple. I'm making it spin clockwise, then slow, stop, and spin counterclockwise. I float it higher and lower, working on my ability to manipulate it, to maintain control over it.

That's when I hear a slow, loping gait entering the storage room.

Weasley.

I drop the wandless magic and catch my apple. Start tossing it as I await his arrival. He comes into view, and is carrying a...towel? over his arm.

He stops a few feet away from my cell and sighs dejectedly. Looking at me. Seemingly building up the courage to speak. As I await the dim-witted git, I sit up and rest my arms on my knees. As I make to look like I'm considering eating my apple, I reach out to touch the surface of his mind, hoping for some clue as to why the fuck he's here.

When I dip in I find his mind is a jumbled, chaotic mess. I pull out immediately. There's no fucking way I can make sense of anything in there without making my presence known.

I'll have to wait.

By the look on his face it's clear he hates me – the feeling is 100% mutual – but there's something else going on, too. Is he conflicted? Commiserative?

What the fuck is going on?

I can't stand this. "Weasel?" I inquire, raising an eyebrow at him.

He gulps, runs his hand through that awful ginger hair, and finally says resignedly, "I'm to take you upstairs for a shower."

"Just you?" I ask incredulously.

"Well..." he shrugs, "I'm guessing you won't try anything until *after* the shower, yeah?"

I nod briefly.

"You're probably right," I confirm and I stand up, assume the position, placing my hands behind my back. He *is* right, of course. I'd never risk an opportunity to take a shower and get properly clean. Even if it's the weasel offering. Even if I vowed to murder the motherfucker the next chance I got. I'm so fucking pathetic.

He performs an incarcerous on my wrists and ankles, then opens my cell, wand trained on me.

"Let's go," he says, nodding his head and indicating I should lead the way.

We make our way up to the pink and green bathroom without incident, and without encountering anyone else. Seems my shower was well timed.

Once inside the tiny bathroom, I turn, and realise I have to stand in the tub if I don't want to brush shoulders with the weasel as he manoeuvres around the door to close it. He does so, leans back on it, and then casts a silencing charm on the room.

What the fuck?

He turns to me, and removes my binds with a flick of his wand.

“Weasley?” I ask suspiciously, rubbing my wrists. “What’s going on?”

“I need to talk to you.”

“You need to talk. To *me*?” I clarify by pointing at my chest.

“Yeah.”

“Am I going to get a shower?” I can’t help asking.

He lets out a little huff, and actually half smiles at me. What kind of weird fucking alternate universe is this?

“Sure. But make it quick, yeah?”

I nod, and turn around, frowning as I remove my clothes and toss them out of the tub. He casts a shield charm as I turn on the water, then let it pool at my feet while it warms up. I stare at my feet, watching the cold water drain, trying desperately to ignore the fact I’m standing naked in front of the weasel with nothing to do.

Once it’s sufficiently warmed up, I flip on the shower, and focus on washing up. I move quickly over my hair, face and body. Something about the weasel coming to *me* to talk has got me nervous.

When I’m done I turn off the water, and watch the last of it go down the drain, then turn to look at the weasel, waiting. He jerks slightly, coming out of whatever daydream he’d been in, and removes the shield charm. I grab the towel, dry myself off, then get back into my clothes. I sit on the side of the tub and look at him, raising my shoulders, “So?”

He sighs. Shakes his head. Runs his hands through his hair.

“So,” he begins, “the last time I spoke to you...” he hesitates, “I accused you of manipulating Hermione.”

“You did.”

“And *you* said she was too smart to fall for anything like that.”

If I’m completely honest, I haven’t really spent much time thinking about that conversation. I mean, the outcome was that I was beaten unconscious, and spent weeks recovering. But as soon as the weasel mentions it, there’s something that bothers me about it. I can’t place it.

“I believe I said something to that effect...” I reply cagily.

“You did,” he confirms. “The thing is....you were right.” He looks at me, his eyebrows raised. I don’t like where this is going. The weasel is saying I’m right? He’s agreeing with me? There’s something very wrong with what’s happening here.

“What are you getting at, Weasley?”

"I told you she was different, and thought that you'd made her that way. But I was only partly right. She was... *is* ...different. But *not* because of you...." he trails off.

There's a ringing that starts in my ears. Very quietly, at first, but it gets louder, more intense as the weasel keeps talking.

"...I couldn't figure out *why* she was spending so much time with you. What she could possibly get from it..."

He looks at me here, and shakes his head.

"Don't get me wrong, Malfoy...the two of you actually have quite a lot in common. A lot to talk about considering how swotty you both are. But it didn't...doesn't...add up."

The ringing keeps getting louder, it's almost deafening. My breathing becomes uneven.

"And then I realised..." he continues, "... *she* was never being manipulated...."

I lean my elbows on my knees and hold my head between my hands, my breathing more ragged still.

"....but *you* were...."

He's still talking, but I can't focus on the words. It's like he's far away, talking at me from a very long distance, his voice echoing and reverberating in my head. I want to deny it. I'm desperate to deny it. But it makes too much sense. I believe him. Why the fuck else would Hermione fucking Granger spend so much time with me? Why else would she want to *be* with me? To use me. Seduce me. To get the information the Order hadn't been able to with traditional means....to turn me. I mean, it didn't work. Not really. I never revealed anything, never turned traitor as they'd surely hoped, never fucking promised to protect Granger, or the Order, should Voldemort prevail in any of her stupid fucking 'what if' games....but I did fucking fall for her.

I roar in frustration, pulling at my hair. I stand up and smash the bathroom tiles with my fists, over and over again, breaking them, tearing the skin on my knuckles. Blood dripping off of them.

"Malfoy..." Weasley says gently.

I turn and look at him in surprise, having completely forgotten he was even here.

"Malfoy..." he repeats. "You have to understand. Hermione would do anything for the Order. *Anything*. To finish what Harry started. To defeat Voldemort. It took me a while to confirm, but after asking some questions, and looking into things on my own, I think it's pretty safe to say the Order – and she – thought your beliefs weren't quite so firmly established. They thought they could use you. Turn you. Get an inside man in Voldemort's army....I don't know all the details, but I know it hasn't quite worked out that way. That your....allegiances have held. That you haven't been so easily swayed..."

"So what was the plan?" I hiss. "To fuck me into subservience?"

Weasley winces at that.

"Look, Malfoy, I know you're angry. But I know Hermione, even if things were...contrived at the start, she's not the type to let things progress as far as they did if it didn't mean anything."

I sit back down on the side of the tub, and place my head between my knees. The room is spinning. I need to calm down.

"Malfoy..." the weasel continues. "You can't hurt her..."

I look up at him, gasping for air, uncontrolled magic crackling around me, causing the broken tiles to vibrate and the mirror to crack. "Of course I won't hurt her," I say, barely managing to get the words out. I run my hands through my hair, pulling harshly on the ends, "I'm in love with her."

Oh gods. I can't get enough air. I can't fucking breathe. I'm in love with her. I just told the fucking weasel that I'm in love with her. I'm in love with the mudblood. I keep gasping for breath. She played me. Bitch. Cunt. Whore. The ringing in my ears is so loud. So fucking loud. I can't hear myself think. Can't concentrate. It's unbearable.

I need to focus. I close my eyes and cradle my head in my hands.

Brick one. Brick two. Brick three. Layer on the mortar. Brick four. Brick five. Brick six. Another layer of mortar. Brick seven. Brick eight. Brick nine. Mortar.

Layer after layer, I start building walls around my feelings, and around that fucking manipulative mudblood bitch until my breathing starts to steady. Until I catch my breath.

When I finally look up again, I can breathe. I'm occluding, but not entirely absent...just, distant. I'm still present enough to engage. I look at Weasley and ask the one question I just can't fucking figure out, "Why are you telling me this?"

"Because ferret," he sighs, "I'm in love with her too. And it's bloody torture."

Chapter End Notes

Books referenced:

Anne Frank's The Diary of a Young Girl

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

This chapter gets a little violent. Consider yourself forewarned, and read with caution.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

I don't even know how I get back to my cell.

All I know is that the weasel is a sadistic fuck. Standing there, laying it all out for me, telling me about Granger's role in the Order's plans is torture. Actual fucking torture. And here I was, trying to spare her the pain of knowing she'd been manipulated, when all along, she was the master manipulator, and the agony is all mine.

Fucking Cunt.

I feel like my heart has been ripped out. My chest is tight, and my heart rate is dangerously high. Beating so fast it feels like it'll come right out of my chest. I can't control my breathing. I gasp for breath, but can't get enough air no matter how hard I try. I get lightheaded, and feel a cold tingling and prickly sensation in my hands. My face. My feet. I'm hyperventilating.

Fucking mudblood.

I close my eyes to try and calm myself, but as soon as I do, I see her face. Her freckles. Her wild curls. Her big brown eyes. Her breasts. Her gorgeous beautiful cunt.

Fucking whore.

I'm going insane. Spiralling. I pull at my hair. I need there to be something else. I need to focus on something else. Anything. I start hitting the wall. Punching it, over and over, focusing on the physical sensation of my hands hurting. The pain. The feeling of my hands bleeding. Of the blood trickling down my wrists and onto my arms. I keep going until my fists are a bloody mess.

That feels better.

Now that I can focus on the pain, I can detach sufficiently from my feelings and occlude. Now I can wall that bitch up. Now I can breathe.

I need to get out of here. Now.

I make my proposal to Finch-Fletchley.

He doesn't take much convincing in the end. He confirms the Order's cause is failing. He's scared – not only because he's on the losing side, but because he's a mudblood on the losing side.

We strike a deal.

I put all my efforts into wandlessly unlocking my cell. It's so frustrating. Alohomora is such a simple spell it's taught to first years with barely any magical experience...the difference, of course, is they have a fucking wand. They don't need to know what the mechanism inside the lock looks like to manipulate it. To unlock it. Whereas I'm operating blindly, without a wand to direct my magic.

I'm still working at it, when I hear that quick gait I know so well enter the storage room.

My heart rate spikes. My breath starts catching. I think I might be sweating.

I stand up slowly and move to the back of my cell, leaning against the wall. Getting as far away from the bars as possible. I try to focus on breathing normally.

Brick one. Brick two. Brick three. Layer on the mortar. Brick four. Brick five. Brick six. Another layer of mortar. I build tall walls around everything I'm feeling, and retreat into my occlusion. My eyes are almost completely vacant by the time Granger emerges from around the stacked boxes.

She looks...heavenly. Her wild curls form a halo around her. The little bit of sun coming in from the window highlighting the gold in her hair, the freckles on her cheeks.

"Draco! I have a treat for you!" she says as she comes right up to my cell, fishing around inside her beaded bag.

Her voice is cheery, relaxed. She seems genuinely happy to be here. To see me.

I don't say anything. I can't. I just look at her from the back of my cell. Trying to breathe.

“...it’s not much,” she continues, still focused on her bag, “but I remembered you saying that these were your favourites when you were a child.”

She finds what she’s looking for, and triumphantly pulls a box of Pepper Imps out of her bag.

“Ta da!” She holds them out to me, her hand extending through the bars, into my cell.

I look at them, then look at her again.

“Draco? What’s wrong?” she asks.

Her focus now out of her bag, Granger looks at me properly for the first time since she’s arrived. Her arm drops, leaving her leaning against the bars. “What are you doing back there? Why are you occluding so deeply?”

It takes everything in my power to control my breathing. I take in a deep breath, count to three, then release it, “Step away from the bars, Granger.” It comes out as a whisper.

She frowns. Her brows pulling down in the centre.

“What do you mean?” she asks. “What’s wrong?”

I let out a hiss, “I said, step away from the bars, Granger.” This time my voice is more forceful.

“I don’t understand, Draco. What’s going on?”

“What’s going on, *Hermione*, is if you don’t step away from those fucking bars, I can’t promise I won’t reach through them and break your scrawny fucking neck.” My voice is seething. Full of hate. Rage. “*Step away from the bars, Hermione.*” I repeat. Shouting.

She steps away, and backs out of arms’ reach.

“What’s happened?” she asks. From the look on her face, she’s clearly hurt. Confused.

You and me both, bitch.

I run my hands through my hair, then turn to face the wall, leaning my forehead against it. I sigh. Focus on my breathing, on collecting my thoughts. Without turning, I spit out, “I know.”

“You know? You know what?” she asks, innocently, but her voice is shaking. Just barely, but enough for me to detect it, because, you know...I know her so fucking well, being in love with her, and all. Fucking idiot.

“I know all about your little scheme.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about...”

I turn around and look at her. “Don’t play stupid, Granger. It’s insulting.” I take the few steps to the bars, grab hold of them, my knuckles white, and spit out, “I know all about it. Befriend the Death Eater. Gain his trust. Get him to fall in love. Get him to turn. Get him to help the Order.”

Her breath catches, and her head cocks to one side. “Fall in love?” she asks, her voice small, unsure.

“Yes,” I sneer. “Fall in love.” I look at her, hurt. “I called you mine.” It’s an accusation.

“And I am,” she says adamantly, taking a tentative step forward, but stops when I give a brief shake of my head. “I’m yours,” she says, her voice wavering, her eyes starting to glisten.

“Don’t you *dare* start crying,” I spit out.

She nods, sniffs, and wipes her eyes.

I hang my head down, not wanting to look at her. Unable to look at her. “So it’s all true, then.” I say quietly.

“I’m sorry.”

I huff. I can’t bring myself to say anything.

“I only wanted to help the Order, Draco. I never expected...” she stops, searching for words, “I never expected to enjoy your company so much. I never expected to look forward to seeing you. Talking to you. I never expected to be...” she pauses, and I look up at her, hopeful “...to be attracted to you. To want you. To care for you.”

I fucking hate this. I fucking hate her. I fucking hate that in all the things she never expected, love wasn’t one of them.

Fucking fuck.

She’s looking at me with...what is that expression?

“At a certain point it became obvious our plan wasn’t going to work. That your loyalties couldn’t be shifted. I should have abandoned the plan...abandoned you...but...” she trails off.

“But what, Granger?”

“But I *didn’t want to*,” she looks at me defiantly. “I told McGonagall there was still a possibility. That even if you wouldn’t switch sides, that I could still get information from you...so I could justify still coming to see you.”

“You mean so you could justify fucking me?” I sneer.

She actually gives me a small rueful smile. “That too,” she says, as she looks down at her hands. Twisting them in front of herself. Fidgeting with the hemline of her horrendous

jumper.

“Fuck, Granger...”

She keeps looking at me with those big doe eyes. Pleading. Begging.

“I can’t do this,” I sigh.

“You can’t do what?” she asks, far too innocently.

“I can’t look at you,” I scream.

I turn around, facing the back of my cell again. I place my hands against the wall, my head hanging between my arms. My eyes closed.

“Get out,” I whisper.

“Please,” I beg.

It takes a few minutes, but I eventually hear her steps retreating as she walks out of the storage room. And hopefully out of my life.

That night, with renewed energy fueled by hate and anger, I wandlessly unlock my cell.

Three days later Finch-Fletchley tells me there’s an Order mission taking place on Thursday night, when Nott and Goyle are on duty. The safe house will be all but empty.

I give him a message to pass on to my associates outside. It’s simple. It’s brief. It includes a code so they know it comes from me. So they know to give Finch-Fletchley a pass.

I tell them to prepare reinforcements. That on Thursday night, the fidelius charm will be broken.

Thursday can't come soon enough. I'm restless. Anxious. Full of energy and magic. I exercise. I occlude. I practise levitating and spinning an apple. Summoning small items from across my cell.

I think of Granger almost non-stop.

I beat off to thoughts of her, and then berate myself for doing so.

She doesn't come to see me.

It's for the best, because I fucking hate the lying conniving bitch. But there's a part of me that wishes she would. A part of me wants to forgive her. Fuck her. Experience her bliss one last time.

When Thursday night finally arrives I wait two hours after my dinner is delivered, just as Finch-Fletchley instructed. That's when I can be certain the mission will be underway, and the safe house on a skeleton staff.

I rise from my camp bed, and take the sole item I want to keep from this shithole.

My favourite book.

Then I look to the lock on my cell, breathe deeply and calmly, and concentrate. I hear a click, and push the door open. This is the first time I've exited my cell without any Order members present, without wands trained on me, without permission to exit the wards surrounding my cell. As I take that single step over the threshold, I can feel myself passing through the wards. For the brief moment I'm within them, they feel thick. Heavy. Suffocating. Trying to hold me back. Grabbing on to me, pulling me. And then....nothing.

I'm through.

I make my way past the innumerable boxes and crates to the storage room door and stop. Take a few deep breaths. Build up my walls to ensure I'm sufficiently detached. To remain calm no matter what I encounter.

I try the handle.

Yes.

It's open, just as the Hufflepuff said it would be.

I slowly open the door, and peer around it – the hallway is empty. Dimly lit.

I exit, close the door again, and then quietly make my way to the kitchen, my bare feet padding along the tiled floor. Three doors down from my storage room, on the left. I peer around the doorway, checking to see if it's occupied. It's empty. I enter and go immediately for the butcher block, grabbing the largest knife. The sound of it scraping the edges on its way out is far louder than I'd like. I stop. Try not to breathe. Listen carefully.

I hear footsteps.

I return to the doorway, and press myself against the wall, just next to the open door. Waiting. Weighing the knife in my hand, getting a feel for how it's balanced.

A witch comes in, her wand not even drawn.

Stupid bitch.

I reach out as she steps through the doorway, and grab her from behind. In one swift motion, I run the knife blade across her throat. There's an initial gasp of shock when I grab her, but she's otherwise silent, and doesn't make a sound. I slowly guide her body to the ground, depositing it as quietly as I can, watching the bright red blood gurgle and seep out of her throat, and listening to the rasping breaths she makes as the life drains out of her.

It's satisfying to watch. To see the blood pool around her body. Spreading out over the tile floor, reaching my bare feet. It's warm.

I step deeper into the pool of blood and crouch down, searching the witch for a wand. I carelessly flip her lifeless body over, and finally find one sticking out of her back pocket.

It's a little bloody. No matter.

I smile to myself, and reach for it.

As my fingers wrap around the twelve or so inches of vinewood – touching a wand for the first time in months – I feel an overwhelming surge of magic course through my veins. The feeling is intoxicating. Breathtaking. Powerful. The intensity is almost indecent. I feel an actual twitch in my pants, it's that good.

I steady my shaking breath, take the wand in my left hand and test its compliance, casting a few quick – and quiet – spells. Accio. Aguamenti. Evanescio. And Diffindo to cut the limbs off the witch on the floor. The wand obeys beautifully. I grab the knife in my right hand, and quietly make my way out of the kitchen, and back into the hallway. Leaving a trail of bloody footprints behind me.

My goal is the last door on the right – the study.

I very carefully make my way down the hallway. I check each door as I go. I don't worry about the locked doors, leaving well enough alone, but investigate the open ones.

In what looks like a sitting room, two wizards are seated on a sofa, their backs to the door. They're looking at a black-framed box filled with moving pictures, making loud noises. The colours are garish, and the movements make me nauseous.

I stand behind them for a few moments, considering.

I remind myself that I need to keep things quiet. I also remind myself that I fucking hate these motherfucking Order members, and would like to eviscerate every last one of them. I note the picture box is loud. Loud enough to mask a limited amount of struggle? Absolutely. I decide to put the witch's wand to the test. To have a bit of fun.

I deserve it, don't I?

I very deliberately walk around the sofa, and step in front of the picture box, facing the two wizards. "Hello boys..." I say, cocking my head to the right.

One of them is shitstain. The other, I only vaguely recognise. They're both taken completely by surprise. As they make to move, get their wands, do something, I disarm them both. I cast an immobulus on shitstain so he can watch while I use an actual evisceration curse on his friend.

I take a deep breath. Feeling strangely satisfied. It's the first curse I've cast in months and I feel vibrant. Alive. I feel more like myself than I have since....well, I want to say since I was captured. But that's not true. Fucking Granger made me feel alive and myself as well.

I watch the wizard I only kinda recognise bleed out on the upholstery, then I turn my attention back to shitstain, smile, and ask, "So, what'll it be? Quick? Or slow and painful?" The poor bloke is shitting bricks. "If I release you, do you think you can run away fast enough?" Shitstain's eyes are huge. Scared. Fuck, I haven't had this much fun in ages. I'm positively gleeful. Ecstatic.

"Finite incantatem," I whisper, and watch as he scrambles to his feet, attempting to get around the sofa. As if I might *actually* let him get away.

"Impedimenta" I mutter, slowing his movements as I make my own way around the furniture to face him, and consider my options. I decide on an old favourite.

"Sectumsempra."

I watch as the curse hits shitstain, makes him fall to the ground. His chest is ripped open in huge bloody gashes and he cries out, writhing in pain. It's absolutely fucking beautiful to watch. I stand over him observing his last laboured breaths, until he bleeds to death.

I look around the room. Satisfied. There's blood everywhere. Actual organs from that bloke I disembowelled. On the walls. On the sofa. On the floor. It's a fucking mess.

I quite like the messiness of taking a life. I *like* to get my hands dirty. It's why Voldemort favours me. I do his dirty work for him. I'm just as depraved as he is. Maybe more.

The sounds from the picture box are still the loudest thing in the room. I step over shitstain's body, and make my way back to the hallway.

I don't encounter anyone else on my way down the hall to the study. If I'm being honest, I'm a little disappointed.

When I reach it, I find the door slightly ajar.

I peer in through the crack. I see McGonagall sitting at the desk, her head bent over a stack of parchments, concentrating. Deep in thought. Her hair is in a kerchief, and she's in her dressing gown. It's tartan. Bloody predictable bitch.

I can't resist myself, and knock on the door.

"Come," she says with an irritated huff.

I push open the door, and walk in wearing a big smile. When she sees me, her eyes widen in surprise and shock. "Mr. Malfoy!" she exclaims, her eyes running up and down my body.

I spare a quick glance at myself, realising I'm completely covered in blood. Maybe a few entrails.

Huh.

I return my attention to the witch at the desk. "Hello, Minerva," I say cheerily.

"How did you..." her eyes are scanning the room, her person. Ah. She doesn't know where her wand is.

"...Get out?" I finish for her. I shrug. "Just a little wandless magic."

"But the wards?"

"Oh, I found a way around those," I tell her smugly.

"I see." Always so reserved. Always so frigid. I couldn't stand her back at Hogwarts, and I fucking loathe her now. "How?" she asks.

"My occlumency," I tell her. "Found a back door."

"Very impressive, Mr. Malfoy. I'm only surprised it took you so long."

Cunt.

"Well, I did have a bit of a distraction." I look at her pointedly.

"Oh yes, of course. Miss Granger," she sniffs. "I had hoped she would have had a....good influence on you. But..." here she stops and looks at my blood-soaked clothes again, "I see that was not the case."

"Apparently not."

"Apparently."

We stare at each other for a few minutes more, and I finally decide she's not going to put up a fight. Shame.

“So, I think we both know how this is going to go,” I say.

“Then get on it with,” she says, looking me straight in the eye. It’s all very anticlimactic.

“If you insist...” I say, then cast my first unforgivable in months.

The feel of the killing curse leaving my lips is like saying the name of a long lost lover. “*Avada Kedavra*.” It even sounds beautiful as it rolls off my tongue. I can feel the darkest of magic coursing through my body. Through my veins. Wrapping itself around every organ, around my very soul. It’s like a drug. Exhilarating. Thrilling. Addictive.

Gods, I’ve missed it.

It’s quite possibly better than sex. *Possibly*.

I watch as the old witch’s head slumps down onto her desk, dead.

I stare at her for a moment, shake my head, and then take my time to examine the contents of the room, collecting maps, correspondence, the names of contacts, anything that might help the Dark Lord and his faithful track down and wipe out every single member of the fucking Order and its supporters.

I open one last small drawer — I’d almost missed it — and a wand rolls to the front of it. Hawthorn, ten inches, unicorn hair core. I smile, and pick up my wand, feeling an intense rush of both dark and light magic as it recognises me. Responds to me. I throw the dead witch’s wand aside, and replace it with my own.

Then I grab McGonagall by her arm, drag her off her chair, and make my way to the door.

As I exit the safe house, I can feel the protections of the fidelius charm failing. Collapsing. It’s like shattered like glass falling all around me, or a disillusionment charm melting away, as the safe house becomes visible to all – no longer safe.

I walk down the front steps of the house and immediately see Theo and Goyle waiting for me. I can’t help grinning. Their eyes widen at the sight of me, barefoot, covered in blood, and dragging McGonagall’s body behind me.

I mean, I could have levitated her, but this is so much more satisfying, especially listening to her thump down the stairs.

I drop the witch and go to greet my friends. Theo pulls me into a huge hug. Goyle stands to the side, shifting from foot to foot, not knowing what to do. Fucking dolt. I pull him into a hug too.

“What’s this?” Theo asks, pointing to the dead witch.

“I’m glad you ask,” I say, as I levitate McGonagall’s corpse and use a sticking charm to fasten her to the front of the house, like a figurehead on the prow of a ship. “She’s a welcome home present for the Order.”

Theo smirks. “I always hated her. So bloody smug and condescending. Completely insufferable.”

“Agreed,” I pause, looking at her. I turn to Theo and ask, “Are reinforcements ready to move?”

“They are. They’re just waiting for a location.”

“Locations.” I specify, waving the papers I retrieved from McGonagall’s office. “Let’s hand them over.”

And with that, we disapparate.

Chapter End Notes

End of Part 1

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Part 2

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There's a little more violence described in this chapter. Take care.

I make a quick stop by my personal quarters in Malfoy Manor.

Obviously I don't have a lot of time, but just being there, in my own personal space – *my home* – feels great. It's a relief. Like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I feel like I can finally breathe again.

It is, by and large, part of the manor so shares the same overly elaborate architecture, ornate woodwork, and marble flooring. But I've made it my own over the years. The walls, and soft furnishings are all neutral – mostly shades of grey – with the exception of the many rugs I've added. My only criteria for a good rug is that it has to feel nice on bare feet – I couldn't care less what it looks like. It's resulted in some rather outrageous choices, according to my mother.

There are shelves and books everywhere, leaving very little wall space for decorations, of which there are only a few select landscapes. I banished all portraits from my quarters when I moved in – I can't stand them spying on me.

I head to my bedroom, pass my four poster bed, drop my book off on the nightstand, and then head directly to the ensuite to shower. There's no time to luxuriate in the excellent water pressure, or the scalding hot water — that'll have to wait. I exit and quickly change into proper clothes befitting someone of my rank and station in society, and that aren't drenched in blood. I opt for a crisp white dress shirt, and a bespoke black suit — which I have to charm to account for the weight I've lost in captivity — and dragonhide shoes.

Over top, I layer on my wand and knife holster, my robes, and though I don't put it on, I bring along my Death Eater mask.

I've never been much of a fan. It's bloody stuffy in there.

The whole process takes no more than ten minutes.

Then I return to my Dark Lord.

I'm in Voldemort's throne room, for lack of a better term. He hasn't declared himself king, by any stretch of the imagination, but he does have a tendency to see himself as larger than life. Officially I believe he refers to it as his audience chamber. You know, just like a royal would.

I'm kneeling before him on the cold, and very hard marble floor, my head bowed down in respect, when he hisses, "Ahh....young Malfoy. It is so good to have you back amongst us. Are we to understand you have brought us...gifts?"

I smirk to myself. He's even started using the royal 'we.'

"I have my Lord."

"And what have you brought us?"

"A location, my Lord. Of Order headquarters. And information. Safe houses. Suppliers. Contacts."

I pull out everything I'd collected from McGonagall's study, and spread it out between us on the floor. I look up at him for the first time.

He's smiling.

Which in and of itself is rather disturbing.

"This is....quite excellent, Draco," he hisses. "Quite excellent, indeed."

He looks at the treasure trove of intelligence before him, before looking back at me. Still kneeling.

Fuck, my knees hurt.

"It does not, of course, absolve you from being captured in the first place. Or from taking so very long to free yourself."

"Of course not, my Lord."

"No...of course not," he says, and he proceeds to crucio me as punishment.

With my punishment complete...I mean, honestly....it was *barely* a punishment. Voldemort crucio'd me for what? Five minutes? Definitive proof he was fucking ecstatic with the

information I brought him – Theo and I take reinforcements back to the safe house, to await the conclusion of the Order's mission, and the return of its members.

It's going to be a slaughter, and I can't wait to participate in it. I'm practically hard at the mere thought of it.

There is a small niggling worry at the back of my mind, though.

Will Granger be there?

The thought of her definitely makes me hard.

The Order returns from its mission in waves. Each new group that arrives has the same surprised and shocked expression as they discover the fidelius charm on their headquarters is broken. As they see Minerva's dead corpse greeting them. As they see the battle in front of them. It's like experiencing Christmas over and over again.

I dive into the melee, thoroughly enjoying taking the lives of the people who've imprisoned me for so long. I want every single one of them dead – to avenge myself, of course, but also because I can't have any of them captured. Tortured. Made to talk. To reveal my indiscretions with Granger.

I refrain from using the killing curse. It's too fast. Too kind. Too merciful. Instead I use the tactical knife holstered to my chest for anyone in close proximity, and an assortment of dark magic curses for those out of arm's reach. I choose ones that inflict as much damage and pain as possible. I rip open bodies, make their blood boil, and cause swarms of parasites to eat them from the inside out.

The feeling of dark magic coursing through my veins, and of spilling copious amounts of blood is glorious. Invigorating. It's fucking heaven on earth.

I've *really* missed it.

In the midst of it all, I feel a tap on my shoulder. I look around to find Theo, without so much as a drop of blood on him – it's really why he's the approachable Death Eater, he's so meticulous – he tells me my turncoat is looking for me. Looking for his pay off.

Well, he's certainly earned it.

I make my way to the agreed upon rendezvous point, to find Finch-Fletchley waiting. He's looking rather green and very nervous. Shocked and sickened at the carnage happening a little ways off. That he helped make possible.

I toss a heavy bag of galleons at him. “The agreed upon amount,” I tell him. “Now go. Get as far away from here as you can fucking get, mudblood.”

He nods nervously, and disappears without a word.

I turn my attention back to the fray. Trying to decide where best to re-engage.

And that’s when I see her. Granger.

Wild curls bouncing around her head, as she ducks and dodges curses, and casts spells of her own. All of them non-lethal, of course. Fucking Gryffindor morals. She’d be pretty good in a duel, if only she’d cast something more damaging.

I sigh, cast a particularly strong shield spell around myself, and slowly make my way towards her, dodging hexes, curses and random flying objects on the way.

She only notices me when I pull the knife out of my chest holster, and physically cut open an Order member standing next to her, slicing straight across his gut, his intestines spilling out. She’s about to cast what would undoubtedly be yet another non-lethal spell when I pull off my mask, revealing my face.

“Draco!” she cries out in shock. “How did you get out? Did you....did *you* do this?” she asks, gesturing at Minerva, and all around us.

“I did, Granger.”

Her eyes open wide. A series of emotions flickering across her features. Disbelief. Revulsion. Disappointment. Resignation.

I grab her elbow hard, and disapparate us outside the battle.

I bring us far enough away to avoid the crossfire, but close enough to keep an eye on what’s happening in the assault.

I’ve still got her elbow. Looking at this frustrating, lying, fucking mudblood bitch. But it doesn’t matter what she did. Not really. She still takes my breath away. I still love her.

Her chest is heaving and she’s glistening with sweat from exertion. Her eyes are bright and alert, and they’re trained on me, like I’m some unpredictable, savage beast.

Which, I guess at the moment, I am.

I can’t help myself.

I roughly grab a fistful of curls and forcefully pull her mouth to mine, kissing her like a drowning man breathes in air. Pulling her body against my own, against my blood spattered Death Eater robes.

Our magic sparks as soon as our lips touch. Stronger and more forceful than ever before without any magic suppression wards interfering. It feels incredible, and I deepen our kiss, wrapping my other arm around her lower back. At first, she kisses me back. Her arms reaching around my neck, grabbing onto my hair, and her tongue responding to my own, to the familiarity of it. Then she comes to herself, realising where we are. What's happening. What I've done. She tries to push me away, and fails. This is the first time we've touched without prison bars between us. She's never experienced me when I'm free. Unfettered. Wielding magic. Strong.

I hold on to her waist, trapping her.

"Draco," she exclaims, ineffectively pushing back against my chest, "how could you do this?"

"I escaped," I reply. Isn't it obvious?

"But McGonagall..."

"Was a cunt," I interrupt.

She looks around helplessly. Frustrated. Panicked.

"Granger," I say calmly, "you can't be here."

"I have to be! I have to help! You have to let me help!" she says frantically, as she again tries to escape my grip.

I hold firm. Refusing to let her go.

"Granger, it's over. The Order is lost. At this very moment squads of Death Eaters are scouting and attacking every location recorded in McGonagall's office. They've lost. You've lost. It's over."

She looks at me...not wanting to believe it. Shaking her head.

"You need to leave. Now."

"No...it can't be...there are others. Other cells," she insists.

"Hermione. Honey. Any Order members who aren't killed tonight will be hunted down like animals, and killed in the coming days. I can personally guarantee it."

She looks at me, her eyes widening, her head still shaking in denial. "But you can't...Draco, you can't!" she shouts.

"I can, and I will," I tell her firmly.

I'm still holding her around the waist. Her hands are on my chest, grasping at my robes. "This isn't who you are," she whispers in that small voice she gets when she's upset.

I brush the hair off her forehead. Kiss it.

"But it is," I say gently. "It's exactly who I am."

She leans her head on my chest and I put my chin down on it.

"You, and McGonagall, and I don't know who the fuck else, came up with some idea that I was someone else. Someone good deep down. Redeemable. But I've been telling you since the very beginning. That's *not* who I am." Her shoulders start shaking. She's crying. "...I'm the villain of our story, remember?"

I let go of her, pull away, and tilt her head back with my finger on her chin so she's looking at me, "You do recall what options there were for you, should Voldemort win, don't you?" I caress her cheek with my thumb. "You need to go, Granger. Find whatever Weasley's are left – find your family – and run." She stares into my eyes, not moving.

"Now, Granger," I say more firmly.

The bitch still isn't moving.

Does she want to die? Get captured? Be tortured? Enslaved?

"Please. Go." I say.

Fucking fuck. She's just staring at me.

Is she in shock?

"I...I..." she finally starts, "...I c..c..c..can't," she stammers out.

"Why the fuck not, Granger?"

She reaches up with her hand, and cups my face, "Because," she says, "I...I...I love you."

Fuuuuuuuuuuuccckkkkk.

I close my eyes, and breathe deeply. Rapidly building walls, and tearing others down, as I try to analyse the situation. Compartmentalise each complication. Figure out what to do with the exasperating witch I've pulled back into my arms. Gripping her tightly to my chest.

She's the brightest witch of her age.

She's Harry Potter's Golden Girl.

She's a symbol for the Order.

She's a mudblood.

She won't run.

She won't save herself.

She's right here, in my arms.

She loves me.

She's mine.

I love her.

Right.

I tuck her head back under my chin, and disapparate with her, taking us away from the battle.

I bring her to the apparition point just outside Malfoy Manor. Outside the wards. Her whole body stiffens when she sees where we are. Starts shaking.

"I can't go in there, Draco," she says, clearly distressed, shaking her head, and unsuccessfully trying to wriggle out of my arms.

"You can," I reply.

"N..n..n..no..." she stammers. "I c..c..can't go in there," she repeats. Her whole body is shaking in my arms.

I kiss her on the forehead and say gently in her ear, "It's the safest place for you right now, Granger. The wards are strong. Impenetrable. They could hold off an army." I pause, looking at her.

"I...I...I can't," she whimpers.

"You can, and you will," I say firmly.

I don't have time for this.

I know she was tortured here. I know she's terrified.

But I can't afford to be away from the battle long.

I take her arm just above the elbow, and drag her through the manor's wards. I pass through freely, but feel them resist, and pull, as they try to prevent the mudblood from passing through. I take her other arm, and give one final strong tug, and she's through. I wrap her back in my arms and immediately apparate us into the foyer of my private quarters within the manor.

She looks around, eyes wide, panicked.

"Where are we?" she asks.

"My private apartment. It's entirely self-contained. No one else has access to it. You'll be safe here."

Despite my assurances of safety, I release her from my arms, and start casting additional protective wards, layering them one on top of the other. I pull out the tactical knife I keep holstered to my chest, and cut open my palm, smearing my blood on the walls and door as I mutter incantations. As the magic takes hold, the blood soaks in and disappears.

"What are you doing?" Granger asks shakily from behind me, "Is that blood magic?"

"It is. I'm adding blood wards."

She watches me closely, fear and curiosity co-existing.

I come and stand in front of her. "Give me your hand, Granger."

"*My hand?*"

"Yes. The wards will be stronger if I use your blood."

"*My blood?*"

"Yes. The wards I'm placing will only allow a blood match to enter this apartment. Me and... once I add yours, you."

She holds her hand out to me. It's shaking. I take it firmly, holding it still, and quickly run my blade over her palm. She gasps in surprise. I pull her alongside me, spreading her blood in the exact locations I'd put mine, repeating the incantations, and adding in a few extras.

"Those were different," she says. Fucking observant bitch.

"They were," I confirm.

"Why?"

"Because, Granger. I've also included wards to prevent you from leaving."

"You mean you're trapping me here?" Again, there's panic in her voice.

"No," I reply with growing irritation, "I'm not trapping you. I'm keeping you safe here." I look at her pointedly, then cast a quick healing charm on both of our palms.

"Now, Granger. I have to go."

Her eyes fly up from examining her hand, and stare at me in terror.

"You're *leaving* me here?" She sounds incredulous. Her right hand instinctively starts rubbing at her left forearm. At the scar she received in this very house.

"I have to go back to the safe house, Granger. I can't just disappear in the middle of a mission. I'll return as soon as I can. Go ahead and look around. There's a kitchen, a sitting room, a bedroom if you're tired. As tempting as it'll be, *don't* touch the books in the study... or anywhere in the apartment, for that matter. They're cursed to prevent anyone who's blood isn't pure from touching them."

She nods in understanding.

"Okay. I have to go."

I grab a handful of curls, lean over, and kiss her passionately on the mouth. I look her in the eyes one last time, nod, then disapparate.

When I return to the safe house, there are still a number of skirmishes occurring with the more experienced Order members. I quickly assess the situation – even in the face of defeat, the Order is *still* casting non-lethal spells. There's a reason these cocksuckers are losing.

I find Theo, whom I note does not ask where I've been, and we break away from the fray to move around the house and attack the remaining Order members from behind. There's a part of me that feels it's maybe a little cowardly and dishonourable to take someone out when their back is to you. But the other, stronger, part of me honestly couldn't give a fuck about the fairness or morality of it. Encirclement has been a military tactic for centuries for a reason. It works.

As we round the corner of the house, I come upon a rather large wizard – Hagrid large – definitely some sort of filthy giant half-breed. His back is turned to me. Theo casts a quick silencing charm as I run up behind him and jump up on his back, grabbing one side of his massive head, and stabbing his neck on the other side with my knife. He cries out, and rears back, flailing his arms, trying to reach behind himself. Swatting with his massive meaty hands. I hang on for dear life, and twist my knife. Pushing it in deeper, and then pushing the hilt forward. Trying to sever the giant man's head from his neck. I'm about halfway through when the blood starts gushing and he falls to his knees. I jump off his back and step around

him to watch as he takes his last few gasps of breath. The blood still pulsing out of his neck, his head partially severed.

Huh.

I think fleetingly of Nearly Headless Nick, and can't help smiling at the reference.

We keep moving, relying on the darkness of night, and our black robes to provide us cover. We encounter, and silently dispatch, three more Order members before we find ourselves behind the main battle.

With their shield charms cast in the wrong direction, Theo and I work fast, before the Order can react and turn about. We cast the killing curse quickly and accurately, focusing on causing mortalities, not injuries. There's a flurry of green light as the shocked Order members fall to the ground, dead.

I walk amongst the bodies, nudging each of them with my boot. Ensuring we haven't missed anyone.

Satisfied, I cast the morsmordre, and begin organising the clean up, and inventorying of the safe house. It'll take a few days. The whole house will be scoured, looking for any additional intelligence I may not have already procured during my escape.

We'll also open every single one of those bloody boxes and crates in the storage room I'd been staring at for months on end. I'll finally see what's in them.

Chapter 12

It's early morning when I return to my quarters. The sun is just rising and the whole apartment is awash in golden light streaming through the large windows, all the heavy curtains thrown wide open.

I'm still buzzing with excitement over the events of the last 12 hours. My escape. My return to Voldemort. The battle. Granger's declaration. Our victory.

How can so much have happened in so little time?

I silently walk around my rooms, looking for Granger. I find her in the sitting room curled up on the sofa, a blanket wrapped around her shoulders, looking out the window at the sunrise.

She startles when I enter the room. Those big brown doe eyes of hers grow wide as she takes me in. My blood-soaked robes.

"So that's it?" she asks, her voice small.

"That's it," I confirm. "Safe houses across the country were revealed, and attacked. Voldemort's Dark Mark was seen in the night sky in at least a dozen different locations. Over the next days and weeks, we'll analyse everything we find, and eventually finish the job. It's over."

She lurches forward, her hands over her mouth in an effort to hold back the sobs threatening to break free. Tears escaping the corners of her eyes.

I watch her, feeling....absolutely nothing for the loss she's suffered.

No.

That's not true.

I feel....relief. I feel....appeased.

I feel the dark magic coursing through my veins, infiltrating every part of me, and I feel exultant. I feel satisfied. I feel...

Desire.

I feel the beginnings of an erection, making my trousers snug.

"Granger," I say.

She looks up, her face tear-stained.

Sweet Salazar, look at her.

Even crying I want her.

Gods, I'm an insensitive prick.

She just lost everything, and here I am thinking of all the ways I can fuck her now we're not on opposite sides of a prison cell.

Fuck.

I really don't do emotions.

I sigh, remove my outer robes. Unfasten the holster on my chest. The one on my forearm. Drop everything to the floor, and sit on the couch, pulling her into my arms.

"Let it out, Granger."

She wraps her arms around me and buries her face in my neck. Weeping. Sobbing. Uncontrollably.

I fucking hate this. She's crying all over my expensive shirt...admittedly, there's probably already blood on it. But still.

I hate crying.

I rub her back in what I hope is a soothing circular motion.

She moves closer to me, sitting on my lap.

I shift my position to hide my hard on.

Arsehole.

We sit like that for what feels like fucking ages.

Eventually she stops sobbing, and it's only tears I feel. Making my collar wet. Finally those stop too. Her tears dry up, and she's just hugging me. Her face still buried in my neck. We sit like that for some time, as I try – gods, *I'm trying* – not to rush her or be impatient, when I feel her lips brush against my neck.

My breath catches. Did Granger really just kiss me?

She does it again, trailing tiny whisper kisses up my neck to my jawline.

I stop with the circular motions on her back. Pull away to look at her. Her face is still tear-stained, her eyes still sad, but...there's something else there now, too. I move my hand to her throat, rubbing up and along her jawline, caressing behind her ear, and back down again. Her neck is so delicate. The skin so soft. I lean in and kiss it just under her earlobe, then work my way down, planting kisses all the way to her collarbone. Back up to where her neck meets her shoulder, where I bite – not too hard – causing a sharp intake of breath from Granger.

She leans her head back, exposing her neck, inviting more.

I resume my caresses, interspersed with kisses and nips. Then proceed to lick her jawline to the spot just below her ear that's so sensitive. She puts her hand in my hair and holds it tight. Rough. Pulling.

She tugs my head back. Looks me in the eyes as she shifts her position on top of me. Straddles my lap. She leans in to kiss me on the mouth. Her tongue gently tracing my lips, my teeth. She bites my lower lip.

Yes.

I place one hand on her lower back, while the other moves into her hair. Entangles itself. I pull her head back hard, and lean in to kiss her, full of need and want and desire.

My erection returns with fervour, pushing into Granger's thigh. She adjusts her position on top of me, ensuring my hard member is directly under her centre, and starts slowly, deliberately, moving her hips. I place my hands on her hips. Holding her. Her face is close. Watching me. Breathing my air. Leaning in to kiss me, here and there, while running her hands through the hair at the back of my head. Caressing my neck. My shoulders.

We both start breathing more heavily and our kisses become sloppy. Wet. We gnash our teeth together. We bite each other's lips.

I run my hands up under Granger's shirt, moving from her hips to her breasts, cupping them, caressing them. I pull her bra out of the way, and pinch her nipples. Roll them between my fingers, feeling how hard they get. She starts breathing deeply, still into my mouth. Still kissing me intermittently. Her hips continue moving, grinding down harder and harder on my cock.

Oh gods.

She's panting on top of me, letting out little gasps of pleasure as her bucking hips dry hump my erection. Breathing into my mouth, she whispers, "Draco...I love you."

I don't answer.

Instead I adjust the position of my cock to increase the friction under her, and guide her hips, pushing down on them to ensure she gets enough pressure to get herself off. She rides me, breathing heavily, moaning every time she pushes down against me. The movement of her hips becomes faster. More frantic. Her keening more desperate. I run my hands up her back, under her shirt, caressing her as I feel her whole body start to quiver. I watch her ride me to completion, and enjoy the look of satisfaction on her face as she comes, shaking on top of me.

She leans forward, and puts her head in the crook of my neck, breathing deeply. I continue to rub her back while she catches her breath. Then move my hands to her thighs, rubbing the length of them, my thumbs making their way into her groin, rubbing along the crease.

Granger leans back, and looks at me with hooded eyes.

I reach one hand up, pull her into me for a kiss, then place both hands under her buttocks, and stand up with her. She shrieks in surprise, holding on tight with her arms around my shoulders.

“Where are we going?”

“To bed.”

I make my way purposefully to the bedroom, carrying her in front of me. She’s so small, so light, it’s like she weighs nothing. I deposit her on the end of my four poster bed – I’ve just kept the bed frame and removed the heavy curtains – on the dark grey bedspread.

“Take your clothes off, Granger,” I say as I stand back and remove my jacket, start unbuttoning my shirt. I watch her pull her top over her head, remove her already displaced bra, and slide out of her denims. She approaches me in just her white cotton knickers – is it normal that such simple, practical undergarments should be so fucking hot? – and starts unbuckling my belt for me. Unzipping my trousers. Pulling my pants over my very hard erection.

I watch her undress me. Step out of my pants. Remove my shirt.

“Get into bed,” I say.

Granger slides back on the bed, towards the headboard, lying down. I crawl on to the bed on all fours, leaning over, and slowly kiss my way up her body. I caress her foot, and kiss her ankle. Then run my hands along the calf on the other leg. Dragging my tongue along it. I kiss her knee, then spend an eternity kissing her inner thighs. Small little kisses, until I get closer to her groin. I start sucking and licking the sensitive skin on her upper thighs. Holding down her hips to prevent her squirming too much.

I run my finger up and down along the edge of her knickers. They’re completely drenched in desire. I pull them over, and flick my tongue against her clit eliciting delightful little squeals, then move my head back, so I can pull them off completely. And then very slowly and deliberately, dip my tongue into her extremely wet slit, and drag it up to her clit, where I lazily suck on it. Nibble it. Granger arches her back and groans in pleasure.

I work my way up, kissing the skin under her navel. I lick her actual navel, and dip my tongue in making her laugh. I kiss her ribcage, and then lick along the underside of her breasts. I suck on one of her nipples, and trace circles with my tongue around the other, before continuing on my way.

Now that she can reach me, Granger’s got her fingers tangled in my hair. Holding on tight. Pulling at it.

I run my tongue up over her chest and along her collarbone. I nip and bite at her shoulders, biting hardest where they meet with her neck, leaving a mark on one side, causing her to

squeal in pain and pleasure. I continue biting and licking my way up her glorious neck, all the way to where her hairline meets it, just behind her ear. Where she smells so good.

She's breathing deeply now. Her legs are wrapped around my waist, and she's arching her back. Pushing her breasts into my chest. Still tugging at my hair.

When I start sucking on her earlobe, she cries out, "Oh Draco...please. *Please* ." Her hands leave my hair and run down my back, then back up, scratching.

I continue my slow progression, kissing along her jawline. Then over to the other side of her neck, to nip and lick and bite there, too. I lick her jawline on this side, and finally – *finally* – make it to her mouth.

She's had enough – she hungrily pulls my lips to her own, crashing against them, her tongue searching and forcing its way into my mouth. She reaches down for my now very hard cock, wraps her fingers around it, and begins rubbing and teasing it, sliding my foreskin back and forth, and running her thumb over the tip.

I groan into her mouth.

She wraps her legs around me more firmly, breathing out, "I want you inside me, Draco. I *need* you inside me," and pulls me down. Lining me up.

I pause, poised to enter her, and look at her, into her eyes. Caressing her cheek with my thumb.

"I love you, too, Granger," I say.

Then lower my hips, and slide my cock into her wet, silky core, moaning in pleasure.

It's the first time I've been on top of my girl, felt my weight on top of her small frame. Been on a fucking bed, been horizontal. Been free.

I go very slowly at first, enjoying the sensation of sliding my cock in and out of her from above. Feeling her tight cunt squeezing me, providing friction all along my length.

Granger wraps her arms around my neck, and I get lower, keeping the bulk of my weight on my elbows on either side of her, but plunging deeper, as far as I can go. Up to the hilt. I'm surprised she can accommodate me. She closes her eyes, and lets out these soft, irresistible little grunts on each thrust, as my breathing becomes more laboured.

"Open your eyes," I command.

Her eyes fly open, as I hold on to her, and roll over, flipping our positions.

Once more, Granger is straddling me, my hands on her thighs.

She adjusts herself, angling her hips to ensure the greatest amount of friction against that desirous clit of hers, and starts rocking back and forth, lifting her hips, then grinding back down. She leans forward, placing her hands on my shoulders and her breasts in my face.

“Fuck, Hermione...” I moan, “Don’t stop.”

She looks at me, eyes wide, as she continues her thrusting and rubbing against my pelvis.

“You never call me that unless you’re angry,” she says in wonder.

“Keep talking and I will be angry at you,” I spit back.

She nods, and increases her pace.

Fucking. Hell.

I can’t stop looking between us, at the sight of my cock going in and out of her cunt, covered in her desire. I reach down, and rub her clit with my thumb, causing her rhythm to increase, become erratic. On every thrust, she’s leaning on me and letting out these little “Ohs” that drive me completely wild.

“So. Fucking. Good,” I pant, as I start thrusting my hips higher, burying myself deeper into her, moaning with need.

I move my hands to her hips to steady her as she bucks on top of me, her breasts bouncing jauntily. She leaves one hand on my shoulder to steady herself, and moves the other to rub her abandoned clit, which has got to be the hottest thing I’ve ever seen.

“I’m coming,” I grunt.

My body tenses, and my thrusts slow, “Nghhh...” I groan, releasing wave after wave of pleasure inside her.

I take a moment to relish the feeling, catch my breath, then turn my attention back to Granger who has yet to come. Again.

My hands still on her hips, I guide her body up off my cock, and move her forward until she’s straddling my face.

“Draco, really? You just...”

“Really, Granger,” and I pull her hips down, hold on to her thighs and lap at her centre, wet and dripping with her desire as well as my own.

She throws her head back, her glorious curls cascading down over her shoulders. She places one hand on the headboard to steady herself and the other on her breast, squeezing and pulling at her nipple. Then she starts gently rocking her hips, while I lick and suck at her core, thrusting my tongue inside her. Tasting her. Tasting pure bliss.

“Oooohhh,” she moans. I feel the muscles in her thighs tensing and squeezing on either side of my head. I reach one hand up from behind, teasing my thumb just outside her arse hole. She bucks at the unfamiliar contact at first, then slides back into a rhythm in which I lick and nibble at her clit with my tongue, and rub her slit and beyond with my fingers, causing her to gasp and moan.

As her hips speed up, I move my tongue back and forth from her centre – laving at her desire – to her clit. She places both hands on the headboard, and focuses on moving herself in such a way as to obtain maximum friction against my tongue, my fingers, and my face, without suffocating me – honestly I'd be happy to die right here, nestled into her cunt. A near constant mewling escapes her lips as her legs tense and she finally comes on my face.

Chapter 13

I wake up a few hours later with a naked Granger in my arms. We're spooning, and I can feel so much of her skin against my own, it feels fucking fantastic. But her hair is...everywhere, almost enveloping me. It still has that amazing coconut vanilla scent, but is tickling my nose. Bloody mop.

I gently extricate myself from the still sleeping curly-haired mess, and stretch out next to her on the bed.

My bed.

My fucking bed.

I slept in my fucking bed.

Granger's in love with me.

She's right here with me.

Safe, for the moment.

I put my hands behind my head and sigh in contentment.

I'm free. I'm in full possession of my magic. Voldemort is pleased with me for effectively handing him the Order on a silver platter. But for a few loose ends, the war is over. We won.

Now what?

Fuck.

Is my father alive?

Gods, I hope so. I can't imagine running the manor and family assets. I've been cooped up too long in that fucking cell. I need activity. I need dark magic. I need violence. I need revenge. Last night wasn't nearly enough. I need to hunt down whatever's left of the Order, and destroy it.

I rub my hands over my face.

I need a shave.

I come out of the bathroom freshly showered and shaved to find Granger sitting up in bed, staring out the window with a faraway look on her face. She's wrapped in a bedsheets and... nothing else. I feel a stirring beneath my towel.

Her cheeks are streaked. Wet. She's been crying again.

Fuck.

"Granger," I say in greeting.

She looks up at me through her eyelashes, wiping her eyes with the back of her hand.

"Good morning, Draco...you look..."

I raise my eyebrows, waiting to know how I look.

"...you look more yourself," she says.

"You mean clean?" I joke.

Look at me, I'm telling jokes.

She smiles briefly, looking down at her hands, twisting them in her lap. Twisting the sheet.

I sigh.

"Did you want to take a shower?"

"I think that might help, yes."

I gesture her to the ensuite, find her a towel and a bathrobe for after.

"Do you have that beaded bag of yours?" I ask, "Do you have a change of clothes in there?"

She looks around herself, as if expecting it to materialise. "Umm, yes, I left it in the sitting room, I think. I have a few items, but...but not much."

How she can haul around an entire library, but not have a pair of spare knickers is beyond me.

"Okay. I can get the house elves to clean your clothes for now. Feel free to grab any t-shirts of mine if you want, and I'll see what I can do about getting something else for you to wear." I watch her for a moment, before adding, "I'm going to go down to the manor's kitchens and find us something to eat...I won't be long."

She nods, and I hear the water start running as I walk out of the bathroom.

I throw on a pair of trousers and a t-shirt, grab Granger's clothes, then leave my quarters to find out who's alive, and who's dead.

When I finally get down to the kitchen I find my mother apparently supervising the house elves' preparation of breakfast. I can't imagine what role she could possibly play in this situation.

"Draco, my darling," she says without an ounce of emotion, "I'm so pleased to see you." She looks me over carefully, pausing and touching my hair – contemplating it – for just a moment before adding, "It's such a relief to have you home and unharmed."

"Thank you, Mother." I reply stiffly, running my hand through my hair to erase the feeling of her touch.

We've never been much for hugs in our family, but it seems after months of imprisonment, a mother might show a little more affection?

Maybe Granger is rubbing off on me.

"Yes, yes...so good to have you home Draco," says my father impassively as he, too, walks into the kitchen and stands next to my mother, like some kind of inhospitable welcoming committee.

Oh, good. Everyone's alive.

"Father," I greet him with a nod.

Now I've established everyone still has a pulse, I turn my back on my parents and begin rummaging through the kitchen cupboards. I find myself a tray, and start loading it with breakfast pastries, toast, jams, fruits, and anything I can think Granger might want for her tea. House elves are dancing around me, trying to help.

After watching me for a few moments my father carefully says, "The Dark Lord was rather... displeased with the length of your absence, but it would seem with the manner of your return, all is quite forgiven." By the icy tone of his voice it doesn't sound like *he*'s quite forgiven me.

"I am very fortunate."

"Yes," my father agrees, looking at me calculatingly. Watching me collect breakfast for two on the tray.

"You brought a guest through the wards last night." It's a statement, not a question.

"I did."

"It seemed....a struggle to get them through."

I stop and look at him, my eyes narrowing, "Well, considering they're set up to protect against anyone without at least, what? Four generations of pureblood ancestry?"

"I've increased it to six," he informs me, "...considering the times. The political climate."

"Right, well, it'd be difficult for most so-called purebloods to make it through, then. We all know most families have a few skeletons in the closet."

"Not ours, Draco."

"What about the Dark Lord, Father? Can he make it through your wards?"

It's the regime's worst kept secret that he's a fucking half-blood.

"Draco!" my mother exclaims, shocked.

I turn my ice-cold gaze to her. I mean, it's a legitimate question.

She clears her throat, "Are we to meet this guest of yours?" she asks, her eyebrows raised.

"No."

"I see," she replies. Disappointed.

I collect a few scones that have just come out of the oven, add them to my tray, and look to my parents. "Well, then....if that's all?"

I don't wait for an answer.

When I arrive back at my quarters, Granger's clothes are already clean and neatly folded just outside the doors, on a side table. I tuck them under my arm, and enter, looking for signs of life.

I find Granger in the kitchen, boiling water. She's standing in front of the stove wearing one of my t-shirts and, presumably, nothing else.

Sweet Salazar.

I clear my throat and place the overloaded breakfast tray on the table.

She turns, and gestures to the kettle, "I thought I'd get started on some tea...I hope you don't mind?" She looks....lost? Shy? I can't quite place it. She continues, "I rummaged through the cupboards to find it."

"Feel free to rummage all you want, Granger."

I silently hand her the pile of clean clothes, sit down at the table, and watch as she immediately pulls on her knickers, followed by her denims. She keeps my t-shirt.

“What?” she asks when she looks up, sees I’ve been watching.

“Granger. How is it that a woman your age wears knickers I would imagine my Great Aunt Walburga wearing?” I tease.

Her cheeks flush pink, saying, “I’ve met her, you know…well, her portrait, at least.”

“Grimmauld Place?”

“Yes.”

“When were you there?”

“The first time was the summer before fifth year – when Sirius offered it up as Order headquarters. A few times after that, including when Harry was undesirable number one – before we actually went on the run, living out of a tent.”

“The Order had its headquarters there? She must have loved that…”

She smiles, “It was a very difficult time for her – there were mudbloods, blood traitors, *and* half-breeds in her home....she didn’t know where to direct her indignation. We couldn’t remove the permanent sticking charm, so kept her covered by a drape to keep her quiet.”

I chuckle...I know that portrait. It’s a real piece of work.

She bites her lower lip, returns her attention to the now boiling kettle and makes a pot of tea. Turning, she says matter-of-factly, “You know....there’s not a lot of choice when you’re ordering supplies – including knickers – for a resistance. You take what you can get.”

“I’ve grown quite fond of them, actually.”

She brings the pot to the table, goes back for two cups, then sits and pours the tea. I note Granger takes milk and an obscene amount of sugar in hers. I take mine black.

Then we tuck in.

I’m famished.

We eat in silence. Me, because I’m too busy shovelling food into my mouth. Granger, presumably because she’s still upset. She barely touches anything.

I’m eating my fourth piece of toast, smeared with raspberry jam, when there’s a sudden burning sensation on my left arm. I drop my toast and hiss in surprise. Grab my arm. It’s the first time in months I’ve felt my Dark Mark.

Granger watches me in alarm, her eyes wide, her eyebrows raised.

“I have to go,” I stand up, wiping the crumbs from my hands. “The Dark Lord has summoned me.”

Her eyes move from my face down to my left forearm. Nods with a look of resignation on her face. Follows me to the bedroom closet where I pull out a dress shirt, jacket, and a fresh set of Death Eater robes.

“How long will you be?” she asks hesitantly.

“I’m not sure, Granger,” I look at her. “Try to eat something? I’ll see if I can find out which locations were hit last night, who might have escaped.”

“Thank you,” she says quietly.

What I don’t say is I’ll be volunteering to find those escaped Order members and kill them. Brutally.

I don’t think she’ll thank me for that.

Well, shit.

I expect there’ll be more crying when Granger hears the full extent of last night’s operations. Of the casualties.

When I get back to the manor I find Granger in the tub, pink and purple bubbles surrounding her. She moves to get out but I tell her, “Stay there. I’ll join you. Just give me a sec.”

I head back to the kitchen. Put a warming charm on the dinner plates I’d brought up, and grab the shoppers I brought home with me. Return to the bathroom.

I walk in, swinging the bags in front me.

“I brought treats, Granger.”

She smiles at the reference, and asks, “What kind of treats?”

“Clothes. I’m sorry they’re not muggle, I know you prefer them.”

“That’s alright, thank you,” she says. “Actually I found your t-shirt rather comfortable.”

“If you want to wear my t-shirts, go right ahead. I won’t object if they’re the *only* thing you want to wear,” I say, raising my eyebrows suggestively, as I remove my own shirt and the t-

shirt underneath.

I pull off my trousers and pants, then stand before her, assessing the bath situation. I jerk my head, indicating she should move up the tub, and climb in behind her placing my long legs on either side, pulling her back into my chest. I wrap my arms around her middle, resting my chin next to the messy bun on top of her head.

We sit in silence for a few minutes.

“Where the fuck did you find the bubbles, Granger?”

“You mean the pink and purple bubbles *aren’t* yours?” she asks cheekily. “I found them rummaging through the vanity.”

Huh. I have a vague recollection of an ex-girlfriend who liked bubble baths.

“So,” she finally says, “how bad was it?”

I shift my position, moving my hands to her hips and stroking her sides gently with my thumbs.

“Let’s not talk about it just yet, Granger.”

“That bad?”

“Later,” I say firmly, closing the topic for now.

“Okay,” she sighs, and leans her head back against my collarbone. She’s too short to lean it on my shoulder.

I run my hands over her stomach.

“How was it?” she asks, “...being able to go out and about again?”

I move one hand up to her breast. Weigh it in my hand, before squeezing gently, then absentmindedly playing with her nipple.

“It was...great,” I answer honestly. “Felt good to be outside again. To sit in the sun.”

“To sit in the sun?”

“Like a fucking cat, Granger. I just sat there, enjoying the warmth of the sun on my skin....haven’t felt it in months.”

“Hmm..” she responds, and pushes herself back against me.

Her nipple is so hard I could cut glass with it. I move my hands down to her thighs, caressing them, rubbing little circles with my thumbs just below her groin. Eventually I move one of them over to insinuate itself between her legs.

She lifts and opens her knees, allowing me access. I run my fingers over her clit, then down over her slit, then back up again. I do this a few times before focusing on her sweet spot. Rubbing up and down repeatedly. Slowly. With lots of pressure, just how she likes it. She moans gently, arching her back and pushing her bottom against my growing hard on. I pull her back against me, and tease the opening of her slit. Spreading open her folds, before inserting my finger, going in deep then pumping in and out. I cup her breast with my free hand, massaging it, as I continue to trace my fingers along, and inside her cunt. Rubbing her clit with the heel of my hand. “Ohh..” she sighs, reaching up to cover my hand already on her breast, and to caress the other on her own.

Her whole body moves in rhythm with my hand, the water sloshing, her head falling backwards, “Oh gods,” she says.

“The gods aren’t here, Granger.”

I hear her smiling, before she looks over her shoulder, to confirm it.

Then she moves both my hands away, and carefully gets up and turns herself around in the tub, kneeling between my legs. I watch her with hooded eyes as she takes hold of my cock, and begins stroking it. I lean back, enjoying it, breathing deeply and closing my eyes.

Her hands are so small and delicate. Her fingers move so precisely, as they trace the vein on the underside of my length, before they wrap around my girth and start pumping up and down.

I hear the water rippling before Granger says, “Move your legs, Draco, I need mine to be on the outside.” We reorganise ourselves, so that Granger is now on her knees straddling me. She resumes stroking my length, gripping harder, then moves closer and rubs it back and forth against her cunt. Teasing her slit with my tip.

“Ahh...” I moan. She positions herself on top of me, lines us up, then lowers herself, sitting on my cock, her wet silky warmth engulfing me.

“Fuck, Granger,” I choke out.

I place my hands on her hips, feeling her move up and down, slowly and deliberately at first, then speeding up, causing the water to splash over the side of the tub.

“Oh, Draco, the water...” she exclaims, pausing.

“Fuck the water, Granger, don’t stop,” I pull her hips down roughly so she’s swallowing my length once more, sending even more water sloshing over the edge of the tub and onto the floor.

She remains preoccupied with watching the water splashing, until I pull her mouth to mine, shove my tongue into her mouth, and put my thumb on her clit, rubbing vigorously.

“Ooh...” she whimpers into my mouth, her focus returning where it should be. On riding my cock.

“I’m almost there,” I breathe.

“Me too,” she pants.

There’s a few frantic moments of Granger bouncing on top of me. Water splashes everywhere. Up and down, she grinds her clit into my pelvis, pushing me deep inside her. It feels fucking amazing. She pauses when I’m at my deepest, places her forearms against my chest, and angles her hips forward. My cock still entirely enveloped by her cunt, she starts moving back and forth to create more of the friction she’s craving, while at the same time forcing my cock to rub the front walls of her core. To rub against her g-spot. “Ngh, ngh, ngh,” she grunts over and over as I feel her inner walls start to spasm and clench around me.

Oh gods, yes.

Maybe the gods *are* here?

I haven’t got time to think about the fucking gods. I begin to tense, grab Granger’s jaw and steer her face to mine for a kiss, then groan. Coming inside her, and sighing deeply into her mouth.

She slumps against my chest, breathing hard. I wrap my arms around her back, and lazily caress it. Once she’s caught her breath she pushes herself up and looks down at the tub, leans over and looks at the floor. “There’s barely any water left in the tub!” she exclaims. “It looks like it’s flooded in here.”

Still breathing heavily I sigh, “Don’t worry about it, Granger, that’s what house elves are for.”

And it’s like she snaps.

She stares daggers at me, stands up abruptly – unsheathing my cock in the process – and steps out of the tub, grabbing a towel.

“So *what*?” she says with venom. “*We* make a mess, and just leave it for the house elves to clean up?”

Fuck.

I’d forgotten all about her crusade on behalf of the house elves. What was that called again?

“That is quite literally what they’re for,” I say as I stand and get out of the tub, taking the towel she passes me, and start drying myself.

“They are intelligent, emotional creatures, Draco!”

“I know that, Granger. Unlike you, I’ve been around them my whole life. It’s why I know they *like* to take care of us.”

“You’re saying they like to be slaves?”

“I’m saying they like to be of service.” I wrap my towel around my waist.

She stares at me. Fuming.

I narrow my eyes and decide to poke the bear.

“Boots!” I shout.

There’s a loud *crack!*, and my favourite house elf apparates directly into the bathroom, looking about herself, assessing the water everywhere. Granger’s cheeks go bright red, and she quickly wraps her towel around herself to cover up.

She looks at me in disgust.

“You *named* your house-elf after an article of clothing she can’t have?” she spits out, positively fuming.

“No,” I reply calmly – maybe a little condescendingly. “My grandmother named her after the constellation Boötes when she was a child, only she couldn’t pronounce it. She wanted to give her a name following Black family tradition.”

I look at the house-elf and smile, “Hello Boots.”

“Master Draco,” the house elf says, “Welcome home! You is making a very big mess in the bathroom. Boots will clean it up for you.”

“Thank you, Boots,” I say, and walk out of the bathroom. I can hear Granger apologising repeatedly to the house elf for the mess. Boots just giggles in response, clearly not understanding the witch’s bizarre behaviour.

By the time Granger makes it out of the bathroom with her shoppers, I’ve already put on a pair of lounge pants (that is, overpriced joggers), and a fresh t-shirt. I’m leaning against the bed frame with my arms folded across my chest. Waiting.

She places the shoppers on the bed and opens them up, peering inside. She is very noticeably not looking at me or talking to me.

I sigh. Run my hand over my face. Push off the post, and start walking out of the room saying, “Get dressed, Granger. Dinner’s in the kitchen, and we need to talk.”

I sit down and wait for Granger in the kitchen, my elbows on the table, my head cradled in my hands.

How the fuck am I supposed to tell her this?

And how do I feel opposite emotions about the same thing?

On the one hand, I'm fucking elated that the previous night's operations went so well, and almost completely wiped out the Order's network of safe houses and suppliers. I *want* the Order obliterated. Crushed. And we're almost there now.

On the other hand, I know this news is going to devastate Granger. And while I personally rejoice in it, I don't want to see her get upset. Cry.

Oh gods, the crying.

Is that all I really want to avoid? Am I that insensitive?

Yes.

Yes I am.

"Draco?" Granger says as she enters the room wearing one of my t-shirts, and a pair of new lounge pants.

I look up. Go get our plates off the counter, place them on the table, then grab a bottle of wine from the pantry and ask, "Is red ok?"

She nods. I fetch some wine glasses, uncork the bottle with a flick of wandless magic, pour, then sit. I take my glass, swirl it around, smell it, and finally close my eyes and take a slow sip, relishing the taste on my tongue. I pick up hints of prune, liquorice and something slightly floral.

I sigh in contentment.

When I open my eyes, Granger is watching me, a curious look on her face.

"What?" I ask, raising my shoulders. "It's the first alcohol I've had in months. I'm going to enjoy it." I pause, "...and probably get a little drunk."

"Do you need to get drunk to tell me your news?"

"It'd certainly help," I admit. She watches me intently, waiting for me to begin.

I sigh. Take another few sips of wine, and a few bites of my food. Then lean back in my chair.

"So last night," I start, "was a resounding success for Voldemort's regime. Of the locations identified in the information retrieved during my escape, fourteen of them proved active and were neutralised."

"And by neutralised, you mean..."

"I mean those locations are no longer viable for Order operations. In most cases, maximum casualties were suffered."

"Most cases?"

"There were a few exceptions. Some Order members escaped. We'll hunt them down. Eliminate them."

"So that's it? Everyone was just...eliminated?"

"Not everyone. A few were taken in for questioning."

"You mean torture."

"While asking them questions."

She gives me a look.

"Yes, torture."

She puts her fork down and pushes her plate away. I keep eating. Take a few more gulps of wine, watching the wheels turn in that giant brain of hers.

"Are there lists of casualties?" she finally asks.

"There are."

"Who?"

I hesitate, "Better to ask who's *not* on the lists..."

"Okay. Who's not on the lists?"

"Most of the Weasleys."

Her eyes brighten, then narrow.

"Most? Explain."

"The Burrow was among the locations attacked," I pause as she gasps, her hands flying to her mouth. I continue, "Arthur Weasley apparently held off about a dozen Death Eaters by himself using some cockamamie muggle contraptions and weapons. His sacrifice permitted the rest of his family to escape."

She removes her hands from her mouth slowly, to confirm with a shaking voice, "So Arthur is...is dead."

"He is."

"And the others?"

"Are not. At least none of them have been identified among the dead. And considering they all have that awful ginger hair, I can't imagine there'd be any doubt. I think it safe to say, the remaining weasels have eluded us."

"Thank the gods," she whispers, as the tears stream down her cheeks, unchecked.

I refill my glass, and take another few gulps of wine, watching her. Conflicted. I feel like I probably ought to be comforting her. I mean, she *is* crying. But at the same time...I'm really fucking happy with the outcome of everything. I wish I could celebrate everything I achieved last night. I wish I could be happy about it....but I can't. Because that'd make me an insensitive arsehole.

"Is that everything?" she asks. Hopeful.

"No."

"No?"

I reposition myself in my chair, lean my elbows on the table in a very ungentlemanly manner, and crack my neck.

"You're undesirable number one, Granger."

Her eyes widen in shock, her tears suddenly forgotten.

"Me?" she whispers.

"You."

I run my hand through my hair, and tug on the ends. Grimace.

I really need a haircut.

"Which means..." I sigh, "Granger, you need to think about what you want to do." She makes to interrupt me, but I keep going, "You're safe here. For now. But this isn't a permanent solution."

"So you're saying I'm not a prisoner here."

"Whatever made you think that?"

"I can't leave, Draco. You locked me in with the blood wards."

"You...you... *what?*" I can't believe this bitch. "You *refused* to run when I asked you to. So I brought you to the safest place I could think of. My home. *My fucking home, Granger.* Do you know what they'd do to me, if anyone found out you were here?" I bang my fist on the table, looking at her angrily.

"So if you want to leave, then leave. Because you're not a prisoner here. But you *are* a fugitive. So you'd better make sure that when you do, you have a fucking plan. Because everyone – and I mean *everyone* – is looking for you."

I'm shouting.

I'm shouting at her.

Viciously.

And she's crying.

But fuck, she needs to hear this. Understand the gravity of the situation.

Understand that no matter my feelings – *our* feelings – she has to leave. I am not fucking dying for her.

If I've told her once, I've told her a hundred times.

I'm not that guy.

I get up, leave Granger crying in the kitchen, and head directly to the liquor cabinet in the sitting room. I need something stronger than wine.

I grab a bottle of firewhiskey and don't bother getting a glass.

I wake up the next morning lying on the sofa, feeling like complete shit. Not because I shouted at Granger – she needed to hear that. But because I drank the entire bottle of firewhiskey.

Fucking lightweight.

I groan, get up, and groggily make my way to the kitchen to find a sober-up potion. I poke around the cupboards until I find one, drink it in one gulp, then pour myself a glass of water.

I'm leaning against the counter, rehydrating, when I notice the dishes from last night have been cleaned up. Washed by hand and left to dry in the rack next to the sink. The table and chairs have likewise been tidily arranged. It's a small kitchen, but I've always liked it. Preferring the simplicity of eating directly where food is prepared over a separate dining room.

I place my empty glass in the sink and head to the bedroom.

When I get to the door, I pause. Granger is asleep in my bed, the only thing visible her massive mop of curls spreading out over the pillow. I watch for a few minutes, wondering how angry she is with me.

If I'm being completely honest, I'm still angry with her.

The cunt is so wrapped up in Order propaganda, she has no clue of the danger she's in. Of the danger *we're* in, just by her being here. I sigh, and quietly head to the ensuite, strip off my clothes, and take a shower so hot it nearly burns my skin.

It's only when I'm getting dressed, that she sits up. Watching me.

"Where are you going?" she asks.

"To work."

She nods, bringing her knees up to her chest.

I can't help thinking how things change. I'm the one who can move about freely now. She's...no. She's not a prisoner. But she *is* in hiding. Trapped, in a sense.

"What can I bring you?" I ask, "To occupy your time? Books?" I can't help but smirk.

"You don't even have to get books, Draco. You could just remove the curses from the books you already have."

"Right," I nod my head, frowning. Then hold out my hand.

She looks at it, then up at me.

"Come pick a few right now, and I'll remove them," I explain.

"Oh!" She scooches off the bed, takes my hand, and we head to my study.

The study is probably my favourite room in my quarters. Save for the door, windows and mantle, there are bookshelves lining all four walls – which is nothing in comparison to the manor's actual library, but still amounts to thousands of books. My favourite books. There's a heavy desk at the end opposite the fireplace, in front of the bookshelves, and a small sofa perpendicular to it, in front of the windows. It also has one of the comfiest, and probably most colourful (maybe garish?) rugs in the apartment. It feels fucking great on bare feet.

Granger takes a few minutes perusing the shelves – she almost looks happy doing so, back in her element, as it were – and eventually points to three books, being very careful not to actually touch them.

I pull them out, confirm they're what she wants, and get to work breaking their curses. It's not difficult, *per se*, but a little tedious. The Malfoys really fucking hate mudbloods to have gone to such lengths on every bloody book in the manor.

Once done, I stack them up and hand the curse-free books to her. She very gingerly pokes them, before taking them in her arms.

"Thank you," she smiles, looking up at me through her eyelashes.

“You’re welcome.” I caress her cheek with my thumb and kiss her gently on the lips. “Enjoy the books. Call for Boots if you need anything. I’ve asked her to stock the kitchen, but if there’s anything missing...”

“I thought only you and I were permitted in your quarters. The blood wards?”

“House elves have their own magic, Granger. Boots can come and go as she pleases, but has used her magic to ensure none of the other house elves can get in.”

“Elf wards?” She cocks an eyebrow.

“Something like that.”

“Why Boots?”

“Because I trust her.”

“You trust a house elf, Draco?”

“Surprised?”

“Yes.”

I shrug, “I’m full of surprises, Granger. I’ll see you later.”

Chapter 14

Over the next few weeks, I settle into a sort of routine.

Every morning I wake up with a raging hard on. I nudge Granger awake for a quickie, then head to the ensuite to shower and shave.

By the time I'm dressed Granger is up, and makes us breakfast – she's quite good in the kitchen. Says she learned spending all that time in a tent cooking for those worthless fuckwit friends of hers in seventh year.

If we wake up late, everything gets switched around a bit. I shower first, then come eat breakfast. Sometimes we fuck instead of eating. It's not really something we plan to do. In fact, the first time it happens is entirely by accident. After sleeping in, Granger literally just rolls out of bed, rushing to the kitchen to get the kettle on. After rummaging through the lower cupboards – oh gods, the sight of her bending over in just my t-shirt – I'm standing right behind her, kissing her neck, and rubbing my hands up over her hips, her behind, her stomach, her breasts.

"The sight of you in my t-shirt does things to me, Granger," I breathe into her ear.

"Does it?" she responds innocently. She reaches her arms up, lifting that hemline even higher, and grabs hold of my hair, pulling my mouth down to hers and kissing me deeply, fervently, over her shoulder.

My hand reaches down and over her now exposed mound, to caress the folds of her centre. I spread them apart, and dip my finger into her sex, slick with arousal.

Her legs shake as she continues to stand on her toes trying to maintain our kiss.

I break away, allowing her to get off her toes, and focus my lips on her neck, behind her ear, and nipping and biting at her shoulder. I reach my hand up under her t-shirt and place it on her breast, rolling my thumb over her nipple, while the other drags her desire forward to her clit, rubbing.

Granger leans forward. Places both hands on the counter in front of her.

I back away for a moment to unbuckle my belt and unzip my trousers. I pull out my cock, insinuate it between her legs, and rub it back and forth, coating it in her desire. The lustful bitch moans in pleasure, and pushes her arse back, seeking. I grab her hips, and guide myself into her waiting cunt, pummeling her against the counter, over and over again, each thrust getting harder. Going deeper.

"Yes, yes, yes," she cries out each time I push into her. I reach around to finger her clit again, causing her hips to buck frantically as she seeks friction in the front and depth from my length.

I keep pumping until she throws her head back and I feel her walls begin to spasm, finally permitting myself to spill my seed inside her, groaning, both of us leaning over the counter. Out of breath.

I don't talk to Granger about work, and she doesn't ask.

It's really for the best.

I spend my days tracking down her Order associates and friends. If they're not of particular importance, I'm allowed to have fun with them. And by fun, I mean terrorise and torture them. And maybe their families too. Close friends and even mild acquaintances if I get carried away.

I sometimes do.

If they're targets of some importance, I'm required to interrogate them before dispatching them. I use a combination of magical and muggle techniques. I'm loath to admit the physicality and brutality of personally inflicting wounds on a subject, rather than relying on magical means, is satisfying in a way that I'd barely just discovered with my tactical knife before. And I explore these new methods with enthusiasm.

Once I'm satisfied my target is sufficiently weakened, and is unable – or unwilling – to talk, I use legilimency to rip and shred through their thoughts and memories, discovering every last piece of useful information they possess.

Only then do I curse them, watch them bleed out, contort in agony, and die as the dark magic twists and entangles itself around my soul.

It's transcendent.

High profile targets are, surprisingly, the least fun. Once I capture them my options are limited, as their minds need to remain intact for interrogations by the Dark Lord himself or his highest ranking officials.

For this reason alone, I often request *not* to be put on high profile cases. I like to play with my targets. The Dark Lord – pleased with the cruelty and savagery in my methods – generally indulges me. He is after all, a complete and utter psychopath himself, and encourages the same behaviours in me.

It's ironic, though.

While I'm ripping apart people's bodies and minds, avoiding high profile assignments, I'm secretly searching for some of the very highest profile blood traitors wanted in Voldemort's regime.

Just as I used to know how Order initiatives were going based on Granger's mood, she now knows what sort of day I've had by the state in which I come home at night.

She never asks for details, but will sometimes remark on the splattered or blood-soaked state of my robes. Of the dark magic emanating from my body. She tells me it rolls off me. Sometimes in such an overwhelming intensity that she fears what it's doing to my soul.

I tell her not to worry. It's already too late. My soul is fucked.

What I don't tell her is how much I enjoy it.

I get home one night, my clothes damp.

Seeing as I'm not covered in blood, nor radiating dark magic, Granger leans into my chest for a kiss, then backs away, confused.

"Did you get caught in the rain, Draco?"

"No."

"No?"

Isn't that what I just said?

"No."

"How did you get so wet? It's..." she pauses and runs her hands over my robes. Opens them up and finds my clothes damp underneath as well... "It's like you went swimming this morning, and forgot to take your clothes off. Have you been in these damp clothes all day?"

She pulls my robes off and starts unbuttoning my shirt. Unbuckling my belt.

"Granger, you'd better be prepared for the consequences of your actions, here." I look down at her hands at my waist, then back up at her face.

She flushes, but continues undressing me.

"Are you going to tell me what happened today?" she persists.

"Absolutely not."

What does the bitch expect? She knows what I do. At least in theory. Just because I'm wet instead of bloody doesn't mean today has been any different.

"It's just strange..." she says, helping me step out of my trousers.

It's not strange, actually. I spent the day waterboarding one of her Gryffindor buddies before bringing him to the Dark Lord for questioning. Was I supposed to torture him? Technically no. But the water left no visible marks, so who's to know?

"Drop it, Granger," I growl, as I pick her up over my shoulder and take her to the bedroom.

It goes without saying, I'm occluding the fuck out of my mind. I have to completely compartmentalise and hide each and every facet of my life from the other.

It's a huge problem for Granger.

She expects to see *me* when I'm with her, not an emotionless shell of Draco. It requires a very fine balancing act, in which I knock down a sufficient number of walls to show enough of myself to satisfy her, while barricading the rest of my life to prevent the darkness from completely taking over, and showing her what a monster I truly am.

I mean, she definitely suspects I'm a monster, what with the blood-soaked robes, and all...I just don't want to unequivocally confirm it by being that monster in front of her.

At work, though, the occlusion works in my favour. An emotional Death Eater is an ineffective one. The more walls I erect, and the more distant and emotionless I am, the better I'm able to do my job.

Not to mention the fact it allows me to keep Granger hidden. Safe in her box, on the top shelf of a locked closet in my mind. No one at work is even remotely aware there's someone waiting for me at home every night. No one knows the reason I'm sometimes late is because I spent the morning fucking my brains out.

The only people even slightly aware that something is going on are my parents. My occlusion doesn't fool them. Rather, it tips them off I've got something to hide.

They know me too well. They just don't happen to grasp the magnitude of what I'm doing.

It being fucking treason, and all.

Instead, they keep quiet. Observing, and waiting until I somehow fuck up. Until they have more information.

I've felt my father reaching into my mind, attempting to breach my walls to discover who I've got hidden in my quarters.

My mother is more patient. More subtle. She catches me in those brief moments when my walls are down for Granger, and I've ventured into the manor. She makes pointed remarks about how happy I seem. Like it's a bad thing.

She definitely knows I'm getting laid.

My colleagues think I'm a news junkie.

Every week I make the rounds and buy every local and international newspaper I can get my hands on. I get home and give them to Granger as homework.

The little swot still can't resist an assignment.

The British and European papers demonstrate to her the extent to which Voldemort's pureblood ideology has taken root. To illustrate the vilification of mudbloods, such as herself. And her, specifically. There are regular smear campaigns against Granger. Gross exaggeration and utter fabrication in most cases. They nevertheless succeed in putting the general population on high alert for undesirable number one.

Tips and sightings as to Granger's whereabouts come in regularly.

I, myself, am sent off to investigate at least four sightings. I go through the motions, of course knowing they'll lead to nothing. I spend my time interviewing the witnesses only half paying attention, my mind wandering to how I'm going to fuck the nation's most wanted fugitive when I get home.

I insist she read the international papers cover to cover. She needs to see what's happening in Voldemort's regime from an outside perspective – one that's not just pushing propaganda. She also needs to understand what's happening elsewhere in the world. To get a feel for where she might like to go when she finally gets over this inertia she's currently trapped in.

I walk into the study and find Granger curled up on the sofa, folding up the latest copy of the *New York Ghost*. She's got that look on her face that says she's thinking. Processing.

“Anything?” I ask.

She bites her lower lip. “The Magical Congress has voted not to intervene in foreign affairs of state,” she says dejectedly.

“That’s....” I trail off. It’s bloody fantastic news, really. It means I’m not going to war to fend off the military might of America. It means Voldemort’s regime will be able to further solidify its hold, and cement its ideology in Europe.

I run my hands through my hair, and try to gauge her face. She looks at me.

“You’re pleased.” It’s less a statement and more an accusation.

“Granger, you do understand if they’d voted to intervene, it’d basically be a death sentence for me, right?”

“And their voting not to intervene is a death sentence for me!” she shouts.

“No, Granger. It’s status quo for you. There was already a ransom on your head,” I shout back.

And here it is. The same argument we’ve been having at least once or twice a week since she got here.

I continue, “It’s why I’ve been asking you to go. To save yourself. Choose a location – anywhere – and I will fucking get you there.”

“And once I go? Then what? We’ll never see each other again.”

Bloody fucking hell, again with this sentimental bullshit.

“Gods willing, we won’t.”

She looks shocked I’d ever say such a thing, that I’m so willing to let her go. Like it somehow means I don’t love her. It’s as if we haven’t already had this conversation over and over again.

“I don’t know if I’m ready for that,” she whispers.

“Granger. Honey,” I sit down next to her, take her face between my hands, caress her cheeks with my thumbs, “You have to get ready. Soon.”

“But I love you...” she says sadly.

“And I love you...” I kiss her softly on the lips. “But this?” I gesture to my quarters, to us... “It isn’t healthy. Trust me, I know what it’s like to be trapped, and I don’t want that for you. I’m not going to lie, Granger – this is a shitty, fucked up situation, and I hate it. I fucking hate it. If I had my way, I’d keep you here with me forever. But I can’t. It’s not fair to you. I want you to have a life, and that isn’t possible for you here. There isn’t anything for you here.”

She makes to argue, to say she has me, but I stop her, telling her firmly, “I can’t keep having this argument, Granger.”

Chapter 15

It's a lazy Saturday afternoon and Granger and I are in the study, reading. I'm lying on the sofa reading some random book plucked out of her beaded bag – I've been slowly making my way through her collection – and she's sprawled out on the floor with a wide range of now curse-free books surrounding her, in some sort of organised chaos I've yet to figure out.

Boots apparates with a crack, somehow managing to avoid Granger's mess, startling us both. "Master Draco! Miss Hermione! Boots is being very sorry to disturb you, but Lady Malfoy is insisting Boots give Master this."

I sit up and swing my legs over the side of the sofa as she hands me a heavily embossed envelope with cursive writing on the front. As soon as I've touched it, she gives a little curtsey and immediately disappears, apparently so I can't give it back.

Fuck.

With the war over now, Britain's pureblood elites are ready to formally socialise again.

I flip the envelope over and see a handwritten note stuck to it. I pull it off, and find my mothers elegant cursive informing me that the attached invitation is not optional.

I sigh.

"What is it?" Granger asks from her position on the floor.

"An invitation," I open it up, weigh the heavy cardstock in my hands and glance over the details, "to a gala at the Greengrass estate."

"Greengrass? Weren't you..."

"Fucking Daphne. Yes."

"Are you going?" She's got that small voice she gets when she's upset...I can tell she hates the very idea of this.

"I'm going to have to, Granger." I look at her clouded face, and rub my hands over my unshaven one, scratching at the stubble. "I've already avoided a few charity events and re-openings. But people will talk if I don't attend this...and the *last* thing I need is people talking about, and taking notice of, what I'm doing. I need to behave as people expect."

"And how do they expect you to behave?"

"Like an heir in need of a wife."

Insensitive prick.

Granger's eyes get glassy, but she continues, "And what does that look like?"

She's still sitting on the floor, cross-legged, in the middle of her mess looking up at me with those big sad doe eyes of hers, and all I want to do is lie to her. Tell her I won't go to the fucking gala, or any others for that matter, and that I don't need a pureblood wife to have pureblood babies with, because I have her.

But I can't. Because that would feed into whatever it is that's holding Granger here with me, and as much as I want her to stay – *gods, if I could just be with the fucking mudblood* – she can't. So I answer her question instead, "Well, it looks like me. In formal robes, a haircut, and a clean shave. On my very best behaviour – which means gallant to the young ladies, and charming to the older ones. As for the men, most of them will be Death Eaters, their allies and supporters, so it won't be a question of good behaviour so much as a pissing contest to compare our achievements and prospects."

"And how do you stack up against the competition, Draco?"

"Very well, Granger."

"You sound very sure of yourself."

"I am."

She raises her eyebrows.

I shrug and explain, "I'm the Malfoy heir...that makes me one of wizarding Britain's most eligible bachelors. And as far as achievements go...I'm good."

Her eyes narrow at this statement.

"You're good?"

"Yes. I'm good." I leave it at that. We're getting dangerously close to talking about my work. About what I do, and how I rank in Voldemort's regime. Granger senses my reticence and backs off.

"So what happens at a gala?"

"Honestly? Nothing. They're terribly dull affairs, filled with pretentious attendees, insincere conversations, and stiff dance partners."

And matchmaking.

Lots of family alliances are forged at these events, culminating in marriage contracts.

I don't mention that.

The gala is everything I expect.

And worse.

It's crowded. With this being the first event of its kind in years, everyone is in attendance. Everyone is over the top. Over dressed, over coiffed, over perfumed, over medicated. Jewels are everywhere, each family trying to remind the rest how rich they are. Everyone is overly boastful about their roles in the war, and overly emphatic about their support for Lord Voldemort.

I know for a fact most of them never got their hands even slightly dirty. Many of them wavered on the sidelines for years, waiting to see which side would win.

In the height of pretentiousness, each couple or attendee is introduced as they make their way into the ballroom, like we're all fucking royals. There are a few names that cause the crowd to pause. To watch. To assess and calculate the value of their clothes, jewels, and current net worth. They're all single. Myself included.

This is a fucking meat market.

My mother protested when I said I wasn't dressing up. She said I needed to stand out amongst the crowd. And I do. But in my own way and on my own terms. My dress robes are traditional black. The fabric is expensive and the cut impeccable, creating perfect, clean lines. My only embellishments, the cufflinks I got from my father when I turned seventeen, and the Malfoy signet ring.

The simplicity of my attire, combined with my back to silver-blond hair makes me stand out like a raven in a sea of ridiculous peacocks.

My mother smiles in approval as I make my way into the ballroom, every eye on me, every unmarried bint pasting a coquettish smile on her face, every one of their fathers seeing gold.

I'm already sick of this.

The decorations are garish, the orchestra too loud, and – mercifully – the alcohol is flowing.

Right.

If my occlusion doesn't dull my senses enough, I can always get smashed.

I lose count of how many women I dance with. Of how many stilted conversations I have, trying to find a delicate way of describing my days hunting and torturing enemies of the state. I finally settle on 'locating and questioning' which they all claim is very heroic, as they bat their eyelashes, and touch my arm more than is even remotely necessary.

I watch my parents talk to other parents, making pointed looks at their respective offspring.

It's obvious everyone is anxious.

Pureblood families tend to forge their marriage contracts young, as soon as their children are of age, and before we have too many opinions of our own. Engagements last a year or so, and then we're typically married by the age of twenty, leaving us plenty of time to make an heir, and grow to either love or despise each other.

But now there's a whole generation of us who aren't married due to the war. We're adults now, have opinions, and experience. We're getting old.

There's a definite sense of urgency to catch up.

I'm standing off to the side of the dance floor. The orchestra is taking a break, which allows me one as well. All the dancing, all the small talk, all the forced pleasantries, and feigning interest....it leaves me drained.

What I wouldn't give to go home. Pour myself a drink, and sit in comfortable silence with Granger in my study. We would read our respective books, she'd tell me about some outrageously miscalculated arithmancy formulas she'd come across, huff a little, and then correct the calculations herself. I'd tell her to note her corrections in the margin – my willingness to defile a centuries old text even more scandalous than the error itself. I'd eventually convince her to do it – for the sake of future readers, who surely ought to know the correct equation?

Then we'd fuck and call it a night.

Perfect.

It's actually how I've spent most of my nights since I escaped. Since Granger has been hiding out in my quarters.

"Well don't you look positively thrilled to be here," a familiar voice breaks my reverie.

I turn to find Daphne Greengrass approaching, a flute of champagne in one hand and a firewhiskey in the other. She holds the firewhiskey out to me.

"Thanks," I say, taking the glass.

We stand next to each other in companionable silence for a few moments, each sipping our respective drinks, watching the crowd.

"There's been a throng of eligible young women surrounding you all evening, Draco – I expect this is the first moment you've had to yourself...I understand if you'd like me to leave?"

"It's fine."

“See anyone you like?”

I snort, and turn to look at her. I’ve known Daphne since we were in the same year at Hogwarts together. She’s tall, has thick dark brown hair – currently swept up in a fancy updo – and impossibly sharp features. A widow’s peak at her forehead, high cheekbones, angular nose, a pronounced cupid’s bow on her lips, and a pointy chin. She’s really quite attractive, and would make a first-rate dominatrix, in my opinion.

She also knows how much I despise these kinds of events. That a fancy dress and jewels are not the way to my heart. I remember her expression the first time she came to my quarters and found me barefoot in a pair of joggers. Apparently she expected me to wear a suit and tie at all times, including invitations for casual sex.

“My sister is among them, you know.”

“Not you?” I ask.

“Oh Draco...” Daphne turns to look at me with an expression on her face I can’t quite figure out. Triumph maybe? “You know as well as I do that I’m damaged goods. Not at all appropriate for an arranged marriage.” She raises her eyebrows at this. “No, my loose morals have guaranteed I’ll get to pick my own husband...obviously someone lower down society’s pecking order, but at least it’ll be my choice.” No, that look wasn’t triumph. It was defiance.

“My sister, on the other hand....well, as soon as my conduct became known to my parents, they ensured Astoria wouldn’t have the same opportunity to sully herself. To ruin the family’s chance at an advantageous alliance.”

I cock an eyebrow in inquiry.

“A chastity charm,” Daphne explains.

“They still do those?”

“They were practically unheard of...until the delays brought about by the war made them come back in fashion.”

I shake my head. I’ve come across references to ‘chastity charms’ in my reading. They’re rather nasty pieces of dark magic, bearing a large resemblance to the mudblood curses placed on the books at the manor. Only in this case, the curse wards off sexual contact by anyone, no matter who they are or their blood status. In most cases they’re permanent, with an additional rite to add an exception for the witch’s husband.

It’s bloody barbaric. Eliminates any freedom of choice or self-determination.

I finish my drink and place it on the tray of a passing waiter.

“You know one of these fine young women is likely to be your future wife, Draco.” Daphne looks at me pointedly.

I nod, as I watch the orchestra returning to their seats, tuning their instruments and preparing to resume.

“For my part, I hope it’s my sister.”

I’ve got to admit, I’m a little surprised. My face must show it.

Daphne closes the space between us, and places her hand on my shoulder, saying, “Oh, I’m sure you’ll be an utter arsehole to any woman – that’s just who you are – but I also know you’d treat her well....Salazar knows, nobody else has.”

Then she walks away.

It’s late when I get back to my quarters, still heavily occluded and a little drunk.

I head straight to the bedroom, but find my bed empty and still perfectly made. She hasn’t been to bed at all. She’s been waiting up.

It was obvious that Granger absolutely hated me going to this event. She’d watched me get dressed, even helped with my cufflinks, commented how handsome I looked, and then gave me a very reticent peck on the cheek before I left. But the whole time, her face was pinched. She knows what it means for me to re-enter society. What it means for us.

I back out, and head to my study.

The first thing I see upon entering is an open bottle of wine and an empty glass on a side table, next to the sofa.

“Granger, are you...”

I stop mid-sentence when I see her, standing with a large open book in her arms, seemingly cross-referencing it with another book sitting open on the desk. She’s bending over as she compares the text in the two volumes.

And she’s only wearing one of my t-shirts.

I swallow hard.

She raises a finger, indicating she knows I’m here, but continues whatever it is she’s doing. I watch her bare behind, just peeking out from the hemline, with lustful eyes. I feel a very large twitch in my trousers.

I clear my throat, and come to stand alongside her, looking at the texts she’s examining so intently. They’re ancient runes. I really couldn’t give a fuck about ancient runes right now.

Not when my girl is standing next to me with her bare arse just asking me to fondle it.

“Granger?”

Her finger is still in the air, and a moment or two later she starts nodding her head in comprehension. She slams the book shut in her arms, puts it down on the desk, and looks up at me.

Her eyes are lidded – she’s either drunk or aroused. Maybe a little of both?

“How did it go?” she asks.

“As expected.” I place a hand on her thigh, running it up under the t-shirt to her waist, where I leave it. Leaning in and kissing her on the cheek, I continue, “What have you been up to?”

“Me? Hmm.” She looks around the room as if she can’t remember. “Well, Boots and I made dinner together, I had some wine...and then I got to thinking about how Spellman’s Syllabary got some of the symbols wrong when I’d been translating the runic copy of Beedle the Bard Dumbledore left me. I remembered you had a copy of the Elder Futharks, so I thought I would compare...”

She trails off, and runs her hands over the lapels of my robes.

“And you decided to do all this in my t-shirt?”

“Oh...no. I mean, most of the night I was feeling sorry for myself, thinking about you at the gala with all kinds of beautiful women throwing themselves at you...but then I had some wine – too much wine – and reminded myself that you were coming home to me.”

She continues playing with my lapels, straightening my cravat, before looking up at me and continuing, “That you’d be fucking me tonight. Not them.”

Gods, I love it when she swears.

She backs away from me, takes hold of my t-shirt hem and pulls it over her head, her curly hair bouncing around her beautiful bare shoulders once it’s released. She’s completely naked. Completely glorious. Completely mine.

“Granger, I fucking worship you.”

“How much?” she asks suggestively, eyebrows raised, as she reaches down and slides two fingers into her folds.

I don’t answer. I can’t. All the blood from my brain has rushed down to my cock.

I close the gap between us, grabbing a fistful of curls, and pull her into me roughly, her naked body against my overly dressed one. I kiss her desperately, my tongue running over her lips, delving into her mouth.

My hands busy themselves, making their way over her body, exploring it, caressing it. They skim over her freckled shoulders, and down her arms, all the way to her fingertips, where I intertwine them with my own, continuing to kiss her mouth, and then her neck.

I place her hands on my chest where she grabs onto my robes, so I can move my own to her waist and run them around to her lower back, scratching up over her shoulder blades, and back down to her hips. I bring them up her front to caress her breasts, and pause. Cupping each one, circling her areolas, and teasing her nipples with my thumbs. She moans into my mouth.

My hands resume their downward trajectory to her hips where I draw little circles with my thumbs, before moving back to grab her arse, to squeeze it, knead it. Until finally I bring them back around to the front, and insert one between her legs. Spread her lips apart, run my fingers through, and dip one into her slit.

“Fuck, Granger, you’re so wet.”

She pushes herself into my hand, swaying her hips and moaning with need into my mouth.

“Make me come, Draco. I’ve been thinking of you all night.”

I wrap one arm around her waist holding her close and steady, while I drag her desire forward and rub her clit with the other, running my fingers back to her slit and beyond, then forwards again.

She starts breathing deeply.

I move my hand. Reach behind her instead. “Ooh,” she gasps as I tease her arse, circling her rim with my finger. Her hands clench my robes, and she leans her forehead against my chest.

“You like that, don’t you?”

She nods, her lips clenched between her teeth.

Dirty mudblood bitch.

I gently insert my finger and feel her whole body tense, her grip on my robes getting tighter.

“This ok?” I ask.

“Uh huh,” she grunts. I slowly remove my finger, and then reinsert it. In and out. In and out. Slowly. Allowing her to get used to the feeling. To adjust. To stretch. After a few rounds, she loosens her grip, and starts panting.

“Hold on to my neck,” I instruct.

She abandons her grip on my robes, and wraps her arms around my neck, gives me a brief and hard kiss, saying “Okay,” when she’s steady.

I leave my hand behind her, but take my supporting arm away from her waist, caress her hip for a brief moment, and then move it in front and resume running my fingers over her beautiful cunt, and rubbing her clit.

It's like there's an explosion of sensation and her body convulses. She goes up on her toes and her hands find the hair at the back of my head, holding tight. Pulling hard.

"You alright?" I ask.

"Yes," she gasps, breathing deeply. "Don't stop," and she begins rocking her hips, slowly, setting a rhythm for me to follow with both hands, one on either side of her. Each one in a different hole. She whimpers. Pushes her face against me. Her breath hot, even through my robes and my suit.

I know she's getting close when her cunt starts clenching on my fingers. Her face is buried in my neck, when she chokes out, "Faster." I push my finger deeper into her arse, still pumping it in and out, and increase the intensity of my palm on her clit and the depth of my fingers in her slit. Both of my hands move rapidly, causing her whole body to spasm. She bears down on me, her hands scrabbling at my robes before going back to my hair, crying out, "Fuck, fuck. Oh Draco, fuck!" Then makes a keening noise I've never heard as she has one of the strongest orgasms I've ever witnessed, her whole body shaking with the intensity of it. She releases her iron grip on my hair – honestly, it felt like she was going to pull it out – and stands flat footed, her forehead resting on my chest, panting.

"Oh Draco," she breathes out, "that was....that was so incredibly intense."

She looks up at me, biting her lip. I lean over, kiss her forehead.

"I think I should go wash my hands," I say rather suddenly, and head to the water closet. Leaving Granger standing in the study, naked with her head in her hands, obviously contemplating the new way in which I just violated her, and what sort of person she is considering how much she enjoyed it.

When I get back to the study, she's gone. I spin on my heel, head back to the hallway and call out for her, "Granger?"

"In the kitchen," I hear her shout.

I make my way there, and find her back in my t-shirt, standing at the counter drinking a glass of water.

"You okay?"

"Mmhmm," she mumbles as she finishes her water. "Yes. It's just I really drank too much wine, and wanted to get some liquids into me."

I narrow my eyes, "You're not blaming the wine for just now, are you?"

She blushes and smiles sheepishly. "I'm tempted to say yes. But no, that wasn't the wine....I still can't believe you did that."

"I can't believe you let me," I smirk.

I remove my robes, throw them on a kitchen chair, and loosen my cravat. I'm still incredibly aroused, and watch Granger intently as she moves around in my t-shirt, the hemline lifting when she reaches into the sink to wash her glass.

"Come," Granger says, eyeing the very obvious bulge in my trousers. She grabs my hand pulling me down the hallway, her bare feet slapping, and my dragonhide shoes click clacking, on the marble flooring.

Granger brings me to the bedroom and has me sit on the edge of the bed. She stands between my legs, and while she unties my cravat, I run my hands under her shirt, all along the smooth warm skin on her back, her thighs, and her bottom. She moves on to unbuttoning my dress shirt, and I swear on Salazar's grave she's doing this slowly on purpose to kill me.

Buttons done, she pulls my hands off of her, and removes my cufflinks, very intentionally placing them on the dresser to ensure they don't get lost.

When she returns she removes my dress and under shirt, then runs her small, but deft, hands over my bare chest, tracing my scars with the tips of her fingers – it almost tickles she does it so softly – then following with soft kisses. She starts at my shoulders and makes her way down. When she gets to my stomach, she kneels down in front of me, tracing kisses from my navel to my waistline.

I sigh and lean back on my hands, as she unbuckles my belt, slowly slipping it out of the loops of my trousers then dropping it to the floor. Looking up at me mischievously, she places her hand on my erection, rubbing back and forth. I don't think I've ever been so hard. I bite my lower lip and start breathing deeper, my eyes glued to my girl between my legs. She unzips me, and I lift my hips so she can pull my pants and trousers down over my erection, then over my knees, and down my calves. She kneels on her feet, takes off my shoes – setting them aside – and finally removes the last of my clothing.

Granger traces her hands up my calves, along my thighs, and back again, definitely teasing me. I watch her with hooded eyes, and smile lazily.

Then she leans forward and kisses my upper thighs, before taking my cock in hand to run kisses along its length. She starts at the base, and when she gets to the end, she kisses the very tip, lasciviously licking off my precum, and then running her tongue from end to end, making me groan loudly.

She finally – *finally!* – takes my cock into her mouth, sucking it as deeply as she can take it. I grab a fistful of her curls, as she begins bobbing back and forth. “Oh that’s good,” I breathe. Entirely focused on how her tongue runs along the underside of my cock on every thrust. How deeply she takes me into her mouth.

She squeezes my thighs, and then holding on to the base of my cock with one hand, begins to lick and tease my tip again, eventually moving her other hand over to more forcefully rub and stroke me, before resuming her ministrations with her tongue and mouth.

I sigh as she takes a slight pause, tighten my grip on her curls. She looks up and I shake my head, saying, “Slow down, Granger. I don’t want to come just yet.”

I let go of Granger’s hair and get up, pulling her with me into a standing position. I take her in my arms and kiss her mouth deeply, my arms wrapped around her waist, and hers around my neck. She sucks on my lower lip, and lets it pop out of her mouth, making us both stop and smirk at each other, before we start kissing more fervently.

“Get into bed, Granger,” I say with a jerk of my head, indicating where I want her.

She crawls onto the bed on her hands and knees, her beautiful arse on display under my t-shirt.

“And take that damned thing off.”

She stops, still on her knees, turns to me, and pulls the t-shirt over her head. She takes my breath away. She’s curvier since she’s been at the manor – her breasts are a bit larger, her stomach, hips, and arse have all rounded out just a little, making her less angular. She looks healthy. Beautiful.

She tilts her head, “What are you looking at?”

“You.”

She blushes.

“Well stop it.”

“Never. I want to memorise every inch of you.”

“Draco...”

“Granger...” I crawl onto the bed next to her and playfully push her over, so she’s lying on her back in front of me. I kneel, sitting on my feet, and look at her once more, truly trying to burn every detail of her into my mind. My unspoken words – that what we have here will end – hang over us.

I snap out of it.

Really, I’m turning into a sentimental sap. What in Salazar’s name is wrong with me? There’s a naked woman in front of me waiting to be fucked.

I lean over her whole body, so small beneath mine, and kiss her again. Run my tongue down her neck to her collarbone, then to her nipples. I suck on one while I roll the other between my fingers, making them hard. I kiss the space between her breasts, then make my way down her stomach, planting kisses the whole way – lick her navel to make her laugh – then keep kissing my way down, over her mound, and finally between her legs. I lick and tease her clit, ensuring she's good and wet, then resume my kneeling position below her, between her legs.

I take her ankles and hitch her legs up over my shoulders. Her arse is in the air, and her cunt right in front of my hips. I reach over and grab a pillow. Place it underneath her, then rub my cock over her slit, line it up, and slowly push myself in. I moan in satisfaction, and Granger gasps at the depth and angle at which I enter her, pushing as far as I can go, rubbing the front of her inner walls with my length.

I start off slowly, adjusting her legs and my position as needed. Once we're both comfortable, and we've established a rhythm, I pump faster, and start caressing her clit.

“Oh gods, Granger...” I breathe out, revelling in the sensation and sight of her tight cunt surrounding my cock – it really is mesmerising to watch how she expands to welcome me inside her.

“There are no gods here, Draco,” she chokes out with a smirk, gasping each time I drive into her which, admittedly, I do a little harder and rougher after she parrots back my line.

“Oh!” she cries out.

“I’m almost there...” I choke out, and place my hands on her thighs to help pull myself even deeper on each thrust. She reaches down to rub her clit now I’ve abandoned it, temporarily causing me to lose my rhythm – fuck, it’s hot watching her touch herself.

Focus.

“Almost....” she grunts as she pushes against me, her walls clenching around my cock, which explodes into her as I come.

“Oh fuck...” I say, breathing deeply. I pull out, and gently remove her legs from my shoulders. Lie down next to her, pull her into my arms, and catch my breath.

Chapter 16

I walk into the interrogation room, my head down looking over the file of my next subject. Reviewing its most important points: Half-blood. Hufflepuff. Supplied the Order with medical supplies and potions ingredients. No direct involvement with the Order or its operations.

I close the door, and finally look up at who I'll be spending my afternoon with.

Susan Bones.

Huh. I vaguely remember her.

She looks...absolutely terrified. This is going to be easy.

I hate the easy ones.

They're no fun.

I sigh, and place her file on the table. Apart from two very uncomfortable chairs, it's the only furniture in the sparse room. I remove my robe, fold it with precision, and place it on the back of the chair. Then roll up my shirt sleeves, place my hands in my pockets, and stand between the table and the door.

It's all done very deliberately, especially for cases like this. Seeing my Dark Mark on one arm, my wand holster on the other, my knife strapped to my chest, combined with the silent treatment, creates an atmosphere of tense anticipation. Susan was terrified when I walked into the room, and I can tell she's about ready to shit herself now.

I look at her and begin, my voice bored, "Susan. How would you describe the Order of the Phoenix?"

She looks up at me, surprised, and I can see the wheels spinning as she thinks how to answer.

"It's not a trick question, Bones. Tell me how you would describe the Order."

She clears her throat, and meekly says, "They were a resistance."

"I'm sorry, what was that?" I lean forward slightly.

"They were a resistance movement," she says with more conviction.

"Wrong," and I actually tsk her. "The Order of the Phoenix was declared a terrorist group seven and a half years ago." I look at her pointedly. "Susan, did you know it's illegal to provide supplies to terrorist organisations?"

"I...I..But I..."

“It’s punishable by a maximum sentence of 50 years in Azkaban.”

Her eyes start to get watery, and she starts taking in short gasps of breath.

Gods, this is too easy.

“That’s the maximum, of course. The minimum sentence for trafficking with a terrorist group is somewhere around 2 years. Obviously, we would take your cooperation into account when determining your sentence. If you provide the names of all the people you met, or were in contact with, the locations you met them, and the dates you met, that would be a great help.” I pause, “To us, and especially to you.”

“But, but, I.I...c...c...can’t,” she stammers.

“You can’t? Or you won’t?”

“I...I can’t...I can’t remember all of those details.”

“Susan,” I pause for dramatic effect, and move forward. Not far, just to the table. “It’s amazing what you can remember with the right motivation. I can show you...”

She’s crying now.

“I’ll start by pulling out your fingernails.”

Sobbing.

“Then I’ll break your fingers.”

Big ugly sobs.

“From there, I’ll move on to cutting them off....and that’s just your fingers. We’ll just be getting started”

“P...p...p..please,” she manages, “D...D...Draco....”

“Did I say you could use my name, you fucking cunt?” I cut her off severely, leaning over the table. I don’t like my interrogation subjects getting overly familiar with me. Of thinking just because we went to Hogwarts together, that they know me.

“N...n...n...no....P...p...please...I h...h...h...have a family.”

“Yes, I know...three children,” I say, her eyes bulging out of her head, “Two boys and a girl. You wouldn’t want me to meet them, would you? Look into their blood status?”

“N...n...no!” she gets out. “I...I...I’ll t...t...talk. Tell y...y...you ever...everything I know.”

“Of course you will, Susan,” I take her file off the table, before continuing, “my colleague will be in shortly to get the details from you. *All of them*. Should I hear you’re not cooperating, I *will* come back to see you. Maybe pay a visit to your children.”

She nods. Her face is a mess – all blotchy, with tears and mucus streaming down it.

It's fucking pathetic.

I take my robe, drape it over my arm, and leave the interrogation room, handing Bone's file to my associate.

"She's all yours," I say.

The upside of such an easy and boring interrogation, is that I'm officially done for the day. I head home, and find Granger in the kitchen, busily chopping, stewing, and doing I don't know what. It all looks rather muggle-ish to me.

"You're home early," she says over her shoulder.

I come and stand behind her, pull her mane aside so I can kiss her neck, and look over her shoulder, "What are you making?" I ask.

"Beef stew."

"You know you don't have to cook, right? The house elves would be more than happy to cook for us."

"I know. But it gives me something to do. The planning, the list-making, the preparation and cooking...It keeps me busy," she pauses, then turns around, "Would you like a drink?"

"I would. Thanks."

"Do you want firewhiskey or wine? If you have wine, I'll join you."

"Wine, then."

Granger busies herself fetching the glasses, and a bottle of red. She uses her wand to open and pour, then gets back to her chopping.

I take my glass off the counter, sit at the kitchen table, and take a sip, considering. "You know, Granger, you'd better be careful. I could really get used to coming home to a beautiful woman in my kitchen, making dinner, pouring me a drink," I smirk.

"Yes," she says, an edge to her voice, "if only I was barefoot and pregnant."

I put my glass down, frowning.

"Granger, what the fuck are you talking about?"

She sighs. “Oh, it’s just a reference to an old muggle stereotype that a woman’s place was in the home, not working, and bearing as many children as possible.”

“Why barefoot?” I ask. I mean, besides the obvious comfort.

“I think the idea is that if you’re barefoot, you’re at home. Not going out.”

“Fucking muggles,” I sneer.

“In their defence,” she says, “even muggles consider it an old-fashioned and out-of-date way of thinking.”

“Don’t defend them, Granger, the fact they ever thought it at all is deplorable.”

She gives me an exasperated look and gets back to her chopping.

After a few minutes of silence Granger slides some of her chopped vegetables into the pot waiting on the stove – *why the fuck is she chopping by hand?* – turns to me, and says, “You know, I’ve been meaning to ask you...” she trails off.

I watch as she hesitates. This can’t be good.

“What’s that?” I ask.

“How did you get out of your cell? At the safe house.”

Fuck.

I’ve been wondering when she’d finally ask about that.

I drain my glass, and hold it out. She refills it for me.

“Wandless magic,” I reply.

She frowns. Leans back on the counter.

“But there were wards to prevent the use of wandless magic. I know. I helped set them up.”

I nod.

“And they worked, Granger. For a time.”

“Wards don’t just wear off, Draco.”

She’s irritated. Upset her wards didn’t work. She crosses her arms, getting defensive.

“I never said they wore off.”

“Then how?”

Fucking swot. It’s killing her she doesn’t know.

I smirk, “I found a back door.”

“You...you what?” She uncrosses her arms, and leans forward, “How?”

“With my occlumency. Found my source of magic, and tore down the walls preventing me from using it.”

She stands there, staring at me. Takes a sip of her wine, and shakes her head.

“That’s....”

Is she lost for words?

Hermione fucking Granger is lost for words?

“...that’s incredible, Draco. I don’t know that anyone has ever done that before.”

I shrug. Drink more wine.

“But wandless magic aside – how did you know when to make your escape? How did you know the safe house would be mostly empty that night?”

I shake my head. She may be the brightest witch of her age, but she’s so fucking stupid sometimes.

“What!?” she asks, seeing the expression on my face.

“How do you think I knew, Granger? Someone told me.”

“Someone from the Order *told* you?” She sounds absolutely scandalised. I can’t help but chuckle.

“Who?” she asks, maybe a little louder than is strictly necessary.

“Do you really want me to rat them out, Granger? Will you feel better knowing who was a traitor among you?”

She pauses at that. Thinking. Wanders over to stand next to me.

“Yes,” she finally says, pointing at me with her wine glass, her other hand on her hip. “Who helped you?”

I look at her for a little while, enjoying the look on her face. I take another slow sip of wine before responding.

“Finch-Fletchley.”

“Justin?” she says, her eyes wide. But then a strange understanding comes over her features.

“Well...” she continues, “He did think you were rather fit.”

“Wait, what?”

Now I’m the one who’s confused.

“He found you attractive, Draco.”

“Finch-Fletchley found *me* attractive?”

“Yes, Justin is gay.”

Huh. That...makes sense. “So he *was* looking at my cock in the shower!” I exclaim.

Granger almost snorts her wine.

“I expect he was. It is rather...”

“Large, yeah, I’ve heard.”

“But I still don’t understand why he’d help you. I mean, it’s one thing to find you good looking. It’s an entirely different thing to help you escape. *Especially* considering your views about blood purity, and the fact he’s a muggle born.”

I reach up and pull one of her curls playfully. “Yeah, I can’t imagine how *any* mudblood could possibly want to associate with someone like me.”

She looks at me. Again with the exasperation.

I continue, “*Because* he’s a mudblood, Granger. I offered him a ridiculous amount of gold so he could disappear.” Understanding dawns on her face, and I go on, “Which, coincidentally, is the same thing I’ve been offering you. Only in your case, I don’t want anything in return.”

Apparently I’m engaged.

Who’s the lucky girl?

My parents insist I join them for a late dinner tonight.

Considering they’ve chosen my future wife without so much as consulting me, I feel like it might be fucking warranted.

My mood is...tense, to say the least. I mean, I've been expecting this. I knew it would happen. I just didn't think it would happen so quickly. Never realised my parents were so anxious to see me settled so soon after the war.

It's like another nail in the coffin of my relationship with Granger, because as much as she's willing to put up with hiding out in my quarters and my murderous pureblood arseholery, I don't think she's willing to share me.

I don't want her to, either.

She deserves better.

As evening approaches I keep Granger company while she has a bite to eat, then we head to the study to remove the curses from a few more books. She dives right into one on ancient runes, and I slump next to her on the sofa, trying to distract her.

I'm randy.

The mere idea of some other woman — my soon to be wife — has me wanting Granger even more.

I lean into her, kissing her neck and running my tongue along her jawline. My hand explores her stomach before moving down to her thigh, running along its length, and trying to get between her legs. The little cunt keeps them crossed and tries to ignore me, swatting me away. Eventually I run out of patience and grab her book, tossing it onto the floor.

"Draco!" she admonishes me. "That book is easily several hundred years old. You can't just throw it on the floor."

"I just did."

I take her hand and kiss her knuckles.

"Pay attention to me," I demand. It *might* come out more as a whinge.

She sighs.

"But you're meeting your parents soon."

"Fuck my parents."

I reach over and pull her onto my lap, running my hands greedily over her thighs, circling her waist, up her arms and over her shoulders, to the back of her neck, where I tangle them in her hair, pulling her down for a kiss.

I slip my hand into her pants, reaching for her warm centre.

She rolls her eyes at me, but doesn't protest, shimmying back a bit to undo my trousers and pull out my hardening cock, running her hand up and down the length of it.

I moan with satisfaction.

“Sit on my cock, Granger,” I instruct.

Or beg.

What’s the difference?

“You’re incorrigible,” she says, but slips off my lap, slides off her trousers and knickers, then climbs back onto the sofa, straddling me. She inches forward as I line us up, then lowers her hips.

“Fuck, Granger, you’re so tight.”

She wraps her arms around my neck, and starts moving herself up and down, leaning in to kiss me, and bites my lower lip.

“Faster,” I breathe, and help guide her hips as she rocks them on top of me.

I don’t last long – I really only have time for a quickie anyway. My legs tense, and I come quickly, breathing deeply, and resting my head on her shoulder. Granger remains seated on top of me, hugging me, rubbing my back.

I can’t fucking believe I have to leave her to go see my parents now. I don’t want to go.

Her hands make their way up to my neck, and she runs them through my hair.

She’s comforting me.

I don’t deserve it.

I sigh, lean back from her shoulder, kissing her cheek on my way, and lean against the back of the sofa.

“I should go,” I say, starting to build my walls. I make them high and thick. Impenetrable. I can feel myself becoming distant. Vacant.

She nods, and climbs off my lap.

I put myself away, get up off the sofa, tuck in my shirt, and tell Granger not to wait up.

I find my parents in the lounge. I walk in, hands in my pockets, and stand just inside the doorway, waiting to be acknowledged.

They're deep in conversation, sitting next to one another on the sofa, aperitifs in hand. My mother eventually looks up and says, "Ah Draco, there you are," as a mere statement of fact. There isn't the slightest hint of emotion in her voice or expression on her face. My father looks up as she interrupts their conversation with a frown, gets up, and reaches out to help my mother do the same.

"Shall we head to the dining room?" he suggests curtly.

"Yes, let's get this over with," I say tightly.

"Now, now, Draco. There's no need to be rude. Your mother and I have scarcely seen you since you came back from your imprisonment. It's as if you never came back at all."

I don't answer, but turn on my heel and head back out into the hallway, my dragonhide shoes echoing on the marble floors, making my way to the dining room. I can hear my parents behind me, but don't wait. Instead, I head straight to the table, take a seat, and immediately pour myself a glass of wine from the bottle already set out and breathing.

I take several very large gulps.

"Well, Draco, it would seem you've lost your manners," my mother scolds me, as my father holds her chair and tucks her into the table. "Thank you, dear," she says over her shoulder, as he moves beside her to sit down, and sighs audibly.

I reach back for the bottle, and pour my parents each a glass. Satisfied?

"So tell us, Draco," my father begins slowly, "whatever have you been up to in those quarters of yours? I daresay the wards you've placed on it are quite impressive."

I look at him sharply, "Have you tried to enter?"

"No, no. I would never dream of invading your privacy. I just....poked around. Checked to see what sort of protections you had. If memory serves your guest has yet to leave the premises. You must have someone very precious hidden away in there, to protect them so well."

He knows damn well my guest is still here. Had she left, he would have felt Granger pass through the manor's wards again.

"I never have been much for sharing. What's your point, Father?"

"No point at all," he replies. "Just making conversation." As he takes a sip of wine, two house-elves enter the room and begin serving dinner. He continues, "Your mother believes it must be a woman. A concubine. Maybe the spoils of war?" His eyes narrow at me.

"And what if it is," I ask. "Would it make any difference?"

"Not in the slightest," my father replies. "You could have a mistress for every night of the week. So long as you do your duty to your wife. To your family. And produce an heir."

“And to whom will I be doing my duty, exactly.”

My father gets a gleam in his eye. He loves being able to lord this over me. To have selected my wife, without me having a fucking clue who it is.

“Ah,” my mother responds. “The Greengrass girl.”

“Daphne?” I ask, despite knowing it can’t possibly be her.

“Oh no.” My mother says almost too quickly. “No no. Daphne Greengrass is....not appropriate.” She wipes at her mouth with her napkin, and says in a hushed voice, “Too loose.”

I roll my eyes.

“She was too loose with me, Mother.”

“You, Draco?”

“Yes. We fucked. Regularly. In this very house.”

“Oh well, such behaviour is most unbecoming of the future Lady Malfoy. The younger Greengrass girl, though. Astoria. She has an impeccable reputation. Beautiful girl. Lovely manners. She will be your wife.”

I lean back in my chair.

Astoria.

Have I ever even spoken to her? I must have danced with her at the gala. What is she? Two... three years younger than me? All I really know about her is that she’s Daphne’s younger sister, and cursed to remain a virgin until her future husband takes her. Until I take her.

Fucking hell.

“Have you anything to say, Draco?” my mother asks.

“When?”

“When?” she repeats.

“When will the wedding take place?”

My father cuts in, here, “It was agreed that with the war dragging on for so long, we were all due for some happiness. The engagement will be comparatively short. Less than a year. Perhaps as little as six months.”

Six months? I could be married in six fucking months?

“What’s the determining factor?”

“It is entirely dependent upon when the Greengrasses are able to make the proper arrangements for the wedding.”

“Alright, then.”

I stand up, throw my napkin on my untouched plate.

“I think we’re done here.”

And I head back to my quarters.

To Granger.

She’s in bed.

I quietly make my way into the ensuite, get myself ready, then attempt to slip silently under the sheets.

As soon as I’m in, Granger turns around, props her head on her hand, looking at me with a blotchy face and bleary eyes.

“So?” she asks.

“Astoria Greengrass,” I reply.

She nods, then nudges herself under my arm, settling her head on my shoulder. She slings her leg over mine, effectively hugging the entire length of my body.

Chapter 17

It's been a particularly satisfying day of work. I *may* have taken some of my frustrations with life, my parents, and my impending marriage out on the poor sod I was interrogating.

Fortunately, he was only of moderate importance, so I was authorised to dispatch of him. I mean, once I was done questioning him, there really wasn't much left. A scourge was all that was needed to clean up the mess.

When I get home Granger is waiting for me. She looks....anxious? Conflicted? I can't place it.

"What's wrong?" I ask as I enter the kitchen, grabbing an apple and taking a large bite.

I'm famished.

It doesn't matter what's wrong. She takes one look at me, at the blood splattering my robes, and the dark magic rolling off of me, and tells me it can wait. To go clean myself up.

I nod, finish my apple, and head to the shower.

I spend longer than usual just standing under the hot water. As if it'll wash away the dark magic as easily as it washed away the blood.

Once done, I head straight to the closet, and throw on a t-shirt and joggers. When I come out, Granger is waiting for me. She's sitting on the bed and wrinkles her nose in disgust, "Draco, what did you *do* today? It's like I can taste the dark magic emanating from you."

"You don't want to know."

"No, I guess you're right. I don't." She pauses, before continuing, "It's just that...I mean....do you...."

She hesitates. Visibly struggling to say the words.

"Out with it, Granger."

She huffs, and twists her hands in her lap.

"Do you...do you *enjoy* what you do? Or do you do it because you *have* to? For Voldemort."

Fuck.

This feels like a trap.

I decide to be a complete fucking idiot and be honest.

"I enjoy it."

Her face falls. “How? Why?”

I sigh. Sit down on the bed next to her and take her hand, weaving her fingers through mine.

“Because I’m not a good person, Granger. My parents raised me to be a monster, and that’s exactly what I am. An overly ambitious, sadistic, arrogant blood purist, who — if I’m being honest — is addicted to the feeling of dark magic coursing through my veins.

“When you say you can smell or taste the dark magic on me, it means I’m feeling fucking fantastic. That’s who I am.”

She squeezes my hand tightly.

“Frankly, I don’t know what you see in me.”

She ignores my last statement and asks, “You said your parents raised you to be like this...do you think...do you think you’d still be the same if they hadn’t? If you’d had kinder, more nurturing and loving parents?”

“Fuck if I know...why are you asking?”

She gets that anxious look on her face again. Bites her lower lip. I can feel her hand shaking in mine.

“Granger. What the fuck is going on?”

She places our intertwined hands on her lap, and strokes my knuckles with her free hand.

“There are big debates among muggle psychologists as to whether a child’s behaviour and predispositions are due to nature or nurture...and I guess I’m just trying to get some sense of what...” she pauses and brushes her hair out of her face, “...of what our child might be like.”

I stare at her.

“Draco, I’m pregnant.”

Well fuck me.

“Are you going to say something?” She’s still holding my hand. Tightly.

“Give me a moment, Granger. I’m processing.”

I’m a little shocked, but at the same time? I’m really not. Surprised might be more accurate. Honestly, I should have expected this. We’ve been fucking like rabbits since she got to the manor, and we haven’t exactly been diligent with the contraceptive charms. Have we even used one at all since we got here? Fuck, I don’t know.

I rub my free hand through my hair.

“How far along are you?” I ask, focusing on the practical.

“Quite a ways, actually. I’m embarrassed I didn’t realise sooner, it’s just I have almost no concept of time since I’ve been at the manor. Besides, before coming here, half the time my cycle was thrown off due to stress or amenorrhea, I didn’t realise I’d missed a few monthlies.”

“A few? How many?”

“I’m just finishing my first trimester.”

Fuck.

“So...there was obviously no morning sickness or anything that would have tipped you off...”

“No...No nausea, no indigestion, nothing. I’ve felt great. Fantastic, actually.”

“I mean, you look great. I thought it was because you were finally eating properly. No more Order missions or skipping meals.”

“Me too.”

“Aren’t magical pregnancies supposed to be awful? *Especially* in the first trimester?”

She considers this, “That was my impression too. Though morning sickness is quite common among muggles as well, some don’t have it at all. My mother, for instance, always claimed she’d never felt healthier than when she was pregnant with me. Maybe being muggle born is an advantage in this case...maybe I’m having a muggle pregnancy, not a magical one....” she trails off.

“You do realise you can’t have the baby here. Now you *have* to go.”

It’s a little blunt, I admit. It’s also true.

She nods her head. A tear rolls down her cheek, and she lets go of my hand, turns and faces me at the bottom of the bed.

“Are you upset?” she asks.

“No. Not at all.” I pause, thinking. “Maybe a little sad.”

“Sad? Why?”

“Because Granger. I think you’re going to be an amazing mum. And if anyone can overcome whatever shitty nature I’m sure to have passed on to the little bean, it’s you. You’ll nurture the hell out of this kid, and ensure he’s a well-adjusted, morally sound, all around good guy. But I won’t get to see it. I won’t get to meet this amazing kid you’re going to raise. I won’t ever get to meet my boy.”

“What makes you think it’ll be a boy?”

"History, Granger... Malfoy's have had boys for centuries. I think someone cast some sort of charm hundreds of years ago to always ensure an heir. And ridiculously blonde hair. You know, to prove paternity."

"So....we're having a son, then?" she asks.

"I think it's safe to say so. With very blonde hair."

She gets a wistful look in her eyes, as her hands instinctively go to her stomach.

Fucking fuck, I hate this. I hate that I won't be able to do this with her. I hate that we won't get to be a family together. I sigh and I pull her onto my lap, place my hand on Granger's belly, and hug my little family while I still can.

I get an invitation to dinner from Astoria Greengrass a few days later, suggesting we start getting to know one another.

Seeing as we're engaged, I can't really refuse her – as much as I'd like to. I suggest lunch instead, so I can still spend my evening with Granger. I want to savour every moment I can with her. We're on borrowed time now.

Astoria is already at the restaurant when I arrive. It's crowded, loud and hot. I already hate it. Though I've left my Death Eater robes behind, I'm otherwise dressed for work, which includes a suit jacket. I take it off, and place it on the back of my chair before sitting down.

"Draco," she greets me with a smile, eyeing my knife holster on my chest.

"Astoria."

"I take it you are coming from work?"

"I am."

"Did you find the restaurant alright?"

"I did."

"It *is* rather crowded in here, is it not?"

"It *is*."

She half chuckles, and looks down at the table, straightening the cutlery already laid out. Then looks up and says, "Daphne told me you could be a man of few words. She was not exaggerating."

“She wasn’t,” I smirk.

“Alright...I think I can play this game.”

I raise an eyebrow.

Let the games begin.

“Let me start with something easy. School...you played quidditch for the house team?”

“I did.”

“Seeker?”

I nod.

“And do you still follow the sport?”

“I do.”

“Daphne says you excelled at potions. Was that your favourite class?”

“It was.”

“Do you still like to brew?”

“Time permitting.”

“Time permitting,” she repeats. “That is the greatest number of syllables I have managed to get out of you so far.” She takes a breadstick out of the basket on the table, and bites the end off, watching me the entire time she chews.

I watch her back.

She’s not unattractive. On the contrary, she’s rather beautiful. Long wavy chestnut hair cascading about halfway down her back. Fair skin. Intense green eyes – so green I wonder if she hasn’t glamoured them. She looks a lot like her sister, only softer. Less dominatrix and more....doll-like. She’s impeccably dressed, of course.

What strikes me most, though, is the way she speaks. Her enunciation is so very precise – every letter of every word is pronounced. And she doesn’t use any contractions, which seems to emphasise her over-articulation.

It’s slightly annoying.

The waiter comes and takes our orders. I make certain to provide equally short responses to him, as well. “Firewhiskey” and “Steak, rare.”

Astoria resumes her line of questioning, “What about work? Father says you were an integral part of Lord Voldemort’s efforts to eliminate the Order, and now to eradicate its remnants.”

“I am.”

“Am I to understand you are...” she pauses, looks at my knife holster again, “...active in the field?”

“Correct.”

“And by active, I would assume you apprehend these criminals?”

“I do.”

“Interrogate them?”

“Yes.”

“Torture them?”

She’s so matter of fact about it. Not at all shocked. It’s....interesting. A Death Eater’s daughter.

“Yes.”

“Both magical and muggle methods?”

“Yes.”

“Which do you prefer?”

“Muggle.”

“Why?”

“It’s...” Fuck, she’s got me. I can’t answer this in two words or less, “It’s more hands-on.”

She nods, a slight smile on her lips. The bitch knows she got me.

“And dark magic?”

“My favourite.”

Our meals arrive, interrupting her little interrogation. We eat in silence for a few minutes, before she launches into a brief, but very precise summary of herself, all of it perfectly articulated. She tells me about her interests (she likes to paint and play piano), her charity focus (healthcare and education), and her general political views (a staunch supporter of Voldemort, of course). She’s a perfect pureblood aristocrat.

We finish our meals, I pay the bill, then look at my watch.

“I expect you must return to work.”

“I do.”

“Before you go, Draco. I wanted to at least acknowledge that this whole...” she waves her hand here, gesturing between the two of us, “....situation is rather sudden for me, too. I understand any hesitations you may be having. I am having them as well. Though our parents are eager for the engagement to be short, I think we should nevertheless proceed with caution.”

“Caution?” I ask with a frown.

“Yes. Caution with each other. I have no desire to marry a stranger. But regardless of how well we know each other, we *will* be married. And soon. So let us try to make the best of a situation neither of us had any say in. Let us get to know one another, without feeling the need to adhere to some deadline. Should we marry, and still feel as strangers, I am...okay with continuing to get to know you, before we fulfil our duties as husband and wife.”

I nod. It’s somewhat of a relief to know she isn’t thrilled about this situation either. At least we have that in common.

“Agreed.”

She nods. Smiles.

We both stand, and make our way out of the restaurant together. I notice she’s rather tall. Taller than her sister, anyway. A giantess compared to Granger.

Once outside, I turn to face her. Run my hand through my hair again.

“Goodbye Astoria.”

“Goodbye Draco.”

Back at work I can’t concentrate. I couldn’t give a fuck where my current assignment might be hiding out. He can stay there for all I care. I need to leave. After spending time with Astoria, I feel an intense desire to see Granger.

I go home.

She’s sitting on the sofa in my study, a pile of newspapers beside her, a glass of water and a plate of sliced apples on the side table.

She looks up when I come in, and smiles.

“I wasn’t expecting to see you for another couple of hours.”

“I wasn’t getting anything accomplished, so decided to give up and come home.”

“Good.”

“Good?”

“Yes,” she says playfully. “You not accomplishing anything means somebody, somewhere might get an extra day to escape, or keep their fingers or limbs, or life.”

She’s not wrong.

I sit down next to her, and give her a good long kiss. Then lean over and kiss her belly whispering “Hello Bean.”

Granger runs her hands through my hair as I do so.

“For what it’s worth, I think you’d make a good father.”

I look up at her, my face filled with scepticism.

“It’s common for people who had....less than ideal childhoods...”

“Granger,” I interrupt, “I’m not sure I’d describe my childhood as ‘less than ideal.’ It was a fucking shit show.”

She continues, ignoring my comment, “...people who had shitty childhoods, then, are often scared to have children of their own, lest history should repeat itself. But when they finally do, they can turn out to be the best of parents, because they know what *not* to do. They know how important all the things they were lacking as children are, and so make sure their children have them in ample supply. Things like love, safety, and positive reinforcement.....”

She trails off.

This mudblood and her muggle psychological references. Always trying to see the best in everyone. In every situation.

“I love you,” I tell her suddenly, and pull her close to me, tucking her in under my arm.

She wraps her arm around my middle, and rests her head on my chest, that blasted hair of hers tickling my chin.

“I love you, too. So much.”

We sit like that for a while. I don’t know what she’s thinking, but I can’t help wondering — *again* — why this good, kind, and beautiful witch is even here with me. It’s like she’s reading my thoughts when she suddenly pipes up again, “You’re not all bad, you know.”

“I’m not?”

“No,” she looks up at me, “Because you love. That means there’s good inside of you, too. And that’s what I see when I look at you. Not the man raised to be a monster. I see the man who, against all odds, can love, forgive, and hope.”

“Hope?”

“Everything you want for me. For our son. That shows you have hope, too.”

Well shit, when she puts it that way.

I clear my throat, gesture at the pile of papers, and change the subject. Kind of.

“Any ideas where you want to go?”

“I’m thinking America, as you’d suggested all those months ago.”

I nod, “It’s still a good idea. Though MACUSA doesn’t want to involve themselves politically or militarily, they are firmly against us ideologically, against everything Voldemort’s government is trying to achieve.”

I brush her hair away from where it’s tickling my neck, then start playing with her curls.

“America is a big place. Any preferences as to where? Have you at least narrowed it down to a coast?”

“East, I think....Ilvermorny is in Massachusetts. I think I’d at least like to be in the same time zone as our son when he goes to school.”

Already thinking so far ahead.

“Plus,” she continues, “there are some excellent muggle universities in that state. I might like to pursue my own education at some point, too.”

“What would you study?”

“Maybe law...”

“Back to your childhood dreams of becoming a barrister?”

She pushes off my chest, and looks at me. Eyes wide.

“You remember that?”

“Of course I do. I remember everything you tell me.”

I pull her back down to my chest. I feel like I need to hold her.

It’s pathetic.

We're lying in bed later that night, spooning. I'm running my hand up and down Granger's leg — honestly, she's so fucking short, I can caress her whole bloody leg in this position — when she asks me,

"Do you have any preferences for a name?"

I pause momentarily, before resuming my stroking, moving my hand to her waist, and around to her belly.

"You want my opinion on a name?"

I'm....surprised. Touched, maybe?

"Of course," she turns onto her back so she can look at me. "It's your child. And if you're right and it's a boy, I want to choose a name with you."

"And if I'm wrong, and it's a girl?"

"Then I'll just have to fly by the seat of my pants and come up with something," she smiles.

"Hmm."

"Should we name him after a star or constellation, like you? Or maybe after someone important or special?"

"Who's so special you want to name our son after them?"

"Well, Harry was pretty special and important to me," she says with a glint in her eye.

"Don't you dare name my child after that fuckwit."

She laughs.

"A star or constellation name it is, then. Any ideas?"

"I've always liked Scorpius. I can't think of anyone else in the Black family with it."

"Scorpius?" she repeats and makes a face.

"What's wrong with Scorpius?"

"I don't know that I want to name our child after a scorpion. It's almost as bad as..."

"Naming them after a dragon?" I interrupt.

"Exactly," she smirks. "I think we can find a name that's strong, but not so...so...."

"Dark?" I finish for her.

She nods.

We both lay there, thinking for a while. Trying to remember our astronomy classes.

“What about Orion — the hunter?” she asks.

“Nah, there are already far too many of them in my family tree.”

“Well, I don’t expect our son will make it onto your family tree, but okay...isn’t Rigel a star within the Orion constellation? It’s got a nice ring to it.”

“It does...” I reply, “...but isn’t Rigel the hunter’s foot? Do we really want to name our son after a foot?”

“No. I guess not.” She turns onto her side, facing me, running her hand up and down my arm before continuing, “We don’t have to be fancy or obscure. What about something simple, like Leo? The lion is strong and courageous...there’s the obvious Gryffindor connection, of course, but it’s also a constellation most people know. And it has muggle connections that aren’t astrological. It’s short for Leonardo, a very famous muggle from the Renaissance. He was a painter, scientist, inventor, sculptor, you name it, he could do it. He used to even write his cursive backwards. He was brilliant.”

“Leo Granger,” I say. “I like it.”

“Leo Draconis Granger,” she amends.

“You sure you want to include such an overt reference to me?”

“I am. You’re his father.”

“Then it’s perfect.”

I lean over and kiss her, grab her curls, then run my hand down the length of her body. I hook my arm around her backside, and pull her right up against me.

I cradle her head in my hand, kiss her forehead, her eyes, her cheeks, and her lips, then rub my nose against hers. I move my attention lower, caressing her backside, then come around front to insinuate myself between her legs, checking that she’s wet enough to accommodate me.

She lifts her leg, and hooks it over my hip, and sighs contentedly as I slide my length inside of her.

Everything is slow, and deliberate. My arms are wrapped around her, and my thrusts are punctuated by kisses and caresses, and whispers of sweet nothings.

“I love you.”

“You’re perfect.”

“You’re beautiful.”

“You’re mine.”

“I’ll love you forever.”

“I’ll miss you so much.”

For probably the first time ever, we’re not fucking. Granger and I are making love. We’re looking into each other’s eyes and pouring everything we’re feeling into each other — all the love, desperation, hope, and sadness.

Granger’s breathing starts to hitch, and she changes the angle of her hips, searching for more friction. I reach down between us to rub her clitoris with my fingers, and increase the pace of my own hips.

“Oh, Draco,” she breathes into my mouth. She kisses me deeply, before breaking off and panting more rapidly.

When she comes, it’s not the desperate and passionate climax she normally has. It, too, is drawn out and more subdued. Instead of crying out, she holds me tight and kisses me deeply, as her whole body shudders and her inner walls clench around my cock. She maintains her tight grip, looking me directly in the eyes, until a few thrusts later I tense up and release into her with a gasp.

Afterwards we lay together with our legs intertwined and Granger’s head nuzzled against my chest – tucked perfectly under my chin – and fall asleep.

Chapter 18

I found them.

I tore and ripped through innumerable minds, performed a shit ton of obliviations, and spent a fucking fortune in bribes and hush money, but I fucking found them.

Another small fortune, and I'm in possession of a round-trip black market international portkey to somewhere near Boston, Massachusetts.

I tell Granger I'm working late, am careful not to get too bloody during the day, then portkey to America after work.

I fucking hate travelling by portkey.

I arrive in a field, then immediately apparate to the address I've been given. It's an apparition point in downtown Boston, from which I have yet more directions to get to my final destination.

It's an interesting walk.

Boston is...nothing like London. Or anywhere I'm used to. Everything looks shiny and new. The roads are too wide, and the automobiles far too numerous. The streets are crowded with filthy muggles, all talking with their irritating American accents. I don't like it here. I walk as quickly as I can, following the directions I've been given and amazingly (thankfully) find the local Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

Fuck.

I can't believe I'm actually fucking here.

He'd better be in there.

I walk in, put on my most charming smile, and go up to the witch behind the reception desk. She looks me up and down, appraising me, and smiles back. I'm off to a good start. Before long, I'm being ushered through a series of hallways and, finally, to an open area office with about eight desks. The witch asks me to wait at the door as she goes in, then disappears into another door off the back of the room.

I build up my walls, preparing for the worst.

The witch returns, asks me to wait a few minutes, and gestures to a bank of seats.

I thank her, and sit.

Waiting.

I look at my watch. I clasp my hands. I cross my legs. I fidget with my cufflinks. I uncross my legs. I sigh. I fucking hate waiting.

And then, after about ten minutes, there he is.

The fucking weasel comes walking out the door...he looks largely the same. Maybe a little healthier, better fed. Somehow his hair is less garish. Maybe the sun in America has bleached it? His eyebrows shoot up in surprise as he sees me.

I stand up, waiting for him to reach me.

Could he walk any fucking slower?

He finally arrives with that slow loping gait and, surely for appearances sake only, shakes my hand.

“Malfoy,” he says in a slightly strangled voice, squeezing my hand hard, “How did you get back here? Nobody is permitted in the offices.”

“How do you think, Weasel? I imperiused the witch behind the front desk.”

“Bloody hell, Malfoy. You can’t just go around imperius’ing people.”

“And yet that’s exactly what I did. Strange how that works, isn’t it?”

The weasel runs his hand through his hair, looking around shiftily.

“Nobody knows you’re a Death Eater, do they?”

“I wore sleeves, Weasel. I think I’m ok.”

He huffs. “What are you even doing here? How did you get here?”

“I took a portkey. I....”

“A portkey?” he interrupts me. “I didn’t think you could portkey to America from anywhere within the regime.”

I sigh.

“You can’t. Not legally.”

“You’re here on an *illegal* portkey? Bloody hell, Malfoy, what are you playing at?”

He’s looking around nervously. Honestly, I hope he never goes undercover for his job. The man has no poker face.

“I need to talk to you. About Granger.”

At the mention of Granger’s name his whole demeanour changes. Instead of looking nervous and extremely inconvenienced, he suddenly looks anxious. Starved for information.

“Is Hermione okay?”

“She is. But we need to talk. Privately.”

He nods. Gestures for me to wait, and goes to speak with one of his colleagues on the other side of the office.

I wait impatiently, adjusting my cufflinks and my sleeves. When he returns, he says, “Come on,” and walks out the door.

I follow him, backtracking through all of the hallways, past reception – the witch behind the desk smiles at me – and finally out the front door. Once on the street, he walks a few doors down and heads into a café. Looking at me, he asks, “Do you want anything?”

“I don’t have any muggle money.”

“I figured. That’s why I’m asking if you want something.”

“Sure. Earl Grey. Black.”

He nods, and orders.

We stand awkwardly – *so fucking awkwardly* – waiting until our order is ready. The café is crowded. There are muggles everywhere and it feels like they’re all looking at me. I can’t figure out if it’s my imagination or not.

I look at the weasel, and he bloody smirks at me, clearly aware of my discomfort.

“You do stand out,” he chuckles.

Fuck. I straighten my tie and give some muggle bitch who’s staring at me a dirty look. She has the decency to look abashed, and turns away.

Once our beverages are ready, we grab our to-go cups and head back out, down the block, around a corner, and to a park, where Weasley sits on a bench under a tree. I sit on the opposite side of it.

“So....Hermione is okay?” he asks again.

“She’s fine.”

He sighs in relief. Rubs his hand over his face, before continuing, “She disappeared right after you escaped...how the bloody hell did you do that, anyway?”

He looks at me curiously.

“Does it matter?”

“Well, I mean, I guess not, it’s just the wards on your cell were placed there by McGonagall, and reinforced by Hermione and a number of other top witches and wizards...it’d have to be a pretty impressive bit of magic to circumvent them, is all.”

I tip my head. When I don’t say anything, he goes on, “Anyway, nobody knew what had happened to her. We wanted to look, but...well, the Burrow was attacked, my father...” he pauses, swallows, “...didn’t make it, the rest of my family was on the run. We couldn’t linger around. We couldn’t look for her. We had to get out of the country as soon as we had the opportunity.”

He looks at me, as if he’s hoping I’ll understand why they had to abandon Granger and save themselves.

“It was...the best decision you could have made, Weasley.” I look at him, elaborate, “After Granger, you’re undesirables number two through eight? Nine? I can’t keep track how many of you there are.”

He nods. Somewhat relieved.

“Did you really stick McGonagall’s body to the front of the house?” he asks.

“I did.”

“Bloody hell, Malfoy.”

He shakes his head and finishes the last of his coffee, contemplating my cruelty. Or maybe he’s just thinking he needs another cup. Fuck if I know what goes on inside the cocksucker’s head.

“So where is she?” he asks.

“Granger’s been with me. I’ve been hiding her.”

“Bloody fucking hell. Where?”

“My private quarters in Malfoy Manor – it was...the safest place I could think of.”

“The wards on those old manors are strong.”

“They are. And I added more to my quarters. Blood wards. Granger’s and mine only. Nobody else can get in.”

“And she agreed to blood wards?” He looks incredulous, “Those are dark magic.”

“I didn’t give her a choice, Weasel.”

“If you hurt her, Ferret...”

“I assure you, she’s unharmed.”

He looks at me. Nods. He knows I wouldn’t hurt her. He knows why.

“Does anyone know she’s with you?”

“No one.”

“You’re sure?”

“Even the Dark Lord can’t get past my occlumency. I’m sure.”

“So why are you here, then?”

Why indeed.

I sigh, and run my hand over my face.

“First, to check you actually *were* here... I spent a lot of gold to find you, you know.” I look at him, “And second, because...” Fuck. This is harder than I thought it would be, “...because Granger can’t stay with me. She needs to get out. Out of Voldemort’s reach.” I look at him, pointedly, “She always referred to you lot as her family. I was hoping I could send her home.”

The weasel looks...relieved. He actually smiles.

“It’s not even a question, Malfoy...of course she can come home...well, to our *new* home, that is. My mother will be thrilled to see her. Everyone will.”

I nod. Hesitate. “There is...something else.”

Weasley frowns, worry creasing his features, and waits for me to go on. I’m not sure I can. I drink one, two, three gulps of tea. I look around the park we’re sitting in. Noting the quantity of muggles surrounding us, walking dogs, drinking coffee, eating, talking on little rectangular devices held up to their ears....I look back at him and scratch at the stubble on my neck.

“Granger is pregnant.”

His face goes slightly purple and gets this odd look to it. Like he doesn’t know how to process this new information. That Granger is carrying my child. I elaborate, “She’s into her second trimester. She’s doing very well, in fact she looks and feels great.” I pause, “The baby is the *only* reason I was finally able to convince her to leave.”

The weasel puts his coffee cup down on the bench and rubs his hands over his face multiple times. He sighs repeatedly.

“That’s ok. It’s fine.” It sounds like he’s trying to convince himself. “She belongs with her family. She belongs with us. We’ll help and support her no matter what. Including the baby.”

I close my eyes and sigh in relief, my whole body relaxing, knowing Granger will be okay.

“You really do love her, don’t you?” he asks.

I look at him. “I do.”

“She’ll be ok. The baby will be okay. We’ll take care of them both,” he assures me.

“Thank you.”

By the time I get home Granger is fast asleep. I crawl into bed as stealthily as I can so as not to disturb her.

The next morning I’m up early. I’m not even sure I slept. I try to be patient, but can’t. I’m on edge, and I need Granger.

I reach around to caress her breasts, circling her areolas and playing with her nipples as I nudge her backside with my erection.

She randomly swats her hand in my general direction. “I’m sleeping,” she says, irritated.

I kiss her neck, and run my hand over her stomach.

“Go away,” she moans sleepily, and buries her face in her pillow.

I continue my assault on her neck, kissing and licking the sensitive skin behind her ear, and nipping at her shoulder. I run my hand over her smooth skin wherever I can touch it – her breasts, her stomach, her hip, thigh, and calf.

She lets out a little moan of pleasure.

Gotcha.

My hand makes its way to her mound of curly hair, and she shifts the angle of her hips, getting half on her back and opens her legs for me. My fingers go in first, sliding through her soft folds, dipping into her, and back up again to her clit. I rub back and forth, pinching it after every few strokes, as I take a nipple in my mouth, and suck, circling it with my tongue.

“Oh, Draco...” she breathes out somewhat sleepily.

I release her nipple from my mouth, and kiss along her jawline, then catch her mouth with my own, pushing my tongue into it, as I shift my body on top of hers, and line myself up with her slit.

“Ready, Granger?” I ask.

She nods, looking a little more awake now and wraps her legs around me, pulling me down. I sink into her and sigh. She feels so fucking good.

I start moving slowly and deliberately, pulling almost all the way out, then pushing back in.

“You’re so fucking perfect.”

She blushes and turns her head to the side, allowing me to nuzzle her neck, and kiss my way from just below her ear and across her cheek. I reach down between us, and start massaging her clit, moving to the same rhythm as my hips.

“Oh Draco,” she sighs. “You know just how to touch me...”

When her hips start bucking of their own accord I increase the pace of my own and of my fingers.

“Oh, oh,” she pants each time I pound into her, my breath becoming laboured.

“Tell me what you want, Granger.”

“I want you as deep as you can go.”

She grabs her legs on either side of me, holding her knees up, and opening herself wider. I place my hands on either side of her head to steady myself, adjust the angle of my hips and thrust into her. Grinding myself against her pelvis, rubbing against her clit as much as possible. Eliciting groans of pleasure from the both of us.

Her knees start to squeeze my sides, and I know she’s close.

“Harder,” she begs. I put more of my weight onto her, pushing against that desirous clit of hers, filling her up completely. She cries out, “Oh, yes,” and I feel her walls clenching around my cock.

I keep up the pace as she rides her climax to its finish.

Next we focus on getting me off. Granger wraps her legs around me and holds on to my shoulders, kissing and licking my neck.

“Bite me,” I order.

She runs her teeth over my shoulder and bites down hard, right above my collarbone. “Fuck, Granger.” I keep thrusting into her, panting. “Do it again.” She moves her lips along my skin, and bites down again closer to my shoulder, breaking my skin.

I moan in pleasure and come.

Later we're both sitting at the kitchen table having tea and fresh scones for breakfast, courtesy of the house elves. I put my cup down, my hand shaking.

"I have something to tell you, Granger."

I take her hand, and caress her knuckles with my thumb.

My voice and hands are shaky. I promised myself not to occlude for this conversation, which means I'm a total fucking mess.

And she notices.

"What is it, Draco? Is everything okay?"

Get a grip, for fuck's sake.

"I...I wasn't at work late last night. I lied to you."

She pulls her hand away and puts it in her lap. "Where were you?" Her tone is sharp. Accusing.

I sigh and rub my hand through my hair. As soon as I tell her, it'll be real. It'll happen. And soon. Fuck.

I should have kept my mouth shut.

"I took an international portkey. To Boston."

"Boston? I don't understand." She's shaking her head, looking at me, perplexed.

"I found them, Granger. For you. The Weasley's are living in a small community a few hours outside of the city."

Her eyes go wide.

"I spoke to your fuckwit best friend."

"*You spoke to Ron?*" She sounds...incredulous. Wistful. Hopeful.

I want to fucking die.

I nod, and she takes my hand in both of hers.

"He's an auror in the city. Most of them are living in some kind of communal family living arrangement until they all get settled. I expect it's rather crowded." I pause, and look down at our hands. "He says you're welcome to join them anytime. Whenever you're ready. They're your family. They'll take care of you..." I trail off.

"Does he know about the baby?" There's uncertainty in the question. Worry.

"He does. They'll take you both in. They'll take care of you and....and our baby."

Emphasis on *our*.

"Draco....I...I can't believe you did that." Relief.

"I did it for you, Granger. You need your family. Especially with a baby on the way."

"I don't know what to say....it's so..."

"Real, Granger. It makes you leaving real. All that's left is to choose a date."

She nods in silence, then stands up and comes to sit on my lap, hugging me.

"Thank you," she whispers into my necks I wrap my arms around her and hold on tightly.

She's got a bump.

Granger officially has a baby bump, and I can't help thinking how fucking amazing it is that there's an actual human being growing in there. A baby that *we* made.

Also. Is it strange I find it so fucking sexy?

I can't help myself. I'm at her like a dog in heat.

I meet Astoria for lunch about once a week.

She realised after her third declined dinner invitation that my evenings are reserved for someone else. It doesn't seem to bother her.

We're at what's become our usual place. It's a little out of the way, quiet, not crowded, and has great food.

We are, much to my surprise, actually getting to know one another. At least we are now that I'm speaking to her in full sentences. I waited until our fifth lunch date for that. Since then, the conversation flows fairly easily between us.

We have a fair amount in common. Besides being pureblood elitists with Death Eater fathers, that is. We're both big readers. We both like potions. She has an interest in the dark arts, though it's purely academic. And most surprising of all, she loves quidditch. I'd completely forgotten, owing to some rather large distractions in sixth year, that she'd tried out for the house team.

We're finishing up our meals when Astoria mentions, almost in passing, "I had lunch with your mother earlier this week."

"Oh?"

This can't be good.

"She mentioned that she and your father hardly see you. That you mostly keep to your quarters."

"That sounds...about right..." I hesitate. "I don't get on particularly well with my parents. I find it makes life easier to just...avoid them."

She nods in understanding before continuing, "Your mother seemed to imply someone is living in your quarters with you," she pauses, finishing the last of her wine. "I presume that someone is the reason we only meet for lunch?"

My fucking mother, and her fucking big mouth.

I rub my hand over my face, and look at the woman across the table from me. There's no judgement or emotion in anything she's said. She just seems to be gathering information. Figuring out where she stands.

I sigh, finish my firewhiskey in one gulp and say, "She is. But only for a little while longer."

"Oh?"

Nodding, I add, "The situation isn't fair to either of you. She's...."

I stop abruptly. The words won't come out of my mouth. I don't know if I can say it. I have to.

Fucking pussy.

I take a deep breath and finish, “...she’s leaving. She won’t be a factor in our marriage.”

Astoria takes a sip of water, watching me carefully.

“She means a lot to you.”

I nod. I don’t think I can talk anymore. I’ve got an actual fucking lump in my throat.

Fucking Granger.

Astoria reaches across the table and very hesitantly places her hand on mine. I flinch, but don’t pull away.

“Thank you for sharing that with me, Draco. It helps me better understand your misgivings about our engagement. I am relieved, actually.”

I don’t trust my voice. Instead I just wait for her to explain.

“Besides your frustration with the arrangement in general — which I share — I thought perhaps you were disappointed with me. But I see now, I hope at least, that you would have been disappointed with anyone...”

I nod slightly.

She pulls her hand away, and continues, “I take it she was not a suitable choice for a wife?”

I almost laugh at that, “Not even remotely.”

She nods, and drops the subject.

When I get back to work, I beg Theo to trade me his lower priority leads for my higher ones. I need cases where nobody cares what happens to the subjects.

I want to hunt and kill.

Violently.

Anything to distract from the hurt and panic I’m feeling at Granger’s impending departure.

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

I start preparing for Granger's escape, in a practical sense, at least.

I acquire another untraceable black market portkey to Boston — only this time it's one-way.

And I set up a very circuitous set of transfers to move galleons out of my vaults, into a series of other companies and investments serving as intermediaries, and ultimately into a fresh new vault in America, in Granger's name. I fucking hope she uses the name we picked, because I do the same for Leo. I may not get to be in their lives, but I can at least make sure they're never wanting for anything.

Neither of us wants to make the decision when Granger will leave.

Eventually we choose a milestone. She'll stay until her second trimester is over, or at the very least until the baby moves. Feeling him move inside her belly is the closest I'll get to knowing our son.

Until then, my life is one of extremes.

By day, I'm a monster. I pursue my prey with relentless determination. And when I find them, I tear, rip, and sever their flesh. I engulf myself in dark magic, and create new dark curses of my own. Curses that inflict as much pain and agony as possible. Nothing so simple as death. Death is easy. Immediate. I want my victims to feel everything. To pray for death to come faster. I revel in it. I'm addicted to inflicting pain, and the feeling of darkness running through my veins.

When I come home at night, I immediately take a shower. Try to physically wash away the evidence of my day. And while the water does wash away the blood, I know I still reek of dark magic when I come out. Granger has either become accustomed to it, or has decided to ignore it for the sake of maintaining peace between us these last few weeks.

With Granger, I'm the lover. I dote on her. Do everything I can to ensure she's comfortable, happy, satisfied. I whisper sweet nothings in her ear, and imagine what amazing things she'll accomplish in America. What her and Leo's life will be like.

I omit the Weasley's from all of these musings. They'll get my mudblood soon enough, I don't need those fuckers encroaching on my dreams for Granger.

I am constantly aroused when I'm at home. I'm like a trained dog. I walk into my quarters, take my shower, and immediately get a hard on. Granger's growing belly doesn't help. She looks like a fucking Venus, and I want to penetrate every orifice of her body. Watch her face when she's feeling me pleasure her. Listen to those marvellous sounds she makes. Feel her body react to the touch of my fingers, my tongue, my cock.

It's been a particularly good day at work. I've perfected a new curse, and it's magnificent. It is so bloody gruesome, that when I demonstrated it to my superiors, they called Voldemort himself to come and see a repeat performance. He was impressed. Very impressed. Asked me to teach it to him on the spot.

I was honoured. It takes a lot to impress a psychopath like him, and I seem to be doing it repeatedly.

What does that make me?

In Voldemort's regime it's grounds for a promotion, which, after he successfully performed the curse smiling with sadistic delight, he gave me on the spot.

He's placed me on an equal level with my father. Which means I will undoubtedly be surpassing the bastard soon. In rank, as well as in responsibility and cruelty. Which is saying something – the man sets the bar very high.

I feel elated. Triumphant.

And when I get home? I also feel extremely hard.

I take a quick shower, and go looking for Granger. The dark magic is engulfing me. I can feel it snaking through my veins, coiling around my organs, and embedding itself within my soul. I feel like I'm being forged anew, and it feels so fucking good. So addictive. So satisfying. The only thing that comes even close to comparing is being with Granger – and the thought of being with her while the dark is so strong within me has me buzzing with anticipation.

She senses it as soon as I find her in the kitchen, standing at the counter making soup, or stew or something or other. All I really register is that there's a pot on the stove. I walk up behind her to kiss and caress her neck, and her body shifts as she feels the dark magic that's like a cloud surrounding us, as well as my heightened desire pressing up against her. I run a hand down her back and around her front, asking quietly in her ear, "I hope whatever you're making can wait?"

She tilts her head back, allowing me better access to caress the front of her throat with the tips of my fingers, and replies, "Give me two minutes, then I can put it to simmer."

"Two minutes, Granger," I say.

But I don't actually leave her alone. I can't. I want her too much.

Instead, I stand behind her and irritate her.

I pull her hair out of the way, and kiss the back of her neck. I caress her buttocks, and run my hands up her shirt, rubbing her back, unable to resist moving around to her front, to fondle her breasts, and her amazing and increasingly large belly.

"Draco!" she says without the slightest hint of actual anger.

She knows how desperate I am for her these days. And despite how much she disapproves of dark magic, she knows that when it's coursing through my veins, it amplifies my desire. Personally, I think since she's reconciled herself to the darkness within me, she's decided to take full advantage of it – I've been making her come like there's no tomorrow.

"I'm serious," she says, not sounding serious at all, "I need to finish this up, or the whole pot will be ruined. Two minutes is all I'm asking."

"I don't think I can wait two minutes," I inform her.

"Then go get yourself started," she says exasperatedly. "I'll join you in the study as soon as I can."

I smirk. My swotty little mudblood has shown a distinct preference for getting off while surrounded by books.

"Okay, then." I turn on my heel and head out of the kitchen, calling over my shoulder, "Two minutes!"

I was being completely honest when I said I couldn't wait. I can't. I sit down on the sofa, lean back and pull my cock out of my joggers, running my hands up and down my length. I moan, close my eyes, and imagine Granger's hands instead of my own. I run my thumb around the tip, then over the top of my cock, rubbing harder, then back down to the base, holding myself firmly, and pumping my foreskin slowly, deliberately.

I feel a set of hands on my thighs, and my eyes shoot open. Granger is lowering herself between my knees, smirking as she says, "You really weren't kidding."

"I really wasn't," I breathe deeply, removing my hand from my cock.

Her gentle hands take my place, her fingers curling around my girth, as she caresses up and down, slowly increasing the amount of pressure and speed she uses. Oh gods, she's deliberately going slow to torment me. I'm so desperate to come.

"Suck my cock," I plead.

She leans forward, moves my length against my stomach, and runs her tongue all the way up the underside, from the very base to the tip. I moan, "In your fucking mouth, Granger."

She gives me yet another smirk, as she thoroughly licks my length a few more times, circling my tip with her tongue, before finally taking my throbbing cock into her wet, warm and inviting mouth.

“Nghhh,” I moan. I’m incapable of speech. Entirely focused on the feel of my girl’s mouth surrounding me. As she sucks on my cock, and rubs her tongue along the length of it at the same time. A little touch of her teeth here and there. “Oh fuck, go faster Granger,” I choke out as I grab fistfuls of her hair, and my hips start moving of their own accord, searching for greater depths into her throat.

Granger adjusts her position and tempo to match the movements I can’t help from making. Grasping my cock at the base, she takes me in as deeply as she can, bobbing her head up and down. I’m going to come.

I stop thrusting, stretch my legs out, tense and let out a long moan as I release down Granger’s throat.

“Oh fuck,” I say, breathing deeply.

I’m still clutching Granger’s curls, as I lean forward and pull her face to mine, kissing her deeply, passionately, my tongue entering into her mouth. It’s a wet kiss. I stray and kiss along her jawline, and up to just under her ear. Then lick down her neck, to her shoulder, and bite, not entirely gently.

She makes a sharp intake of breath, and though I just came not two minutes ago, I swear I feel my cock twitch.

I move off the couch, and join Granger on the floor, kneeling, holding her against me. I kiss her forehead, her temples, her cheeks, her nose, and her mouth. I run my hands over her, my thumbs travelling over the sides of her breasts, and then down to her hem and up under her shirt. I rub my hands up and down her back, before fondling her growing stomach between us. Then dip down its underside to move my hands lower, rubbing her centre.

She sighs, wraps her arm around my neck and leans into my hand.

“Take your clothes off, Granger,” I order.

I help pull her shirt over her head, and release her increasingly large breasts from her bra. She hooks her thumbs into her waistline, and pulls her lounge pants and knickers down to her knees at the same time, then lowers onto her behind to remove them completely.

“Get on all fours,” I tell her next, watching her intently.

She turns away from me, gets on her hands and knees, then lowers herself down onto her elbows, placing her head on her forearms.

I reach over to the sofa, get a cushion, and hold it out for her. Granger raises her head so I can place it underneath, then gives me a coy little smile, saying “Thank you.”

I resume my place behind her. Where she's presenting herself to me like the filthy little mudblood she is. Her beautiful wet cunt waiting for me. Beckoning to me.

I lean forward, inhaling her irresistible musky scent. Then run my tongue from her clit, back over her slit — gods it's wet — and back even further to her arse hole. She lets out a little gasp, and I do it again. This time pressing harder on and flicking her clit, lingering and teasing my tongue into her slit, and then back to her arse, where I very deliberately run my tongue over it, teasing it. She moans and her whole body shudders.

I move my mouth away, and replace it with my fingers, following the same path from front to back, then lingering. Granger pushes herself back against my fingers.

"You like that, don't you, you dirty bitch?" I ask.

"Yes," she breathes out.

"Yes what?" I rub my thumb around her rim, before gently inserting it into her arse.

She grunts out, "I like it."

"Tell me what you like," I insist as I slowly, gently, start moving my thumb in and out.

She cries out, breathing unevenly. "I...I..."

"What do you like, Granger?" I pause, waiting.

She's moving her hips back, trying to get me going again. I wait. "I like your finger in my bum," she says meekly. Obviously mortified by her admission.

I smile and resume my ministrations with my thumb, pushing it in and out, and running it around the rim of her arse. Then I run my index and middle fingers from my other hand through her wet folds towards her clit, assaulting her from both ends, with both of my hands.

She mewls in pleasure, her body twisting and bucking as it seeks the best angle, the greatest amount of friction and depth, as I finger fuck both of her holes. Gods, she's a filthy little cunt. I'm completely hard again. I need to be inside her.

I'm pretty sure she's loose enough.

"I'm going to fuck you up the arse, Granger," I inform her.

"Okay, yes..." she pants, pushing herself back against me.

I pull down my pants, and run my cock along her slit, sending shivers through her. I reach down and gather her desire to spread over my length, lubricating it.

"Tell me if you want to stop."

I insert my thumb again, moving it this way and that, ensuring she's good and loosened up, then rub the tip of my cock over her arse, and slowly push in, just a little bit, testing.

“Is that okay?” I ask.

“Oh gods, yes, Draco,” she moans.

Well okay, then. I experimentally push in deeper, still going slowly, not wanting to hurt or rush her. Granger takes the reins, and pushes herself back, enveloping my cock inside of her.

We both groan audibly. Fucking fuck. It’s so tight. Tighter than her cunt. It feels fucking incredible.

I start moving my hips, back and forth, still going slowly. Still a little unsure.

“It’s okay, Draco,” she reassures me between pants, “It feels so good. You’re not hurting me. Go faster.”

Unable to speak, I nod, even though she can’t see me, and start thrusting faster. Sweet fucking Salazar, I can’t believe I’m fucking Hermione Granger up the arse.

She’s letting out an almost constant mewl as I move my cock in and out. I want to push her over the edge. Hear her scream. I reach around, find her dripping wet slit, and insert my fingers. “Nghhh,” she cries, lifting her head up off the pillow, back up on all fours, then I start pumping my fingers in time with my cock, the palm of my hand rubbing her clit.

“Oh, oh, oh” she cries, louder each time.

“Tell me what you want, Granger.”

She grunts, pushing herself back onto my cock forcefully, then leaning forward into my hand.

“I want you,” she says, out of breath. “I’m going to come, I want you to come with me.” She’s moving erratically, I can barely keep up.

I do my best and steady her hips with my free hand, then go as deep as I can, grunting as I feel my orgasm coming, my legs getting tense.

“Almost there, Granger.”

She cries out loudly, pushing and bucking, her head thrown back in ecstasy, her curls spread out over her back and tumbling over her shoulders. Her core muscles clench tightly on my fingers and her whole body shakes as she climaxes.

I pull my fingers out of her cunt, and keep thrusting behind her, chasing my own climax into her deliciously tight little arse. Oh gods. I reach forward, grab a fistful of curls, pulling her head back and pump faster and rougher a few more times, then slow myself, tense as a bowstring, and spill into her, grunting with pleasure.

I untangle my fingers from her hair. Carefully extricate my cock. She lays her head back down on the pillow, panting, her arse still in the air.

I run my hands over her back, her buttocks, her thighs, caressing her as she catches her breath. I pull her off her knees, and onto her side onto the floor with me. I spoon her, and continue running my hands up and down her whole body, over her calves, up her thighs, onto her belly, and then fondle her breasts, teasing her nipples between my fingers.

She moans in pleasure, and turns onto her back to look at me.

Still breathing deeply she looks deep into my eyes, still clouded with dark magic and desire. She angles her body towards me, cups my face with her hand and says, “You’re mine, Draco Malfoy.”

“And you’re mine, Hermione Granger,” I reply, nuzzling my face in the crook of her neck, kissing it, and whispering over and over again,

“I love you.”

“You’re perfect.”

“You’re beautiful.”

“You’re mine.”

“I’ll love you forever.”

“I’ll miss you so much.”

We’re about two weeks away from Granger completing her second trimester. It’s late, and we’re lounging in bed after I had Granger riding me like a muggle cowgirl.

She’s sitting propped up on a few pillows drinking a glass of water and reading her favourite book, while I have my head on her increasingly smaller lap, facing her belly, and – if you can fucking believe it – I’m talking to the baby inside. According to Granger and the muggle baby books I got her, the baby can hear us, and she wants it to know my voice for some bloody reason I can’t comprehend.

I won’t ever meet it.

But I’m humouring her. My head is in her lap, facing her belly as I gently caress it and tell the baby inside how awful I was to its mum back in school. From calling her names, to cursing her teeth, and – oh gods, what if the baby inherits her original teeth? – I keep that worry to myself and instead describe how, in our third year, his mummy punched me in the face.

And that’s when I feel it.

A bump.

“Granger? Did you feel that?”

I look up over her belly to find her already staring at me, a look of wonder on her face.

“I felt it!”

We both place our hands on her stomach, waiting.

Nothing.

“Keep talking,” she prompts.

“Right, umm....so your mum and I ran in very different circles in school. She was a Gryffindor — which means she’s very brave and courageous, and always willing to stand up for others and do the right thing. Whereas I was a Slytherin — ambitious, resourceful, a little sly and always ready to stand up for myself,” I smirk at the comparison.

There’s another definite bump.

“We both had a pretty hard time at school — though for very different reasons. I was trying to save myself. Your mum was trying to save the whole wizarding world.”

Bump, bump, bump.

“I hate to break it to you, though. As strong and courageous as she is? Your mum failed. The good guys don’t always win.”

Bump.

“But that’s ok, Little Bean, because even though your old man is one of the very worst of the bad guys, I won’t let anything happen to your mum. I’ll keep her out of danger until she can get the two of you to safety.”

As I feel another bump Granger places her hand over mine. I look up and see there are tears streaming down her face.

“Granger, what’s wrong?” I ask.

She lets out a strangled sob, “I don’t want to leave you, Draco.”

“Granger,” I move my head off her lap, sit up and move next to her, pulling her into a hug. Kissing the top of her head, “We’ve discussed this over and over. It’s for the best.”

“Is it really?”

“Yes,” I reply emphatically. “It is absolutely the best and only option. You’re going to go be safe in America with your family. Have the baby. Lead an amazing, fulfilling, and – most

importantly –*free* life. No need to worry about bloody fucking Death Eaters carving your blood status into your skin, or trying to kill you because they don’t think you deserve magic.”

“But how can the best option be one in which we never see each other again? In which you never meet your son?”

I sigh. If I’m being completely honest? I’m having a hard time convincing myself it’s for the best, too.

“Look, Granger. I can’t imagine we live in a world that will let Voldemort continue to wreak havoc and terror forever. One day, reason will prevail, and the Dark Lord will be overthrown.” I brush her hair aside, and kiss her temple, “When that happens – if I survive it – I will most definitely end up in Azkaban. It won’t be ideal, but fuck Granger – we started our relationship with me behind bars – I can meet and get to know my son then. *If* you still want him to know me, that is. His sociopathic, dark magic wielding, war criminal, Death Eater dad.”

She doesn’t answer me – she’s trying too hard to hold back her tears – but nods and hugs me tighter.

Tomorrow’s the day.

We can’t put it off any longer – we’ve hit our milestones, and we don’t dare go past the point at which it’ll no longer be safe for her to portkey.

I have...mixed feelings.

Of course the rational part of me is relieved. For all the reasons I’ve been repeating to Granger over and over again. It’s for the best. Of that I have no doubt.

But the less rational side of me can’t accept that Granger – *my* Granger – is leaving forever. That I’ll never see her again. Never hold her again. Never kiss her again. Never hear her laugh, or hear her cry out in pleasure again.

Add the baby I’ll never get to meet?

It’s fucking breaking me.

As much as I hate to do it, I’m occluding. Just enough to keep it together. Granger sees me doing it, but doesn’t comment. I’d wager if she wasn’t so shit at occlumency, she’d be doing it too.

We spend our last day together quietly.

Granger gets her little beaded bag with the extension charm in order. She hasn't got much to add to it, apart from some clothes, and a few books. I gift her the volumes on runes from my study that she likes so much. She tries to protest, claiming I can't possibly give her such old and valuable books. I tell her I can't think of anyone who might put them to better use, and insist she take them.

I tell her about the vaults I set up for her and Leo. She's rendered speechless for a full two minutes when I tell her how many galleons are waiting for her. She protests that too, but I tell her it's too late. It's done. She's just going to have to accept that she won't ever have to work a day in her life, if that's what she wants (we both know it's not).

We don't eat much. Neither of us has an appetite.

We touch a lot.

Lots of hugs, snuggles, kisses, caresses, and holding hands.

When we go to bed, we don't even fuck. We just hold each other, feel the baby move in her belly, and tell each other everything's going to be ok.

I'm not sure either of us really sleeps, but when the rising sun sets the room aglow with its warm rays of light, I kiss Granger on the neck, and run my hands over her from top to bottom, memorising every inch of her.

She turns into me, caresses my cheek with the back of her hand, and we make love for the last time.

It's bittersweet, and full of emotion. And when it's over, we cling to each other again, before finally dragging ourselves out of bed.

We take turns showering, get dressed, and go through the motions of breakfast.

We decide that Granger will portkey from outside the manor. It's a little risky, but she says she needs to go through the act of physically removing herself from the manor. To feel like she's actually leaving the rooms that have served as her hideout these last months. To leave me. To move on to her new future.

I don't argue. I understand her need for closure.

I mean, didn't I kill everyone and then hang Minerva McGonagall's body outside the safe house when I finally escaped? I get it.

I apparate her to just inside the manor's wards, pull her through, and then wrap her in my arms again and bring her to an open clearing in the Forest of Dean. She says it's a place that has associations with her parents, as well as her fuckwit friends, and now it'll also have one with me.

I pull out the portkey, a marble carefully wrapped in a handkerchief, and give it to her.

"Are you ready?" I ask.

“No.”

“Me either,” I admit.

She grabs my arm, looking slightly panicked, saying, “Draco? Do you regret....this? Us?” She gestures between us.

I take her in my arms, holding her tightly. “No,” I tell her, my voice full of conviction. “Not one second of it, Granger. My whole life was scripted from the start – everything – my friends, my Hogwarts house, my allegiances, a pureblood marriage and another baby to repeat the whole process with. Then you came along and threw a book at me, and I got to go off-script for a while. Thank you for that.”

I push the hair out of her face, before I go on, “But now it’s time for you to go be free, and for me to go back to my scripted life.”

“But what about you? Are *you* free?”

“No. I’ve never been free, Granger. I was born into this role, and I’ll die in it.”

I lean in and kiss her fiercely. Then step back, and repeat, “Are you ready?”

“Yes,” she says nodding, the wind blowing her glorious curls. Then she lets the handkerchief fall open, touches the marble with her bare hand, and is gone.

Chapter End Notes

So this was originally the end of the story. That was it. No HEA. Draco gets Hermione to safety, and he goes back to his shitty scripted life.

Buuuut....I couldn't leave it at that. I was too invested in these two.

The epilogues are up next!

Epilogue 1

Chapter Notes

So I feel like this first epilogue may need to come with a little warning – nothing dire – just a little preparation for those of you who don't like Draco with anyone but Hermione. Because this instalment is all about Draco and Astoria. And it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone, but he *will* fuck his wife (he needs an heir, right?).

It's short lived. Our star-crossed lovers will make their way back to each other. Hang tight.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

After Granger leaves I pour all my energy into work.

If I was merciless in my endeavours before, I'm downright inhuman now. Already part of the elite squad hunting down Order members and sympathisers, our mandate ultimately grows to include anyone who opposes Lord Voldemort.

Unless you're an adept occlumens, and I thank Salazar daily that I am, no one is safe.

We're given permission to dip into people's minds at random. Spot checking them for potentially treasonous thoughts.

If we find any, we're authorised to question and, if nothing of immediate state importance is found, to execute by any means we see fit. While some members of the team prefer the killing curse, I opt for far more gruesome and hands-on methods. I slice my subjects open, and pull them apart limb from limb.

Once I've had my fill of blood and internal organs, I curse them with the darkest of spells to finish them off. Blood boils or turns to metal, skin peels or melts off, and organs liquify.

It's a beautiful thing to behold.

We simultaneously serve as law enforcement, judiciary, and – in my case – bloody executioners.

The power is intoxicating.

I'm consumed by dark magic. With Granger gone, I no longer have any reason to restrain myself.

My wedding to Astoria occurs three months after Granger leaves – right about the time the baby should arrive.

It is, on all fronts, completely over the top.

Our parents are thrilled and the guests awed.

Everyone thinks our obscure addendum to the handfasting ceremony is romantic – involving an exchange of blood between Astoria and I. Nobody catches on it's old blood magic, and is being done to create an exception for me on the chastity curse placed on my bride nine years ago.

I fucking hate every second of it.

Fortunately it's only one day.

Our wedding announcement, along with a photo of the new bride and groom makes the international papers. It's the first big society wedding to occur since the end of the war.

Astoria and I do not set up home in my quarters – those will always remind me of Granger – or in Malfoy Manor at all, for that matter. The manor is still very much the current Lady Malfoy's domain and, truth be told, I want to keep as far away from my parents as possible.

Instead, we take up residence at the Malfoy estate in Wales. It's been long neglected and requires substantial updates. This not only gives Astoria a very large project to focus her efforts on, but allows her to make it truly ours.

She turns out to be an exceptional partner.

I'm not particularly surprised she knows how to manage a household or play the role of a perfect pureblood wife – she was raised for it, after all. What does surprise me is how open I am to it.

To her.

While I miss Granger every single day, and the mere thought of my son makes it hard to breathe, they're both locked up behind so many fucking layers of walls, that I've turned them into a distant ache. One I carry with me at all times, but that doesn't consume me.

With Astoria, at least, everything is out in the open.

She helps take off my bloody robes at night and asks about work. There's no need to conceal anything. She's completely aware that I torture and kill people for a living. That I use dark magic, and that I like how it makes me feel. She doesn't flinch at anything I tell her, no matter how detailed I am.

She accepts and supports me in all of it, and celebrates my triumphs with me. Apparently that's what the wives of Death Eaters do.

It feels natural. Easy.

We have a singular purpose – to support the Dark Lord, and ensure my survival and success among the piranhas he calls his followers. Plotting together how to climb higher into Voldemort's inner circle.

We spend our first few months of marriage just being partners – allowing ourselves to get to know each other without Granger's shadow hanging over us or distracting me. We do everything an aristocratic newlywed couple is supposed to do. We go to banquets, charity events and openings. We go to dinners, quidditch matches, and the theatre. We go shopping for new furniture, or pillaging the family vaults for old furniture. We even go out just to go out, perusing bookstores and antique shops. Lingering over tea in streetside cafés. Going for walks in the park.

We do not have sex.

Not at first, anyway.

True to her word, Astoria wants to know me before fulfilling her duties as my wife. Having the chastity curse placed on her so long ago, she's never known the touch of... anyone, really. It's all new and overwhelming for her. So we start off small. We hold hands. We cuddle on the sofa. We kiss. And I caress her – chastely – familiarising her to my touch. To the feel of my hands.

But it's the dark arts – or more so their effects on me – that pushes us beyond just partners.

We're almost four months into our marriage when I get back from work, the dark magic rolling off me. While I've arrived home aroused before, it's the first time since we've been married that I'm completely fucking hard.

I walk into the parlour and find Astoria leaning over a table, poring over plans to re-landscape the back gardens. She's wearing a dress that rides up in the back as she leans over, highlighting her long legs, showing the backs of her thighs. I want to run my hands up them. Between her legs. Move her knickers over and slide my fingers into her.

Gods, is it strange that for the first time I can honestly say I want my wife? Like, right now?

She looks up when she sees me, frowns.

"Draco — you are positively soaked in dark magic. What on earth did you do today?" She turns to face me, one hand on her hip.

As part of 'taking things slowly' I've been kissing Astoria in greeting. At first, it was on the cheek. Later, it moved to the edge of her mouth, and we're now up to a full kiss on the lips.

But tonight when I reach her, I grab a handful of her long dark hair, wrap it around my fist, and pull her head back so she's looking up at me. Her eyes go wide, but not with fear.

Surprise, maybe. Then my lips crash onto hers and I pull her right up against me, my erection in clear evidence.

She reaches up, placing her arms around my neck, her body moulding to mine.

A little moan escapes from her lips, and it lights me on fire. I pull back and look at her. Her lips swollen, her breaths coming hard.

My hand still entwined in her hair, I pull her head to the side so I can look at her throat. Caress it with my other hand, run my fingers up and down the smooth skin of her long neck, up behind her ear, and back down to her collarbone. I place my fingers around it. Just a little more pressure, and I'd choke her.

Astoria's breaths are coming faster now. Her eyes locked on mine, while I continue holding on to her neck, mesmerised by how small it is. How fragile.

I let go of her hair, untangling my hand and moving it down, around her waist, pulling her even closer to me, my cock digging into her waist, as my mouth replaces my hand, licking the length of her throat, then biting down on her shoulder.

She gasps, as her hands make their way into my hair, grasping it at the back tightly.

I'm still kissing and biting at her neck, her collar, her shoulders when I start pulling the skirts of her dress up, running my hand over her legs, not even remotely chastely.

"Draco," she says in my ear.

Her tone is off.

I pause, breathing hard.

I'm so fucking desperate. I can't believe I'm about to say this, "Do you want me to stop?"

She hesitates.

Fuck .

"No," she finally says, "...but Draco, I need you to tell me what you plan to do. Each and every step. No surprises."

I nod, suck on her neck and earlobe, "I can do that," I breathe.

"And if I cannot?"

"I'll stop," I tell her. "I promise."

"Good, okay."

I look her in the eye, "Okay?"

"Proceed."

Fuck me.

When we first met, Astoria's overly precise diction and formality irritated the fuck out of me. Every time we spoke I wanted to roll my eyes, ask her to use a fucking contraction. Mispronounce *something*. Now, I'm not only used to it, I'm turned on by it. There's something about hearing Astoria talk with perfect grammar and elocution that just does it for me.

I kiss her neck again before saying, "Okay. I'm going to put my hands on your breasts, and then go back to pulling up your skirts."

She gives me a single nod, before leaning in and kissing me.

True to my word, my hands cup her breasts. Squeeze them, caress them, rubbing my thumbs over her nipples, hard under the fabric.

"I like that," she says.

"Good," I respond, and pinch her nipple. She lets out a little yelp of surprise. "How about that?" I tease.

"Less so."

"Okay, good." I go back to rubbing her nipples, using only pressure, but no more pinching. She hums in pleasure. I keep one hand on a breast, and go back to pulling up her skirts. Running my hand up the back of her thigh. Her breathing increases.

I rest my hand on her hip, lean back and look her in the eyes, "I'm going to rub your inner thighs, and then between your legs."

Her breathing slows, and again I get a single nod. I go back to kissing her, and run both hands over her legs, tickling the sensitive skin on her upper inner thighs, before bringing one hand up to cup her centre. She tenses for a moment, then relaxes, and I start gently moving my hand back and forth over the smooth fabric of her knickers.

After a few strokes, I feel a touch of damp seeping through.

I keep rubbing, adding pressure, feeling the folds of her cunt through the fabric, and adding friction to her clit. Her knickers are wet now, but her breathing starts to increase again. Get uneven.

"Okay Astoria," I pause again and look at her. "I'm going to pull aside your knickers now, and continue rubbing you."

A nod.

I kiss her hard on the mouth, pull her knickers over, and sweet fucking Salazar her cunt is wet – her desire pooled at the entrance to her slit. I groan, and push my erection against her hip, as I start running my fingers through her folds, over her slit, and up to her clit, where I focus my attention.

Astoria lets out a whimper, pushing herself into my hand.

“Don’t be shy,” I tell her. “Tell me how it feels. Tell me what you want.”

“I want you to push harder,” she says.

“Okay.” I increase the pressure of my fingers against her clit, and watch the expression on Astoria’s face change, from concentration to pleasure. “I’m going to put my finger inside you now,” I tell her, only this time I don’t wait for her to nod. I slowly insert a single finger and start pumping it in and out, maintaining pressure on her clit with the heel of my hand.

“Oh Draco,” she gasps. “That feels...”

“How does it feel, Astoria?”

“It feels....extraordinarily stimulating,” she breathes. I smile at her choice of words. Add another finger. Go deeper. Faster. Harder.

“Oh, oh, oh,” she pants. “Draco?”

“You okay?” I ask. Not stopping.

“I feel like I have no control.”

“That’s because you don’t, Astoria. But I do.”

She looks at me again. Nods.

I pull my fingers out of her. “I’m going to fuck you now, Astoria.” Her eyes go wide. I elaborate, “I’m going to put my cock right where my fingers just were.”

She hesitates, “But Draco...this is my first...I have never...”

“Do you trust me, Astoria?”

“I do.”

I hitch her up onto the table so she’s half sitting, half leaning on it, and stand between her legs, releasing my cock from my trousers and pants.

“I’m going to rub against you first, to lubricate myself.”

“Okay,” she says looking down, watching every move I make.

I push aside her knickers again, now sopping wet, and tease her cunt with the tip of my cock, then run my length against her several times. Oh gods...even that feels amazing. I line myself up with her core. “This might hurt a bit,” I warn her. She puts her hands on my shoulders to brace herself, as I push in slowly.

Fucking hell, she’s beyond tight. It feels so fucking good. I look up to find she looks like she’s on the verge of panicking.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

I don't want to stop. I don't care what I promised.

"Try to relax, Astoria," I say, bringing one hand up to cup her cheek, "I'm going to move, okay?"

She slows her breathing, and nods.

"Okay." I pull out a bit, and push back in. Slowly, to gauge her reaction. After a few times, I feel the muscles in her core unclench. Slightly. She's starting to relax. Her hands move down and rest on my upper arms. Still holding on pretty tightly. I pull her left leg up, and hook it around my hip, then push in deeper. I let out a protracted groan.

"Astoria, your cunt feels amazing."

I start thrusting more rapidly, finding a rhythm. We pant in unison, in time with my hips. I reach down between us to resume fingering her clit, and she lets out a low moan.

Gods, yes.

I increase the friction on her clit, as well as the force of my hips. I want to crush her, split her in two.

"Oh, oh, Draco," she gasps on each thrust. "This is...is...too much." Her nails start digging into my skin.

"We're almost there, Astoria," I choke out and keep going. I'm so close.

"No, no..." she grunts, as her cunt starts clenching, her whole body tensing. "What is..." she can't finish, and cries out.

"You're coming," I gasp. "I'm right behind you." I lean over and bite down on her shoulder, causing her to cry out again as I explode into her, releasing months' worth of restraint and denial.

A year into our marriage and people start getting vocal, wondering when Astoria will produce an heir.

I tell them all to fuck off.

But it worries Astoria. It is, after all, what she was born and raised to do. Get married. Produce an heir. It's like we're living in the dark ages, for Salazar's sake.

I'm decidedly not worried. Firstly, because it's only been a year, for fuck's sake. And secondly, because I already have one. At least technically. Even if he'd be shunned for having a mudblood mother and being born out of wedlock.

This last point will obviously not comfort Astoria. I keep my mouth shut, and fuck her instead. I fuck her first thing in the morning, I fuck her when I get home in the evening, and I fuck her in bed at night.

I'm nothing, if not diligent.

We're just past our third anniversary when Astoria falls ill. She can't keep anything down and vomits violently whenever she tries.

I can't convince her to go to St. Mungo's. Though she volunteers there, and is tirelessly fundraising for them, she has an inexplicable fear of being an actual patient. It isn't until she's on her third day of being unable to eat or drink anything, is showing signs of severe dehydration, and is simply too tired to fight back that I finally take her, ignoring her weak protestations.

She's looking so pale and so haggard, I'm fearful for her life. I've never felt so helpless before.

You can imagine my surprise, then, when a healer approaches me in the waiting room smiling.

What the fuck?

"Mr. Malfoy," he says cheerily. "I'm so happy to inform you, there's nothing wrong with your wife at all."

"Excuse me?" I say, getting ready to wipe that fucking smile off his face.

"Your wife isn't sick, Mr. Malfoy. She's pregnant."

Pregnant?

Sweet fucking Salazar, she looks like she's dying.

"You're sure?" I ask.

The cocksucker actually chuckles, "Of course I'm sure. It's really quite common for magical pregnancies to start off a little bumpy," he says lightly.

“Bumpy?” I repeat. “She hasn’t been able to keep anything down for three days. Including water. The human body can’t survive without water....for about three days, if memory serves.”

I frown at the healer and use my interrogation techniques on him. Remove my suit jacket. Roll up my sleeves. Ensure my Dark Mark, wand and knife are all on display. He finally concedes that Astoria is suffering from a particularly extreme form of morning sickness, and recommends admitting her until the healers are able to stabilise her condition and find a treatment that allows her to ingest at least something. Anything.

I feel like I’m watching Astoria waste away.

I throw my full weight as a Malfoy and a member of Lord Voldemort’s inner circle around the hospital. I threaten healers that they’ll need healers themselves unless they make Astoria comfortable, and find a solution to her nausea.

They tell me they’re doing their best. That it’s normal to feel helpless and worried, and that I should just let them do their jobs.

It takes me actually gutting one of those patronising little shits for them to finally take me seriously and help my wife.

The help they provide is marginal, at best, but at least I can bring Astoria home.

It’s not an easy pregnancy.

Astoria puts on a brave face, makes preparations for the baby, and attempts to be pleasant company for me in the evenings.

I hate seeing her this way. I hate that she has to try so hard for everything. It breaks my fucking heart – cold and shriveled as it may be.

Unsatisfied with the results produced by St. Mungo’s to relieve Astoria of her discomfort, struggles, and in some cases outright pain, I take matters into my own hands. I spend an entire weekend shut up in the manor’s library looking for a solution that will bring Astoria some form of relief. I find one – though it’s a little unorthodox.

“So what, exactly, does this spell do?” Astoria asks.

“It’ll allow me to help share the load, in a manner of speaking.”

“Explain.”

“We do the spell. And a share of your symptoms transfer to me for the remainder of your pregnancy.” Her face lifts at the idea of some reprieve. I continue, “The moment you go into labour, the spell breaks.”

“I daresay labour would be a most opportune time for someone to ‘share the load,’” she says wryly.

“Agreed. But this’ll at least help make the next few months more bearable for you.”

“But what about you, Draco? You need to keep working. You cannot be seen as weak, or others will try to take advantage...”

“I’m a big man, Astoria. I’m strong and I’m healthy. If I can do this for you, I want to. If it turns out that my share is too much and affects my work...we can reassess.” I pause, looking at her, “There’s a counter-spell if we need to reverse it.”

Liar.

This is a one-way spell with unpredictable results. I could end up with the full brunt of her symptoms and be seriously affected at work. The difference, of course, is that I’m not actually pregnant, and can take any number of potions or spells to alleviate or mask my symptoms.

“And what does the spell entail? You said ‘we’ do the spell.” Nothing slips by this one.

“It involves an exchange. Of blood.”

“So this is blood magic?”

“Yes. Are you opposed to that?”

Astoria’s past experience with blood magic doesn’t exactly inspire confidence. “No,” she says firmly after thinking about it for a moment. “Blood magic does not scare me.”

Of course it doesn’t. As far as I can tell, nothing scares her, so long as she has the opportunity to understand it. Prepare for it.

“Good. Then it’s settled. We’ll do it at the end of the week.” I look at her pointedly, “In case I need the weekend to adjust to my new symptoms.”

She smiles at me. The first genuine smile I’ve seen in months.

“Thank you, Draco.”

“Anything for you, Astoria.”

And I mean it.

Fucking hell.

I feel like something that crawled out of Salazar's arse.

At least Astoria is feeling better.

A few months later Astoria is huge, healthy, glowing and smiling.

I, on the other hand, feel like fucking shit most days. I have an impressive array of potions at my disposal to help mask most of the pain and discomfort, and alcohol and occlumency to dull what remains. But they can't alleviate the very worst of what I must endure.

My parents.

They've been having us over regularly for lunches, teas, dinners, drinks, whatever excuse they can find. I try to decline, but Astoria says we must...and so we must. But I hate every single second I'm with them. Watching them fawn over my Astoria, when only months ago they abused and belittled her for not producing an heir, makes me want to tear them apart for their hypocrisy.

My mother senses it and is careful with me. But my father has his own motives for ingratiating himself with us. With me.

He's so fucking transparent. Pathetic.

It's been a little over a year since I've outranked him in Voldemort's chain of command. He still can't truly accept it. At first he tried to dominate and manipulate me in other contexts. As Lord Malfoy. As my Father. If he couldn't find fault with me at work (he couldn't – the only thing he could find was that I was captured all those years ago, but that resulted in our defeat of the Order), then he'd list my faults as a son – of which there were, apparently, a great many. Anything to show his superiority.

But now that Astoria is with child – with an heir – he's taken a new approach. He's done a complete 180 and panders to me as he does to the Dark Lord. Plays the role of the munificent father. The doting grandfather.

It doesn't suit him.

It's still early when we get home from our latest torturous visit. I head straight to the decanter in the parlour, pour myself a very large firewhiskey, sit heavily on the sofa, and sigh in relief.

“Oh Draco,” Astoria chides as she enters the room, “it was not *all* bad, was it?”

I don’t respond, but give her a look. One that implies she’s lost her fucking mind if she thinks that went well.

She smiles, shakes her head – she knows exactly how I feel about my parents – then comes and sits next to me. I lift my arm, place it on the back of the sofa, so she can lean into my chest.

“The food was good,” she states.

Well I guess she’s right. It wasn’t *all* bad.

“That was all Boots’s doing. She’s been diligent in knowing what foods you’re craving most.”

“Is she now?” she looks up at me, surprised.

I nod, taking a sip.

“Which means,” I continue, placing my hand on and addressing Astoria’s belly, “that while Boots is a great house-elf, your grandparents are ghastly, dreadful people.”

Astoria looks at me with wide eyes, “What on earth are you doing, Draco?”

“I’m talking to our magic bean.”

Isn’t it fucking obvious?

“Whatever for?”

I shrug, “I read somewhere that by this stage of your pregnancy, babies can hear sounds outside the womb. Our little one has been listening to you – your heartbeat, your voice, your growling stomach...” I nudge her at that, “...for ages from the inside. Now he can hear more, it’s time he gets to know me, too.”

She shakes her head in wonder. “Draco Malfoy,” she says, “the man who returns home at night drenched in blood and dark magic, counsellor to the Dark Lord himself, has read books about babies and their development?”

“Your mummy thinks I’m a fucking neanderthal, Bean,” I respond, addressing her belly once again, while running my hand gently over it.

The baby kicks.

“See?” I look at Astoria knowingly, smirking. “He agrees.”

I continue my soft caresses, moving them decidedly lower, and finding my way to Astoria’s thighs. I run my hand down to her knees, gather up the skirts of her dress, and make my way back up on her bare skin, brushing my fingertips along the delicate skin on the inside of her

legs.

She sighs contentedly, and opens her knees wider providing access between them.

I lean in and kiss her neck, nipping my way up to her jaw, while my hand runs back and forth over the smooth fabric of her knickers. She turns her head, kissing me fully on the mouth.

I move my other arm off the back of the sofa, brush Astoria's hair over her shoulder and ask, "Lift?" She braces her legs and pushes herself back, lifting her hips for me. I move in front of her, pull her knickers down, and off once she's sitting again. Then I open her legs wider and kneel between them. Resume my attentions on her increasingly wet cunt, dipping my fingers into her slit, then back up to her clit where I rub in little circles, just how she likes. When she starts breathing deeper, starts angling her hips to increase the friction, I pull her down the sofa, so her arse is right on the edge.

"Gods, Astoria, you've got a beautiful fucking cunt," I say in reverence.

"Draco," she replies breathily, "if the baby can hear us, do you really think it wise to speak in such a manner? About such topics?"

I lean back on my heels so I can look up at her, smirking. "Astoria, the baby has heard you come. I hardly think it's going to be traumatised hearing me swear, or talking about your cunt."

And with that, I close the topic of conversation by leaning in and running my tongue through the folds of that beautiful cunt, and causing its owner to forget all about my crass language.

I'm in an interrogation room. One of those stark little numbers with only a table and two chairs. I'm in the middle of carving my knife through some half-blood bitch's thigh. I think she's a Gryffindor from a few years ahead of me? Anyway, I'm making my way to her artery, when I suddenly feel lighter. I feel....good? Not the sort of good I get from inflicting pain on others, or from using the dark arts. I feel...healthy. Vibrant. Full of energy. Like I'm in the prime of my life.

Oh nonononononono.

The magical bond between Astoria and I has been severed.

She's in labour.

It's too soon. Way too fucking soon.

I pull my knife out of the bitch's thigh, wipe the blood off on my sleeve, and leave the interrogation room without a second glance to the woman tied to the chair. Theo just happens

to be walking by, looks at me and says, “That was fast...”

“I didn’t finish,” I say, pulling off my robes, holstering my knife. “I have to go. Astoria. The baby.”

“Go,” he says. “I’ll finish up here.”

I nod, run out of the offices and to the closest apparition point. I’m feeling better and stronger with each passing second which can only mean Astoria is feeling worse. I pause when I get there. Where am I going? Home? St. Mungo’s? Somewhere else? Fuck. I build up my walls to calm myself down. Avoid panicking.

I need to think clearly. This only just happened. Astoria has only just gone into labour.

I go home.

I apparate just outside the estate’s wards, then sprint through them, up the front steps, and into the house, shouting as I enter, “Astoria?” All I hear is my own voice echoing back.

Fuck, fuck, *fuck*.

I run down the hallway, shouting her name, looking into every room as I go by.

Where the fuck is she? Is she even here? Was she supposed to go somewhere today? I can’t remember. *Why can’t I fucking remember?*

I run to the most likely areas she might be – the parlour, the sunroom, the kitchen — when I make it to our bedroom, I hear water running. I head to the ensuite and find Astoria kneeling on the floor next to the bathtub, the water overflowing.

Oh gods.

She’s white as a sheet, gasping in pain, holding her belly, with a pool of blood spreading out around her, mixing with the water from the tub.

“Astoria, I’m here,” I choke out. I kneel down beside her in the blood and water. Gather her into my arms. She looks at me with those intense green eyes of hers — they’re wide. Terrified. She grasps my arm tight as she whimpers, “Draco,” her face contorting in pain. I brush the sweaty hair out of her face and stand up, carrying her, “I’ve got you, love.”

It doesn’t matter who I threaten, maim or kill. The ultimate decision is made by Astoria, without my consent. By the end of the day it’s just me and my son.

Welcome, little Scorpius.

Your mummy loved you so, so much.

Chapter End Notes

Ugh.

I actually really liked Astoria and felt terrible for what I had planned for her. So I gave her a few good fucks, and a husband who really did grow to love her. Maybe not the same passionate love he had for Hermione, but love nonetheless.

Poor Astoria. Poor Draco.

Epilogue 2

Chapter Notes

So here's our one and only foray into Hermione's POV.

Note the lack of swearing!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

I'm sitting on my favourite bench under the big oak tree. It's sunny outside but I'm in the shade enjoying the warm late summer breeze. Relishing the sound of the wind blowing through the leaves, the birds chirping, the odd irate squirrel chattering when the dog gets too close, and of the children playing.

I'm soaking it up. Cherishing it. Memorising every detail.

It's our last summer before Leo heads to Ilvermorny. How did the time fly by so fast? How is he already eleven? It feels like only yesterday that I arrived in America. Very pregnant. Torn. Scared. Devastated.

But also joyful.

Being reunited with my adopted family was more than I could ever have hoped for. Though I was in an entirely unfamiliar location, just being with the Weasleys was like coming home. I don't know how I would have made it through those last months on my own. Or anything following, for that matter.

There were, of course, some reservations about where I'd been. Who I'd been with. How I'd ended up pregnant – I almost launched into an explanation about the birds and the bees when asked that one. Not everyone could wrap their heads around how I could possibly be in love with Draco Malfoy, of all people. How I could overlook his role in the war, his treatment of muggle borns, and his overall murderous approach to everything, including the Order.

I couldn't explain it. I didn't even try. I'm not even sure I knew.

It was no longer relevant.

I'd left him behind.

Forever.

He was my past, and now I had to focus on my future.

My greatest supporter was, quite surprisingly, Ron. He never once questioned me about my feelings for Draco. He just accepted that we had loved each other, and that was that. I know he and Draco spoke a few times – before the escape and after. I think he was sufficiently convinced that Draco's feelings for me were real. And if that was possible – if a Malfoy could love a mudblood so genuinely – then why couldn't I love him back?

He was my best friend again.

When Leo was born, he was right there beside me, holding my hand and excitedly proclaiming, "Bloody hell, Hermione! You've got yourself a right little ferret there!"

He wasn't wrong.

Leo favours his father in almost every way. Same silvery-blond hair. Same fair complexion. Same sharp patrician features. Same build. Only his hazel eyes are mine. Along with a smattering of freckles across his cheekbones and nose. He takes my breath away every time I look at him. Every time I see the sun reflecting off that beautiful hair of his.

A shriek of delight breaks my reverie.

Leo is pushing the twins on the swings, the girls' fiery red hair catching the sun's light, looking like actual flames. I can't help but notice they're going way higher than should be physically possible.

"Leo!" I shout, "Not too high!"

He looks over, smiles and nods, as the girls both protest one over the other.

"Aww...it's not too high!" whinges Rose.

"We want to go higher Mummy!" shouts Marigold.

I roll my eyes.

Leo already has a control over his magic that I'd never dreamed possible in someone so young. All wandless. If I didn't know how his father had harnessed his own magic through his occlumency, I'd think it impossible. But there it is. Right in front of me.

Possible.

The first time Leo purposefully used his magic a few years ago Ron got worried. Said a child so young shouldn't have any magic at all, beyond what manifested accidentally. He feared it was some latent dark magic he'd inherited from Draco. I knew otherwise, though. I could see how Leo's eyes went almost blank from time to time as he'd sort through his thoughts and memories. Compartmentalising. Organising. Exploring. He was occluding naturally, just like his father. Finding his own back door access to his magic.

He's a good kid. Smart. Mischievous. A little snarky. And he knows how to speak volumes with just a shift in his expression or a nod of his head. Or a smirk. Gods, that smirk. It's just like his father's.

Ron walks out of the house and heads towards me, our youngest strapped to his chest in a carrier, and a newspaper in his hand.

“Poppy asleep?” I ask.

“Yeah,” he says. “Been about 15 or so minutes. What’s with all the shouting?” He nods to the swing set.

“The usual,” I reply. “Leo is swinging the girls far too high, and they love it.”

He smiles and sits down next to me, moving very carefully so as not to wake Poppy. She’s a terrible sleeper. Always needs to be on top of somebody. Molly says we should just let her cry it out, but after one night of trying both Ron and I agreed it wasn’t for us. Instead, we take turns wearing her.

“I can’t decide if Leo is going to love school like you, or be completely bored by it because he’s too bloody smart for his own good,” Ron says while watching the kids play.

“I really hope he loves it,” I say.

Ron nods. Reaches over and takes my hand, caressing my knuckles with his thumb. “I hope so, too,” he says. “The house’ll feel awfully different without him. I’m going to be surrounded by girls,” he grimaces at me.

After Leo was born Ron stayed right by my side. He became my son’s de facto father figure. They were two peas in a pod. He was always there, always helping. It only took a few years for him to make his intentions clear. He didn’t care that Leo wasn’t his. He wanted to be his dad. Be my husband. Make a family.

One morning I woke up and realised I wanted that too.

We sit there, holding hands, watching the kids in silence for a few minutes before Ron clears his throat and asks, “Did you see the paper?”

“No, anything interesting?”

“You might say so...” he says. He places the folded paper between us, then gets up and heads to the swingset. I watch his easy manner with the kids for a moment. How he jokes and teases them to their utter delight. I couldn’t have wished for a better father for my children. He reminds me of Arthur...but no. I don’t want to go there today. Don’t want to think about the sacrifice he made for his family.

I take the paper and unfold it.

Oh.

Oh my gods.

The headline jumps out at me.

MACUSA Overthrows Lord Voldemort .

How? When? And more important than anything else, what happened to *him*? To Draco?

I'd made a conscious decision all those years ago to never intentionally look for information about him. I saw his wedding announcement, of course – he and Astoria looked absolutely perfect together. Both of them so poised. So beautiful. A few years later, I read that he'd been widowed. That his wife had died in childbirth – sacrificing herself to provide him an heir. I doubted very much that that had been Draco's decision. The child's name, though? That was all Draco. The dragon finally got his little scorpion.

Despite my promise to never to do so, I scan the paper, looking desperately for one thing only – his name. My heart feels like it's going to burst out of my chest when I finally find it, in stark black letters – Lord Draco Malfoy.

He's alive.

He's in Azkaban.

For life.

For unspeakable war crimes.

Just as he'd predicted.

Leo is sorted into Ilvermorny's most scholarly house – the Horned Serpent.

When Europe finally opens back up to all witches and wizards – regardless of blood status – there's a huge rush of people who return to the cities and homes they'd abandoned so many years ago.

But there's just as many who choose to stay away. Who remain in their new homes, continuing to live the new lives they've made for themselves.

We seriously discuss the idea of returning to Britain. Of having the kids go to Hogwarts. But ultimately decide against it. This is their home. This is where their friends are. Leo is already at Ilvermorny, and the twins can't wait for their turn.

We like the life we have here. We love the house I bought with the many many galleons Draco gave me. Ron loves his job, and I'm headed to Harvard Law School to finally – *finally* – become a barrister.

A lawyer.

Whichever.

It's late. I'm getting ready for bed, but dawdling. After washing my face, brushing my teeth and flossing, I put on my pyjamas, then spend a ridiculous amount of time putting on lotion. Ron watches this spectacle with a knowing look. He knows I have something difficult to say. He knows I'll work up to it. But he isn't the most patient man. After a few minutes of lotion smothering – really, I think I may have to wipe some of it off – he sighs and says, "Hermione, please, stop," and gives me a pointed look. "What's on your mind?"

It's my turn to sigh. I draw in a great big breath, and let it out as I sit on the edge of the bed, facing him. I don't know why I'm so scared to say this. It's been coming for a long time.

"I have to go see him," I say, then bite my lower lip.

It's been over a year since Europe opened back up and even more since Voldemort was overthrown, but there's no need to specify who I'm talking about. In this house Draco is 'He who must not be named.' It started out as my rule when I first came to America. I couldn't say or hear his name without getting upset. Later, it was so Ron wasn't living under his shadow, wasn't competing. And now it's just kind of stuck. It's never been a question of not discussing him – we do, quite a lot actually, seeing as Leo is his son – we've just always considered it safest to avoid overt references to the man the papers refer to as the Butcher of Britain.

Ron nods subtly, and takes my hand, reassuring me. "I'm surprised it's taken this long to come up."

"I wanted to wait until the dust had settled a bit," I explain, then hesitate before continuing, "I also think...I think I should bring Leo with me. They should meet."

Ron takes his hand back to rub it over his face. Thinking.

"If that's the case, then," he says slowly, "I think you should wait 'til the summer, so you don't interrupt school...." he pauses, "...and maybe you go to see him first. Alone. Just in case he isn't the person you remember."

I go to protest, but he continues, "It's been a long time, Hermione. He's been through a lot. He's *done* a lot. Worse than when you were together. Just...check him out first, before bringing Leo in to see him."

I can't argue with that logic. Ron is one hundred percent right – I don't know Draco anymore. I knew him when he was still working his way up Voldemort's food chain. Before he made it to the top. Before he became fully immersed in the darkness and cruelty the papers love to sensationalise.

"Okay," I agree. "This summer. And I'll visit him first to make sure it's safe for Leo."

It's settled.

We decide to make it a family trip – to both the magical and muggle attractions of Britain.

Magical highlights will include Diagon Alley, Hogwarts and Hogsmeade. Muggle highlights will include a whirlwind tour of my favourite spots in London and beyond, including the Natural History Museum, Tower of London, Stonehenge, and Loch Ness. We'll see what's left of the Burrow, visit the street I grew up on, and go camping in the Forest of Dean.

At some point I'll go off to Azkaban and visit Draco on my own, then discuss with Ron whether I should bring Leo to see him next.

We make the arrangements, all courtesy of Draco's galleons.

When we arrive, Ron and I are shocked at how much has changed since we left. At how Voldemort's policies of blood purity and terror spilled over into everything. Tainted it. Turned it into something else. Something less welcoming.

There are signs of a rejuvenation. Of change. But it's not there yet.

We pivot our focus to exploring muggle attractions, which apparently includes riding the entirety of the London Underground and "minding the gap." No matter how hard I try to familiarise my family with muggle realities, I sometimes forget how enchanting and quaint it can seem to them. All of them. Including my husband, who is as delighted as the children are to explore this new world.

About a week and a half into our trip, Ron wakes up early and takes the children to the Forest of Dean to set up camp, all on his own. Bless him.

I stay behind.

I take my time showering. Taming my hair. Applying what little makeup I wear. I put on my favourite red blouse, a pair of black capris, and my black Old Skools. I lament the fact I don't have nicer footwear. At least they're clean.

Then I sit and quietly have a cup or three of tea, mentally preparing for what I'm about to do.

When it's about fifteen minutes from my appointment time, I go check out of the hotel, and take their floo to Azkaban.

It's cold here. Though the dementors are long gone, Azkaban's location in the middle of the North Sea, with its blustery winds, makes it cold all on its own.

I should have worn trousers.

I confirm my appointment with the guard on duty, a sullen, unfriendly sort of fellow, who gives me an odd look when he realises who I've come to visit. He huffs, says he'll have to make sure one of the highest security visiting rooms is available, then goes on to explain it'll require more time to fetch the prisoner, as they'll need more guards to move him.

I tell him to take his time. That I'm not in a rush.

He puts in the request to have prisoner ↴ 065 sent to a maximum security visiting room.

While waiting, I go through security. Hand in my wand. Then sit in the waiting room, twisting my hands in my lap, picking at my cuticles, bored, and wishing I got mobile reception in the middle of a magical stronghold in the North Sea.

About thirty minutes later a different guard comes to fetch me.

"We're all set up, ma'am," he says.

Do I really look like a ma'am?

My gods.

I stand up, wipe my sweaty palms on my capris, and follow the guard. We make our way down a long damp hallway to a lift, and then up, up, up.

"Maximum security prisoners are on the top floor," he explains, examining me.

I nod my head.

"Apart from his son and the young one's chaperone, nobody visits the bastard. Got to admit, we're all a little curious what brings you here," he says, staring at me outright, before

clarifying, “What brings *the* Hermione Granger here....you *were* friends with Harry Potter, weren’t you?”

I clear my throat. Look at him and nod slightly, “He was my best friend,” I say quietly.

Since the end of the regime Harry has become somewhat of a symbol again amongst the wider population and not just those who were resisting Voldemort. Of innocence lost in the fight for freedom against tyranny. It’s one of the reasons Ron and I decided to stay in America. It’s awkward always being reminded of him. Of always being seen as the child warrior you were forced to be, all those years ago. Of only ever being acknowledged for something you did so long ago. Something so painful.

We arrive at the top floor, exit the lift turning left, and go all the way to the end of the hall. Our footsteps echoing off the stone floors and walls.

It really is cold here.

We stop outside a fortified door, and the guard warns me to keep my hands to myself, not to come into contact with the prisoner, not to give him anything. He tells me the prisoner will be restrained. That there are magic suppression wards throughout the prison, but that this prisoner has seemingly still managed to perform some wandless magic, so I need to be careful, and immediately ask to leave the room should he do any in my presence. I must knock to leave, though, as the door will be locked. He clarifies this for me – I will be locked in with the prisoner.

I nod in understanding. My mouth terribly dry. I really wish I had some water with me.

And then it’s time.

The guard unlocks the door, holds it open for me, and I step through into a small, bare room.

He looks up at me as I enter, and my breath catches.

He looks....the same. Not the Draco I left behind — all polished in bespoke suits and Death Eater robes — but rather he resembles the man I fell in love with. Unkempt. A bit tattered and rough around the edges. Perfectly imperfect.

His hair has dulled again to a light, rather than platinum blond, and it’s grown out, touching his shoulders. He’s got a full, though roughly trimmed, light blond beard. The frown lines between his eyes have become permanent, and his eyes....oh gods, his eyes. They’re cold and distant at first, but turn to molten silver when he sees me, with an intensity I’d completely forgotten. A look that makes me feel like I’m the only person in the universe.

He’s sitting at a bare metal table, to which he’s attached, his wrist restraints having been woven through a loop on the tabletop. His feet are similarly chained to the floor.

Despite the chains, he somehow manages to look nonchalant and greets me, “Granger,” he says, with the slightest of smirks.

At the sound of his voice my knees almost collapse under me, and I feel a definite flutter in my stomach. Maybe a little lower, as well.

Get a grip, Granger.

Mercifully, I make my way to the opposite side of the table, and sit on the only other chair in the room.

“Draco,” I reply.

He flat out stares at me. Examining me. Waiting.

I realise I don't know what to say. How to start. I can't very well ask how he's doing. He's in prison for Godric's sake. I decide to cut to the chase.

“Draco,” I start, my voice a bit wobbly, “...all those years ago, when I left....” My gods, why is this so difficult? I can't look at him. I look at my hands instead, and continue, “...when I left you, you said that when more rational heads prevailed, when Voldemort was overthrown, and you ended up in...in here...” I gesture around the room, “...that *that* would be your opportunity to get to know your son.” I pause, finally look him in the eye, my voice finally steady. “I'm here to find out if that's what you still want.”

He looks at me intently, not saying a word. I feel a slight coolness in my thoughts. Almost at the very back of my mind. It's a refreshing sensation. One that makes me feel so relaxed I think I could say anything. Reveal anything. Share my deepest darkest secrets.

Wait.

“Draco, get out of my head,” I say, irritated.

He's never tried to use legilimency on me before. I had no idea it could be so delicate. So subtle. I recall hearing him describe ripping and shredding through people's thoughts. This was definitely not that.

“Fuck, Granger...” He backs off right away, the coolness retreating. “Is he here?”

There's an unfamiliar look in his eyes. Is it desperation?

“No,” I reply. “Not today. I wanted to see you first. Check that you're....” I trail off.

“Not going to traumatiser him?” he finishes for me.

“Something like that.”

“Are you back?” he asks.

“No. Just visiting. We're all still in Massachusetts. I've got a year of Harvard Law School under my belt, Leo will be starting his third year at Ilvermorny in the fall, and....”

Do I tell him? Do I tell him about my family?

“And?” he prompts. “Who else is still in Massachusetts?”

“...Ron and the girls,” I finish.

“Married?”

“Yes.”

“How many girls? You haven’t gone and bred yourself like your mother-in-law, have you?”

I snort. It’s not at all ladylike.

“No. The twins – Rose and Marigold – are four years younger than Leo. Poppy just turned three. And that’s it. That’s all of us.”

“You’re happy?”

“I am.”

He nods. Sighs. Looks...sad? Resigned? I can’t quite tell. He’s always been so difficult to read.

“Tell me about Leo.”

Now I really smile. “He’s wonderful, Draco.” I reach into my beaded bag – honestly, the guards downstairs didn’t think to open it, they just scanned it and didn’t detect anything unusual, which goes without saying since it’s an undetectable charm – and pull out a small photo album. I slide it over the table to Draco, and begin telling him about our son.

“He’s smart. So smart – he was sorted into the Horned Serpent at Ilvermorny.” Draco looks up at me, frowning, “...the equivalent at Hogwarts would probably be Ravenclaw.”

He nods and opens up the photo album. Sees a picture of his son for the first time, from when he was born. His hands are shaking. I stand up and come around the table to look over his shoulder. Explaining the backstories to some of my favourite photographs.

“He’s only a few hours old in that one. As easy as my pregnancy was, my labour was....a different story. After about thirty or so hours, both of us were in distress. I insisted on a transfer to a muggle hospital where they performed a c-section.”

He looks up at me, his confusion evident.

“It’s a procedure in which a baby is delivered surgically,” I explain.

His jaw tenses, and his eyebrows draw together, as he asks, “They cut Leo out of you?”

“That’s right. It’s a very common procedure among muggles, especially when a natural birth is no longer safe for either the mother or child – I honestly think magical hospitals should look into it....it’d probably save a lot of witches....” I stop talking abruptly, realising suddenly that Astoria died in childbirth. I don’t know what kind of complications she was

suffering from, but could she have been saved by muggle medicine? I'm sure the same thought is going through Draco's mind.

He looks at me with those piercing eyes for a few moments before clearing his throat and returning his attention to the photo album. He flips the page to Leo's third Halloween.

"Oh! That's the first Halloween Leo really understood the concept of trick-or-treating..."

"Trick-or-treating?"

"Dressing up in costume and going door to door asking for candy. It's a muggle tradition."

He shakes his head in disbelief, "Sweet Salazar, Granger. They go begging? Why not just give the kids some candy?"

He looks back at his son dressed as the cutest dragon ever.

"We gave him pepper imps, so he could breathe fire...." I trail off.

He continues to make his way through the mix of magical and muggle photos. I purposely didn't edit them. There are photos of Leo on his own, with me, with the girls, and with Ron.

"The weasel's a good father?" he asks while looking at a more recent photo of Leo and the twins attempting – and failing – to tackle and subdue Ron.

"He's brilliant." I say. "He's never treated Leo any differently than the girls. Even before we were together, he was a huge help. He loved Leo from day one. To this day he calls him his 'little ferret.'"

Standing behind him, I can't see his face. But I see his shoulders hitch at that. At the mention of another man loving his son. Raising him as his own.

He stops at one of my favourites, taken just a few months ago. It's a close up of Leo with Poppy — my oldest and youngest. Draco stares at it for a long time.

"He's got your eyes and freckles" he says.

"And everything else is you. He's smart, with a sharp wit and sense of humour. He does very well at school — his favourite subjects are potions and transfiguration. He's tall and strong. Flies circles around Ron. Loves quidditch and American baseball. He plays both. Made his house quidditch team as a beater, and is a pitcher for our local little league baseball team..."

"He's got a good arm, then."

"He does." I walk back around the table and sit down. "He's an amazing older brother. The girls absolutely adore him."

Draco looks up at me, away from the photo.

I keep going, “He’s a natural occlumens...untrained, of course, but compartmentalises and organises his thoughts and memories systematically, using doors, as he describes it.”

Draco leans forward so he can rub his face with his hands, lingering in his beard, scratching.

“He found his own back door to his magic when he was eight. Scared the daylights out of Molly when he levitated the dog across the room.”

He smiles at that, and asks, “What kind of dog?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” I shrug. “A big black mutt. Ron and Leo came home with him one day, and he’s been with us ever since. We named him Padfoot.”

He clasps his hands in front of himself. Still watching me.

“What about you?” I ask. “You have a son?”

He nods.

“Scorpius,” he replies, smiling at me, surely remembering how much I’d disliked that name when we’d discussed it. “He’s nine — which would make him what? The same age as your twins? And, to be honest, Granger, he looks a lot like Leo. A lot like me.”

He looks down at the photo album again, then back up.

“He’s got Astoria’s green eyes, though.

“He’s intelligent, bookish, loves quidditch, but moreso the game statistics. He flies like shit... he won’t be making any house teams. He’s a bit of a troublemaker, but in a curious ‘he’s too smart for his own good’ rather than ‘up to no good’ kind of way. Likes to perform experiments, as he calls them. He blows a lot of things up. Keeps Boots on her toes.”

He pauses, looks down at his hands.

“I miss him,” he says sadly.

“He visits?”

“Once a week.”

“How is he handling all this?” I ask, again gesturing to the room, to Draco, his chains.

Draco shifts in his chair, but his movement is limited by the chains. “It’s not as bad when he comes,” he says, raising his hands and indicating the chains. “They don’t chain me up like a fucking animal for family.”

“The guards said they had to take extra precautions with you...”

“You know my track record with prison guards, Granger,” he says seriously.

“How many?”

“So far? Seven.”

Seven? How can he have killed seven prison guards in a maximum security ward? Shouldn’t they be trained to prevent such a thing from happening *seven* times? And why did he do it? Does he enjoy it? Taking life? Do I want to know?

“Don’t look so shocked. You’re fully aware what I’m capable of.”

“So...are the papers right, then? *Are* you the Butcher of Britain?”

He sighs. Shrugs. “I’ve always told you, Granger. I’m a monster.” He looks up suddenly, asking, “Does Leo know? That *I’m* his father? That his father....” he hesitates here, “That his father is the Butcher?”

“He does.”

“Do others? Does it cause him any trouble?”

I consider this. “A bit. He gets in the odd fight over it, but nothing too serious. Ron has taught him to defend himself, and his aunt Ginny has passed on the secret to her famous Bat Bogey Hex.”

He nods, frowning.

“Draco....” I lean forward, deciding to change the subject – I don’t really want to get into details about Leo’s troubles over who his father is. Not right now. “I need to ask you something.”

“I’m not going anywhere.”

I hesitate. Fidget with the photo album. Shift in my chair.

“Spit it out, Granger.”

“I read everything I could in the newspapers, but could never find any reference to it....what happened to Nagini?”

“Voldemort’s snake?”

“Yes.”

“I killed it. When MACUSA was making their way into Voldemort’s headquarters. When I knew it was over.”

“*You* killed it?”

“That’s what I said.”

“Why?”

He sighs, tries again to get more comfortable. Fails. Rubs his hand over his beard.

“Because, Granger. You talk in your sleep.”

“I...I, what?”

What is he talking about?

“All those years ago. In my quarters. At least once or twice a week, you’d have nightmares about Voldemort and his snake. And you’d always mention the word horcrux.”

I can’t believe what he’s telling me. I think my mouth is hanging open. I shut it. He continues, “I didn’t know what the fuck a horcrux was, so I looked it up.”

“But it’s almost impossible to find information about them,” I interrupt. “Only the darkest of texts....”

He gives me a disdainful look, speaks over me.

“As I was saying, I looked it up. In the manor’s library, which houses one of the largest collections of dark texts in England.”

Right.

“But why would you kill Nagini? Wouldn’t you *want* to bring Voldemort back?”

Another look. This time like I’m just a complete imbecile.

“That psychopath? Why the fuck would I want him back for a *third* try at world domination?”

Why, indeed. Because you’re a dark wizard who ascended to a ridiculous amount of power under his reign and might want another go at it? Because you’re the Butcher of Britain? Because you’re a pureblood supremacist? Because the alternative to bringing Voldemort back was life in Azkaban?

I keep my mouth shut. I’m not sure I’m prepared to delve into Draco’s current political views and ideologies. Instead, I ask, “Draco....this is really important. Was the snake killed before or after Voldemort?”

Another look.

Really, *what* is his problem?

“Hermione,” he says, catching my attention with the use of my given name, “Voldemort isn’t dead.”

Wait, *what*?

“He’s not?” I choke out.

“No.”

My heart sinks. I start to feel cold all over, starting from my head and descending throughout my whole body, to my extremities. My breathing feels out of control. I can't get enough air. I feel lightheaded. My face and hands start tingling. I push my chair out, and brace my hands on the table, looking down, between my legs.

"You need to control your breathing," comes Draco's calm voice. "In and out. Slowly."

I look up at him, my eyes wide. I can't breathe. I start gasping.

"You're having a panic attack, Hermione. Breathe," he says, demonstrating with his own breaths. "In," he takes a slow deep breath, "and out," he lets it out. I try to follow his example. Try to calm myself.

It takes a few minutes. I close my eyes and listen as Draco continues breathing with me the whole time, demonstrating, setting a pace for me to follow. Eventually the tingling goes away. I still feel shaky, though. I look back up at him. He's staring at me. Observing. But his eyes are distant. He's occluding.

Why now?

"Where is he, then?" I finally ask, my voice shaking. "Voldemort. Is he here?"

"No."

I almost weep in relief.

"He's at Nurmengard," Draco finishes.

"And the others?"

"What others?" he asks, frowning.

"The other high ranking Death Eaters..." I hesitate to say her name, "...your aunt?"

He leans his elbows on the table as best he can, looking at me with those cold, far away eyes, "A few of them are here. But most of them are dead." He pauses. "My aunt included."

"Bellatrix is dead?"

"She is. It was a long, drawn out and painful death. I made sure of it."

I don't know how to respond to that. By the way he looks at me, the implication is clear. He made it painful for *me*. I feel myself start spiralling again. Draco reaches a hand as far across the table as he can, palm up.

"Keep breathing, Granger," he whispers.

The guards specifically said not to touch him. I look at his outstretched hand, seeking to comfort me. Even after all this time, after I went and married one of his worst rivals, he only asked if I was happy. He's trying to help me. Calm me.

I reach towards him, and very gingerly place my hand in his.

As soon as our skin makes contact, it's like a bolt of lightning runs up my arm. Is he using his magic? This was a mistake. A huge mistake. I go to pull away, but he wraps those long fingers of his around my hand. Holds on. Looking at me intently. All of his walls have been pulled down. I'm looking at *him*. And he looks...like a drowning man taking his first gasp of air as he breaks the surface of the water.

Oh gods.

He's not doing anything.

Not overtly.

It's the same feeling as all those years ago, when we first touched accidentally. When our magic reacted to each other. It's what was so addictive about him. Why even after it was clear I wasn't going to turn him, I didn't want to stop seeing him. Touching him. Feeling him touch me. Those long fingers caressing my entire body. Exploring every inch of me. Making me feel things....

Stop.

I have to stop.

I pull my hand away.

“I...I...” I start.

Pull yourself together, for Godric's sake. This is ridiculous.

“I have to go,” I finish, and stand up.

He pulls his own hand back, clasps it in the other on the table top, and looks up at me. His eyes clouded over again.

“Will you bring Leo?” he asks.

“I'm going to discuss it with Ron,” I reply, and head towards the door, knocking.

The door opens within seconds, and as I step through I hear Draco say, “Take care, Granger.” I look back over my shoulder, and catch one last glimpse of the man I love – loved? – so desperately, as the door is closed behind me.

Godric help me.

When I arrive at the campsite, Ron and the kids have got everything set up, and he and Leo are in the middle of cleaning fish.

“Mummy! Mummy!” shouts Marigold as she dances around me. “We went fishing!”

“Wow! I can see that! How many fish did you catch?”

“Seven!!” she shouts.

At that, Ron and Leo both make a face at each other. Leo gets up, wiping his hands, adding, “*Marigold* didn’t catch anything. She screamed that we were scaring the fish, and then lost her rod in the river at her first bite.”

That sounds more accurate.

He continues, “Rose caught one, Dad and I both caught three. Poppy dumped her Cheerios in the river in an attempt to lure the fish to us.” He looks down at his little sister and smiles at her mud pie making endeavours. “It didn’t work.”

When the boys are finished and cleaned up, Ron comes to join me at the campfire, gives me a peck on the cheek, and asks, “So? How did it go? How was he? Not a nutter, or anything?”

“No, he seemed perfectly sane.”

I sit, thinking.

Ron fills the silence, “He didn’t try anything, did he? Get under your skin, say any pureblood bullshit, tell you he still loves you?”

“No.”

I mean, not really.

I think about how it felt to see him. Hear his voice. Touch his hand. The intense physical reaction I had. I *cannot* tell Ron about that. Besides, that wasn’t Draco trying anything. He was trying to calm me. Wasn’t he?

“I mostly just told him about Leo.” I pause and look at my son, the late afternoon sun reflecting in his hair, creating an almost halo effect. “He’d like to meet him.”

“Do you think he should?”

“I mean, we’re here. I don’t know that I’d ever consider Draco a particularly great father figure, but he *is* Leo’s father. He’s not obviously insane, or anything. I think they both deserve this opportunity...” I hesitate, before continuing my thought, “...in case it doesn’t ever present itself again.”

Ron sits in silence for a few minutes, thinking and watching Leo pretend to eat Poppy’s mud pies. “He’s a good kid, isn’t he?”

“He really is.”

“Alright. You’re right,” he says, nodding his head. “They should at least meet once.” And with that, he takes my hand, kisses it, lets go, and gets up shouting, “Who wants to help me cook some fish?”

Chapter End Notes

One more epilogue to go....plus a few pieces of extra content that I'll post at the same time....and that's it!

WOW. It's been a ride, I can't believe we're almost at our destination. Thank you EVERYONE so much for reading along, commenting, and recommending this little story of mine.

Epilogue 3

Chapter Notes

Back to my comfort zone – Draco's POV!

(let's please not discuss what it means that this murderous awful Draco's POV is where I feel most comfortable)

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Bloody fucking hell.

Granger leaves the visitation room, and I can still feel the burning sensation where she touched my hand. It's like her fingerprints were seared into my flesh.

I didn't want to let go.

Besides Scorpius she's the first person to touch me in ages.

It was like falling off the wagon. Like I'd been sober for thirteen fucking years and just took my first sip of firewhiskey and felt the complete, absolute bliss of it sliding down my throat. Making me all warm inside.

She looked...just like my Granger. Beautiful. Her wild curls everywhere, brown and gold... maybe a few greys. Little hints of silver. More freckles than when she was with me — evidence of her freedom. Of time spent outside enjoying the sunshine. And her big brown eyes...fuck, I could get lost in them. So deep, so full of expression.

She looked so bloody good. So edible. Still so small, so petite. With a few extra curves, her breasts a little less perky, her hips a little wider. Evidence of what her body's been through — *four kids...three of them the fucking weasel's.*

Fucking mudblood.

I never should have sent her to America. To the weasel. I should have kept her. It wouldn't have been hard to convince her. She was as addicted to me as I was to her. She would have stayed in my quarters, and I could have had her whenever I wanted.

Fucking bitch.

Who the hell does she think she is just showing up here, anyway? Without a word's notice? Just suddenly walking into the fucking room like it hasn't been thirteen fucking years. Like she didn't get married to that fucking blood traitor. *Married*. To the weasel. I can't fucking stand the thought of his hands on her. Of him inside of her. Of him making her come.

Does he make her come as hard as I did?

My thoughts are interrupted when the guards come to move me back to my cell.

I'm really not in the mood for these arseholes.

Wands trained on me, they detach my restraints from the table and floor, preparing to take me out of the visitation room.

For fuck's sake. They're so incredibly disorganised. You'd think I was the first murderous prisoner they ever had to move. They're talking amongst themselves, trying to decide who will transfer my wrist restraints from my front to my back. Nobody realises they should have transferred them *before* detaching my ankle restraints from the floor. I can move about the room freely. They're honestly so fucking pathetic.

Maybe killing one of them will make me feel better?

It's worth trying.

All it takes is two steps and I'm behind the closest guard. I lift my arms and wrap the chain from my wrist restraints around his neck. My hands grasp his head, twist, and then a loud crack. His neck broken, I let his body fall to the floor, then look up at the other guards with vacant eyes.

They're painfully slow to react. One of them casts a stupefy my way, but I block it with wandless magic, his eyes bugging out as my protego shields me.

I shouldn't be able to do that here. Not with all the magic suppression wards on this place.

I smile at the guards and shrug my shoulders. I know I can't duel wandless, but it's fun to show them I have access to my magic. It leaves them wondering how much of it I can actually channel. What spells I can cast.

My goal, of course, is to cast some pretty powerful spells. I've been practising. I've had a lot of luck with a subtle legilimens, gleaning information here and there, delving a little deeper when I can. It's how I know what happened to Voldemort. The other Death Eaters. Nobody told me, of course. I've also had some success with the imperius curse – getting guards to give me double portions of food, or bring me things. I've got one guard whom I've compelled to supply me with parchment and quills regularly so I can write to Scorpius. And I've confounded others to forget their protocols – though that's often not necessary. They do that often enough on their own.

But I haven't tried anything too overt yet. It'd be pretty obvious if I tried a dark curse, and it only half took.

I still need to work up to those.

And so here I am, wandless, with three stunners headed my way.

When I wake up I'm back in my cell, with more than my fair share of new contusions. The guards of Azkaban are only brave when the prisoner's are out cold.

Fucking pussies.

I take a very careful deep breath in, checking how much damage there is. It hurts, but isn't overly painful – which means my ribs are bruised at best, but not broken. Satisfied, I sit up slowly, swing my legs over the side of my camp bed, and rest my elbows on my knees.

Thinking.

I can't believe how shocked Granger was that I'd killed Voldemort's snake. That she thought I'd actually want to bring the Dark Lord back again.

What the actual fuck?

Does she think I'm that selfish?

I mean, I am....there were lines I wouldn't cross in the past. But where my sons are concerned? I would do anything to keep them safe, no matter the consequences.

It's why I took the time to find and kill that fucking snake, rather than save myself.

And it's why I'm stuck in this shithole for the rest of my life.

Because there was no bloody way I was going to let that bastard come back again. Start another war for the next generation to fight. I don't want that for my boys. One pressured into taking the Dark Mark and serving that bloody psychopath, all because he bears the Malfoy name...the other hunted like an animal because he's been raised by mudbloods and blood traitors.

Over my dead body.

Now when Voldemort dies, it'll be for good.

I'm being moved to a visitation room.

Not only have the guards restrained my wrists and ankles to move me, but they've also got me around the neck with two fucking snare poles like a wild animal, to make sure I can't get close to any of them.

Honestly, I'm surprised they haven't done this sooner.

And as much as I'd like to break every one of these cocksuckers' necks at the moment, my mind can't help racing in other directions.

I saw Scorpius two days ago. They're not taking me to see him. It's got to be Granger and Leo.

I'm going to meet my son.

I'm led to the same room in which I typically visit with Scorpius – I'm never restrained in there, not with family – which means Leo is officially here as my son.

I'm also usually the last to arrive.

I breathe deeply and build up some substantial walls to make sure I'm good and calm when I enter the room. It's my first time meeting Leo and I'm in full restraints, tied up like a fucking animal. That's scary enough. I don't need to behave like one to scare him even more.

The guard in front of me opens the door, and I'm guided forward by my neck by the two arseholes handling the snare poles.

I see Granger first. She stands up from the chair she'd been sitting on, eyes wide and ablaze in indignation. "What on earth is the meaning of this?" she demands, pointing at me. "You've got him trussed up like an animal!"

"Leave it, Granger," I say calmly with a slight shake of my head. As the guards start removing the restraints on my ankles, then my hands, I scan the room.

There he is.

In the corner, watching with wide eyes. Her eyes.

I don't want to make eye contact with him yet. Not when I'm occluded so deeply. I clench my jaw and focus on the wall behind Granger instead.

The guards move away towards the door while I rub my wrists, my neck still ensnared. The head fuckwit looks at Granger and Leo saying, "Remember what I told you. He's dangerous and unpredictable, and because he won't be restrained you'll have little time to react should he try anything." Then, muttering under his breath he adds, "Honest to gods, I don't know why you insisted on a familial visitation room."

"Because they're family," Granger responds icily, looking pointedly between me and Leo. I mean, it's blatantly fucking obvious he's my son. He looks just like me.

“Well, we can’t be held responsible if something happens,” the guard counters.

“Nothing will happen,” I say and give the guard a look that implies something *will* happen to him if he doesn’t get on with it. He nods and leaves the room. Then the snares are removed from my neck, and the last two remaining guards hurriedly exit, closing and locking the door behind them.

I turn around to find Granger talking quietly to Leo.

“Are you sure?” she says.

“I’m sure,” he replies.

She nods, then looks between the two of us. “Well, Draco. This is Leo. Leo, this is your father.”

I look him in the eye. No walls, just me.

“Hello Leo,” I say. “I’ve been looking forward to meeting you. For a very long time.”

He looks up at me with those big brown eyes the exact colour of his mother’s – there’s not a trace of fear in them, only curiosity.

“Why did they have you restrained like that?” he asks – his accent takes me by surprise. It’s a strange mix of British and American English.

I rub my neck where the snares were, and look down, thinking. He’s thirteen years old. Old enough for me to be honest? I look at Granger for a split second, but she seems equally curious to know the answer. I decide to remain vague. Just in case.

“Because the guard wasn’t wrong when he said I can be dangerous and unpredictable,” I respond. “But you and your mother have nothing to worry about,” I add. Hopefully reassuringly.

Leo nods his head, then asks “So you’re still dangerous, even in prison?”

“I am.”

“Towards other prisoners, the guards, or both?”

“Mostly just the guards.”

He nods again and seems satisfied. Then looks at his mother, the door, and back.

“Right,” Granger says, and looks at me with an odd expression on her face. “Leo was hoping to get to know you on his own. Man to man, as it were...” she looks to Leo and finishes, “I’ll be right outside.” And with that, she knocks on the door and is let out of the room. Both Leo and I watch her go, and when the door closes, look at each other.

I nod towards the table and chairs, go take a seat. “Your mother tells me you’ve got quite the arm – that you play quidditch *and* baseball? Tell me about it...” I hesitate, scratch at my beard. “Though you may have to explain baseball to me. I know they run around in circles, and hit a ball with a stick, but...that’s about it.”

He gives me a lopsided smile.

Fuck, he’s a good looking kid.

“They’re not sticks,” he says, taking a seat next to me, “...they’re bats...” and he launches into a detailed explanation of the game he so clearly loves.

And just like that, I’m having a conversation with my first-born son.

We’re in the middle of discussing how Leo organises his thoughts and memories – into rooms with locked doors – when Granger re-enters. We both look up, somewhat surprised and a little irritated to be interrupted.

She smiles at us.

“It’s going well?” she asks.

“Yeah,” Leo responds animatedly, “we were just talking about occlumency.” Then, a little disappointed, “Is it time to go, already?”

“Already?” Granger says with surprise. “It’s been three hours.”

Fuck me, has it?

“Oh,” says Leo, nodding at his mother and standing up. “Okay.” Then to me, he asks, “I can write to you?”

I nod, “I’ll even write back.” He grins at my response.

I’ve lost count how many times he’s smiled. It feels fucking amazing to see my son smile at me. To see he isn’t scared. To know he wants to know me. Keep in touch.

I look at Granger, only to find her looking right back at me. She’s got a look, that, if I had to describe it, I’d call....intense. Hungry. Desperate.

“Leo?” I ask, not taking my eyes off his mother. “Can I have a few minutes with your mum?”

“Yeah, sure,” he says, heading to the door. “I’ll wait outside.”

He knocks and is let out of the room. As soon as the door closes, I stand up. Take the few steps needed to put myself right in front of her.

“Granger,” I say, my eyes running the length of her body.

“It went well?” she asks again, backing up and attempting to ignore the way I’m looking at her.

“Yeah, it was great,” I say absentmindedly, and cast a wandless silencing charm on the room.

“What are you doing, Draco?” she asks, alarm evident in her voice and eyes. “Why do you need a silencing charm?”

I look at her intently, step closer and back her up against the wall, run my hands up her arms. Our magic instantly reacts, sending delicious waves of burning heat and desire through my veins.

“I’m going to fuck you, Granger. Right here against this wall.” I say it very matter-of-factly, like it’s an absolute certainty.

I mean, it is. Quite possibly whether she wants to or not – they did say I was dangerous, didn’t they?

Her breath comes out in short panicky gasps. “But I can’t, Draco. Leo is right outside.”

“He can wait.”

“He might hear.”

“I cast a silencing charm.”

“I’m married, Draco. I’m married to Ron.” She’s breathing deeply. Her chest – her breasts – rising and falling with each breath.

“I don’t give a fuck.”

I lean forward and kiss her neck, right below her ear. The panic in her breath hitches, turns to something else. Anticipation. Her muscle memory kicks in, and her arms wrap around my neck, her hands twisting in my hair. Pulling it.

I kiss along her jawline to her mouth, then push inside and taste her tongue. My kisses are rough. Desperate. Messy.

I lean into her, our bodies pushed right up against one another, my erection digging into her waist. A small guttural moan escapes her.

Gods, yes.

My hands desperately rove across her body. I tangle them in her glorious curls, massaging her scalp, before I move them down her neck, over her collarbone, and onto her breasts where I pause, cupping them. I rub my thumbs over her nipples and feel them get hard through the fabric of her blouse. She lets out a little whimper as I move my hands away, down to circle around her waist, and finally to caress her hips. I place one hand between her legs, cup and rub her centre, and feel her whole body convulse as she gasps.

“Gods, Draco,” she breathes, pulling at my hair. “We shouldn’t be doing this.” What she says, or thinks, doesn’t stop her hands from making their way down from my neck, over my chest and stomach, to the waistline of my trousers. Then down to rub her hand over my cock.

I pull back from her and look her in the eye, “You’re mine, Granger. You will *always* be mine. Remember that.”

She nods.

“Repeat it, Granger,” I order. I desperately unzip her denims, and kneel down in front of her, pulling them down and off, along with her knickers, and her bloody fucking trainers which require untying, loosening, and removing.

“I’m yours,” she breathes. “I’ll always be yours.”

I’m at eye level with her cunt. And right above her mound of curly hair is a scar. I lift her blouse out of the way to get a better look at it. At the evidence of our son’s birth. I lean in and kiss all along it. Granger sighs and wraps her fingers in my hair. I wrap my arms around her and hold her tight.

Then I kiss her stomach one last time, before hitching her knee over my shoulder, and leaning in to inhale her irresistible musky scent before I lick her from arse to clit. “Ohhh, Draco,” she moans, and pushes her hips forward against my face.

Sweet fucking Salazar, she tastes good. I run my tongue over her again, through her folds, dip it into her slit, then back up to her clit to lick and suck on it before unhitching her leg from my shoulder. I stand up, put her leg around my hip instead and pull my cock out of my trousers. Running it back and forth over her dripping wet cunt, I pause and look at her, “Okay?”

She nods, and we both watch as I line myself up with her slit, rub my tip over her, and then slide my length into her. She’s wet, warm, and tight, and fuck she feels like home.

We both sigh audibly.

Content.

I begin moving in and out. I try to move slowly, but honestly it’s been years since I’ve fucked anyone, and it’s been forever since I’ve fucked my girl.

I’m not kidding myself. I’m not going to last long.

I start thrusting desperately. Fast. I can't fucking wait. I reach down and firmly rub her clit between us, trying to match the bucking of her hips.

"Oh, oh, oh," she moans with every thrust. "Harder," she commands, "Faster."

I remove my hand from between us, hold on to her hips and slam into her as deep as I can go, over and over again, grinding my pelvis against hers, my breaths coming out short and shallow.

"I'm going to come," I tell her. Unable to hold off any longer.

She nods her head in acknowledgment as I tense and start moving more slowly. "Nghhh," I groan as I lean heavily against her and release.

Fucking fuck.

I breathe deeply, leaning my forehead against the wall next to her. I remove my cock and replace it with my hand, returning my attention to her clit, determined to make her come. My other hand makes its way to her breast. Cupping it, rubbing circles around it, teasing her nipple.

"It's okay, Draco," she says softly, pulling away slightly.

"You're next," I say firmly, pushing her back against the wall, kissing her harshly on the mouth, and biting her lower lip.

She doesn't argue.

It takes a few minutes of kissing, licking and biting her neck, and fingering her deeply – the heel of my hand pushing hard against her clit – to get her back to her fevered bucking, but we get there.

"Oooh," she moans into my mouth as her lips go cold, and she raises herself up onto her toes. Her fingernails dig into my arms and her cunt clenches around my fingers as she lets out a final, drawn out cry.

Gods I've missed the look of ecstasy on her face when she comes.

I give her one last deep kiss, then back up. Lick my hand clean and put myself away, as she pulls her knickers and denims back on. Puts on and laces her trainers.

She looks up from her crouched position and....she's about to panic. I can see it in her eyes.

"Granger?" I ask.

"We shouldn't have done that," she says, covering her mouth with her hand. "What have I done? Everyone will know." She gasps and looks at me. "I just cheated. I've never cheated."

"Firstly," I tell her calmly, "no one will know." I cast a quick glamour over her, to mask her flushed features. My love bites. "And secondly, you have most definitely cheated before."

Her eyes open wide, affronted.

“I have not!”

“If not cheated, then....you’ve been dishonest. Manipulative.”

She looks at me for a very long time.

“With me,” I add for precision.

“You’re right,” she says, getting up. “But I’ve never done anything like this,” her voice trembles as she speaks.

“Do you regret it?”

Another pregnant pause.

“No.”

I knew it. The weasel definitely doesn’t make her come like I can.

If at all.

“Good. Now let me help you get that guilty as fuck look off your face.”

“What do you mean? What are you going to do?” she asks warily.

“You look like the cat that ate the canary, Granger – I can glamour away the physical effects of us fucking, but not that look on your face.” I walk up to her, take her hand. “You’re going to have to let me in,” I say gently, prodding at her mind with my legilimency. “Let me in,” I repeat. “I’ll be gentle.”

She takes a deep breath and nods. I take her by the shoulders, look in her eyes, then I slowly, carefully dip into her thoughts, fluttering over her memories of the last....fifteen minutes? Is that all? Honestly, it feels like something momentous, but really, it was only moments. I take us, the burning heat of our touch, the desire, the passion, the actual fucking, and...where can I put it? Her mind is chaotic. Completely fucking disorganised. I don’t know how she can even think, let alone where I can hide something this big. I create a lock box amongst the disorder and place the last fifteen minutes into it. Lock it. Push it to the back of her mind and bury it in the mess. And then I smoothly back out of her head.

I look at her. The expression on her face looks...more or less normal.

“Better?” I ask.

“Better,” she confirms, and smiles before saying, “Thank you, Draco.”

“No, Granger. Thank *you* . For....everything today.” I look at her, drinking her in, memorising everything about her, how she’s changed over the years, but still remains the same. So beautiful. “You should go,” I say, as I reach up and pull one of her curls.

She nods. “I really should,” she says, and moves to the door. Knocks.

I step back, distancing myself.

When it opens, Leo is standing just outside. He peers into the room, looking from his mother to me, and back again.

I’d bet every galleon in my vaults the little shit knows.

I address him over his mother’s shoulder, saying “I look forward to your letters, Leo.”

He smiles and asks, “And responding to them?”

“And responding to them,” I confirm, smirking.

Then I look to Granger – to the woman I still fucking love after all this time – and softly say, “Goodbye Hermione.”

Then the guards close the door and lock me in until they’re ready to move me back to my cell.

Chapter End Notes

And that's the last epilogue folks...Draco has *finally* met his son and they're going to write and have a relationship.

And Hermione? She's still his...

Keep reading! I've got some extra content to help wrap this story up and guarantee our HEA.

Correspondence 1 - Leo

Chapter Notes

So Draco's still in Azkaban. His only means of communication? Letters.

The following three chapters consist of a selection of correspondence from Leo, Hermione and Draco. They span a few years and are not, by any means, complete. Snapshots, as it were.

In keeping with our single point of view, we're also only seeing one side of the conversation at a time.

There's *some* overlap between them, but you'll mostly have to imagine how the recipient is replying.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Dad,

Is it weird to call you that? I don't know how else to refer to you. Father sounds too...I don't know. Like something I'd never actually say.

I was hoping you could tell me more how you organize your thoughts. Especially pushing them to the back of your mind. I'm good at compartmentalizing, but I feel like everything's still at the surface, if that makes sense?

Mom has zero books on occlumency. I'm hoping to check at school when I get back in 3 weeks.

(I don't know how long it'll take to write back – if it's close to September 1st, maybe send your letter to Ilvermorny rather than home?)

Leo

Dad,

I didn't expect you to write so much.

(How do you get parchment in prison, anyway? Or ink? Or quills? Are quills considered dangerous because they're sharp? Does that make a difference? Mom says you can kill people with your hands. Should I send you some muggle pens? They're still kinda sharp, but at least they don't require ink pots. Let me know what color you want – blue or black?)

Anyway, it helps to know the more walls you build the harder the memory is to access...now I need to find my own equivalent. More doors? Seems too easy to open.

I'll have to think about it.

It'd be hard, but maybe I need to switch my compartmentalization method. Use something I can't imagine opening so easily. Maybe build walls like you.

There are some books on occlumency at school, but the librarian keeps eyeing me suspiciously whenever I check them out. Says she's never seen a third year interested in something so advanced. I think she thinks I have something to hide.

I don't.

Not really.

I mean, I was kind of behind the dung bomb incident at the beginning of term.

And it was me who put the permanent sticking charm on Professor Innes' chalk two weeks ago (it was SO amazing, it was stuck to his hand for days....he finally realized the only way to get it off was to use it).

And I did hex Chester Greeves in the halls yesterday (but only because he was bullying a first year — he totally deserved it).

Maybe I do need to hide things better.

Don't tell Mom?

Leo

Mom,

I know you're disappointed I got detention for hexing someone, but did you really have to send a howler?

You never even asked for my side of the story.

I didn't just decide to hex Chester for no reason. He was bullying a first year. So bad it made him cry. You always tell me to stick up for those who can't do it themselves. That's all I did.

Besides, I didn't even use my wand.

L.

Dad,

It's safe to say you and Mom have very different opinions on my ability to cast a wandless hex.

Leo

Dad,

Since you ask, I did make the quidditch team this year.

Beater again.

I was maybe hoping for chaser? You know, a position where I get to throw a ball, rather than hit it. Not that I don't like beating....it's just I figure anything that's closer to pitching helps me practice both sports in some way.

The team's got a new keeper. His name's Jeremy, and he can catch anything. I asked him to help me practice pitching – can you believe he'd never even heard of baseball? I know he's from an all magical family but has he been living under a rock? It is America's pastime, after all.

Anyway, I told him he doesn't need to know anything about it, so long as he can wear a glove and catch. Typical seeker said the glove made it too easy, so I told him to go ahead and try catching a pitch bare handed.

He did catch it – but he ended up in the infirmary with two fractures. I feel like my pitches are getting stronger.

I wonder if there's a spell to measure how fast I'm throwing? Muggles use a radar gun to measure speed – surely we can come up with something?

Leo

Dad,

It works!!!

I can't believe you created a spell without even being able to practice or test it! All based on theory – and it actually works!!

I mean, it took me a few attempts to figure out how to say it – to get the words to sound right (I'm American, remember? In the end, I pretended to be pretentious and imagined how Mom would say the words) – but once I did, it worked perfectly (at least I think it did? I don't really have anything to test it against, but it seems right).

Mom tells me you used to create curses.

Is that true? What kind were they?

Leo

Wow. Remind me never to piss you off.

L.

Holy crap.

I got accepted to baseball camp in Florida this summer. If I do good there, and if I can find somewhere to actually play during the school year, it could put me on track for the minor leagues when I'm older.

Do you think school would let me floo to practices and games next year?

Dad,

It is so hot in Florida.

I'm melting.

But camp? Is amazing. The coaches are really good. One of them showed me a new way to hold the ball and now I'm throwing pitches at almost 90 miles per hour, which seems to make everyone really excited. They've got me practicing with the 16-year olds.

I can't believe summer is almost over. Only two weeks left, then back home for a week before school.

For the first time I'm not really looking forward to it. I mean, I want to see my friends. But I won't be able to play ball. Somehow quidditch just isn't the same.

Leo

Dad,

What did you do?

Before I left for school, Dad (the other one) went on a big rant to Mom about galleons not buying everything, and that I shouldn't be handed things on a silver platter. For the first time in my life, Mom didn't have a counter-argument. She just said to let it be. Which is not like her. I couldn't figure out what they were on about.

But then I got to school and the headmistress called me to her office right after the welcome feast. I didn't even make it to my dorm. Said I've been given special permission to floo off school grounds to play muggle baseball in the Boston league so long as it doesn't interfere with my studies.

Did you pay off the school?

Is that even possible?

If so....you're the BEST! THANK YOU!

Leo

p.s. You won't be disappointed if I skip quidditch this year?

Hey Dad,

Sorry for not writing. Between school and practice, I've been so busy. I don't know how I'll manage next year with O.W.L.S. Do you think Mom would be angry if I stopped school after that? Focused on baseball?

Uncle George never finished Hogwarts, and he does just fine. Brilliant, really.

I can always take my N.E.W.T.S. later.

Leo

Hey, so I just found out the school is building an annex for a new potions lab. We'll finally be out of the basement.

What I couldn't figure out – at least at first – was why they were giving me a tour of the construction site. Until I realized. It's because of you.

You're paying for the annex, aren't you? So I could play baseball during school?

Geez, Dad...how rich are you?

Leo

Dad,

I can't believe summer is already over. Baseball camp was even better than last year. My pitches are up to 93 mph, nobody can hit my curveball, and everyone is saying I've got a chance to play for real.

I can't believe it.

Question: Is it possible to use occlumency to hide or bury something, but not completely? Like, just so it doesn't distract you? I can't stop thinking about something, and I think I might go crazy. It keeps repeating over and over in my head, and I feel like I just want to stop the loop, you know?

Play it back once, or on demand, but not constantly and out of control?

I kissed someone for the first time. It was...totally amazing, and I can't stop thinking about it. I literally can't. stop. thinking. about. it.

I feel like I'm losing my mind.

The thing is? What has me worrying, and maybe obsessing about it so much...is that it was another guy. The catcher I was practising with all summer at camp. I kissed him on our last night (he kissed me back – that was a relief). I haven't told anyone yet. And I only think I can tell you because I'm writing and don't have to look at you.

It felt...right. Really good, actually.

I hope that's okay?

Leo

p.s. Is Scorpius excited for Hogwarts this fall? Rose and Marigold won't shut up about joining me at Ilvermorny. Gods, I hope they don't end up in Horned Serpent.

Wow....that was...not the response I was expecting.

But it's all good – I freaked out a bit after sending my last letter, worried you'd be disappointed with me.

After everything I've heard about purebloods – especially the old aristocratic families – and how conservative they can be, I was worried you might be the same.

I guess not?

L.

Dad,

The gods are kind. Rose is in Wampus house and Marigold was sorted into Pukwudgie. We barely see each other except at mealtimes.

Though I think they're starting a new trend. Some kind of inter-house unity thing – they keep sitting at the Horned Serpent table to eat with me. Considering I barely see them because of school and then baseball camp – I kinda like it.

(I'd never admit that to them, though.)

Did Scorpius end up in Slytherin?

Leo

Dad,

I'm thinking life would be easier if I just became a dumb jock.

We haven't even made it to Christmas, and I'm already stressed about O.W.L.S. It doesn't help that all my professors are constantly going on about how important this year is, and reminding us how we do on our O.W.L.S. will determine what jobs we can do later. Like that isn't a huge amount of pressure to put on a fifteen year old, you know?

(Not that O.W.L.S. will help me play baseball...but that's a whole other story.)

I am keeping up with my work, though. Don't worry (I don't actually expect you to worry — Mom does. Too much. Enough for all of us). It's just really hard with baseball practice added in. I have no down time.

Add to that the fact both you and Mom got so many Outstandings, and I feel like I have a lot to live up to (maybe I'll just try to do as well as my other Dad — he wasn't such a nerd).

Leo

Thanks Dad,

It's good to know I can always fall back on being a spoiled rich kid.

Leo

Dad,

I don't know what happened, but Rose, Marigold and I got home for Christmas break and Dad wasn't there. He left?

Mom's a mess. Poppy is confused.

We all are.

Leo

Chapter End Notes

And yes, I know....the spelling in this chapter shifted to American English....because Leo's American, and that's how he'd have been taught in school.

Correspondence 2 - Hermione

Draco,

Thank you for your letter and your kind words.

Though I must admit it was rather unexpected. In fact, it left me with the distinct impression you meant the opposite of everything you wrote. That you're not at all sorry to hear Ron left me, but rather very pleased. Though I obviously couldn't see your face, I could imagine it, and felt your smirk behind every single word.

I don't hold it against you, of course. I know it's difficult being stuck in your cell, with no hope of ever leaving. Watching everyone else live while you can't. Misery loves company, right?

Now we're both miserable.

H.

Draco,

If you must know – I was talking in my sleep. About my deepest, darkest secrets.

H.

Draco,

Leo informed me last night he wants to leave Ilvermorny after he takes his O.W.L.S.

Did you know about this?

I know Ilvermorny isn't going to help him reach his dreams of playing professional baseball, but there's got to be a better solution than dropping out of school.

He's too young for the minors anyway.

H.

Draco,

I understand creating a spell for Leo was a fun exercise for you, and I'm sure it feels really good knowing it worked (though apparently he really did struggle with the proper intonation – poor kid has such a mix of British and American in him – Godric knows I cringe every time I see him spelling in American English).

But I do not need you to create a curse for Ron.

I repeat. DO NOT create any curses for Ron.

H.

Draco,

I was rather surprised by your suggestion, but you were right.

I found a private muggle boarding school focused on sports in California. It's got a great baseball program, and a great track record for turning out professional players.

It's where the college scouts go to find upcoming talent, and offer scholarships to the best colleges and universities. From there, if Leo's really got what it takes, he'll be in a position for the minor and major league scouts.

I think it'd be a great fit for him.

It costs a fortune.

Can we afford to send him there for three years?

H.

I get it.

You're very rich.

H.

Draco,

Am I to understand you already knew Leo is gay?

He says he told you in a letter last year, that you were supportive, and the only advice you gave him was to 'make sure he finds a bloke with a big cock'.

Honestly?

That's what you told a young man exploring his sexuality?

Thankfully he has a good head on his shoulders, and knows to take most of what you say with a grain of salt.

But I didn't write to admonish you for your terrible advice (though it was really terrible – horrendous, awful advice).

Rather, I wanted to share the news that Leo has his first boyfriend. His name is Jeremy, he's from Vermont, and is seeker for the Horned Serpent house team. A very down-to-earth and polite young man – quite good looking too! Sandy brown hair, big blue eyes. More slight than Leo, but it seems to work in his favour as seeker. They're terribly cute together.

I got to meet him at Ilvermorny's open house last week, where we toured the school and watched an exhibition quidditch match. When I saw the boys holding hands I just about melted.

Unfortunately, I don't expect it will last seeing as Leo isn't heading back to Ilvermorny in the fall. But it is a big milestone for him.

Our young man is growing up.

Hermione

Since you ask, yes.

The divorce is final.

H.

Draco,

Thank you for the ‘your divorce is final’ flowers.

They were absolutely beautiful, if not slightly over the top.

Did you get your solicitor to send them? Or did you imperius that poor bloke who supplies you with parchment and quills? I hope, at the very least, you reimburse him?

Hermione

Draco,

It was a different experience sending the kids off to school this year. Three different drop offs!

Leo wanted to arrive at his new school the same as all the other muggle students, so he and I flew to California in an aeroplane, stayed in a muggle hotel, and then took a taxi to the school on drop off day.

It was an adventure, to say the least. Leo declared it was one he doesn’t ever need to repeat again (he didn’t much like the change in cabin pressure as the plane took off and touched down). He won’t have to. There’s a public floo just 1.5 miles away from the school we can use in the future.

Then it was back home for me (by said floo), where Ron and I dropped the twins off for Ilvermorny. It’s really too bad they only had one year there with Leo (but if I look at it from a different perspective, at least they had that one year with him to get accustomed to being away from home).

And can you believe Poppy is off to school too? We’re sending her to a local magical kindergarten – I’d wanted to send her to a muggle one, but she has so many outbursts of

accidental magic, I didn't think it wise.

The house feels empty.

I officially feel old.

Hermione

That's easy for you to say, Draco. You don't have to look in a mirror everyday.

Besides, society (magical society included) is still of the opinion that while women get old, men get distinguished. It's not right.

Can you believe young people are starting to refer to me as ma'am? Even one of the guards at Azkaban did so, and I don't even think he was that much younger than me.

Hermione

I will not tell you who it was.

I'm afraid you'd imperius him. Or worse.

Hermione

Dear Draco,

I never thought I'd say this, but I absolutely love having Leo at the muggle school.

They encourage students to go home as often as possible on weekends. Something about allowing them to better unwind and get support from friends and family. Little do they know, Leo crosses the whole country every second weekend to do so. He uses the floo at the pub not too far from there.

I love it.

I love having him home so often.

I've made sure to coordinate with Ron, so Poppy is always here to see him. She loves it, too.

Yours, Hermione

Dear Draco,

I may be overstepping, but was wondering – would Scorpius like to come visit with us over the Christmas holiday? We could arrange for a portkey direct to our house.

Leo has been wanting to meet his brother for ages, and it seems the girls will be with Ron for a large part of the break (though I'll have them up until Christmas eve).

Let me know – we would be happy to have him.

Yours, Hermione

Dear Draco,

Thank you so much for your Christmas gift.

How ever did you manage to track down a first edition? Who found it for you? Where? It doesn't matter. You could have imperiused every single guard at Azkaban and had them scouring the entire country to pull this off. I don't care. I love it.

It's an absolutely beautiful book, and in wonderful condition. Is it strange I'm afraid to read it? In case I damage it?

I can almost hear you telling me the whole point of books is to read them. But you also throw, dog-ear, and annotate rare and precious texts, so I feel like I can't listen to your voice in my head.

I'll compromise. I'll read it once, and then keep it safe on a shelf, and reserve bedtime readings for my old battered up copy.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

This means so much to me.

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

I feel like I should tell you about Christmas dinner, if only because I'm sure Scorpius will, and I don't want you to think I'm trying to hide anything.

Molly invited me and the boys to a big family dinner, complete with the whole Weasley gang, many of whom we haven't seen for quite some time as they've all dispersed across the country, or returned to Britain or Europe. Leo begged to go – wanting to see Ron as well as his aunts and uncles – and so I acquiesced.

Everything seemed to be going smoothly until a little later in the evening, when we'd all probably had a little too much to drink. Some comments were made as to why Scorpius was spending Christmas with us. Implications that he didn't belong. I put a stop to them at once, telling everyone he's Leo's brother, and therefore family. End of story.

And that was the end of it. It didn't come up again.

But what really got to me was the subtext of what was said. The looks they gave me. Especially Ron. What they all really wanted to know was how we'd gotten to a point that your son is spending Christmas break with us. How and why I'm treating Scorpius like family.

Maybe I'm reading too much into it.

Anyhow, we have the whole rest of our Christmas holiday ahead of us. I'm looking forward to getting to know Scorpius better.

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

The boys are getting on wonderfully. It's amazing to watch them together. Honestly, it's amazing just to look at them side-by-side – you were right, they really do look alike. Especially the hair – it's exactly like yours, and I can't stop thinking about that ancestor who

charmed the entire Malfoy line to have it, and so guarantee paternity. Without a doubt, it works.

I think you once told me the Malfoy's rarely had more than one male child – now you have two. Do you think if you had another it might be a girl? And would she inherit your blonde hair as well?

There has been a lot of sports talk over the last few weeks.

Leo is determined to improve Scorpius' broom skills. I think he's actually had some success – though you know how miserable I am on a broom, so I may not be the best judge.

Meanwhile, Scorpius has been lecturing Leo on the importance of statistics in sports. They started with quidditch, but then Leo showed him baseball stats, and I swear Scorpius' eyes were as wide as saucers (you probably don't know, but baseball has league stats, team stats, player stats, as well as stats for each individual pitch, and it goes on and on and on). It's a statistician's dream.

Scorpius delved right into the data and is now, I think, obsessed. They've pulled out all of Leo's playing statistics from camp and school and are attempting to track his progress and calculate his chances of making the major leagues.

It's so much fun to watch. I wish you could see them together.

Scorpius is such a great kid. You must be so proud of him.

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

Summer break is fast approaching, and with Leo so completely engrossed in sports all year long at school, we're forgoing baseball camp.

I was thinking of taking the kids to Britain for a holiday. I'm pretty sure I can manage on my own, now that Poppy's six.

...would you like to meet the girls? Could we all spend time with Scorpius?

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

I think it would blow Poppy's mind to meet a real house-elf. Are you serious? Would Boots be available to help with the kids?

(And why am I so excited at the idea of help from a house-elf? Though she is a particularly exceptional one – I thought I wanted them all to be liberated? I must be slipping in my old age.)

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

It's settled.

All five of us will arrive in Wales and stay with Scorpius at the estate.

We'll visit with you as much as we can. They tell us it's only Scorpius and Leo who are allowed to visit more frequently because they're family....but I'm working on it.

(I feel there's got to be a loophole somewhere, I just need to find it.)

Love, Hermione

Dear Draco,

I dreamt of you last night.

Do you remember after the Greengrass gala? In your study? I woke up with a feeling I haven't had in a very very long time.

Afterwards I touched myself, just the way you encouraged and instructed me to do all those years ago in the safe house. Only I imagined it was you. Your fingers. Your tongue. Your... everything.

Gods, Draco. How is it after all this time, after all these years, after everything I know you've done – I'm still yours? It feels like an addiction. One I can't break. What am I supposed to do when all I want is you, but you're behind bars for the rest of your life?

Love, Hermione

Correspondence 3 - Draco

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Once? You dreamt about me once?

Are you fucking kidding me?

I think and dream about you – and every dirty filthy thing I want to do to you – every day and night.

D.

Granger,

Why would I be against Leo dating a muggle? I expected it would happen, considering he's at a muggle school and almost exclusively interacting with them.

As far as I'm concerned he can date whoever he wants.

I know my history and political views would suggest otherwise – I know you probably don't believe me – but it's different with Leo. He's not my heir (he is, actually...I've written him into my will as an heir, but he's not the Malfoy heir). He won't be inheriting my title, or the manor (fuck...nobody wants that awful place), and there's no need for him to marry or produce an heir of his own.

That honour and obligation will fall to Scorpius – if he wants it (I've made it clear that's all optional – the world might be a better place if the Malfoy line dies out, anyway).

Which leaves Leo free to be gay, and date whomever he chooses.

D.

Granger,

Please tell me you read something other than law texts? It sounds insufferably boring.

Even more boring than your nineteenth century upper middle class heroines looking for husbands. You must read for pleasure as well, rather than just work?

Speaking of reading, I have an assignment for you. Send me my favourite book? They've confiscated my copy just because they're complete and utter dicks, and I feel lost without it. It reminds me of you. Of how we used to discuss the novels you'd bring me.

The second part of your assignment is to send me photos. Of you. I don't want anything artistic or merely suggestive. I want explicit photos of you getting yourself off like the dirty little mudblood I know you are. I want to get hard just looking at them.

Magical would be ideal, but I'll accept muggle too. I know you can make those at home.

Extra points for creativity if you use props.

D.

p.s. The guards do go through everything before it makes it to me....charm your photos so they look innocuous at first glance.

Leo,

Despite your mother's very strong opinions, it's totally normal – and expected – for a sixteen year old to want to fuck his boyfriend.

As for advice? Use lube. Make sure you have it on hand. DO NOT use magic, no matter how randy you are. You are not to break the statute of secrecy over anal sex. If you're on the giving end, you'll want to loosen him up with your finger first, before attempting to enter him. Once you're in, it'll feel fucking amazing.

No matter how good it feels, or how desperate you are to come, never forget there are two of you. Check your bloke is feeling it. Make sure he gets off, too.

I have no experience being on the receiving end. You'll have to ask your mother.

D.

p.s. Do not ask your mother. She'd be mortified, and would never forgive me for suggesting it.

Fuck me, Granger.

You really are a dirty bitch.

D.

Scorpius,

A few ground rules for when the Grangers are visiting:

- Hermione ~~hates~~ loves rules – try not to break too many in front of her. She'll expect everyone under the age of seventeen to be wandless throughout the summer (and your brother until his actual birthday). Maybe check with Leo what her level of tolerance is for wandless magic.
- Do not, under any circumstances, use or talk about dark magic around the Grangers. This includes spells, potions, and blood magic. They're a light household. I don't expect the kids have had any exposure to dark magic at all.
- The only exception might be for Poppy. I'm told she wanders and can get lost. I'll write Hermione and check if she wants a blood ward to keep her on the premises – the forests around the estate are thick, and the cliffside steep. If so, that is the only blood magic you are to perform. Do it quickly and without fanfare. Use a numbing charm on Poppy's hand before cutting it.
- Keep the experiments to a minimum. At the very least, use precautions, and get the elves to cast protective shields (remember you're supposed to be wandless). Leo and the twins should be fine, but Poppy is six. She won't follow instructions. She will be curious.
- Finally, don't be a little shit. I know you're acting man of the house, but don't let it go to your head. They're your guests.

D.

Granger,

Scorpius may or may not be a particularly good host during your visit. He is, after all, a thirteen year old and we both know from experience that thirteen year old Malfoys are insufferable little arseholes.

If he gives you trouble, talk to Boots. She's far more effective dealing with him than any governess or guardian has ever been.

Make yourselves at home at the estate.

You've mentioned Poppy wanders and doesn't follow instructions — I'll let you assess the situation when you arrive, but I'd suggest wards to keep tabs on her, and limit her movements. You'll see when you get there. Scorpius is perfectly capable of applying them, to whatever degree you deem necessary.

D.

Yes, Granger.

I was referring to blood wards. And yes my thirteen year old son knows how to apply them.

He knows how to do lots of things thirteen year olds shouldn't.

His dad's in prison for life, remember?

Granger,

I apologise if my last letter was — how did you call it? Snippy?

You touched a nerve.

I'm doing the best I can for Scorpius, but the fact remains I'm stuck in this fucking prison until the day I die. It kills me I can't be the dad he deserves.

It kills me I barely see him now he's at Hogwarts. It kills me he's going to grow up and move on with his life – as he should – and not have time to write or visit anymore.

Maybe I'm getting old and sentimental, but I just wish we could be a family again. That I could actually participate in his life, rather than watch it from the sidelines.

Fuck.

I'm fucking pathetic.

If any guards at Azkaban find themselves dead or imperiused into doing something dangerous or ridiculous today — it'll be your fault Granger. I need to take my mind off this.

D.

Put your mind at ease, Granger.

There's nothing you could say or do that I wouldn't forgive. Case in point: you married the fucking weasel, of all people, and bore his children — yet somehow I got over it. Or maybe I just didn't care? You were never really his.

As for the guards, none of them have met an untimely death of late. At least not as a result of your letter.

D.

Granger,

You realise there's no loophole to being family, right?

You either are, or you aren't.

D.

Leo,

To answer your first question, it's about finding balance. If you bury too much, you bury yourself as well. You'll seem cold and distant. Detached. I don't expect that's what you're going for.

The reason it's so much harder with your boyfriend than with your classmates and teachers is because there's an emotional connection between you. He expects to know you. He expects to see you, not some vacant empty version of you.

So you can't just take your magic and wall it up like you do with others. There's too much of you tied up in it. Your magic is a part of who you are. You'll need to spend time compartmentalising it into what's safe to leave on the surface, and what needs to be hidden and locked up. It's difficult and takes practice, but it can be done. And once you figure it out, it'll become easier. Second nature.

It's how I pushed the dark magic back when I was with your mother.

As for your second question, no. You're both strong and healthy young men. I think it's safe to say you can fuck as much as you want.

D.

Granger,

Is being my family an option?

D.

Granger,

I can't fucking believe I'm going to write this but...think about what you're saying. I am and always will be Draco Malfoy. Death Eater. Pureblood supremacist. Dark wizard. Butcher of bloody Britain.

I'm a villain through and through.

I'm in Azkaban for life. Convicted of unspeakable crimes against humanity. There is no chance I'm ever getting out of here. I've killed nine guards now — I think it's safe to say there'll be no exceptions for good behaviour.

Are you really sure?

You're not toying with me?

Because as far as I'm concerned you're already mine. You always have been and you always will be. But if you say you want to be mine in every sense, officially? That you want to be my family? I will fucking hold you to it. Forever. I will not let you go again, Granger.

So you'd better be sure. Because there'll be no backing out of it.

I'm serious.

Once you agree to be mine — body, mind and soul — I will fucking destroy anyone or anything that comes between us. You will belong to me until my dying breath.

D.

Scorpius,

Boots tells me your trip to the vault was long, dusty, and frustrating — but ultimately a success. Thank you. You don't know how much I appreciate you doing that for me, son.

There's one last thing I need you to do, though.

I can't remember the title but Boots knows the book. It's bound in green leather, and should be in my study at the estate. You'll want to look up the curse itself — it hasn't got a name but is rather a description. Something like 'To repel the impure'? It'll be obvious when you find it. The counter-curse is handwritten in the margins.

Let me know if the ring gives you any trouble.

D.

Hermione,

I love you, too.

Can't wait to see you,

Draco

End.

Chapter End Notes

It feels almost surreal that this is it....the end.

I hope you enjoyed my slightly different take on an HEA....no jailbreaks or random pardons. The Butcher of Britain will not miraculously get out of Azkaban so he can be with Hermione*. But he is in love with her. She's in love with him. They're going to be together as best they can (we know prison has *never* stopped these two before). They're going to be a family as best they can, too.

THANK YOU SO MUCH for joining me on this adventure. For reading, commenting, kudo-ing, and recommending this little story of mine. I appreciate it so so much.

* at least not yet.

If you, like me, have fallen in love with this murderous villainous Draco....I have plans for him.

There's more to come.

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