

Seeds to Sand

by aerynfire

On the run with Draco following the death of Dumbledore, a restless Snape seeks to escape the tedium of his existence...if only for one night.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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On entering the bar, Snape stopped and looked around, containing the urge to turn on his heel and walk back out. The place was so unutterably typical of a mid-range hotel bar at nine thirty on a Thursday night that it was almost painful with its brown leather booths, chairs, wood panelling, and art deco table lamps. The lighting was also ridiculously subdued, the designers obviously aiming for understated class -- but instead, it gave the bar a seamy air.

In the far corner, the high-pitched syncopated sound and half witted patter of a smarmy middle-aged pianist had attracted one obviously desperate woman to flirt with him. Around the too-dark room, a few other guests sat about in small knots or alone in near silence.

It looked for all the world like one of those cheaply produced spy movies his father used to watch on television while getting drunk.

He eyed the long, sleek bar -- the only thing that had him here. If one didn't count the boredom, that is.

He was thoroughly aggravated with sitting alone upstairs in his poorly decorated room, and even more incensed when he wasn't alone. This was his and Draco's fourth hotel in three weeks as they moved about the expanse of the United States on the orders of Lord Voldemort, who wasn't keen to have the two most wanted wizards in Europe too close to him during this key period in his plans. And so they had gone to ground in the far safer environs of America, away from Europe's Aurors, keeping a low profile as 'father and son,' while playing the Muggle through and through.

His jaw clenched as he observed the scene around him. He'd spent his last summer babysitting Peter Pettigrew and *now* he had Draco. It was no improvement.

God, he wished Dumbledore was still alive...just so he could kill him again for putting him through this hell. Him and Voldemort both.

After straightening the charcoal grey tie, he checked the placement of his hair. It was pulled back into a neat ponytail as a concession to his role of travelling businessman and he still found it odd to have it so constrained, but there were, he decided, far more irritating constraints. His need for a decent drink and some time away from his room -- and the boy -- was infinitely stronger than his loathing of the pathetic nature of this bar.

As he moved towards the bar, he passed two salesmen -- one quite drunk and alone with his samples case by his feet and the other in the far right hand corner with a woman. Probably a hooker or a barfly. She'd been hanging around near here every time he'd passed the place. And she...no doubt...was the reason Draco had kicked up such a fuss about not being allowed to come downstairs with him and why he'd had to seal the lock on the doors and windows of the boy's rooms.

The boy was entirely too prone to boasting...and let near a woman he thought he had half a chance of getting his leg over, be she Muggle or not, he'd lay it on thicker than

Hagrid spreading jam on his bread. If Draco had had his way, they would be playing the part of millionaires, flashing money around like water...the boy seemed to feel that, if he had to suffer the indignity of pretending to be a Muggle, he might as well do it at the top level.

And thus making them noteworthy.

Idiot child.

If ever proof was required that there was no way the boy could have complied with the Dark Lord's request to deal with Dumbledore, the past few weeks had proved it. Once his fear had disappeared, Draco's overbearing arrogance had kicked back in and swamped his intelligence with self-pitying snobbery.

The sooner the Dark Lord let Narcissa convince him to place her son with her for hiding, the better. He was sick of watching over the whiner. Draco was, in his opinion, getting to be as bad as Potter. Potter, whose annoying presence and misconstruing of the situation with Dumbledore happened to be the third reason he was here seeking a way to dull his ennui.

A lone woman sat at the far left end of the bar, her laptop open and her fingers moving over the keyboard in between sips of her vodka and cranberry juice. Her hair was up and held back with a pencil, and though she wore casual clothes, she definitely looked as if she was staying here due to business.

Tugging on the jacket of his single-breasted black suite, he took a seat about three stools away from her, taking care to keep the large mirror that hung in the middle of the long bar to his right, so he could watch the entrance in it but not be seen in its reflection.

"Brandy," he told the barman before the grey-haired man had a chance to ask. "Napoleon V.S.O.P. Not...V.S...not...O.P...V.S.O.P," he warned him.

The bartender pursed his lips. "A man of taste. Coming right up." Looking at his other customer, the barman asked, "You okay, ma'am?"

"Hmmm?" she replied absently, not even noticing that there was another presence before her until she glanced up from her screen. "Oh! No...I'm fine...no wait...do you have nachos and onion rings?" She scanned the small upright bar menu by her hand.

"Onion rings, yep." The bartender turned and picked up a rather dusty dark bottle of brandy and opened it. "What kind of nachos?"

"Loaded...extra cheese and guacamole," she answered, flashing the grey-haired man a smile. "I forgot to eat lunch."

"Then you should consider real food." Snape didn't look at her as the bartender passed him his drink and took his money.

Her eyebrow arched as she turned to take in the unexpected commentator. "Sure...if there was anything open this time of night in this town. Instead...I'll settle for a large nachos and onion rings."

"Doesn't this place have room service?" he addressed the bartender before taking a sip of the twenty dollar drink.

"Sure does...open till midnight," the other man replied as he returned Snape's change to him. "But...you have to be *in* your room."

"And after travelling around and being in twelve such rooms...I'm not looking at another set of four walls with bad art for longer than I have to," the woman added before smiling again at the bartender. "No offence."

"Hey, none taken...I ain't the decorator!" he said, holding his hands up with a smile.

"No...that would be the colour-blind fool with the zebra fetish," Snape interjected with a sneer, referring to the off-colour striations that adorned every bedroom wall.

The bartender chuckled as he picked up the phone to call the kitchen. "Sounds about right. Anything food-wise for you, sir?"

He was about to say no, but it occurred to him that he, too, hadn't had dinner thanks to Draco's petulance about staying in what he regarded as 'another cheap Muggle dive.' That argument had resulted in yet another long 'chat' involving a satisfying amount of threats.

"Have you any of those...chicken things...with that honey mustard dipping sauce?" He had acquired a taste for the combination somewhere between Chicago and Denver.

"Chicken tenders?" The bartender shook his head. "Only on the room service menu, I'm afraid, sir."

"Then no," Snape replied and took another drink while the bartender returned to phoning in the order for his other customer. "I take it from your order you are travelling alone," Snape addressed the woman to his left again, still without directly looking at her.

"And you would take it correctly," she agreed, her eyes raking over him. "Why from my order?"

"No one would order and eat food like that alone if they were planning on sharing a room with someone," he said dryly.

"I suppose not." She laughed. "And I take it you are not...travelling alone, that is."

"What makes you say that?" he said into his glass as he glanced into the mirror and reminded himself that he had to wash his hair again. It had been clean for three months now, if still somewhat lank, thanks to a gradual reduction in the oils years of potion making had left there, firstly due to his change of position at Hogwarts and now washing it far more regularly to keep in accordance with his role of a well to do businessman. For there was no point wearing an expensive Muggle business suit and then ruining the effect.

"Well, you have several long white hairs on your suit...you have that annoyed look on your face that screams you need to get away from someone that's bothering you...you didn't want to go back to your room to eat...and..." She paused to take a sip from her drink. "I saw you and your son check in this morning."

"Observant. Are you a detective by trade...or just by inclination?" he enquired, finally turning his head to take her in.

"I'm a writer, actually. Mystery novels..." She chuckled and waved her hand at the computer. "I tend to write more when I travel...not entirely sure why."

"An expensive way of writing...going from place to place, hotel to hotel..." he noted. "You must be moderately successful."

"Moderately," she agreed. "But mostly, I just know how to book hotels and travel plans." She patted the computer. "Online you can get quite the sweet deals." She took another sip of her drink. "So...father-son outing?"

"Something like that..." he replied. "I'm waiting for his mother to organize to take him."

"Ah...too close quarters for too long? Yeah...the teenage years are hell...I remember them well," she sympathized. "Of course...that was at least...ten years ago." She wrinkled her nose. "How depressing is *that*?"

"Not as depressing as you think."

"True," she conceded, her nose wrinkling in apparent remembrance. "I can live without the melodrama, the angst, the zits, and the general annoyance at being forced to hang out with other teenagers."

"What *do* you miss then?" he asked. "Considering you've summed up virtually the teenager's entire miserable existence."

She pursed her lips and thought about it for a moment. "I miss...a most certainly faster metabolism, feeling that everything was new, knowing I have years to go before I will even think about pushing thirty, not worrying about money...the anticipation of that first-ever hand hold...kiss...dance...date...the first time I drove a car..." She sighed and shrugged. "I think I would have savoured those all more if I knew then what I know now."

"That's true of almost every experience." He finished his brandy and nodded at the bartender for another one. "Personally, I couldn't wait for my teen years to be over. Teenagers may have anticipation..." He turned a little more to face her on the barstool. "Adults, however, have the power and the ability to actually experience," he finished quietly, taking her in and his eyes lingering for a moment on her full, almost pouting lips.

Her smile reappeared, her grey eyes twinkling as she conceded him his point with an incline of her head. "There's certainly wisdom and patience with age. Everything doesn't need to be right now...and the best things do come to those that wait." Her grin broadened at the sight of the bartender returning with two large steaming plates. "And speaking of good things, the nectar of my existence has arrived."

Pressing a few keys on her laptop, she waited a few moments before closing it and replacing it back in her bag. "You are a god," she told the bartender, rubbing her hands eagerly at the anticipation of delving into the food.

"Bon appetit. Shall I charge it to your room?" he asked with a chuckle.

"Please," she agreed, snagging a chip loaded with meat and cheese and slowly...reverently...slipped it into her mouth. "Mmmmm..." she hummed, her eyes closing in enjoyment as she chewed.

After ordering another brandy, Snape turned his eyes to watch her, his gaze taking in the expression on her face...her enjoyment...and at the sensuality of the sight, he found a rather unexpected thrill run through him and straight to his cock.

It had been a while since he'd been with a woman. Even longer since it had been a Muggle. Still, he was bored, she was attractive, not mentally deficient as far as his initial forays could make out...and, when in Rome...

Rising to his feet upon receiving his drink, he moved down the bar to stand behind her. "Get the lady whatever she wants to drink with that," he addressed the bartender before leaning into her, his breath brushing her cheek as he commented, "I'd suggest something long and cool." Moving on, he sat down at a table nearby.

A little startled, her eyes opened and she turned to watch him as he walked and sat down.

He was not the handsomest man on the planet...far, far from it, in fact. He was English...which in her mind was a definite plus. His voice and accent alone had been enough to turn her on to a ridiculous extent when he'd spoken in her ear. And from what she could see, thanks to that suit, his ass was nothing to sniff at...and he was long...lean...firm.

She turned her head back around to her food quickly and stuffed her mouth full of nachos. Man...it had been far too long. Far too long since she'd had actual physical enjoyment of a sexual nature that hadn't come from herself or something with batteries.

Seriously...the man had the lankest hair she'd ever seen, his nose was the size of Florida, and his teeth...~~there~~ had been innovations in the dental arts in England...she knew there had been. In fact, she often spoke with a lady who was a dentist in England on her blog!

On top of that, he was almost vampirically pale...but...he did have that litheness and those intense black eyes...and he wasn't an idiot, she was a good enough judge of character to notice that.

She stuffed several more nachos in her mouth, chastising herself for her insane thoughts. She simply did *not* have one night stands...and most certainly not with men with baggage, and from the sight of his very blond and annoying son when they'd arrived...he had some serious baggage.

His paying for her next drink was awfully kind though...and deserved *some* gratitude. Just...not sex. She gazed at the large plates in front of her. Well, it was only polite to share...

Snape watched her over his glass, wondering what her dark brown hair would look like without that pencil holding it up and why she had a pencil in it in the first place when she was working one of those infernal computers.

He let his eyes slip down over her body. She was in good shape...her arse certainly was, from what he could see from where it was neatly sat upon the stool. She had a full curved figure, not voluptuous but certainly not skinny, and he could feel another shot of heat through him as he imagined dealing with those offending articles of clothing that were stopping him determining exactly how curvaceous. Focusing his mind upon her, an eyebrow twitched slightly on feeling the surge of attraction that wafted from her.

His one-drink investment, it seemed, had not fallen on rocky ground. Putting his glass down, he gazed into the bronzed depths of the liquid, more pleased than ever that he had insisted on Draco taking a room across the hall from him rather than an adjoining one.

"Um...excuse me..." The soft voice had just enough of a quaver of nervousness and control that he could tell right away she was trying very hard not to appear nervous at all.

He looked up, his dark eyes drifting lazily and enjoyably over her as they made their way upwards. He schooled his expression to look mildly quizzical, although he already knew precisely why she was there...even if she was pretending to herself that it was otherwise.

Holding out the plate of nachos, she gave him a rather bright smile. "Since you paid for my next drink...I thought I might return the favour? I've got plenty of food..."

Standing up, he glanced down at the food before lifting his gaze to her. "Afraid your appetite isn't sufficient?" he asked her quietly.

Her eyebrow arched, and he watched her swallow back her nervousness, though her voice was cool and confident when she answered. "No...it's more than sufficient...but one good turn deserves another." She paused and gave a slight shrug. "But if you are not interested..." She turned to go back to her seat at the bar.

He laid a gentle hand upon her arm. "I believe," he said, drawing out a chair for her, "that we *both* know I am interested."

She set the plate on the table. "Good...I'll just grab the onion rings..." She hurried back over to the bar to retrieve the other plate, her bag, and the fresh drink.

He watched her go and return with vague amusement. It was clear she wanted to accept his overtures...but it was also clear she did not usually do so with men she did not know, which oddly made him all the more eager. Waiting till she sat down, he picked up one of the rings and looked at it. "Are they good?" he asked her.

"Very," she agreed with no small amount of enthusiasm, popping one into her mouth and chewing slowly, her eyes again closing as she savoured it.

As he slowly ate his ring, he sat back and watched her. "You enjoy your food."

The corner of her mouth quirked upwards as she swallowed. "I think it is safe to say that," she agreed, taking a sip of her drink.

"What else do you enjoy?" he enquired, as he washed down the fried food with his vintage brandy.

"Rollercoasters, travel, writing, good conversation, deep tissue massage, finding a deal at the mall..." Her mouth quirked up a little more. "Oh...and sex...especially with a man who knows what he's doing." She took another sip. "You?"

Her last comment obviously meant to shock him, he gazed at her, his glass still poised at his lips. "Reading, observation, intelligent conversation, researching...I like to know what I'm doing and that who I am doing it with is worthy of my time..." he answered as he put his glass down. "Oh...and sex, of course."

She chuckled a little, her eyes twinkling in humour...or perhaps mischief. "So...read any good books lately?"

"Several," he replied. "All very informative. Ride any good rollercoasters?"

"Several..." she returned, trying to remain straight-faced while getting quite a thrill from his innuendo and flirting. "But with varying degrees of enjoyment."

"Oh..." He leaned forward as he took a nacho, his eyes never leaving hers. "What was the last one like?" Staying where he was, he popped the laden chip into his mouth and chewed slowly.

Her eyes remained fixed on his mouth for several seconds before she forcibly pulled her attention away. "Well...slow to start, quick to finish...and a bit dizzying in the middle." She took a sip of her drink. "Rather disappointing really."

"I see..." He nodded just a little. "Yes, I can see how you could get very little satisfaction out of that," he sympathised. "If one is to be dizzy, it should be at the end, I would have thought...after a sufficient build up of anticipation for the ride itself."

"Yes...but sometimes if the wait is too long, it kills any anticipation, don't you think?" she returned, slipping a nacho into her mouth, her eyebrow arching just a little as her tongue sneaked out to lick a stray dab of salsa off the corner of her mouth.

"Agreed," he said, "such things can get tedious...which is why I prefer to not to have them dragged out too long." Rising to his feet, he held out his hand. "Would you care to join me in a more private setting? I have a quirky nature in that I prefer the actual details of seduction to occur in private."

The light music of the piano was temporarily overrun by the sound of the young woman choking on her drink, while she tried to keep herself from spitting it all over the table. Snape, for his part, merely waited for her to stop spluttering.

Pounding her chest several times, she swallowed and gazed up at him with more than a little shock and a tinge of respect. "Well...I...that is to say..." Groaning internally at her complete loss of vocabulary, she inhaled slowly. "Oh what the hell," she said under her breath and, slinging her bag over her shoulder, took his hand.

Stopping by the bar, he slipped money to the bartender to pay for her drink before crossing with her through the lobby to the elevator. They stood in silence, their eyes fixed on the doors until they pinged open whereupon he turned his gaze back to her. "My name is Severus, by the way."

"Cassandra," she replied, her eyes meeting his.

Stepping inside with her, he released her hand to press the sixth floor button. And barely a heartbeat after the doors slid shut, his mouth found her neck, his tongue snaking out to taste her, his body pinning hers to the faux wood wall of the lift as his hands slid down her sides to her hips.

Her back stiffened in shock, but as his tongue laved over her pulse, a low moan burst from between her lips, the tension releasing from her as she arched her neck to him in silent supplication.

Her scent was...intriguing...just like a writer's probably should be, her natural musk mixing with that of the light perfume she wore and the faint smell of lead from the pencils she obviously did use for more than just holding her hair up. She smelled of paper, too...erasers...and now...sex.

He could feel her mind subsumed in her desire and in the knowledge that what they were doing was wrong, and yet that knowledge was only making her even more responsive...more excited. And he encouraged it, his tongue trailing a line from under her chin to just below her ear as his hand brushed aside her blazer to cup and fondle a breast through her blouse.

Her hands gripped his arms, her fingers fisting the Italian wool, partly in response to what he was doing and partly to keep her on her feet, the stability of her knees vanishing with each stroke of his thumb over her nipple. Her tiny moans and panting breaths echoed in his ears as her eyes closed, her body arching to his as it called silently to him for more.

He pulled away from her as the doors pinged open behind them. With dark and hooded eyes and a wolfish curl to his lips, he took her hand and led her out of the elevator, drawing her after him, as he strode with swift steps down the hallway until he reached his door.

Pulling her to him, he pressed her back against the door with his body, feeling her shiver with anticipation as his erection brushed her hip. His eyes never leaving hers and his lips hovering millimetres away from her own, he slipped the key card from his trouser pocket and into the awaiting slot.

A soft click of the lock later, he pushed the door open and manoeuvred her inside, keeping her tight against him as he yanked the key out and took her bag from her shoulder to place it on the floor. The moment the door shut behind them, his mouth was on hers, his tongue hungry and ravaging, while his hands dragged her blazer from her body as he walked her backwards into the bedroom proper.

Her kiss, though marginally hesitant at first, soon matched his in every way, her tongue massaging and battling with his as she yanked and pulled at his suit jacket. It had been so long since she had had a man in her arms...so God damned long...that her hunger and need was overwhelming. She wanted...no, craved, skin...to touch, explore...excite...and for him to do the same to her.

Once his jacket was disposed of, his hands slipped around her, sliding up and down her back and sides before pulling her blouse out of her jeans. While one hand caressed the soft skin of her back, the other found its way to her hair and drew out the pencil holding it up, his skin tingling as the silken, thick, dark strands fell over his fingers.

Backing her to the bed, he broke the kiss though kept his head close to hers, their breath mingling hot and sharp as his fingers unbuttoned her blouse with rapid, precise movements. Pulling open his tie, he divested himself of his shirt before stripping her blouse off her and cupping her breast again. A low groan of delight was his reward as his mouth found her hardened nipple, letting the hot, wet heat seep through lacy fabric of her bra to her aroused flesh below.

Her body arched eagerly to his mouth, her hands delving into his hair and pulling most of it out of the neat ponytail as she pressed his head firmly to her breast. His soft grunts vibrated against her, not that she could hear it under the pounding and roaring of her blood in her ears. Nor could she hear the tiny cries and calls of approval and encouragement she gave him as her body shivered in his arms, her skin alive and on fire wherever he touched it.

But he heard them...and they fired his blood all the more. With each cry and call, his hunger and his assertiveness increased, making him eager to give her what she needed and take what he wanted. Her soft moans shot straight to his groin and the feel of her hands in his hair and her nails stroking his scalp sent ripples through him.

A louder moan filled the air, and her knees finally gave out as she surrendered herself to him and his touch. Her body pressed against his as she writhed in his arms, her nails grazing his back while she clutched and pulled him even tighter to her.

His teeth grazed over the lace and caught her nipple, grazing it between them, while one hand unhooked her bra and the other snaked over her bare stomach and down between her legs to rub her roughly through her jeans.

He raised his head, dark eyes flashing, and her groan of protest sent another surge through him as he stripped her first of his touch and then the flimsy bra hanging loosely

upon her shoulders. His rough kiss claimed her mouth again as his hands took possession of her breasts, squeezing and massaging while his thumb circled and brushed over her nipples. But soon another aggressive low grunt filled the air as he pushed her down onto the edge of the bed.

With increasingly shadowed eyes, he slipped his knee between her thighs as she lay beneath him, forcing them apart. The long black hair that she'd freed spilled forward over his shoulders to frame his face as his hands pulled open the button-fly of her jeans.

Her mind barely registered her new position as she watched him with heavily lidded eyes. Her pants filling his ears, she raised her hips to aid him as he yanked the offending items of clothing from her body. Her only thoughts now were of him, her, and their need...*her* need. Pushing herself up, she grabbed the waistband of his trousers and unfastened them with rapid fingers.

Slipping off his shoes, he pushed down the suit trousers and boxers beneath them, her admiring gaze taking in the impressive dimensions of his now freed and erect cock before her. Grasping hold of her hair, he lifted her face up to him to look down into her lust-filled eyes. Her hands wandered and stroked his thin lean body impatiently until, with another rough push, he forced her back into the heart of the bed and covered her body with his own.

His tongue laved a slow line over her breast bone to her throat, tasting her, as her nails scraped and teased the skin of his back. Her encouraging moans and whispers burst forth from her lips with increasing frequency as her body arched and rubbed feverishly against his. Oh God, she wanted him...was desperate for him.

She couldn't remember the last time a man made her feel like this, made her lose such complete control of her senses and loosed the starving animal within her. Her hands gripped the firm cheeks of his ass, squeezing them as she pushed him to her.

And then...her mind remembered something. Something very important. And she cursed her brain for reasserting itself *now* of all possible times. "Wait!" she gasped. "Severus...wait!"

But he didn't...merely snarled something into her damp flesh as his mouth continued to move unceasingly over her. She blinked as his hand suddenly appeared before her face, her passion-dilated pupils refocusing on the small foil wrapped disc he held between his fingers...almost as if he had read her mind.

Muggles, he growled to himself. So predictable.

She wasn't the first Muggle woman he'd ever had. And, with God knew how long he'd be stuck in this wilderness, he doubted she'd be the last. A supply of those damnable discs were always required and within easy *Accio* of the bed. With the preventatives he took, condoms were not required but there was no explaining that to them. So it was just easier to put it on, though suitably altered magically so he felt nothing, and get on with it.

Feeling her relax beneath him and her hands slip back to his hair, he reached down to himself, though instead of bothering to mess with the dretched thing, he raised his head and murmured a ready-made spell into her ear. The Latin words were virtually inaudible to her, and he smirked when she crooned a soft, unintelligible response even as the foil unwrapped itself from around the latex disc. The freed condom slipped pleasurably and unerringly over his rock-hard shaft... and all out of her sight.

Any possible thoughts of his uncanny alacrity were wiped from her mind as he took her hands and pinned them on either side of her head, while his black eyes gazed down at her with a fire so intense that it stopped her heart for a beat. A beat in which she realized that this night would be unlike any that she'd ever experienced.

Her neck arched to meet his mouth as his teeth nipped over her chin, jaw, earlobe and his hips ground slowly into hers. Her eager cries and moans filled his ears anew and one leg wrapped around his hip, opening herself to him as her body undulated with his.

And once more her mind was washed away...by the sheer heat of his body on hers...his lips on her flesh...his scent filling her nose and lungs.

His hips rolled into her one last time before, with one long, hard stroke, he drove himself deep inside of her, his lip curling back in a sneer of pleasure as she surrounded and engulfed him. His fingers tightened around her wrists, pinning her...holding her still just as she held him like hot silk inside. And his lust exploded -- each thrust of his cock followed by another and another as he drove into her again...and again...

Her eyes rolled back as his hips set a deep, fierce rhythm, her gasps and grunts shifting to cries and pleas for him as this stranger stretched, filled, and withdrew from her again and again. Yes, her mind called out blindly, *dear God, take me...yes, harder...spear me with that gorgeous cock!* She had no idea if her thoughts were being verbalized...didn't particularly care...she just did not want him to stop.

His lips quirked above her as another satisfied shriek echoed in his ears. Her mind in this state...her need wafting from her...was as clear as a bell to him.

Their bodies slick with sweat, he filled her over and over, fucking her with a steadily growing roughness. His teeth bit into her shoulder as he pounded into her...feeling her hips rise to him, feeling her shiver around him as he took her with a relentlessly demanding rhythm.

Oh, she was good. Very good. She moved naturally, instinctively...and best of all freely...giving herself over to her need to fuck and be fucked.

She was awash in a sea of fire, her blood pounding in her ears in time with his cock's thrusts inside of her, her flesh so sensitive that each brush and bite made her cry out in ecstasy as he drove her insane with need for more...fuelled the blaze even further until it threatened to consume her. And finally...oh God, finally...she shattered.

He watched her climax beneath him, his thrusts never slowing as she arched and thrashed. But soon, the tightening of his balls and the twitching of his cock signalled his own impending climax, and with a long satisfied hiss, he released, the fire in his groin shooting outwards and turning his blood to lava.

His breaths were quick but steady as he slowed, his hips continuing to rock into her and the occasional brush inside setting off gentle, rippling aftershocks. Once assured that for the moment she was spent, he drew himself out of her and casually disposed of the condom before turning his attention back down to her where she lay.

Blinking up at the ceiling, she tried to clear the fireworks from her eyes...her mind literally blown away by the fierceness of her orgasm.

"Not bad," he murmured, the fingers of one hand trailing easily up and down her sweat-sheened body.

Her eyes shifted to meet his, widening at what was, to her, the understatement of the century, until they met his and she saw the appreciation there. Her full breasts rose and fell quickly with each panting breath as she drew in another lungful to answer him. "Thank you," she demurred, pushing her hair back from her face and feeling her cheeks flush even more at the simple compliment.

Part of her was amazed that he was still coherent, though a small voice inside scoffed at her for thinking such a thing. It was obvious from the moment they had met that he had an ego...quite a big one really. But there was little doubt from the aura of confidence he exuded that when he put his mind to something, he did it...and did it very well -- no ands, ifs, or buts -- and that thrilled her...excited her...and confirmed to her that she truly was in for the night of her life.

She just hoped she'd be able to walk a little the next morning.

His fingers circled her navel slowly, as he bent to kiss her collar bone. "Your lover was a fool," he murmured as his mouth trailed down between her breasts.

"What...what lover?" she whispered, her breath catching in her throat as her eyelashes fluttered.

"The one that obviously left you, or was fool enough to let you leave him. It's doubtful a woman like you, with your obvious talents, has been alone for too long." He flicked his tongue at the inner curves of her breasts, enjoying her 'writer's' scent. It was oddly calming to him...the way the library used to be...calming and intriguing.

Her immediate gasp thrilled him as his hand slipped down to play with her curls between her legs. Her voice cracked in her attempt to not lose her coherency so quickly as she whispered in reply, "We were together for years...my family loved him. We had a house...a dog...but he found someone else..." A low groan burst from her as he found

a particularly sensitive area. "I left...been travelling ever since..."

"Then he's doubly the fool..." he rumbled as his mouth wandered further down her belly, a single finger slipping into her heat to circle her entrance slowly. His tongue followed his finger's lead around her navel before both plunged into their respective targets.

"Severus!" she cried out, her fingers grasping and tugging the covers of the bed as her hips and belly surged to him.

In reply, his mouth drifted lower over her abdomen, his finger, teasing at first, diving deep within her to stroke and circle as he studied her responses and triggers.

Satisfied that he had learned enough, he withdrew his hand from her, leaving her whimpering and pleading below him. With a dark smirk upon his lips, he slipped oh so slowly down her body and, before she realised what was happening, pressed his mouth to her searing heat. His tongue laved a slow trail from her entrance to her pulsing clitoris, teasing her...playing with her, bringing her to the edge again and again, until he allowed her...willed her to tighten...to cry out and fall apart for him and him alone.

She fought to prolong it, to keep the growing tide of pleasurable pressure at bay, but her body, too expertly primed by him, betrayed her in the end. And with a series of cries that bounced off the walls, she came in a heated rush. Every muscle taut, her body arched off the bed, her legs clamping to his head and holding him in place as she shuddered and pulsed around him.

He rode her climax easily, drawing it out with slow, easy sweeps of his tongue, until finally, he let her rest. He sat up as her body slumped back to the bed, moderately pleased with himself and semi-erect again thanks to her reactions and her taste. Pondering his next move, he decided to afford her a few moments grace. "Drink?" he murmured, leaning down to kiss her panting mouth.

She stared up at him with something akin to wonder and nodded, her voice lost as she focused on simply breathing.

Slipping away from her, he crossed over to a table and pulled out a bottle of Absolut Vodka from a paper bag. Grabbing two glasses, he poured out two shots, and mixed it with orange juice from the mini bar for her and lemon soda for him. Returning to the bed, he sat with his back against the wall and propped up by the pillows, and handed her her glass. "My apologies, no cranberry juice."

Pushing herself up into a seated position next to him, she shook her head. "No...that's fine," she assured him, pushing her hair back from her face again. He took a slow sip from his drink and draped his arm over his arched leg, his eyes fixed on her.

"So..." she began, trying desperately to think of something to talk about while part of her wondered if she was even supposed to try...the etiquette of 'sex with strangers' having been one class she missed out on. "What brings you to the middle of Northwest nowhere?"

"Travelling," he answered, swirling his glass a little and letting the ice cool the drink before taking another sip. "Getting away from...everything."

"Ah...so a little retreat for you and your son?" she enquired, suddenly wondering where the sullen-faced blond was.

He smirked, a little snort of humour escaping him. "Yes...retreat is an excellent word for it," he agreed with an incline of his head. "Though as I said, the boy's only with me till his mother makes other arrangements for him."

She nodded, taking another sip of her drink as she studied him and his rather removed manner. "Is she back in England?"

"I assume so." He shrugged and turned his eyes away to study a particularly gauche painting on the wall. "I've heard nothing to the contrary from Draco..." His eyes flicked back to her for a moment. "He and his mother are very close."

Her eyebrow arched a little at the name -- another old fashioned one, like his. Of course, she could hardly comment on that score. "That's good," she commented, taking a longer draught of her drink, as unbidden and unwanted thoughts of her own family flitted through her mind. Just as they had been doing almost every spare minute since she'd left home.

"Perhaps," he mused, lowering his glass again. "Sometimes, I believe the ties are far too close." His voice grew a little sour. "Too much devotion can lead to complications for others."

"Tell me about it," she agreed, giving in to her thoughts. "Hence why I stay as far away from mine as I can...that and..." She sighed and shook her head. "Let's just say I wasn't too thrilled about a new member of our family."

His gaze once again fixed upon her. "A new member?" he enquired. "Parents divorced and remarried?"

"Oh no...they've been together since they were in high school," she corrected with a wry smile. "No...the ex? The other woman he left me for? She was my sister." She took another long drink, her eyes avoiding his as he continued to gaze at her, as that now very familiar angry flush of humiliation swept through her. "Told you my family loved him...seems one member *really* did. They'd been having a thing behind my back for a bit. She got herself knocked up...yadda yadda..." She waved her hand with a roll of her eyes. "I tend to avoid the whole lot of them now."

"Your...sister," he repeated. "*Charming* of her."

She let out a snort of laughter. "Oh yes...and she *charmingly* invited me to their wedding...and asked *me* to be a bridesmaid. And then *charmingly* told me I was being unreasonable for saying no." A sour expression on her face, she took another drink. "Even the dog loves her."

He smirked at her final comment, quite enjoying her wry, if bitter, sense of humour. "How did you find out? If you don't mind my asking?"

"Well...after I came home early from a trip to my publisher...I caught them fucking each other. So, I left the house, took a nice spontaneous trip to France for a week...spent a charming seven days drunk...and came home to confront them only to find out they were getting married from my very happy mother when I went to go cry on her shoulder." Another long drink followed before she continued, "They loved him...and were very sorry for me, of course, but apparently *everyone* knew we were all wrong for each other! My lovely, beauty queen sister who could do no wrong was soooo much more better for him. Could give him a stable home life...attend to all his needs...blah blah blah." A puppet hand shadow mimicked her words as she rolled her eyes. "Long story short...I avoid my family, they think I'm unreasonable, and I bite my tongue whenever I talk to my parents so I don't tell them to stick it up their asses." She paused at the end of her acerbic tirade and blinked. "What do you know? It *is* easier to talk to strangers!"

With a sigh of amusement, he took her glass from her and put both it and his aside. "I believe..." he said, drawing her over him so she was straddling his thighs, "we all want to tell our parents that at one time or another. So now they have the son they never had?" He pushed her hair back over her shoulders before slipping his hands down her sides to softly stroke her hips.

She smiled, feeling more at ease and natural with him than she ever had with a man in so short a span of time. "Something like that. And now they have a grandson too! Lucky ducky them." Her eyes dipped down to his semi-aroused cock nestled in a thick thatch of black hair. She reached out and traced her fingers down its side, eliciting a sharp inhale from her partner as she teased and cupped his balls, rolling them gently.

"Not really..." he replied, his eyes darkening at her touch while his own fingers drew slow circles up and down her legs. "A man who will cheat with his lover's sister...will almost certainly wander again. Flesh and blood..." His voice was low as his hands travelled up her sides and across her stomach. "Is the most binding of connections. In time, they will regret their actions."

As his fingers slipped over her breasts, she shivered and squeezed the soft flesh in her hand gently, the warm smile on her face lit not just by the rush of alcohol. "Well...he

is their problem now," she told him in a heated whisper.

"Perhaps..." he agreed, reaching out to the bedside table and swirling one long finger in his drink, "but as long as you remain on the road to avoid the situation, it remains yours, does it not?" His finger trailed a wet line of cool vodka and lemon down over her skin from beneath her collar bone to her areole, peaking the nipple of her breast. Feeling her shiver and slip a hand into his hair at the cold contact, he leaned forward and slowly licked off the alcohol, his tongue swirling around her tip and sucking on her vodka-soaked nipple.

"Oh..." she groaned, a tiny whimper erupting from her at his ministrations. "I'm not on the road avoiding it. I've been travelling long before that...it helps with my writing..." Her grip tightened in his hair and over his balls, eliciting a tiny but very satisfying grunt in his throat as he shifted his hips. "Besides...you're one to talk...you're travelling a bit yourself..." As he shifted back from her, she leaned forward, her mouth latching onto his earlobe, her tongue teasing it as she drew deeply.

His hands slipped to her back, a hint of a curl forming at the corners of his lips when he felt his cock grow hard and full in her hand. "Yes, I find it broadens...the mind..." he answered, his breath quickening when her breasts brushed over his chest.

"Mmmm," she hummed, her tongue flicking over his lobe as she continued to suck on him.

His arm curled about her, pulling her in close, his erect cock brushing her thigh as she moved up him. "Here..." He turned his head to whisper in her ear, the crinkle of another foil wrapper being opened beside her. "My *mind* is broadening quickly."

Her lips slipping slowly off him with a pop, she looked down, her hand moving over him admiringly. "Let me put it on," she murmured, nipping him under his chin. "I want to feel you before you fill me...and then I want you to put that hard cock of yours inside me...and fuck me," she breathed into him, taking the disk and pinching the end of it before slipping it over his tip. And as her lips again found and suckled on his earlobe, she rolled the latex down with a slow methodical pace.

His eyes were hard black blazing coals as he pulled her forward over him to angle himself to her entrance before drawing her down over him with agonizing slowness.

She exhaled in a hiss, and, her body went rigid as he filled her completely once more, setting her nerves alight and her blood in flames. "Yesssss," she moaned, grasping him tightly to her as she rocked and swayed her hips to allow him to brush more of her inside.

His arms wrapped around her, he gently thrust up in counterpoint to her, circling his hips against her movements and sending the friction between them rocketing. "You move well," he murmured with a satisfied nod at how easily she responded to him. It had been a long time since he'd found so compatible a partner.

"Not...so bad...yourself..." she panted, her eyes closing and opening as she tried to control the rush of utter sensation from driving her over the edge too quickly. "Sooo good..." she moaned, a bead of sweat slipping down her neck and over her collarbone while several others formed on her brow.

He gritted his teeth on feeling his balls tighten -- her movements, her reactions, her words and calls...all perfectly modulated to bring him rapidly to fever pitch. Forcing the sensation back and concentrating, he grasped her hips and set forth to fucking her in earnest. His hips rose off the bed with each hard drive into her, his breath harsh and a feral smile crossing his lips with each of her gasps as she received him.

Her responses were instant...her zeal equal, and it soon became unclear who was leading and who was taking.

Their breaths merged and flowed into each other as fluidly as their bodies. Her pulse roared in her ears as she felt the levies inside her begin to give and on his next thrust, she slammed herself down to meet him, his cock impaling deeply within her. Her ecstatic cry filled the room as she released her control...and came...and came...and came.

He watched her writhe erotically in his grasp as she closed around him like a vice, her cries reverberating around the room as he continued to thrust into her, fucking her hard. But soon her uncontrollable spasms and fierce draws on him finally became more than he could bear and, with a violent explosion of heat that took his breath away, the pressure inside gave way, losing himself in a torrent of sensation.

With a gasp, her rigid muscles released and she collapsed with a low moan into his arms, her body sagging limply against him. Her mind was blank as she listened to the beat of his heart and willed her breathing back to a somewhat regular rhythm.

He let her rest there for a moment, catching his own breath and heartily congratulating himself on his choice before drawing back the covers on the bed. Rolling her off him, he laid her down on the sheets before removing the condom and joining her under the bedclothes. Reaching back, he picked up his drink and took a swig, contemplating quietly before glancing back at her. "I don't normally make such offers, but you are free to stay the night if you wish." It was a statement, not a question.

With a slow blink, she turned to meet his eyes, her tongue sweeping over her lips to hide the smile that threatened to break out at the casual arrogance of the statement. "I'm flattered," she replied, pleased that only a hint of sarcasm slipped through. "But that depends..."

"On?" he enquired, turning his penetrating gaze back to her.

"What I can expect if I stay?" she answered, the corners of her mouth quirking up just a little this time.

With a sigh, he swirled the ice and remaining liquor in his glass. "A poetry reading...some literary discussion...political analysis and the swapping of gourmet recipes."

Her nose wrinkled in disapproval. "That sounds horribly dull," she responded with complete seriousness to his dripping sarcasm, disarming it and him. Her eyes twinkled with humour even as she made a face and waved his suggestion away.

"Very well, as that's not to your taste...I suppose I could just fuck you till you pass out."

"Much better." Then without missing a beat, she rejoined, her eyebrow arching, "But what makes you think that it will be *me* that will be passing out?"

The ice in his glass clinked as he placed it on the beside table, and a moment later he was on top of her, his already awaking prick nestled between her legs as his black eyes bore into hers with a decidedly smug gleam. "Trust me," he murmured.

The sun was well up before there was any sign of movement from the two bodies lying in a tangle of limbs and bedclothes. A ray of light, however, soon solved that problem by shining through the drawn curtains and directly into Snape's face. With a grunt, he rolled over to check the time. He was not particularly pleased to be awake but nevertheless, he unwound himself from a particularly twisted sheet and padded silently into the bathroom.

Shortly after, the sound of running water tickled the still-sleeping occupant's ears as she lay sprawled in the bed. With a groan, she rolled over, burying her face in a pillow while a slow-moving hand searched for the now missing warm body beside her. Lifting her head, she opened her bleary eyes with an irritated grunt.

Pushing the hair out of her face, she pushed herself upright, her eyes widening at the sight of the sunlight pouring in through the cracks in the curtains. Spinning around, she grabbed the clock and noticed the time 9:00.

Closing her eyes for a moment, she sighed in relief...her plane wasn't due out till later that afternoon. Wrapping the sheet around her body, she crawled out of bed, not surprised at the twinges of soreness in her limbs...nor the stupid grin that formed on her face. They *had* been rather exuberant. She couldn't remember the last time she had gone all night like that...and still craved more.

Her eyes shifted to the closed door of the bathroom. *What* was it about that man? He was not exactly a prize to look at...but she'd never felt so natural and free with anyone in her life...and he *even* seemed to appreciate her dry humour.

If it had been a different time...place...she might have actually been inclined to ask him out on a date. But it wasn't. This had been what it was...and she was surprised to find herself all right with that.

Holding the sheet around her body, she crossed the room to the bathroom and tapped lightly on the door.

"Enter," came the rather formal reply.

Her eyebrows both shot up nearly to her hairline, feeling as though she'd been thrust back in time to the threshold of the principal's office in high school. Shaking her head with a small wry smile on her lips, she opened the door, letting the sheet fall to the floor as she stepped into the steam-filled bathroom.

Crossing the empty room, she pulled back the edge of the shower curtain and stepped inside the tub. "Good morning!" she greeted him with a cheeky smile. "Could you pass the soap?"

He turned and raked his wet hair back off his face, his expression noticeably surprised as his eyes wandered over her. "No soap," he replied with a slight surly frown, not having expected any interruptions to his ablutions or his thought processes. "Just gel."

"Ah..." she breathed, taking a step closer and blatantly ignoring any hint of displeasure in him. "Then, could you pass the shower gel?"

He hesitated...if only for the length of a heartbeat, before reaching behind him to pick up the small bottle. But, instead of giving it to her, he poured some of the gel into his hand and put the bottle back.

Her eyes followed his every movement. "Is something wrong?" she enquired, her voice low and husky as her fingers drifted over the side of his cheek and down his neck, not stopping till they reached a nipple, one nail flicking over it.

He inhaled, his eyes watching the water sluice down over her body. "I don't share my showers."

"Why not?" Her voice teased his churlish state, as her fingers traced and brushed his peaking nipples and lines of his chest, one dipping lower to tease his navel.

"I like to think...and plan..." His hands lathered the gel between them.

Her eyes stayed locked to his as she raked her nails gently down over his abdomen and out over his thighs. "For what?"

Two steady hands moved over her shoulders, soaping them slowly before he slid his fingers up her neck and over her collarbone. "What I intend to do today."

Her breath caught slightly as his fingers slipped over her breasts, working the liquid soap over and around her, his thumbs brushing over her nipples. "And what do you intend to do?" she breathed, her gasp shifting to a swallow.

One corner of his mouth turned upwards as he gazed at her from under heavy lidded eyes. Eyes that were displaying an obvious and entirely different answer from the one which slipped from his lips. "What I do every day," he murmured, taking her arms and turning her quickly to push her against the tiled wall.

The sudden movement and the feel of cold tile on her skin elicited another gasp. She struggled to compose herself as he moved close to her again. A small amused smile pulled on her lips at his words even as his hands slipped down over her stomach, her hips, her thighs... "Try to take over the world?" she ribbed, arching an eyebrow.

"No..." He leaned closer, his lips finding *that* spot just below her ear. "That, I leave to my employer."

Her head lolling back a little, she allowed him to do whatever he willed. "Ohhh..." she moaned, her nails grazing over his sensitive, damp skin. "And you?"

"I take advantage of whatever opportunity comes my way." His voice was but a whisper as his fingers slipped into the dark, wet curls at the juncture of her legs.

Her hands wrapped around his biceps, her grip one of iron as his touch made her knees dissolve from under her. Her rapid breaths filled the air as her legs widened their stance in silent supplication, her desire stoked and burning in seconds.

"Please..." she hissed as his fingertips wafted over her clitoris, "take all the advantage you like."

She pulled him closer, his chest brushing slickly over her soaked, soaped breasts, while one shapely leg wrapped around his own, locking him in place as her hips rocked and ground into him. Her body curved and melded to his as her mouth found his neck, nipping and suckling on the wet flesh.

A moment later, his hands grasped her hips, the cold tile biting into her back as her feet left the tub. His body holding her in place, his hips ground into her, his cock hardening with every brush.

Her entreaties, both clear and incoherent, rang in his ears as she begged for him, her fingers biting into his shoulders as pure animal lust filled her mind and body. Hoisting her up high against the wall, he relaxed his grip to let her slide back down and with one vigorous thrust, impaled himself deep within her.

He buried his mouth in her neck, kissing and biting at the tender skin under her chin, while her nails clawed into his back, breaking the skin and leaving little red crescent moons and lines in his flesh. Her body writhed against him, her calls shifting from exuberant, to pleading, to the down right vulgar...culminating into the undecipherable as her blood pounded in her ears in perfect rhythm with his cock's thrusts.

The heat swelling and burning inside her took away all thought...all reason...and there was again nothing but him...and what he could do to her...was doing to her...and how she did not want him to ever stop.

He didn't rush but took his time to prolong it, using his deep, steady thrusts to keep them both at bay...knowing that this was almost certainly the last time. That once they were done, they would dry, dress, go their separate ways, and that would be an end to it. Yet, just as he had last night, he found himself thinking she was too rare a find to simply rush out his door. More than just an excellent fuck but one with a more than reasonable wit attached.

Gazing up at her, he watched as her head tossed against the tiles, his hips sawing back and forth slowly as he rubbed himself over a spot deep inside of her that he had learned would drag her breath from her in gasps.

It was so much...too much...the pleasure he was building inside her sent her rocketing towards the edge to leave her hanging over it, held back only by silken rope. Her heels dug into his ass and her legs tightened around his hips as she babbled and cried out for him to end her torment...to let the levies crumple inside and the fire overwhelm her. She was never so alive...nor so sure that she was about to die.

No matter how much he wanted to hold on, he could feel his legs weaken as his balls tightened with each cry and plea that burst from her lips. Finally, the leash on his control snapped, and with a snarl at how she had shaken him, he took her...driving into her harder, faster...pounding into her...giving her what she cried out for as he rushed himself towards his climax.

And with a shriek that bounced over the tiled bathroom walls and their ears, she shattered. Her muscles clasped him like a silken vice, grasping him...milking him, mirroring her body's grip on his the way her nails dug deeply into his flesh, the way her legs locked around his hips, way her chest, sticky with suds, water, and sweat, sealed to his. And in that final moment, her teeth found his shoulder and bit down with a fierceness she had never known, even as she continued to groan into his skin.

The pain shot through him like an electric shock and with a gasp, he exploded into her. Pain and pleasure racked him as one as he crushed her to the wall, his hips driving and grinding into her. White flashes flooded his vision as she drained him of everything he had, until with a long low groan, he gave one last shudder and sank slowly to his

knees, her back leaving a soapy trail down the wall as he took her with him.

Boneless, she slumped against him, vaguely aware of the hot water raining down on them and dripping off their bodies, contented where she was and at least mildly satiated. Mildly, she confirmed, not entirely sure that she could ever truly be satiated where he was concerned.

She breathed a quiet sigh against his shoulder. All things considered, it was probably for the best they would be parting...a wry thought coming to mind that if she remained with him, they may just end up literally screwing their days away.

After a time, his head rose and his eyes turned to regard the bite mark on his shoulder, the running water diluting the blood seeping from it. His back stung and his legs ached, but a dark smile slipped over his lips as he turned his gaze to his partner's bowed head.

She was quite the hellcat...and really quite a woman. A shame he would not see her again.

His hand enveloped itself in her dark wet hair and drew her head back so he could see her face. "My compliments...as you can see, you have brought me to my knees. Not many have managed that."

A languid, if a tad smug, smile formed on her lips as she gazed up into his face with slightly dazed eyes. "You're welcome," she replied in a croaky voice.

Taking in her dishevelled state, he brushed a few sodden locks of hair back off her face, allowing himself one last quietly amused moment before their interlude would end and the curtain would rise on the final act of all such encounters. Taking hold of her, he rose again and set her on her feet. "I should let you finish washing."

She nodded slowly, her face shifting into one of solemn agreement. "Yes...I have to be at the airport soon..."

"And I..." He glanced at his shoulder. "Must attend a physician," he finished with a smirk before stepping away from her.

She gave him a small if slightly embarrassed smile, amazed once more at her actions over these past twelve hours or so. "Yes..." she agreed. "I'm sorry...I don't usually...bite. I don't know what got into me."

"From the looks of it, I'd say a half pint or so," he returned with a snort.

Her cheeks flushing again, she turned her eyes away. Regarding her silently for a moment and then quite without knowing why, he reached up his hand to touch her face, drawing her eyes back to him. They regarded each other quietly for a moment as his thumb brushed her cheek, but then with a slow incline of his head, he stepped away from her and out of the bath. Drawing a towel about himself and taking a second smaller towel with him, he left her to her solitude.

She showered quickly, not wishing to linger and dwell...for she knew it would be absolutely pointless to do so. Turning off the water, she wrapped her hair in a towel and used another to dry herself before padding into the bedroom proper to find her clothes. Her brow furrowed a little while she gathered up the pieces of her outfit, her mind replaying the events of their most recent encounter...and the one very significant difference between it and the others. Casting a few nervous glances at him as she tried to phrase her thoughts, she finally turned back to him and spoke up. "We didn't...in the shower...we didn't have protection," she told him as she slipped her underpants back on.

Turning from tucking his shirt into his trousers, he looked at her and held back a sigh. "I wouldn't worry...you may take my word for it that I have nothing worth catching save a foul temper...and there is little chance of you falling pregnant by me. I assure you."

She nodded, her back to him as she slipped and re-hooked her bra and pulled on her shirt. "Still...you needn't worry. I won't try and track you down even if..." She paused, sighing a little. "Don't worry...it's not like you held a gun to my head...I made my own choice."

There was no point trying to assuage her further without the concoction of some cock 'n bull story, so he merely nodded at her generous if unnecessary statement. She would be fine -- go on her way...write her books...meet some Muggle man, settle down, and have a family. The past hours would become merely an anecdote to tell her girlfriends when they were sharing a few glasses of wine. A hot and shameless one nighter with a dark and strange Englishman. Turning away, he retrieved his tie and slipped it about his neck.

Dressing quickly, Cassie unwound the towel from her hair, giving it a quick rub before twisting the dark brown locks back up and fixing them in place with her pencil. Taking the towels back to the bathroom, she dropped them in the tub before moving back out and picking up her laptop bag to swing it over her shoulder.

"Well...this is it," she said, taking a deep breath as her grey eyes met his black ones. A long list of things to say flashed through her mind...but what *did* one actually say in a situation such as this. So long...take care...it was fun...thanks for all the fish?

Nodding, he walked past her down the small 'hallway' that led to the hotel room door. Stopping by the entrance, he turned to gaze at her as she drew alongside of him. His hand slipped to her waist to draw her to him, his nose brushing hers as his eyes bore into hers, his voice quiet and deep. "It has been...a *very* great pleasure to know you," he assured her before his mouth covered hers and his tongue took rough possession of her one last time.

She longed to release the moan that welled up inside her...to again lose herself in him...but she couldn't. No...she wouldn't. It was time to go. Time to finish penning this short interlude in the current chapter of her life -- the night she had let go and simply allowed herself the sexual freedom to explore...to be.

If she stayed, she might be tempted...tempted to desire more...more than either of them had to give. It would be time wasted -- as useless as casting seeds to sand. And so she gave in just enough to return his kiss but took the initiative and was the first to pull away.

"I...it was indeed a pleasure," she replied, stepping back and opening the door. "I wish you well, Severus." She paused just long enough to allow her eyes one last lingering look and to whisper, "Goodbye." And with that, she slipped out into the hallway, the lock clicking shut behind her.

He regarded the door for a few moments, considering the possibility of going after her to at least ask her her surname. But there was no point to it. Especially now. And so he turned and walked back into the bedroom, taking in the messed bed and the lingering scent of a woman.

He had only one point now, at least in the role he was currently playing. The loyal Death Eater on the run for the murder of his other 'master.' Until the time came when he would have and take his chance, his only obligation was to himself and that brat that was still sealed in the room across the hallway.

He glanced down at his watch.

The boy was probably hammering futilely at the silenced door by now, looking for his breakfast and about to break into a whine that could peel paint off the walls. Not that that would be any great loss to the décor here. Still, Cassandra *had* left him feeling quite centred and mellow, he mused as he picked up his jacket and slipped it on. And he wasn't in any mood for the Malfoy brat to sour that. The sooner Narcissa wheedled her way around the Dark Lord the better. Otherwise, she might not get her son back the way she wanted him.

His eyes glinted a little. He'd had his fun last night and there was no reason why he couldn't continue to make the best of an intolerable situation today, he thought as he leaned down, his hand reaching under the end of the bed to pull out a small cage. A cage that was just right for a couple of hamsters.

Or a nice sized ferret.

A smirk on his lips, he turned on his heel, leaving behind the room...the bad décor...the memories...and moved on.

A huge thank you goes to Wendynat who betaed this story for us...her efforts are greatly appreciated.