

Devotion

by slytherinlaurel

Bellatrix returns to her master's side...

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Chapter 1 of 1

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She never felt her knees crack against the flawless marble floor. It was nothing compared to the chill that had bored into her body and soul for so many years. The heat of the Manor almost burned her, she was so used to the harsh climate of the North Sea.

Through the candlelight she crawled, dragging her uncooperative limbs as her face turned upwards to see him. It had been so long she hadn't remembered—no, that couldn't be it. His face was all that mattered, and she had carried it with her. No, he was changed. Still beautiful in his new form, she relished each agonizing moment as she drew up to him and sank to the floor, clutching the hem of his robes.

"My dear Bella..." He exhaled with a sibilant hiss.

"Yes, my Lord?" Her heart ached to hear his words. Bella tried to inhale the scent of his robes, which she had loved so fiercely, but dared not cling to them any more than she already was for fear of incurring his wrath. Azkaban had blurred many things in Bella's mind. Memories of her Lord's punishments were not one.

"I hear you were faithful to me in my absensss..."

"Of course, my Lord. To be in your service gives life to my every breath."

"Tell me of your badge of honor. Tell me how you earned your sentensss to Azkaban," Voldemort commanded softly as he met her upturned eyes peering beseechingly from behind a wretched, tangled mane.

"The filthy blood traitors, my Lord, the Longbottoms. We thought they held things from us, important things to help us find you."

"You ssspoke with them, my dear Bella?"

"Yes, my Lord," Bella forced through her ragged vocal chords. "We went to them, tortured them to give us what they had."

"And what did they give you?" Voldemort narrowed his glowing eyes, watching her expression carefully.

"Nothing, my Lord. We gained every word of their knowledge—useless, every syllable. It was a trap." Bella started to shake as she remembered her fury at her own stupidity.

"You were ssso foolisssh as to walk into a trap set by the impotent *Order*?"

"They were late to spring the trap, my Lord. The Longbottoms paid for their foolishness and that of their *friends*," Bella sneered, attempting to hide the panic creeping into

her strained voice at the thought of her Lord's disappointment.

"And how did they pay, Bella?" His red eyes bore into her with greater intensity, if that were possible.

"There is nothing left of their minds," Bella said, gaining control of herself, malice seeping into her tone.

"They *live*?" Voldemort hissed as his voice dropped into a deadly tone.

"They live without their minds, a constant reminder of your power, my Lord." Bella's eyes began to glow with the fervor of her devotion. "She plunged in darkness with your name on her lips as her helpless husband and child watched. It was in your name, my Lord. Every shriek, every curse, brought glory to you."

"Bella?"

"My Lord?"

What of the child? Bella could feel him push the words into her mind as he invaded it. He could see her years of torment at the hands of the dementors, the trial where she had declared her allegiance for all to hear, and the wailing child cowering in a corner as Rodolphus destroyed his father moments before the Aurors burst in.

"He lives an orphan, my Lord, reminded daily that it is within your power to take away."

Bella...

The cold of the marble floor and the shooting pain in her joints rushed back to her as she clutched the hem of his robes ever tighter.

Bella...

"The Longbottom woman... the blood traitor... I destroyed her in your name..." Bella stuttered, struggling to convince him of her loyalty even as her body began to weaken.

You know of the prophessy, Bella. Her mind began to scream in protest at his invasion.

"But the Potter brat, my Lord..."

There isss nothing left to chanssse in my name, Bella.

"Please—"

With a grim smile Voldemort raised his wand and turned it on his most loyal servant, the one he knew truly held him in her soul.

"Crussio."

A/N: Thanks to my wonderful and speedy beta, debjunk. This was written in response to PyjamaPants' prompt: Bella's first conversation with Voldemort after breaking out of Azkaban.