

Not Dirty

by Aling

She still has nightmares, but she no longer wakes up alone.

One

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*Hot. So unbearably hot. Can't breathe, can't hear anything over the pounding of blood, thick, fast, burning through my skin, gasping for air, can't find it, the pressure, it's building, won't stop, hotter and hotter and **pain**. Scratch my skin, exorcise the heat and the poison and the demons and, oh, there's someone standing over me, laughing, teasing polished silver along my throat, so sharp, so lethal, one wrong move and it's over, oh, gods, she's driving nails through my hands, staking them to the ground, can't move them anymore, girlie, muddied blood spills over, needles pierce my cells, down to the very bone, screaming, screaming, screaming, blood everywhere, and Bellatrix, madness, chaos, and there's someone in the corner, blond hair?, watching, waiting, disgust on his face, don't want you anymore, you're soiled, ruined, screaming, screaming, screaming, and—*

I wake with a jolt, large dragon tears streaming down my face, and I'm choking on deep, never-ending sobs. Salt fills my mouth as trails of water spill over my lips and down my chin. My throat's sore from yelling in my sleep, and I recognize that I need something to drink, but I can barely breathe as it is.

Strong, callused hands pull me backwards against a firm, bare chest. The sparse hairs tickling my naked skin oddly soothe me.

"Shhh...shhh...it was just a dream, Hermione. It's all over now. It's all over."

Draco rocks me back and forth, rubbing my back in circles as my sobs die down and the twitching subsides. I lean into his reassuring warmth, and he presses gentle kisses against my temple.

"Didn't deserve it. Not dirty," I mumble.

I'm not sure if he understands my incoherencies, but then he whispers softly in my ear, "You're not dirty. You're beautiful."

And I believe him.