

Temptation

by Pyttan

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The lines written in italics are quotes taken from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban page 12, and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire page 34.

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Many thanks to my fantastic beta, Diabólica.

"Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off "

James was panicking. He never panicked.

She didn't hesitate. She grabbed Harry, stumbling as she ran.

She heard the sound of a door bursting open behind her and the metallic zinging of thrown hexes.

She glanced out a window as she ran past it. Dark shadows were moving around the house.

There was no way out.

A stray spell burnt a hole through the wall in front of her the second before she ran past it, and James shouted something to her she couldn't hear.

She ran up the stairs to the nursery. She put Harry in his cot, hurrying so she could go back down and help James. She could hear them on the stair. Heavy steps. More zinging. A heavy thud.

When she turned, someone was standing in her way.

The house was silent.

He was taller than she'd imagined and much thinner. And he was smiling. The smile looked strange. His face stretched in all the wrong places, as if smiling was so alien to him that his face couldn't manage.

"You cannot help him."

She didn't understand who he was talking about. Then he took a gliding step away from the door and inclined his head as if he intended to look over his shoulder. He never did though; he kept watching her from the corner of his eye instead.

She looked past him.

James was sitting on top of the narrow stair, propped up against the wall in the cramped area, with his head turned towards her. He looked like he had just sat down to rest. Only, his eyes were empty. His eyes were never empty. They were happy or angry or thoughtful or ...

"I will spare you if you give me the boy."

She looked back at him and pulled her dressing gown closer around her body. She was cold. She wished she was wearing her slippers.

She reached for the cot, wanting to get closer to Harry.

"Give me the boy, and I will let you live."

"No." She had wanted to sound assertive, but the word came out as a short, breathless huff.

"No? You wish to die then? Together with your husband and child?"

She grabbed the railing of the cot. She had painted it in a soft green while still pregnant. James had teased her about it. Choose another colour, he had said. He didn't want to risk having a Slytherin in the family, he'd said. Just about any other colour would do, even yellow, he'd said. And then he had laughed at her when she became upset with him. Then he had hugged her, saying she could use any colour she wanted and that their kid would be fantastic no matter what, and he had kissed her.

She put her hand on Harry's back, stroking him. He was warm and his skin so very soft.

"You could have other children." His eyes narrowed as he watched the two of them.

"What "

"Mind your language. You ought to say 'pardon'. 'What' makes you sound like the Mudblood you are."

He took a step towards her. He moved in such a strange way, as if he floated instead of walked. She imagined herself walking up to him and lifting his robes, finding that he was standing on a miniature flying carpet. She swallowed the rising laughter.

"I have a young man among my followers who wants you. He asked me to spare you."

"I don't "

"I have two as a matter of fact. I might even let you choose. But one of them I cannot imagine it. A girl like you, with someone like Peter Pettigrew?"

She didn't understand. Peter had brought Harry a toy dragon yesterday. He'd helped them move in, helped around the house. He'd promised James ...

Her skin prickled as the hairs on her body rose in horror.

"Ah, I knew it. You cannot even bear the thought of Pettigrew touching you." He smiled. "But Severus, your childhood friend, wants you too. I would condone it."

Her lips were dry. "Why would you "

"I am half-blood, and so is Severus. We are both far stronger in our magic than any pure-blood."

She looked at Harry. He was standing up in his cot, scowling at the strange man. He wasn't afraid, her boy. He was a reserved that was true but never shy and never afraid. She stroked his hair. Jet black.

She had wanted him to look a bit like her so much, before he was born. He had arrived into the world with a furious bawl looking like a miniature James. But when his eyes changed from the dark bluish-grey he was born with, they had turned green. He had her eyes after all. But at that point it hadn't mattered to her anymore. He had been a person in his own right by then, and her need to have him look like her was long gone.

She drew a deep, shuddering breath and forced her attention back to Voldemort. He was still blocking the door. He had his wand ready, and hers was down stairs.

"I have been told that you are an impressive witch. Severus's offspring, bred on you, would be formidable. Strong in magic as well as in mind, and Severus would be devoted to you." He didn't hide his sneer. She didn't think he even wanted to hide his contempt.

For a moment, wrath took over. She wanted him dead and turned to dust. And she wanted Peter and Sev dead, too.

His eyes widened, and he looked surprised, disturbed even. Then he flicked his wand, and a picture rose.

A little girl who looked very much like her appeared. Only her nose, small and pretty as it was, was different. It had a decided hawkishness to it.

Next, the girl was laughing while swinging on the playground. Sev was standing in front of the swing holding out his arms, smiling and calling something out. The little girl jumped from the swing, laughing even harder now, trusting him to catch her.

She blinked and the picture turned, showing herself giving birth. Sev was by her side, holding her hand and stroking her hair. The baby was small and skinny with a tuft of black hair on its head. Severus rose and received the baby with an expression of pure possessiveness.

Lily closed her eyes in agony. When she opened them again, another scene was playing out in front of her. They were on platform 9 ¾. Sev had his arm around her waist as they were waving at two children on board the train. The red-haired girl was there, together with a little boy. He had black hair and black eyes, but other than that, he looked like Lily.

She turned her head away from the pictures unfolding.

"You need not die. I would allow you as many children as you want, and all you would have to do is keep out of my way."

She didn't want to die. She wanted more children. Then she caught a glimpse of James. Her James. Idiotic as he could be. Spoilt as he was. And funny, and strong, and thoughtful, and playful, and kind, and not weighed down with darkness. Darkness that would be passed on to her children.

She took the single step that placed Harry behind her. She was grateful that one step was all it took.

Voldemort's red eyes glittered as he lifted his wand.

She lost it then.

"Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!"

She needed to save Harry somehow.

"Stand aside, you silly girl ... stand aside, now ..."

No.

"Not Harry, please no, take me, kill me instead "

It was no use. She was an obstacle to him, nothing more. He wanted Harry.

"Not Harry! Please ... have mercy ... have mercy ..."

But mercy wasn't in his nature. He seemed to enjoy pain. She fell quiet.

Voldemort's shrill laughter filled the nursery.

Standing there looking at him, she felt almost calm. She should be afraid, shouldn't she? But she loved Harry. She'd always known that, of course, but she had not realised how much or how deep. Odd that she hadn't understood that before.

Her heart was beating hard against her breastbone. She wondered if she would be able to save him.

No use thinking of that. She would try.

"Avada ... "

She screamed.

"Kedavra!"