

Communion

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Chapter 1 of 1

Alone in the forest during a lull in the final battle, Hermione comes across an unexpected figure, as broken as herself.

This story has echoes of 'Touch' yet is completely distinct and unrelated in terms of plot and situation. Like 'Touch', it features a rather broken Lucius and how Hermione also seeks affirmation of life through him. Although I realise it is unlikely, there is no reason why this should not be completely compliant with DH and the epilogue. It is a moment between two people in the midst of battle.

There was a lull in the fighting. They were trying to find Nagini, to destroy her, and hence another Horcrux. But for a time, Hermione had split up from Harry and Ron and now found herself back in the Forest. Exhaustion was compelling her to rest. They had escaped from the castle under Harry's invisibility cloak, but were wary of remaining together in case of detection and so had separated briefly, with the intention of heading to the Shrieking Shack.

But now, as she paced between the trees, her limbs weary, her mind torpid, Hermione wondered, for the first time, if she had the resolve, if she had any more left in her to fight to the end.

She had already faced death and had it steal from her. The prospect of it taking her too loomed large and real, never more than now, having just witnessed the death of Fred Weasley. Her face still stung from the tears which had poured down it a few hours before. But now, after sorrow, had come an odd numbness.

She had been sticking to the densest parts of the forest to avoid detection. She had long since lost the last of her fresh clothes, and had relied recently on endless cleaning charms and spells. But the magic was starting to wear off, and her jumper now was torn and ragged, stained with blood, damp from rain. The bottom of her jeans was shredded and threadbare and her once fine leather boots faded and scuffed. She had not given a thought to her hair and face for an age. Survival did not care for a daily skin-care regime.

She continued to push her way through the trees, the branches taunting and scratching and tugging at her. Her strength ebbed further. How good it would be to sit, to lie down, just for a moment, and forget everything. To close her eyes and shut it out shut out pain and death and anguish. Shut out the need to do the right thing.

She stumbled, catching her foot on an exposed root and fell with a thud onto the mottled ground. She hardly had the energy to respond to the discomfort.

But glancing around as she dragged herself up once again, she found herself in a place where the trees were less dense. Directly in her path was one that had clearly been felled in a storm many decades before. The thick, gnarled trunk lay before her, like a strange forest creature sleeping the sleep that she so craved.

Its branches lay sprawled and twisted along it, covered now in moss and lichen which gave it a sheen and colour lacking elsewhere in the forest.

It was becoming increasingly dim as night approached, but she had not been bothered to withdraw her wand to use *Lumos*. But now she could barely make out a way

around the impediment blocking her path. She peered at the trunk, trying to find the best way around it. Directly before her, one particular part of the tree rose up acutely and vertically, a dense mass of pale lichen blooming from the top. It struck her as an odd formation considering the massive destruction which had already befallen this tree.

But then it moved, ever so slightly; the pale moss on top shifted, as if sliding over a knot in a branch.

Still, only slowly did Hermione realise: she was not looking at a gnarled remnant of a once glorious tree; she was looking at a person.

Hermione started, frozen. She was not even sure at this point if it was male or female. The hair on top of the head, which she had initially mistaken for lichen, was long, dishevelled and matted. It was certainly pale, or would have been had it not been murky and thick with dusk and dirt. On closer inspection she noted that what she had thought was another branch, was in fact an arm, clad in what seemed to be a fine coat. It was now torn in places and spattered with mud and what was surely blood, but she could tell that it had once been an elegant garment - the material was thick and heavy.

But still her mind did not allow her to realise who this person was. Her feet shifted for balance and a twig snapped under her. At last the person looked up, not in alarm, but with the slow necessity of someone who was beyond care. It was a man.

Hermione met eyes hollowed and sunken in a gaunt face, the rims red, dark shadows etched and extending down to sharp cheekbones. But within the hollowness, the eyes sparkled with a diamond grey, a faint burn of desperate need, clinging onto life. It was only then that she recognised him. She had seen his face only a few weeks before, in his own house. It was Lucius Malfoy.

Hermione wondered why she didn't gasp and step back. Surely that is what should have happened.

But here before her was a sight of such wretched despair that she could only stare. Malfoy was unrecognisable, even from the broken man she had such scant recall of from those weeks before.

And for his part, Malfoy hardly flinched. He saw her; he looked long enough for her to mark his recognition, but then his head dropped again, and he slumped back into the haggard form she had found him in, not from repulsion but exhaustion.

It was such an extraordinary meeting that her mind did not allow her to process it logically. She was set to ignore him, to walk past and continue her progress through the forest.

Hermione started to walk with deliberate footsteps, as if by concentrating hard they could both pretend the other wasn't there.

She thought she had passed, thought she would leave him slumped on the trunk and that they would forget the curious incident.

"I need to find my son."

She stopped. She did not recognise it as the same voice she had heard in Flourish and Blotts all those years ago, so effortlessly condescending and dismissive. This voice was thick and rough, rasping in desperation.

"Is he in the castle? Do you know where he could be?"

It was only then that Hermione started to tie up the threads in her mind. Why was Lucius Malfoy alone in the forest? Why was he not with the Death Eaters? With Voldemort? Why was he asking her, a Muggle-born, about Draco with such despairing need?

The truth was so hard to accept that she searched her thoughts for reasons other than the obvious, but at length she could no longer deny it: he had abandoned the fight. He had abandoned his master. He was no longer following the Dark Lord.

She turned back, and met with the face, not of a malicious bigot, but of a father, of a man in urgent need of family security. Malfoy's brows were creased together, his gaunt visage at once open and pleading. He was asking her for help.

She answered him uncertainly; her most recent experience with Draco was still burning her. She, Ron and Harry had just saved his life in the Room of Requirement, but she had no idea of his current whereabouts. Her numb mind could not convey the details of her experience now, but she gave his father the reassurance he needed. "I ... I don't know. I saw him, not long ago. He was alright, but I don't know anymore. I must go back myself."

"Will you look for him? Will you find him?"

"Mr Malfoy ..." She was not sure what to call him.

He tried to stand, to push himself up onto swaying feet, but immediately he inhaled in agony and clutched his side, falling to the trunk again helplessly.

She took a step towards him. Seeing a person in distress, no matter who that person was, inevitably brought out in Hermione a need to assist.

"You're hurt."

He sneered. For the first time, she caught a glimpse of the old Malfoy. It was almost comforting. "Obviously."

She stepped closer to him as he flinched with pain again.

He shifted himself, his face twisting in discomfort. "I need to get to the castle. I want to find my son."

"You can't go anywhere like this. Where is your wand?"

"I no longer have it." There was a low regret in his voice.

"Well ..."

Practicality overthrew reason. Hermione withdrew the wand she was carrying. Malfoy flinched again, his eyes wide with alarm. He thought she was going to curse him. And oddly, after the initial horror, his face shifted into one of resignation; he was not even going to try to resist. Hermione found herself smiling reassuringly. "I'm not going to hurt you. I can try to heal you a little ... if you want."

He looked at her steadily. In the midst of the empty helplessness, his eyes shone bright. "Granger."

She dropped her head. "Yes. That would be me."

"Why are you out here? Why are you not with your friends?"

"We separated. I'll find them soon enough."

"Still so confident."

"What else can I do? We must always hope."

There was a pause before he spoke again. "That is what I used to think."

"You still should."

"Do you think my son is dead?"

She hesitated, her mind raging. Did she wish Draco had died? She closed her eyes. He could be dead now. But she could not wish that on anyone. Never. She spoke clearly.

"Knowing Draco, he will have found a safe place, a way to avoid danger."

"I didn't think you had much respect for him."

"It depends in what way you mean."

"You hate him."

"Yes. But that does not mean I don't respect him. He has changed a lot. A lot has been demanded of him. He has had to shoulder a greater burden of responsibility than me. And he has been very brave."

Malfoy looked at her in clear shock. "Brave?"

"Yes. What he went through last year ... and this. He didn't want it. I could tell he didn't. And he was so alone. Alone with all that darkness inside. How terrible."

"I was not there for him."

"No."

His eyes darted to hers with a look approaching shame. "It was not my fault. I was in prison."

"You only go to prison if you've done something wrong, Mr Malfoy."

He did not even argue with her, but his voice was empty and bitter. "A series of failures ... And here I am now. Wretched, in a forest, with a Mudblood."

She sighed. Amidst his emasculation, there was still callous disregard. "I'll be gone in a moment."

"It doesn't matter." His tone had changed and was hollow again.

"What?"

"You. I no longer care. I am too tired. Too tired."

He let his head fall forward into his hands, his once lush hair hanging lank and matted over him. She studied him carefully. No, she realised, *he really didn't care*. And she was not sure she did either. Part of her wanted simply to slump next to him, curl on the forest floor, and sleep. She stood above him, her shoulders hunched uncharacteristically. He was no longer looking at her and she could hear the breaths pulled into his body, shallow and ragged. She was reminded of her intention to help him.

"If we are going to heal you, I'm going to have to see the wounds. Can you take off your coat?"

At first he did not move.

"Mr Malfoy?"

And then suddenly he raised himself with a sigh, and tried to pull off the garment. Immediately, he grimaced and sucked in a breath of pain.

"Here. Gently. Let me help."

With firm hands, Hermione helped smooth the coat off his shoulders. Malfoy did not stop her. Underneath, he wore a white shirt. Blooms of red had spread over it on the right sleeve and across his abdomen. Hermione grimaced, her instinctive concern for a fellow human being rising swiftly.

"You'll have to take your shirt off too."

He seemed to be beyond any concern of dignity. With barely a hesitation or thought, his eyes still half-closed, Malfoy started unbuttoning his shirt; it was clear it was paining him.

"I'll do it." She reached in and slipped the buttons out. Her head was down, concentrating. She did not see Malfoy studying her, as if aware for the first time what she was doing. But still he let her.

As carefully as she could, she peeled the shirt back from his shoulders. They were broad and muscled and she had to pull hard to drag it off. He hissed again.

Hermione stepped back. Across his right upper arm he had a gash some four inches long, deep and angry, but this was nothing compared to the laceration extending from under his breast diagonally down across his abdomen, nearly a foot long. Blood had soaked into his skin all around it, giving it an unworldly lustre in the dim light, and was still visibly oozing from the wound.

She could not prevent a loud gasp escaping her.

"That doesn't sound particularly promising," he muttered. She glanced back to his face. His eyes were closed, resigned, but he was smirking with sardonic understatement.

"It's alright. I have my wand, well ... it was someone else's but ..." She neglected to mention that it was actually his sister-in-law's. "I can seal these."

She took off her jumper to concentrate on her task. Malfoy's eyelids pulled heavily open, enough to see her body arch to shake off the ragged woollen garment. She was wearing only a thin top underneath, but under the circumstances, propriety was banished.

She concentrated on the abdominal wound first. Malfoy was breathing heavily, the tight muscles of his torso rising and falling urgently as he struggled to capture air. "You will have to try to be still for a moment. I need to be as careful as possible." She bent to the wound, peering at it in the gathering gloom. She noted many other scars and abrasions which criss-crossed his otherwise smooth and toned flesh. He had suffered greatly over the years. But her thoughts were focussed on this new wound which she knew could kill him if not dealt with. "Who did this?"

"I don't remember. One of them ..."

"What?! Harry? Ron?" Hermione looked up, alarmed. She could not recall when they would have had the opportunity.

"No," he hissed dismissively. "One of *them*. One of his. Or him even. I am used to it now. I try not to remember the details."

"Voldemort?"

He flinched at the name, but now not so much with shock at her mentioning it, but revulsion of being reminded of him. "How can you speak that name with such ease?"

"Because he holds no fear over me."

"Then you are a better person than me."

She looked up in surprise. He closed his eyes with a smirked breath out.

Hermione was touching the wound lightly, assessing the best spell needed to seal and heal it. It stung. She knew it would. His breath was increasingly rapid, but he flinched minimally under her touch. Her fingers searched the flesh as delicately as she could. She had never been put off by blood, especially when such urgent need presented itself. As a young child, before witchcraft, she had seriously considered becoming a doctor. She sighed, thinking of the best way forward, and ran her fingers through her hair, transferring some of his blood onto her face.

Even under the pain which flamed through him endlessly, Malfoy did not shift himself. He was staring down at her, his breathing still rapid. "Why are you doing this?"

"You're in pain; you need help. It's called humanity."

He continued to stare down at her as she reapplied herself, incanting a preparation charm which spread a sudden cooling balm across the wound. He exhaled loudly, his brows furrowed.

"I'm not going back to him."

She took a while to respond.

"You don't know who'll win yet. Surely it's a little hasty to decide that."

"I am not going back."

She looked up. "Then you too are very brave."

Their eyes met, the only points of light as night encroached. It took a moment before Hermione remembered to continue with her task.

"This will hurt. I'm sorry."

Malfoy sucked in, holding his breath, and immediately Hermione ran her wand over the wound, incanting a complicated and difficult healing spell. It only worked with the deepest commitment and magical skill. A sharp cry rose from Malfoy but still he did not move a muscle. And then, with relief and joy, Hermione saw the jagged edges knitting together and the flow of blood ceasing. Immediately, Malfoy's body relaxed and he let out his breath, slow and deep this time, a sound of complete release.

Hermione sagged with exhaustion and relief. Her own body was so wrung out that the deep magic required had sapped her last reserves of strength.

"Are you alright?" She could hear concern in his voice.

"Yes." She was almost panting and brought a hand to her brow, her eyes still closed.

"Thank you." His voice was low and quiet, but genuine. Her eyes moved to his, the grey spark even more aglow now. She had to look away quickly.

"Let's sort your arm out."

His arm, although severely cut, did not require the same intensity of spell craft and healed quickly under her ministrations. She looked on her efforts with satisfaction.

"How does that feel?"

"Much better."

"There is a stream over there. I'll clean you a little. Wait a moment."

She drew herself up, stretching to regain some strength in her weary limbs, and searched for a cloth. None was to be found, and she resorted to ripping a strip of material from her shirt, exposing her belly a little. Malfoy's eyes rested briefly on the pale flat stomach exposed before him. Hermione dropped to her knees by the small stream that ran beside the fallen tree. Dipping the material into the water, she then crossed back to him and pressed it carefully against his torso. He hissed with shock. "Cold!"

She smiled apologetically. "Sorry."

Hermione continued cleaning the blood, her brows furrowed on her task.

"You said you don't know who will win yet, but you must have some idea. What is your ... gut instinct?" he asked.

"I really cannot tell."

"Are you scared?"

"No. I should be, I suppose. But, it will serve no purpose and ..."

"And what?"

She sighed deeply. "I think I have run out of fear."

He smiled, just a small remorseful smile, repeating, "Run out of fear ..."

"Are you scared?"

"Not for me."

"For Draco?"

"Yes." His voice was flat again, distant. But then he sighed, a sigh from deep within his aching body. "But I am so tired, so very tired ... I wish I was not so damn tired."

"I know. So am I. I could sleep for a year." She had done as much as she could, although a fair amount of blood still clung to his skin. "There. That's the best I can do. How does it feel?"

"Much better. Still tender."

Hermione allowed herself to sit down on the trunk beside him, then lit her wand with *lumos* and placed it beside them.

"It must be about ten o'clock. I'll just ... rest for a moment." A few minutes would do no harm, she hoped.

"The forest itself can be dangerous at night."

"I know."

"I used to come out here as a student. In order to ..."

"In order to what?"

He smirked, his head lolling back, resting on a grizzled branch behind him, eyes closed. "Get up to mischief."

"You, Mr Malfoy! Surely not!" Her sarcasm amused her.

"From what I understand you yourself came very close to being expelled on many occasions. Draco would tell me all your tales." His smirk deepened. "I always lived in hope ..."

"Thanks a lot! Well, I'm still here, although being a student seems to have passed me by this year."

"Draco too."

There was a rustling behind them. Hermione darted round, picking up the wand.

"Can you see anything?" asked Malfoy.

"No. I think it was just a deer or something. But the centaurs can get ... frisky at night."

"Frisky centaurs, Miss Granger? Don't get excited now ..." He was teasing again. Considering the extraordinary situation she was in, she rather enjoyed it.

"Don't be stupid - they can be very dangerous. But I suppose if it's a choice between centaurs or Voldemort ..." She laughed. The sound was so odd under the circumstances that it caused her to giggle even more unstopably.

"What?"

"Well ... this ... you and me ... in the forest, chatting."

"Chatting? Is that what this is?"

"It would seem to be. And laughing ... I haven't laughed for a long time. And to do it here, now ... It seems so strange, don't you think? Almost as if it's forbidden, illicit. I have seen so much death today ... Are you allowed to laugh when surrounded by death?"

He did not respond, simply looked at her steadily.

Hermione sighed deeply. "I really should be going. But ..."

"But what?"

"I'm not sure that I can ... like you. I am so tired. I just want it all to end. And sometimes I resent the fact that it seems to be expected of me to help bring it to an end, whatever that end may be."

"I understand. I have felt the same pressure."

"But we're not there. Instead we're stuck out here in the forest, Death Eater and Mudblood, chatting and laughing."

He chuckled, further confirming her words. She had never heard him laugh before. It struck her as being a remarkably natural sound from him. Stillness settled gradually over them again.

"Do you resent that?" he asked at length.

"What?"

"That sense of responsibility, of having to do what's right?"

"I do at the moment, I admit. I never used to. Responsibility was everything to me. But ... I've just had enough: shell-shocked, battle-weary, whatever you want to call it."

"It will be over soon. No matter what, it will be over."

"I know. It's a relief. After all this time; it's a relief."

"Yes."

"I suppose that is why I'm not afraid. That's terrible, isn't it? I just want it to end. Even if Voldemort wins, it will be over. I don't want to run anymore. I don't want to hide." She paused. "He'll kill me, I suppose."

After a while, Malfoy spoke steadily. "If one is held by the Dark Lord, death is often the most desirable outcome."

"Do you think that?"

"I know that."

Stillness again. She could still hear his breathing, less ragged now, but still pained. "I'm sorry," she said softly.

"For what?"

"For all you have suffered."

"Although it pains me to say it, you are right: I brought it on myself."

"You admit that very freely."

"What else can I do? I have nothing left. There is no use in pretending. I have nothing left with which to support pretence."

"You have your son."

"Yes. And my love for him is genuine. That I know."

"And your wife."

He did not respond. His eyes remained closed. Hermione was curious.

"Where is she?"

"Searching."

His voice was still measured. She pressed further. "Why aren't you with her?"

"I don't know. We became separated. She went off." Pause. "She is stronger than me."

"She wasn't in Azkaban for a year," Hermione replied immediately.

"No ..."

Hermione looked hard at him. He had not opened his eyes.

"That must be hard."

"What?"

"To have been through that and to return to someone who possibly expects you to be the person you were before."

This time he did open his eyes to look at her.

"You are remarkably wise for someone so young."

It was her turn to drop her head. "Don't."

"What?"

"I am sick of being wise."

"Sick of that too?"

"Yes. Sick of everything."

He was staring steadily at her now, his eyes reflecting the glow from the wand. "My family has always treated you very badly. I hated you. As did my son."

"I'm well aware of that."

"And here you are, healing my wounds and chatting - to me."

"Does that surprise you?"

"I'm not sure; I haven't thought about it."

"Well, I suppose, like they say, all's fair in love and war. And like you said, you are not going back to him. I believe you. And I admire that."

She turned to him and smiled. And he smiled back, his face not as harassed in the pale glow of light falling over them.

Malfoy sighed deeply once again, his limbs shifting a little. "I must go to Draco. No matter where he is or ... how he is."

"Yes," she concurred, albeit reluctantly. "And I must get back to the fight ... to the ending."

Malfoy tried to push himself up. Again, there was a stab of pain, despite her healing, and he sat down again suddenly.

"Is it still hurting?"

"Nothing like it was; I simply haven't much strength. Still so tired."

She felt exactly the same.

"Let me see."

Gentle fingers moved over the wound again.

He glanced down. Her fingers were soft and warm and ridiculously caring over his flesh. "It's still very hot. It must still be sore."

"Yes."

"I've run out of options, I'm afraid." She smiled with helpless resignation and let out a soft laugh. "Save for kissing it better."

She had spoken before realising. She was not sure why she had said it. In normal circumstances it would have just been a joke laughed off between friends. That was how she had intended it. But Lucius Malfoy was not a friend. And the hard, scarred abdomen of Lucius Malfoy was mere inches away from her.

She dared to glance up at him. He was staring at her with a fierce intensity.

"That is what my mother used to do." His words drifted into her.

She looked into the grey again. His eyes were alight, but his face had relaxed and had lost some of the gaunt harshness it had held before.

"Did it work?" she asked gently, not taking her eyes from his.

"Yes."

There was no doubt in her mind, and none in his. They both sought that affirmation, that tender reminder of being alive, if only for now. And so Hermione bent her head,

slowly and deliberately, and pressed her soft lips onto the scar on his arm. Just one little kiss over a fraction of the wound. She heard the softest and briefest sigh above her. She glanced up at him, not pulling back, and murmured, "Better?"

"Yes."

And then she kissed again, further along, and then again, working her way slowly and carefully along the length of the scar, her kisses growing deeper, softer, trying to impart healing as her wand had done earlier, and in turn, to take warm humanity from him, even him ... especially him.

And then she drew back, but kept her body close to him. He was still looking at her, his eyes steady upon her face.

"I like that ... Hermione."

His hand came up and cupped her face. His thumb stroked over her cheek. It was strong, yet remarkably smooth and warm.

But he did not guide her, he did not need to. She lowered her head again, this time to the tight muscles of his abdomen, and laid her lips on the harsh scar which had ripped into his flesh. This time she felt him relax under her, felt his breathing steady. She was so close that she could sense his blood pouring round his body, hear his heartbeat. In all the desolation she had witnessed, it was a moment of raw human joy.

Hermione now instinctively let her tongue flit out to run over the raised flesh. His hand came up to hold her, stroking through her hair, caressing, as soothing to her as her mouth on his skin to him. And this time her lips and tongue coaxed and soothed; with light licks and sucks and kisses she covered his scarred flesh. At first he studied her, then let his head fall back and gave his body over to her healing mouth. Her fingers had joined her mouth, and occasionally would run lightly over a nipple. Neither minded, both rejoiced. She was travelling up, tasting the copper of blood, the salt of sweat, mingled into one fervent reminder of living man, caught on the knife-edge of time. She came to his neck, bared and open for her, the saline sweat strong there. It tasted good to her and she licked up, her tongue reaching his firm jaw line.

Now she kissed again, soft and gentle, up his chin, feeling the cleft in his jaw.

She had reached his mouth. Pausing only momentarily, she looked deep into him and whispered soft against his lips, "The kiss always heals."

"Yes ... always heals."

And with that their lips met. Softly and sweetly, they kissed, their tongues tasting and searching, their lips rubbing, breath coming softly, mingling, mouths open. It was a new kiss. A kiss which restored, a kiss of discovery, of new life amidst death.

And she pressed against him and felt his skin hot, crying out under her. She recognised it as she felt it in her too. Hermione pushed onto him, her damp heat seeping into him. One of his hands was holding her back hard into him, long fingers splayed to feel as much of her as possible.

And then his mouth was at her ear, whispering into it, "I want to be inside you. Can I be inside you? Please. I want that. I have to."

She did not question for an instant. His insistence merely confirmed her own need. With another kiss of blessing, Hermione stood swiftly to pull her jeans and knickers off, kicking off shoes and socks in the process, missing his close heat in the few seconds she was away from him. She picked up the wand and mumbled her contraceptive charm again. Then, with agile hands, she undid the buttons which kept him from her. He let her, simply watching. Then with a grunt he burst out, large and long. She pulled his trousers and shoes off deftly, and so he sat in the muggy heat of that summer night, naked before her in the forest. She pulled her top up and off and quickly discarded her bra. His eyes widened as he gazed upon her naked beauty.

Hermione came over to straddle him, and then, with barely a moment's hesitation and a final kiss of acceptance, she sank down onto his rigid cock. At the moment of conjoining they both fell silent, feeling only flesh within flesh, upon flesh. Her arms coiled around his shoulders and she threw her head back down to look at him. He was staring up at her in wonder, blissful surprise etched into his face. At that point it was not about lust or desire, although their adoration of each other's bodies had compelled this. For minutes, they did not move, simply rocked a little upon each other, not as lovers, but as fractured souls seeking confirmation of life through each other.

He was large, almost too large, but she wanted nothing else. She felt an almost painful nudge on her cervix, but merely ground onto it, rejoicing in her completion.

"Better," he murmured.

"Better," she confirmed.

And then Lucius' hands came to her hips and, for the first time as a lover seeking pleasure, she started to move: slow, deep undulations, working her pussy hard upon him, milking his cock, pulling him out. There in the forest, with remnants of life and darkness around them, their bodies worked together, moved inside each other, bloodstained and wet from despair and death.

She held him tight and felt her body dampening further from the blood and sweat which clung to him, transferring onto her. Her hands ran over his back, hot under her fingers, drawing up the perspiration which clung to his spine.

And then Hermione leant back and felt his hands travel up to her breasts and his cock press hard along her. She sobbed as fingers closed on her left nipple, just an exquisite pang, so needed, so wanted. And then fingers at her clit, rubbing and plying, carefully and surely. She had to look at him again, wanted that further connection, and she drew back her head to meet his eyes, brown to grey.

Lucius' mouth hung slack, but his eyes were fierce with unrivalled pleasure. Hermione clenched upon him, rolling again, causing him to suck in with sharp rapture. Her body girded itself, and with the rise of pleasure she felt strength surging back through her. She bucked and rocked on him ever more urgently, his cock working her inside with deep perfection, little cries and whines of abandon floating from her into the forest air. And thus joined, cock deep inside her, hand strumming her clit, the other squeezing her nipple, they came, completely and together.

Lucius felt his seed shoot fast and hard from him, more and more, stuffing her full of him, and in turn she wailed, crying out as she shook upon him, pleasure ripping through her limbs.

She fell forward, her breathing as heavy as his. Together they slid down the trunk, still joined, curling their limbs together. Hermione turned on her side. He fell out briefly but was still hard enough to quickly slip back into her from behind. And then, pulling his coat over them, spooned together, they slept.

They woke an hour or so later. Hermione opened her eyes to find a rabbit stationary before her, staring at the two of them quizzically. As she stirred, it dashed off quickly, the flash of white on its bob causing her to smile.

She could feel Lucius still inside her and, although she was in no hurry to leave him, reality pressed in on her, not regret, but the need to get back to the others at last. He inhaled and drew his arm around her.

"Are you awake?" she murmured.

"Hm."

She reached around. Lucius leaned over, staring hard into her, and they kissed once again. And as they kissed, they moved, and their bodies came apart. Hermione moaned softly as she felt him slip from her.

Silently but deliberately, they stood and dressed, finding their clothes in the gloom.

When they had finished, they stood a little apart, awkward for the first time.

But both could tell they now had the renewed energy to do what needed to be done.

Their eyes met. She smiled, true and tender, and began to walk steadily into the forest, back towards the fight.

"Hermione."

She turned back.

"Thank you."

His voice had never been so genuine.

"Thank you, Lucius." She smiled softly. "Go and find your son."

He returned her gentle smile and gave a slight nod of confirmation.

And Hermione walked off, to complete the ending.

Any comments happily read. Thank you. LL x