

Weakness

by KellyH

What if Hermione had not managed to escape that night at Godric's Hollow? And what if Voldemort had imprisoned her at Malfoy Manor? Once inside the Manor, both Hermione and Lucius find that temptation has become one of their greatest weaknesses.

Prologue :

Chapter 1 of 4

What if Hermione had not managed to escape that night at Godric's Hollow? And what if Voldemort had imprisoned her at Malfoy Manor? Once inside the Manor, both Hermione and Lucius find that temptation has become one of their greatest weaknesses.

"Do you really think it is weakness that yields to temptation? I tell you that there are terrible temptations which it requires strength, strength and courage to yield to." Oscar Wilde

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Prologue:

Hermione leaned forward and placed her hands upon his thighs. She wasn't sure what came over her as she looked up at him from a kneeling position between his thighs, but she suddenly felt the urge to kiss him. She followed her impulse, and Lucius seemed very keen on her kiss as his hand twisted into her hair, clasping it around the nape of her collared neck with a gentle pressure.

She was giving him a chaste kiss, purely to feel his lips upon hers. He opened his mouth to urge her to deepen the kiss, but she pulled back from him suddenly. Yet, she remained close enough that she could feel her own breath rebounding back upon her lips.

Upon her face was etched an expression of revelation. A revelation that suddenly came over her which made her greatly upset. For a moment, she could not speak, then finally she whispered, "I feel nothing."

He looked at her with narrowed eyes while he tried to assess her meaning.

"What have you done to me?" Her words come out like a plea while her face contorted with emotional pain.

He was confused by her declaration that she felt nothing, especially when it was obviously not true. "I've only done what you allowed me to," he pointed out to her as he settled back against the chair.

Biting her lip, she held back the tears that threatened to erupt. It was at this moment that she felt utter pain. The pain of whom she had become, and how she now felt about the circumstance she was in. She shouldn't have felt this at all, not with him – especially not with him.

They were not lovers – they weren't even friends, and yet they acted like they were.

Straightening her back, she stood up sharply so she was looking down upon him. "And if I told you, 'no,' what would you have done?"

She knew the answer even before asking, but she still wanted to hear it from his lips. "I would have kept pursuing you until you said yes."

"And how far would you have gone to make me say yes?"

He did not answer her question, and she was not surprised by that. "You won't tell me?"

Rather than telling her with words, he gave her a mischievous smile that hinted at how far he would pursue.

She wanted to wipe that smile off his face, but that was not an option. Instead, she said, "Take me back down to the cellar."

She no longer wanted to be in his presence, and after he carefully gauged her for a moment, he relented and agreed.

They said nothing to each other as he escorted her back into her cell. Their talking and false affections were finished for that day.

Hermione sat with Luna, leaning against her arm. She should have been sleeping, but she found she couldn't. Her guilty conscience grew heavy with the burden she had placed within herself.

It had only been six weeks since she was first brought here, and yet, to Hermione it felt like years. She had been captured on Christmas Eve when she and Harry had gone to Godric's Hollow in search of the Sword.

She couldn't remember the precise details of that night, because she could only recall a few things that happened. She remembered throwing blasting curse after blasting curse at the snake she could not see. She had cursed until she had been struck by its tail, which had sent her flying into Harry. She had lost her wand at some point when she was struck; she had thought she had heard Harry calling out to her that he had it, but she couldn't say for certain; she could have imagined it.

She was certain of one thing though, and that was of Harry's pain. He had been screaming something at her through his pain while he tried to lift her off the floor, but she had never caught what he said. She had been so disorientated from the blow that she had been utterly useless.

In the next moment, she had felt Harry partially lifting her up from the floor and dragging her to the shattered window, where he had tried to throw them out of it. It had not worked. She had been dead weight and useless to help him. When Harry had gone out the window she had not gone completely out. Half her body had hung out while Harry's grip had slipped away from her, and he had been gone, disappearing before he had hit the ground.

Just as Harry had disappeared she had felt hands upon her body, roughly pulling her within, and she had managed to get one glance at the figure before she had succumbed into darkness.

Voldemort had captured her.

The next several days had been Hermione's breaking point. Days that she long considered to be the worst in her life; the time she had longed for death to take her. Tortured, starved, and beaten, she had thought she could not endure anymore – but she had. She had lived through it, and all the while she had been able to not give up any clue on Harry's whereabouts, or why they had been there in Godric's Hollow.

She could at least give that to Harry. Harry, who was most likely all alone now, abandoned by Ron, and knowing Harry, succumbed with guilt for leaving her behind. She knew it wasn't his fault, it hadn't been his intention to leave her, but she knew him enough that he would blame himself.

Hermione knew why they were keeping her alive. Professor – Headmaster Snape was the one that had saved her on the day of her execution. Much to Bella's disappointment, Voldemort had agreed to his plans to keep her alive to lure out Harry. They had not done so yet, but she knew the day was fast approaching. As of now, the only reason it did not happen was that Voldemort seemed occupied with another task, a secret task that no one knew about, but everyone speculated on.

Luna squirmed beside her, but she did not awake. Across the room in the only bed that was provided for them slept Mr. Ollivander. He had been weakened considerably by all the tortures he had endured, and she feared that soon she might end up much like him. She had heard him once confess easily under torture, and for Harry's sake she hoped to continue to be strong, to keep herself from getting to the point that she would do anything to make them stop. However, right now she was strong, at least when it came to torture, but she feared her other weakness. Lucius was becoming a crippling situation to her.

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Disclaimer: There is no money being made by this story as all rights belong to JKR. My thanks go out to Sunny33 for the wonderful beta job. Story prompt came from Silverrotter1.

Chapter One:

Chapter 2 of 4

What if Hermione had not managed to escape that night at Godric's Hollow? And what if Voldemort had imprisoned her at Malfoy Manor? Once inside the Manor, both Hermione and Lucius find that temptation has become one of their greatest weaknesses.

Chapter One:

Lucius watched as she dipped the rag into the water and brought it up to the window. He would have complained that the water was too filthy to continue with but he didn't. He didn't, because he told himself that it was women's business, but if he was really honest with himself, the true reason was that he didn't want to see the girl leave.

Sipping on his tonic, he studied her as she went on with the cleaning. The girl had not acknowledged him yet, but he was certain that she would. He figured that she was in her mood again, trying to distance herself from him like she had been trying to do lately. Whether she liked it or not she wouldn't stay away, she couldn't, nor would he allow her to. He had made that decision the day he had first decided to touch her.

He had accidentally dropped his glass on the floor due to the weakness that came over him periodically. He had assumed that his condition had to do with his time in Azkaban. However, he couldn't visit a Healer; he, being an escaped prisoner, just had to deal with his symptoms when they came about. They had never really caused him any pain; they were more of a nuisance than anything else.

On that particular day, when the weakness had suddenly struck him, his fingers had lacked the strength to hold the glass, which caused it to shatter as it had hit the floor. She had turned to him, and then without an order by him, cleaned it up. Not only had she cleaned up the shattered pieces of glass but she had fetched another tonic without being asked. Lucius couldn't help but have been intrigued by that. A haughty pleasure had wrapped around his tattered pride as he had smelled a weakness within her. He suspected that she had catered to his needs because of what he had done for her after Bellatrix had tortured her.

When the girl had been brought to his home on Christmas Eve, her battered body had appeared nearly broken, but she had complained of no pain at least until Bellatrix had taken a hold of her. She had been tortured for information that would lead them to Potter, but she had stayed strong, giving them nothing.

He had feared that she would. He had stayed with her on every occasion that she had been tortured, fearing that she would speak out at last.

Lucius knew his position with the Dark Lord was not good, and even though he felt confident that he would be able to reclaim his right to be next to the Dark Lord, he knew it was a position that he did not want. The Dark Lord's sanity had been weakening by the day, and Lucius was troubled by that. For his son's sake, he could no longer wish for the Dark Lord to continue his reign.

Lucius couldn't care less for Potter, but he would rather have him win than his Master. So, Lucius took a great deal of interest in the girl and what she offered to them during her tortures, which was never much.

One day, which was to have been Hermione's last torturing session with Bellatrix, Narcissa had complained about Hermione's screams echoing throughout the house. She had asked Bella to do something about it, and Bella had obliged her by simply gagging the girl.

Lucius had not turned around to watch; he never did, as he had found he no longer cared for tortures since leaving Azkaban. Not too long ago, that sort of thing hadn't bothered him in the least, but his year in Azkaban had made him a different man, more than he liked to admit. The Dementors must have weakened him, softened him to the point that he had actually felt sympathy when hearing her screaming.

The screams had begun immediately as soon as the tape was secure upon her face. Bellatrix had cackled madly as she had shot curse after curse into Hermione's body. The tape had muffled her cries, preventing her from fully screaming out, but enough sound had seeped through that the occupants in the room were able to hear her.

Bellatrix had asked her not one question; her strategy had been purely to break her.

Lucius had been able to hear her body convulsing as the curses had riddled through her body. She had thrashed desperately upon the chair, and he had known she would have rope burns upon her arms from trying to get away.

After the tenth curse had hit her, Lucius had finally had enough and had commanded Bellatrix to stop.

Bellatrix had turned quickly toward him and given him a look of cold contempt while looking at him as if he were someone who was not her equal. Lucius had faced her full on and returned a glare that had matched her own.

They had glared at each other for only a moment before Bellatrix had snorted, "Fine," and had lowered her wand to her side.

"Perhaps next time she will be more inclined to speak," she had said as she had turned and spoken directly to Hermione, "I am looking forward to finding out."

He had assumed that Bellatrix was finished with her, but no, Bellatrix had to deliver one final humiliation before she left.

The girl had slumped forward in the chair due to her lack of energy. Bellatrix had bent down and lifted her chin to make her look directly into her eyes. Placing her wand upon the tape, she had drawn one curved line upon it.

"There, there. You see, the Mudblood can smile after all. Look how she has enjoyed our time together!" she had laughed as she spoke to him, but had never taken her eyes off Hermione.

She had eyed the girl with one more look of pleasure, much like one would when completing a masterpiece, before dropping her hand from her chin and then had finally left the attic.

Hermione's head had dropped down again by the time Lucius was in front of her. Just like Bellatrix, he had bent down and brought her head up with his hand. He had gazed upon her as she looked up at him with wide, weary eyes. The tears that had gathered in her eyes had not been released, but they were visible nonetheless.

Slowly, he had begun to peel the tape from her face. The tears that she had been trying to hold back had fallen out of her eyes, but she had not cried out.

He had leant forward after the tape was away from her face and pressed his chest into hers as he had reached around to undo the rope. Her weakened state had made her slump her head upon his shoulder, and to him, it had felt like a mock embrace. Normally, when he had untied her, he would have stood behind the chair and let her fall to the floor. However, this time he had been in front of her to catch her.

He had grabbed hold of her, and he had taken her to the makeshift bed on the other side of the attic. Laying her upon the bed made of old drapes, he had said nothing to her as he had inspected the skin upon her wrists. He wasn't sure why he had been so concerned over her, although at the time it had just seemed like the natural thing to do.

A piece of her hair had fallen across her face, and without thinking, he had reached over to push it away. His fingers had slid upon her sweat-soaked forehead, and Lucius had been overcome with something he had never thought he would feel for someone like her compassion. Drawing himself away quickly, he had left her there and retreated to his own room.

She had been asleep when he had come back to fetch her, and even when he had lifted her off the drapes, and cradled her into his arms, she had been barely conscious. She had mumbled something incoherent as he had pressed a vial to her lips. The contents had easily slipped down her throat, and she had not complained of the bitter taste.

The potion he had given her was to heal her; she had endured enough torture for it to really affect her health. Lucius had felt compelled to help her, despite his inner conscience telling him to leave the girl alone.

The following day, the Dark Lord had announced that she had been sentenced to die, but at the last minute they had received a visitor. Severus Snape had walked into the room and requested the ear of the Dark Lord. He had stood above the girl, who had hung her head low, as he had asked to keep her alive. He had suggested to the Dark Lord that Potter would be far easier to lure out of hiding if they kept her alive. Their Master had thought on it and agreed with him.

Severus had also requested that the girl be held within his school, which he had claimed was far more protected than the Manor, but he had been denied this. The others had agreed that no Mudblood would step a foot into Hogwarts again.

That very same day the Dark Lord had left, telling everyone that he was not to be summoned unless Potter was caught. The other orders he had given were that none of them were to lure Potter out with the girl until he had returned and Headmaster Snape was to be the only one to interrogate her.

Once a week Snape had come to have his 'talk' with her when she had been taken behind closed doors for questioning. This had not gone down well with Bella, but she had complied with her Master's wishes, just as Lucius had to because he had hated to think of what Snape was doing to her behind those closed doors.

For days after the Dark Lord's departure, she had been simply kept below, but then upon Narcissa's suggestion, they had started to make use of her and the other girl, Luna. The Dark Lord had no longer been around to rule their home; Narcissa had felt that if she had to endure her home being a prison, there was no harm in putting the

girls to work. The house-elf, who he had procured from a dead relative a few years back, had not been in the best of health, and he had been able to see her point in wanting them to work. The house had been becoming quite unkempt since they had not been able to hire a person to clean. That would have been most unwise, considering what the house was used for nowadays. So he had had no objections.

She had been collared to keep her from escaping, and the day he had been overcome with the sudden attack of weakness, he had been watching her scratching her neck as she had dusted the shelves. When the glass had broken upon the floor, she had stopped her dusting to clean up the glass and fetched another drink.

He had doubted that she was the sort of person to have become so obedient after such a short time, so he had had to wonder if she had been affected by his gentleness that day in the attic. Testing out his theory the following day, he had found that when he had touched her she had not moved away. She had tensed from his touch, but she had kept quiet as he had simply placed his finger upon her bare arm and stroked her.

He should have stopped then, after all, his curiosity had been satisfied, but the following day, he had found himself reaching for her again. She hadn't stopped him and had allowed him to touch her, but she had remained unmoving as he did so.

He had wanted more from her, and so he had sought it out, pursuing her and wooing her to touch him back. He had even spoken to her as an equal, and he had been surprised by her foolish ideals, but at least it had made her more comfortable around him. Enough that she had began not to tense when he touched her.

He now stared at her across the room, impatiently waiting for her to turn to acknowledge him. Then, finally, she finished with the window and looked over at him.

"Come here, girl," he called to her, and she walked forward until she was nearly within his reach.

"Closer, girl," he demanded as he watched the hesitation upon her face. He knew she would do as he asked, and so he placed his glass upon the side table in order to have his hands free.

When she made no movement, he impatiently leant forward and grasped her arm. She took in a sharp breath, but she did not pull away.

"These cuts here, do they give you any trouble?" he asked as soothingly as he could, attempting to make her more comfortable with his concern.

She shook her head, no, and attempted to pull back her arm, but he applied a gentle pressure to keep her arm from slipping away.

With his fingers, he started to caress along the small cuts. "Where did you get these?"

Again, she said nothing.

He looked her up and down while he moved to stand up from the chair. She did not shy away in disgust or fear she was so used to his advances that she had become desensitised by them.

Lucius thought there was a part of her that craved his touch. That she battled with herself, because she felt it was wrong, but she so desperately wanted it. He watched as her lips parted, as if she were anticipating a kiss, which he planned to finally do.

He pulled firmly on her arm, bringing her closer into his body. He wrapped his other arm around her, whispering into her ear, "I take it you're still fighting with your desire?"

"How can I not?" she replied. She had told him once that she was not looking for love, nor was she looking for him to like her. But with his advances, he saw how she craved something from it, and it appeared that she hated not knowing what it was.

He laughed at her words and moved her more tightly into his embrace. "I've taken to stop fighting it."

These words changed her mood very quickly, and she tried to push back as she asked, "Why are you doing this?"

"Isn't it obvious?"

"You have wife for that, Malfoy. Take it up with her," she scolded him, which made his grasp on her more firm.

"I have been treating you fairly since you came here. Never, ever, bring that up again if you value my fairness."

"Fairness!" she hissed. "Nothing is fair here. You have already admitted that, even if I tried to stop you from... doing what you do with me, you would have pursued harder. There is no fairness here; don't try that with me."

"Don't victimise yourself with me. You've touched me of your own accord," he sneered.

Inwardly enraged, Lucius merely looked at her with calm, penetrating eyes. He was right; she hated that he was, but she had chosen this path, and she had to accept the consequences of that choice.

His grip slackened, and she took that opportunity to move away from him. But, as she stepped away, something must have caught her eye behind him. Her loud gasp caused him to turn his head toward the doorway, but no one was there. Turning around to look back at her, he found that she had paled considerably.

"Was that your wife?"

"It matters not."

"It doesn't matter?" she asked in disbelief.

"No," he simply replied without further explanation, and to empathise that point he walked toward her, cupped her face, and gave her a chaste kiss upon her forehead.

"Why wouldn't..." She didn't get to finish her question because Lucius stopped her speaking by bringing his mouth to hers.

Chapter Two:

Chapter 3 of 4

What if Hermione had not managed to escape that night at Godric's Hollow? And what if Voldemort had imprisoned her at Malfoy Manor? Once inside the Manor, both Hermione and Lucius find that temptation has become one of their

greatest weaknesses.

Chapter Two:

Later that night after she returned to the cellar, she sat in the corner with her head bowed into her hands. A headache had sprung up, which throbbed at her temples. She rubbed her head, moaning slightly to herself when she happened to glance up to find Luna staring at her in a way that startled her.

It hadn't been Narcissa she had seen earlier; it had been Luna. She had been the one watching from the doorway.

They locked eyes and looked at each other with a knowing acknowledgment, but they said nothing about it. Even if they wanted to, they couldn't, as Mr. Ollivander was pouring them both drinks in the corner of the room.

When they had finally settled for bed, Luna laid next to her. The room was so dark that when Hermione turned toward her, she wasn't able to see her, even being as close as they were to each other. Across the room on the bed Mr. Ollivander snored lightly in his sleep.

Luna had continued her silence as Hermione reached over to place her hand upon her arm. She didn't turn away, which Hermione was thankful for, but if this silence between them continued . . . Hermione wouldn't know what to do. She did not want her only friend here turning her back on her, so she whispered into the darkness, "It's not what you think it is."

Her only reply was Mr. Ollivander's snores from across the room.

"There is more to it than you saw, and it's not really as bad as it looks." She continued with the lie. She didn't know whom she was trying to fool – Luna or herself.

"Balokstings," Luna finally said.

Wincing, Hermione thought Luna was attempting to avoid the subject, but then Luna elaborated. "When I was little, my father called me out to look at a Baloksting. It had found a toad in the garden, and it had already swallowed the toad's leg by the time I came out. I asked my father to save the toad, but he told me that we mustn't. The toad's leg had been broken, and the Baloksting would starve if it didn't eat."

"Why are you telling me this, Luna?"

"Because I can't stop what has already begun, even if I don't agree with it."

There was silence between them, a silence that both of them knew would not last long.

"It's hard being here; one can't help but seek comfort wherever one can get it." With that, Luna turned toward Hermione and placed a hand on Hermione's arm. "I'm here. Don't forget that."

Her words made Hermione cry, but she did so silently while Luna pushed herself into Hermione to give her a tight, comforting hug.

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Lucius stood at the doorway and leered at her once again, which made Hermione drop her rag onto the shelf as she looked over at him.

They were fighting with their eyes again, but this time Hermione matched his calculating glare with that of her own. After a time, his expression slightly changed, and she saw that it mostly changed around his eyes, those icy grey eyes, which haunted her with their intensity.

Her breath quickened in anticipation as she watched him walk toward her and then move into her personal space. She had not placed the rag far enough away from the edge, and it toppled to the floor. His eyes followed it; then he looked back at her with a supercilious smile upon his face.

She didn't move her eyes from him, even as he moved his hand forward to press against her cheek. She had a small scar there from the night Voldemort took her, and he smoothed his fingers over it.

Hermione could no longer deny why Lucius was acting the way he was. It was not love, for that she was certain, nor did she really think that it came down to attraction. It was purely a power trip. He craved to touch her body only because he could.

Lucius would not admit that he was a fallen man. A man whose wife despised him and whose son saw him weakened in front of his own master. She knew that he was trying to cling onto something he could control, and unfortunately, she happened to be it.

She could no longer look at him and drew back, moving out of his reach as he moved forward.

"Don't," he pleaded. His plea caused her eyes to narrow in confusion – Lucius Malfoy did not plead with anyone.

He brought his hand up, not to her face again, but this time to run his fingers along the collar on her neck.

Her eyes were turned away, and he moved his head a little to the side to try to catch them, but she darted them away again to the other side. He brought his hand from her neck to her chin and with his fingers held her head still as he attempted to make her look at him.

She opened her mouth to speak, but in truth she did not know what to say.

"Allow me this." And he moved his head toward her, touching his lips softly against her own in a chaste kiss that lingered.

He pulled away for a moment, and when he tried to lean in again, she stopped him by placing her hand upon his chest.

She took a step away, and his arms dropped to his side as he looked at her in confusion. He almost seemed hurt, but it was so hard to tell from his natural haughty manner.

She steadied her resolve, focusing on the task at hand – to make sure that he understood her reluctance. She had to stop giving him mixed signals; she had to make sure he understood that this wasn't right. They were not going to benefit from this at all. Especially considering whom they were and what they were to each other.

She shook her head and then bowed it to the floor, unable to look at him any further. "I'm asking you to stop. I can't do this anymore. I don't want this. . . And I don't think you want this either."

"If you are trying to make me prove my desire for you, I must warn you; you are going about it the wrong way."

"I don't want proof of your desire. I know it exists."

"Then, what is going on in that silly, little head of yours."

Inwardly, Hermione wanted to scream her frustration, but she kept silent – letting her eyes do all the talking.

"I didn't mean to say that—" He attempted to backtrack.

"You've said worse to me before – especially about my parentage."

He raised an eyebrow at that and looked at her as if he just figured what she was going on about. "So, that is what this is about. Do you want me to say that I have changed my ways – my beliefs? That I no longer look upon your kind as something that should not have existed?"

"Do you?" she dared to ask.

He just gave her a pointed look as if she had asked the daftest question he had ever heard.

"You are such a hypocrite." She seethed.

She made a slight move to get out of the room, but he was on her at once. Grabbing her wrist, he snarled, "It is too late to deny what is happening between us. Despite my beliefs and your hatred toward me, there is a connection—"

"A connection?" She laughed without humor. "It's a pretty weak connection. No, I'm done. I can't do this anymore."

Lucius looked away from her, scowling as he moved his lower jaw back and forth. She could tell he wanted to say something to her. He opened his mouth to speak after a time, but he quickly closed it.

Giving her once last glance, a look that she thought could very well be resentment, he left without saying another word to her.

Hermione felt like she had won a minor concession with him, but she took no joy from it. She had thought by banning him she would have patched a part of her pride, but Hermione found while standing all alone in the room, that it was far too late for that.

She refused to cry, even though it was obvious she wanted to.

Chapter Three:

Chapter 4 of 4

What if Hermione had not managed to escape that night at Godric's Hollow? And what if Voldemort had imprisoned her at Malfoy Manor? Once inside the Manor, both Hermione and Lucius find that temptation has become one of their greatest weaknesses.

Chapter Three:

Lucius stared out at the night sky, and he was tempted to open the window to let in some of the night air. It was humid in the room, but for his intended purpose for that night, he kept it closed.

He heard the door clicking behind him and smiled as he kept his back to the person who entered. Lucius knew it was her. He had planned and plotted that it was going to be Hermione who entered his room tonight.

Lucius had wanted her to come here for some time, urged her, and pleaded with her to see that morals did not exist here. They were two people who could turn to each other in comfort to shade themselves from the bleakness of their existence.

She would not have it, and nor would he have her denial. It bothered him that she was doing this to him, pushing him away like everyone else he cared about in this world. He should not have been displeased by this, she was an inferior being, but he was, and it drove him nearly mad with rage.

It did not escape his notice that she was always in the presence of the elf or that Lovegood girl, and because of this, he was not able to touch her or to even speak to her. But, of all the times she had been alone before, of all the times he had been able to interact with her, he realised she had made it possible because she had wanted it to be so. Now that she was determined to push him away, he never saw her without one of them.

And the cunning girl was supposed to be a prisoner in my own home.

He wasn't really upset by her actions at all; in fact they had only seemed like a minor obstacle since he had known he would be seeing her tonight. He had planned for it to be so.

Avery had helped him a great deal today, even though he was not aware of it. Today, Avery had spoken his thoughts out loud regarding how he believed Potter was dead. Lucius contemplated this. He did not think about the boy being dead; at the time he couldn't have cared less. No, at that time he was thinking of her and of how he could weld her back to him.

He informed Bella, after Avery had left, that there was a rumour that Potter was dead. Since it would be only a matter of time before his body was recovered, she should have Narcissa start the preparations for a celebration.

Lucius had told her this because he had known Bellatrix would take this rumour to heart. She would not be able to hold herself back as she boasted that her master's nemesis was dead. This would also take care of Narcissa, as she would be far too busy preparing for the great celebration that would never take place.

He had known Hermione would be distressed when she heard the rumour. She would hear, of course she would, since Bella would not be able to contain herself. Bella would boast and torment the poor girl with the rumour that she took as the truth. Hermione may have her cellmates to turn to for comfort, but for answers she would have to come to him. And she did need to have her answers.

As expected, she had come to him. How, or why, she had been let out he did not know, and truthfully he didn't care because she was here. She shuffled into the room, shutting the door while he kept his back to her. Lucius waited for her to call out to him, but she didn't. He heard Hermione sniffing behind him, and he turned instantly at the sound.

Her eyes were puffy and red from crying, and she stood there trembling with an expression of utter agony. He had expected that she would be upset, but to see her standing there like her heart was about to break troubled him. He had thought that the boy was only a friend, but from her appearance before him, he couldn't help but

wonder if it were more than that. His brows furrowed together and, before he could speak, she cried out, "Is it true?"

"Is what true?" he asked, playing ignorant with a voice filled with concern.

"She is saying that he's dead. Is it true?"

"Ah, I take it you heard."

"Is. It. True?" She practically yelled from the frustration of not getting a direct answer.

"It is just talk, Hermione." He said her name for the first time without noticing, as he was focussed on determining whether her tears were from losing a lover or a friend. Her name had escaped his lips without any forethought. "Bellatrix only hopes it is true."

"But. . . she seemed so sure he is. . . dead." She tried to speak as she cried, but she was failing miserably.

"Is the Dark Lord downstairs celebrating with her?"

"No."

"Do you not think he would be here to celebrate his death?"

"Of course. . . but she seemed so sure," she repeated again, but more to herself.

"Until his body is found, I will have my doubts." These words brought the expected hope into her eyes that he wanted. He wanted her to seek comfort from him, which would hopefully knock her determination to keep herself morally together.

Still crying, she rushed at him and threw her arms tightly around him. He gladly welcomed it and gripped her back with a suffocating embrace.

"You believe he is not dead?" she asked with her face in his chest.

Lucius sneered visibly, as she could not see him, but his hand remained gentle as he wrapped it into her hair, caressing the nape of her neck in a manner that was meant to be soothing. "Yes," he replied in a calm voice despite the sneer still etched upon his lips.

"Headmaster Snape believes there might be truth to it." She paused to sniff before continuing, "He said it was possible the people holding his body might be holding out for a reward."

Lucius smirked at this: The rumours have warped to this so soon. Snape must have been joining in the celebration, no doubt wanting to take credit for the boy's death. "What rubbish is this?"

"He just thought... that perhaps the people who had found him are holding his body until they find someone to buy it. He said it might be possible they don't want to deal with Lord Vol..." She stopped herself from saying his name and then continued on. "So they could be looking to sell his body to someone that will."

"An interesting theory, one I would expect from Snape," he said as he contemplated what the girl had told him. However, something bothered him, and before thinking, the words left his mouth. "Why is Snape telling you this?"

She pulled away from him then, sliding backwards until she was out of his reach. "He must have been trying to make me lose hope. . . But you believe he is fine, don't you?"

He nodded his head slowly and watched as a small smile crept to her lips.

"Will you hold me for a while? I just need to be held," she asked with her arms at her side.

Immediately, Lucius took her back into his arms, pressing her against his chest, yet he was not content to just hold her. The days without her touches had created a longing for more. He did not know whether by tomorrow she would reject him; all he knew was that she wasn't rejecting him now. She had come to him, most willingly, and he could not afford to miss this opportunity.

"Do they know anything about Harry?"

Lucius looked down at her and saw the worry in her eyes. "They do not know anything. There hasn't been a sighting of him since the night you were captured."

She nodded her head and then wiped her tears from her eyes.

A silence came over them, and Lucius took the opportunity to stroke his hand down her back. He was tempted to do more, but he hated to press his luck after she had finally decided to come back to him.

Her hand began to rub at his back, her fingers clutching the material of his shirt as she raised her hand toward his shoulder. She looked up at him, and he saw within her eyes that she was frightened. He had thought he had calmed her fears down slightly, but now she seemed just as frightened as she had been when she had first entered the room. Her hand slid to the nape of his neck, and with gentle pressure he felt her urging his head toward her own.

He did not hesitate for a moment and moved quickly to her lips. He was holding her so firmly that she was standing on her tiptoes, but she didn't seem to mind in the least; in fact, she was kissing much harder than he was.

Her kisses were brutal, but he thought it was only because she wasn't aware of how to kiss. Yet, as her teeth sunk into his lower lip, he realised this wasn't about her experience; she knew what she was doing.

Pulling away from her, he looked down at Hermione and saw the raw desire in her. The hatred and the desire were mixed together, which caused his loins to harden. If she wanted to play this way, he was willing to play back just as hard.

Cupping her head not at all gently, he forced her lips back to his own and continued to kiss her with such forcefulness he wondered whose lips would bleed first. Most likely his, as her teeth had already penetrated his lip. As he thought this, her teeth once again sank back in.

This was not really how he wanted her, after all.

Again, he pulled away, his lip still caught between her teeth, causing him to wince. "Don't do that," he chastened her softly because he did not want to scare her completely away, just calm her down.

"Why?" she dared to ask. "Isn't this what you wanted?" She was teasing him. The girl was actually teasing him with tears in her eyes and a playful smile upon her lips. The contrast was quite alarming.

"Be gentle." He scowled her with a nervous laugh. He was not sure what had come over her; her change of mood was not a turn-off, but it was unsettling.

Hermione started anxiously clawing at him again; her hands were now stroking his chest. She leaned up, kissing his jaw, his neck, running her tongue down his body in

slow licks as she unbuttoned his shirt.

She apparently wanted him, and he thought that was all that mattered, despite her quick change in temperament. He let her continue to unbutton his shirt as he stroked her down her back in a gentle manner, hoping that this would urge her to be gentle.

When his shirt was open, and it was his turn to undress her, he did so gently. Kissing her in short, soft kisses, he leaned down to suckle her skin above her breast. When she groaned, they weren't groans of ecstasy, but frustration.

Hermione pushed him away and took a few steps backwards. "Don't. Don't do this gently. I don't want it like that."

"I don't want to hurt you," was all he could say.

She only glared at him and replied, "You won't."

She continued to undress herself. Roughly pulling the clothes from her body until, with a few short tugs, she was completely naked. She stood in front of him naked and without shame.

"I need you to do it this way." She wept as she said this and walked back to him to kiss him once again.

He no longer desired to have her this way, but he went along with it. Gripping her body, he began clawing at her while she brought her hand down to his pants.

In an instant, she was on the floor with him over her. He attempted to be gentle with her, despite her request, but when she raked her nails over his skin while lowering his pants to his thighs, he found himself being a little too forceful with her.

She arched her body up as he entered her, forgetting that she could have been a virgin because of his greed to have her, but thankfully she was not. As he thrust into her, he kept thinking of how he finally had her, and now there was completion.

His movements within her were harsh, hitting her with his hips for the hard fuck that she wanted. He wanted to make her happy, and as he heard her gasp and moan, he knew he was succeeding. Lucius did not open his eyes to look at her, being too engrossed with the feeling of himself within her.

Her hands on his buttocks pulled him forward, directing his movements as she jerked her hands back ruthlessly. He wouldn't last long, but there would be more times he would make sure of it.

He started to force himself more deeply within her, unafraid of hurting her, even though she gasped with each stab.

Hermione shifted under him, causing him to move with her to keep himself from slipping out. Already, he could feel the burning of his knees from the carpet, so he quickly pulled her up so she was sitting on his lap. The move gave him enough time to adjust to give him more time to enjoy her.

Thrusting up into her, he kissed her hard. He went deep, as deep as he could go.

Hermione bowed her head to his shoulder, and he could feel her trembling in his arms. To him, it was an indication she was coming. He wasted no time, urging himself to find release from the pent up frustration he had felt for the past year. He punished her body with upward thrusts that had now become erratic. With a long, loud grunt, he indicated to her that he had found completion, and that he didn't care who had heard him.

It never took Lucius long to re-group. A few short seconds at most, and when he brought his head down to kiss her head through the copious amounts of hair, she was still trembling. She had not been trembling from an orgasm as he had thought, no, she had been crying.

"Hermione?" he asked as he raised her head to look at him. He did not get an answer from her; as soon as she looked at him, she began to bawl. "Did I hurt you? I told you I didn't want..."

"It wasn't you," she sobbed. "Oh, why did it have to be you?"

He couldn't make any sense of what she had said. Maybe he never would, since he could not really make sense of why they were together at all. They had such hatred for each other for being who they were, and yet here they were, naked, with his penis slowly slipping out of her body.

He didn't know what to do, or what to say, and he could only watch as she brought her hands to her eyes to cover the tears that leaked down her face.

Lucius could only stand so much of this hysteria, so he moved, lifting her up as he stood and brought her to the bed. Her hands wrapped around him as he lifted her, and she continued to cry into his shoulder, even when he laid them both upon the bed.

When her cries became sniffles, she finally spoke, but only after she turned her back to him. "This will have to end."

"Why do you say that?"

"Don't be daft; you know it too."

He did. And yet he was not willing it to be so not yet. Not when it was apparent to him that he needed this, needed her. He could find a way; he had always been able to find a way to get what he wanted before, but with her it meant that he would be losing a great deal. And he wasn't sure if he wanted to lose everything for her.

The next day, she was in his arms again while he moved slowly within her. Her lips were locked with his, their breathing ragged and shallow. Lucius had sought her out earlier that day, and he was glad she had not put up a fuss when he had suggested she come back to his room.

If anyone had asked, he would have said he was weak again and needed the girl's assistance, and it wouldn't have been a lie at all.

The night before, after she had left, he had felt a void without her; he had a need for her to stay with him. He never wanted to let her go, so he vowed not to. She could be worth losing everything. This world no longer cared for them, and they could find some small amount of comfort with each other if they were away from it all. Isolated and alone, he imagined a good life with her.

He could make her forget the boy, make her forget everything, and give her everything that she needed as long as it was him.

He wanted to have her, and so he thought he would.