

With the Passion Put to Use

by Rose of the West

A sunny day, a study session, and a random library book. It should have been a mundane afternoon.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The sun was brighter than usual that Easter Holiday. The Slytherin Seventh Year students-those that stayed at Hogwarts to revise for N.E.W.T.s, that is-spent much of the week out by the lake. Perhaps it was slightly less effective to have study sessions out where the grass was so green and the sky was so blue, but it was far more effective than sitting in classrooms and looking longingly out of doors.

Today was Arithmancy, and quite dry at that. Andromeda, having quickly done the problem set they planned to work on, spent most of her time smiling into the face of the sun and ignoring the Mudblood under the tree that was right on the shore of the lake. He was also studying for the Arithmancy N.E.W.T as well as the Potions N.E.W.T. that they had studied for yesterday. In fact, Andromeda seemed to recall that she'd seen him there every day this week. He was an ordinary sort of fellow, with sandy blond hair that got in his eyes. She was torn between wanting to cut it and wanting to run her fingers through it.

Wait.

No, of course she didn't want to touch his hair or any part of him. He was a Mudblood for Merlin's sake! If Lucius's hair drooped like that, she would want to touch it, she told herself with a nod. The ring on her left hand winked and twinkled in the sunlight. She wasn't used to being an engaged person yet. They'd barely even kissed. The first attempt had ended with Lucius receiving a sore nose and an embarrassing rash. Served him right for coming at her with no warning.

The Mudblood was smiling brightly. Damn, he'd caught her staring. She looked away, suddenly very interested in the discussion. What was Sinistra going on about? Oh, yes, the combinations necessary to get the correct answer to number 23. Andromeda checked her work, which was of course exactly as Sinistra was describing. It was safe to take a surreptitious look at the Mudblood, to make sure he was looking back at his book. Damn, he caught her again, and this time raised an eyebrow at her.

She couldn't believe no one else saw him. Lucius, she could well believe. He was trying this philosophy in which the difficult aspects of life simply didn't exist. He would never see the Mudblood because he had decided Mudbloods shouldn't, and therefore didn't, exist. He was pretty good at it, too. He never noticed the Mudbloods any more, and even the only half-blood who existed in Lucius's world was that funny Snape kid in second year.

Speaking of Lucius, he was coming over the rise. "It's time for you to come to dinner! You can study more of your numbery mess afterwards!"

"It's Astronomy tonight," Sinistra responded, "Something you would do well to study, yourself."

"Aurora, you're brilliant," he responded. "An opportunity to spend time in the starlight with my beautiful future bride!" He sighted Andromeda, and after heading in her direction, tripped over something and stopped to look at it. "Hallo, this isn't Arithmancy. *Sonnets from the Portuguese?* Who's reading this Mudblood garbage?" He looked around the group.

Andromeda stood. "I'm sure I don't know, but I'm also sure it's harmless, Lucius. Look, it's a library book. We should take it back."

"How do I love thee?" Lucius grabbed Andromeda's hand with proprietary grace and held the book open in his other hand. "Aha! This one is about us! 'How to I love thee? Let me count the ways.'" Dropping the poetry book, he took Andromeda's study books from her and declaimed, "I love thy mother, so pure of blood, and thy father, *toujours pur*, and would that I could count every drop of pure blood within your lovely body..."

He moved in to kiss her but ended up kissing the air behind her head as she turned toward the castle and said, "I wonder what's for dinner tonight? I hope it's something good."

"If you wish for anything that isn't there, I shall demand the House-elves fix it forthwith, my lady," Lucius replied. Everyone was moving toward the castle by then, and he drew her along. "I shall draw you into my star charts tonight, darling Andie, and in my mind I shall be drawing us both up there, looking down upon the world we shall someday rule."

Andromeda carefully looked away from him before rolling her eyes. Surely this isn't what love was supposed to be. Suddenly she remembered that book. They didn't have it with them. "Oh, Lucius, we forgot a book. I'll run back for it. Don't wait for me."

"I shall secure our spot at the table."

She quickly saw the book. Running toward it, she didn't see the Mudblood, who had lingered. She heard him first. "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach, when feeling out of sight for the ends of being and ideal grace."

He reached forward to cup her face in his hands, and since she had put her hands to her hips as soon as he started talking, she couldn't avoid it. Then his lips were on hers. Nothing like this had ever happened to her before, and she gasped, into his mouth as it turned out, while her hands and arms tried to figure out what to do. One was pushing him away as the other pulled him closer and a force like magic seemed to flow between them. Had they become Dementors, stealing each others very souls away? Finally the hand that was pushing him away won.

"...I love thee freely, as men strive for right.." the Mudblood was saying.

After recovering her breath, Andromeda faced him and looked him in the eye. "NEVER do that again, Mudblood," she said.

"It's number forty-three," he said.

She swept the book from the ground and ran up to Lucius, who was almost to the doors by then.

"You're all red," he remarked.

"I just ran to catch up with you, and..." That was all she had, but it was enough.

"Oh, of course. It's not your best look, I must say."

They sat in the very middle of the Slytherin table, looking out over the rest of Great Hall, as if they did indeed rule it. Lucius loved that sort of thing; Andromeda was uncomfortable with it, especially since the Mudblood kept looking at her from the Hufflepuff table as if the sun had dawned on his face. She made it through dinner, enjoying it sufficiently that Lucius didn't trouble the House-elves.

"How shall we while the hours before the stars come out?" Lucius asked her as finished eating.

"I'm going to take a book back to the library," she responded.

"Ugh, horrid place, and you'll spend the next hour there if I know you at all. I think I shall go back to my dorm. There's something I should check on." His hair, probably. It was a particularly good feature, but Andromeda somehow thought that he felt more affection for it than any person he knew, certainly more than he felt for her.

The library was cool and shady and relaxing. She intended to go straight to the desk to return the book, but found herself sitting down with it instead. "The face of all the world is changed I think," captured her eye. She kept paging through. Why was she bothering with this? She couldn't keep herself from opening to the poem Lucius, and then the Mudblood, had recited. And there it was. It was the sort of love that Andromeda has wondered about. She pictured the Mudblood saying those lines, and in her mind's eye they flowed easily from lips that she'd never noticed before. Sure she'd heard his voice countless times in class, giving answers in exchange for points to Hufflepuff, but now he became a completely different person to her. Why would he say such things to her? Why would he *kiss* her? Was the answer in this poem?

"Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death."

Andromeda jumped up, put the book on the desk, and ran from the library. Something just walked over her grave.

Author's Note:

This was in response to the challenge issued to me by Kerichi in the story Complicated. I don't know whether to pass the challenge along or whom to pass it, but if something strikes your fancy, please feel free to continue the theme.

Meanwhile, the central literary tool of this story is Sonnet #43 of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese. The first line of Sonnet #7 also seemed apt, and so it caught Andromeda's eye as she thumbed through.