

Entrance Hall

by Anastasia

"Power shifts, Hermione. In a traitorous heartbeat."

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Chapter 1 of 1

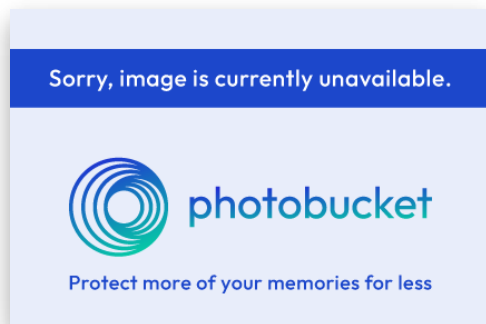
"Power shifts, Hermione. In a traitorous heartbeat."

Disclaimer: All characters belong to JKR. I am only playing for a time. Hermione is of age.

AN: Thank you to Ariadne AWS for the encouragement to find my inner almost-smut writer. An additional debt of gratitude for the coverart.

If you haven't read 'Of Debts and Debt Collection', you only need know that Severus' leg and ribs are injured. Why does that matter? You'll see...

After everything I've put Severus through in my fic, he deserves this...



Severus turned and caught her wrist, drawing her to him, his expression unreadable. Hermione stared at his grip as he pulled her arm to his chest, just over his heart. Leaning closer, he said in a tone meant to instill nothing less than cold fear, "If you haven't noticed, it is not in my nature to forgive easily. I am not a nice man."

"I'm aware of that. I didn't mean for it to happen."

"Really? Do you?" he asked sarcastically, pressing her forearm against his chest.

Hermione felt him tighten his grip; his expression changed, quieted. He was thinking too much for her to feel comfortable.

"I'm supposed to be angry with you. It is a question of honor, you see," he said, lowering his head slightly, watching his own hand as he lifted each finger and repositioned them, aligning, planning. With a final sweeping glance around the Hall, he swiftly lowered her arm, shoved her shoulders to spin her around, and pulled her back against him.

Hermione gasped in surprise, but was silenced by his hand over her mouth, pulling her head to rest on his shoulder as he backed them into a cool, deep shadow. He lowered his head, breathing against her neck and held her arm behind her back. A draft from the doors swept the heat from her, a reminder of exactly how fast the man behind her could instill both fear and desire.

Feeling a chill pass down her spine, she said distractedly, "I'm angry with you too."

A deep, rumbling chuckle. Not in the least amused. More like pleasure at watching prey struggle. Enjoying the power. Establishing rules without a single word.

He moved his free hand from her shoulder, splayed his fingers across her chest and pressed her against him. Slowly, he moved his mouth up against her ear. Lingering there. She could feel his lips. Painfully close. Moving his face into her hair, knowing that every movement drove her senses further to the fine edge of control.

"Do you honestly think your anger threatens me?" He was moving his hand upwards, tracing her collarbone, holding her jaw. Increasing the pressure just slightly.

"No."

Severus grinned into her hair. "I have a concealment spell on this Hall, Hermione. No one will see us."

She shifted, and her arm was immediately twisted harder.

"Or hear you," he growled, biting her shoulder.

Hermione hadn't noticed that she had her nails dug into his thigh, flexing her grip whenever he moved. Each time he ventured further, she squeezed more, giving a signal to keep going, don't stop to ask.

When he moved her hair and kissed her neck in the gentlest of ways, she moaned. In response, he loosened his grip on her arm slightly, lowering it the slightest amount.

"Is that a request?" He was smiling, his cheek against hers as he rested his head on her shoulder.

She shook her head: not here.

"Oh, no, never here. Never," he murmured, enjoying how she stiffened with the knowledge that he had read her thoughts.

Silence. He was waiting. Listening.

He loosened his grip again, her hand now held behind her back by little more than fingertips.

"A request? Or a prayer?" he asked, letting her hand go.

She stood, leaning against him, her head down, heart beating hard enough that he must know; it could surely be felt anywhere he touched.

"Yes." Nothing more than a whisper. Perhaps not even spoken aloud.

A small rush of breath that told her he found this amusing. His hand traveled down her arm to where she was clutching his thigh to the point of causing him tremors.

"Nervous?"

"No." *Yes, terrified.*

"Interesting," he murmured, twisting her hand from his thigh, his other hand moving along her back. Lightly, barely touching, making her long for that touch to return, aching for it. She tried to lean into him again, but he moved away, slightly, just enough to keep her within range to feel the heat from him, to want that touch, to keep her thoughts spiraling hopelessly away from her usual, relentlessly academic paths.

Fascinating.

He held her hands and leaned forward, pressing his chest against her back, resting his chin on her head. In a philosophical tone he mused, "There is something to be said for anticipation, Hermione. Don't you agree?"

He felt her drop her chin.

Releasing her hands, he took hold of his robes and raised them up. Slowly, he wrapped his robes around her, his hands clasped on her opposite shoulders.

Moving to speak into her ear again, he relished the time he took to take that first breath. How she shuddered, almost trembling while waiting. "It raises the level of arousal, I believe. This is something that should be entered into with the utmost attention to detail. One should accept nothing less, yes?"

Hermione leaned her cheek against his arm and nodded.

"The knowledge that something may happen, something out of your control, something potentially dangerous. Do you enjoy danger, Hermione?" he asked, dropping his voice lower. He gripped her shoulders before he let his hands drop.

Shaking his hands free of his robes, he reached up and, in one movement, turned her around and pulled her into an embrace. She had no time to react before she was crushed up against him, the heat, him, taking her lips to his, viciously at first, claiming her, proving his power. He took her hand in his and intertwined their fingers.

Without looking, he pointed their hands towards the last torches lighting the Hall.

And extinguished all but one. Far away, its light dying by the time it reached them.

He held her, gripped her, as if she would flee at any moment.

Hermione reached her hand up and traced his jaw line, trying to read his expression in the dim light. She moved to kiss him, but he withdrew, hissing, "I'm afraid not."

Watching, entranced as he lifted his hands to his throat, released the clasp and slipped off his robes. Without removing his intense gaze from hers, he let the robes fall to the ground. His hands, again, moving towards his throat, tipping his head back, entering into the process, motions easily performed without thought, swiftly, daily, devoid of emotion, a chore. Now, he was making a show of slowly working each one free, fascinated by the look in her eyes as she watched. The hunger of a woman who had thought of this moment before. It was easy to see.

"You've seen me before."

She nodded, raising her hands to touch him, but stopped when he shook his head slightly.

"Yes, but"

Severus leaned forward as he let his frock coat join his robes, leaving a white linen shirt. He brought his mouth near hers, breathing the same small space of air. In a voice rapidly moving towards the realm of baser needs, he whispered, "Run. Now."

Hermione shook her head slowly, a fierce look in her eyes. "I have nothing to fear here."

That deep soft laugh predatory. Hands on hers, bringing them to his chest. "Finish."

She watched his eyes slip closed as she began to work the buttons, her hands shaking as she went. Concentrating, moving fast, but wanting to savor it at the same time. Reaching the middle, the heat pouring off of him in waves, further along, his ribs, bruising to the point of near black, receding, but most definitely painful. The end, the fabric separates, pulls out and falls effortlessly off his shoulders. Hermione pulled the shirt aside, holding it out before sending it to the floor.

Severus raised his eyes to hers and nodded before kissing her softly, slowly, barely touching. Tilting his head down, he murmured against her lips, "Would you care to continue?"

As she brought one hesitant hand to his hip, he guided the other lower, "Power shifts, Hermione. In a traitorous heartbeat."

He had expected her to be shocked by his forwardness, after playing with her, teasing, ensuring that she was well aware of who was in control. When she didn't remove her hand, and instead began to slowly unbutton his pants, he suddenly felt his breath hitch. Trying to control his heart was useless, it had been beating wildly from the moment she approached him in the hall. He told himself it was out of anger, but knew differently. If she ever fully realized the power she held over him...

"I've noticed," she said in a low voice, quietly, even though there was no way for them to be heard. When she shifted her hand slightly, he bit back a moan, bringing his hands to her shoulders, his grip sure to leave marks. His head fell forward to rest on her shoulder.

A slow grin spread on Hermione's face. Imitating his tone, she said as she reached the last button, "Power shifts, indeed."

She felt him nod his head against her shoulder; an admission. The change was incredible, the weight of him against her, his halted breathing becoming more erratic, missing, a strangled groan when she moved her hand lower and brought it up, slowly, hard, then light.

When she brought her hand up between them to remove her robes, she heard him mutter, "No"

Startled, her hand frozen in place, she tilted her head down, bringing it level to his cheek. His shoulders shook and his whole body contracted when her hand completed another motion. Teeth bared, restrained, the pain from holding his breath incredibly intense.

"Severus, it's okay. You can let go," she whispered into his hair, only able to see his jaw. His grip on her shoulders eased and his hands moved to her neck, undoing the clasp.

His fingers worked on her blouse, his normal ease failing him. Head down, he abandoned working on her clothes and dragged his hands down her sides, ending at her hips. With the last vestige of control, he muttered a spell to remove the rest of her clothing, his own, and arrange them in a pile below. In a fluid motion, he held her head in his hand, took hold of her leg, and lowered her to the floor. His hair hung forward, obscuring all but his jaw line, struggling to kneel, holding his breath against the pain of the motion. She could feel the coldness of the floor permeating through their robes, smell his scent in his clothes lying around her, but the sight of him in the dim shadow, light barely tracing his outline, took her breath away.

"Will your leg" she started, but trailed off as he moved over her, too lost to hear. Her hands caught his shoulders as he lowered himself onto her, driving the draft away. The heat was incredible, all encompassing, heart-stopping. He rested on his forearms and looked down at her, kissing her with restraint, then easing, needing to breathe, swallowing becoming difficult with so little air. Eyes locked, a flicker as she raised her arms, trailing her fingers down his back, tracing his spine. Severus closed his eyes and dropped his head down next to hers. Hermione continued to drag her fingertips along his back, moving over his shoulders, increasing the pressure and moving lower, when his breathing stuttered, and stopped.

Tilting her head up, she whispered, "Do you want this?"

A nod, his muscles contracting when she drove her nails deeper into his shoulder blades, then dragged them down slowly, methodically, angling past his ribs to his hips where she took hold, opened her hands and brought them down in between their bodies. He lifted his hips slightly. Gazing into her eyes, slipping closed when she brushed lightly, squeezing shut when she took him into her hand. Again, he fought to remain silent, his mouth falling open, forcing a gasp. He turned his head to the side, clenching his jaw. She moved her hand slightly, watching his reaction, his shoulders moving forward, a moan too forceful to be denied. Lightly, slight friction as she drew her hand back, turning her fingers over, then closing her hand.

Her other hand clutching his hip, feeling his subconscious movement, the flex of the muscle.

"Now, Severus."

Her hand crushed between them, he drove forward, falling, losing all constraint, driving conscious thought away, every care, worry, memory, regret all gone replaced by her and the overwhelming, primal urge. Hermione clutched his arms, trying to hold him, his eyes too wild for reason, beyond painful, but he wouldn't stop, unwilling to disappoint her. She pulled him down, pressing him to her chest, lean, her hands gripping his hips, feeling both the power and the pain, desperation and denial of the limits of the mortal body, his loud growl of frustration before a bruising kiss, his hands encircling her face before she broke it to moan.

His rhythm ending with a shudder each time he receded, head down in determination, his hair mingling with hers, sweeping forward before he lowered himself more. She arched her back, moving in time, joining him. When his growls of pleasure tainted with pain descended into only tearing waves of near agony, she reached up and took hold of his hair. His wild eyes met hers.

He tossed his head up, the tendons in his neck straining, glancing down when he felt her hands on his chest, shaking her head, he couldn't do this anymore. Snarling, he shoved his arms under her and rocked upwards, throwing his leg forward. Before she could protest, he thrust himself to his feet, clutching her to his chest with one arm and driving his fingers into her thigh with the other, leaving her no choice but to wrap her arms and legs around him. She could feel him quake, the pain between his leg and ribs competing for the pleasure of forcing him to admit defeat. Pausing, his knee failing before he forced the joint to lock, gritting his teeth against a strangled scream as he twisted and lifted her to sit on the flat base of the banister.

Freed from holding his weight, he kept a relentless pace, hands gripping her flesh, pulling her to meet him almost violently. She dug her nails into his shoulders, head thrown back, telling herself to let go, reveling in it, feeling his hot, shaking breath on her chest, chasing the chill away. His hands gripping her hips, driving deeper, harder. Another brutally passionate kiss, possessive, bordering on assault, overwhelming.

He leaned his forehead to hers, leaving distracted kisses whenever logic appeared long enough. She wound her hands in his hair, pulling forward, holding him to her chest. His hand left her thigh, moved between them and her world blazed to life along with every torch in the Hall.

Painfully pulling at his shoulders, tearing at his back, hands traveling to his hips, driving nails into him, urging, don't stop. His rhythm falling into a quaking, desperately forceful act bordering on consensual violence. Their screams rising as one, clutching close, tightly, breath stopping while their hearts pounded mindlessly.

The torches exploded in ferocious fire, flames spilling onto the floor in a shower of sparks, receding only when the Entrance Hall doors blasted open, twisting from their tenuous frames and collapsing onto the stairs outside.

