

Deliciously So...

by Ophelia Immortal

Hermione Granger is about to set off with her two best friends to find a way to defeat Voldemort. But even before she could start her search for Horcruxes, she meets someone totally unexpected...

Trapped.

Chapter 1 of 6

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"...there is a sum of evil equal to the sum of good, the continuing equilibrium of the world requires that there be as many good people as wicked people..."

Marquis de Sade

The tinkling of a bell above the door of Flourish and Blotts, significantly magnified by the shop's eerie emptiness, announced the arrival of a customer. The customer in question was a breathtakingly beautiful man: long blonde hair, sensual lips, fair skin and icy grey, penetrating eyes; he carried a black cane with a silver serpent engraved on the handle.

One of the assistants stood staring at him, then quickly asked her colleague about him.

"Don't go too close, luv; that's Lucius Malfoy, that is. Aye, e's got th' looks o' an angel, but e's rot'en t' th' core. E's been in Azkaban, that 'un has. Captured at th' Ministry when You-Know-Who returned. Stayed there over a year 'til they released 'im; was under th' Imperius Curse so they say. Death Ea'er, if you ask me. Go on, ask 'im if 'e needs help then leave 'im be. Don't go lookin' fer trouble."

Approaching the man, who was still looking around lazily, she said, "Good day, sir; how may I help you?"

"No need." he replied over his shoulder, dismissing her with a wave of his hand before he started walking around the many bookcases, finally walking up the stairs to the second floor.

"Pity though, he's really something to look at..." she commented, having returned to her friend.

"Like th' Devil. Mark me words; no good will come from 'im. 'Is wife died, you know? God knows 'ow..."

"You don't say!"

"I do say, but if anyun' asks, you ain't 'eard 'owt from me. Right?!"

"Sure."

"Dark times, these are... Don't know who t' trust... and it's damn bad fer business; hardly anyun' comes in anymo..."

"So don't you think that makes it a good reason to work, ladies?" The manager interrupted, sneaking up on the two chatting women. "Gossip break over, get back to work. You go to the back room and see if we've got any new orders."

The younger assistant blushed furiously, whilst the older one just grumbled, "We ain't got no work to do. Orders we've seen t' and th' only person in th' shop don't need help, so why don't you..." What the manager was supposed to do no one found out, for the woman was interrupted yet again, this time by the bell on the door. A young woman walked in, cheeks glowing from the wind, long brown hair slightly bushy. She walked towards the manager.

"Good morning, I..."

"Good morning, Miss Granger! Lovely to see you."

The manager didn't normally remember the names of his customers, but for her he made an exception. First of all, he hardly had any customers. Secondly, and the main reason, because she was one of his best customers. She would spend hours in here at a time, her eyes always twinkling.

"Mr. Potter and Mr. Weasley not with you this morning?"

"No, they're just taking a last look at the joke shop," she replied, rolling her eyes.

"We've got the books you ordered."

"Oh, thank you. I'll just take a look around." And with that, she went up the stairs to the Defence Against the Dark Arts and Charms sections.

Hermione Granger was quite happy that, although almost all of the shops in Diagon Alley were closed down, the bookshop remained open. Not that she was really in the mood for shopping: what with Dumbledore being dead and the whole of the Wizarding world terrified of Lord Voldemort's attacks. It really came as no surprise that many preferred locking themselves in their homes and spending what little time they had left with their families. Even going into a bookshop gave Hermione little pleasure, but at least she knew she was doing something useful.

Harry and Ron and she had been on the run since Bill and Fleur's wedding. Yes, she grimaced, they had escaped the Order, escaped their friends and family and were now getting the final things sorted before looking for the missing Horcruxes. They also had to go to Godric's Hollow to visit the Potters' grave.

She had decided to leave the boys in Fred and George's joke shop - Fred and George knew what they were planning on doing and had decided not to stop them. After a lot of persuading, she had managed to earn the right to go to Flourish and Blotts' alone. Yes, it was risky splitting up, but she didn't want to spoil the last time she would see her two best friends laughing. Plus, she knew more hexes and spells than people ten years older than her. She had also remembered to bring one of the DA's fake Galleons with her and give two to the boys as well, so if anything were to happen to any of them, they would be able to communicate easily.

She had ordered a tremendous amount of books on curses, jinxes, hexes, counter-curses, spells and incantations; anything that could help them. She was trying to find a book on Horcruxes, but she had no false hopes; she knew that the only copies would be in some Death Eater's private library. She had no intention of going to ask for permission to borrow a book when she knew she'd be cursed to oblivion before even getting within two miles of the front door, simply for being a Muggle-born.

She had also been wondering who this R.A.B. could be. Her first thought had been Regulus. A. Black, but she'd quickly dismissed this theory. Sirius had repeated time and time again that his brother was too thick to be one of Voldemort's most trusted Death Eaters (and she seriously doubted that even they knew the whereabouts of their master's soul), and Harry's description of the obstacles guarding the locket seemed to be more than enough to keep Regulus Black away.

She was pacing around some bookcases and looking around the empty shop quite a novelty, before a person could hardly move for the crowd in here whereas now it was completely empty. A few years ago, when it had been packed to the brim with Gilderoy Lockhart's fans, she had wished that it would be as empty as it was now. Such a pity it had actually happened. Losing herself in her thoughts, she continued to look absentmindedly at book titles, not noticing that someone was looking at her from behind.

Lucius Malfoy was leaning against the wall, face partially covered by a stack of books, and observing with interest who had just walked into the shop. Interest... Well, to put it a better way, he was wondering what the filthy whore of the golden trio was doing in Diagon Alley, all alone. *It is as if she were looking for trouble. So much for being the smartest witch in Hogwarts! Filthy Mudblood.* His expression darkened as he remembered her in the Department of Mysteries. *I should have killed her there and then. No matter. She is here now and as no one is here to stop me, she is all mine. It is so deliciously ironic that the place we first met would be where she would die. Am I not charitable? Killing her here so she can be surrounded by the very things she loves above all others.*

Hermione was just turning over a nasty-looking book on curses when she heard a familiar drawl behind her.

"My, my, Miss Granger... What is a young, innocent-looking Mudblood like yourself doing with a book like that?"

Her heart stopped. Upon turning round, she saw Lucius Malfoy smirking at her. She dropped the book with a loud thump.

Oh god! She knew he had been released from Azkaban, but wasn't expecting to meet him the one time she was alone. Not only had she found a Death Eater, who would loathe her for nothing more than her parentage and the fact that she was a living testament to the fact that being of pure blood did not ensure superior magical abilities, but she had managed to find the one sadistic bastard who had a personal grudge against her and her friends for sending him to prison. She took a step back.

"Honestly, I would have thought that you of all people would not treat books like this." He smirked as he bent down and picked it up for her.

She started to slowly put her hand in her pocket, reaching for her wand...

"No, no. None of that... *Accio wand.*" He caught her wand in his hand.

Hermione was staring at him, the first traces of panic beginning to take hold of her. She then remembered the galleon in her other pocket, but before she could even touch it, she heard, "*Accio Galleon.*" Watching in horror as she was left totally unprotected against one of her worst enemies.

"You didn't think I was unaware of these, did you?" he chuckled coldly, placing both wand and galleon in his inner robe. "Draco told me all about these. He even copied them to communicate with the Death Eaters that memorable night. You could say it is thanks to you that Dumbledore finally died," he added and noticed with much satisfaction that the witch was crying.

"Did I hit a nerve?"

Bastard! she thought. *Arrogant bastard! But he is also a very dangerous man, not to mention a murderer. Oh Circe! What can I do?! He has both my wand and the coin! I have to keep calm and think it over. I am alone with this man who will no doubt kill me; there are people downstairs, but even if they heard us or noticed something was wrong, they would be no match for a Death Eater. He has just got out of prison, so he wouldn't do anything in front of witnesses, unless he killed them too, which he would do, without a moment's thought.*

"When did we meet last? A year ago, perhaps? The Ministry ring any bells? I must thank you, and Potter of course, for handing me to the Dementors. It really was an unforgettable experience." His gaze was now, unmistakably, full of loathing and vindictive fury.

Hermione turned on her heel and started to run away from the man. She had always been terrified of him, and now finding him in a deserted shop all by herself was just too

much. She had to find Harry and Ron. But before she could get very far she was caught by a painfully strong grip around the waist, his other hand clamping over her mouth.

"Now, now, Miss Granger. I would have thought that even you would remember your manners," he whispered in her ear. "Who has ever seen someone run away in the middle of a conversation?"

With that he pulled her behind a bookcase. She tried with all her might to break loose, but he was unbelievably strong. She started to really struggle now, pushing and pulling, but to no avail: he held her fast. Desperately, not knowing what else to do, she bit down hard on the hand over her mouth. He let out a yelp, but did not let her go. He pushed her against the wall, pinning her arms with his cane. "Stand still, you stupid girl!" he hissed.

Hermione was now crying even harder: she was trapped. He had restrained her arms with that bloody cane of his, and he had her wand and coin too. She was completely at his mercy, which, she was afraid to admit, was inexistent.

Lucius was trying to catch his breath. *The little bitch put up quite a fight, and she actually bit me with that filthy mouth of hers! How dare she! She will pay... Oh, yes,* Keeping a firm grip on his cane with his left hand, he extracted his wand with his right. "*Muffliato*," he whispered, directing the spell at them. Then he cast a particular variation of the disillusionment charm, so they were now in a sound-proof bubble that made them invisible. *Now no one but I will hear her screams.*

"Well, Miss Granger, first thing's first:" With that he slapped her face. "HOW DARE YOU BITE ME, YOU MUDBLOOD SCUM?!" Her lip was bleeding and the blood was mixing with the copious tears running down her cheeks. His smile was cruel. "No one can save you now."

True, she was crying, and she was probably going to be killed, but she would at least go down fighting. "Yes, that's right," she said, whimpering slightly. "No one can save me because a fearsome Death Eater has me trapped. He is so powerful that he dare not face me unless I am unarmed and immobilised. Well, you've certainly proved your point, Malfoy! You're too scared to face a seventeen-year-old girl, like you were too scared to face a group of kids at the Ministry last year! You're nothing but a coward! A cruel and arrogant coward!"

"SILENCE," he roared. "What would you know?! Hmmm?" he continued, starting to slap her again. "What would you know, you repulsive vermin?! You know nothing! Nothing! You keep parading yourself with Potter, too stupid to realize the danger you are in! And they say you're the one with the brains? Don't make me laugh!"

"Tell me, what is it like to know you have been wrong for so many years? What went through that frizzy head of yours when Draco let the Death Eaters in? When Severus killed that decrepit fool: Dumbledore?! You trusted him, didn't you? Just because he was a teacher." He stopped to catch his breath. Her cheeks were burning, her lip was bleeding, she had tears running down, her eyes closed tightly, and her breath was coming out in ragged gasps, making her chest heave. She was trembling like a dried leaf.

He smirked "So much for Gryffindor courage," he added softly.

With that, her head snapped up, and she spat in his face, saliva and blood dripping down his eyes. He wiped it away in disgust "Y-you say you d-don't like my blood... we-well, at least it's better than yours!"

"I am going to make you scream so hard that your lungs will burst out of your body!" he hissed, pressing his cane hard against her chest. He was really going to enjoy breaking her into little pieces and then kill her just to put her out of her misery. How many times could she resist the Cruciatus Curse? It would be interesting to find out...

It was then that he noticed something. In the struggle, her cloak had been torn away, and her blouse had come loose, revealing part of the bra covering her shapely breasts. Her skirt was also beginning to ride up, revealing creamy legs underneath... She had grown! She was already a young woman! Probably the little bitch was the favourite past time of Potter and the Weasley brat.

"My, my," he whispered as her heaving chest continued rising and falling rapidly, giving him a tantalizing glimpse of her cleavage. Much to his astonishment, he felt himself getting hard. *What in Merlin's name is this?! I am aroused by a Mudblood? This is pure insanity! Why should I desire to soil myself with the likes of her? Ever since Narcissa died I have not lain with anyone nor felt the need to do so. It is possible I am simply intrigued by such a display of flesh, sordid as it may be. On the other hand, were I to partake in it, there would be nothing she could do to stop me. I must not forget that she is a Mudblood, and as such my inferior: it couldn't even be classified as 'rape'.*

Hermione noticed to her horror that whilst staring at her, his cold eyes kept flicking over her breasts and legs. Along with the loathing, hate and revulsion, she saw something else in his eyes. *lust. Oh Lord, he's going to rape me.*

"Yes, it would not really matter," he said more to himself than to her as he started running a long soft finger over one of her cloth-clad breasts.

"No," she gasped.

"Silence," he hissed before ripping open her blouse, buttons scattering all over the floor. "My, my, Mudblood... You have become a woman..." he commented, grasping her roughly.

"No, please..." she begged weakly. "Not that..."

He observed her trembling, *Poor thing. She is quite alluring, it is indeed a pity she is such an abomination, really; I might have even considered a more fulfilling relationship. Merlin, Azkaban must have really lowered my standards. After a beautiful trophy-wife like Narcissa, precious few can be considered her equal, particularly not this lowly female before me... But still, it would be one way of settling matters. The more I think of it the more it seems the perfect retribution: she has humiliated me, it seems only fair to reciprocate.*

"Oh, Miss Granger, pray tell; what do you do with Potter and Weasley?" He enquired, his cold voice no more than a whisper. "Why on earth would they keep a Mudblood like you around? Perhaps you allow them to indulge themselves in your filthy body?" He yanked down her bra and pinched one of her nipples hard, smiling wickedly when she let out a whimper of pain. "Do they take pleasure in sullyng themselves with your flesh?" He finally let go of his cane, and by carefully pressing his weight against her, was able to use both his hands to grope her buttocks.

"S-stop!" She pleaded, shaking in pure revulsion while his hands were travelling over her entire body.

"Or do they kiss your disgusting mouth, to keep you quiet, perhaps?" He licked her bloody lips and pressed his mouth against hers, prying it open, biting her lips when she wouldn't part them, his tongue immediately exploring her crevice violently.

Hermione just stood there, too shocked to do anything but stare at the man who was continuing his ministrations, ignoring her disgust. She felt like vomiting, the whole situation was becoming too horrid to bear. He was biting her lips, pushing his tongue around her mouth, tasting her coppery blood. She had only kissed a few times, and this was certainly different from innocent school boys' kisses: he was completely violating her! *God, he's suffocating me! Doesn't he need to breathe?!*

He started to move his hands around her body again, digging so roughly into her skin she could have sworn he was breaking the surface. Quite suddenly he pushed against her even more, knocking all the air out of her lungs. In this dazed state, she barely registered what she felt pressing on her lower abdomen. *Oh no. Not that. God, no no no! This cannot happen! It can't! Please, someone, anyone, help me!* But she knew no one could. Her complete helplessness was maddening, but she didn't know what to do! She could feel his hands taking hold of her thighs, as he started lifting her up with ease. It finally came to her, in a surprising moment of clarity, that the only way she would get away unscathed was if she did something herself. She could not try to break loose, as by now his hold on her was such that she couldn't even reach the floor to generate any leverage for throwing him off. Her only chance of salvation was being able to get back either her wand or the galleon. If she could move her hands on him, even just for a second, she could reach inside his robes and retrieve them. But that would mean having to touch him... It may not even work but it was her last hope.

Feeling quite disgusted, wondering if it was really the only way, she took a deep breath and moved her hands to his neck, and to back up her pretence, she started kissing him back.

Lucius was outraged when he felt two small tentative hands resting on his neck, but then she had started kissing him! But she didn't stop there: she started moving her hands up and down his chest too. She was acting like a pure wanton, as if she were enjoying his actions! *How dare she! As if, in any other situation, I would touch her!* But for some unexplainable reason he did not stop her, incited even more to bringing about her ruin. He moved one of his hands to her waist; with the other hand, he reached for her knickers, attempting to pull them down, though there was hardly any room for such a move. In the end, with an infuriated growl, he ripped them off.

She let out a hiss of pain as she felt the elastic snap, and having understood the urgency of her plight she hastened her search. Moving her hands from his chest to his inside pockets, she inadvertently rubbed her breasts against his chest in the process. She was grasping around his cloak, and, just when she was just beginning to lose hope, she found both wand and coin. She grabbed at them frantically, breaking off the kiss as she pulled out her wand and pointed it at the man in front of her.

Lucius Malfoy was busy trying to catch his breath. He gathered his wits and finally managed to understand why Granger was in possession of her wand and was pointing it at his throat. He realized, with regret, that he had dropped his wand whilst attempting to get more physical contact between himself and the Mudblood. *How could I have been such a fool?!* He thought angrily.

"Listen to me, Malfoy," she started, trying to keep her voice calm. "I want you to put me down now and step away two paces or I swear to God, I will hex you!"

"You really are a whore, Granger!" He spat while carefully following her instructions. "To use your body like that."

"Your insults mean nothing to me. I think it's much worse torturing and killing people because of unfounded prejudices. Now, I have sent for help. You either leave now, or I shall disarm you and bind you here until they haul you back to Azkaban, and somehow I doubt you will get away this time. Leave, now!" She could tell he was weighing up the two options. She hadn't yet been able to call anyone, but she hoped he wouldn't call her bluff.

He could easily take care of the girl the moment he reached for his wand; still, if she had alerted any of her companions, matters would prove to be more complicated. True, any would-be rescuers wouldn't be able to see or hear them, but if the place was swarming with members of the Order, he wouldn't be able to leave either. They could even find them if they had that dratted Moody, with that bloody magical eye of his, with them. And then he would be flying high on a broom with no handle. He would have to leave her... but he would make her pay.

"Well, until we meet again, Miss Granger," He picked up his cane, pulled out his wand and said, *Finite Incantatem!*. Then, as he was walking away, he turned and said, "Rest assured that next time, I will finish the job." Going down the stairs, he held his cloak closed in order to hide his erection. He exited the shop and Disapparated just outside the doorway.

Hermione slumped against the wall, heart beating wildly. She was safe and still alive. Looking down at herself, she could see she was in a frightful state clothes ripped and in disarray, hair wilder than ever before, and her underwear torn. She muttered, *"Reparo,"* to repair her blouse and undergarments. She then wiped away the blood on her lips, took out a pocket mirror, and found herself looking at a girl who had been trampled by a stampede of Hippogriffs. After muttering a few quick spells to straighten herself up, she bound down the stairs, grabbed her books, threw money onto the counter, and left the shop, practically running until she got to the joke shop where she found her two best friends. Now she was truly safe.

"Wow, Hermione! That was quick! We thought we would have to drag you out," Ron said cheekily.

"You all right?" asked Harry, looking concerned.

"Oh, yes! No problems... So, shall we stop off at the Leaky Cauldron?"

"You're on!" they both said, grinning.

Although she was smiling, Hermione could not stop thinking of how that man had touched and kissed her, of what he had been about to do to her. How could anyone treat another person like that? How could he have tried to do *that* to her?! She shuddered slightly while imagining what would have happened had she not been able to get her wand back. She had been lucky today; she knew she would not get off so lightly were it to ever happen again.

Poisoned.

Chapter 2 of 6

Lucius Malfoy is having to cope with the side effects from his encounter with Hermione.

Poisoned.

"I hear you calling and it's needles and pins

I want to hurt you just to hear you screaming my name

Don't want to touch you but you're under my skin

I want to kiss you but your lips are venomous poison

You're poison running through my veins"

Poison, Alice Cooper

Lucius Malfoy Apparated moments later to the entrance hall of Malfoy Manor, Wiltshire. Taking one angry look around the empty space, he called for one of his house-elves.

"G-good morning, m-master," it squeaked appearing on its knees before him.

"You insolent vermin, how dare you make me wait?" he exclaimed, hitting the prostrate creature on the head with his cane.

"S-sorry, master," it yelped in pain. "I-I will punish myself."

"Yes, see that you do." he said in irritated tones. "Blinky, I have work to do. I shall be in my study and will not tolerate any form of disturbance."

"Y-yes, master!" it said getting up slowly in order to take the wizard's cloak and gloves once he discarded them. It was however caught by surprise when noting a swollen and red mark on his left hand. Unfortunately, when Lucius threw his garments at the cowering elf, it was still observing the mark and failed in catching one of the gloves. Squealing in terror, it chanced looking up at its master's face and remained petrified at the anger it saw there. Closing its eyes, it tried in vain to protect itself from the frightening glare only to be thrown across the marble floor when the wizard kicked it neatly on the head. It got up shakily to kneel at his feet.

"Bad Blinky! You have greatly displeased me." He spat.

"I-I is sorry, master; I is no-not meaning it."

"I shall explain this in a way that even you will understand: go to the kitchens, switch on one of the ovens and when it is at its maximum heat, put your head in it."

"Ye-yes, master. Blinky will do as master asks." It wailed, picking up the clothes with trembling fingers.

"And clean up any mess you might make; I do not want to eat anything that has been contaminated by you."

"Yes, m-master." It said, snapping his fingers and vanishing with a loud crack.

Servants just aren't as they used to be... he smirked as he walked out of the entrance hall, crossed one of the many corridors lined with portraits and relics of generations past, and arrived at his study where he locked the door behind him. After sitting down at his desk, he summoned a decanter of Firewhiskey and a large glass from his drinking cabinet, poured a large amount and gulped it all down. He took in a shuddering breath as the amber liquid rasped his throat.

He looked at his still injured left hand where she had left her teeth marks, making the flesh around the bite swollen *That Mudblood dared to mark me! Me!*

Instantly, he had a vision of her trembling whilst pressed against the bookcase, her face flushed, tears streaming from her eyes, and blood trickling from her lips. He smirked at the memory; she had been terrified.

But then another vision snaked into his mind... Her light touch sending jolts to his spine, her sweet tongue moving sensually in his mouth, her own warm and tasting of blood; her breasts, those voluptuous breasts, rubbing against him...

"Good God!" he exclaimed at his growing arousal. *How humiliating! I cannot believe I am aroused by that Mudblood whore!*

He decided to ignore the bulge in his trousers and poured himself another glass. Although after a few minutes, his discomfort had risen to such extents he could not resist any further. So, swallowing down all of his pride, he opened his trousers and gingerly removed himself from his silk black boxers. Slowly, he started to move his hand up and down his shaft.

How dare she? How dare she?! He thought as he continued to pump into his hand, panting slightly. How dared she make him want sexual gratification from the likes of her? She would pay, of that he was certain. He would make her scream; he would hurt her and break her, and he would enjoy every moment of it.

But every thought of revenge and violent desire were blown away when another image entered his mind. An image of her hands, not his, stroking him. Her soft, small hands pumping his manhood; her face only inches away from the head. His hand picked up its pace. Her opening her mouth, licking the tip with her little pink tongue...

"Oh, Circe!" he shouted as he came into his hand, his seed dripping down onto the antique carpet, while he panted, gasped for breath.

How the hell does she have this effect on me? It was quite ludicrous: *he*, Lucius Malfoy, a pureblood and object of desire of countless witches, affected by a Mudblood. It was just too much.

"Scourgify." He had finished cleaning his hands and the carpet when he heard a knock on the door.

"Who is it?"

"Severus."

Perfect, just perfect, He thought angrily. *He had to call on me now of all times!* Quickly placing his still semi hard member in his trousers and straightening himself up, he raised his wand and, with a lazy flick, opened the door.

"And what brings you here, Severus?" he enquired coldly.

"Since I have been living here for over a month, my presence at your study door should not cause you so much surprise. What is so strange in my paying a visit to the lord of manor?" he replied as he entered, closing the door behind him. He noticed straightaway that his friend was troubled by something and that he had also had sought comfort with maybe a glass too many of whisky.

"What comes as a surprise is your finding enough time to visit me when you are now the most popular amidst our ranks." he snapped.

"Oh no, not at the moment, although I must admit I am highly requested," he sneered.

"Severus, as usual, you have called at the most inopportune of moments. Now will you kindly tell me what you want before I lose my patience?"

"The Dark Lord wants to see you tonight."

Oh, what a delightful day! First Mudblood Granger, then Severus, the miserable bore, and now the Dark Lord.

He cleared his throat slightly. "Ahem... Pray do tell, why would he want to see me? And why must you pass on the message? Can he no longer call me with the Dark Mark?"

"From what I understood, he wants to see if you are worthy of a second chance. You know, even after your humiliating fiasco at the Ministry, he may consider forgiving you."

What is this?! The Dark Lord would no sooner give second chances than Severus Snape would wish to adopt Potter! He quickly dismissed this thought, as it did not seem at all appropriate to laugh at his friend, though the absurdity of the image was enough to make him smile.

"When you see fit to remove that sardonic grin from your face, I will continue," Severus drawled, quickly bringing him back to reality.

"Please, forgive the interruption."

"As I was saying, the Dark Lord is willing to give you another chance. He sees that you are faithful, unlike your late wife Narcissa, and ever obedient. He thinks that it would be best that you return to our ranks, thus also giving aid to Draco, who seems somewhat reluctant."

"Do you not think her stepping in front of her son as he was about to receive the Dark Mark, and being killed by our Master as a result, could have anything to do with it?"

"Possibly. Anyway, Draco seems to not want to take the Mark until he is absolutely sure. I think you should tell him that he had better hurry up. The Dark Lord's patience is waning."

"You seem to have forgotten to explain why the Dark Lord is willing to forgive me."

"I imagine you want the truth?"

"If you would be so kind."

"The truth is that you are a valuable piece on his chessboard. You were certainly of greater value before, when you had free access to the Ministry, but nevertheless you are one of the more powerful and obedient followers he has. He had thought that you may want to seek revenge for you wife's death, however I assured him that on the contrary, you valued him more."

"Then it appears I should thank you, Severus." He said, inclining his head. "But what exactly must ~~do~~ for him?"

"Well... apparently you, I and a few selected others have been chosen for an attack... but the rest of the details will be given by the Dark Lord himself."

"So all I have to do is complete this mission?"

"Yes, and do try not to ruin it like last time."

"Last time..." he started before Snape cut him short

"Last time, you were stopped by a group of six teenagers! Even Longbottom and Weasley got the upper hand on you! And you had thirteen of the strongest Death Eaters at your disposal! I could understand Granger giving you problems, but..." he stopped at the look on his friend's face "What in the world is wrong Lucius?! You remind me of the time your venison was under seasoned."

Lucius' face had started to redden with fury, but with his pale complexion, it just made his cheeks pink. "Do not worry yourself, Severus," he retorted angrily. "You know quite well how denigrating it was: being beaten by a group of children."

"I can imagine. And no doubt the Dark Lord will remind you of it, so hold your tongue because that horrible temper of yours always gets you into trouble. Like the time you were caught brawling in Flourish and Blotts with Arthur Weasley." Again he stopped for his friend had started to shake.

"Are you certain you are alright?"

"Yes, yes quite alright. I might have had too much to drink. What time do you suppose the Dark Lord will call me?"

"Around nine tonight, but then again I cannot be sure."

"Then I had better retire to my rooms: a few hours of rest will do me good." And with that, he nodded curtly at his friend as he Disapparated out of his study, not fancying having to walk all the way to his chambers.

As soon as he got there, he went straight to his bathroom and, looking in the enormous mirror, saw that he did indeed have a face that revealed all the emotions simmering underneath: wrath, revulsion, and to his uttermost disgust, desire. He looked down at his still swollen hand before taking an small jar ointment from the cabinet and applying it to the wound. He hissed as it started to smoke. After a few seconds, the smoke had disappeared, taking the mark with it. Severus.

Turning to the bedroom, he started to undress, scattering his garments on the floor of his room. He sat down on his king-sized four-poster bed, and after removing his shoes and socks, he lay down between emerald silk sheets. He found the almost liquid feel of the material against his skin so sensual. Narcissa always used to wear silk, but certainly not to please him, merely to show herself in all her beauty and power to the lesser people. Had he ever loved her? Of course not: it had been a marriage of convenience, decided and planned by their parents. He had not objected however, and why should he have? She had been the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. But no, there had never been love in their house. He smirked *Love is money for the poor; little wonder the Weasleys have so many offspring.* He could not even say he missed his wife, as her absence was just a variation of a habit: for so many years, she had been there by his side, and now she was no more.

Turning over in bed, he closed his eyes, but could find no solace from the lustful images that flooded his mind. His sleeping member became suddenly and painfully awake, much to his anger. Not being able to ignore it, he pleased himself, wanting to get it over with, but he found himself yet again imagining it was she who was caressing him, her breasts rubbing against his body, hot, wet mouth kissing, and licking his skin... Groaning, he came for the second time in an hour thinking of her. *She has poisoned me! How else could I be subject to this madness?!*

But he was too exhausted to feel humiliated and drifted off immediately into an uneasy sleep, his mind becoming a prison of lascivious thoughts.

Surprises.

Chapter 3 of 6

During her stay at a B&B, Hermione remembers the day she started her journey. A series of events take place, ending with a mysterious gift left on her bed...

Surprises.

"When good people in any country cease their vigilance and struggle, then Evil will prevail."

Pearl S. Buck

She awoke in a dark room and found herself naked, tied to a bed and gagged with a black silk sash; she was all alone. She heard a voice she couldn't recognize at first, and a black clad figure emerged from the shadows. He took off his cloak, long blond hair almost glowing in the darkness, identity unmistakable: Lucius Malfoy.

He approached her with an animalistic growl. Then, climbing onto the bed and straddling her, he pulled out a long silver knife and pressed the blade to her collarbone, piercing her flesh. She struggled desperately against her bindings, but to no avail. Warm blood was trickling down to her breasts, which he lapped up with his tongue, biting and breaking her skin. Parting her thighs, he brutally thrust into her.

Blood, pain, screams, and then darkness.

Hermione Granger woke up screaming.

"Hermione, you alright?" She heard a worried voice behind her door.

"Yes, I'm fine Harry... Just a nightmare."

"You sure?"

"Yeah, I'm alright, don't worry. Go back to sleep."

"As long as you're sure...Night."

"Good night."

Looking at the little clock on her bedside table, she saw it was three in the morning. She groaned and headed towards the little table in the middle of the room to pour herself a glass of water. She sipped it slowly and started to walk towards the window.

Just a nightmare, she thought. The same I have been having for two weeks, ever since I met him.. She had been haunted for days with thought of what he could have done to her.

Gazing out of the window, she watched the moon appear from behind the clouds. They had found this B&B by chance the day before, not knowing where else they could stay. It had been a month since they had been on the move. Not telling anyone in the Order their plan, the three adolescents had decided to abandon their last year of schooling, as going back to Hogwarts after Dumbledore's death and Snape's betrayal would have been too hard. Of course they weren't even sure it would be open that year. Harry, Ron and Hermione had left the Burrow the day after Bill and Fleur's wedding. She had left Crookshanks with Ginny, knowing the cat would be nothing more than a hindrance to their movements. They had been Apparating all over the Britain, searching for Horcruxes, working for money, and waiting for news concerning the activities of Voldemort and his Death Eaters now that their main adversary, Albus Dumbledore, had been eliminated.

Hermione found her room most distasteful, as it reminded her very much of Dolores Umbridge's office when she had been at Hogwarts. The walls were pink, there were lacy doilies on all the furniture, dried flowers in vases, and little statuettes of kittens playing littered over almost every available surface. *Fortunately there aren't any of those ghastly ornamental plates...or technicolor kittens! Honestly, who could be so sick and without any aesthetic sense whatsoever as to make them?*

She decided to get one of her books and read until sleep overtook her. Sighing, she walked over to her bag and took out a cardboard box. Taking the box with her, she sat on the bed and emptied the contents onto the bedspread. The box contained at least fifty books, all shrunken down to the size of postage stamps. Picking one of them up, she placed it besides her and put the others back in the box, closing the lid.

"*Engorgio*," she whispered, pointing her wand at the book, which instantly regained its original size.

"What would I do without magic?" she smiled. She had bought all the textbooks they would have used during their final year at school, not wanting their, and most importantly *her*, education to be incomplete. And obviously, she had bought many other books she thought would be useful in preparing for the difficult tasks that awaited her and her friends.

Opening the enormous book, she started whizzing through the pages. Even Hermione agreed the tome was not exactly bedtime reading, however they needed to know how to withstand dangerous creatures such as giants and Inferi. From what the volume said, Inferi could be repelled with fire, but she had not yet found a way of completely destroying them. Whilst she tried to find something useful to fit her purpose, she could not help thinking back to the first day of their departure...

The first place they had stopped off at was the Dursleys', and though it had not been the most cordial of visits, in its own way it had been an eye-opener.

She had insisted they telephoned the Muggles beforehand, thinking it to be rude to turn up unexpected, and had agreed to meet half an hour later at Number 4 Privet Drive. What the Dursleys had obviously not been expecting was for them to Apparate into their hallway. Consequently, the trio's arrival was met with screams from Aunt Petunia and Dudley and the beetroot-red face of Uncle Vernon.

When their respective cries of fear and shouts of anger had subsided, they were left with a very uncomfortable, but welcome, silence. Harry explained all that had occurred in the wizarding world in the past year, including the death of his former Headmaster. Ron took the opportunity to look at all the strange Muggle things dotted around the Dursleys' living room, pointing and asking questions, causing Hermione to hiss at him to shut up. Hermione had to admit she felt quite uncomfortable with Dudley staring at her as if he had never seen a girl before. In trying to avoid the boy's uncomfortable gaze, she noticed that Mrs Dursley appeared to be scrutinising Ron's tatty second-hand clothes with narrowed eyes. Looking over to her friend, she realised that the woman was actually glaring at the dirt he had on his nose. Hermione quickly took out her wand and performed '*Scourgify*' on him.

"Honestly, Ron, it looks as if you find personal hygiene a foreign concept."

"I don't see what the problem is."

It wasn't until she turned to see the Dursleys' faces that she realised her mistake. *Damn... I keep forgetting these people hate magic* Hate magic was a bit of an understatement, seeing as they were looking at her as though she had just admitted to being a leper.

"She did magic!"

"Well, yes, Uncle Vernon. That's what you do if you're a witch."

"But you can't do magic outside of *that* school!"

"We're of age now. We can do magic almost anywhere now. Anyway, as I was trying to explain, we are not going back to Hogwarts this year. There may not even be a school to go back to. Look, right now Voldemort..." He shot a look at Ron, who had flinched. "... is at war with most of the wizarding community. He and his followers find it amusing to torture and murder Muggles, that means *normal* people, like *you*."

The Dursleys looked at him with a mixture of shock and terror on their faces.

"B-but why would those nutters come here?"

"Why not? It doesn't really matter who you are; being Muggles, you should be purged from the world," he said with distaste. "And you're also related to me, so they could try to use you as bait."

"That is preposterous!" Mr. Dursley cried, jumping to his feet. "You were forced upon us! We want nothing to do with you! We..."

"Are in danger." Harry interrupted heatedly. "Listen to me, it's fairly simple. If you stay here, you will die."

"I can defend my own family!"

"Uncle Vernon, you remember how you coped with Hagrid years ago? And he was harmless."

The large man reddened at the thought, his moustache quivering.

Aunt Petunia finally seemed to have found her voice "But where could we go? We can't just leave."

"That is precisely what you must do."

"Must, boy?"

"If you are captured, I can't save you." Harry said quietly.

"Vernon," Mrs. Dursley said urgently, "maybe we should listen to him."

"Yes, Dad. What if he's right?" Dudley asked, terrified at the thought.

"Quiet, everyone! I need to think!" he shouted, before starting to pace around the crowded room. "You say that we are in danger if we stay in this house. *Our* house."

"Yes," the boy confirmed.

"And how can we be any safer out there? I have people to protect, boy!"

"If you want to protect them, then you had better go!" Harry said, starting to lose his calm.

"We can't just leave! What of our affairs? My job? Dudley's schooling?"

"I can't believe you're thinking about that now! Don't you realise what 'war' means?!"

"Don't you dare use that tone with me!"

Harry was about to reply when Ron nudged him, which was enough to bring him back to his senses. After exhaling slowly, he tried once more "Uncle Vernon, please, listen to me. I know you've never liked me, and you probably never will, but please trust me at least this once. Pack your bags, just the indispensable items," he added, looking at his cousin, "and go to Ms. Figg's..."

"Ms. Figg? Why should we go to her?!" He stopped abruptly as comprehension dawned on his face, his beady eyes widening. "She's not one of... one of *you*, is she?!"

"Well, not exactly. I mean she can't do magic, but she is a witch."

"And all those years we sent you there!" he exclaimed in horror.

"I only found out recently. What does it matter now? Just go to her and tell her I sent you. You can leave letters for anyone who may worry about your absence, saying that you're going on a long holiday. The others will make sure you'll find a comfortable place; they'll help you find a job and everything. That should be it." Turning to his two friends on the settee. "Shall we?"

"Ready when you are, mate," Ron said.

"Erm, it was a pleasure to meet you." Hermione said, nodding to the Dursleys.

"Goodbye then. Have a good life." The three Muggles just stood staring at their retreating backs as they walked to the front door.

"Harry, don't you want to say anything else?" the brunette asked worriedly.

"What's the point, Hermione? There's no love lost between us. And if they do as I've asked, they'll have their memories modified: they won't remember anything at all."

No sooner had they shut the door behind them that a loud scuffling could be heard, along with a loud voice barking instructions such as "... not that one, Petunia! You can't fit a thing in that! The big one! The big one!"

"Something tells me they're going to follow your advice." Ron smiled.

From Privet Drive, they had gone to Godric's Hollow to visit the tomb of Harry's parents.

What remained of the Potter's cottage had been in ruins and covered by a thick coat of ivy. The three of them walked through the silent village until they reached the churchyard and continued through the rows of graves, searching for that one name. After a while, they found a great oak tree; amidst its roots were two white lilies and a single, small, marble tombstone that read:

James Potter, born 27 March 1960, died 31 October 1981

Lily Potter, born 30 January 1960, died 31 October 1981

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Apparently, someone had charmed the tombstone so neither enemies nor unknowing Muggles couldn't desecrate it and the flowers would remain forever in bloom.

Hermione looked up to see tears glistening in her friend's emerald eyes, and tugging on Ron's sleeve, they left him alone with his thoughts and memories. They sat waiting for him at the gates, sombre and in silence, until he joined them, his whole being aflame, as if animated with some newfound purpose. Hermione realised then that he would do all that he could to see the end of his nemesis, though she could not tell if it would be for salvation or revenge.

Poor Harry. He is too young to have to face such a task she thought as her eyes closed and sleep enveloped her.

She awoke at seven, and after getting washed and dressed, she walked down to the breakfast room, sitting down at the table reserved for her and her friends. The Housekeeper came bustling in and asked her what she wanted. Having ordered a pot of tea and a cooked breakfast, she sat looking around the room, noticing with displeasure that this too was done in a style reminiscent of Umbridge.

As she was presented with her breakfast and wondering just how long she should wait before waking up the boys, a paper boy came bounding in, announcing the story of the century. The Housekeeper came hurrying into the room, yelling at the small boy for disturbing her guests.

"I'm sorry, Ms., but the paper..."

"It is not civil to come barging in here like a barbarian!"

"But the headline..." he insisted, waving it in front of her nose.

"What? What's the headline?"

Thrusting one of the papers in her hand, he turned to look at her with a satisfied grin as she began reading excitedly. "How could it have happened?"

"Dunno... But what is for certain, that ain't no heart attack!"

His purpose achieved, he started walking out of the room. As he passed her table, Hermione called to him. "I don't suppose I could have a paper too?"

"If you gimme a quid you can."

Taking her purse out of her pocket, she handed him a pound in return for the paper and another one as a tip. His eyes lit up. She just winked at him.

"Thank you, miss!" he said, before running out the room in search of more customers.

Hermione smiled and, taking a sip of her tea, opened her paper only to choke as soon as she saw the headline.

PM DEAD IN OFFICE

CAUSE YET UNKNOWN

PAGAN HOLOGRAM OVERHEAD

The Muggle community seemed to have mistaken the symbol for something satanic; but no witch or wizard could possibly do the same. Over the rooftops floated the eerie image of a green skull with a snake coming out of its mouth: the Dark Mark.

She ran upstairs and knocked violently on the boys' door.

"Harry! Ron!"

"I'm coming, I'm coming," came a grumpy voice from the other side of the door. As soon as it opened, she bound inside.

"Hermione, what's up?" a worried Ron asked from behind her.

Whipping her wand out, she just pointed it behind her and set a silencing charm on the door

"Hey, be careful where you point that thing!"

"Shut up, Ron!"

"What is happening here?" Harry asked, coming out of the bathroom.

"Harry, Ron! They've done it!"

"What?"

Loosing all patience, she threw the paper at Harry who took one quick look and paled instantly. Ron, who had walked up behind him so he could read over his shoulder, looked up incredulously. "This means..."

"Yes, this is now open war. There shall be proper battles next." Hermione answered with a small voice.

"What are we going to do?" Harry asked, looking at the floor.

"You mean, are we going to return to HQ?"

He nodded.

"Well... that is really up to you, Harry." He looked at her.

"Hermione's right, Harry. We'll following you whatever you decide."

"I need to think. You need to think. I can't decide for everyone."

"But..."

"No, Ron! Do not place your lives in my hands!"

"Look you two, go and have some breakfast, and then come back up so we can discuss it, ok?"

"Yeah... Alright." Filing silently out of the room, the boys headed down the stairs whilst Hermione went to her own room.

While Muggles would remain mystified at the sudden death of their Prime Minister, wizards would know at once who and why it had been done. And this would only make them more terrified than they already were.

Something had to be done. Finding the missing Horcruxes was the only real chance they had for winning the war, and they had to do so urgently or there was no telling how many would perish. After conquering Britain, it would not be long before Voldemort spread his reign of terror over the rest of the world: none would be spared.

She heard a knock on her door and opened it to find Harry and Ron standing there. Letting them in, she closed the door and conjured two extra chairs for them to sit on. Taking a deep breath, Harry started to talk.

After many hours, they had finally come to an agreement. They would continue their search for the remaining treasures of the Founders of Hogwarts, and if they heard of one more attack, just one more, they would immediately Apparate to HQ and ask for help from the other members of the Order.

It started raining outside so, just for that day, they decided to give it a rest. Hermione read a book on Rowena Ravenclaw, wondering what her treasure could be, while Harry and Ron practiced wordless magic.

Around lunchtime, Harry clapped his hand to his head and started laughing. Fearing that he had suddenly gone mad, the other two looked at him with alarm.

"Honestly, you two! Oh, Hermione, we forgot what day it was today!"

"Come again?"

"Look at the paper," he said, grinning and pointing to the date above the headline.

"The 19th of September," she muttered softly, "It's my birthday..."

"Damn right it is!" Ron said, grinning.

"I'm eighteen!" she chuckled.

"And here's your present!" Harry said, handing her a light-coloured parcel.

Opening it, she gasped: a periwinkle blue silk scarf and gloves came out. "Harry, they're wonderful! Thank you!"

"I thought that colour suited you." He winked.

"And here is my present," Ron said from behind her.

Looking around, she saw that he too was holding a wrapped parcel. She opened it slowly. "Oh, Ron!" There was a pair of silver earrings with little blue orbs hanging underneath, and the orbs seemed to be glowing. "Is that...?"

"Fairy dust: should bring good luck. Let's see you wearing 'em."

Smiling, she put the earrings in her ears and the scarf around her neck.

"They suit you," Harry commented.

"Yeah, you really look nice," Ron blurted out.

"Oh, thanks!" She stood on her tiptoes and kissed him on the cheek.

"Anytime," he mumbled, his ears turning red.

"Time for lunch... Shall we?"

"Yes, you two go ahead. I'll just put my gifts away."

"Right. See you down there." Closing the door behind them, she crossed to the mirror on her chest of drawers and determined that she did indeed look nice.

Hermione put the scarf and gloves in her bag and the earrings back in their case. She turned around and was about to exit the room when she noticed a flower on her bed. It was a single white rose.

"How beautiful," she murmured, and crossing the room once again, she reached out for the flower. But as soon as her fingers touched the stem, she felt a strange yet familiar feeling of having a hook tug just behind her navel, and she felt wind rushing past her. As soon as it had started, it stopped. Opening her eyes, she found herself in a completely different room. It appeared to be a mansion, of sorts, based on the scale of the chamber and the old-fashioned yet expensive furnishings. The mere size of the place was dumbfounding. Looking around, she noticed a fireplace, flames crackling away, engraved with a serpent.

She had a horrible suspicion she knew where she was, but prayed she was wrong. Her blood chilled when she heard a soft voice behind her, confirming her suspicions. "Happy birthday, Miss Granger."

Author's Note: I just wanted to point out that the timeline is slightly different to Deathly Hallows. Hermione's birthday is on the 19th of September, but I moved the wedding date, instead of just after Harry's Birthday in July, to round about the end of August. Being an Alternate Universe, I have put in some elements that are present in the seventh book, whilst others I have changed. Thanks for reading.

Ophelia

Prisoner.

Chapter 4 of 6

How will Hermione manage to defend herself, having been captured by her foe? And to what extents will Lucius go to slake his obsession? *Rape and Violence*

Prisoner.

"I am too frightened to open the door

I can't stop shaking as I drop to the floor

My hands, unfaithful, did not protect me

My voice, transparent, when I needed to scream

What really happened during those nights?

I could not move so I just turned off inside"

Fear, Switchblade Symphony

"Happy birthday, Miss Granger."

She did not need to turn around to know that she was in the room with Lucius Malfoy. She did not need to see his cold, grey eyes to know he had brought her there, and she certainly did not need to see the satisfied smirk on his pale lips to know that he was going to do her harm.

"Eighteen today. A very special occasion." He bowed his head for a moment, his blonde hair falling down his shoulders. He added softly, "We must celebrate *accordingly*."

She tried in vain to Disapparate, but he obviously had wards over the mansion preventing this. She drew her wand, but before she could so much as point it at him, he had disarmed her, sending her wand flying out of her hand to land somewhere across the room.

"Why, Miss Granger, you hurt my feelings. And here I was convinced you liked my gift," he said, looking down at the rose she still had clutched in her hand.

"How could you know where we were?" she asked, speaking for the first time.

"Ah, at last you speak. Well, after our previous encounter, you had left some drops of blood on my robes. Though my initial thought was to destroy the ruined garments, I decided to keep them; for as young Mister Potter knows, the blood of one's enemy is always very valuable. I was able to use it, minute a quantity it was, for a rather interesting spell to locate you. I merely had to order a house-elf to place the Portkey on your bed, and the deed was done."

He smiled pleasantly, waiting for a reaction, but she remained silent, the seriousness of her situation weighing down on her. She didn't know where she was, she potentially could not leave, and she had no means of contacting Ron or Harry since Lucius had divested her of her wand. She was once again at the mercy of a Death Eater.

"You know," he continued silkily. "You should be honoured that I have found time for you. I have been so busy recently, even had to call on the Muggle Prime Minister. He was such a nervous man, possibly he was under a lot of strain because of his job."

"Murderer," she whispered, barely audible. But he had understood: he had seen her lips moving, forming a voiceless accusation.

Smirking, he replied coldly, "I would not go so far as to call it 'murder': it is more a form of liberation. Muggles and their like will be purged in the same way one would disinfect a wound. Soon the whole world will be free of them. Though the Minister did prove to be useful in the end: I can now say I am back in the Dark Lord's good graces, all thanks to him."

She listened to him in disbelief as he talked so effortlessly of murder: the lives of his victims had no value, and he had no guilt. His face was relaxed, untouched by feeling, making him look inhuman. That frightened her even more.

"Now, coming back to us," he hissed, eyes locked on hers.

She started to back away, her eyes continually scanned the space around her, searching for a way to escape, lips moving in silent prayer.

He was slowly moving closer, his steely orbs alight with malice, a cruel smile curving his mouth.

She was looking at him as one would do a wolf on the hunt, circling its prey and enjoying every moment of the animal's terror.

He was only a foot away now. With one quick step, he took her face in his hands and licked her lips. "I am going to possess you," he whispered near her ear.

His words made her spiral into fear, making her whole being shudder. Panic clenched her heart, and losing all rational thought, she slapped him across the face, leaving a red imprint of her hand on his pale skin. She pushed away and ran to the solitary door. Grasping the handle, she tried to open it, but found it, unsurprisingly, locked. She threw herself against the wooden frame with all her might, but she lacked the strength to unhinge the heavy door.

She could hear him walking steadily towards her.

"You have nowhere to run, Miss Granger," he purred.

"No!" Turning to her left, she found a vase on a pedestal. Desperately, she threw it at the wizard. He repelled it with ease; no sooner had it shattered on the floor than he had reached her and grabbed her by the wrists.

"Let go of me!" she screamed, digging her nails into the flesh of his hands. He inhaled sharply, but his grip only tightened. "Let go!" she screamed again, voice breaking with sobs.

"So much vain resistance; you must have realised your fate has been sealed," he said as the struggling girl tried to kick him. "Obviously not," He added, pulling out his wand and whispering, "*Extenuo*."

She was enveloped by a lilac light, draining her of all her strength. Head reeling, she barely realised her legs had given way under her; instead she was held up by the strong grasp of her attacker.

"I doubt you have ever heard of this spell; am I correct?" he said as he encircled her waist with one arm. Lifting her head with his other hand, he stared into her eyes, liking what he saw there. The look in her chestnut eyes was one of pure terror, silent tears creeping down her cheeks. She looked as if she accepted the hopelessness of her predicament. It excited him how the loss of hope painted her face with despair!

He placed a gentle finger on her trembling lips, moving it softly to her cheek where her pearly tears were leaving wet trails on her skin. Catching one tear on his fingertip, he placed it in his mouth, sucking it lightly, tasting her anguish. Then, as if having suddenly awakened from a trance, he crushed her body to his and her lips with his own. When she would not open her mouth, he bit her bottom lip sharply. When she let out a whimper of pain, he pushed his tongue in to explore her mouth.

Still holding her trembling body with his left arm, he started to remove her clothing. Her hands, which had until then remained at her sides, tried to push him away, but she was far too weak.

Momentarily interrupting his possession, he picked the crying girl up in his arms and carried her over to the bed where he dropped her unceremoniously. His hands, now free of the burden of sustaining her deadweight, busied themselves in removing her clothing. When she wore nothing more than her underwear, he proceeded to take his own shirt off, revealing his well-toned chest and arms. Sitting down on the bed, he kicked off his boots and removed his socks. Letting out a sigh, he turned to the girl, who whimpered when she saw his eyes aflame with unremitting lust.

"I told you, Miss Granger, that we would meet again," he said silkily as he crawled over to her, reinforcing her earlier images of a hungry wolf. "I told you that you would pay for what you had done," he continued as he ripped away her lacy bra. Using his tongue, he licked from her collarbone to her navel, leaving behind a wet trail. "And I always keep my promises." He took hold of one of her breasts. Touching it fervently, he licked the nipple, biting and pinching it.

Her mind, her soul, her whole being was screaming in despair. She knew how futile struggling would be, and she knew she could not prevent his violation. Ever since his failed attempt weeks ago, an impending sense of doom had haunted her; but she had not been able to do anything to prevent this from happening. Now she lay there paralysed, unwilling to let any of her distress show, not wanting to give him any more satisfaction.

"Miss Granger, you disappoint me: as I recall, you were a lot more responsive in Flourish and Blotts."

"Stop it," she said coldly. "Does it make you feel powerful, to have me at your mercy? Does it give you satisfaction, you twisted bastard?"

"Language, Mudblood," he chided, grasping her jaw roughly. "Must I silence you as well? I hope not: I want to hear you begging for mercy. I want to hear your screams."

After capturing her lips once again in a hungry kiss, he moved to her neck where he bit her hard, drawing blood. Sucking the wound, he moved lower to her thighs. "So who has already had you? Potter? One of the Weasleys? To whom exactly did you give your virginity?"

She was still crying, but the weight of his words struck her. She wouldn't be able to experience her first time with Ron. She would probably not live to see him again.

"Am I to imagine that you are a virgin? You have obviously had your nose in books for far too long, but I see no reason to complain." As he removed her knickers, he added, "It will be much more fun to break you."

Unzipping his trousers and pulling them down, along with his black, silk boxers, he knelt before her as naked as she was. Gazing at his hard length, she shuddered at the thought of how much he would hurt upon entering her.

But he did not take her straightaway; instead, he bent his head between her legs, breathing on her womanhood. Parting her labia with his index finger and thumb, he started to languidly stroke her with his tongue.

Hermione wanted to vomit as the hateful man licked at her entrance. She had always imagined her first sexual encounter to be with someone she deeply cared for. *This isn't how it was meant to be!*

But now, despite herself, she was beginning to feel a strange sensation, starting from her stomach, spreading to the rest of her body. Odd warmth was stemming from her core and sending wave upon wave of heat, growing in intensity, outwards to the rest of her.

"Stop! Stop!" she cried as he began to suck on her clitoris, eliciting a small moan to escape her lips. What was he doing to her? How could her body react ~~to~~ *him*?

He heard her moan, and a satisfied smirk broke out on his face. *At last she will be mine! I have spent two weeks being haunted by her! Visions of her tormenting me day and night, and now she will pay!*

He continued his attack to her clit, licking and sucking it relentlessly. Even more moans escaped her lips as she began to wriggle, trying lethargically to escape his tongue. The more her body responded to his ministrations, the emptier she felt. He was stealing her soul.

After minutes of suffering under his assault, she came. Her first orgasm. Her body trembled and shook as she panted, finding herself out of breath.

Lucius licked up her juices avidly. Then placing his manhood at her entrance, he started to push inside her, gasping at her tightness.

Hermione was crying again. *He's trying to split me in two... There is no way in Hades he's going to get that thing in me!* "Stop! You're killing me!" she wailed as she felt her channel stretching painfully.

He felt her vaginal barrier, and after pulling his erection almost out of her, he thrust back in with force, breaking her completely.

Hermione let out a piercing scream.

"Keep quiet, Mudblood..." he growled, burying himself in her completely. "Be thankful... I made you... come first... otherwise you... would find this... even more painful..." he grunted as he thrust in and out.

He revelled in her tightness, basking in the feeling of finally having her at his mercy after weeks of torture. He had not seized her because he thought her attractive or because he wanted her. His reason for kidnapping her was completely different: he wanted to take her, so that she would no longer trouble his dreams. It had been hell for him, *pure* hell, imagining her writhing underneath him every five minutes, imagining her sucking him every time he closed his eyes. And now, at last, he was able to rid himself of this ridiculous obsession.

He continued to thrust his entire length into her core, her screaming the whole while, exciting him even more. He covered her mouth with his, taking her in a vicious kiss. He gripped her fiercely around the thighs and lifted her so he could penetrate her more fully.

He kept pounding into her until he felt his balls tighten; then, removing himself from her, he squeezed his throbbing cock in his hand and came all over her.

Panting, he collapsed next to her. She just lay there, tears still running down her cheeks, eyes fixed on the ceiling, before she lost consciousness.

He climbed off of bed and collected his wand before turning around to face her. There she lay, her cheeks stained with tears, blood flowing from her core and neck. She had bruises on her thighs where he had held her, her lips were swollen, and her long-brown hair was fanned out underneath her. He had taken her, used her, and now he could kill her. She had served her purpose and should be disposed of.

Pointing his wand at her, he cocked his head to one side. True, he had had her, but he did not feel at all satisfied. It mystified him: he had wanted to have her and he'd just done so. What more could he want?

A voice in his head answered him softly, *But you wanted her to want it too, didn't you?*

"I have had my share of sex. This Mudblood means nothing to me."

Then why do you want to have her again? Why do you not feel sated? You want her to writhe beneath you. You want her to do it of her own free will...

"I want nothing of the sort!"

You can try to hide the truth. But you would only be lying to yourself.

"What I want is to be done with her! I will kill her now!"

Go ahead,

He pointed his wand at her. It would mean nothing to him, **nothing!** "*Avada Keda...*" but he stopped before finishing the curse. Maybe the inner voice was right. He would have to find out. Pointing his wand at his own body, he cleaned himself and got dressed. He picked up her wand from the floor before walking through the door.

"THERE YOU ARE!" an angry voice shouted from behind him.

"Severus, how may I help you?"

"What the hell have you been doing in there? I heard screams!"

"Oh, that was my new toy. I was just trying her out. Severus, would you mind terribly if I asked a favour of you? I think she may need fixing."

"Fixing?"

"It was her first time, and I might have been a tad overzealous," he smirked.

"Very well."

"Oh, and, Severus... after fixing her, you can play with her too."

Author's Note and thanks:

Extenuo is Latin and can be roughly translated as "to weaken".

I apologise for the tardiness of my update, but I have been having a rather hard time with real life. Thank you ever so much for your patience.

Thanking my wonderful beta Sempra for the lovely job she's doing on this story.

Ophelia

Consequences.

Chapter 5 of 6

What will Severus do when he discovers the identity of Lucius' new "guest"? What has happened, in the meanwhile, to Harry and Ron?

Consequences.

"But as in ethics, Evil is a consequence of Good, so in fact out of Joy is Sorrow born."

Edgar Allan Poe

"Oh, and, Severus... after fixing her, you can play with her too."

Chuckling to himself, he turned his back and started walking down the corridor. "I will be in my study if you need me."

With his eyes still focused on the blond wizard walking away, he took out his wand and summoned his bag of healing potions and ointments. After making sure he had everything he would need, he opened the door and entered the room, softly closing the door behind him. The room was in semi darkness. A lazy wave of his wand gave new life to the dying fire in the grate and lit the many candles in the chandelier, thus enveloping the room in a soft light.

The room itself was chaotic. Clothes were strewn across the floor as well as pieces of a broken vase, which he assumed had been priceless. A few quick spells, and the clothes disappeared while the vase returned to its original state and levitated to what Severus assumed was its rightful place.

"When will he ever learn to play nicely with the ladies?" he muttered to himself, although he knew his friend, despite his sometimes vicious treatment, had never had a shortage of lovers. The bed with the woman of the moment seemed to be in a similar, if not worse, state to the room. Putting his bag down on the bed, he stood back to observe the situation. She seemed to be youngish with a nicely shaped body; her face was covered by her lustrous, long, brown hair, but he made no attempt to look at it. There were far more important matters at hand, such as her pitiful state: blood seeping from her womanhood as well as from her neck; bruises on her thighs and Lucius' seed covering her stomach. Still scowling, he started to work.

"Scourgify," he muttered, removing the seed from her body and the blood from the sheets. "It is high time he learned how to clean up after himself," he spat.

He considered for a while which wound to treat first, concluding that he had better start on her brutalised sex, lest she die through loss of blood. He reached into his satchel and took out a small glass jar, after which he sat down on the bed next to her. Having parted her thighs and assessed the damage, he coated his index and middle fingers and began to slowly caress her torn flesh, the ointment hissing as it healed her wounds. He was quite thankful for her state of unconsciousness, as he could imagine how painful it would be to have such a sensitive part of one's body subject to the burning sensation. When he pushed into her dry channel, however, she whimpered slightly; ignoring her discomfort, he continued with his task, which grew ever more difficult as she reacted to the pain, so much so, she instinctively sought to move away.

He looked up angrily at the wriggling figure and noticed that, thanks to her moving, her face had been uncovered. Instantly, he let out a gasp of surprise, as the girl in front of him was none other than Hermione Granger!

Has the world gone mad? Of all people to be here, it is her? The bookworm of the golden trio, little Miss know-it-all..She is Lucius' new toy? No, no. I must be hallucinating, all of the stress I have experienced must have caused this irrational vision.

Closing his eyes, he opened them again as if expecting there to be someone else on the bed, but much to his chagrin, the girl was still there.

"Lucius, what have you done?" he muttered. "Of all the girls you could have chosen, it had to be her! And to have placed me in such a situation... Were she to wake... Damn you, Lucius!"

His anger grew even more as he recalled the blond wizard's words: *"Oh, and, Severus... after fixing her, you can play with her too."* His arrogant friend had overstepped the limit this time and would suffer the consequences of his actions accordingly. Snape felt affronted as he thought of the way he had been played with. Glaring down at the unconscious figure, he realised he had yet to finish healing her, and though the worse had been dealt with, it would not do to neglect the other injuries.

Inhaling deeply, he sought to calm himself before reaching once again into his satchel, this time for a phial of violet liquid. Forcing her mouth open, he let a few drops fall onto her tongue. *There, now at least I can be certain she will not wake up. Imagine her surprise at opening her eyes and finding me staring at her naked form. It would certainly be most... inconvenient,* he thought savagely.

He coated his fingers once more in the ointment and proceeded to dab the bite mark, which hissed and steamed, leaving perfect, unmarred skin behind. He did the same

for the bruises on her thighs, meticulously rubbing the salve into her skin, every now and again cursing under his breath whilst thinking of the blond wizard, who was sitting in his study just a floor below.

Once he was satisfied with her condition, he pulled the bed sheet over her and, grabbing his wand and bag, left the room without a backwards glance, slamming the door as he went. Pausing for a moment, he closed his eyes before opening them abruptly. "Lucius," he whispered, voice full of malice.

"Oh, Severus... after fixing her, you can play with her too." Chuckling, he turned his back and started walking down the corridor. "I will be in my study if you need me."

He simply could not wait to see Severus' face when he realised who he was supposed to be healing. Lucius was sure Severus would not feel in the least bit inclined to play with her. If he knew his friend, which he did, he wouldn't want to touch her more than necessary; actually, it was quite possible he would refuse to heal her. *That could be problematic...*

This whole situation is proving to be problematic, he thought angrily. What am I going to do now? It had seemed so simple before: he had wanted the girl, had obsessed over her, so he had snatched her and used her. So why had he not killed her afterwards? Why had he seen fit to keep that filth alive after he had taken what he had previously been denied? It made no sense at all, and he could not abide anything he could not understand. It irritated him. Made him feel as though he had no control. *And a Malfoy is always in control.*

He entered his study and sat down at his desk. Summoning his decanter of Ogden's Firewhiskey and a glass, yet again, he poured himself a glassful. He raised it to his lips but did not drink. He sat like that for a few minutes, pondering silently on his *encounter* with the girl. Why did she bother him so? What did he want of her now that he had taken her? What more could he want?

You wanted her to give herself to you, without having to force her, said the same soft voice in his head as before. *You wanted her to want you, to enjoy your coupling.*

"Nonsense." he said out loud.

Really?

"It makes no difference to me; her satisfaction, or lack thereof, has no meaning whatsoever."

Yet you remain unsatisfied, that you have already admitted. It seems your self-confessed charms were insufficient for the Mudblood.

"I have nothing to prove... to anyone."

So why then did you not kill her? Did it hurt your ego to have to force yourself on someone so far beneath you? The soft voice cooed. *If she has so little meaning, there is no reason to let her live or to have brought her here in the first place?*

"Enough!" he cried, losing his patience.

But the voice continued relentlessly, *You only wished to prove you could have anything you wanted, such a shame you failed so miserably. But then again, you are becoming quite accustomed to failure, are you not?*

The noise of a door slamming violently upstairs drew his attention away from the disturbing inner dialogue.

Suddenly the study door opened with such force that it bounced off the wall and slammed itself shut behind the extremely furious Severus Snape, who had just barged into the room.

"Do you not know it is polite to knock?" Lucius drawled.

"Silence, Lucius! How dare you put me in such a situation! How dare you!" he growled, putting his hands on the oak desk and leaning down to glare at his friend.

"You seem to be overreacting for such a small thing. And please remember I am not one of your students, Severus; do not try to intimidate me in this fashion."

"I cannot believe your nerve! How could you use me like that? Do you think me an imbecile?! To involve me in your own sordid private affairs without giving me any choice in the matter!"

"I fail to see why you are so upset; unless she awoke," he smirked. "Was that the case?"

"No, she did not wake. I gave her a sleeping draught. Do you have any idea what could have happened if she had seen me?"

"She did not have a wand, Severus. In any event, she seemed highly incapable of any form of fighting, magical or physical." He drawled.

"She would no doubt have gone into hysterics."

"And we would not have wanted that to happen, would we? Are you so worried for your former student, Severus?"

"You know perfectly well the answer to that question, therefore why ask it? Am I to imagine you involved me for your own amusement?" he enquired icily.

"Yes, that could be the case. And I was not disappointed by your reaction either."

"You are treading on thin ice," he hissed.

"Do calm yourself, Severus. Sit down, have a drink."

"Do not think you can worm your way out of this: I am furious!"

"Indeed," he replied, softening his gaze. After a small pause, Lucius queried, "Forgive me, Severus, but I cannot help but ask whether you played with her or not."

"Of course I did not, Lucius. I am appalled you even suggested such conduct with her. "

"Yes, of course, how unforgivable of me. Please, take a seat," he said, waving to the chair in front of him which his friend took begrudgingly.

"So, Lucius," he started coldly as he sat down. "I will not question your sexual tastes, nor the fact that you are old enough to be her father; but why did you choose Granger? Did you stop for one minute to think about the consequences of your actions? She is one of the Order! She is a Mudblood! Merlin, she is Potter's best friend! I hope you obtained the Dark Lord's permission before you took action." At the wizard's silence, he rose to his feet. "You didn't? Good God, Lucius! Can you not imagine what is likely to happen now?!"

"Severus, sit down and let me explain from the beginning. A fortnight ago, I had a rather peculiar encounter with her in Flourish Blotts. This encounter left me in a somewhat uncomfortable state. I am ashamed to admit it, but I developed an obsession for her. Wanting to rid myself of my infuriating condition, I concluded that satisfying the nature of my obsession would be enough to end it. So I tracked her down to her lodgings with the aid of an ancient, but very useful, Dark spell. Today I had a white rose

placed in her room. The rose was a Portkey which brought her here. I had not informed the Dark Lord as she would have been disposed of once I had taken her, perhaps even handed over to him as a gift; that remained to be decided. Now, however, I find I shall have to improvise since I had not planned on letting her live after I had had my... fill."

The dark-haired wizard was listening in silence, absorbing all the possible information he could draw out of his friend's words, when he came to a surprising realisation.

"Why have you not killed her? She has served her purpose, has she not? Dispose of her before the situation becomes even more dangerous."

"I will, Severus, I will. But first, I want something more from her."

"What more can you possibly want, Lucius?! You have already had her!"

"I am just not satisfied with the outcome. Were I to partake in her again, I could completely eradicate the attraction. Perhaps if she were to want it as well, I would feel completely fulfilled."

"So I plan to seduce her, to make her want me, make her burn with desire. And once I've satisfied her and she me..." He looked his friend in the eye. "I will kill her."

"You cannot be serious. Do you really prize your pride and libido over your own life? If that be the case, please, continue with this inane idea of yours. But leave me out of it. I refuse to be involved."

"There is no need to be so agitated," he retorted. "I have everything under control "

"You certainly do not!" he snapped. "Think, Lucius, of all the things that can go wrong with this little game of yours. Think of the unknown or unpredictable variables at play here and their possible consequences."

"Just how do you propose to achieve this little seduction? Will she stay here, a prisoner in your manor? Not to point out the obvious, but this place is literally crawling with people who loathe her. Your son, Draco, for one. If she sees me, and no doubt it will happen, then... well, I do not need to spell out what will happen to your little scheme then. Also, you frequently entertain guests that may not completely approve of her, like your fellow Death Eaters. And then there is you, Lucius. You have just abducted and raped her. Do you think she will enjoy being in your presence long enough for you to seduce her?"

"How would I know? I have never been raped."

"Stop being so facetious, Lucius! This is no trifling matter!"

"Honestly, do you think I am unaware of these problems? Of course, I realise I face obstacles!" he shouted, slamming his fist on the desk.

After a moment, Severus quietly asked, "Why her, Lucius?"

"I have already told you, I do not know. I just wanted her..."

"And you always get what you want?"

"Most of the time I do," he replied, a touch of warning in his cold voice.

"And gods forbid this is not one of those occasions!"

"Come now, enough of this. Would you care for a drink or not?"

"Very well," he answered stiffly, sitting down once more. "If I must."

"Splendid," Lucius said while summoning another glass. After pouring a large amount into both glasses, he handed one to his friend.

They sat in silence, each sipping the amber liquid, both thinking about what the future would hold.

At the Burrow, there was yet another argument taking place.

"Is there really no way to find them, Arthur?"

"I told you, Molly. They keep changing locations so fast, we can't track them down in time. We'll find them when they want to be found."

"Still on about that, are you?" a young voice said as he entered the room with his twin brother. "Look, Mum. If they want to go off by themselves, let them. They're all of age anyway. They have to make their own decisions."

"George! Have you seen what's in the paper?! We don't even know where Harry is, and he will be one of the main targets!" his mother shrieked at him.

"If Harry has decided to do it, it's up to him. You wouldn't want to keep him locked up hiding like Sirius, would you?"

"No, Fred, but all the same. He can't go around as if nothing's wrong."

"But that's the point. If neither the Ministry nor the Order can find them, then it narrows down the chances that the other side will as well."

"Charlie, dear, You-Know-Who could find them in an instant."

"Mum, arguing about it won't make them come back." Ginny said sadly.

The room fell into an uncomfortable silence. Ginny was absentmindedly stroking Crookshanks, who had been left to her by Hermione. Fred and George had just sat down in the kitchen with Charlie, who was fidgeting with a hole in his shirt. Molly Weasley was making some tea while her husband was just staring at the grandfather clock, which showed that all of his family members were in mortal peril.

"Is anyone here?" a calm voice sounded from outside the door.

"Remus! Tonks! What brings you here?" Molly asked as a middle-aged man with greying hair came through the door, accompanied by a young witch.

"Just wondering if you'd had any news," Tonks asked, eyes darting to the various sad faces around her.

"I'm afraid not," Arthur replied, whose eyes had not left the clock.

"Care for a cup of tea?"

"We can't stay long..." Remus started.

"That would be lovely," Tonks cut in. "It won't hurt to stay just a bit."

"Come on, sit down." Mrs. Weasley said, making some room at the table.

"Molly!"

"What's the matter, Arthur?"

"They're here!" He cried, springing off his chair before opening the door to reveal two figures in the darkness. A small voice spoke out.

"Dad."

With that, there was pandemonium. Arthur Weasley scooped up his son in a strong embrace; Molly was crying nearby; the twins were jumping about, trying to get closer to their younger brother, and Charlie was not too far behind. Remus and Tonks stood staring at the Weasleys in silence, not wanting to intrude on the family reunion. Ginny had already bounded outside to find the other boy out there. "Harry!" she said breathlessly.

"But where is Hermione?" Remus asked, looking from one face to the other. Everyone calmed down instantly; the two boys looked around uncomfortably.

"Inside now!" Arthur whispered hoarsely.

When they saw the two boys in the light, they noticed they were extremely pale and their eyes looked unfocused.

"What has happened?" Molly asked.

"She's gone," was all Ron could reply.

"Let's go through it one last time," Remus said twenty minutes later. "You two left her and went downstairs; after ten minutes, she still hadn't arrived. You went back up to her room, and after you knocked and received no reply, you opened the door to find it empty. Her things were still there, and there were no signs of fighting. The window was closed, and no one had passed you on the stairs."

Harry nodded; Ron kept his eyes on the floor.

"So where have you been 'til now?" Tonks asked "Why didn't you come here straightaway?"

"We've been searching for her. We even went to look for her at her house. You know, it's her birthday; maybe she wanted to see her parents. But she wasn't there. We went looking everywhere we had been recently. And when we got back, her things had disappeared from her room. We asked the housekeeper, but she said she hadn't touched them and no one had come to collect them. It's as if she'd never been there."

Ginny started crying, hiding her face in her hands.

"So, then we decided to come back here, in case you had heard from her."

Everyone just stayed silent. What could they say? What could they do? If she had been abducted by anyone from the other side, she was as good as dead.

"B-but we will find her, right?" Ron said, breaking the silence, eyes searching everyone's faces for some hope. "We must."

"Ron, we'll have to wait. We can only hope that she's alright; we can only hope..." Arthur answered softly.

Ginny let out a wail that carried out into the night.

Author's Note and thanks: Thanking the very lovely Sempra, who has betaed this chapter beautifully. I thank also all of you have read my story so far. If you have any comments, questions or have found something that is not quite right, please leave a review: constructive criticism is very welcome.

Dark Void.

Chapter 6 of 6

Hermione at last awakes, terrified and hurt. What will happen when she meets another member of the Malfoy family?

Dark Void.

"Weariness, a bitter taste of déjà-vu,

Haunted my sad mind...

Deprived of any joy...

Lost in a parallel world,

I dreamt of diving deep

Into a dark abyss...

What provides life with relief

Is the shadow of death..."

Assombrissement De L'âme, Dark Sanctuary

Hermione had felt him get up, but was too exhausted to do anything, too hurt and torn to care. She could feel warm blood dripping down her thighs and knew that if nothing was done, she would die from sheer loss of blood. But why should that matter? After what had just happened, she welcomed Death with open arms, longing for the eternal nothingness that was soon to come. She started to lose consciousness, barely aware that warm tears were still cascading down her cheeks. Finally, she let herself slip

into a sweet oblivion that wrapped itself around her, rocking her swiftly to sleep...

She drifted through the darkness, nothing more than an invisible trail of thought lost in the Void. She no longer felt pain, nor regret; nothing from before was of any importance, almost as if it had all been a dream. Only the growing cold, washing through what was left of her body, reminded her of her approaching end.

Quite suddenly something was drawing her back. Though she would have sworn she was by then numb, the pain came again, seemingly worse than before. She desperately tried to get away, but the burning sensation did not cease; on the contrary, it continued, becoming even more acute. Whimpering, she wished it all to end; she wanted to return to where she was before, where nothing existed. No more pain, was that too much to hope for? Was she to suffer to her last breath? And then, as quickly as it came, it stopped, and she felt herself sinking once again into darkness...

Time passed, and she found herself resurfacing from her slumber... Was she supposed to wake? Shouldn't she be dead? Maybe she was and this was just what was on the other side. Opening one eye, she saw what appeared to be a candle looming next to her, but she couldn't be certain as it kept swimming in and out of focus. She opened her other eye as well and saw it was indeed a candle, which seemed to be resting on a dark wooden bedside table. Was there furniture in the afterlife? She raised her head and noticed that she was still in the room where *it* had happened. Where Lucius Malfoy had violated her. She had expected him to kill her, but he had apparently decided to leave her to die by herself, not that she felt as though she was dying. Strangely enough, she wasn't even in pain. After taking a calming breath, she pushed herself up onto her elbows, unsure whether she would have the strength to do even that. Looking down at her naked body, she was surprised to find that she was not bleeding, nor was she injured. Why, she wasn't even dirty and neither were the sheets! She touched her neck with trembling fingers, but could find no evidence of the bite wound. Had someone healed her?

She quickly looked around the room, half expecting someone to be lurking in the shadows, but she was alone. She scanned the room for her wand, but it was unsurprisingly absent. Although there was a roaring fire in the grate, she felt none of its warmth. Her whole body started to tremble uncontrollably, and instinctively, she drew the satin sheets around her before curling into a foetal position, seeking protection.

She felt broken, as though her soul had been irreparably broken, smashed into tiny fragments and *he* had stolen one of the pieces. She would never be whole again. Even if she were to survive, nothing would ever be as it was before. Tears threatened to cloud up her already swollen eyes, but she desperately tried to hold them back. Why was she still alive? Why couldn't she have been left to die? It would have been far better than to live after what had happened...

Only after she repeated these questions in her head, time and time again, did she actually realise their meaning. Emerging from her state of distress, mind momentarily clear, did she actually think of her predicament. If she had not only been left alive but also been cured, it meant she had some further purpose. Could they want to use her to get to Harry? To blackmail the Order? But he needn't have had her healed for such a reason; generally those who were abducted weren't always set free. No, if she had to be in "good health", there had to be some ulterior motive. Perhaps she was to become a slave, his or someone else's...

"Ron, Harry, where are you now that I need you?" she whispered and let the tears break through.

"Well, Severus? Can you give me no indication of when she will wake? How powerful was the potion you gave her?" A bored drawl sounded through the study.

"She should have awoken by now. But I do not think it would be prudent to attempt anything against her at present. She will be in quite a state as it is without having to see the man who is the cause of her plight."

"Do you really think me so foolish?"

His friend snorted in reply, "Actually, Lucius, if there is one thing I have learned from today, it is to never expect anything of you. For you are more than likely to do something unpredictable and nonsensical."

"What is the reason for such rudeness, Severus? Are you still *upset* because I involved you in this little affair?"

"'Upset' does not fully cover how I feel at the moment," he answered darkly.

"Delightful," Lucius hissed, but instead of answering the dark wizard's comment, he snapped his fingers, and a house-elf appeared with a loud *crack*.

"Y-yes, master?"

"Pisky, there is a young lady in the guest room in the west wing, facing the gardens. You are to bring her a tray with a warm broth, some bread and some water. Have I make myself clear?"

It paused for one second, trying to picture the room in question. But its belated reply earned it a quick blow on the head from its master's cane. Clutching its head in pain, it squeaked up, "Yes, m-master," before bowing low and disappearing with a snap of its long fingers.

"Lucius, it is high time you learned how to treat your things." The Potions master sighed.

"I beg to differ: one must rule with an iron fist to avoid disloyalty. And there is no better way to insure their obedience than with the threat of pain," he retorted.

"As true as that may be, rendering your servant nervous wrecks is no assurance of the quality of their services."

"I shall treat my servants as I see fit!"

"Temper, temper," he sung softly.

Before he could seriously consider cursing his friend, he was interrupted by a loud *crack* as the house-elf reappeared, cowering, at his feet.

"Yes?" he said, voice dripping with malice.

"I-I is gone to the Miss's room. An-and I is knocking, but the Miss is not opening the d-door. So I is A-Ap-parating in, and she i-is crying on the bed, s-sir. I is sp-speaking to her, b-but she is not hearing Pisky. R-rolled into a b-ball she is, sir. I is leaving the tray n-near the b-bed." the elf squeaked, avoiding its master's eyes, and stared at his feet instead.

"Very well. You may go."

The frightened elf didn't need to be told twice; it removed itself as fast as possible from the blond wizard's sight.

"What are you planning to do now, Lucius? You may have caused more damage than you had previously imagined."

"Oh, blast it all, Severus. Must you be so insufferable?" he hissed.

"If you had thought more thoroughly, beforehand, you would not find yourself in such a situation."

"Are you only capable of lecturing me when the deed is already done? If that be the case, you have leave to remain silent," he snapped.

"Of course, forgive me. I could point out that I was not given the opportunity to lecture you before the deed, but I won't; you need to concentrate on thinking your way out of

this *dreadful* predicament."

"Severus, you are dangerously close to making me lose my patience, and I will not be responsible for my actions should you continue along these lines."

"Ah, but you see, that is exactly the point! You are **never** responsible for your actions. Circe, use the apparently useful brain that was bestowed upon you! If you did not possess such a blinkered view of the world, you would be able to understand the consequences of your actions beforehand! Instead, you rush headfirst into situations that then prove to be far more serious than you had imagined."

"Forgive me, Severus, but that still sounds like a lecture to me."

"For someone who came up with such an ingenious plan to actually abduct the girl, you seem highly dim-witted."

"One more word, Severus. Just one more..." he hissed, pointing his wand in the other man's face.

"My, my... Someone thinks highly of himself now, doesn't he?" he sneered, seemingly completely indifferent to the wand only inches from his head. "The only thing you can do now, Lucius, is wait. You must ascertain how deep her wounds run... both physical and psychological. It is only when you see how she fares after such an experience that you can decide how you can relate with her."

"If you want her alive, you must make sure she eats something soon. Having lost the amount of blood she has, it would be best ere she wastes away."

"Wait? ... just to wait?" Lucius repeated as he poured another glass of Firewhiskey for himself. "Why not? I am in no hurry..."

Tear after tear streamed down her face, leaking from her soul. He had taken from her something that could never be replaced. No words she knew could express it; no words to accurately describe the enormous void in her soul, eating away at her heart.

Each tear washed away a part of her, her emotions, her cares, leaving her void of all but one thought, she must escape before anything else could happen. As hopeless as her circumstances felt, she could not bear simply waiting for her fate to be sealed. She had to at least try to escape.

Rising unsteadily to her feet, she walked slowly to the bed, her head spinning through the effort. She sat down on the bed to regain her bearings when a thought struck her. Thoughtfully, she caressed the satin sheets before ripping them from the bed. Taking hold of them, she tore into the centre, creating a large hole in the middle. She threw the ruined sheet over her head, letting it cover her entirely. As the longer side would trail behind her uncomfortably, she tore through the sheets yet again, creating long strips of cloth that which she tied around her middle to secure the rest of her makeshift robe.

Feeling slightly more protected, she looked out of the tall window. It was almost dark, the last rays of the sun long since gone, leaving only purple colours in the clouds. The almost full-moon was already shining in the sky, a slight mist creeping over what she presumed was the garden. How long had she been gone? She sat down on the floor, resting her head on her knees, watching the candles burn and the flames dance in the grate.

She waited, her mind going blank while she tried to summon up some courage for the task that lay ahead. It was then she noticed that there was a tray of what appeared to be broth and bread near the bed. Was this her last meal? She could not even entertain the idea of eating something *he* had offered her: the mere thought made her nauseous.

She walked over to the door, slowly touching the wooden frame, and was surprised to find the door was unlocked. Opening it slightly, she stuck her head out and observed a long corridor stretching into the distance on either side of her: portraits lined the walls while candles cast an eerie light onto the floor, revealing white marble underneath a green velvet carpet.

She strained her ears, trying to hear the smallest of sounds, but not a thing stirred. Taking her chance, she ran out of the room and to the right, down the corridor. Even though she wasn't paying particular attention to her surroundings, she could see it was littered with priceless artefacts. The corridor eventually came to a junction, and hesitating but a moment, she turned left, coming face to face with a very startled Draco Malfoy.

Snape was half-inclined to leave his friend alone, to ponder over his 'misfortunes' in peace, but decided instead to sit and be of some company to the wizard. There was a grandfather clock in the corner, its sharp ticking having a calming, almost hypnotic effect on him. Letting out a tired sigh, he summoned a book from the bookshelf behind him and started to read.

His train of thought, however, was interrupted by Lucius' summoning of Pisky.

"Yes, m-master?"

"Will you go back and tell the Miss, if she does not decide to eat now, she will have to wait quite some time before she will be allowed to again?"

Bowing, the house-elf disappeared, only to reappear less than a minute later with a look of pure terror on its face.

"Well?"

"M-master. T-the Miss is not in the r-room," it squeaked.

Any form of sadistic pleasure Lucius Malfoy could have derived from punishing his servant was forgotten when a piercing scream erupted from upstairs.

"Granger?" he said incredulously.

He was just as she remembered him looking the last time she had seen him four months earlier: tall with pale skin, silvery blond hair and the same grey eyes as his father. The last time she had seen him was during the battle at Hogwarts, the night he had let the Death Eaters into the castle, sealing Dumbledore's fate.

She was roused from her thoughts when, with one rapid movement, he had slammed her into the wall.

"What are you doing here?" the cold voice sounded in her head, and she found herself staring into his eyes while fear, mixed with rage, kept her silent.

"I asked you a question, Mudblood!" He looked her up and down. "What is this? Why are you wearing nothing but these sheets?"

Still she did not reply.

A malicious leer lit up his face. "You've become his whore, haven't you?"

Slap. He stepped back, the force of the blow making him stumble.

"That is the second time you have raised your filthy hand to me! No Potter and Weasley to save you now." Taking out his wand, he hissed, *Crucio.*

Burning fire coursed through her bones and invisible knives pierced her flesh while she felt every nerve in her body being crushed. Falling to the floor, she writhed, a piercing scream escaping her lips.

"It seems, Severus, you were careless enough to leave the door unlocked," the blond wizard said as they sprung to their feet, disappearing on the spot. They Apparated to in front of the room where they had left her, but it did not take them long to locate the pair, Hermione's screams echoing down the corridor, indicating the way. The sight that met their eyes made them stop dead in their tracks.

"That is quite enough, Draco," Lucius shouted over the screams.

"Just a bit more, Father..."

"I said that is enough!" he roared, grabbing his son by the throat and pinning him to the wall.

Daggers flew from the stormy eyes that were piercing the frightened ones of the young man.

"B-but she hit me," he whimpered, gasping for breath.

"I have told you many times before, Draco, to never touch my things!" he hissed.

Loosening his grip around his son's throat, he let the boy fall to the ground. Stooping down, he picked up the trembling body. She shivered as soon as he touched her skin.

"I will deal with you later," he said, directing the statement to the blond boy. "Severus, kindly take him to my study. I will be with you shortly."

Carrying the shivering witch in his arms, he left a confused Draco and a thoughtful Severus behind him.

Walking through the still open door and slamming it behind him, he deposited her on the bed. It was then he actually noticed what she was wearing: sheets covering her body in a similar way to the pillowcases worn by his house-elves. Taking out his wand, a large glass of brandy appeared in his hand. Turning back to the girl, he noticed she had yet to stop trembling and was staring at him with empty eyes, void of anything.

"Drink it," he said, presenting her with the glass.

She didn't acknowledge the fact that she had heard him at all.

"Drink it," he repeated.

Still her face betrayed nothing, no feelings. She was just staring at him with those ghostly blank eyes, making him feel slightly unnerved.

Growing impatient, he thrust the glass in front of her. "I shall tell you once more time to drink this before I force you."

A flicker of fear appeared in her eyes, so fast he thought he had imagined it, before they turned empty and full of shadows once again. Then slowly, ever so slowly, she brought herself to look into his eyes, her gaze hardening as soon as it met his, before she suddenly slapped his hand away, sending the glass and its contents to the floor.

"How dare you?" she whispered before she spat at his feet, dirtying his polished black boots.

Raising an eyebrow, he scourgified his boots, and then cleared the mess from the floor with a few flicks of his wand. Placing it back in his cane, he sat down on the bed beside the trembling girl.

Putting his index finger gently onto her lips, he leaned towards her, eyes locking on hers as he whispered softly, "When I offer you kindness, you would be wise to accept it. I may not be so benevolent in the future. During your stay here, I want none of this insolent behaviour. I demand the uttermost respect and humility from you, or I will be forced to take action. Do you understand?"

Upon hearing him voice such a threat, terror dawned on her face; after lowering her eyes, she nodded.

"Good," he continued, removing his finger from her soft lips. "You shall wait for me in this room and do nothing in my absence. When I return, we shall continue this discussion and decide your punishment."

"P-punishment?" she shivered.

"Of course, you have hardly behaved admirably, have you? Leaving this room without permission, ruining expensive bed sheets, slapping my son and being disrespectful to me... quite a list, is it not?"

Loathing, disgust, terror... they were all there, burning at him, mirroring her soul.

Walking away, he turned back as he reached the door and said, "I highly recommend you respect my wishes. If you do, nothing ill should befall you. I think you will find me quite amiable when I get what I want. Wait for me here, I shan't be long." With these words, he left her.

As he arrived in front of the study doors, he could hear the sound of muffled voices speaking rapidly and footsteps pacing on the parquet coming from within. "Draco, always one to overreact," he sighed upon entering the room. His son immediately stood still, taking one last glance at Severus, who was leaning lazily near the fireplace.

"Sit," he ordered as he, himself, took a seat behind his desk. Draco was quick to follow suit.

"Now, Draco. Miss Granger will be staying here for some time..."

"Why?"

"She is here, Draco, because I brought her here. That should suffice as an explanation."

"But, Father, she's a Mudblood! How can you? I mean, after everything you've taught me... Doesn't that count any longer?" he almost shouted. "Why is it different with her?! How are you not polluting yourself by touching her?! How can you go back on your principles because of a passing fancy?!"

"Draco," he whispered softly. "Never question my wishes. Never, ever question me, or you shall be quite sorry. The time for me being lenient with you has long passed; disrespect me once more and you will have to face the consequences."

"But, Father..." he pleaded.

Warning dripping from every word, he repeated, "Draco, do not question my wishes."

The pale boy's face drained of what little colour it had.

"Yes, Father. Sorry, Father."

"You may go. Dinner will be served at eight o'clock sharp."

Getting up, he nodded to the two men and hurried out of the room, a somewhat troubled look on his face.

"Poor boy, he must really be quite puzzled," the dark haired wizard said, a note of amusement in his voice. "All the certainties of a lifetime crumbled in a matter of seconds. I could almost feel sorry for him.

"Now if you will excuse me, I have an important draught brewing in the dungeons that requires my supervision. I will see you at dinner. That is if you haven't found a better way to spend your time." And with that, he left, black robes billowing behind him.

Letting out a sigh, he took out his silver pocket watch. *Half past six. I suppose, I might as well leave her be a while longer. That leaves me ample time to think how I should act. Oh, the ways I could punish her.* A cold smile lit his lips.

Hermione waited in silence staring at the closed door, listening to the sound of his footsteps fade away. The way his eyes had flashed when she had flung away the glass, she had expected him to slap her; though his words had hardly been better. From what he had told her, she was to be a perfectly obedient slave until he tired of her, respecting every wish, following every order. To avoid pain and suffering, she would have to become what he wanted her to be. At present, she thought she would rather die than do anything he asked her to, but then she thought of the pain she had felt when the younger Malfoy had cast the Cruciatus curse on her. It had only lasted a few minutes at the most, yet it had been enough to make her want to do anything to make it stop. Her thoughts turned to Neville's parents and how they withstood it: rather than betray the Order, they had preferred to continue being tortured until their minds were beyond repair. She knew that she would not be able to do the same, were the need to arise, and felt quite ashamed at her weakness. Her world suddenly started to spin, and be it from the exhaustion or fear, she fainted, falling once again into darkness.

"Wake up, Miss Granger." A soft voice she knew all too well was calling her from her slumber.

She opened her eyes and found Lucius Malfoy sitting next to her on the mattress. She sprung up immediately.

"Would you care to join me near the fire?" he asked, though she knew it was more of an order than a request. With a wave of his wand, two armchairs appeared; he took his place nearest to the fire and waited for her to follow. She could hardly move, feeling as faint as she was, so she shook her head, hoping this would not be classified as an act of insubordination.

"You will not?" he asked coldly.

"I can't..." she replied shakily. "I can't get up..."

Regarding her pale face slowly, he sighed. "Very well then. After some consideration, I have decided what will become of you. You are to remain my *guest* until I think your presence is no longer necessary. You will be allowed to roam the Manor freely, but you may not contact, in any way, anyone from the outside. You will be respectful to me, to my guests and to anyone else who lives in my domain. This is to be your room, and you will be allowed some forms of comfort, such as fresh clothes and food. Your collaboration will be rewarded while if you question me in any fashion, you will be punished. Have I made myself clear?"

She just stared, not knowing what else to say.

"I expect you to answer me when I am talking to you," he snapped.

"Perfectly..." she whispered.

"Good. Now, concerning your punishment..." His voice soft yet deadly. His grey eyes alight yet again with a dark light that clouded them over.

Author's Note and thanks: I really must thank Sempra for all the work she did on this chapter. She is really a wonderful beta. I thank those of you who have read this and those who have reviewed. Hopefully it won't take so long to update next time.

Ophelia