

Heaven/Hell

by curikitten

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Chapter 1 of 1

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She sees how the other women look at her. There is so much pity in their helpless gazes.

It makes her sick.

She chose this. They belong to their men as clearly as she does to him, and this was her choice. It was this or death; her decision is life.

Months and months ago...over a year now...just after the Dark Lord ~~always the Dark Lord~~, *always the Dark Lord, don't say the other* killed Harry (*out loud, "The Boy Who Died," but this is one thought he cannot take away*), Lucius Malfoy offered Hermione Granger a bargain. The trade? Her life for her body. Malfoy offered books, a bed, and his protection for a willing trophy.

And a trophy she is. After he took her the first time, in her Gryffindor tower dormitory of gold and crimson dreams, her master led Hermione through the battle debris and onto the body-strewn grounds. Barefoot and naked, her skin told the relevant details of the past few hours: the bruises and faint magical mists associated with heavy dueling, the blood and come that now marked her as Malfoy's. The latter message was clearly understood by her master's peers.

She was to have been the elder Crabbe's prize, a boon for killing Ronald Weasley, had not Lucius spoken first. The other man was obviously disgruntled by Malfoy's claim, though his vocal complaints were silenced by a word from the shadows, where the Dark Lord stood and watched them.

Already Harry's body was skewered and raised on a pike.

"I am told the Dark Lord plans to display the corpse in Diagon Alley," Lucius murmured in her ear. His voice was amused, and Hermione could not look at his face.

And when they left the battlefield at Hogwarts and arrived at Malfoy Manor, Draco met them both with disgust upon his pale ferret's face.

"He wanted you for himself." Lucius smirked in his son's direction as he escorted Hermione, still nude and filthy, from the private receiving room. "But I do not share what is mine, Miss Granger," Malfoy added before they were beyond Draco's hearing.

His. Everything she has is His. Her elegant rooms, her precious books, her beautiful robes: His. Even the things that are meant to be hers, that have been hers since birth and even before...they belong to Lucius Malfoy. Her magic, her name, her mind, her *body*: His.

She is happiest when she forgets this fact...or when she accepts it so fully that she can embrace the freedom from responsibility.

It was more difficult in the early days. Hermione did not connect pain and pleasure before Lucius; indeed, to her they were as opposite as Summer and Winter, as Light and Dark. But she has learned...through her books (*his books*) and Lucius...that they are simply sensations, neurological impulses traveling the same fibrous paths and providing her brain with information. An overload of either can bring the blissful white moment of nothing for which she hungers.

Pain and pleasure are complementary; in combination, like red next to green, they create startling effects...uncomfortable to contemplate but vibrant and wholly alive.

Hermione has studied pain. Her practical experience began before theory was introduced, but she has finally reached an equilibrium in her research methods.

When she first arrived at the Manor, both she and Lucius were very angry...and grieving, too. Lucius' world had changed just as abruptly as hers, after all, and he had also lost friends in the conflict. He even lost his wife. (Draco tells her that Narcissa was as self-absorbed as her mythical namesake. He confides that his parents could not bear to occupy common space for more than an hour at a time. While Narcissa was alive. Now she is dead.)

The part of Hermione that is still Muggle...that will always be Muggle, because she was Muggle-born and Muggle-raised and that taint will never fade...is always faintly bewildered that there are no scars from the beginning. Lucius likes to cut her pale skin (*perfect*, he calls it) and watch the oxygenated blood well up in lovely ruby beads. He is fascinated by her blood.

When she was unused to him, to the strange joy of pain/pleasure, it was traumatic to be fucked with whatever he called to hand: the hilt of a knife, for instance, or the snake-head of his cane. And he made her enjoy his attentions, even as they both knew she would be sick in the toilet later when Middy came to look after Missy Herry.

Middy's name for Hermione amuses Lucius and Draco, and Hermione bears it with good grace. After several attempts at persuading Middy to use her first name, Hermione and the House-Elf settled on the compromise.

Hermione hates the women who give her their sad-eyed compassion and thorn-filled kindness. They do not know her, and they do not know Lucius.

She first began to truly learn her master (Sometimes, when he is in a certain mood, Lucius likes her to call him *Master* in bed. He never, ever calls her *Mistress*.) after she read a text on neurology. She was starved for conversation, and Middy, though helpful and kind, was hardly prepared to provide intellectual discourse. Lucius visited her rooms...fucked her with his cock in her cunt and her hands braced against the bedroom wall while he scratched large, bloody rows down her back...and what came from her mouth was not a moan or a sigh or a scream, but the things she had learned in her books.

Lucius was not pleased.

His displeasure resulted in a revocation of Middy's services and a temporary suspension on Hermione's library acquisitions. He visited Hermione's rooms daily over the two weeks while she suffered her punishment. His prize tarnished before his eyes. At least, this is what she imagines he saw. She felt dead during that time. Dead and insane.

But at the end of the two weeks, Middy was back, and a large box of books on topics related to neuroscience appeared in Hermione's personal library. There was parchment, too. And quills.

Lucius' next visit consisted of two fucks and a conversation between. He was intrigued at what she had learned, he said, and he did not have the time to study it himself. He did not say where he acquired Muggle texts, and Hermione did not ask.

The first time he led her from her room, Hermione was clad in a simple shift and brought into the Manor's ballroom. Her hair fell loose about her shoulders, and her thighs were bloody. The large hall held only a few people, but of those few, the Dark Lord was the one Lucius intended her to see.

Or, rather, to see *her*. At Lucius' prodding, Hermione fell to her knees before the extravagant sofa upon which the Dark Lord sat. When the Dark Lord reached out a hand (*and his skin was so very cold*) and lifted her chin so that he could see her eyes, she looked into his face with a calm that she later learned made Lucius proud.

She did not feel it when the Dark Lord entered her thoughts, but he spoke, and it was as if his voice were in both her mind and the physical world outside at once.

"You have made a good whore of this woman-child, Lucius. Someday she may even love you." There was a strange hissing laugh here, and the rest of the men in the room engaged in hearty chuckles that drifted into a pregnant silence. The Dark Lord was thinking.

"It is a tragedy that her intellect comes in such a...*difficult* package; this girl could have been a worthy bride for you, Lucius, and one of my most powerful servants besides. There is nothing to be done about that now, of course, and yet...Do not destroy her, Malfoy. She may still have her uses."

After her dismissal from the Dark Lord's presence, Hermione struggled to contain her excitement. Someone who would really *value* her knowledge...her brilliance...could finally see her potential. It would keep her alive and safe and content in Malfoy's care. And she had already begun to relate pain with passion and pleasure, so when Lucius took her...in the bed, with his mouth before his cock...it was easily one of the best days of her existence.

Conversations with Lucius have become longer since that audience with the Dark Lord. Sometimes he borrows her notes for the Dark Lord's perusal. They are always returned, scrupulously neat, with a polite letter in which the Dark Lord adds his insight and queries into her research.

The Dark Lord's suggestions frequently lead to new breakthroughs in Hermione's studies...in mundane topics from neuroscience to genetics to biology and magical theory in every possible form...and he does not hesitate to praise the connections she finds between subjects. She never sees him in person.

When Lucius allowed her access to the Manor's library several weeks ago, Hermione felt like crying. She did not, because to do so in front of Lucius would be horribly inappropriate, but she felt it all the same. Her own library was by now quite large and growing almost daily, but to be in *this* library was like discovering her magic all over again.

He has begun to bring her out at dinners, carefully outfitted in expensive robes. Middy fixes her hair. Before they leave Hermione's chambers, Lucius fucks her, hard. He escorts her downstairs with his seed and her blood slipping down her legs. It makes them both feel more secure.

He has also given her the freedom of the Manor, though she is not allowed outside without a chaperone. Lucius says it is not safe. Draco says that the rebels would target her.

Although her wandless magic is competent, casting does not feel the same without a length of wood as a conduit. Two weeks ago, Lucius brought a wandmaker to the

Manor. He introduced Hermione and the man...quite young, she thought, and somewhat handsome...and watched as the artificer went through the ritual of matching material to magic in the drawing room. A custom-made wand found its way into Hermione's possession last week, and she has been brushing up on practical spellwork since.

Occasionally, when she wanders the large house on her own, she comes across another woman or a group of women. She has seen them at dinners, too, and knows that they are the wives and daughters of Lucius' colleagues. They look at her with their large, knowing eyes and their superior attitudes. Hermione wants to both cringe and scream.

There is pity in the women's gazes, and there is jealousy.

Long ago, in that tower with Lucius where everything began, Hermione had wondered to herself about her life's worth...to her. Now she realizes that her life (being all she has, being that without her life, nothing could have worth at all) is worth *everything*. She is obeying the mandate of living things and adapting. She is continuing to live...in the way of all that endure.

It is a heady, noble thought.

End.