

Pang of Contrition

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Honorable Mention for the Potter Place Anything Goes Challenge. Lucius begins his first day in servitude to a new master.

Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Lucius Malfoy arrived by train at Hogsmeade station early one morning. He despised using public transportation, but one of the requirements of his *conditional release*, did not allow him to use magic. The walk to Hogwarts was not much better. Beads of sweat had formed on his brow before he reached the gates. The gates were locked when he arrived, and he was forced to wait for someone to allow him to enter.

With all the humiliating restrictions the Ministry had placed on him, he was not sure if he would have rather served out the remainder of his sentence in Azkaban. He had already spent three years in the wizard prison for his role as a Death Eater. He had another five years of the conditional release to complete, five long years without using or feeling any magic.

His wand had been confiscated. His use of his own house elves had been restricted. Worse of all, he had to wear a monitoring bracelet at all times to ensure that he was not using magic.

The last and most mortifying condition was the matter of his servitude to an unnamed witch or wizard. He was to meet his new 'master' today at the school. Dark and terrible thoughts of bowing down to Hagrid, or worse Filch, had plagued him since he'd heard the conditions of his release. The types of menial and degrading tasks he could imagine performing for either of those two were enough to send shivers down his spine.

It had taken him two days to agree. He'd actually, for a few brief moments, considered remaining in Azkaban. Finally, his son had come to see him and demand he either get busy living or get busy dying.

Draco was right. He had served one master for more than twenty years. He could easily serve another for five and still get on with his life.

Today would be the first day of his enslavement, only one thousand, eight hundred and twenty five days to go. It was a disquieting thought. He was irritable. The day was abnormally warm, and he had spent the night tossing and turning, getting very little sleep as he contemplated the next five years of his life.

Finally, the Headmistress appeared striding down the lawn to escort him to the castle. Minerva McGonagall was a stern witch, but she was fair and honest. Something he was not used to dealing with. She was also one of the few who had arranged for his release; regardless of the conditions, he was grateful.

The identity of those who fought for his release had surprised him. When the Ministry had come up with this idea, he had figured that only those with families that had not directly supported the Dark Lord would manage to get a hearing. Many of those had either been released to serve those who they had wronged the most or under a charge of a Healer, so that they might be of some use around St. Mungo's.

Aside from McGonagall, there was Harry Potter, who he'd tried and failed to kill several times, Arthur Weasley and Hermione Granger had been on the team to get him

released. He had never had a kind word to say about Weasley. In fact, several years before, he had almost killed the man's only daughter. He had taken every chance he'd got to sneer and ridicule the man and his family.

But possibly the biggest surprise was the amount of support he'd received from Hermione Granger. His knowledge of her came mostly from what his son had told him about her over the years. Namely, that she was an annoying know-it-all. But he would admit, from what he had seen of her in the Ministry of Magic and at the Battle of Hogwarts, she was an excellent fighter and could easily hold her own.

He had never been nice to her, mostly because she was a Mud... Muggle-born and beneath him, yet she had fought the hardest for him. She had come to every hearing. She'd spoken on his behalf, citing relevant cases. Her arguments had been well researched and organized.

Even his wife, his ex-wife, hadn't fought for him like his four defenders had. Draco told him that Granger had a habit of championing lost causes, maybe that was what he had become, a lost cause.

"Good morning, Mr. Malfoy," McGonagall said as she approached the gates.

"Good morning, Headmistress." Irritable heat or no, good manners instilled since birth demanded he be polite.

"Well, I am sure you are anxious to begin. So if you follow me, I will show you to your chambers."

"Will I be meeting with my sponsor?" He really hated the thought of calling someone at this school master.

"You will be meeting with his apprentice. She will fill you in on the details of your duties. Any questions or concerns you have, you will need to approach her with. When and if your 'sponsor' can see you, she will make the introduction."

"Minerva..."

"You will address me as Headmistress or Professor McGonagall. You are aware of the terms of this servitude, and as such you have no equals in this castle. For the next five years, you belong solely to you master and his apprentice."

"I was unaware that I had to follow orders from an apprentice." Just barely managing to suppress his sneer.

"As part of the contracts you will be required to sign, you must follow the orders of the master assigned to you, his and only his orders, except when that master has a legal and binding apprentice. In such case, you are to follow the orders issued from the apprentice as if they had come from your master.

"The formal binding may take place anytime in the next forty-eight hours. You will be bound to both your master and his apprentice, for their protection. If any of this seems unreasonable, please let me know now so I can have you escorted back to Azkaban."

"The terms are acceptable." He knew without a doubt that this had to be better than spending the next twelve years back in that prison. This was his choice. Fifteen years in the worse possible place imaginable (and that was saying something considering there were no Dementors guarding it) or five years of servitude.

At least in servitude, the meals would be frequent and warm, most likely. He would have a reasonably comfortable place to sleep, and he would be allowed bi-monthly visits with his son at his master's discretion, of course.

"Follow me then," she said as she walked through the Entrance Hall and down towards the dungeons.

He followed her growing more confused by the moment. He knew there was no teacher currently on staff that resided down here. Slughorn had taken quarters with the rest of the teachers on the second floor.

He knew Slughorn had remained at the school after the war. His son told him that he continued to teach Potions and was still the Head of Slytherin House.

Still trying to determine who he was to become enslaved to, he was a little surprised when the headmistress stopped in front of what was once Severus Snape's chambers. The former Headmaster, Potions master and Head of Slytherin House.

The man had been killed during the final battle. He had died at the hands of the Dark Lord, or rather, at the mouth of his precious snake.

After the battle, Harry Potter used every bit of his impressive weight in the Ministry to assure that Snape was cleared of all charges related to the assisted suicide of Albus Dumbledore and of any related Death Eater activity.

Lucius didn't know whether to hate the man or applaud him for his deception. Very few people would have killed one of the greatest wizards of the age to gain a few more months of information. It didn't matter now; they were both rotting in the ground.

McGonagall knock loudly on the door.

"Someone will be with you shortly. Wait here," she said before turning to leave the dungeons.

"Headmistress, I thought no one had been able to break the enchantments on these chambers."

Turning back to look at Lucius, she thought for a moment before carefully answering him.

"When Severus fled after the death of Headmaster Dumbledore, his chambers did indeed stop any and all from entering. We had some of the best curse breakers in the country try to no avail. When he returned the following year to become Headmaster, he continued to using these chambers, even though he was entitled to use the ones adjacent to the office. Since the end of the war, the chambers have allowed those with permission to enter."

She turned without another word and quickly walked away. Lucius stood there by the door, waiting for someone to answer.

Just as he was starting to become annoyed at the wait, the door was swung open. Standing in the doorway, dressed in Ministry issued Auror robes, was none other than Harry Potter. To say Lucius was surprised was an understatement. What could Harry Potter possibly want with a Death Eater servant?

"Lucius, how nice of you to join us. Please come in," Harry said.

Raising an eyebrow, Lucius simply replied, "Mr. Potter."

Harry stood aside and allowed Lucius to enter. Lucius gazed around the room, amazed that it really didn't seem any different since the last time he had been here as a guest of Snape.

The bookcases were still overflowing with various texts that the Potions master had collected through the years. The furniture was still the same burgundy leather sofa with matching wing back chairs, arranged in front of the fireplace. Snape's wizard chess board was still displayed on the small table between the two chairs. A desk sat in front of a stand of bookshelves along the far wall.

"I guess the Ministry has kept you too busy to redecorate, Mr. Potter," Lucius remarked.

"Well, seeing as these are not my chambers, it would be rude for me to redecorate at all, and I don't think the current tenants would appreciate it much."

