

Chapter 22

Walking from the laundry room to the master bedroom, Sylvia hissed and stumbled as a sharp pain shot through the bottom of her foot. Cursing under her breath, she set the basket of clothes in her arms on the couch and sat down to rub her foot. Looking at the floor, she saw a few of Amanda's dolls had been left out.

"Amanda," she called. "Come pick up your dolls."

"Okay, mummy," Amanda said.

She came running out of the kitchen, the little stuffed Krup that Harry had given her, Alfie, bounding in after her.

"Thank you, sweetheart," Sylvia smiled.

As she stood gingerly on her sore foot, there was a knock at the door. Wondering who it could be, she walked over to the door and pulled it open. The tall, dark haired man on the other side took one glance at her before shoving the door open roughly and pushing her back inside. Sylvia stumbled backwards and nearly fell as he kicked the door shut. As she got her balance, her hand dipping to her pocket for her wand, the man pushed her against the wall. His hand pressed firmly at the point where her throat met her collarbone while his other hand pointed his wand in her face.

"Mummy!" Amanda screamed, Alfie growling next to her.

"Shut it!" the man growled. "Where's Mark?"

"I don't know," Sylvia said shakily. "My husband left months ago."

"You wouldn't be lying to me now, would you?" the man growled, the tip of his wand pressing into her neck.

"I haven't seen him, I swear," Sylvia said.

"Well, until you do know where he is, *you're* going to be the one paying me back the eight thousand Galleons he owes me," he spat, his disgusting, alcohol soaked breath washing over her face.

"I - I can't. I don't have that kind of money," Sylvia told him fearfully.

"Then find it," the man hissed. "I don't care if you have to whore yourself out in Knockturn Alley. You *will* get me that money."

Glancing over at Amanda, he smirked and then looked back at Sylvia. Her heart raced at the malicious look in his dark eye.

"I thought your husband would get the message when I sent Greyback to pay him a visit," the man grinned darkly. "If you don't give me that money, what happens to her next will be a whole lot worse."

"Alfie, no!" Amanda shouted.

Sylvia looked over at Amanda, and then her eyes widened. Alfie bounded towards the man's back, rapidly growing until he was the size of a Doberman. Hearing the thumping feet, he turned around just as Alfie leapt at him. He shouted in fright when he was knocked to the ground, then screamed in pain as Alfie's jaws locked around the hand holding his wand.

"Gerooff of me," the man growled, trying to yank his hand free.

Sylvia raced over to Amanda and pushed her behind her as she trained her wand on the man. The tip shook lightly, her heart pounding in her chest.

Suddenly, the door burst open, and Harry came charging in, wand at the ready and fury burning in his bright green eyes. Sylvia sagged in relief when Connie rushed in after him. With a flick of his wand, Harry disarmed the man while Alfie backed off with a menacing growl. Seeing the situation was well in hand, Connie darted over to Sylvia.

"Are either of you hurt?" she asked.

"No, we're fine," Sylvia replied shakily.

"Who are you?" Harry growled furiously.

Sylvia looked over as the man simply sneered.

"He said he was here to collect my husband's gambling debt," Sylvia told him. "They can't find Mark, and now he wants me to pay it back. He's the one that sent Greyback after Amanda and said he'd do worse if I didn't pay."

Sylvia gasped when she felt magic flood the room. The man was lifted clear off of his feet and pinned to the wall as Harry's magic matched the fury on his face.

"That's Wilber Runcorn," Connie said, walking up to Harry and placing a calming hand on his shoulder. "He's paid muscle. I doubt he's actually the one her husband owed the debt to."

"And they'll keep coming for it until my employer gets paid," Wilber sneered arrogantly. "You take me in, and they'll just send someone else."

"Who do you work for?" Harry asked angrily.

"I'm not telling you shit!" Wilber spat. "Quit playing games, boy. We both know you're not going to do anything to me with an Auror here."

"Connie," Harry said, staring at Wilber intently. "Take Sylvia and Amanda into the kitchen, would you?"

"Sure," Connie said, smirking as the confident look on Wilber's face faltered. "Just try not to kill him. I'd rather not have to do the paperwork."

Taking Sylvia's arm gently, she led her and Amanda to the kitchen.

"Harry's not going to hurt the bad man, is he, mummy?" Amanda asked as the door closed.

"No, sweetie," Connie replied with a smile. "Harry's just going to scare him a bit."

"Thank you so much for coming," Sylvia said as she picked up the kettle with a shaking hand. "How did you know, though?"

"Harry put some extra charms on Amanda's Krup when you were at the Wolf's Den," Connie smiled. "He was afraid something like this would happen. He came running up to me in the Great Hall and told me to come with him. I didn't even know what was happening until we got here."

Nodding, Sylvia set the kettle on the stove, too shaken to trust her magic.

"I don't know how I'll ever thank that man," she sighed before shaking her head with a smile. "He's been so good to us. I don't want to even think about how I would've dealt with Amanda's condition without that potion and now the Wolf's Den. And now this?"

Sylvia jumped when she felt a hand on her shoulder. When she turned, a hand held to her chest, Connie smiled apologetically.

"Sorry," she mumbled.

"Don't be," Connie told her.

Pulling her into a hug, Sylvia blinked back tears as she leaned into her embrace.

"Don't worry," Connie whispered. "Harry and I will make sure nothing like this happens to you again."

"It just happened so fast," Sylvia said thickly. "I opened the door, and then he was inside and..."

"Shh. It alright," Connie said, rubbing her back. "You're both safe now."

As Sylvia let out a shaky breath, a tear fell from her eye. A moment later, she felt a small pair of arms wrap around her waist. Pulling back from Connie, she looked down at Amanda and smiled.

"Are you okay, mummy?" Amanda asked.

"I'm fine, sweetheart," Sylvia said.

Leaning down, she hugged her daughter. As she let go, the door to the kitchen opened.

"Get anything?" Connie asked as Harry walked in.

“Thomas Nott,” Harry said, his expression uncharacteristically hard. “That’s who paid him to come here.”

“Great,” Connie sighed.

Sylvia’s heart dropped into her stomach. Thomas Nott was a powerful and cruel man.

“Did Runcorn give you anything we could use?” Connie asked.

“No,” Harry said, shaking his head. “I had to use Legilimency to get that much out of him, then I Obliviated him.”

“What are we going to do?” Sylvia asked worriedly, her arms tightening around Amanda.

“We have a couple of choices,” Harry said, running a hand through his hair. “I could just pay him off.”

From the look of distaste on his face, Sylvia knew he didn’t like that option any more than she did.

“I can’t ask you to do that,” Sylvia said, swallowing thickly.

“You’re not asking, I’m offering,” Harry said firmly.

“I really don’t like the idea of letting that piece of shi – er, garbage – go free.” Connie frowned.

“Neither do I,” Harry sighed. “The only other option we have is to put wards over the house. Unless you have another idea.”

“You could make it clear she’s under your protection,” Connie said. “You’re well enough known, and frankly intimidating enough, that it might force Nott to back off.”

“How do I do that?” Harry asked.

“You could always take Sylvia as your mistress,” Connie smirked.

Sylvia inhaled sharply while Harry blinked, nonplussed.

Connie rolled her eyes, “I was kidding. All you have to do is make a statement when we take Runcorn in. something in the press would be best. After what you did to Greyback and now catching Runcorn, it should make anyone else think twice if they’re offered the job. With improved wards, it would cost Nott more than it’s worth to keep coming after Sylvia.”

“What do you think?” Harry asked, looking at Sylvia.

Sylvia bit her lip thoughtfully.

“You and Connie would know what to do better than I would,” she said eventually. “I just want Amanda to be safe. She doesn’t have anything to do with this.”

As she blinked back the tears forming in her eyes, Harry walked over and wrapped his arms around her. Instantly, Sylvia felt herself relax in his strong arms. She felt bad that he was doing so much for her while she could do nothing to pay him back, but she’d do anything to protect her daughter.

“What do you want to do, Harry?” Connie asked.

Harry sighed, “You call in the Aurors, and I’ll take care of the wards.”

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"You know, for someone on leave, you've made more arrests than most of my Aurors," David Bones said when he walked in and spotted Connie.

"It's his fault," Connie said, pointing at Harry. "He attracts trouble like a magnet."

Harry rolled his eyes.

"I've noticed," David smirked, shaking his hand before looking at the bound wizard on the floor. "So, what happened here?"

"Wilber over here thought it would be a good idea to try and make Sylvia pay the gambling debt her husband owes," Connie explained.

"I see," David said, his jaw tightening as he glared at Runcorn. "And how did you two get involved?"

"I was worried something like this might happen, so I put some protective and alert charm on one of Amanda's toys," Harry told him. "It held him off long enough for us to get here. I need to adjust them, though. They took a little too long to start working."

"Smart," David nodded approvingly. "Was anyone hurt?"

"No," Harry said, shaking his head.

"That's a relief," David sighed.

"He also admitted to sending Greyback after Amanda," Harry told him.

“Did he?” David growled, turning back to Runcorn. “Anything to say for yourself now?”

When Runcorn sneered, David motioned for the two Aurors with him.

“Get him out of here,” he said.

“Listen, I need a favor,” Harry said as the two Aurors disappeared.

“What kind of favor?” David asked suspiciously.

“Nothing big,” Harry said. “I just want to make sure everyone knows that Sylvia and Amanda are under my protection.”

David grinned, “You actually want me to leak this to the press?”

“Unfortunately,” Harry grumbled.

“It’s the only thing we could think of to protect them,” Connie said.

Nodding, David drew his wand and sent off a Patronus message.

“They should be here soon,” he said. “Why don’t you two go keep them at bay while I interview Ms...?”

“Burns,” Sylvia replied softly.

“Sure, boss,” Connie said.

Harry sighed as she grabbed his arm and pulled him towards the front door.

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As Harry sat down for breakfast the next morning, the owls flew in to deliver the morning post. He nearly lost his appetite when he saw a picture of himself staring back at him from Lily's copy of the Daily Prophet.

"Merlin, Harry," Alice gasped. "How do you always end up getting involved?"

"I have no idea," Harry replied.

"He can't help himself," Lily said.

Turning, she kissed him on the cheek. When Harry felt someone sit down next to he turned to find all three of the Black Sisters had joined them.

"Are Amanda and Sylvia alright?" Andromeda asked worriedly.

"They're fine," Harry smiled. "A bit shaken up, but they weren't hurt. I put some wards around the house to make sure it doesn't happen again."

"The statement you made to the Prophet was bad either," Narcissa told him. "I was worried when you told me about that, but you did a lot better than I expected. I wish I had been there to help you."

"Me too," Harry said, squeezing her hand with a smile. "Tell you what, from now on, you can deal with the press for me."

Harry meant it as a joke, but Narcissa's eyes sparkled at his words.

"Now you've done it," Bellatrix smirked. "Cissy's going to make you the biggest name in the Wizarding world."

"Please don't," Harry begged.

"But just think of it," Narcissa purred while pressing herself against his side and rubbing her breasts against his arm. "I could make you bigger than Dumbledore. People would listen to anything you say. You could practically run the government without having to do any of the tedious work."

Harry groaned.

"She's got a point," Lily told him. "I know you hate the attention, but you could do so much good for our world."

"Of course, you'd have to tie yourself to Cissy for her to really be able to help you," Bellatrix grinned.

Harry flushed as the girls around him giggled.

"I don't think I'm ready to get married just yet," Harry said.

With the brightest smile he'd ever seen from her, Narcissa cupped his cheeks and pulled him into a searing kiss. Several people at the table whooped and whistled until they broke apart breathlessly a few moments later.

"What was that for?" Harry asked.

"It's adorable when you're this clueless," Narcissa smiled, patting his cheek.

Harry opened his mouth to ask what she meant, then decided better of it and just shook his head.

"Besides, you don't have to marry me," Narcissa told him. "You could take me as your mistress."

"Oh, not you too," Harry groaned.

"Too?" Narcissa asked curiously.

"Who asked to be your mistress?" Lily asked.

"I bet it was Prewitt," Bellatrix whispered to Lily just loud enough that Harry caught it.

"Connie, er, Professor Hammer said I could protect Sylvia better if I took her as a mistress," Harry explained.

"That's not a bad idea," Narcisa said thoughtfully.

"Wait," Lily said. "How would that protect her?"

"By taking her as a mistress, Harry is essentially staking his claim on her," Narcissa explained. "Meaning that everyone would know that if they wanted to get to her, they'd have to deal with him. Considering his reputation and position on the Wizengamot, most people would be willing to risk incurring his wrath."

"Normally, mistresses are taken to tie daughters from a lower house to a more influential family," Alice added. "It used to be done all the time for political gain, but it's not nearly as common now."

"So, if Harry took Sylvia as his mistress, she'd be more protected?" Lily asked.

"Are you really considering this?" Marlene asked incredulously. "I mean, he's already dating three of you."

"To protect Sylvia and Amanda, yes," Lily nodded.

"Now, hold on--"

"And if I were to become his mistress as well, it would cement him as a powerful, protective figure in the public eye," Narcissa interrupted Harry excitedly.

"Wait a--"

"You know mother and father would never agree to that," Andromeda said. "It would make them look weak."

"I don't really care what they think," Narcissa said.

"They'll kick you out of the family," Andromeda told her.

"They would do that anyways when I refused to marry anyone other than Harry," Narcissa said. "Besides, in a couple of years, Harry's name will carry more weight than the Black could ever achieve."

Staring off into the distance, Narcissa rubbed her legs together with a shudder.

"I-"

"We should go write Sylvia," Lily said.

Before Harry could even try to get another word out, Lily, Narcissa, and Bellatrix stood up and left the hall, talking animatedly.

"What the hell just happened?" Harry asked.

"Narcissa's right," Alice smirked. "You are adorable when you're clueless."

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Over the next week, the atmosphere around the castle gradually grew tense. Thankfully, it wasn't due to anything nefarious. It was down to the upcoming exams. With only two months left in the year, OWLs and NEWTs were approaching swiftly. Even for the sixth years, the teachers were piling on the work to prepare for end-of-year exams.

Harry, however, felt none of the stress his classmates were experiencing. In the grand scheme of things, a few test results meant little to him anymore. He was far more focused on expanding the Wolf's Den to include a house and a building they could use to start churning out enchanted objects. He hoped they would have a large batch of Memory Projectors like the one he had made for Lily before summer.

It surprised him how many Werewolves were skilled at enchanting, considering many had never finished Hogwarts. When he'd asked Thor, he had told him that a lot of Werewolves, unfortunately, had to get good at stealing to survive. That meant knowing how to undo wards and protective enchantments. Since they were already familiar with that kind of magic, it didn't take long to teach them the spells they needed.

Soon enough, the day of the next full moon arrived. Harry, the girls, Connie, and Professor McGonagall all left for the Wolf's Den after dinner. Surprisingly, McGonagall had taken to going to the Wolf's Den with them nearly every time they went. She seemed to genuinely enjoy helping out, and Harry was more than happy to have her there.

While Professor McGonagall and the girls headed out to the pen to make sure everything was ready, Harry, Connie, and Andromeda headed to the basement.

"Oh, good, you're here," Agatha said. "I need to talk to you."

"About what?" Harry asked.

"The Goblins finished the second cage today," she said, gesturing to the golden mesh cage identical to the one Amanda used during the full moon. "I need an adult Werewolf to test my results from Amanda against."

"Do you have anyone in mind?" Harry asked.

"No," Agatha replied. "I just need an adult who's been infected for at least a year."

"Alright, I'll take care of it," Harry said. "Anything else?"

"Not right now," Agatha said. "Andy, can you set up everything for a blood draw?"

"Of course," Andromeda said.

"Well, I'll leave you to get ready while I go find you a new test subject," Harry grinned.

“Patient,” Agatha corrected sternly. “I’m a healer, not an Alchemist.”

Smiling, Harry waved and headed towards the stairs. Just as he reached them, Sylvia and Amanda arrived.

“Harry!” Amanda exclaimed happily.

Harry grunted as she rushed forward and wrapped her arms around his waist tightly. With a soft smile, he patted her back and ran a hand over her dirty blonde hair.

“It’s good to see you too,” he chuckled.

“Look what Alfie can do,” she said excitedly.

Taking half a step back, she set the stuffed Krup on the floor, and he looked up at her expectantly.

“Alfie, jump,” Amanda said.

The dog jumped into the air and did a perfect backflip before landing on his feet with a happy little yip.”

“That’s great,” Harry smiled.

When he had adjusted the enchants on the dog to make him react to danger a bit faster and make him a bit more dangerous, Harry also improved the Animation Charms. Now, Alfie wasn’t entirely like a normal dog, but it gave him a bit more character.

“How are you feeling today, Amanda,” Agatha asked.

As the healer gave her a once over, Harry turned to Sylvia. For some reason, she blushed and looked away but smiled none the less.

"How are you doing?" he asked.

"I'm alright," Sylvia replied. "I sleep a lot better at night knowing your wards and that dog are keeping us safe. I really can't thank you enough."

"Really, don't worry about it," Harry smiled.

"But I do," Sylvia said. "And, if you have time, I'd like to talk to you later, maybe after Amanda falls asleep?"

"Sure," he said. "I'll come back down when I have everything settled."

"Thank you," Sylvia smiled.

Wrapping her arms around his shoulder, she hugged him tightly and then surprised him by kissing his cheek. Blushing and smiling, she hugged Connie and went over to her daughter.

"Any idea what that was about?" Connie asked.

Harry shrugged, "I think she's still a little shaken up."

"Probably," Connie nodded as they climbed the stairs. "So, any idea who you're going to choose for healer Moons next Guinea Pig?"

"I have no idea," Harry sighed. "Thor, maybe?"

"You think he'd go for it?" Connie asked.

"I don't know," Harry sighed. "Maybe I should just ask for a volunteer."

Connie nodded as they reached the top of the stairs. Harry waved to Maggie quickly before they made their way outside. Werewolves were already starting to arrive and waiting for their potions. He waited another half an hour for people to arrive before deciding to speak up.

"If I could have everyone's attention for just a moment," Harry said loudly. "As I'm sure some of you know by now, we have a healer here who's been working on learning as much as she can about Lycanthropy, hoping to find a cure. She's requested a volunteer who's been infected for at least a year and is willing to spend the night downstairs. We have a special cage set up where she can draw blood and monitor you. Any takers?"

There was a prolonged, awkward silence as everyone avoided looking at him.

"Look, lad," Thor said eventually. "I appreciate what you've done for us. We all do. But I'm not big on being a lab rat."

"You pussies," Adriana scoffed. "I'll do it."

"Thank you," Harry said gratefully. "Come on, I'll show you where you'll be staying."

Shouldering her way past Thor, Adriana followed Harry as he led her back towards the office.

"This healer isn't going to be cutting me open or anything, right?" she asked.

"No, of course not," Harry said. "Like I said, just drawing some blood and a few Monitoring Charms."

“Well, you’ve been straight with me so far,” Adriana said. “But we’re going to have words if this healer pulls out a probe.”

Harry snorted and shook his head as they descended into the basement.

“Ah, Potter, are you sure this is safe?” Adriana asked, eyeing the two flimsy looking cages warily. “Those cages don’t look like they could hold me once I transform.”

“If all goes well, you won’t,” Agatha told her.

“Sorry, but I didn’t want to announce it to everyone just yet,” Harry said. “We’ve found that gold cages like this keep out the magic from the moon. They completely prevent the Werewolf transformation.”

“So far,” Agatha corrected before turning back to Adriana. “And that’s why you’re here. We need to see if it only works on newly transformed Werewolves or if it works on older ones as well.”

“And if you told everyone, they’d all be clamoring for one of these gold cages,” Adriana said.

“Exactly,” Harry nodded. “So, I’d appreciate it if you didn’t mention it for now. We’re working on building more, but they’re not exactly cheap.”

“To not have to transform tonight? I’d be willing to do a lot more than keep my mouth shut,” Adriana smirked suggestively.

“Now that that’s out of the way, how long have you been infected, dear?” Agatha asked.

“Two years,” Adriana replied.

"And the Wolfsbane works for you, correct?" she asked.

"Yes," Adriana nodded.

"Any side effects?" Agatha asked.

"No," Adriana replied, shaking her head.

"Very good," Agatha said, handing her a dose of the Wolfsbane Potion. "Now, if you could please wait in the cage?"

Walking over to the golden enclosure, Harry touched the tip of his wand to the wall.

"You can just walk right through," he told Adriana.

Nodding, she downed the potion, ran a hand through her short, dark hair, and walked inside.

"Don't suppose I could get a magazine?" she asked as she sat down on the cushions littering the floor.

"I'll grab some from the waiting room," Harry smiled.

"And what happens if I do transform?" Adriana asked.

"There's an iron cage embedded in the floor," Harry told her. "If the wards covering the room sense any transformation, the cage pops up around you."

"Hello, Adriana," Andromeda said as she walked up to the side of the cage.

"Hey, Cissy," Adriana smiled. "So, this is what you've been doing down here."

"Healer Monn's been letting me help with her research," Andromeda nodded. "If you don't mind, I'd like to take a sample of your blood before and after the full moon rises."

"Sure," Adriana shrugged.

As Andromeda entered the cage, Amanda looked over at her and smiled.

"Hi," she waved.

"Hey, kid," Adriana said, smiling back. "Looks like we get to be roommates for the night."

Smiling, Harry left to help outside.

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It was another couple of hours before he got a moment to head back to the office basement with Lily at his side.

"Evening, ladies," Harry said with a smile. "Everything going alright?"

He felt a huge relief seeing Adriana sitting up with a magazine in her hands. She looked bored, but at least she hadn't transformed. At one of the tables, Andromeda and Agatha were going over their notes while Sylvia sat next to Amanda's cage, watching her daughter sleep.

"Everything's fine," Agatha told him.

Walking over to Adriana, Harry smiled down at her.

"Holding up alright?" he asked.

"Yeah, a bit bored, and-" Cutting herself off, she looked over at amanda to make sure she was asleep before looking back at him with a smirk. "Who's dick do I have to suck to get this every full moon?"

"Must you be so crude?" Andromeda asked while Harry snorted. "You're almost worse than Bella."

"You say that like it's a bad thing," Adriana winked.

"Tell you what," Harry said. "As long as Agatha doesn't need it for anything else, you can use it. We should have more built soon."

"Too bad you can't put one big one around the den," Adriana said.

"I – Why didn't I think of that?" Harry asked with a sigh.

"That would be really expensive," Lily said.

"Yeah, but it's not like I'm really losing that much," Harry said. "I can always melt the gold down later if need to."

"You're serious?" Adriana asked. "You know I was joking, right?"

"It's not a bad idea," Harry said. "I'll have to talk to Narcissa and see if we have the funds for something like that.

If not, he could always raid the Room of Requirement for more rare and expensive artifacts, he thought.

While Adriana shook her head at him, Harry moved over to check on Sylvia.

"You doing okay?" he asked.

"I'm fine," Sylvia replied, smoothing her dress down over her legs.

"Did you want to talk now?" Harry asked.

"Um – well, yes. I suppose now is as good a time as any," she said, sounding nervous. "Could we go someplace private?"

"Sure," Harry said, looking at her curiously.

"I'll watch Amanda and keep Adriana company," Lily smiled. "Have fun."

Harry shook his head with an amused smile. It was like she expected him to sleep with her, he thought.

Sylvia followed him as he led her upstairs and out of the office. She stayed quiet as they wandered the grounds. Just as he was about to ask her what she wanted to talk about, she finally spoke.

“Are you happy with the new house?” she asked, nodding to the two story manor built at the top of the hill.

“You know, I haven’t actually been inside yet,” Harry said, wondering what was making her so nervous.

“Oh,” Sylvia said before falling silent and looking at her feet.

Harry decided to give her a little more time before he asked what was really on her mind.

“Do you want to go take a look?” Harry asked.

“If you want to,” Sylvia said quietly.

“Come on,” Harry smiled.

Making the short walk up to the house, Harry used his wand to unlock the front door. Gas lamps sprang to life as they walked into the foyer, illuminating a large welcoming living room.

“Wow, someone’s been decorating,” Harry said.

“Probably, Maggie,” Sylvia replied.

“Probably,” Harry agreed.

With a flick of his wand, he lit the logs in the large fireplace, more for comfort than for heat. Taking a seat on the couch, he patted the seat next to him. Sylvia sat gingerly on the edge as if ready to bolt at any moment.

“What’s bothering you, Sylvia?” Harry asked gently.

“It’s not so much that something is bothering me,” she said, biting her lip and staring at the fire. “It’s just – well, you’re girlfriends sent me a letter...”

“Oh,” Harry blinked.

Quite honestly, he’d completely forgotten about that.

“They said that – that if I wanted to be your mistress, they would be okay with it,” Sylvia said quietly.

“You don’t have to do that,” Harry said, resting his hand lightly on her shoulder. “I’ll protect you and Amanda no matter what.”

“I know,” Sylvia smiled, her body relaxing. “But – well, it does have some benefits.”

“Like what?” Harry asked curiously.

“Better protection for me and Amanda, for one,” Sylvia said. “Then there’s the fact that it would guarantee there’s a man in her life she can trust.”

“And what about you?” Harry asked. “What if you meet someone and decide to get remarried.”

“Mistress contracts can be canceled,” Sylvia told him. “If either of us wants to end it, we can. Besides, I really do want to repay you for everything you’ve done. Even if it’s by... well...”

“Sleeping with me?” Harry asked. “Is that what you want?”

“I know you already have three girlfriends, but-”

Sylvia cut off mid-sentence with a gasp when Harry wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into his lap. She swallowed nervously and rested her hands on his shoulders as she straddled his thighs.

“Is this what you want?” Harry asked again, his thumbs slipping under her shirt and caressing the bare skin of her hips.

Biting her lips, Sylvia looked down nervously.

“It’s... been a while,” she admitted softly. “Even before Mark let, we were having problems. He spent more nights on the couch than he did in our bed. Even when he did, he was usually too drunk to do anything.”

Raising his hand, Harry caressed her cheek softly. Sylvia closed her eyes and leaned into his touch with a soft sigh. Curling his fingers under her chin, he raised her face until she was looking at him. Watching her eyes closely, he slowly leaned in.

Harry felt her tremble nervously, but she didn’t pull back. As his lips brushed hers lightly, Sylvia closed her eyes and let out a shuddering breath. Stroking her cheek, he leaned in and kissed her softly. After a moment of hesitation, Sylvia tentatively moved her lips against his. He gave her a few seconds to relax before deepening the kiss, and this time she responded eagerly. Her tongue caressed his while her arms wrapped around his neck, and her fingers threaded through his hair. With a moan, she rolled her hips, pressing her body more firmly against his.

Pulling back slightly, Harry started kissing along her jaw. He took her earlobe between his lips, sucking lightly before grazing it with his teeth. Sylvia whimpered, her breath washing across his neck.

“Should we take this upstairs?” Harry whispered.

Burying her face in the crook of his neck, Sylvia nodded.

Smiling, Harry kissed the side of her neck and stood, lifting her with him. When he set her down on her feet, he took her hand and led her up the staircase. Sylvia gripped his hand tightly as he took her up to the second floor and then took a right to where he knew the unoccupied bedrooms were. Pulling her into one of them at random, Harry closed the door and then pinned Sylvia to it as he kissed her passionately.

She gasped in surprise before kissing him back hungrily. As Harry pressed himself firmly against her, she moaned into his mouth, her hands threading through his hair. Running his thumbs along the bare skin of Sylvia's hips, he grabbed the hem of her shirt and tugged it up. She didn't hesitate to raise her arms and allowed him to pull it up and over her head. Harry only got a brief glimpse of her decently sized breasts encased in a pure white bra before he was kissing her again.

Sylvia ran her hands down his back and then slid her hand under it, her long nails trailing lightly over his skin. A moment later, she tugged his shirt up and tossed it on the floor next to her own. Harry's lips went to her neck, kissing his way down to her chest while he pulled the right cup of her bra down under her breast. Sylvia moaned loudly as he took her pale nipple between his lips. Gripping her bum, Harry lifted her off of the ground with his face still buried in her chest, her legs wrapping around his waist as he carried her over to the bed.

After setting her down on the mattress, he ran his hands up Sylvia's back to unclasp her bra. Tossing it to the floor, he kissed, sucked, and nibbled all over her smooth, warm globes.

"Harry," Sylvia moaned.

Kissing his way down her stomach, Harry unzipped her skirt. When that, too, ended up on the floor, he started kissing her thighs. The scent of her arousal filled his every breath as he reached for her white panties. As he pulled them down her legs, Sylvia sat up and fumbled with his belt – whether out of nervousness or excitement, he couldn't tell.

In her rush to get his pants off, she ended up pulling down his boxers as well. Harry's erection sprang up, and Sylvia had to lean back to avoid it hitting her in the face. She froze in place, staring wide eyed at his rigid length, leaving Harry to finish removing his pants himself.

As she continued to stare at him, he smiled and curled his fingers under her chin. Lifting her face, he bent down and kissed her softly.

"Do you want to stop?" Harry asked just above a whisper.

"No," Sylvia said. "It's just – you're a lot bigger than my ex-husband, and he's the only one I've been with before now. I think I understand why you have so many girlfriends now."

Harry chuckled as she giggled shyly. When he crawled onto the mattress, both of them scooted back until they were fully on the bed. They lay down facing each other, and Sylvia surprised him by taking his shaft in hand. Stroking him lightly a few times, she kissed him deeply while pushing him gently onto his back. Once he was lying down, Sylvia straddled his waist and pressed her hot, sopping folds against his length with a moan.

Lying back, Harry groaned as she pressed her hands against his chest and continued rolling her hips. His hand slid from her thighs to her hips and then all the way up to her breasts.

"You're so beautiful, Sylvia," Harry said.

Smiling prettily, she ground her hips down hard. When she leaned forward a moment later, reaching back to grab his shaft, she inadvertently left her breasts dangling in front of Harry's face. Grinning, he squeezed them together and wrapped his lips around Sylvia's left nipple. She moaned softly as she placed his tip at her entrance and sat back slowly.

"Bloody hell," Harry groaned as her tight, sweltering folds enveloped him.

Sylvia moaned long and low, her nails digging into the skin of his chest as she slowly worked herself lower. All of her earlier shyness disappeared in a flash. Staring down at him wantonly, she rocked back and forth on top of him, gradually taking him deeper and deeper until every last inch was buried in her depths.

Collapsing on top of him, Sylvia nuzzled into his neck while Harry wrapped his arms around her. Gently, he trailed his fingers up and down her spine, drawing a moan from her lips.

“Thank you,” Sylvia whispered tearfully.

“What’s wrong?” Harry asked worriedly.

Sylvia gave a watery chuckle and sniffled.

“Nothing’s wrong,” she said. “Sorry, I guess I’m just a bit emotional. I’m just – I’m so glad you knocked on my door. I felt like my whole world was falling apart, and then you showed up like a knight in shining armor. I have no idea what I would’ve done with you. You’ve just been so wonderful. Amanda adores you, and I –”

Sylvia broke off thickly and took a shuddering breath as Harry caressed her back soothingly. Turning her head, she kissed his neck and rolled her hips while her inner muscles flexed around him.

“I’ll never be able to repay you for everything you’ve done, but I can do this,” Sylvia panted as she continued gyrating. “I’ll do anything you want. Anytime, anywhere, it doesn’t matter. I’ll do it.”

“Anything?” Harry asked.

Kissing his neck, Sylvia nodded.

“What I really want is to know what you want,” he said.

Sylvia giggled and whispered, “Of course you’d say that.”

Falling silent, Harry ran his hands up and down her naked back. When his hands reached her bum, he grabbed both cheeks and squeezed while thrusting his hips forward. Sylvia moaned as his pelvis ground against her clit.

“Would – would you make love to me?” she whispered softly.

Smiling, Harry rolled over so he was on top and she was under him. Sylvia’s legs wrapped around his waist as she stared up at him. Harry leaned down and kissed her softly while he began thrusting slowly. Her hand tangled in his hair as she moaned into his mouth.

“Harry,” Sylvia breathed against his lips, her hips rolling against his as he bottomed out.

“You feel so good, Sylvia,” Harry said between kisses. “You’re so beautiful.”

With long, deep thrusts, she threw her head back and moaned. Smiling, Harry sucked and kissed at the column of her throat. Sylvia’s throat vibrated under his lips as she moaned again, and her folds tightened around him.

“Merlin, I love when you do that,” Harry panted.

“You mean this?” Sylvia giggled and tightened her muscles around him again.

Growling, Harry pulled back and drove back in sharply. With a gasp, Sylvia arched her back and dug her nails into his shoulders. Her fold fluttered around him wildly as she let out a trembling moan. Arousal drenched Harry’s length, creating a wet slap each time he thrust into her. As she came down from her peak, Sylvia trailed her hands down his back and squeezed his bum

roughly. Her gaze met his, and the depth of emotion in her hazel eyes very nearly took his breath away. Their eyes locked, and she flexed her muscles around in perfect time with his thrusts. Harry groaned at the amazing feeling. It was like she was massaging him each time he bottomed out in her depths.

"I'm close," Harry warned her.

Sylvia tightened her legs around him, her heels urging him on. With a groan, Harry kissed her hard as he buried himself in her depths and erupted. She trembled under him as he swelled and pulsed. Even as he came, she continued to tighten her muscles around him.

Sylvia moaned contentedly as his climax eventually came to an end, her arms and legs trapping him in place. Panting heavily, Harry collapsed on top of her. Unbothered by his weight, she kissed his shoulder and combed her finger through his hair.

After catching his breath, Harry pushed himself up. Smiling, he kissed Sylvia on the lips before rolling to the side. Cuddling up against his side, she kissed his chest as they both relaxed in a euphoric afterglow.

Unfortunately, they couldn't stay like that all night. After cuddling for a while, they both got out of bed and dressed.

"So, does this mean you'll take me as your mistress?" Sylvia asked.

"If you're sure it's what you want, yes," Harry said.

Smiling brightly, Sylvia wrapped her arms around his shoulders and kissed him heatedly.

"Thank you," she said gratefully.

"I feel like I should be the one thanking you," Harry grinned. "But, as my mistress, I expect you to tell me if you or Amanda ever need anything. Anything at all."

Smiling affectionately, Sylvia shook her head. Smiling, Harry took her hand and led her back down the stairs. Lily and Connie, who were sitting in the living room with cups of tea, stopped talking and looked at them with knowing grins.

"Well?" Lily asked impatiently.

"He said yes," Sylvia said, blushing but smiling.

"Oh, I'm so happy for you," Connie smiled.

Rushing over to Sylvia, she hugged her tightly.

"I can't believe you planned this," Harry said to Lily as she walked over to hug him.

"Are you complaining?" Lily asked with a smirk.

"Aw, poor Harry," Connie said mockingly. "His girlfriends keep throwing other beautiful women at him."

Harry shook his head and smiled as the girls giggled.

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The rest of the night passed calmly, and the girls even managed to talk Harry into getting a couple of hours of sleep. When he woke in the early hours of the morning and went to the

basement to check on everyone, Adriana was the only one awake. He talked to her briefly and noticed that she seemed to be looking at him oddly.

He asked Lily about it when he met her at the enclosure.

"I don't know," she shrugged. "But I did see her talking with Bella earlier."

"Should I be worried?" Harry asked with a smile.

Lily giggled, and he let it go as they got ready for morning.