

Equivalent Exchange Possession

"The boy dared hurt me, Bellatrix," Voldemort thundered, almost incoherent with rage. "Me!"

"He must die, my Lord," the woman simpered, praying that his fury at somehow being bested by the boy would keep him from remembering her own failures of this night.

"He must," Voldemort agreed, "but at my hand. I will be the one to destroy him."

"Of course my Lord," the insane woman nodded.

"Leave me, Bellatrix," Voldemort said to his favorite. "I must prepare."

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Upon his release from Dumbledore's office, Harry found himself wandering the halls of Hogwarts, the words of the prophecy rolling through his mind repeatedly. Madam Pomfrey refused him access to the Hospital Wing, so he had no idea of the status of his friends, adding to his stress.

Despite making no attempt to hide himself, Harry's wandering the halls of the castle were unnoticed by anyone, not the staff, not the prefects, not even the caretaker's cat, which was just as well, given how he would likely have reacted violently to anyone who confronted him.

Finally, exhaustion pushed him to return to the Gryffindor dorms. Pushing past the fat lady with a mumbled password, Harry found the common room to be deserted, which was not really surprising given the hour.

Harry threw himself into one of the squashy chairs and stared into the embers of the banked fire, the guilt over what had happened to his friends fighting with the fear inspired by the words of the prophecy for the forefront of his mind.

Movement caught Harry's eye; he turned his head to see Crookshanks trotting down the stairs from the girls' dorms. The half kneazle fixed him with a stare before cocking his head to one side and issuing a single meow.

"Hermione's hurt mate," Harry said quietly. "She's in the Hospital wing and won't be sleeping here

tonight, sorry."

The half kneazel seemed to consider his words for a moment, and then crossed the room to leap into Harry's lap. Without thinking, Harry began to scratch Crookshanks' ears, and returned his gaze to the embers. His body was demanding sleep, but his mind just would not allow it.

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That the primary provider of food and ear scratches was missing was somewhat disturbing, but one of the not-food elf things had thoughtfully provided a substantial portion of tuna earlier and this one was a suitable candidate for emergency backup ear scratch provider, at least for now.

The undisputed lord of Gryffindor Tower deemed life to be good, and began to show the his backup servant his appreciation for the ear scratches by kneading his fore claws into the boy's thigh and issuing a throaty purr.

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Voldemort almost laughed. His previous attack on the boy, while painful had yielded benefits. Where before he had been able to influence the boy's dreams and send him visions, now the connection between them was sufficiently active that he was now able to enter the boy's mind.

His plan was simple; he would once again take possession of the boy's body and if possible destroy the boy's mind. If Potter proved to be more resistant, he would use his control of the boy's body to put him in a life-threatening situation before leaving the boy to his doom. Should Potter survive, the Voldemort would try repeatedly until the boy was dead, enlisting his few remaining Death Eaters if necessary.

The boy was going to die. It was inevitable.

He was in the boy's mind now; Potter was so exhausted he hadn't noticed. Extending his senses over Potter's, Voldemort saw glowing embers in a darkened room, an odd buzzing sound, and a warm... something on the boy's lap.

Now! Voldemort gathered the sum of his psychic strength and struck.

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His auxiliary servant stopped scratching behind his ears, causing Crookshanks to open a single eye to offer a baleful glare at the boy, only to be surprised by what he observed.

The boy was sitting upright, his eyes staring forward and he mouth open in a silent scream. The half kneazel sat up and took in the changes in the boy. A little known aspect of the kneazel breed was on top of their well-known intelligence, the cat hybrids were highly empathic. It was clear that the boy was being attacked by... something.

"Meow," Crookshanks said. When the boy was so rude as to not respond to his master's polite

inquiry, the half kneazel's suspicion about the attack was confirmed. Deciding to act, Crookshanks placed his forepaws on the boy's chest, bringing his face close to the boy's examining him closely.

The center of the attack appeared to be that odd raised marking on the servant's pelt, just below the fur line and extending to just above one of the boy's eyes. Deciding on a course of action came naturally to an apex predator, so Crookshanks batted at the raised marking with his left forepaw with his claws extended.

Rather than the expected blood, what issued from the new wounds was some sort of foul smelling black ooze.

This offended Crookshanks to his very core. He had given the attacker fair warning, yet it still continued to attack a servant belonging to someone else. A lesson needed to be taught about respecting the property of one's betters. Carefully wiping the residue of the black ichor on his paw onto the servant's faux-fur, Crookshanks decided to comfort the servant before he destroyed the attacker. Raising himself to his full height, Crookshanks reared back and head-butted his servant precisely on the point of the attack.

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Voldemort exulted deep in Potter's mind. The boy's consciousness was in his grasp, it would take only the slightest of squeezes to extinguish the boy forever.

Suddenly, he felt himself... stretching. The pain was excruciating, and the stretching continued. The pain seemed to go on forever until he saw a flash of light and then he knew oblivion.

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Harry woke to find himself still in the common room. Shaking his head in an attempt to clear if from the odd dream that was fading even as he tried to recall it. The raven-haired boy was moderately surprised to find Crookshanks sprawled in his lap. He couldn't ever recall seeing any cat lying like that...

"Harry?"

Harry craned his neck to see Hermione and Neville standing in the doorway. Seeing that they were moving under their own power caused his heart to soar. "Hermione, Neville, they let you go? You're better?"

"I'm fine Harry," Neville said his eyes down cast. "Madam Pomfrey fixed me right up, but made me spend the night."

"And I'm better as well Harry," Hermione said. "I've got some potions to take for a while, but everything is alright." The witch had come up to where he was sitting. "You took care of Crookshanks for me? Thank you Harry," Hermione leaned down to scoop the sleeping cat from Harry's lap, pausing to kiss him on his cheek. "I'm so sorry about Sirius, Harry."

"Thank you," he whispered back.

Hermione stood up. "Well, Crooksie and I are heading up to the dorm to get some sleep, I was too worried about you to get any sleep last night Harry. Good night boys."

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Crookshanks woke to a world that was very changed. To start with the entire universe appeared to have added an entire spectrum of new colors, but at the same time seemed to have deleted the bulk of the world's scents.

He wasn't sure if he approved of the differences.

His beautiful body had changed as well. He seemed to have somehow contracted his servant's lack of fur along with the new colors and fewer smells. He was determined to deal with these changes in the way of his kind... by ignoring them utterly.

He divested himself of the servant class' faux fur and attempted to clean himself. He did well enough with this oddly changed forelegs, but this new body was in no way flexible enough to deal with his rear legs or more importantly his genitals.

The door to the chamber opened and a female servant with wild fur entered, falling to all fours to properly genuflect toward her better.

"My Lord," the female said, "are you ready for your breakfast?"

How odd, Crookshanks reflected. He could understand her better in this changed form. Perhaps he could make himself better understood as well. What was the word they used when they delivered snacks? Oh, yes. "Food" he said in a demanding manner.

The servant immediately rose and ran from the room in that clumsy two legged gait of her kind, obviously to fetch him his meal.

Yes, Crookshanks reflected, he could get used to this new level of service.

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Voldemort woke to find himself inexplicably in a Hogwarts dorm room. It was odd that he couldn't determine what house. The drapes around the bed were an odd mixture of greys and blues.

Then he took a deep breath and found himself sneezing reflexively at the sudden flood of scents he discovered.

His sneeze sounded... odd. Then he discovered he was covered in fur. And the scale of everything, it was huge; this was a far larger bed than the one he had slept in during his time in Hogwarts

He blinked in surprise when he discovered that he was not alone in the bed. He was sharing it with

a gigantic version of Potter's mudblood. Reflexively he attacked, discovering that he now had retractable claws when they sunk into the mudblood's bare leg.

He was appalled when his attack earned him a sound spanking followed by a stern talking to. This was when he discovered that he now had a tail. But none of this prepared him for the horror of discovering he was expected to relieve himself in a sand box.

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Bellatrix sat quietly in her Dark Lord's inner sanctum, cradling her Lord's head in her lap, gently stroking him behind his ears. Stopping her ministrations without his express permission was simply not done, as it drove him to a level of fury that truly frightened her.

She really wasn't sure what she thought of the change to the Dark Lord. His desire for conquest was apparently gone, his interests now seemingly divided between sleeping, eating, launching random attacks on Peter Pettigrew for no real reason and frequent bouts of energetic violent sex.

She was honest enough to admit to herself that the last two were real improvements... the attacks on Pettigrew because they were funny, and the sex, because... well, she liked sex.

She stiffened with excitement when her Lord work and vocalized "WRAR". He always did that when he wanted sex.

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"Thank god you're back," Harry said as Ron and Hermione returned from the prefect meeting.

"What's wrong Harry?" Hermione asked as she took her seat between Neville and Luna.

"Your demon cat," Harry sniffed.

"He seems to have taken quite a dislike of Harry," Luna said helpfully.

"He was reaching out of his carrier to claw at Harry's foot," Neville laughed. "He's always been a grumpy cat, but this is all new."

"He has been acting different all summer," Hermione admitted.

"Different?" Ron laughed, "Hermione, he's a cat... well, half cat half kneazel, acting different is practically the definition of the whole species."

"I will have you know that Crookshanks is a very good boy..." Hermione protested, before hesitating for a moment. "It's just that this summer he's been less... evil."

"Less evil?" Harry asked. "What does that even mean?"

"Well, he just sat on the porch all summer looking at the birds. He always used to hunt and kill

them, sometimes to eat, sometimes to play and sometimes," Hermione paused as she blushed a bit. "sometimes to offer it to me to show how much he loves me. I would scold him, but he never paid any attention, but now..."

"Maybe he's getting old," Neville suggested.

"I don't know," Hermione said. "Maybe."

"Maybe he was possessed by the Dark Lord" Luna suggested helpfully. "That's why he hates Harry now."

"My cat is possessed by Voldemort?" Hermione laughed. "And that made him less evil? Luna, you crack me up sometimes."

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From inside the cat carrier, Voldemort hissed and spit. Soon Potter, he thought, soon I will be out of here and you will meet your doom. I will end you Potter!

The girl reached down to scratch his ears through the rattan of the carrier, and he found himself leaning into her fingers.

Soon Potter... after my nap.