

Red Dawn

by Somigliana

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"We shouldn't be here." Hestia Jones sounds nervous, and her eyes scan the shades and shadows of Knockturn Alley. She can feel her heart beat in her ears *thump thumpa*—and her wand is clutched tightly in her hand. She curses herself for letting Dorcas talk her into this.

Dorcas seems supremely oblivious to the war pressing in around them, dark like the night; she balances along on platform shoes and excitement. "It was just fine last night —"

"I cannot *believe* you came alone—"

"Gideon and Fabian were here, and we had a fabulous time." A little smile—a secretive little smile—plays on the corner of Dorcas' painted mouth.

Muggle disco music haemorrhages into Knockturn Alley from a building up ahead. Pulsing crimson light flickers like flame on the cobblestones, painting a hedonistic path to Red Dawn, the vampire-run disco club.

"I don't think that you—"

Dorcas stops abruptly and turns to Hestia with pleading eyes. "I've been stuck in that godforsaken castle, working on counter-measures against the Death Eaters, for weeks. Just because I'm not British doesn't mean I don't understand that there's a war going on. I'm just... I need a break from Albus this weekend; he breathes down my neck, and he—"

"Fine. Let's go."

At the entrance of Red Dawn, the heat presses out into the crisp October air. It's a throbbing, raw, sensual heat that makes Hestia's skin itch. The metallic gaze of the vampire who takes her money makes her skin crawl. The red light reflects off his dead eyes, and he smiles at her, revealing the tips of slender, death-sharp fangs. She moves along quickly, suppressing the flight instinct that slides down her spine.

"I'm not checking my wand." She scowls at the security troll and the boxy device he's pointing a tree-stump finger at.

She can't hear herself think above the music—*thumpa thumpa*—that pounds under her feet. She scratches her arm—rakes her fingernails across her itching, crawling skin.

"Everybody does. No gratuitous magic or war in here... only music and booze, darling." Dorcas tucks her receipt into her bra with a wink.

Reluctantly, Hestia places her wand into the slot—I just gave up my wand, fuck it—and grimly accepts the receipt that shimmers into existence. She feels utterly vulnerable

without her wand; the empty holster feels foreign, too light.

She steps into another world where reality is painted in red and forgetfulness. The lights dance and gyrate to the disco music above a haze of swirling smoke; the flashing distorts her vision and makes her feel on edge. The music swells and the crowd sways. *I will survive*—thumpa thumpa—*I will survive*.

Not without my wand... Hestia thinks sourly.

Dorcas seems to be looking for somebody from the outset—her eyes scan the crowd eagerly. They pass over the groping hands and the little potion vials passed palm to palm and then palm to nose. She even ignores the tight arses in designer Calvin Kleins.

"The twins are on duty tonight; they won't be here." Hestia has to lean close to shout in Dorcas' ear.

But then Dorcas stiffens—"Oh, there!" she murmurs excitedly—and Hestia follows her line of sight.

Oh, God, no.

"No, Dorcas... he's bad news..."

But Dorcas is already moving towards the tall, lithe wizard-god in leather, who is languishing against the bar. He watches the crowd lazily with a sexy, supercilious smirk.

"Hi there, sexy," Dorcas purrs. She puts a hand on Sirius Black's bicep and licks her lips, cocks her hip towards him.

His bedroom eyes turn towards her with barely a flicker of recognition. "Yes?" He sounds bored, looks bored.

It's like watching a train wreck about to happen Hestia thinks. She hangs back; Sirius' tongue is sharp and sardonic, and she has been lashed with it before (in more ways than one, but then only once).

Dorcas' expression falters. "I thought after last night, you might want to—"

"No." He lights a cigarette; his eyes return to the crowd.

Dorcas frowns. "But last night... we made love... I thought—"

He's sharply beautiful as he turns to her, leans close, enunciates his words like they're daggers. "You were *just* a fuck. What the fuck did you expect? *Adragon ride* at sunset, red roses?" He barks an ugly laugh. "Now, *fuck off*." He flicks his fingers at her dismissively, and then he turns and winds into the crowd like a dark wisp of smoke.

That song is playing again. *It took all the strength I had not to fall apart*—thumpa thumpa—*kept trying hard to mend the pieces of my broken heart*.

"Oh, Dorcas..." Hestia puts a hand on her shoulder.

Dorcas blinks rapidly, as if trying to clear her vision, and she turns and runs blindly, pushing through the sinful mass. The writhing crowd seems to swallow her whole, and Hestia pushes against the ebbing wall of revellers—move, dammit, fucking get out of my way—until she's sucking cold night air that stings her panicking heart.

Helpless, wandless, Hestia sees Dorcas trip and fall halfway down Knockturn Alley, wrenching her ankle—crying out into the pitiless night—and falling to her knees.

Hestia's heart—*thumpa thumpa*—sticks in her throat, so that she can't shout out—Oh, God, Dorcas, behind you!—when a shadow peels from the stone wall, its icy blond hair glinting in the moonlight.

As her fingertips close around her empty arm with its empty wand holster, she can't hear the shadow say, "Dorcas Meadows. Well, well. Our Lord will be most pleased; he is very interested in meeting you." But she does see her friend haloed in crimson Stunner flare, and the crack of Disapparition is like a Muggle gunshot; its echo off cold stone is discordant with her belated scream.

Hestia stands numbly outside Red Dawn, her wand receipt in hand, staring at the smears of blood on the cobblestones where she'd seen Lucius Malfoy steal the Order's brightest hope.

And the disco music plays on—*thumpa thumpa*—until the dawn bleeds, dull-red and sullen, into shadows.

Author's Notes: According to canon, Dorcas Meadows was killed by Voldemort personally—a measure of how important she was to the fight against him. I've imagined she was a witch who Albus brought in as a consultant. She wasn't aware of Sirius' reputation.

This piece is set in 1979, after Sirius had finished Hogwarts, while he was working for the Order.

I will admit to watching too much *Queer as Folk* this week. Thus, this piece is heavily influenced by the show (only straighter).

Thank you to my darling Gelsey for proof-reading. This was expanded from a piece written for Romancing Wizard's *Bring Out Your Dead* Challenge.