

Do Save me the Trouble

by cflower

The sequel to *Of Winds and Wisdom*. Night cloaked the castle that was permanently attached to the heavily grassed Scottish hills.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I do not own anything that J.K. Rowling has written.

This is the sequel, which I never thought I would write, to *Of Winds and Wisdom*. I highly recommend you read that story first in order to get the full meaning. Thank you for taking the time to read.

Lastly, thank you, Annie Talbot, for beta'ing.

~oOo~

Night cloaked the castle that was permanently attached to the heavily grassed Scottish hills. The night took occupancy in the small nooks that reckless teenaged lovers were always drawn to. It molded itself to the contours of the stone walls and caressed the corners of windowsills. Gliding over each stair banister, it rested between every thread of carpet in every bedchamber. It even circled around almost every child's sleeping head, giving their dreams a floor to develop on.

There was one girl, though, who wasn't engaged in dreaming. Instead of partaking in the events that unfold in slumber, she was walking the corridors of the castle. Her fingers gently glided over bumpy, night-covered walls, and her feet pressed themselves into the darkness that was the floor. She thought it was amazing how thick, like fog, night was in the castle; if she didn't know better, she would have thought herself blind.

The fact that she only had four senses to use didn't bother her, as she knew exactly where she was going. A *sixth sense*, she thought, *how odd*. The night, which spent its time cushioning the castle, also was the force, located at the small of her back, that seemed to urge her forward to her destination.

Mentally, she went over the path to get to The Great Hall. *Turn right at the portrait of the first registered animagus. Then turn left at the corner with the dent in the wall. Finally, another left when the floor seemed to dip a bit.*

Once she passed the dipped floor, she came across a heptagonal window, the only one of its kind in the entire castle. Pausing for a second, because she could never resist an uncovered window, she gazed across the rolling hills to the Forbidden Forest. Sometimes she wondered if the darkness that occupied the castle at night made its true home in the untraceable forest. She knew logically that night had no origin, but every so often she perceived that the castle and the forest coexisted in an amiable relationship. It was as if the forest, by trusting its night reside in the castle, had accepted the castle as part of nature instead of some magical edifice.

Night tugged on a brown tendril of her hair to remind her of her primary goal.

~oOo~

The Great Hall, she knew, always had one light lit at night. The light was located directly above the headmaster's chair at the High Table. She thought it looked like a beacon which bathed each chair with some measure of light; the illumination faded as the chairs got farther from the central headmaster's chair.

The girl's eyes gravitated to the chair on the left of the headmaster's; it was slightly lower in height. It seemed like forever that the chair on the left had been her dominant focus every meal. Indeed, she would check its occupancy before she would chatter with her best friends or even smile warmly at her Head of House.

From looking at the chair perpetually, she observed that sometimes he was at the meals and sometimes he wasn't.

It was always unnerving when he wasn't.

Although she felt butterflies in her stomach as she approached the vacant High Table (it felt so forbidden and untouchable), she wrapped her night-filled need around herself for strength and continued.

She stopped at the far left side of the table to ascend the three steps in order to reach the elevated floor where the teachers' table was located. Once again, from the small of her back, night pushed her to move behind the chairs where there was more room to walk.

She counted each chair she passed to herself, *One, two, three, four, five, six, and seven.*

This was the chair; the seventh one.

The girl squeezed herself between the sixth chair and his chair in order to be able to maneuver herself to the front. She noticed that when she faced the chair, her lower back gently touched the table's edge.

This is where he eats, she thought, *where he drinks his coffee in the morning and his water at night.* What a simple human need, eating, and yet, so personal because it was needed.

Her hands gently traveled over the arms, feeling the slight ridges of engraved wood. There was a tension in the pit of her stomach that made her feel unnaturally warm.

As her hands steadily made their way to the cushioned bottom of the chair, she felt something foreign; it wasn't soft. Actually, it had felt the perimeter of sharp edges.

She knew what it was of course. She was an expert at all things book related. But what astonished her was the location of it. The light from above the headmaster's chair illuminated the book so her eyes could inspect its qualities. It was softly leather-bound, with a brownish-red color. The pages' edges were uneven, perhaps for style.

As her eyes read the title, her stomach clenched.

The Paradox of Forever

Tears made paths down her cheeks as she opened the front cover to find a neatly folded piece of parchment. It was a letter.

Ms. Granger,

I thought that you would find this book useful. The book is non-fiction; I hardly have time for fiction anymore. Do save me the trouble, and learn something yourself.

Professor Snape

Hermione folded the letter and placed it carefully in the book. She hugged the book tightly to her chest because it was precious. Closing her eyes, a small smile made its way to her face. She would save him the trouble.

~oOo~