

## 2 May, 2018

*by juniperus*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Two figures stood atop a mountain overlooking the ramshackle house, a loch barely visible through the newly greened trees beyond. The gentle scent of lilacs surrounded them, carried afar by the brisk spring breeze.

"Twenty years," the shorter of the two said softly.

"Twenty years," the thin, tall figure agreed in a deep, hoarse voice that still held faint hints of its former resplendence.

As the shorter figure turned to her companion, the hood of her cloak slipped back in a gust, allowing her chestnut curls to tumble forward and blow in the wind. "Severus?" She tucked a lock of the steel-gray hair that had escaped the leather thong at his neck behind his ear and quietly watched him.

"Twenty years. So much lost, so many lost," he whispered, then took his companion's hand in his own. "And, yet, I am deeply grateful for what I have found. For having *been* found." He gently kissed her knuckle and released her, searching in his robes for something.

"Cuiridh mi clach air do chàrn," he rasped as he placed a stone on the cairn beside them. After taking his companion's hand once more, he turned away and slowly trod back down the mountain.