

Jardin des Plantes

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A young witch sees something in the garden.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Paris, to her, always had a musky smell. Maybe it was the old stone, or maybe it was the river that wound slowly through the city. Having lived there for several years, she had given up on figuring it out, and by now she simply considered it one of the benefits. That musk always smelled like him - that black-robed, solitary figure in the back of her mind, the presence that she couldn't forget.

The young woman strolled through the Jardin des Plantes with a basket over her shoulder and a pair of pruners in her hand. Her hair was pulled back so it wouldn't tumble into the shrubs as it was wont to do if she wasn't careful. The day was slightly misty, which made the walk through the Labyrinth almost slippery to tread. Eyes trained to the ground to avoid a misstep, she wound through the familiar ground. The yews had grown so well that they almost had an enclosed feeling, wrapping one up, cherishingly, protectively. They led her to the gazebo where she always rested and took stock of her cuttings before she roamed through the rest of the gardens. There was much that she could obtain in the Muggle portions of the gardens, but some plants still refused to grow without the addition of magic to their soil. For those plants she had to journey into the Jardin des Magiciens. It was tucked away between the Menagerie and the river. Muggles saw only the hedges and paths, their eyes slipping right over the rows of bubbling, bleeding, blistering, magical plants. Fortunately for the day, she was just about finished. The only thing she needed was a few pepper seeds from the vegetable garden.

The sky had darkened as she had sat in the gazebo examining her collection. Wind was stirring, raising small tendrils of hair from around her head. A swish of her wand provided a bit of calm, as well as waterproofing. The mist from earlier that morning had started to turn into a drizzle that threatened to turn into a fine rain before long.

The young woman found herself before a long promenade that held the patch she needed. Ahead of her was the river, calm and steady. Right now, it was as grey as the sky. The peppers dropped into her basket just as she felt the first stirring in the air. That brush along the back of your neck that tells you that you are not alone. In the Jardin des Plantes it wasn't unusual. Having been the site of mass murders, the garden was one of the most haunted spots in the world. However, this felt different, more present, more... something, just more. Her eyes scanned ahead of her before she barely turned her head. Finding nothing, she held her wand tight and continued along the paths, seeking some of the ripe vegetables for her stewpot tonight. It wasn't until she realized that the feeling hadn't gone away that she slowly turned around, looking for the specter that kept impinging on her consciousness. She didn't mind ghosts, but she preferred to know they were around.

Lightening lit up the sky, and thunder rolled just as she saw him. He was standing down the path, looking towards the river. His hands were behind his back, and his robes were swirling in the storm. His hair was black as raven wing, and his skin pale in the way only an Englishman's can be. She quietly slipped away before he started walking again.

He had been here before, wandering the gardens. Always he stared out at the water, never seeming to notice anyone else. Always seeming to wait, walking near the river. And wherever he went, his scent always lingered.

AN: Written for Saturday Night Drabbles. Prompt: Stormy weather, vegetable garden, river walk. The river walk didn't really come out, but it is there. The Jardin des Plantes is real and beautiful. Google it for wonderful images.