

November Chill

by Arachnae

Musings before the final battle. Who is it? The thing wouldn't let me leave it blank.
Complete.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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November. Already the air has a bitter chill as I climb the stairs, searching for the roof of one of Hogwarts' more unused towers. Glancing down at my shoes and robes as I move, it dimly registers that they are the colour of mourning...black. When had I stopped wearing colour? Did I even wear them? Sometimes it feels as though I stopped living before I'd had a chance to do so. People with big hearts and good intentions have asked me when 'it' all went wrong. One has to wonder if 'it' was ever right.

A blast of cold wind hits me as I step onto the sought after roof, whipping my hair about. Ah...the freedom, power and sheer wildness of the wind! Closing my eyes, I stretch my arms out as though to embrace that elusive zephyr as she toys, teases and seduces me. I became a lover of that sprite some time ago whilst playing sweet games of tag and 'catch me if you can' with leaves she tossed about as I chased after on my broom! Seems a lifetime ages past... belonging almost to someone else. I remember laughing with her as she ran her fingers through my hair and tossed my robes about carelessly. A fickle love is she, but a part of me will always love her. How can I not? She is a part of my soul. That still wild untamed area of my heart that no amount of sorrow or tragedy can ever quite squash.

Opening my eyes once more, I look about at the trees, knowing the dangers that likely lurk within them waiting for the unwary and unprepared. The conifers are still green and lush while the rest are naked and bare, void of all but the most stubborn of leaves. Some creatures just never knew when it was time to let go. I shake my head wondering if I am any better than they. The sky is grey and heavy with snow while the trees stand as still as death, waiting for their cold white shroud to cover them. I snort humorlessly to myself, wondering when I got so maudlin and morbid.

I can only surmise that sorrow begat sorrow. My family, such as it was, tolerated me and forced me through hardship, to age me beyond my years. Unwanted and unloved. How used to that would I become over the years? Even now---from those who would claim me for friend? What do they truly know of me? So much I held within. So much that would never be known. Yet---I survived 'home' until Hogwarts sent that wonderful letter! What a haven it became! Safety was found within and I treasured it! Mind you, dangers in other forms were always present here also in the form of one house in particular, but I could always find more pleasant company with my friends and own house.

When did my home become my prison? When did my life become not my own? Was it ever my own? Everyone manipulated me from the very beginning seemingly, and I nodded my head, going along with whatever they said as though I were under the Imperious Curse! How could I have been so foolish? How could I have believed them when they said it was 'best' for me?? I slam my fist on the unyielding stone of the battlements with the intensity of my emotions fueled by rage and a horrible sense of futility!

Tomorrow is to be the final battle for the Wizarding World, and I will likely die, missing what I'd never had, dreaming of a life that would never be, grieving for my non-existent wife and children and regretting dreams unrealized. I wanted them dammit! I have a right to them! I stand for several long minutes with tears streaming down my face. The wind dries them with her icy touch, caressing me stingingly and whipping my robes about roughly so that I am nearly thrown from the tower to the hard cold ground below. Ah...but, my zephyr is a harsh mistress at times. Perhaps I love her more for this. She brings me back to my senses even as she nearly numbs them.

Calm steals over me slowly, and I stand a while longer, looking over the grounds of my beloved haven and reviled prison. It saw me raised here and would probably see me buried here on the morrow. I doubt I am even suitable for a wife now. After all that I have been through, who would want a half-man, haunted by howling demons past

and present? Doubtless there would be a few more gathered tomorrow. My zephyr touches my cheek gently this time, and I make my way downstairs. Tomorrow would come too quickly and there was much yet to do....

The Next Day.....

I dreamt of her last night. Her brown hair fell gloriously as it had that one Valentine's Day Ball, her eyes sparkled as they sought mine, and she smiled a warm and earnest smile of welcome! We both came forward and held hands. I remember that as I leaned in to kiss her, the scene changed and we were in our home... two little ones at our feet. They had their mother's eyes but my hair. I leaned down to pick up one of the toddlers while she laughed at their antics. Then, the scene changed again. We were older and attending their graduations at Hogwarts, holding hands like love-struck teenagers, so proud of our children! What a dream!

Now as I rise, I begin to believe that should I survive this... this apocalypse... that I should approach her and see if there is hope. That becomes my mantra. If she survives. If I survive. If Voldemort does NOT survive. Ah, well, better to let events take care of themselves.

I am nearly ready now. I tuck my wand into place and look at myself in the mirror. The age in my eyes is startling, but now there is hope shining within those depths. With a grim set to my features, I turn and head out to face the bleak day ahead.