

Deviance

by kizzy7

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N Hello! Just a bit of a warning, really. This is definitely a Potions Under Duress ficlet, but a thoroughly deranged Trelawney (and deranged in a different way than her usual eccentricities imply) plays a significant part. This also includes non-graphic descriptions of a teacher/underage student affair. If this offends you, please do not read. I really wanted to explore the Professor Snape/Student!Hermione love affair from a different angle, and I hope I've succeeded! Thank you for reading.

I'll tell you, now. When I first discovered his... indiscretions.

It was earlier, much earlier than I've ever admitted before. Yes, I know what you will say. To save myself, my job, I lied. Yes, I did. Hogwarts is my home. Was I complicit, then, in his wrongdoings? I think not. I was more of a... secret confidant to a troubled soul. But I'll tell you my story, and you'll see.

Four years ago, it was, on a chilly night in November. I rarely descend from my tower...it is the comfort of familiar surroundings, you see, because I know what all those people think. *Oh, they think, that's just Sybill. Don't mind her, as we keep her locked away in her tower most days.*

Like I'm some dotty aunt to hide from the boyfriend during the holidays.

I always thought, though, that somehow, *he* didn't think such things of me. Perhaps it was because if I'm the dotty aunt, he's the creepy uncle with the dangerous past. Perhaps he felt the same way as I did, seeking solace within the familiar, rarely ascending from his dungeons to avoid the furtive looks and muffled snickers.

So it came as a shock to me to find him in such a situation.

I'd gone to the kitchens for a bit of late night pudding and a swig of sherry, if available. Already, that Umbridge terror and her noxiously sweet insinuations were wearing against my feeble moral strength, and I needed the fortification these clandestine excursions provided.

Night, it was, and the shadows I saw lurking in the corners came alive and followed the solid echo of my footsteps, and so I hurried. Fear. It is the starker, hidden side of my Gift, like a diamond that sparkles at all turns save one. I see the future, and I see the glimmer of the unknown in the shadows of our reality.

Crazy, you may say, but listen to my tale, and you'll know then wherein madness truly lies.

For him, for me, for all of us. I know that you judge him and his actions as unforgivably wrong...monstrous, even...but let me say this. It is human nature to *want*, and it is equally as human to get what we want. Our wants and our desires pay no heed to trite, imposed social conventions, no matter that we all pretend in the light of day they do.

We mask ourselves, do we not? Behind an acceptable, pleasing front? And those that don't...take, for example, the Lovegood girl, and her sneakers hanging from multiple rafters...those that don't are scorned.

He had what he wanted...had her many times, in fact, and in many ways...but I think you'll find that in the end this is a happy tale.

I am going to get what I want.

On that chilly November night, I fled from those shadows, shadows that took the shape of twisted, taunting children and words written in blood...so black in the moonlight, and they read, *Murderer, Murderer*...and I was in the dungeons. The air was cooler down there, so cool. I remember wishing I had brought my other shawl, and that thought coupled with my crippling fear and stifling desire for the clear-minded insight provided by a swallow of sherry.

When I heard it.

Low, muted panting. It sounded male to my ears...though it had been awhile since I've heard such explicit desire in reality, as you say. Now came a shriller, effeminate cry, and a name, keened into the night air.

"Severussssss!"

Rounding a corner, I saw them from a distance. They were too... involved to notice me, my movements, the clink of my silver bangles or the nervous clattering of my bejeweled rings. I straightened my glasses.

Yes, that was certainly Severus, his dark hair shrouding his face as he angled his mouth to her chest and captured a nipple between his teeth.

But the girl...?

A student, most definitely. Her skirt was hiked up round her waist, and his long-fingered hand worked assuredly between her legs. I couldn't quite make out the expression on his face, but I imagine it was grim, focussed, intense...wanting, needing, to give her pleasure.

She tilted her face upwards, and in the murky gloom I could finally discern her features. Unruly hair, tiny, button nose.

The fool, Hermione Granger.

I've heard her called 'the brightest witch of her age,' and doubtless she's earned that title through traditional book learning and rote memorization. But she is a fool. Very few have the Gift such as I, but only fools question its very existence, its *power*. What, I ask, makes Conjuring water from thin air or turning squealing porcupines into decorative pincushions so much more plausible than reading the signs sparkling in the stars? Are we not connected to the stars? And to our futures?

Again, she is a fool, and the worst kind. So certain of herself that she doesn't even recognise her own inanity.

Tabloids, newspapers, fellow students and colleagues have all speculated...*whyher?* Why, of all the delectable underage students available to Severus Snape, did he choose her? Her brilliance, I've heard it said. *Well, they really do have so much in common*, Filius whispered to Pomona one day. (Yes, I realise a small minority are inconceivably sympathetic to their plight. Because they *love* one another).

Her beauty, I read in some rag, though I laughed.

Mind, students can be attractive. As a teacher, especially here at Hogwarts, and you watch them grow and live and learn, and you have your favorites. Those handful of eager students who swell your heart with love and affection, and sometimes, when they leave Hogwarts and come to shake you firmly by the hand and offer their gratitude for your tutelage, you think, *By God, he's grown up. Such a fine young man.*

Sometimes, those thoughts become, at night, wild scenarios played out deliciously in your head.

Well, what if he came back, returning with his bright blue eyes and perfectly coiffed hair to say, 'I fancy you.' What then? Would you turn him away? Or would you invite him in for tea and let him kiss you, tease you, paw at you beneath the flimsy gauze of your transparent top?

Severus is not the only one who's succumbed to the charms of the pubescents in our care, I'll tell you that. There were rumours once, as there always are when one is single and relatively young. I heard something about McGonagall, even, and a boy called Paul. How close they were. She mentions him sometimes...*Yes, you've heard? Paul Pearson, doing such wonderful things with his life. Just published a book. What a student he was!*...her eyes glazed over and a foolish grin on her face. I suppose it must thrill her to think of that young, illicit passion.

I've asked Severus why, and yes, he natters on tirelessly about love, but I'll tell you what I think. I think that something in the girl...perhaps her courage, her confidence, or simply the smoothness of her skin...reminded him of Lily.

Fifteen, Granger was, when the affair began. Fifteen. I do not waste my time as so many others do feeling sorry for Granger, feeling that she has been taken advantage of in the worst way possible. No. She knew what she was doing, never doubt that. She knew it, and she revelled in it.

But of course she was fifteen. How is it, do you think, that Severus recalls his Lily? Do you believe she is a woman in his mind, welcoming him with full breasts and rounded thighs? I think not. She remains in his memory a perpetual child, and something about the flatness of Granger's chest or the bony knobs of her knees imitated the eternal perfection of his child love.

Do you see?

I continued to watch, my heart knocking alarmingly against the brittle bones of my chest, as he knelt before her and placed his mouth warm and wet against her. To me, she sounded like a wild, rabid animal. Most distasteful.

In my bed that night, I wished, oh, how I *wished* for that sherry now. If only in my slow, quiet retreat I'd had the presence of mind to make a small detour, how that would have helped to ease my trembling nerves.

The bedclothes felt remarkably smooth against my skin...and yet somehow textured as well, textured in a way that rubbed delicious friction against my naked calves.

I'll admit, I wanted... something. I wanted to run to the dungeons and place my hands against his cheeks and press his mouth against *my* warmth. It was a moment of regrettable weakness, and I moaned against my sheets as I thought of him panting, breathless with desire.

What would I do now that I had this information?

I tried to See the future here, most especially for those two rutting in the dark of the dungeons, but it was murky, mottled with spiny patterns of grey and elongated eyelids. It couldn't end well, certainly, but was I to be the one to end it?

Should I make an appointment with Dumbledore and confess?

No.

Call it what you will...selfishness, self-preservation, but I saw for myself a chance. A chance, somewhere in this.

When I was in primary school...before I received my letter from Hogwarts...I knew this neighborhood boy. Frankie Philips. He was sweet-cheeked, rosy-lipped, and even though I was too young to truly understand my want, I often imagined those lips puckered around my breast, and his breath hot on my neck.

Frankie, *Frankie*. He had dusty hair, I always thought. Would have been blond but for the generous speckles of unexpected grey, and it always looked dusty. I wanted to ruffle it, see if I could shake the dust from his head, wondering if it would billow into the air and frame his angelic face like a dirty halo.

I told him one day that his mother was going to die. I saw it. I saw her ruined body wrapped gruesomely around hunks of smouldering metal, and I told him that her last thoughts before she died would be about him, her son. I could read the thoughts in her anguished eyes...*My son, my Frankie*.

When she died later that week, he found me, rosy lips pursed white with anger.

Fucking bitch. Fucking murderer.

I still have the scars...a series of thin, pale pink slits, criss-crossing like an imaginative quilting pattern across my forearms...from the knife he used.

Oh, I've recovered, never worry. And Frankie? Since you ask, Frankie was found quite tragically dead the next week. Suicide, it was declared, for he couldn't bear the loss of his mother. Couldn't bear the grief.

And so I found myself wanting a man for the first time since then. Desire...yes, it was desire, desire that Severus kneel before *me*...but it was more than that. Deep, painful yearning, so bright and pure I became sickened, clutching and tearing at the dark purple shawl that covered my bed until it was shreds of misshapen cloth.

And so I thought, *I'll use this. I'll get him.*

Not *get* him. I do not want you to misunderstand me, as so many do. Sometimes, I have difficulty expressing myself in words, which is why this confession is written down on this crinkled parchment. I've tried to keep things as accurate and as clear as possible, so while I thought, *I'll get him*, what I meant was, *I'll make him see me*.

I've known for a remarkable length of time. Severus and I are kin. We are one, and we are many. We will be those in the afterlife who drink the plentiful wine and dance to the sounds of suffering, to the gnashing of the teeth and the wailing of barren emptiness.

This was simply a catalyst. I was compelled to take action, a thought that both excited and terrified me. Do something, actually *do* something to insert myself into his life so boldly!

I waited. It's something I've excelled at, waiting. Waiting for the creak of footsteps on the staircase to my tower, always hoping that *someone's come to visit!* But they always pass me by. Waiting for five o'clock each and every day, knowing that it would seem desperate to go down to dinner much before. Waiting for summer to end, for Christmas to pass, just so my students will trudge up the ladder and into my classroom, just so I can see and talk and hear human voices again.

It's after those long spells of loneliness that I find myself before a crowded classroom, warm bodies huddled over crystal balls, sweat and fervour heavy in the perfumed air, and I always think, *This is it. I'll open my mouth, and nothing. I've lost my voice, my voice!*

Ha, I'm afraid I'm somewhat revealing myself within this narrative. This has yet to happen...I've never actually been alone so long that my voice has disintegrated, or even weakened. Although, sometimes at night I dream that I open my mouth and yawn an empty cave, and then... nothing. I awake to this nothing, having sensed that yes, I am nothing here on this earth.

To set my plan into action, I had to first wait. I waited through the summer and well into her sixth year before I mentioned anything.

After I made sure they were still... fucking, although I abhor that word. I am trying to be accurate, however, and anything more tender...making love...is wrong. Fucking...the heated, mindless slapping of skin on skin. And they were. I know because I followed her one night...a fool, she is, as I've mentioned before. Too concerned and excited to get into her Potion master's lair, too eager to feel the movement of his cock, I'm sure, though it sickens me to think of such things.

I am a righteous woman, after all. The kind of righteousness that comes only with years of observing people and understanding their plight.

This was perhaps their first liaison that year, and I followed her right to the dungeons. Once, she looked back, but the dark was gathered so thickly around us she could not see me, and she could not sense me, being immune to such powers as those of sense and feeling.

When he opened his door to her, he clutched her wrist and positively wrenched her inside, as if he simply could not wait to tear at her blouse and do those dirty, dirty things.

I pressed my body against the thick, heavy door to his classroom, and I felt the jolts as he fucked her against the wood. I heard her panting and gasping, and him saying in a voice so raspy I almost did not recognise it, "Hermione, I love you."

This, of course, somewhat complicated things. He believed that he was in love with her. A delusion, surely. Could be a problem, and so I struck fast.

A Sunday, after a particularly trying staff meeting, and I slid smoothly to his side, saying, "I know your fucking a student, Snape."

Oh, you should have seen him! His face remained impassive, as it always does, but I detected a tremble, a twitching of his left cheek. I felt a thrill.

That is what he looks like, when he wants to kill.

He clutched his wand, his entire body tensed for action. He wanted to Obliviate me, or kill me, I could not tell which, but Flitwick was in the far corner, huddled with McGonagall, and I whispered to Snape and told him not to worry. For I had duplicated the memory several times over and would *never* forget.

He sneered and growled at me, "What do you want?"

This was the precise moment I had been waiting for, all those long months!

"I just want to be your friend, Severus."

He never did seem to keen on the details of our arrangement, but I thought that I was being fair...generous, even. I could have demanded money, loyalty, allegiance, but all I wanted was dinner, once a month.

Severus said nothing at first, choosing to simply stalk out of the staff room and down, presumably, to the dungeons. I can well imagine the conversation that then took place between him and his child whore. For it was a Sunday, and she was free to be fucked all day and all night if they so choose, which I rather believe they did.

But her, lying on the couch or bed (and though I've never been in Severus' quarters, I know they are of deep hues, ostensibly purple or royal blue, and his bed is large and lush and canopied, and he has a fireplace that always roars with flames to ward off the cold and the dark...both of which, like me, he inexplicably fears). And him, gruffly, "Miss Granger, we've been found out."

Sniffing, and she curls herself into his arms, as if for protection, and by God, he wants to protect her! "Who?" she asks, her tawny eyes wide with worry and concern.

Likely, he laughs here, and bitterly. "The Trelawney slag," or maybe, "That myopic cow, Trelawney." Granger has by now joined him in his laughter, his mockery, and she is no longer worried until he confesses my demands.

"Dinner? Once a month? But... but you never take me to dinner!"

He'll probably sooth her with reassuring words of his unflinching loyalty, and she will naturally believe him. And they'll end up tangled in the bedsheets, an unattractive jumble of naked arms and legs.

He must have convinced his Granger bird of the necessity of the plan, because the next morning, he stopped me in a corner after breakfast and said, "If you push this, Trelawney, I'll kill you." The glitter in his eyes said he meant it, and again, I felt a thrill that tingled my skin and quickened my pulse.

Oh, to have this man within my power! The thought was intoxicating!

And dangerously addicting, as it turned out.

That next weekend, we went out. I don't want to act the blushing bride, but what an exciting week. Even the preparation for it. Should I buy something new? Wear my signature gauzy shawls and skirts? What about my hair? Up? Down? You'll laugh, but I was almost panicked enough to consult Granger, ask her what he liked.

I almost wish I would have, just to see her face.

Settling for a pair of loose slacks and a flimsy, black top (*easily discarded, in the heat of the moment* I thought, though I chided myself for my absurdity. *This was a first date, and respectable women do not discard their flimsy shirts on first dates!*), I opted to pile my hair atop my head and pin it in place with strings of pearl-studded barrettes. I looked acceptable. Certainly not as young and fresh as that Granger piece, but good... like a woman.

That first night out together, he came and knocked on the door to my quarters. Wildly, I imagined him so overcome with the sight of me that we would forgo our night out altogether, replacing the hard, high-backed chairs of a fancy restaurant for the soft comfort of my bed.

Again, foolish of me, but aren't we all fools in love?

He was sneering, and the finely tuned muscles of his face did not even so much as flicker at the sight of me in my party things! I was horrified...should I have perhaps considered traditional dress robes? Would I be ridiculed by fellow dating patrons?

I was about to make excuses and run to the loo to change when he clasped my wrist...oh, so like he had clasped hers that night!...and growled, "Let's get this over with."

Practically dragging me the entire way, we were at the Apparition point before I even had a chance to flutter my eyelashes and breathlessly admit how nice he looked. And he did. I know many have desecrated his visage as ugly, but I tell you. If you believe that rubbish, then you have never really seen him. So powerful, all that emotion bottled up so carefully and concealed so cleverly beneath his ever calm exterior! It positively makes one swoon, imagining him releasing it all, and all on *you*.

He Dual-Apparated us to a classy restaurant in Hogsmeade, though I did rather wish he'd touch me more. He let go of my wrist as soon as we were in front of the restaurant, and do you think he let his hand stray to my waist, guiding me with a loving yet insistent pressure inside? No, no, he did not.

I was so nervous at all those people, all those finely adorned witches and wizards that I barely registered us weaving through the crowd to an empty table in the corner. A waiter stiffly handed us menus and offered a bottle of wine, which Severus refused with an impatient wave of his hand.

Ridiculously, I found myself wanting to turn to a nearby table, tap the woman sitting so formally next to me on her silk-clad shoulder, and squeal! *m here! I'm here with a man! See!*

"So, Severus," I said when our food arrived (fish with some sort of sauce for him, though the impossible man would simply *not* feed me a spoonful, and pasta for me), "would you care to explain yourself?"

He had yet to say anything of substance to me, a fact that I attributed to his nerves, being out with me as he was.

"Explain myself?" he replied coolly. "There is nothing to explain."

I tittered into my cloth napkin and tried again. "I mean, an affair, Severus! With a student!"

At this, he hissed and muttered something that sounded like, *Muffliato!* After taking another hearty bite of fish, he said, "It's really none of your damn business, you nosy bint."

He was quite wrong, of course. I attempted to make him see this. I had witnessed them together, after all, and now...

Eventually, he told me. He said that he loved her, and she loved him, and that was all I need know. Sadly, the night ended on this unfortunate note, and he threw Galleons onto the tabletop and Apparated back to Hogwarts without me.

We went to all sorts of restaurants, food I had never before tasted! Japanese, Indian, Italian. Always, he paid, and always, he held doors for me and offered me my chair first. It was nice, yes, but he never talked with me, not really. I'm not daft, you know. He was thinking of her, perhaps of her perfect rosebud mouth or the flushed pink of her cheeks when he fucked her.

Quite simply, something more had to be done.

Although I won't pretend I didn't enjoy myself. The staff began to speculate, and soon all were convinced that Severus and I... well, that we were sleeping together. The student body, as well. I don't know what exactly he had told the Granger girl, but it was a sheer delight to see her staring daggers at me during lunch in the Great Hall, stabbing at her food with malicious ferocity. She was jealous! *Of me.*

Yes, I can hear their conversation.

"But *sir*, I don't like this. Stop. I want you to stop. If you loved me, you'd stop."

And him, sneering? Or tender? I don't know how exactly he was with her. *the other woman*...but with me, it was always sneers. "I do love you, Hermione. I will stop as soon as I am able. I will find a way."

False assurances and trite platitudes to ease her suspicions. He was falling in love with me and had not yet found a way to tell her. But I was patient. I would wait.

One month...it was February, to be exact, close to Valentine's Day...he came to visit me in my rooms. You can imagine how enthralled I was. Was this to be our first encounter? Would he run his fingers through my hair and lightly scrape his nails across my throat as he pounded, pounded into me?

But it was just to tell me that our dinner date would have to be postponed. It was Valentine's Day weekend, you see, and he had other plans.

Did those other plans by any chance include the Granger tramp?

"Yes, you fucking nutter," he seethed.

"I'm afraid we have a deal, Severus," I replied. We did, we did have a deal, and he was breaking it! I could not allow this, as surely any rational human being would agree.

His hand snaked out so quickly I did not notice what was happening until I was thrown up against the stone wall of my room. The rocks dug deliciously painful pressure points into my back.

This is it! Will he kiss me first?! Will he?

The fingers around my neck tightened, and for the first time, I allowed myself to feel real fear. What if I had miscalculated him?

"Leave us the *fuck* alone, Trelawney," were his last words to me. I fell to a discarded, crumpled heap on my hard floor, and the ringing of the slamming door echoed in my ears for the rest of the night.

The next morning, there were black-blue bruises ringed around my neck, and so I wore a chunky necklace of silver shapes and glared pointedly at him throughout breakfast.

This was not satisfactory. Clearly, he had yet to realise the full extent of my many charms.

The next month, he did show up at my rooms late one Saturday afternoon to take me out. I told him that night over dinner that if he wanted to ensure my silence, I would need something more. Something... of a different kind altogether.

He was fearful when he asked what, what more could I possibly want? And he called me a "crazy old bat, deranged with loneliness."

Who's to say, I replied. Perhaps I was. But not anymore. I had him.

Did I feel guilt, you ask? Let me specify. No, I did not feel guilt. Sometimes, I thought that maybe it was true, maybe despite convention and conformity, they did love each other. But in my heart, I knew this was false. He didn't love her. And Granger? Just twisting her need to please into something indecent.

He just had to see this, see it as clearly as I did. And I would be waiting there, as always, once he did.

Though at this point...just a couple months before the end of the year...he hated me, I could tell. The holidays had ended, and I knew that he had spent the majority of the vacations locked in her embrace in the dungeons.

April, and he looked in a bad way. I knew that he was dealing with the Dark Lord and dealing with Dumbledore and dealing with a torrid sexual affair with a student, and I could read the lines of stress and worry on his face. And me? Where did I fit in on that heavily lined face of his? Personally, I believe I brought him relief, that I was his one oasis in the maddened ocean that was currently drowning him.

At dinner that month, I forced him to tell me, tell *mæexactly* what they did together, him and that Granger cow, down there. I thought for a moment that he wanted to hit me, wanted to hear the satisfying scream of my pain as he *Crucio'd* and *Crucio'd*.

But he didn't. He dabbed his lips with his napkin and spoke softly. "What is it that you want to hear, Trelawney? That I've fucked her in too many ways to count? How she sucks my cock whenever I want? That she is waiting for me now, in my bed, naked and ready for me to slide into her? Is that what you want to hear?" He tapped his nails on the tabletop, his eyes glinting.

I asked him not to speak such filth to me, a lady, but he just laughed. "A lady, huh?" he scoffed before standing so abruptly that his chair squeaked across the floor and the entire dining room turned to gape. He left me then, left me all alone in the restaurant, and I had to pay for our meals and combat the pitying looks of fellow patrons.

This certainly could not go on.

So I demanded more. Tea, once a week, in my rooms. My personal quarters. He only came once, and the things I remember the most are his fingers tensed around my grandmother's teacup and the uncomfortable bend of his knees on the red velvet of my pouf. And his smell, musky and unfamiliarly male, that lingered for days when I buried my nose into the soft fabric and *inhaled*.

He stopped after that. Stopped everything. The dinners, the nights out. Stopped even speaking to me, looking at me. I blame *her*. He was starting to see me, the way that I really am, see all that I had to offer him. I still wonder with what exactly she threatened him. Withholding her favours, I wonder? Was he that taken in?

Men. Ridiculous, fascinating creatures.

No, I didn't tell anyone. At least not immediately. I had hoped... Well. That matters not.

The world knows the following story. He killed Dumbledore that year, and she went off prancing about the world with her two witless cohorts. I asked him once, the one time I managed to talk to him the next year, if he imagined she was faithful to him on her journeys, or did she spend her nights wrapped around the cocks of her friends?

He never answered, although the tightening of the skin around his eyes told me all I needed to know. Of course he couldn't trust her! How could anyone trust such a girl, so recklessly wanton?

My information at this point was useless. There was a war on, and no one paid me any heed. Back to the dotty, old aunt, I'm afraid, although I knew it was just a matter of time. I waited. I mentioned once before that I excel at waiting, did I not? Biding my time.

The Dark Lord was killed, and there was much chaos and death, but still I waited. I waited until she returned, until she nursed him back to health and they publicly announced their intentions to marry. It was ridiculous how happy they seemed, and only I knew that it was all an act.

A judicious owl to Rita Skeeter of the *Daily Prophet* exposed all. After so much death and destruction, the wizarding community jumped with excitement at the prospect of a good, old-fashioned scandal. Yes, it seemed that War Heroes Severus Snape and Hermione Granger had carried on *most* indecently in school.

"I saw them in the hall one night," described the *Prophet's* anonymous source. "I was disgusted. To have a teacher take blatant advantage of an underage student in such a way!"

There was an uproar. Any thoughts of impending nuptials were immediately postponed, as an outraged public demanded justice.

Of course, you know all this. You know of the trial, and how Granger pathetically declared she'd wait for him until the end of time, and how he broke free from the guards to swoop her up into his arms and kiss her one last time before Azkaban.

How did I bear all of this? I missed him, of course, but I could wait. I could afford to wait. Would Granger? Doubtful. She claimed that she would, but after five years, after ten years, would waiting be so alluring? She would find herself aging in the mirror, she would think of the kids she should have and the husband that should be hers, and she will move on, marry another.

Severus will be distraught, I imagine, when this happens, as is inevitable. But I'll be there for him, as I always have. Then, he'll understand.

I went once to visit him, ready and willing to be the sympathetic listener. He laughed when he saw me, laughed and laughed. "Trelawney," he crowed. "How utterly apropos."

Sniffing delicately, I pressed my scarf to my nose, for the smell...so stringent and musty...was almost unbearable. "Severus," I said. "So this is justice."

Lazily, he picked at his thumbnail. "You know I'll be out of here in less than a year. I'm a hero, and Hermione's a hero. The public has somehow decided that we are living a tragic love story, and they will settle for nothing less than a traditional happy ending. After I've served the minimum time here, of course, and make a proper, heartfelt apology. Trelawney, I know you imagine yourself somehow... victorious in this, but let me make this clear." He looked at me then, *really* looked at me, straight into my eyes. "What you've done...or, rather, what you believe yourself to have done...matters little to me. In fact, you matter so little to me that I can no longer even summon anger. I feel nothing towards you. Nothing, Trelawney, because *you are nothing*"

For now, those are the last words he's spoken to me. That was two days ago.

But they are false, I know. He is wrong!

Although the dreams have returned. Dreams that my mouth gapes open and swallows me whole, and there exists nothing but the blackest of black, the darkest of nights, and I am wholly alone.

I will wait for him, wait as I always have. As long as it takes.

Severus.

My love.
