

Unrequited

by sunny33

A man's love remains unrequited.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The warmth of her hand in his, skin to skin, sent a barely-concealed tremor through his body. Offering her a perfunctory nod, he never noticed the flash of hurt in her eyes as he battled with his unconscionable desire to sweep her into his arms and congratulate her properly before she moved on to a beaming Minerva.

She was not for him; never for him. Too old, too bitter, too spent. The joy and life of her very presence encompassed all he had ever wished for; the single, dark red rose on her pillow the only token of his devotion.

The engagement party was held at Grimmauld Place. An abundance of food, lively music, and a veritable plethora of red-headed, laughing faces surrounded her.

Their eyes met once, and he did not understand her unspoken question as she was towed away by her intoxicated fiancé. No-one approached him; his surly reputation remained undoubted; his very presence to be remarked upon later as odd.

As the happy couple kissed to the cheers of their friends and family, his chest tightened unbearably, breath stalling around his beleaguered heart.

Hours later, a tear fell onto the dark red rose left before her mirror.

Shards of pain lanced his soul as he watched her walk up the aisle towards another man. Sunlight filtering through the exquisite stained-glass windows of the tiny chapel set her curls afire and suffused her skin with a golden glow. She had never looked more beautiful.

As they spoke their vows of love, fidelity and honour, his white-fisted grip on his control lent a severity to his expression that few noticed.

It saddened her to see him that way, but she remained silent.

As he left the rose, he vowed never to return. Fickle hope would seduce him no longer.

The relentless flames engulfed her broken body as the keening of her loved ones surrounded the man in black who stood alone outside the circle of family and friends. Her tragic death at the hands of a drunk Muggle driver had shattered their dreams. Voices spiraling up with the flames in a song of lament, the mourners farewelled their beloved wife, mother, and friend.

As the sun sank below the horizon, the silent man finally succumbed to the tears he had denied for thirty long years. The crushed petals of a rose scattered in the wind as he Apparated away.

"Hey, Rose, what do you have there?"

"I think it's mum's old school stuff. Look, here are her Potions notes."

"Just Potions?"

"Yeah. I can't see notes on anything else. But I know she did a lot of subjects. Didn't she get more N.E.W.T.s than any else ever?"

"I think so. She even beat that Snape guy. You know, he was her Potions professor."

"Bet he hated that. Dad said he was a right git."

"Wonder why she had these dried roses with her Potions notes?"

"No idea."

"Shall we keep them?"

"No. Just toss them into the burning pile."

A/N: Saturday night drabble prompt from Droxy: Give me some angst; kill off Hermione. Thanks to ladyinthecloak for checking this over.