

# Missing Spaces

by JackieJLH

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Chapter 1 of 1

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**Author's Notes:** Many thanks to Pyjamarama for beta-reading and janus for Brit-picking!

This story is a missing scene from [Filling in the Spaces](#). Though it takes place on the same day as Chapter 32, it is best read after Chapter 44. I'm afraid it won't make a bit of sense to anyone who hasn't read Filling in the Spaces, though.

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"Ms Jones, it's Friday."

Hestia glances up from her paperwork to see Mr Glyn standing in the doorway. She gives him a cheerful, patient smile. "Yes, sir, it is."

"It's nearly seven," he continues. She nods slowly, one eyebrow raised.

"Yes, sir...."

"Shouldn't you be somewhere that isn't *here*?" he asks pointedly.

With a shrug, Hestia gestures toward the stack of parchment sitting on the corner of her desk. "I have work to do."

She doesn't say, "I have nowhere else to be," or, "I'm not allowed near any of my friends," or, "Your precious Dark Lord killed my entire family, so I spend my evenings alone." She doesn't say it, but she thinks it. She lowers her head and acts like she's studying the parchment before her so that he doesn't see her lose the warm, friendly expression that she usually fakes so well when speaking to him.

He watches her for a moment, frowning. "Perhaps it's time I assign another person to your office. The workload really is too much for one person. I know you prefer working alone, but..."

"Oh, no, sir. That won't be necessary," she says hurriedly. "I can manage it."

"Jones, at this rate you'll still be here on Christmas."

"I had a bit of a cold this week and was moving more slowly than usual. I'll be caught up in a couple days, especially if things quiet down due to the holiday." As if to emphasise her point, she grabs the ten closest bits of parchment, glances at them hurriedly, and slips them into a file. *Andrews*, she mentally notes because that isn't where those parchments go at all, and once he leaves, she'll have to put them in their correct places. "Besides, the Ministry doesn't stop functioning entirely just because it's Christmas. I wouldn't mind coming in if I had to."

He shakes his head, the hint of a smirk at the corners of his lips. "You work too hard." Someone walks up behind him, and he steps out of the doorway to let the other man into the Records office. "Lestrangle, don't you think Ms Jones works too hard?"

Hestia rolls her eyes as Rabastan answers, "Don't we all?"

He sets a small bag down on her desk, and she purses her lips and gives him a questioning look.

"What is that?"

"A Christmas present?" he answers playfully. She doesn't look amused, so he says, more truthfully, "A bribe." Reaching for it hesitantly, she opens the bag and laughs at the squashed-looking, lone fairy cake lying at the bottom. "I need a favor."

"You're going to have to do better than this if you want a favor. After all, as Mr Glyn pointed out, it's Friday night. I really should have left already. " Her tone is light, teasing, but she hopes he'll go away and come back on Monday. Or never. He's the fourth person, not counting Mr Glyn, to walk into her office today. Four in one day is quite possibly more than she can handle.

"Seriously, Hestia," he says, dashing her hopes to pieces. "The Dark Lord wants this done tomorrow. I need three files. *Just three*.... Come on."

If four file requests were too much for one day, six is nearly enough to make her hex Rabastan on the spot. But she carefully schools her features into a look of put-out resignation instead of loathing and lets out an audible sigh. Mr Glyn, still hovering in the doorway, chuckles to himself. "Fine. Who this time?" she asks.

"Paul Ryland and Lovegood," he says, pausing to glance down at a slip of parchment in his hand. "Luna and... Merlin, I have no idea how to pronounce his name."

She rolls her eyes and reaches for the parchment. "Xenophilius," she reads for him, handing it back.

"They're finally going after that barmy bastard, huh?" Mr Glyn says conversationally, and Rabastan shakes his head.

"No, the daughter. Trying to see if we can't force him into behaving himself. Besides, Bellatrix thinks someone will eventually give Lovegood information on Potter's whereabouts. He's their central source of information these days, we think. Though we're also looking at a few other people...we think he might try to visit some of them around Christmas. The Weasleys, maybe."

"I'll have them for you in an hour, okay?" Hestia interrupts, wanting them out of her office.

Rabastan nods and heads for the door. "Thanks, you're the best."

"If you're really grateful, you'll bring me a real present next time," she calls after him, and his laugh echoes down the hall as he disappears from sight.

"I still think you're working too hard," her boss continues as if Rabastan had never walked in. "It won't do us any good to win this war if all of our people are about to pass out from exhaustion."

She holds back a grimace at being referred to as one of *their people*. "I'm fine," she insists.

"Maybe maintenance can put in a window," he mutters, looking around the dim office. "Or Christmas decorations. Something to brighten it up a bit.... It's so dark and gloomy in here."

Hestia just shakes her head and gets up, heading for the filing cabinet nearest the door. It's one of twelve. They line the walls, making the relatively spacious room seem cramped and crowded. The second drawer down contains most of the L files, and she unlocks it with a wave of her wand and quickly pulls out the ones listed under 'Lovegood'. "I really do need to get this done if I want to go home at all tonight," she says apologetically.

"Yeah, I have to get home too. My wife is going to kill me if I keep missing tea. Have a good night, Ms Jones. Don't stay too late," he orders.

"Good night, Mr Glyn." She listens carefully for the door at the end of the hall to close, then stands and closes her own door before retrieving Paul Ryland's file.

Placing the three folders on the desk, she opens the first one and scans its contents *Luna Lovegood, age sixteen. Thorn in the Carrows' sides. Inciting younger students to cause mischief.* Hestia would laugh at the sheer amount of trouble the girl and her friends are causing for the Death Eaters running Hogwarts, but all she can think of is how much danger they're all in.

She knows from putting together and then updating file after file that the students will be headed home in the morning to spend Christmas with their families ~~They'll grab her directly from the train~~, she thinks, and she sighs and begins the charm to copy the file's contents onto blank parchment. She copies it exactly, every word and detail the same. The last thing she copies is the girl's picture.

The duplicate doesn't move like the original; in the original, the girl is blinking dreamily at the camera, then smiles and waves for a moment before she seems to drift off into thought. She looks so impossibly young and innocent that Hestia's heart aches, and a long moment passes before she's able to tear her eyes away from the photograph and close the file. She puts the copies into their own folder and scribbles across the front, "*Saturday: train from Hogwarts. Prior to reaching the station,*" because maybe snatching her away before they reach the station will keep others from dying too. Then she sets the file on the edge of her desk. There's nothing she can do for young Luna Lovegood, and she has to hurry. There's no time to dwell on guilt or regrets.

She copies Xenophilius's file just as quickly, then returns the two original Lovegood folders to their usual places before sinking back into her chair and studying the Ryland file.

Paul Ryland is twenty-two years old, Muggle-born, and lives with his ailing mother in a tiny little flat in London. He left his position with the Cannons last year to care for his mum. He has a handful of friends from his school days that he saw on a regular basis until the war started. He only leaves his flat these days to run errands, and those are all handled in Muggle shops.

He never runs errands on the weekends because his mother's nurse doesn't come on the weekends and he has to make sure she gets all of her medications on time. It's guaranteed that on a Saturday, he'll be home.

The charms and spells guarding his flat are weak.

His dueling skills are substandard at best.

His location isn't Secret-Kept.

Paul Ryland and his mother are as good as dead.

Waving her wand at the file, she watches the text alter. He is home on Sundays now, but almost never on Saturdays. She picks up her quill and quickly writes on the front of a new folder, "*Sunday: after dark due to Muggle neighbours. Silencing charms would be prudent.*" With those sentences, she buys the Order nearly forty hours.

She's just placing the copied parchments into their new folder when Rabastan Lestrangle knocks on her door, opens it without invitation, and pokes his head inside. "Are they ready?"

She nods, picking up the three folders and holding them out to him. "Just finished."

"Thanks." He looks them over. "No way we can get to this one on Saturday?" he asks, holding up the Ryland file. "The Dark Lord isn't exactly the most patient of men."

"You could try, but you'd probably miss him. Our records show he's almost never around on Saturdays." When Rabastan frowns, looking annoyed, she adds, "I suppose you'd probably find him at home if you went late enough. After midnight, anyway. Definitely Saturday, though, not tonight. He goes out with friends most Fridays. Merlin only knows when he'll get in."

"You're a life saver," he says with a grateful look. Even he is afraid of the Dark Lord's wrath, and it makes Hestia feel not quite so guilty over the stab of fear that rushes through her with each lie she tells.

"Yeah, yeah. Get out, I have to lock up and go home," she says with a smile, nudging him toward the door, and he distractedly waves goodbye as he again walks out of the office. Glancing at the address listed in the original Ryland file one more time before she tucks it into its place in the filing cabinet, she locks her desk with a wave of her wand, checks the locks on the filing cabinets, and then heads out the door.

There isn't any time to contact Kingsley, as she normally would. He may not be able to get away, and they don't have time to waste now. She'll go herself; she can get there and then back home in plenty of time to still send her letter, along with food and other supplies, off to Petunia by eleven. If she hurries, anyway. Even if she's late, it will be worth it.

The halls of the Ministry are nearly empty by this time of night, and she nods greetings at the few people she passes on her way to the Floos. A few moments later she's standing in her own living room, and she quickly pulls on Muggle clothes. They look a lot like Petunia Dursley's because Petunia is the only Muggle she knows. She needs to look like she fits in among Muggles, and she can't think of anyone who is more concerned with appearing completely ordinary than Petunia.

Hestia shrinks her cloak down and tucks it into her pocket, then Apparates back to London. She chooses a different alley than she used the last time she had to go to London for such a thing, and no one notices when she steps out onto the street, just another Muggle hurrying home.

Ten minutes later, she knocks on a door. When it opens, she instantly recognises the man from his picture. "Mr Ryland," she begins, holding her wand pointed down, loose in her hand, to indicate that she's a witch despite her clothing, but that she's not a threat. "My name is Hestia Jones. May I come in? There's something very important I must speak to you about."

He frowns, looking both curious and nervous, but stands back and lets her into the flat.

At half past ten that night, Hestia Apparates back into her living room. Tossing books and food into the basket, she quickly runs out of space and ends up wrapping the entire thing in a shrunken-down table cloth to keep things from falling out. She quickly pens the letter she's been composing in her head half the day, nearly breaking the end of the quill in her hurry, then pokes it through a small gap in the fabric near the knot at top of the basket handle. With a wave of her wand, she sends the entire package away just as the clock's hand rests on the eleven.

Needing a distraction, she sits down to work on Petunia's Christmas present. The charms don't seem to want to work correctly, and she reads the instructions from the book yet again, then tries the incantation one more time. Still nothing. Shadow, watching her curiously from the floor, lets out a questioning meow as if to ask, "Shouldn't something have happened?"

Hestia sighs. "This is harder than it looks, you know," she tells the Kneazle in a slightly irritated tone. Shadow, seeming to sense that her criticism is not exactly appreciated at this moment, wanders away.

Hestia's not sure if it's because she can't seem to concentrate or if she's just not casting the charms correctly, but at the moment either reason is enough to make her feel frustrated. Deciding to fight with the chess set more in the morning, she tucks it back into its box and stows the whole thing away under her bed, carefully tucked out of sight.

As she lies in bed an hour later, trying but failing to fall asleep, she wonders if Paul Ryland has left his flat yet. If he's managed to find a way to transport his mother, already so weak with some Muggle illness. If he'll be able to keep them both hidden until the end of the war and still make sure his mother gets all the medicines she needs. She hopes that he will. She hopes the Death Eaters don't catch him because if they do, it'll probably mean her death, too.

But as she drifts off to sleep, she doesn't worry about the terrified Mr Ryland. Instead, she thinks of the five others whose files she turned over today. The ones she couldn't help, *wouldn't* help because the risk was too great. She wonders what will happen to them, to their families. .

She thinks of Luna Lovegood, young and practically defenceless, chosen to be tortured or killed because it was less dangerous to warn someone else.

She aches for the girl's father, who will be spending his Christmas alone and desperately worried for a daughter who may or may not live to see the end of the week.

She remembers Luna's smile.

Hestia dreams of her own hands, coated in the blood of dozens of people she knows only by their pictures and the words in their files, and she wakes up crying.