

Seven Spells

by Orpheus Samhain

Sirius was sent to woo Lily on behalf of his best friend.

Candle In The Window

Chapter 1 of 1

Sirius was sent to woo Lily on behalf of his best friend.

Written for LJ hp_art_tales and 7spells, inspired by hrymfxe's picture "Frozen". Beta: totoffle, thank you!

There was a loud, impatient rap on the window pane. Lily exchanged surprised looks with Alice. Owls delivered mail at breakfast, and people... Well, people usually used stairs and doors rather than windows when it came to the highest tower in Hogwarts castle. Usually. Lily had known whom she would see before she opened the window. Him or...

"Sirius Black, the disgrace of Gryffindor House." Lily crossed her arms over her chest in a very no-nonsense way. "What are you doing here? Weren't you supposed to have a detention with Slughorn?"

Sirius' face hovered just above the stone sill. He didn't seem abashed at being called a disgrace nor by the fact that he got a detention...again...just very surprised to see her.

"The old Slug's chasing his box of crystallised pineapples that suddenly grew legs and did a runner," he said very slowly. Then, he got back his composure, twisted his handsome features into an expression of exaggerated awe and pressed his hand to his heart. "O most fair and noble among women!" Noticing Alice in the back of the room, who was trying to stifle bouts of giggles, Sirius smiled his most charming smile. "Hi, there, Alice, I didn't see you. You are fair and noble, too." He winked at her and went back to Lily, reassuming his awed expression. "Forgive your humble servant, lady, who wasn't prepared for your quick reflexes, worthy of a Seeker extraordinaire..."

"What. Are you. Saying. Black?" Lily was a girl of quick reflexes and, as a consequence, of little patience.

"Close the window, Evans, please," asked Sirius as he unabashedly batted his lashes at her.

Lily was dumb-struck for a split second and then snapped the window shut with such a force that the glass rattled in the panes.

"Aw, Lily, why are you so mad at him? He's cute." Alice was laughing freely now.

"He's trying to wriggle his way out of every situation with his *supposed* charm. I'm sick of it! You're not the first to fall for it. "

"You're so high-principled." Alice smiled indulgently.

"Someone has to be, seeing how the other prefect in this House hasn't been able to even find his badge since the beginning of the year." She returned to their table. "Have you finished the description of the *Artemisia absinthium*..."

"Wormwood, Lily, wormwood. Stop speaking gibberish."

There was a loud knocking on the window, and Alice clapped her hands. "Open the window! It's him again!"

"I know and I won't." Lily turned the page in the book and dipped her quill in the inkwell.

"But I will." Alice grinned at Lily's astounded expression and leapt up from the table. She opened the window wide, and the head of Sirius Black appeared again, this time adorned with a long-stemmed red rose, held between his teeth.

Sirius smiled at Alice as best as he could with his mouth full of thorns, and turned his attention to Lily. Lily, offended by her friend's betrayal and Sirius' presence in the window of her dormitory, kept her gaze to her books and tried to ignore them both.

It wasn't that hard at first, as Sirius' initial attempt at speech ended up in nothing more than an incomprehensible mumble. After Alice's burst of laughter, Sirius smiled apologetically and took the rose from his mouth. A pinprick in his upper lip welled up with blood. Pressing the flower to his heart, he started anew.

"Here I am, my lady, here I am. Still your beating heart!"

"My heart is not beating, Black," Lily couldn't refrain from commenting.

Sirius raised an eyebrow. "Not at all? It would explain all that coldness, Evans," he said in his usual, mocking tone.

Alice stifled a giggle, but Lily glared at her anyway and then bowed her head over the parchment. Sirius cleared his throat and took up the thread again.

"Worry no longer, your pleas for help have been heard."

Lily tightened her hold on the quill and pressed her lips into a thin line, but said nothing.

"I hastened to this magnificent castle of Hogwarts, with my sword..." Sirius lifted the rose as if to demonstrate said sword, "and on my trusty steed..." he soared a bit higher in the air but was violently jerked back down. It seemed that he kicked his leg, but at what, the girls could not see, and straightened his robes, "to relieve you from that greasy monster, who, as I've heard from a person very concerned about your well-being, is forcing his slimy, snivelling presence upon you, my fair lady."

This time Sirius got her attention, as Lily turned to him, her eyes narrowed into thin slits.

"If you're referring to Sev, oh, not-mine and oh, not-fair ruffian, he's not *forcing* himself on me. Just so you know: I. Like. His. Company."

"Beauties these days! Eccentricities. Whims. Caprices." Sirius spoke to someone lower, but quickly remembered himself and stared at Lily.

"He's my friend, not an eccentricity." There wasn't much venom in Lily's voice; she sounded more tired than angry.

Sirius eyed her carefully and when he spoke next, he didn't mention Snape again. "But since my eyes fell on you, my lady, I have only one desire." Lily raised a warning look at him. "To express my admiration for you." He pressed his hand to his heart and bowed his head, as if pained. "To sing a song praising your virtues."

"Better not, Black. I heard you and Potter last weekend at Hog's Head."

"Ah! So you *were* there!" The news delighted him for some reason. "I told you so," he addressed someone below him. There was a minor commotion in the air, and then Sirius returned his attention to Lily. "Uh-uh!" He wagged an admonishing finger at her. "Who would have thought... You lied. A prefect! You told us you stayed at the Three Broomsticks all the time. And I was sure I saw someone with long red hair disappearing from the pub."

Lily blushed and for a while couldn't find an answer. She decided that it would be wiser to divert the attention away from herself.

"Who's there with you? Potter, I'm sure." She stood up and walked to the window, trying to look out, but Sirius blocked her every attempt, hovering in the air lower, then higher, left and right, not allowing her to peer outside.

Lily gave up, since she had been playing his game. "Get lost."

"Ah, is that how you treat your humble servant? Even though you yourself have sent for me. Are all beauties that cruel?"

"I did not send for you, Black!"

"Well, in that case you gave me the secret sign."

"I did not!"

"Did so! You put a candle in your window, and everybody knows what that means. You summoned me."

"Can you see a candle here?" Lily spread her arms and looked around in a show.

"*Accio, candle!* Of course, here's the proof." Sirius levitated a candle from the table onto the stone sill and lit it up.

Lily huffed her annoyance and was lost for words...just for a moment.

"Hey, Black!"

Sirius raised his unaccountably hopeful eyes.

For a split second Lily felt a want to say something according to his little game, just to see the look on his face, to hear what he would say to that. But quickly she recalled his taunting words on every possible occasion and said what she had intended to say all along.

"You said you're my servant. Humble, even."

A very contented smile stole on Sirius' face, and he bowed with a flourish.

"At your service, demoiselle." He handed her the rose.

"And that you'll do what I tell you," Lily said thoughtfully, rolling the stem between her fingers.

"Your wish is my command!" Sitting upright on his broom, all expectant, he puffed out his chest.

Lily leaned to him, propping herself against the sill with both hands, crushing the rose, and spoke in a low, unpleasant voice, her face twisting into an ugly sneer.

"Then listen carefully and pass it on to your inseparable*friend*," she pronounced the second part of the sentence much louder, spitting the last word with disgust, "because he's been slow on the uptake for the past couple of years. Keep away from me with your candles," she threw the candle out the window, "and your pitiful roses". The rose

flew after the candle, straight at Sirius' face.

He caught it out of pure reflex, not taking his eyes off Lily. His expression changed into something Lily had never seen on him before, even in his never-ending, increasingly violent clashes with Slytherins. All loftiness vanished from his face, replaced by a cold fury. She took a step back and stood there panting after her outburst, then woke up and shut the window.

Sirius absentmindedly dabbed at his upper lip with the back of his hand, then looked down at James hovering a few feet lower with a lit candle in his hand.

"Next time, mate, woo her yourself, if you still think it's worth it," Sirius said without his usual smile and soared away from the castle.

~*~

"Alice, have mercy! I have to catch Professor Flitwick before the class! Hurry up!"

Lily stood by the dormitory door, her hand on the handle and her bag over her shoulder. The other girls were still in different states of undress.

Alice sat on the bed, brushing her long hair; her books and scrolls were scattered on the table. She didn't seem affected by Lily's urgings.

"You don't have to suck up to him, you swot. He already thinks you're the most talented witch of the century."

Lily groaned with exasperation. "There's a huge discrepancy between his last lecture and what Slughorn told us yesterday. Remember? I have to know!"

Alice rolled her eyes. "There's no discrepancy. Flitwick always gives more details, while Slughorn gives us his preferred way of doing things. Remember?" She calmly resumed the brushing.

"Maybe, but I have to be sure." Lily was almost bouncing on the spot.

Seeing that her friend could not be stopped, Alice put down the brush. "Go, then. I'll join you in five minutes."

"All right." Lily turned on her heel and stormed out of their dormitory, only to pull up short just outside the door. There was a withered red rose with a note attached to it lying on the floor. She lifted it hesitantly and turned the note in her fingers.

'This rose was meant for you, Evans.'

When Lily had finished reading, the note sizzled, wrinkled and blackened, scorching her fingers, and she dropped it with a gasp.