

# The Innocence of Snow

*by moiramountain*

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## The Innocence of Snow

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Do you still have the knack, do you suppose?

Years ago, you were quite good at it, actually. Perhaps that's to be expected, you being the product of laboring stock, even if one of them was magical. After all, weren't you left to find your own amusements – or not? No matter to them, was it, whether you had a child's diversions to wile away long, wintery days? Wasn't it enough that they allowed you a place at the table and a roof over your miserable head?

The river bank held its trove of shabby treasures that made you dream of something better, somewhere cleaner and warmer, just above the bend. And if the water yielded no particular prize, there were always stones. Early on, with little else to do, you learned just how to choose the right ones for their shape and heft, and after you practiced long enough, you discovered how to whip your scrawny arm so sure and fast those stones would skip and dart and flash all the way across the water. You could follow them sometimes with your eyes and imagine yourself on the other side, ready to journey to a new place – any place that would have you.

And if your only friend pleaded with shining eyes for you to make the stones skip, and stop, and then skip again? Well, that only took a little magic. It was worth the price of getting caught if she'd stay and listen to your stories.

Once you'd come to Hogwarts, you learned, as well, about real snow – that it was something magical and beautiful – nothing like the ash-grimed sludge that clogged the alleys and cobbled streets of before. You could shape it into shimmering globes and aim them, too, just like the stones, with that same long arm, grown more lean than scrawny. And if she asked – your friend – you could make them skip, and stop, and skip again, spinning away just out of her reach. You could turn snowballs into treasures and make her laugh. That was precious enough to take the risk of getting caught.

When she died – your friend – you learned to bury your heart under the heaviest of stones, in snow more befouled than any that had ever shrouded Spinner's End. You could use your arm, sinewy and scarred from battle, to set hexes and curses spinning through the air – but there would be no stopping – and no laughter. Who would dare take the risk of catching you?

And now, standing in the gray shadows of winter twilight – if you cared to, if you wanted – you could still bend on one knee, like a supplicant at the altar rail of innocence, and gather snow as pale and cold as your own hands, shaping and molding it into a sphere of crystalline perfection. If you stood very quietly, very patiently, another friend might pass, her high-peaked hat trailing the bright tartan ribbons of the season. You could draw back your arm, the one not branded by all you've lost, and send that perfection of snow skipping, and stopping, and skipping, yet again – to hover, spinning, just out of her reach. Perhaps she'd even laugh. Or if you'd rather, you could shower her shoulders with flurried white, and when she turned to see who'd dared, you could mock her with the quirk of your brow and a sly "Gotcha".

You could – if you still had the knack.

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Author's Note: Dedicated to Kelly, on the occasion of the coming of the Solstice, inspired by a holiday message from another friend. Sincere thanks to the Real Snape for keeping me on course.