

Deathly Musings

by DarkFate

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Chapter 1 of 1

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He lay on the ground, nearly motionless, as the cold seeped up from the forest floor, chilling his prone form. Dark fluid gushed out of open wounds, dousing him in the warmth of his life-blood. Yet the liquid warmth could not counter the fathomless chill that was emanating from his bones.

It suddenly occurred to him that he was dying: alone, in the dead of night, in a forest too isolated to be of consequence. The thought should have bothered him more, yet it did not. He was oddly indifferent to his own fate... ironic, since he had often been told he was a selfish man. His life did not flash before his eyes, as many had claimed it would, nor did he see any white light. *I suppose not*, he mused idly. A man such as himself would not be granted access to the blessed afterlife... if there was one, that is. What was that saying? "It matters not how one dies, but how one lived that counts". That certainly did not pertain to him. If anything, he would wish to be remembered for how he died. A lifetime of malice; yet could not he be redeemed in death? There are those who would say that a final act of kindness cannot not erase decades of cruelty. But what if said cruelty was necessary for the many veiled acts of humanity? Should not an honourable death atone for at least some of his sins? No, the sins he had committed were beyond redemption, even from the most forgiving souls.

His thoughts flitted rapidly, as though they were trying to make the most of the time they had left. The images he thought would come to mind in his final moments were distinctly absent. It seemed as if all the irrelevant and greatly unimportant things were what he was remembering. He frowned. Or at least he tried to. This was *not* how it was supposed to happen. He had imagined he would see Lily or perhaps Minerva, the woman he loved like a mother. Instead, he was seeing the faces of countless students flitting past his consciousness, Gryffindors and Slytherins alike. Visions of Order meetings, summonses, classes, and staff meetings all faded in and out of his mind, spinning and melding together into a mass of useless memories. His confusion spiralled downward as he drifted in and out of consciousness. Ignoring the pain, he tried desperately to remember a happy memory or the face of one of his loved ones, yet despite his efforts he could not call to the forefront of his mind any of those memories. *Perhaps this is my punishment: dying while unable to recall a single pleasant or comforting memory*, he thought cynically. Life was leaving him; he could *feel* it draining from his body. Tired of fighting the inevitable, he gave in, stopped resisting the images and relaxed against the hard earth. As he succumbed to the eternal darkness, the last image that registered in his mind was that of Portkeying Granger, Weasley and Potter away to safety: his final act in this world.

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