

# Sorrow of the Frozen

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Chapter 1 of 1

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I did not know a great deal of ghosts before my death. They were fewer in number than there were in later years, and I led a closeted existence before I ran away. Still, as it is with all who come to the end of their lives, the choice offered was clear enough to me that it could be made.

I was fortunate; my death came quickly, although not without pain. Perhaps there are people, those who die at home in their beds rather than through murder in a land far away, for whom the end comes comfortably, but I cannot believe it. The body stripped of a soul must surely rebel. And the soul stripped of a body is laid bare.

My cowardice and guilt showed upon me, although how I cannot say. My heart split open to reveal its true character, and in keeping with what it showed, I could not allow it to be seen. The eternal wait for a death that would never come was less fearful to me than that I should be revealed to any and all as a traitor and coward.

The dark, which came as my life faded, never receded. Perhaps I had not enough imagination or experience to create a setting for my choice. Or perhaps my outlook was too bleak, too desolate to form a shape. The awareness that a choice was to be made came to me in stages. For a time, the overwhelming guilt took away all of my sensibility...

*"Helena, I will not have it. You are my daughter and will hear my command. You are a child still, made foolish by too much daydreaming. It is a wonder that anyone should want to marry you at all, and if you cannot find it in yourself to be grateful, you will at least consider my position."*

*"All my life, Mother, I have done nothing but consider your position. I have not ever been allowed to forget it. Do you not realise what you ask of me? What my life would become? All pain, all suffering, and through your fault. Do you not care at all what becomes of me?"*

As she said, I was a child. Too blind and selfish to see that my mother was trying to take care of me and do the right thing, or that had I presented clear arguments and consistent decisions she would have heeded my word, but as I swung between contraries and vilified her to her face, her innate stubbornness was summoned to her aid, and her belief that I could not make my own choices held fast...

*"It is not for you to decide."*

*"It is my own life!"*

*"And you are my own daughter."*

Cruel perhaps, but I had roused all her worst instincts. Throughout my life, I had fought to be free from her influence, and habit more than anything made her quick to oppose me. Child of a woman never born to be a mother, I had been taken from an early life of indulgence into an unexpected whirlpool of hard study unsuited to a girl with no natural inclination to work at anything. I was both lazy and proud, too stubborn to use what wit I had inherited to anyone's advantage but my own. Hopelessly jealous of my mother and her school and her pupils, I mocked and envied them all in equal measure.

Jealousy bred anger. Anger which controlled me, directed me. I had found a new goal, one that I could achieve. I could not build myself up, so I would pull others down to join me. Even my mother. Especially my mother...

*Rowena,*

*I address you by name as I refuse to acknowledge a relationship that has brought me nothing but pain. I have left. I will not be a model to showcase what a fine specimen of humanity you are, nor a doll for you to create worlds for, and then the next day abandon to gather dust until you next wish to invent horrors. I am no longer a child, nor your daughter, but belong to myself, to do with as I wish. I will not leave you love, nor wish you good fortune, for it would be convention not truth, and if you have taught me anything, it is not to do what the world requires for the sake of the world alone.*

*Helena*

It was my guilt, in the end, that drove me to it. I did not consider what might come to pass in the future, only what I wanted presently. The guilt had finally won over the obstinacy, and all I wished was to go backwards. And to go backwards was what I attempted to do. But I was too late. Before I reached my mother, her illness had taken her, and with the bravery that she had not passed to me, there was no chance of her return.

Later, I thought of other reasons for making my choice. Penance for my sins, duty to watch over Hogwarts in my mother's stead, fear of what might have awaited me beyond the darkness. All repeated to myself a thousand times or more as I watched years passing beneath my weary feet. Time slows for us, while rumours tell that for those who make a wiser choice it becomes meaningless or at least rapid. Who can say? If it is true, I envy my mother and all who went before and ahead of her. For all the suffering brought to me by jealousy, I have not yet learnt to be magnanimous, and perhaps I never shall. My spirit is frozen in the past, though in a strange form it holds me in an ever-changing present.

Time and myself are my greatest enemies now. That which I once sought to find is now mine in abundance. My heart will never beat again, my flesh rotted long ago, and yet I must go on, a half-being, a wraith. There is no way back, nor ever shall be.