

Into the Dark

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They say that those who try to forget someone never even really loved them, but sometimes it hurts too much to remember.

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 1

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Summary: They say that those who try to forget someone never even really loved them, but sometimes it just hurts too much to remember.

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Chapter I: Prologue

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*In Bermondsey in Burberry, you held me at the barricade,
the pigs arrived with tear gas*

And I wept at the mistakes we made

We stalked the streets like animals

And danced as windows shattered

For our island, for the thrill of it, for everything that mattered

Oh, how could anyone not want to rip it all apart?

Oh, how could anyone not love your cold, black heart?

([Barricade](#) by Stars)

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"You know, I've never actually believed in all this," she admitted with a sniff, roughly wiping away a stray tear that was running down her cheek.

"In what?" the doctor asked, genuinely intrigued as he propped his chin up on his fist, taking on the classic, cliché pensive pose...one that rather suited the pensive doctor, she noted.

"*This*," she repeated, waving her hands around, aimlessly motioning towards the entire office. "All of this. I've just always thought that...well, I don't know..." she finally admitted with a pitiful sigh. She tried to compose herself, stop the tears and the wave...tsunami of emotions that were simultaneously hitting her, breaking past every defense she had tried to build for her protection.

"I've just always felt that you shouldn't run away from problems, shy away, just because you're scared of some pain. I've always thought that... that life's made up of its little ups and downs because that's what makes it so perfect, that's what makes you appreciate the good all the more, you know? Irony though." She let out a sarcastic and spiteful laugh, none too amused. "*That's* karma's little *bitchy* gift, I suppose," she angrily spat. "I mean it really is ironic that, of all people, am here now... asking you to do this..." She let her voice die out as she made a move for the box of tissues before her, grabbing one and letting out a large, heaving cry as she blew into the tissue.

A small smile tugged at his lips as he lightly patted her extended arm, which was limply lying on the table as the other clutched onto the used tissue as if it were a lifeline, with his available hand. "You know, I have a mantra of sorts with these sort of things," the doctor confided in her, raising his head off of his propped up hand before moving the arm and crossing it with his other as he cocked his head to the side. "It's a quote by Alexander Pope actually, from a poem called 'Eloisa to Abelard,'" he explained. "And in it he makes this one poignant point when he says: '*How happy is the blameless vestal's lot! / The world forgetting, by the world forgot. / Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!*'"

She scoffed. "Well I guess it'd be rather hypocritical of me to disagree now, wouldn't it?...given why I'm here and all... although, I must admit that I'd really like to..."

He shrugged, chortling lightly. "But I wouldn't be so pessimistic about it."

"I just..." she stopped herself with a deep sigh, aggravatingly running a hand through her hair. "I just hate myself for being so weak. I suppose... it kills me not to be able to face my problems head on. After all, isn't life supposed to be about all of the little blunders and screw ups?"

He shrugged helplessly, again. "If it was, then I'd be out of business."

She laughed lightly despite herself. It was a morose and hollow one, though, more so out of self-pity than for the joke itself. "Do you... do you think I'm making the right decision by doing this?"

"Well I don't really know you, now do I? I'm afraid that you're the only person that can actually answer that question," he honestly answered her with a sympathetic smile.

"Yeah," she nodded, pulling her lower lip between her teeth and biting it lightly. "I suppose so... but, if you were me, would you do it?"

He let out a deep breath, pausing for a second before he answered. "If it hurts so much that you don't know how to go on with the pain, how to go through every day with that constant reminder in your head of how much it hurts, then yeah... I really would."

She nodded, letting them both fall into silence, again.

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One need not be a chamber to be haunted;

One need not be a house;

The brain has corridors surpassing

Material place.

~Emily Dickinson, "Time and Eternity"

"How does this actually work?" she suddenly asked a good five minutes later, breaking the quiet. As she spoke the question, she looked up at him, almost innocently as she bit her lip lightly and fidgeted in her seat, a wide-eyed anxiety radiating off of her.

"We'll go from the beginning to the end..."

"How exactly?" she pestered.

He paused for a second, eyeing her oddly. For a second she thought that he might kick her out, saying that she wasn't ready for something like this. Thankfully, however, he didn't. "See those blue potions lining the wall behind you?" he asked.

She tuned towards the wall, scrutinizing it for a minute before turning to him and nodding sharply.

"It's called *memoria novus ordo*," he informed her.

Hermione winced. "Memory new order?"

The doctor shrugged, immediately comprehending her additional, silent question. "Someone wasn't feeling particularly creative, I suppose. It truly *is* an atrocious name, isn't it?"

Hermione laughed lightly despite herself. "Yes, I suppose it is," she admitted with a shy nod.

"Well, either way, it's effective," he assured her. "What it does is while you're on the potion you'll reiterate stories of your time together, and the potion'll manipulate them, deciding whether to erase them completely or reorganize them so someone will take this person's place in your mind."

"How does it do that?" she asked, thoroughly intrigued. "How does it know when?"

"It all really depends on how important of a lesson it was. If it's something that had a great impact on your maturation or mental development, it merely alters the memory so someone will take this person's place in his stead... ergo why we call it safe brain damage. How exactly it does this though, no one quite knows. I suppose you could say that it has a mind of its own."

Hermione winced. "Not sure how reassuring that uncertainty is," she admitted. "But once... once I do this..."

"No turning back," he shook his head, clearly anticipating her question before she had even finished uttering the words. "If you go off the potion too soon, it will leave your psyche so disrupted that you'll be incapacitated. He'll be out of your mind either way since you're going to put something with the essence of him in that potion... it'll just immediately erase him and anything associated to him if you try to stop the process after drinking the potion."

"Why?"

He shrugged regretfully. "No one truly understands the exact workings of the potion to tell you the truth. I suppose people are just too thankful for the miracle that they're afraid to rationalize it. I, however, believe that that might be the first step in the process, deleting his face and name and any situation where he comes up before it moves on to rebuilding the memories... but, then again, this is the mind. No one can really find all of the answers to the brain, it's just a theory."

"But is it safe?"

He nodded. "I've never had a misstep with it save for when people tried to break free of its influence. We've begun restraining people though, to stop them from trying to... I figure it's better to take away their choice than leave them permanently brain damaged...an insurance policy, if you will. You do, however, have to realize that this is voluntary brain damage. You can't simply forget that."

She swallowed, trying to rid herself of the growing lump in her throat. "So it's all or nothing?"

He shrugged. "Pretty much, yeah... so are you sure you want to do this?"

She sighed, letting out a deep breath as she turned her attention and sight back to the potions. Numbly, she nodded. She threw the used tissue into the nearest bin before allowing the doctor to lead her to wherever it was that the entire mess would take place.

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Author's note: *While the rest of the story will be entirely different (in terms of me not even bothering to look at the previous version except for the sake of ideas and gaining a sense of where it all went so horribly wrong) I was semi-pleased with my prologue and have decided to keep it with revisions. Do not be deterred, however; this is not the same catastrophe as before, I promise that!*