

Birthday Laments

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Anything you recognise belongs to JKR and/or WB. I am not making any money with this.

I chose not to give the woman a name. Pick your own favourite.

'Happy birthday, Severus.'

The cold winter winds ripped the words from her lips and carried them away over the lonely grounds of Hogwarts, across the icy waters of the Black Lake and into the shadows of the Forbidden Forest, leaving her wrapped in silence and darkness on top of the Astronomy Tower.

Severus had often roamed these grounds at night, she remembered, to gather his thoughts and fight his demons. He had used the clear water of the lake to brew his potions. And the forest had provided him with the roots and herbs with which he had produced cures for the most painful ails. For his own pain, however, he had never found a cure. Hearts cannot be mended with potions and a soul not be unfrozen by fire.

She wrapped her cloak tighter around herself, defying the winds that were trying to pull the garment from her body and push her over the ramparts of the tower. It was still dark, as the sun hadn't risen yet on this cold January morning. She could barely make out the grounds below her in the darkness, and both the lake and the forest were nothing but shadows in the distance. She shivered and wished for a kinder season, a warm embrace and a lover's touch.

Had it been like this the day Severus was born? Had the cold made his little body quiver? Had the winds threatened to rip away his very first breath? Had the darkness of winter swallowed the sun and dipped the world into various shades of black? And had the little babe known then that his life would always be like this? Lonely, cold and dark?

She had tried. By the gods, she had. Tried to mend his heart, warm him and bring some light into his darkness. From the depths of her own soul she had taken the most tender feelings, all her love and smiles and laid them into his empty hands. She had given all of it gladly, and he had accepted everything. But if he had ever been able to hold onto any of it, she did not know. He had never had the words to tell her, and she had not had the courage to ask.

A tear froze on her cheek, and with trembling hands, she took the lid off the urn, letting the same winds that had carried away her birthday wishes now carry away Severus' ashes over the grounds of Hogwarts, over the waters of the Black Lake and into the shadows of the Forbidden Forest.

'Happy birthday, Severus,' she bid him once more, listening to the wailing of the wind and longing to hear his voice just once more. But he was gone.

'Farewell, my friend,' she whispered and then turned towards the east where the sun was rising, hoping that he was now free and no longer carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders, hoping that his heart had healed.