

I've Always Thought You Were Stupid

by cabepfir

A companion piece to *A Summer in York* from Snape's point of view. Warnings: quotes, references to religion, barbarisms.

I've Always Thought You Were Stupid

Chapter 1 of 1

A companion piece to *A Summer in York* from Snape's point of view. Warnings: quotes, references to religion, barbarisms.

This is a companion piece to *A Summer in York* from Snape's POV. Warnings: references to religion, overflowing quotes, barbaric misuse of language. Everything you recognise belongs to their respective copyright owners. The Potterverse belongs to JK Rowling and associated enterprises. No money is being made with this.

It's not that, just because someone has bad handwriting, it comes automatically natural for him to understand other people's bad handwriting, you know. Even now, it can take me half an hour to decipher two pages of a XV century manuscript, if the stems and flourish interfere too much. Thankfully I am not without a certain experience; correcting inane homework for almost twenty years helped in that sense.

When I finally shut this damn volume about ballistic (ballocks! that's what it should be called), I notice that there's a new librarian. Obviously: Jack left at five. It is, in fact, most convenient that, with the new summer rules, the library stays open until 10 p.m. The sooner I'm finish with this gibberish affair, the better. Why did I decide to stick to such a meticulous reference system?

Staying in a library until late reminds me of Hogwarts. One of the little pleasures of being an adult there. Defying Madam Pince, knowing that she had to eventually give in. Ha.

I've started to become mushy, of lately, when I think of Hogwarts. The librarian, there, she reminds me of...but no, it must be just the hair, because that woman wears glasses...

Wait. It's her. She's even reading a book, no, she is *studying* a book, and what the hell is Miss Granger doing here?

For two weeks, we don't talk. Which is better. Twelve years ago, on this day, I killed Albus. She doesn't seem to remember.

Why is she here? Why does she work in a Muggle library? Has she lost her magic as well?

For two weeks, we don't talk. Then, she faints.

She fainted because she remembered Nagini... Really? I find myself obliged to take her home. For an insensate moment, I think of carrying her to my house, brewing something for her. Luckily, she lives close to the library, because she doesn't seem to have strength enough to go further. She isn't even able to unlock her door. In her bag, I find her wand. Thank Merlin! She has not lost her magic then.

As I walk back home, I try to understand. A trauma? A physical disease? Luckily for my sanity, I have never heard that any of the three nightmares suffered of some kind of illness after the war. Then, what?

I think of Granger's pedantic sense of duty, of her appalling need to do the right thing, of her atrociously limited personality, and I realise that the symptoms have been right under my nose even at Hogwarts:

She's obsessive.

From then on, she enters the unapplied-for ranks of those touched by the demon of anxiety and she becomes Hermione in my mind.

First, and foremost, I have finally a use for all those potions Zabini insists in bringing me. As I race toward her house I even took grandfather's bike to go faster I pray to the never-replying God that Zabini has eventually learnt how to brew properly. Let me roll my eyes.

Her landlady eyes me suspiciously. So what? Why do people always suspect me whenever I try to be helpful?

I decide, then, that I shall teach Hermione how to deal with obsessions.

Not that I'm healed completely no obsessive ever is but I know the theory *so well*. I know *everything* about obsessions. She doesn't, and while a part of me sympathises with what she's going through (she was obsessed by *my* death! *my* death! How horrible must have been, to watch *me* spilling blood all around? There is a reason why we can't see our own face without a mirror), another part is relieved to know that, of the many things I'd rather be glad to ignore, this one can finally be helpful to someone.

Hermione resists and that's normal. I'm not even surprised, actually, when she throws me out from the library. She will understand, with time.

Sometimes, I miss a fag so badly. Healers prohibited me unflinchingly. Your throat, Snape. Your lungs, Snape. Your mother died of cancer, Snape. Yes ma'am. Still I miss it. Inhale. Shhhhhup. Exhale. Pheeeeu. Fog from your nostrils, like a dragon. The acrid taste in your mouth. The lingering aroma. The sensation of relaxing. I *crave* for a fag--

I smoke, now, the bottom of my pencils, but it's not the same.

As I travel south to Wimbledon, my mood is blue.

Twelve years ago, I killed Charity Burbage. Okay, maybe not technically, but still. I killed all those I couldn't save, and every time ~~she~~ died again. And I'm especially tired of thinking about *her* again. I atoned, all right? I atoned. Now get out.

Charity! Another Muggle-born! Always Muggle-born! And all for what? To keep my cover? My fucking, blasted, useless ~~cover~~? My cover was pointless since I was forbidden to seek, reach, and destroy Horcruxes (only bloody Potter could). And that ultimate humiliation: being found by Potter, in the Shack, instead of the contrary. A useless spy, that's what I was.

Besides, the book is coming out awfully. It's worse than *Against a Brick Wall*. I'm blocked. I can't invent a female character. The problem is that I don't have *aname* for her. Anne would be the obvious choice, if it weren't for the confusion with Richard's queen. Rebecca or Leah are jokes too shallow even for me. There are already too many Margarets and Elizabeths around. I'm stuck.

I smoke the back of my pencil.

In his old age, my father can be more repetitive than ever.

"One day we'll organise you a meeting with some good yidenes."

I have been listening to this refrain ever since my mother's death.

"May I remind you," I reply for the hundredth time, "that I'm not exactly a Jew? And that I don't care? Do you remember that Mother's mother was a goye?"

What should it matter to him, moreover? My father is seventy-five and was a rampant *apikoros* in his youth. Behind all this senile dementia, he is still an atheist. I'm a frustrated seeker whose questions were never answered, not even the easy ones, such as: *Why does pain exist? Why did everything happen that way?* What does it matter then, now?

I don't even attempt to make him realise the absurdity of an arranged marriage *for me*, because it's a waste of time.

I think I still go to visit him just because I like trains, as much as any boy who didn't have a model set when he was little.

"That's exactly the point. Better wed over the mixen than over the moor, Severus. You need to marry a yidene to have Jewish children."

Children? Children? Doesn't he know that I hate children? That I can't work out ~~the~~ *sense* for children to exist? That the birth of a child, once, destroyed my life? Doesn't he know how working among children almost drove me insane, at the beginning?

No, he doesn't know.

Hermione knows. Well, maybe not my little problem with the meaning of children, but she knows how it feels to have something on your mind that you don't want.

The other little problem, the one about turning myself into a departed soul, actually predates the end of the second war. Being in a Potions classroom can be sometimes hazardous, for an obsessive. Everything is a potential contaminant. See the children? See the knives? See the poisonous ingredients? The fear of using them against myself sometimes popped out *would you like to slice your wrist with that blade?* but those were fleeting thoughts that lasted but a moment. It was only during my outrageously long convalescence in St. Mungo's that the thoughts became unbearable. Do you know for how long a question like *Did you want to throw yourself out of that window?* can seethe in your mind?

Forever.

I have now reached a point in which I can even pronounce the word 'suicide' without cringing and I can even speak about it as if it was a subject like any other. Not that I strut around talking about it, of course.

The girls in Malfoy Manor are so carefree. Scorpius is fairly tolerable as far as children go, but still. I think of Hermione and wonder if she will surpass the master and learn how to let go, let go.

Since obsessive people feel guilty about the content of their thoughts, she must as well; she must feel like a sinner, even if she's innocent. Thus I come out with a name, Magdalene, and suddenly the character I sought after in vain for months is almost full-shaped in my head.

When I go back to York, I'm in no mood for teaching anymore. I just want to cheer me up. I return to her for a bit of entertainment.

Hermione shakes my hand! Is she stupid? Why do people trust me only when I'm selfish?

Her hand is stupidly warm when it touches mine.

I have always supposed that she was, behind her brilliance, stupid. Look at the way she trusted textbooks! Get creative, Miss Granger, I tried to tell her back then. Create your own spells. Experiment on your own potions. Instead, nothing.

But she had to be, albeit partially, organically disabled. Why would she stand up for Potter, otherwise? I mean, I was obliged, but she? Why should she always be wounded because of Potter?

Why did Muggle-borns always stand for a Potter?

I start looking forward to these ten minutes a day when I have a break between dialogues with myself and words on a sheet.

I don't know if this happens to other people as well, as I never bothered to find out, but when you are a closeted obsessive, like me, you get used to following *at least* two trains of thoughts in your mind. This habit is particularly evident when you happen to talk with some other fellow. With a few years of experience, you become able to answer the other fellow's questions on cue, without paying them even the least attention, because at the same time you are busy with your own mental conversation with yourself. The practice can be quite useful, in conjunction with Occlumency, when you have to deal daily with detested employers. The same applies when you are writing a book. You can chat with someone else, all the while continuing to ponder the construction of your sentences in your mind.

When I walk with Hermione, I can count on the presence of at least *four* streams of thoughts around, and that's quite unusual. More unusual is that she catches all my attention.

Her landlady suspects me, which means I'm doing something good and that it won't end well. She reckons I'm Hermione's suitor. Ah ah ah!

Ah.

She didn't only shake my hand. She invited me to a museum! She read my books! How did she find out? I've always thought she was brilliant.

I am so happy I almost betray myself. "There is an Entrancing Enchantment working in Jorvik, so that visitors also end up finding each other attractive." God, I sound like Lockhart.

Thankfully, she doesn't catch the hint.

I am, for once, so happy so happy that, when you say to me something grave, I can't stay serious. I joke you Disapparate.

It hurts.

You were hurt, too.

You know, it is not that, just because I am a writer, I always have the right words at hand. What can I say? That I'm sorry you didn't aid me in the Shrieking Shack? I didn't even know you were there, then! You and the other two ulcers had only to be kept safe, and what happened instead? You had obsessions about that! You suffered for me! Because of me! And you wish to cry for that? You want to shed your tears for that? Fool! It's I who should weep for you, my dear, dear Herm

But, you're hurt.

I am hurt, too.

I talk through my hat and you go away and maybe this serves me well, because I should have wept with thee, but I was too upset for that. You don't want to talk with me anymore, but you said nothing about looking at you from a distance, checking that you are fine, myself notwithstanding, and that you will arrive home safely. It is not that difficult, considering how you refuse to look around as you pass by, as if this world was now perfectly safe; recalling that I was a good enough spy to know, at least, how to walk quiet and unnoticed.

On Thursday, you don't get out of the library when you are supposed to, but the lights are off, so maybe you left earlier I know there are no visitors in the library this late and I return home telling myself I'm an awful spy, as I've always been.

On Friday, you still don't get out of the library, but the lights stay on. For hours.

I remind myself that you are a stakhanovite, that you are probably still bent over those volumes of yours, that you are working, that you don't want to see me again. I remind myself that the day is inauspicious it's Potter's birthday and that you are probably celebrating with him, but then why there are lights coming from the windows of the reading room? I can tell you are there. You could be hurt, you could have had an attack, you could be dead (no, no, not every single Muggle-born dies young, please, please). In the end, I can't help myself. I step inside the library, profane the sanctity of the archives (staff only!), find you staring in the void.

Then, you cry.

It is one of the most glorious nights of my life.

I'm inordinately relieved in learning that the girl's tastes in men are so poor. Really? She invited him to her house and he slept on the *sofa*? Was he mental?

Why does a woman of her intellect surround herself with de-intellectualised individuals? First Weasley, then this demented Chris Darrel? Why do women always throw themselves at dullards? Why do we all clever people, myself included, always pine for someone stupid?

One of the simple questions I have no answers for.

We sleep on the sofa. She sleeps, at least. I watch her all night. I know I should go away, that it's not proper for me to stay there. But I'm blocked. I do not dare to touch her. I do not dare to go.

I stay.

She's beautiful.

I've never showed the Jewel to anybody. I feel myself blushing like a sissy for what I'm blabbing about its meaning. I manage to stop shortly before blurting out that a sapphire is the perfect stone for engagement rings. I find myself with the chance of inviting Hermione to lunch and immediately I reject it. We are friends again, better not push my luck any further. Basically, I feel the very strong urge to respect Shabbat for maybe the third time of my life, so I go home and do nothing until sunset. At night, I do something I won't tell you about.

I'm writing quite fast, now. Completed a chapter yesterday.

At my father's home, I keep only a handful of records, to distract me from his geriatric *meshugas* at least while cooking. I slip a CD in the kitchen's stereo and I find myself humming different tunes from the usual. Unexpectedly, instead of *I Don't Care*, I hum *I'm Affected*.

When I look into your big brown eyes

And I feel like I'm in paradise

I want you by my side

'Cause I'm affected, 'fected

Yeah, I'm affected, 'fected

Well I'm affected

And all I want is you

Didn't know it a few years ago

But now I finally know

I want you by my side

I want you baby, baby, baby, baby

Weird song.

I put on my very favourites, and instead of *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now*, I whistle *Ask*.

Spending warm Summer days indoors

Writing frightening verse

To a buck-toothed girl in Luxembourg

Well, thankfully Hermione is not in Luxembourg, and I'm not writing verses. I'm done with poetry.

Do you know that, for one year after the Cursed And Thoroughly Abject Slip That Ruined Our Friendship, I wrote ~~her~~ one poem a day, three-hundred-and-sixty-five poems, often with rhymes and proper metres? Then, on the first anniversary of the CATASTROF, I burned all the 365 poems in front of the Fat Lady, wishing *her* a very long life of torment and remorse in the company of her dear Potter. A *very long* life, you see. Luckily they were all dreadful poems, except for the perfect Shakespearean sonnet (sixteen lines, iambic pentameter, etc) made only of synonyms of 'whore'. I did research for it, damn.

I've never been lucky with prophecies, you see.

My father is intolerable. He's been suffering with sciatica and it seems that the sky is going to collapse upon our heads. I don't envy Nancy, not even a bit. Yes, he behaved like that also when he was young and spent months away for England's sake. They say hypochondria is closely related to an obsessive personality. Another album is needed.

I'm dressed in black

Ticked off.

I'm a heart attack

I still wonder how I failed to have one. Opportunities certainly didn't lack.

Do you know that when you fainted...

And my draw is lightning quick

If you're looking for a man with magic hands

I'm not that one anymore. Stop daydreaming, nar.

Most unfortunately, it is now common knowledge that, in the rare cases in which I fall, I actually crash. Thud. Splat. Vile debris of Severus Snape all around.

Don't believe that I like to fall that hard. After all, it caused some of the main problems of my life.

When I start to seek poetry in other languages and to translate it, I think I should rather go back to Hogwarts and teach Potions for another twenty years. What use do I have for poetry about her? As everybody knows, I abhor schmaltz. I can still hear their voices: *Snivellus*, *Snivellus*...

E immersi

noi siam nello spirito

silvestre,

d'arborea vita viventi;

e il tuo volto ebro

è molle di pioggia

come una foglia,

e le tue chiome

auliscono come

le chiare ginestre,

o creatura terrestre

che hai nome

Ermione.

And plunged we

are in the spirit

of the woodland,

living the life of the trees;

and your intoxicated face

is soaked with rain

as a leaf,

and your locks

have the scent

of the bright broom-flowers,

o earthly creature

called

Hermione.

I detest myself. This won't end well.

Except for the food, lunch at the Boddingtons' is usually a very boring affair, with Adele's scruples and all that radiantly shining white. The Yew House is painted white, too, but at least it's dirty white. However, today Hermione is here. (*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day thou art more lovely and more temperate*s not a valid option to greet her, imbecile.) There is the possibility that she will remain in York. I don't know what to say. I have the impression to float for the whole afternoon. She can drag me to whatever horrid carnival she likes, really.

She brings me to the Railway Museum. I've already been here some five, six times. They still don't have on display a big model train set visitors can play with. Not that I would play with it, clearly.

I follow her on the terrible wheel. She asks me if I'm dizzy. Sure, in a sense.

She tells me yes. Yes to what? Which was the question? "It's a..." what? Beautiful day? Lovely way to go mad? A torture? I'm locked inside a damn narrow pod with her and she asks if I'm dizzy! I've always thought she was stupid. She answers questions that weren't asked! I don't remember asking anything; I'm doing my best to stay silent. I'd make myself ridiculous, otherwise.

She puts her head on my shoulder. If she thinks this is a way to prevent me from floating, she's wrong.

Respecting Sundays can have its reasons, too.

All days of the week are holy.

I tell her atrocities and she laughs! She tells back!*Was ever a woman in this humour wooed? Was ever a woman in this humour won? Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot, myself to be a marvellous proper man.*

She grabs my arm. She holds my hand. She walks with me. She kisses me.

I've always thought she was enchanting.

But, in truth, I don't think much at present. I don't understand anything of what it's happening. There aren't thoughts in my head, only the stream of her incomprehensible, wonderful actions.

What does *she* think, on the other hand?

She accompanies me home. She continues to kiss me. She sits on me, rubs herself against my twitching lap, and yet she doesn't go away. What does she want? She's terrifying me.

She asks that we move on the bed. She strides into my room as if she means it. She seems so confident, as if she had seen this coming all along. I am scared to death. Wasn't the chair enough? Does she know that I've done this just once before, during that disgraced Slytherin party after N.E.W.T.s, when even I was admitted to the generalised drinking & fucking?

It wasn't embarrassing. It was *worse*.

What is that? Without skin! Gross!

You take your shirt off and lie face down on the sheets, saying, "Please, kiss me on my back," and the vision of you, half-naked on my bed, the uphill and downhill slopes of your buttocks offered freely to my eyes, throws me off balance. Literally. And you don't laugh. You turn your head to me and your hair cascades on your shoulders in waves. I stumble along to reach you, and my mouth is too dry to utter a sound. My voice left me centuries ago, and I wonder how I have managed to invite you in.

You allow me to leave the lights on. If I were a generous man, I would shut them off. But I'm a selfish man, and in dreams it is allowed to watch.

In dreams, it's allowed to touch and to stroke and to taste. In dreams, our clothes somehow reach the foot of the bed and you are so beautiful I want to cry. I'm welcomed into your open arms and between your loins. I'm allowed to enter there and push and seek and be shipwrecked into you. In dreams, you arch to reach my lips and clamp my waist and rock and gasp against my neck.

If I say something, maybe this will become real and you won't be here anymore... If I speak, the bubble will burst. Power lies within words; by words the world was created. To name something is to shape a bond with it. So, I stay silent. But, in my head, I talk with you all the time.

I love you.

I love you.

I love you.

And apart from *all the rest*, does she know this is the first time I sleep more than five, six hours in a row in years? Decades? I did sleep *eight* hours. Like a normal person.

I think about *all the rest* all the time.

And she stays! She sleeps in my house for three nights. She thought I was planning to throw her out after the first night, ah ah! Ah. I've always said she was silly.

I tell her a lot of things. I spare her the same.

I spare her the details of my therapy in St. Mungo's. How glad I am, now, that she didn't see me in that state, that she didn't come to visit along with Potter and Weasley.

I spare her my trip to Auschwitz (why did I do that? To suffer more? Yes) and my visit to Nurmengard (see above). I skip my crossing of Germany on foot, then of France on foot too, until, near Saumur, I found myself in the French Way of St. James (fate, thy name is irony) and kept following the scallop shell. What was I doing there? Why did nobody chase me away? I was an intruder. I walked on the *Camino* just to follow a path, to know that there was a destination in the end, to know that people wouldn't look at me as a madman if I walked on my feet for so long, unshaved, my head throbbing. I did it, perhaps, just to walk with other people looking for a reason, even if their reason was different from mine. Maybe, as sometimes it happens to me, I wanted to *mix*.

I avoid telling her that it took me a very long while to draw the connection between the nation I hardly belong to and a Muggle birth (everybody knows, now, the consequences of my delay in realising), and to understand how far, how rooted in my family, came the call to *mix*. Like *charoet*. Like the ingredients of a potion. Like the words in a sentence.

I omit telling her that Teresa's mother was very beautiful, too, and that she was as kind to me as a faithfully married woman could honestly be. That, at that time, I licked any crumb of affection that was tossed me, like a beggar.

I forget telling her that I love her, like an idolater.

When she has to return to work, I have no choices but to follow her. I'm bewitched. I fear that if I stop looking at her, she may vanish and never come back, and that this was only a drunken dream I had.

When she slips into the archives, depriving me of the sight of her dear, dear face, it is a painful cut; to stay apart from her feels like a puff of smoke throttled in my lungs, unreleased. Her presence lights me like a match; her absence scorches me, like a cigarette stubbed out on the skin.

Does she understand the effect she has on me? Look where it brought us, that she once shot one of her bluebell flames to my robe! She sets me on fire! I burn for her! She reckoned the storm we've been caught by was horribly hot. I didn't notice, actually, for I now live enclosed in her heat. I burn for her. I melt for her, and she tightens and sparks for me. Why this is happening, I don't care to investigate.

Look at her confidence. She roams across the house as if it belonged to her. Tsk. She walks naked between the bathroom and the bedroom. Cough. She orders me to buy some different tea for her, because she doesn't like Gunpowder. She prefers Lady Grey. Have your laugh about history maniacs.

This is the second weekend she spends in my home, but I am under the impression that it's me finding a home in her, every time.

She lies here, warm and fragrant like summer, and I try to say something, this time, about how beautiful she is and how she stole my heart with one of her glances, but I stammer. I'd like to recite to her the Song of Songs, but when I open my mouth I can say only trifles.

I'd like to say, How beautiful you are, my love! How beautiful you are! Your eyes are doves behind your glasses. Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down Mount Gil'ad. There are young women beyond number, but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, her mother's only child, the darling of the one who bore her.

Instead, I say, "What use do we make for this good-to-nothing?" and she laughs at my atrocious pun and the ripples of her laughter encircle me and I can't speak no more.

I'd like to tell you,

my love

thy hair is one kingdom

the king thereof is darkness

thy forehead is a flight of flowers

thy wrists

are holy

which are the keepers of the keys of thy blood

Your breasts are pillowcases of silk, where the sun powder goes to rest before daylight. The dawn is foretold by your smile. The first ray of light beams from your eyelids. Cupid shoots with his bow, and you shoot with your eye. Your hair is the veins streaming through my body. You are all beauty, my beloved, you have carried my heart away with one bead of your necklace. Your hips are a shell whence I can listen to the sea. Your limbs are the tree of knowledge between heaven and earth. Your womb is an Eden where I can return to. You are earthly and you are holy.

But that wouldn't sound believable in my voice, would it? Besides, she is not wearing a necklace. So I tickle her instead and she laughs and she presses against me and she presses harder and there aren't words in my head anymore, there's only her.

Rainbows spring between your feet as you walk.

Sometimes I nauseate myself with the tripe I come out with when I think of you. I'm supposed to be writing about court intrigues, plots, prisons, executions, and here I am doodling little 'H's on the margins of my notebook.

I wrapped one of your hairs around my heart to hold it like a balloon

The horror! The horror!

dove colombe colomba pomba paloma golubka toyb Taube yonah

Oh, get a grip, Snape.

But look at her hair! Is there anything looking more medieval than her hair? She's Iseult! She is the Lady of Shalott! She tries to sleek it, ah ah. I've always thought she was stupid.

I am ignorant, in this field, completely.

She likes to be kissed on her shoulders, down her spine. She likes to be kissed on her neck, under her ears, around her breasts. She has a scar on her neck it's tiny, but I've noticed it. From the war? When she was tortured? Why does she have a scar on her neck and I don't?

She has a scar between her breasts. That one, I remember. I was there while Poppy dressed it. I couldn't imagine, then, that one day I would know how it felt under my lips.

Sometimes she begins by straddling me, but then she rolls on her back, wants me to kiss her, asks me to stay over her when it ends. She says, "Please." She pants my name, spreads her legs further. If this is the time when I go definitely mad, I regret being sane for so long.

I have to give a try at that music she likes, jazz. The song about hugs and the one about the moon weren't bad. I have to ask her for a record.

At night, when she's not here, I read *The Winter's Tale*. The beginning of Act V troubles me. A lot. Among romances, I prefer *The Tempest*.

"You can stay here, if you wish, until you settle the question with your job. It's only a temporary arrangement."

I don't dare ask for more. I don't know if there is a more. Surely this is some short-living spell. Soon you'll run out of this delusion. You'll remember who I was (I tried to remind you), and who you were, and which role is yours and which is mine in the great play. You'll wake up and notice how old I am, how inadequate, how tedious to live with. I have no magic to offer you, now. I'm Prospero. Summer will be over and you'll fly to London for good, and probably that will seriously be the time when I do something stupid. Just in case, I modify my will. Potter won't get anything but the tin box hidden upstairs, and Draco owns already enough. The house belongs to you.

She's here she's here all day except when she's at work I have to try to behave normally haven't I why should my stomach ache because of some clothes in the wardrobe and a Jorvik mug on the bedside table thankfully the newspaper informs me there is the US Open on I completely forgot I can try to watch a few matches I have to stay prepared for when she'll leave I can't grope her all the time now that she has stopped bleeding she was bleeding you know and apparently it was fine she wasn't even in pain oh what can I do she sleeps here she sleeps here every night and she kisses me when she comes back from work and I cook for her and this is madness and it will definitely break my heart and then you hold me and next you want me and my love your homecoming will be my homecoming

Of all the many idols I bowed to in my life, you are the only one worth adoring.

The rules to be admitted to the worship are quite easy to remember:

1. Brush my teeth after every meal;
2. Kiss you before climax;
3. Don't wake you up in the morning.

I must confess I was forced to perform less enjoyable tasks in my life.

(Zabini dared wake you. What does he know, of the whole chapter *Watching you asleep at my side*)

And before someone protests, please notice how scripture-compliant these instructions are:

4:2 and 6:6. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep that have just come up from being washed.

1:2. Let him smother me with kisses from his mouth.

2:7 and 8:4. I warn you, daughters of Yerushalayim, by the gazelles and deer in the wilds, not to awaken or stir up love until it wants to arise!

It's ridiculous how effortlessly you, my peregrine dove, can shunt me back into orthodoxy. Even the fact that you don't currently eat meat. You are so completely kosher and you don't know it.

You'll miss the gefilte fish, though.

You patiently accept that I can say none of the words that you deserve. The truth is, I fear words. Which is ironical, considering what I presently do for a living, what I did for a living back then. But words have a power that transcends magic. Please remember the CATASTROF. Remember the prophecy. Remember the other catastrophe, when I took a Vow in blank ignorance of all the implications, and as a consequence I had to pronounce the two words I had somehow escaped from uttering, until then. Consider

the obsessive conversations in my head. Imagine (but probably it's better not to) what I had to come out with, when I went back to the Dark Lord. I've taken refuge so many times behind lies, that I can't disentangle myself from speaking through them, even now. I simply can't tell the truth anymore, not even to you.

Maybe I should have given her the poems, instead of burning them. Not that it would have changed much, anyway.

Maybe I should write them down for you, the words that you poured into my soul. You see, I'm so much better at writing, even though my handwriting is so poor.

Maybe I should sing you one of the songs that you like. They say that stutterers have no problems in finishing a sentence when they sing.

I trust you to spot, at least, concealed among the few words I'm able to whisper you, this pitiful perfect rhyme, dove/love, the tritest I could figure.

To make me at ease, you even joke about this! You call it "a friendship with benefits," and I add, "A friendship with benefits minus friendship makes only benefits," and you laugh and I laugh for our wit. No, this is not how friendships go, adored one. I would like to throw cloaks before your feet as you pass, to get down and clinch your knees and beg your favour, before remembering that, because of life's ironies, you answer prayers before they are addressed.

You ask me to stay. You accept *both* jobs. You work three days a week at the Ministry and two days at the Emily Brontë, or vice versa if need be. I've always thought you were stupid. But, after all, you love me, so.

A/N

Alpha-read by Pink Raccoon, revised by Valady.

You have probably recognised the excerpts from the *Song of Songs*. *Your homecoming will be my homecoming* and *my love, thy hair is one kingdom* are by e. e. cummings. *Cupid shoots with his bow, and you shoot with your eyes* is adapted from *Why Was Cupid a Boy* by William Blake. *Was ever a woman in this humour wooed?* and *Upon my life*, etc, come, unsurprisingly, from *Richard III* (I, ii, 227-8; 253-4). *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* is the opening of Sonnet 18. The Italian poem is an excerpt from *La pioggia nel pineto* (*The Rain in the Pinewood*, 1902) by Gabriele D'Annunzio and yes, its protagonist is called Hermione.

I Don't Care and *I'm Affected* are by The Ramones, *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* and *Ask* by The Smiths, *I'm Your Gun* by Alice Cooper. The song about hugs is *Embraceable You* (forgive me, Gershwin) and the other one is *Blue Moon*.

Your basic Yiddish glossary! *Yidene* = Jewish woman, *goye* = gentile woman, *nar* = fool, *apikoros* = unbeliever, *meshugas* = nonsense, *schmaltz* = sentimentality, *gefilte fish* = stuffed fish (a typical Eastern-European dish), *charoset* = paste made with fruits (usually apples) and nuts eaten for Passover.

I spared you songs in Portuguese, so please be kind and leave a review! :)