

The Indweller

by nagandsev

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Chapter 1 of 1

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From the Quality Quidditch Supplies store to Slug and Jiggers Apothecary, a mass of translucent smoke seeped along the cobbled streets seeking a long-lost love. Here and there, the various inhabitants twitched and flinched, attempting to shrug off a creeping, pressing heaviness enveloping them. The searching, porous material probed every nook and cranny, endeavouring a final contact with an all but once abandoned hope. A lost and vanished inamorata. The presence yearned to be free. To be at peace.

She is here ...

Stepping out of Madam Malkin's, her soft brown eyes momentarily noted the billowing dark clouds above which, in the diffused light of eventide, had permeated gently downwards, blending into the shadowy recesses lining the street and buildings. The tall, black-haired witch paused, and a flash of a sweet memory, a faint trace of someone missing in her life, fluttered through her thoughts. But only for a brief second. She blinked the image away. It was too painful.

The dark mist was quickly shrouding the murky cobblestones.

Noting the haughty proprietress of Twilfitt and Tatting's giving her a disquieted look from across the street, the witch forced herself to continue onwards.

As she headed towards the Magical Menagerie, stepping over a black horn-like object, not knowing why, she suddenly stopped in her tracks. She stood, feeling Summoned and lacking the impetus to resist; the drifting fog innocuously crept up and soothingly caressed her. In the dark hollows of her mind, an irrational belief dawned. She began to lose what little sangfroid she had, and tears began to well up uncontrollably.

Then, an unknown entity compelled her forward. In the whirlwind of blindly following the power, coaxing her along, she soon found herself where she had sworn never to return.

Standing in the inner alcove of the once zestful shop, Angelina felt lost in emotion.

'What are you doing here?' The voice was broken, empty, with only the slightest trace of emotion.

She gasped and found it painful to hold his gaze, unable to explain the inexplicable.

Fred... why?

All the anguish and regret of a survivor washed over her in a wave of guilt.

But this was neither a doppelganger nor a ghostly double of a living person but the corporeal, surviving twin himself: George.

Wasting away with grief...

Both stared at the other, overwhelmed and confounded.

In silence, the two slowly came together. Each step, a thawing of the numbness with which each had lived. Each step, a warming to life and love lingering and awaiting to be embraced within them.

Delighted that his final Decoy Detonator had brought about its intended purpose, the inventor and former mischief-maker could let go. The prankster of a spirit gave a peaceful sigh.

As their hands met, George and Angelina trembled, tingling. A cool, gentle breeze passed through them.

At long last, knowing his brother George would have a true companion to help heal some of the wounds, the disembodied spirit of Fred Weasley peacefully crossed over.

A/N: Thank you for betaing, the most wonderful, lyn_f – you're the best!

Prompt: An unseen presence unsettles the denizens of Diagon Alley.