

Tension

by Aurette

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Thank you to my beta.

The air is pregnant.

Swollen.

Presaging the storm that has already caused havoc up ahead on the tracks. Trees are down, they've been told. They'll be cleared when the raging tempest abates.

Here, there is nothing yet. The sky is blue, quilted with white. *Mares' tails and mackerel scales...* What's coming will be terrible, she fears.

She turns to her newest colleague. Sees his face pressed against the window, trying to catch a glimpse of what lies ahead. His future? An odd thing for him, she thinks. He drags his past around with him like he's been shackled to it.

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"We should check the children," she says. "Boredom breeds."

He turns, flashes her a look with his black eyes. He seems embarrassed to be caught being curious... hungry.

She knows. They all do. Not everything, but the little that was told is damning.

What has he faced? What have those eyes seen?

His gaze pushes her toward thoughts that make her feel discomfited. They feel inappropriate, although they aren't. He's not a student anymore. Five years younger than her, really.

She looks away.

His expression flattens, and he gives her a curt nod. He's too young to be so jaded.

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He follows her through the cars, his black robes sweeping against the doors on either side. She need say nothing to the children with guilty faces. He is threat enough

behind her.

Even those students that would remember him as a seventh year know the dynamic has shifted. No one tests him. Everyone is afraid.

Even her.

Death Eater, they whisper.

It makes her shiver.

Is that why? Is it the darkness seeping off him that draws her?

It certainly isn't his face. He's not good looking and doesn't show any promise of that ever changing.

And yet... she wants him.

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"Let's check outside," she says once they reach the front of the train.

He nods and pulls open the door, blasting them both with heat.

The air outside is oppressive, charged. Ahead, the sky is a bruise. Engorged with menace.

She envies the bead of sweat rolling into his collar.

He holds out his hand. "Watch your step, Professor."

"Septima," she replies, feeling her pulse quicken at his touch.

His eyes stab at hers, and they both pause, still touching.

Damn.

Did he hear it in her voice?

His eyes flick over her, assessing, and then his hand is gone.

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He stomps toward the last car.

She steps carefully on the gravel, ever shifting underfoot.

Catching up, she finds him still as stone, staring out at the horizon.

His fists are clenched, and his gaze is... anxious. Fearful.

She touches his shoulder gently. Carefully. "What's out there?"

He whispers, "Godric's Hollow."

She flails for pleasant. "Evans moved there after she married. She wrote to Minerva. Did you know she's had a baby?"

He snarls, and she realizes she's badly miscalculated somehow.

Failed.

Lost him.

There's an ominous rumble of thunder as he climbs back aboard.

Ahead, the sky turns black.

Prompt: Wicked weather lands two travelers in an extremely awkward situation.