

Love of a Castle

by LittleMissBunker

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Protect her.

In the office of Dumbledore, the Keeper of Wizards, I begin. A stream of strong magic shoots out of me, mingles with the Keeper's, and forms a circle to envelop Sybill Trelawney. She stands as if nailed to my floor, her spine relaxing slightly at the spell's warmth. His piercing blue eyes hold hers, enthralled beneath her outsized spectacles.

"You are in great danger," he tells her, "and you need protection."

While performing the long incantation, his wand moving slowly along her body, head to foot, he has called on my ancient enchantments to join with his. His eyes bore into hers, aflame with icy intensity. He cannot command here, only persuade. He does not...cannot...own me. But his words are persuasive, timeless words in a timeless tongue: *protect her, protect her, protect her...*

She now carries a small piece of me, and of the Keeper, around her wherever she goes. As long as her home is within my boundaries, no Dark Magic can destroy her.

The Keeper performs Obliviation, watching her face change until he is certain all memory of the Safeguarding Spell has been erased. Instantly his voice brightens; he is again only the Headmaster welcoming the newest Hogwarts professor. As if this were an ordinary meeting, he shakes her hand warmly, wishing her a wonderful start of term.

I have absorbed earth-turns' worth of the memories of human emotions. Therefore, I know something about them, if only in the abstract. One of these is ~~protectiveness~~ *protectiveness*.

Caretaker Filch brings Sybill to my North Tower. Her trunks float up the staircase in front of her wand. She takes in the classroom and private quarters for the first time, twirling in circles in enjoyment of her new space, musing aloud as she explores every inch of it. "Well, this is certainly a nice change from fortune-telling in taverns. Here, Roland...pretend you're a Muggle plush kitty and stop squirming, your stuffing's coming out...you can sit on the mantel. If only Mother could see me now! Me, an official Professor of Divination...at last!"

She is safe, under the double magic placed upon her by me and the Keeper. There are no threats. I am calm and relaxed, with young and old wizards and ghosts, my music and my lifeblood, active within my many walls like a living heartbeat.

Sybill gazes out of the window onto my green spaces. All at once she tenses, eyes wide, suddenly conscious of my stone frame beneath her thin hands, surrounding her shoulders.

She seems to glimpse something in it for the first time. Her hands begin to stroke my surface, as one strokes flesh or fur.

In that moment, she *sees* me.

And from her lips come whispered words: "Hello, Hogwarts."

This surprises me. Yes, most wizards can sense my powerful magic, and occasionally a professor or youngling will seem to talk to me on impulse, out of desperation, to open one of my doors or perhaps to access my Hidden Room. But this is the first time in many earth-turns that someone has truly *spoken to me*. Sybill has done so, shyly, haltingly, as if addressing an intimidating yet profoundly good person.

Suns go by.

She awakens brightly, eyes sparkling, a curious smile on her face. She stretches and yawns luxuriously. "Good morning, North Tower."

The boy, Harry Potter, is safe in my edifice. I sense a double magic on him, placed earth-turns ago. The Keeper did not call on my protection.

In her solitary hours, Sybill unburdens herself to me. "...Especially Mr. Potter...*he* should know better, given his birth planets and his incredible history. All this nonsense about 'coincidence' and 'suggestibility'...pooh! There's no such thing as 'coincidence' when it comes to matters of fate. Xeno writes about this in *The Quibbler*; he's really quite fascinating..."

The Caretaker does not clean our two Tower rooms; Sybill does so herself. "And Filch told me, 'Now, Professor Trelawney, I've been taking care of this here tower for years...there's no need for you to trouble yerself about it.' Well, I looked right at him and I said I'd ask the Headmaster what he had to say. And Professor Dumbledore said yes...he had the strangest look on his face, as if he knew something...but I must notify Filch at the first sign of any structural problem. I'll just start over here, then." She cleans, humming merrily now and then, not only keeping chairs and tables in order but Scourgifying my stone walls and floor, taking care to get into every hidden, secret crevice, talking to me while she works. Sometimes she uses her hands on me, with a cleansing rag, working slowly and thoroughly, enjoying the contact with my unyielding form.

The sky's light bursts into color, then falls. "I suppose it's time for me to have a bath now, which means undressing. I don't know why I'm a bit shy about it. After all, it's only *you*, it's just your lamps and ceiling gazing down upon me... Oh dear, I'm rather warm and flushed, perhaps it's the moon, it's first quarter this evening..."

On occasion, after her nightly washing, Sybill kneels down to lie directly on me, wincing at the touch of cold stone on her nipples, heart racing like time itself, just to feel my solid firmness against her bare skin.

Many suns pass, many moons, many earth-turns.

The sky is black, and the moon glows softly over me, peeping through my windows, drawing young wizards' eyes and thoughts. I am calm, awake and alive, sensing the Caretaker's footsteps, the myriad snores in sleeping-rooms, my own damp spaces, the tickle of chill wind through leaves and grass, the birds that swoop in and out of my Owlery.

All is well.

I feel a tug in my North Tower. A strange sucking sensation.

Sybill lies here in her bed, eyes closed in sleep, the blankets in chaos, thighs in frantic motion.

Her mind, wide open and unbidden, is pulling firmly at my memory.

Sounds and images of an old castle, hundreds of doings and dreamings of wizards and witches, professors and caretakers and healers, all writhing in desperate lust, engaging in coitus, spending semen in secret, reaching orgasm within my walls, against my grass, in my dungeons. And animals...rutting dogs, mounting rabbits, thrusting cats.

Still asleep, she moans, throaty and low. Her hand moves over the plums of her breasts to pinch and pull at one nipple, then the other. The bedclothes rustle as she rubs them back and forth against the junction of her thighs. At last she shudders, gasps, murmurs my name over and over again: "Yes, dear castle... *yes... Hogwarts...*" Her voice softens, her legs relax, becoming still again, sheets locked firmly in her hidden place.

She has not taken away the memories, only *felt* them and made a link with me, an invisible cord between her mind and my history. The cord dissolves, leaving only a sleeping woman, face covered in beads of perspiration, her curls limp and wild.

This is new to me, this sharing. It has been thousands of earth-turns since I have held a human with this psychic gift. And the sexual connection is something I have never before experienced.

When the sun next falls from the world, as the witch's eyes close and her mind opens, I freely share my thousands of sexual scenes. Sybill calls on me, wordlessly, and I choose to respond. There is a sense of being useful.

"Oh, good morning, North Tower... Well, it seems I've made a mess of the bedclothes again.*Scourgify*. There, that's better."

If I were human, my entire structure would swell with pride.

My dungeons, low and secret.

Here whisper memories of the deepest envy, destruction, and fear. I know it well, a near-constant hum, entwined with the rumbling of the many lives within and the water in my pipes, with occasional spikes of intensity through the hundreds of earth-turns.

Just recently this presence has become stronger, more insistent.

One weak sun, I am jolted into sharp awareness by a silent roar, a blast of aching malice that seems to come at once from my dungeons, from outside, and from a single infinitesimal spot within my Hidden Room. This has happened before. It is beginning again. The Threat has returned.

This Threat once called me his home as well. But he never had Keeper Dippet's protection. I sensed Dumbledore's dread of him, how he knew the young human was a danger to me, even then. He wants me, always has, from the very beginning. But he cannot bond to me, link his mind with my being, as Sybill has done. He looks upon me only as a powerful tool he yearns to bend to his will. And the answering call in my dungeons, the part of me that seeks my own engulfment, my end...here it is, once again.

Out on my spaces, where all wizards' attention is focused on a vast arrangement of hedges, the Keeper's body stiffens, eyes narrowed. Only Sybill goes suddenly pale, her wide eyes turned in the direction of my North Tower.

"Something's happened," she says. "I misread the signs... Cedric's dead. He's *dead*. They say You-Know-Who's back, but that can't be... Can it? Gods, I hope it's not that. But I'm here for you, if that means anything. You're so... so *colossal*; that's why so often I can only speak to a single part of you. Sometimes you just feel too big to talk to, and I've never felt quite so small in my life. You've done so much for me, more than I can ever... I'll clean your crevices, that's what I'll do. I'll Scourgify and scrub every surface until everything is just perfect; at least I can do that, and then I'll see what my Inner Eye and my best crystal ball can tell me about you, but not tonight. No, I won't do it now, because I'm absolutely terrified of what I might find. I'll just take care of you tonight."

For hours I feel her hands at work, until the sweat pours from her arms and they can move no more.

A new witch in pink has come through my oaken doors to teach the young wizards. She is interesting in her obvious and silly desire to make me her own. Does she not know that no human can possess me?

"Hello, Tower," Sybill sighs. "I must look awful. This Dolo...Professor Umbridge, I don't think she quite likes me, but perhaps our energies, our wavelengths, are just different. Perhaps when we get to know each other a bit better, we can learn to find common ground. I need to center myself, help me center, please..." With that, she slumps down onto my surface, legs crossed, eyes closed, and places one trembling palm on me. She calls without words, and I share a long memory of soft sunlight, pale clouds, grass tickling bare fingers and toes. Slowly relaxing, she leans down to kiss that hand-warmed spot on my floor.

One falling sun, she is here with a large bottle. "Cooking sherry," she whispers. "Courtesy of your kitchens. Haven't had it in a while. My great-great-gran used to drink it. It helped her with her prophecies. Mother told me so. And I need all the help I can get. I'm just going to fill this teacup and...cheers...urgh! nasty stuff. Sweetness Charm...*Dulcio*...there, that's a little better. I might as well have a little more; it does take the edge off. Oh, that horrible woman. I don't know how a person can be so... so awful. She has no aura at all, none whatsoever. Better finish this or it'll go stale. Gods, every time she sees me... She wants to break me, she wants me gone. I've been on my own before and I can do it again, so it's not that I can't leave, it's that...

"Oh Merlin, Filch is calling me. Breathe, Sybill, breathe..."

The ball in the sky travels a short distance, and she returns, pressing her body and then her lips against my wall, fingers caressing where one stone meets another, letting her tears wet the place where her cheek rests. "That horrid hag tried to sack me. She tried to make me leave you, but Minerva wouldn't let her come near me, and then Professor Dumbledore came in, and he put that woman in her place! Really, if *she* tried to remove me bodily, I...well, I might have *kicked* her.

"*Hogwarts, I love you so much.* And I love your students...oh, even though most of them don't have a speck of the Sight, they can be wonderful people. I know that You-Know-Who has returned. They try to deny it, but everyone knows...he murdered Cedric Diggory...and I'm frightened. I don't know what to do, but I will do whatever I can to help you, and I won't ever leave. You are my home, and I will never, never let anyone take me away."

Her words can be considered touching. I am amused by this tiny witch whom I have become used to. She speaks to my structure, my windows and ceiling and fireplace, as if I am made of muscle and bone, perhaps even a witch or wizard. As if I am not everywhere at once, attending easily to all and none of hundreds of sounds and sights and smells, the random emotions of a world of younglings, and this new yet familiar alertness pervading my being, the awareness of a Threat. I am at once in my Great Hall and in each and every one of my dormitories and corridors and green rustling spaces, in the cabin I share with the Keeper of Animals...every place I exist. But Sybill looks to me as her great friend, her foundation, her moat. Humans are curious things.

All is not well. I am restless.

My dungeons...and the single tiny point in my Hidden Room...pulse and burn with memories of power, bloodshed, and annihilation.

Everything within my body, alive and undead, crawls with anxiety and fear.

Sybill feels it too.

She lies in a thin sleep, one angled shoulder twitching, dark circles under her eyes. From my ceiling I see her face, turned to a copy of *The Quibbler* on the pillow beside her. One slender hand is tucked behind her head, while the other rests rather firmly atop the magazine, open to a certain well-worn page. She has not called on me tonight, sexually or otherwise.

I share with her a peaceful scene, the one she seems to enjoy the most. A shower of shooting stars over my lake on a warm moon, in the Time of the Four Founders. Soon her shoulder becomes still, and deep rhythmic snoring begins.

I send out a gentle wisp of magic from my Tower wall. It sweeps once through her overgrown hair, disturbing the strands just the slightest bit.

She smiles in her sleep.