

Bouquet of Roses

by Gelsey

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship.
Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

I. Pink

Chapter 1 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

I. Pink

"Gratitude is born in hearts that take time to count up past mercies." – Charles E. Jefferson

"You are such a... a jerk, Scorpius Malfoy!" Rose Weasley's voice cut sharply through the quiet din of the Ravenclaw common room, which was mercifully under-populated during the lunch hour

The wiser ones of the small crowd melted into the background and out of the room. Three years of experience taught them that when Rose and Scorpius had words, the best thing to do was simply get out of the way. Both had scathing tongues and quick wits—dangerous at any time.

"It's the right way to do it, and you know it," Scorpius shot back. Smugly. *The little cretin*, she thought angrily.

"It is not. Once you calculate the absolutes and balance the Pythagorean sets, the entire thing falls apart," she replied hotly.

"We're not even on Pythagorean sets yet, Rosie. The assignment doesn't call for that. Let's just get the bloody thing done already! I have a Potions project to do."

The casual use of a hated nickname made Rose see red. It was a worse trigger than the plucking of her hair—those tugs on her braids, on ponytails, on any stray curl that happened to be available whenever he felt like picking on her. "I don't care, *Score*," she said. He didn't wince at the nickname though she knew he wasn't fond of it. "We'll do this right or by Merlin, we'll both fail this project! And I do NOT fail anything!" Her small hands slammed down onto the table emphatically.

Scorpius leaned forward, mimicking her position. "You will not cause me to fail this assignment," he said, steady, calm, and all too quiet.

For the first time, Rose realized she'd really made him angry. The implied threat, however, made her even angrier. "You don't scare me, Malfoy, so don't even try." She tossed her head, sending her auburn curls bouncing.

"Don't push me, Rosie," he said fiercely.

"Go leap off the Astronomy Tower," she yelled, fed up with the entire argument. She jerkily grabbed her bag and stomped out of the common room. "At least then I can do the project *my way*," she muttered, wishing she had a door to slam behind her.

"Hey, Xander, have you seen Scorpius?" Rose asked her yearmate Slytherin as she passed him on the way out of the Great Hall headed toward her first—and, she knew, Scorpius' second—class of the day.

"Hm?" The odd boy looked up, pulled out of his own little world—Aunt Luna's son was weird, no question, but then, so was his father, Blaise Zabini. "Oh, up near the Charms classroom. I think your cousin James was wanting a word with him."

Rose cursed and stormed past him. The rather unflappable boy merely blinked and went on his way. "Damn Gryffindors," she muttered darkly, having an inkling of what James might want to say to her Housemate.

By the time she arrived at the corridor, it was deserted but for Scorpius, who was looking rather the worse for wear. His usually impeccable (almost abnormally so) robes were rumpled, his tie askew. A closer look showed a smear of blood under his nose where he'd obviously tried to wipe away a nosebleed. His bag of things was strewn at his feet: parchment, quills, books and ink.

"Ah, bloody hell," she swore. "I'll kill him. I'll kill him and resurrect him and kill him again, the great big berk."

Scorpius regarded her warily, pale hand touching his nose gingerly. His eyes seemed to accuse her silently, and she realized with a start that he thought *she'd* sent James after him. She marched right up to him and moved his hand, dabbing at the blood still slowly seeping with a clean hanky Conjured with a flick of her wand.

"Well, are you happy now?" he asked softly, voice sounding a little thicker than normal. Rose didn't think it was broken, but she couldn't be sure.

"Believe me, I'm the last person to send James after anyone. The wanker." Rose considered her cousin, James Sirius, a cross her family had to bear. A very annoying and mischievous cross.

"And your other cousins?" There was less accusation now, and Scorpius wasn't trying to subtly lean away from her any longer.

A storm cloud of slowly seething rage crossed behind her eyes. "The coward. I can't believe he's in Gryffindor. I'm really sorry, Scorpius. I can't believe he did this." Her sincerity bled through her anger.

The blond boy sighed and took the hanky from her, dabbing carefully at his tender nose. "Let's just get to Transfiguration. We're going to be late if we don't hurry." He wouldn't apologize for accusing her, but his tone made it clear he believed her.

"All right." Unconsciously, her hands roamed, straightening his clothing with brisk economical movements that she'd learned from her mother. This time he did make a sound of protest—his dignity demanding it, she suspected with a smile. "Let's get this picked up, and we'll be there in a trifle."

They shuffled his stuff into some semblance of order, and for the first time Scorpius expressed anger when he realized that the essay he'd labored long and hard over—Rose knew better than almost anyone that Transfiguration wasn't his best or favourite subject—was missing. "He took it! That, that..."

"Are you sure you had it?" Rose asked.

"Yes I'm sure! Merlin, Rose, you saw how hard I worked on it. Like I would forget it the day it's due!"

Rose took a deep breath, conscious of the fact that people would start coming through the Charms corridor any moment. "Go, go," she told Scorpius, pushing him gently down the hall. "I'll get it, just go."

He made as if to protest, but just then there was the first pre-class rush, and his mouth clicked shut in the presence of so many others. "Go," she hissed once more, and this time he went.

She slid into Transfiguration class five minutes late, just as Professor McGonagall was calling for them to hand in their essays. She endured the lecture on tardiness passively and apologized with a simple, "I'm sorry, Professor, I forgot my essay in my room. It won't happen again." She sat down in the seat next to Scorpius with suppressed breathlessness, and he could just barely make out the edge of his essay tucked neatly under her own.

His joy in getting his essay in time to turn it in was only eclipsed later that day by the faint hand print still visible on James Potter's cheek.

The next morning Rose was woken early by the tapping of an owl on the dormitory window. Her roommates grumbled, and she stumbled to open it. A regal looking owl swooped in on silent wings, dropped something on her bed, and swooped back out before she could even think of closing the window.

She growled quietly under her breath and went back to bed, practically diving under the covers to warm up again. It was then she turned her attention to what had been delivered—a single pink rose, partly opened and obviously in stasis.

There was a small note and a larger scroll of parchment attached to the beautiful flower. The note read simply, *Thank you*, in Scorpius' distinctively elegant scrawl. The scroll turned out to contain their Arithmancy project, complete with the revisions she'd argued with him for just yesterday.

She sniffed the flower and smiled. Her frienemy certainly knew how to say thank you.

II. Yellow

Chapter 2 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

II. Yellow

"A friend is one who knows you and loves you just the same." – Elbert Hubbard

"Two hundred points! Weasley, what the bloody hell did you do to lose us *two hundred points*!?" The Head Girl and her fellow Ravenclaw was positively apoplectic in her

rage. "We actually stood a chance, for *once*, to win the House Cup! What did you do?"

Rose was torn between her temper and shame at having lost the points. The anger won, and with her own cheeks growing more pink, she snapped, "I hexed Scotty McLaggen. He's in the Infirmary."

"You... you... *hexed* the *Head Boy*!" Sheila stumbled back to sit down, speechless. "What were you thinking, you stupid little girl! I can't believe you would do that!"

"I was *thinking* that he was half a step away from *raping* Gwyneth Jones!"

Silence drew out for a long moment before the older girl said flatly, "I don't believe you. Scotty is a good guy."

Rose snorted. "Obviously you don't know him, then," she said.

"He's my counterpart! I'm sure I know him better than *you*!" The girl was recovering from her shock and reverting back to anger.

The sixteen-year-old redhead lifted her chin up defiantly. "I know what I saw," Rose said stiffly. "Scotty McLaggen has abused his position before, and I don't care if Gwyn denies it now! I know it!"

But knowing it and proving it turned out to be impossible. Practically her whole House was furious with her, preferring to believe that Rose's temper once again got the best of her. The entirety of Gryffindor House—where McLaggen, like his father before him, dwelled—was out to get her, including several of her cousins. Even her brother Hugo was pretending she didn't exist, which hurt more than she let on.

She sat, alone, at the very end of the table in the Great Hall, and pretended to read while she ate. Only a day had gone by, and already having half (or more) of the school treating her like a pariah was wearing on her. It didn't help that she'd received a Howler from her father that morning and a stern letter of reprimand from her mother that afternoon.

Rose was then surprised when Scorpius plopped down gracefully onto the bench across from her and immediately reached for the dish with pudding.

"Didn't your mum teach you to eat dinner before pudding?" Rose snapped. She had been understandably grumpy, at least in her opinion, since the incident happened.

"Certainly. I just don't listen to her all the time," he replied back, unfazed. "My, this thing with McLaggen has you in a bitchy mood."

Rose's lips compressed into a flat line. She wanted to tell him to sod off... but he was the only one who had talked to her so far today. "Having fun poking at the outcast, Malfoy?" she snarled.

"Down, girl," he said mildly. "I'm actually surprised that it's taken this long for McLaggen to get hexed."

The change of topic made her sit back and really look at him. He wasn't looking at her with disdain or anger. There was an air of curiosity about him, but that was about it. "What do you want?" she asked more softly. "All talking to me is going to get you ostracized for fraternizing with 'the enemy.'"

"And I should care, why?" Scorpius asked sarcastically. "If I wanted something, I'd be over there with them. I'm over here because I'd rather be here than there."

She was reminded of the pureblood airs her father always ranted about when the subject of the Malfoys or any other of the old families from back during the war came up. Perhaps Scorpius could afford this attitude... but perhaps not. She'd known him for years, ever since coming to Hogwarts, and though not very friendly most of the time, she knew him reasonably well. He didn't have many friends, and this could feasibly lose him a couple of them.

"All—all right, then. Stay." For all the awkwardness, it was softly spoken, and Scorpius gave her a winning grin before starting in on his pudding. Her heart warmed—she wasn't completely alone after all.

Breakfast the next morning saw the owl deliveries. Rose was full of trepidation—she fully expected to hear more recriminations from the rest of her family, now that there had been enough time for the news to get around. Sometimes it really sucked to have such a large family that practically lived in one another's pockets.

True to form, there was a letter from her grandparents Weasley and a couple of her uncles. She tucked these away but hesitated on the last—it was from Uncle Harry. He rarely wrote, being very busy in the Aurory and rather the most quiet of her uncles (except maybe for Uncle Percy), but when he did, he always had something important to say. She opened it, not having to worry about prying eyes—no one was talking to her still, except Scorpius, who rarely made it to breakfast, the layabout.

Dear Rosie,

I know you've probably had your fill of familial interference at this point, but I hope you'll take a moment for your godfather. I'm proud of you.

Rosie nearly dropped the letter in her surprise.

I've been exactly where you are in the past, if for some slightly different reasons. I remember hearing about the McLaggen boy from Albus in the past, and I'm confident that you wouldn't have done anything so drastic if you hadn't been completely sure of yourself. Your mother might have forgotten, but his father wasn't precisely a great catch either. So long as you can ask yourself, would I do it again, and the answer is yes, then you are justified. The world isn't all black and white.

Take this time as a lesson in friendship, if you can—it's those who stick by you in this time that are worth the most. Keep your head up, Rosie. It will get better.

Much love,

Harry

Rose had tears in her eyes at the end of the note, and this one she tucked in her inner pocket, over her heart. She would read it many times over the next few weeks, she sensed. She looked up and was surprised to find another owl patiently waiting on top of the plate of toast, a flower clutched in its beak.

It was a bright, cheery yellow, opened in that perfect suspension of full bloom. While she'd had to look up the various meanings of the pink one of last year in the book her mother had given her, this one came to her easily—yellow roses were the universal symbol of friendship.

The note from this one read: *Cheer up, sunshine.* She couldn't help but think about what Uncle Harry had just said about friends.

III. Lavender

Chapter 3 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

III. Lavender

"Life's enchanted cup sparkles near the brim." – Lord Byron

The Yule Ball started out being everything Rose had dreamt it would be. Horatio Nott had asked her to attend, and despite being a full seventeen years old, having one of the handsomest boys in school ask *her* to the biggest event of the school year set her heart racing and put a permanent blush of pleasure to her cheeks. It didn't matter that the young man had barely spoken a word to her before the asking, or that Xander Zabini didn't like him, or that Scorpius thought she was acting completely daft.

Because *she* was going to the ball with *Horatio Nott!*

She had on the expensive set of midnight blue robes her mother had bought for her as a birthday gift; they flattered her eyes. Carrie Finch-Fletchley did her hair—almost everyone but Rose had conveniently forgotten about the previous year's debacle, especially when she and Scorpius had managed to win back that many points before the end of the year, plus some—and really, she felt prettier than she'd ever felt before.

Horatio was the perfect gentleman, picking her up just outside of the common room. He brought her a flower—a purple iris that at the time she thought was charming, though she couldn't help but think he might have gone with her namesake. He smiled at her—Merlin, he was handsome—and led her to the Great Hall.

Don't I look great? she wanted to ask, but didn't. That would be vain of her.

"I'll just get us some punch," he told her, ushering her in, not pausing under the mistletoe, much to her inner disappointment. But he was being so gallant and attentive...

... until he never came back. Rose waited patiently at one of the small tables for ten minutes, then twenty, and then thirty. At thirty-two, she stood and decided to go find him. He was popular, after all, but he was *her* date tonight.

She found him partly across the room, not even hidden from sight, not really, snogging that Hufflepuff princess, Marsha Vaisey. Marsha Vaisey, who was possibly the most beautiful girl at school since Rose's cousin Victoire attended. Marsha, with the big breasts and the flat stomach and the fucking perfect blonde hair and green eyes, who had always hated Rose for her cousins and her grades and the fact that James had dumped her and that Marsha never, ever beat her at a single thing.

Marsha saw her, over Horatio's shoulder, and sighed. And smirked. "Oh, dear," she said. "Did you really think Horatio was going to be here with you?"

Horatio looked back and her and smirked before nuzzling Marsha's neck. It had all been a set up. All of it. And she'd been played for the fool. Her eyes flooded with tears as the two lovers laughed, mocking her excitement and care of dress and everything.

She didn't remember leaving the ball. She just... left. She definitely didn't remember brushing past Scorpius, but she must have. Or perhaps he simply saw those two snogging and put two and two together, because he found her not too much longer later, hidden in a far nook of the library where she—and often he—studied.

Rose sniffled into her knees, not wanting to look up, knowing that her face looked a frightful mess. She wasn't the sort who looked pretty when they cried—she got all blotchy and ugly. "Go away," she muttered. Gods, she really didn't want anyone, even him, to see her right now. It was too embarrassing, it was raw and painful and it hurt and she was so *stupid*, so damn stupid, she didn't want anyone to see her like this.

She heard him rather than saw him sit down and rock his chair so it stood balanced on its back legs. "Don't you have a date to attend to?" she asked harshly.

"Not anymore," he said blithely. "But some things are more important than the likes of Daisy Brown-Wood. I only asked her because you had a date, anyway."

She finally looked up when he said that, mouth partially open but uncertain of what to say. He looked casual and cocky, just like she'd expected, but she'd forgotten that he would be in dress robes. In them, he could have been some young, roguish lord of the manor, hair just slightly too long, enough to brush into his eyes. The high collar of the robes and the fine cut of them combined to make him look... well, *yummy* was the first word to her mind, not that she'd ever admit it.

"What? I couldn't go alone if you had a date," he drawled mildly, quashing her brief hope that he'd been going to ask her until *that jerk* had.

Rose retreated back to sulking into the knees of her robes. "What, no 'I told you so'?" she asked darkly, feeling thoroughly sorry for herself.

"Nah. I figure you're doing that to yourself enough for everyone." He remained rather quiet, simply waiting on her. She finally looked up again, knowing she looked a mess.

"He didn't even say I looked nice." She hadn't realized it would sound so sad and forlorn, but it did, coloring the air with the ashy remains of her daydreams.

"Well, my dear, that is because he is an arse." Scorpius stood in one quick, graceful movement and held his hand out to her. "Come on, let me see you."

Rose reluctantly stood, unfolding herself from the chair and brushing vainly at the lines of her robes, hoping she hadn't hopelessly wrinkled them. Scorpius whispered a spell, making the nearby candles shine more brightly so he could see her. He looked for long enough to make her duck her head and feel self-conscious.

"None of that, now," he told her, reaching up to tilt her face back up. "You look... absolutely enchanting, Rosie. Don't let those two vindictive fools make you think otherwise."

She didn't feel enchanting, not in the least, let alone beautiful, but he seemed so serious and heartfelt that she smiled anyway. Even the nickname, once hated, felt like an endearment.

"Come on, dance with me, Rosie. It's the last Yule Ball we'll ever have at Hogwarts," he said, reaching out to grasp her hand again and pulling her close.

She laughed, shook her head. Her artistically arranged curls bounced. "What? Here? In the library?" she protested half-heartedly. "There's not even any music!"

He flicked his wand and the strains of a gentle waltz sounded throughout the normally silent library. And so they danced with graceful turns through the stacks and tables of the library, her laughter a gentle counterpoint to the tune.

That night, when she turned in to bed well past curfew, she found a single lavender rose upon her pillow. Though she had spent a surprisingly delightful night in the library just talking and dancing with Scorpius, he had turned into such a good friend she didn't think too much of it.

You enchant me, body and soul.

Rose's heart skipped a beat even as she knew those words were merely to make her feel better. Lavender roses meant enchantment, after all... there was no way he meant love at first sight. They'd known each other too long for that.

Nevertheless, she went to sleep with a smile on her face and was able to face the world with head held high the next day.

IV. Orange

Chapter 4 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

IV. Orange

"Oh! Might I kiss those eyes of fire,

A million scarce would quench desire;

Still would I steep my lips in bliss,

And dwell an age on every kiss."—Lord Byron

"Aw, come on, Rose! You're working yourself to death. You *need* a vacation." Scorpius' wheedling grated not-quite unpleasantly on her nerves as he sat perched on the edge of her desk.

"You're sitting on my revised recipe for the Invigoration Draught," Rose told him primly, ignoring the oft repeated argument.

"Come on, I swear I can get Uncle Severus to approve the time away. We can go find rare potions ingredients or something while we're gone." This did cause her to hesitate for a brief moment—Severus Snape, miracle survivor and hero of the last Voldemort War, was the Potions master she was apprenticing under, and that might be a good argument to be allowed to take time off. The apprenticeship was grueling and she was tired... "We'll go somewhere warm, maybe with a beach," Scorpius persuaded, intent on exploiting her moment of weakness.

"Scorpius..." She meant it to come out stern, but instead it sounded wistful.

"The sun, the sand, the water... girls in bikinis..." He smirked when she smacked his knee. "Guys in skimpy speedos," he altered.

"If I say yes, will you shut up and let me work?" she said and poked him with the end of her quill. Sweet Merlin, was she actually considering this? Could she actually withstand a week on a beach with Scorpius as a companion and not give in to the urge to jump his bones?

Of course she could, she told herself. They'd been out of school for two years now and she'd never once given into the urge that had grown ever since the Yule Ball. They were just friends. Very good friends. Friends who had dinner at least once a week and had flats in the same building. Friends who dated other people (frequently, in Scorpius' case) and never so much as kissed.

The blond looked far too smug in his success. "Yes. I'll just go bug—ah, convince—Uncle Sev that a week is a great amount of time to let you off for." He hopped off her desk and leaned down to hug her spontaneously. "Now don't work yourself to death while I'm gone..." he told her and started whistling jauntily as he left.

"Prat," she called after him.

"You love me anyway," he replied back, just an echo in the hall.

At least, she thought, there was no way on earth he could see her head thump down into her arms. "Can't seem to help myself," she agreed in a whisper.

Rose had to admit that the Bahamas were fabulously wonderful. The sun beat down here hotly, seeming to melt the tension out of her very bones. It didn't hurt, she would concede, that the suite Scorpius had reserved for them at the Wizarding Reef Atlantis was large and luxurious and well beyond what she would have gotten if she'd gone by herself. There were two beds and baths, so she didn't bother with suspected any illicit motives.

Yeah, like Scorpius would have *illicit motives* over *you*, a little voice in her head said. She managed to ignore it—it was too beautiful here to be thinking such negative things.

"I'll race you to the beach!" she declared to Scorpius as they exited the hotel after putting their things down and changing into their swim wear—a modest one piece for her and surprisingly modest trunks for him. Unceremoniously she took off, laughing at his look of surprise. It was fierce competition and continued all the way into the water after their towels were dumped just above the waterline.

He finally caught her—though with his longer legs, it was a wonder he hadn't done so yet—as they splashed into the surf, arms going around her waist and spinning her

around until she squealed and they fell with a salty splash.

They came up spluttering. Scorpius tossed his head, throwing the hair plastered to his forehead back, and his hands helped Rose sort out the curls that had escaped her braid on the way down. For a long moment their gaze held, grey to blue, and Rose's tongue darted out to wet her lips. She could swear, in that second, that he was going to kiss her. Just lean down and kiss her like she'd imagined for the last few years.

The next wave rolled over them and submerged them, breaking eye contact and making them both splutter once again. The moment was broken like it had never been.

Rose spent a lot of time stretched out on her towel on the beach during their vacation, skin carefully protected from burning by the potion Severus had grudgingly given her after saying she better be ready to work when she came back. Scorpius occasionally complained at her and usually managed to tempt her back into the water for a little while, where they would splash and play like children.

But other times he left her alone to relax with her book or just people watching, and it was during this time that she was nearly hit by a Fanged Frisbee. Its owner came over to fetch it—a rather toned up wizard with a golden tan and dark hair. Not precisely her type, but it was flattering when he started flirting with her.

It had been awhile, given how hard she'd been working, since she'd had the time to properly flirt with an attractive man. So she was miffed when Scorpius plopped down onto the towel next to her--*her* towel, not his, which was only a short distance away—and interrupted with a disingenuous, "Hey Rosie, you ready to go back to the hotel room yet?" It effectively scared away the other man.

"What's your problem, Score? I thought we were here to relax," Rose complained, and elbowed him hard enough to make him roll back into the sand. "I'm not your girlfriend, and I don't interrupt you when you're flirting with some bimbo witch." She stood and stalked back toward the hotel, not seeing the frustrated and hurt expression on his face.

That night, Rose crawled into bed feeling tired but in that relaxed way that a day at the beach always brought. She barely noticed the flower in time to keep from crushing it with her head. Its heady scent saved it, and she turned on the light with a flick of her wand.

The orange color burned brightly. She knew even without a note what it meant—orange roses meant desire, pure and simple.

You're the only rose I desire.

Her fingers wrapped around the stem tentatively, hope fluttering in her chest. Could he really? Did he...?

And if she were misinterpreting, could she face it?

Rose decided, then and there, that she couldn't not find out. She would always regret it.

She padded across the shared living area quietly and pushed open Scorpius' door, which was already ajar.

Scorpius was perched on his bed, knees on his thighs and his hands clasped nervously. He looked up as her shadow fell across the floor. Rose couldn't believe how vulnerable he looked, his face open and naked. She realized for the first time that he'd felt this way for a long time—the entire past couple of years seemed to reflect back in the candlelight, showing her how he'd been trying, in his own way, to show her he wanted her. That he cared.

"Rosie..." His voice was soft, and he reached one hand out toward her. Rose wove her fingers with his and stepped closer, kissing him for the first time.

V. Red

Chapter 5 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

V. Red

"All love that has not friendship for its base is like a mansion built upon sand." Ella Wheeler Willcox

Rose sat at the elegantly laid dinner table and poked at it morosely. The fourth dinner of its type they had arranged, so that Scorpius could interact with her parents. As always, her mother was here...she'd even cancelled a work meeting in order to do this. It was her father who was, once again, absent.

"I'm sorry, Rose," her mother said, setting her fork down with a sigh. "I really did try to get him here."

"It's fine," Rose answered somewhat stiffly, cutting off further explanations. She didn't want to hear her mother's excuses for her father. They all knew the real reason he wouldn't formally meet Scorpius...he didn't approve, not even a little bit. She knew most of the history: rivalries at school, the schism during the war, the mutual dislike that bordered on hatred, at least on her dad's side. Mr Malfoy...Draco, she reminded herself...had at least met her and been rather *nice*, polite even, making an effort to get to know her. Which was much more than her own father was trying to do.

It was enough to make a girl cry. Again.

Scorpius reached out and took her hand. Rose squeezed it. "Let's just... go home," she told him wearily, tears in her throat but not in her eyes. She rose and walked over to her mother, hugging her. Hermione Granger-Weasley smoothed a hand back over her daughter's brow, obviously concerned.

"Same time next week?" the curly-haired woman asked. Rose knew that they looked closer to sisters that mother-daughter these days...the blessing of being witches and having children relatively young.

"No, Mum. Let's just... leave it be. Dad won't be any more amenable next week than he is now." Rose pulled back, retreated into Scorpius' embrace. "But thanks, for everything. For trying."

"Of course, luv. I just..."Hermione trailed off, and Rose sighed, closing her eyes and leaning her head against Scorpius' shoulder. He dropped a kiss on her hair. She didn't see the look the two shared, mingled anguish and frustration, above her head. She was just so tired of this.

Rose woke muzzily. Her head felt thick from the tears she hadn't been able to help crying earlier, when they'd arrived home. She sniffed dejectedly and rolled over, expecting to find Scorpius on the bed next to her...he was always good to her when this happened, and it was yet another reason to love him even more than she already did.

He wasn't there. She blinked and rubbed her eyes before reaching out and feeling the covers, wrinkled where he'd been when she'd first fallen asleep. There was no note, but she rather expected he'd gone to visit his parents...he liked to talk over some of his problems with his father.

Unlike her and her father. Rose buried her face in Scorpius' pillow, breathing in the scent of him.

Well, maybe it was about time for her to start talking to her father. Damn it, well past time. Resolve firming her mind, she rolled over and rose, shoving her feet into her boots and throwing a robe over her pajamas before Apparating to her family home.

Rose was barely in the door before Hermione was right in front of her, hushing her with hand movements and quiet sounds.

"Mum, what..."

"Shhh," her mother said again, taking her daughter's hand and leading her the newest and most improved version of Uncle George's Super-Secret Listening Devices. Rose stopped the moment she heard her lover's voice coming through.

"...made her cry! Every time you don't show up, she cries like you broke her heart in two. And you think I'm the threat?" Scorpius' outrage wasn't concealed like it normally might be behind a polite veneer. No, instead it was being broadcasted at almost a shout, most unusual for him. Her heart swelled at his words.

"You're no good for her." Rose easily identified her father's voice, the specific stubborn note that told her this was something he'd said several times already and wasn't about to stop saying it any time soon.

"Stop being a prat," Hermione quietly urged, her voice a murmur in Rose's ear. "Give him a chance."

"You'll only break her heart."

Rose's lips pursed and she made to go find the two men, but her mother's grip on her arm was surprisingly strong.

"Sir, I love Rose. I adore her. I would never purposefully hurt her." Heartfelt sincerity radiated off Scorpius even at this distance, and despite herself Rose's lips tilted up slightly. "I want to spend the rest of what I hope is a very long life with her."

"Marriage?" Ron sounded aghast at the prospect of a Malfoy marrying *his* daughter.

"Yes, marriage," Scorpius replied stubbornly. Rose imagined his chin was jutting up in that way he had. "We've even discussed it, she and I. I just haven't asked her yet." A short pause, uninterrupted by Ron. "I was hoping to do it after we'd had dinner a few times, but you threw a Chaos Jinx into those plans."

"Good." Hermione's exasperated head shake didn't precisely relieve Rose, but neither did it make her more anxious about the outcome.

"We love each other. We'll do it with or without your blessing." Rose's breath caught and she held it. She would do it, she knew...marry him without her dad's blessing. It wouldn't be easy; it would be a taint on something that should be perfect, but she would do it. She loved him that much. "But please, please don't do that to her." The blond's voice fell into a lower, soothing, persuasive range. Rose silently willed her father to give in. *Please, Daddy, please.*

The silence stretched tautly, so tight that Rose broke before it ended. She left in a whirl of curly red hair and barged into her father's study, banging the door none-too-quietly. Both men looked at her with shock, Scorpius looking faintly guilty that he'd gone behind her back and her father... well, she refused to look at her father.

"I admire your intention, luv, but I think he's a lost cause. Let's just go," she said to Scorpius, weaving her fingers with his with unconscious intimacy when she came close enough. They were halfway down the hall before her father recovered enough to shout at them to wait.

"Wait, Rosie! Wait a minute." She stopped just short of the door to the outside, only half turning toward him.

"What, Daddy?" she asked in a quiet, sad voice.

Hurt scurried across his face at the tone. "Does he... does he really mean that much to you?"

Rose looked up at Scorpius, taking in his harried appearance, his calm grey eyes, the way love softened the angles when he looked at her. "Yes, Daddy. He means everything to me." Her face shone as she spoke.

Ron swallowed hard and sighed even harder. Not just a passing fancy, she could have read on his face if she'd looked away from Scorpius. She didn't look away. "F-fine. Let's go to dinner tomorrow night. I'd like to get to know your beau a bit better." If he looked faintly green as he said it, only his wife noticed.

"Thank you, Daddy!" Rose threw her arms around her father before he could think, giving him a blinding smile and a huge hug before drawing back. "Owl me the time and place, and we'll be there."

Rose had known it was coming, of course. They'd talked about it. The last couple of months had been all about easing their families into it. But Scorpius had given nothing away, and not even she had known when he might propose.

The day had been long but rewarding, a portion of her research with Severus Snape having come through with wonderful efficiency. She came home to find a trail of rose petals leading toward the bedroom.

She laughed to herself, quietly, and toed off her shoes so she could feel the red petals between her toes. Even then, she didn't really suspect...Scorpius liked to surprise her with rose-scented baths after a long day sometimes.

Rose followed the trail, putting her things down as she went and starting to unfasten her robes. His baths were always *quite* fun. It was on the bed that the single rose lay, red in full bloom. She picked it up to sniff it, and the note dangled enticingly.

You are my friend, my heart, my soul. Stay with me always?

Her eyes filled with tears, and she turned as Scorpius stepped out of the bath, where he'd been waiting. In his fingers was a ring, the stone catching the soft candle light. "Marry me?" he asked.

"Oh, yes." Once again, full love bloomed in her chest for this man.

VI. White

Chapter 6 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

VI. White

"Although I conquer all the earth,

Yet for me there is only one city.

In that city there is for me only one house;

And in that house, one room only;

And in that room, a bed.

And one woman sleeps there,

The shining joy and jewel of all my kingdom." – Sanskrit poem

Her nerves hummed under her skin, treading the faint line between nervous and excited. Whichever it was, it was keeping Rose awake. She kept tossing and turning in the half-familiar bed at the Burrow, where she was staying until the wedding tomorrow. Her family was keeping with tradition, it seemed; for all the weddings they had held in the last decade, the Weasley member had stayed in this room, in this bed. Victoire when she'd married Teddy Lupin, Lucy when she'd married Heath Longbottom.

I'm going to look like an Inferi for my own wedding, she thought with a groan as she rolled over yet again. She missed Scorpius' warm presence at her side, the heavy arm that would wrap around her and draw her close.

So intent was she on trying to sleep that it took Rose several minutes to hear the quiet, irregular taps at her window. Intrigued and definitely not sleepy, she climbed out of the tangle of covers and opened the window, letting the fragrant spring air into the room. Below her, in the yard, stood Scorpius, broom in one hand. His smile when he caught sight of her was breathtaking even from a distance.

He dropped something to the ground—small stones that he'd been levitating to the window, she suspected—and threw a leg over the broom to hover just before her window. "You're not supposed to be here!" she whispered loudly enough for him to hear, but she was happy to see him and it came through in her tone. "Get in, get in," she urged, stepping out the window so he could squeeze through. "What are you doing here?" As soon as he and the broom were inside, her arms were around him.

His skin was cool from the broom ride he'd taken and he smelled fresh and wild. "I wanted to see you," he murmured against her warmer skin before sneaking a cold hand just under the hem of her shirt, making her shiver and smack him on the shoulder.

"It's supposed to be bad luck to see the bride before the wedding," Rose scolded him.

"I don't believe in that. It's a silly superstition..." He dropped a kiss onto her lips, light and playful. "Besides, I couldn't sleep. I snuck out."

She cuddled close to his chest. "I couldn't sleep either," she admitted. Her hand slipped into his and she tugged. "Come on, you're cold."

Scorpius took a moment to toe off his shoes before crawling into the bed with a bemused smile on his face. Rose followed him, contentedly leaning into him when he put an arm around her, reclining against the pillows.

"Cold, but it's not cold feet, I'm promise," he told her.

"I know." Such simple words, but completely heart-felt. Rose believed him—in fact, had never doubted that him or even considered the thought that he might jilt her at the altar.

Not that her assurance had kept her cousin James or even Hugo from pestering her repeatedly during the seemingly endless planning that went into the wedding. James had, quite typically, never given up on the "Scorpius is a git and you'll rue the day you ever defended him." Personally, Rose rather thought it was continuing sour grapes for the slap she'd given him so many years ago now.

Poor Hugo, she knew, was simply trying to look out for her. He meant well, always, she knew, but there were times she found it rather annoying. He'd even come to her door late last night—before Scorpius arrived, thank Merlin—and earnestly asked if she was really doing the right thing.

Rose had sighed, looking into the brown eyes that echoed her own, though his face was rounder. "I know what I'm doing," she'd promised him. So earnestly concerned, he still looked worried. Rose had wrapped her hands around his and sworn it once again.

"I'll be so happy after tomorrow... erm, today," Rose said. The statement wasn't quite out of left field—Scorpius had long learned to follow her occasional leaps of topic.

"It won't stop James' complaining," Scorpius said, but he sounded more amused than upset.

"Nothing stops James' complaining. I don't think he knows how to do anything else," she replied with a quiet, sleepy laugh.

Their talk slowly faded into much-needed beauty sleep.

Despite the late night, Rose woke early, but it was a slow rise to consciousness. The first thing she became aware of was the empty space in the bed next to her—empty,

but still faintly warm. Scorpius had obviously risen and left before he could be caught by any of her family.

That would have been a... well, it would have caused quite a huff, to be sure. She smiled sleepily and rolled over, wishing she could open her eyes to his face but knowing it was an impossibility. The space wasn't empty, though. The pillow next to her did not cushion her beloved's head, but instead a perfect white rose.

She reached for it, noticing now the rich, heady scent of the flower. Like with all the others that marked their relationship, this one had a note.

For the most beautiful bride in the history of brides. You are my Rose, my jewel, my crown, my comfort. See you soon, my dearest.

Sniffing back tears, Rose crawled out of bed—crying would ruin the look she wanted for the day. Once her mother arrived with breakfast on a tray, Rose requested to see her wedding bouquet, and without a word of explanation to anyone she wove the white rose into it.

She was getting married!

VII. Blue

Chapter 7 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

VII. Blue

"Of all nature's gifts to the human race, what is sweeter to a man than his children?" – Marcus Tullius Cicero

She was going to kill Scorpius. Rose wondered if it were too late to learn the Killing Curse, but then as another pain ripped through her, she decided that perhaps Crucio would be far more fitting. Torture, that's right, torture...

"Going to Crucio you as soon as I have my wand back," she panted as she gripped her husband's hands as hard as she could. From the tightness around his mouth as she glanced up at him, she could tell that it did hurt him. She felt a little bad, actually, and as the pain faded for a moment she loosened her grip.

"I know, Rosie," Scorpius soothed her, placing a kiss at her brow and pressing his cheek against hers. "That's why wands aren't allowed in the birthing rooms." Rose could hear the silent *Thank Merlin*, but she didn't call him on it. She'd understood the logic of the no wands rule up until the moment she'd gone into labor, and now all logic was out the window.

Another contraction tensed her body and she tried to keep the moan back behind her teeth. Her back arched, shoulder blades cutting back and pressing against Scorpius' chest. He held her firmly but gently as he supported her on the bed. As this contraction faded, he released one of her hands to rub a soothing circle on her very rounded belly. The corners of his mouth turned up as his child kicked, hard, hitting the center of his hand precisely.

"Ow," Rose said, then louder as the muscles hardened in another contraction, "ow ow OW!" Her voice crescendoed in time with the contraction, holding at a high, painful pitch before trailing off in a slur of whimpers.

"Can she not have anything to help with the pain yet?" Scorpius asked, brushing her damp hair off her equally damp face.

"Not yet," the green robed Healer replied, and Rose groaned.

"How much longer?" She ground out the question through gritted teeth and felt Scorpius hide his smile against the back of her neck. She would be amused by his amusement if she weren't about ready to strangle someone to get a painkiller.

There must have been a glint to her eye or perhaps sparks at the tips of her red hair, because the Healer swallowed and said, "Soon, soon," in as reassuring a way as possible before fleeing.

"You scared him, luv," Scorpius murmured in her ear, chuckling quietly. She ground her teeth briefly before stuttering out a laugh; her husband had a charming chuckle and she could admit, if only to herself, that she might be taking things just a mite too seriously.

Of course, as soon as the next contraction hit, her laugh died a choking death and things felt even more serious than before. She was about ready to throw a fit when the Healer came in with another man, also a Healer but older than the other one, and a vial of pale lavender liquid. The older Healer briefly examined her before opening the vial and holding it to her lips to drink.

"It's time," he told her. Rose smiled as the potion took effect, and then she began to push in earnest.

Rose lay on the bed, more exhausted now than she could ever remember being in the past. The little bundle in her arms, however, had been more than worth it, though she was still half tempted to hex that jumpy little Healer if he came in to check on her one more time.

She found herself dozing on and off, but a charm had made certain that even if her arms relaxed, she wouldn't drop Cassie—not that she would have anyway, but caution was always warranted.

She was woken by a warmth at her side and a velvety sensation on her face, down her neck, then back up again. A familiar dusky scent filled her nostrils, and she was already smiling as she stirred, arms tightening gently around her daughter's small form.

"Scorpius," she murmured his name as her eyelids fluttered and opened. Her husband was smiling down at her with a gentleness that took her breath away; the rest of the world might think him remote still, but never her, and never anyone he loved.

"My love," he replied quietly, leaning down to press a soft kiss to her lips. "Loves," he corrected himself, reaching out to gently caress his daughter's cheek with one long finger, as if afraid a firmer touch would harm her. He replaced his finger with the rose he held, the petals soft on the equally soft-cheeked baby.

The rose was blue, vibrant and almost unnatural, but she instinctively knew it wasn't charmed. It had been a couple of years since she had received a special rose like this,

though those years hadn't lacked in love or gifts of roses, just the special ones that seemed to mark the highest points of their relationship.

Blue meant mystical, magical. Looking at Cassiopeia, she felt those feelings keenly, and knew Scorpius did as well.

Scorpius brought the flower to his lips, pressing a kiss onto the petals and then brushed them against hers, letting her take possession of it. A note dangled at the end.

To the woman who has always brought joy and wonder into my life, who has given me yet another beautiful, precious treasure. You fill me with such happiness, both you and my daughter.

"You're daddy is the sweetest man in the world," Rose whispered into her daughter's feather soft hair.

VIII. Black

Chapter 8 of 8

Every rose in the bouquet symbolizes an important memory in their relationship. Rose's bouquet is colorful and precious.

VIII. Black

"Death is nothing at all,

I have only slipped away into the next room,

I am I and you are you,

Whatever we were to each other,

That we still are." – Henry Scott Holland, excerpt from the poem *'Death is Nothing at All'*

Every year the trek to the grave seemed a little longer, a little harder. His knees creaked more and his hair was less, but he would not miss visiting her grave for all the world. Scorpius Malfoy, over a hundred years old with his oldest great-grandchild in tow, had missed his wife every single day for the twenty years since Death had separated them, coming upon his beloved quickly and painlessly in her sleep.

Even to this day, James S. Potter would still creak out that Scorpius did not really love Rosie. Scorpius had long since stopped replying to such behavior, but it was true that publicly he had not made a spectacle of himself in grief.

He mourned her, certainly. There was constant pain in his heart, carved into his chest and his soul, his constant companion. There was an empty slot in his bed, where she would lay curved against him; a missing warmth in his arms, where he held her; a missing softness against his lips, where he kissed her.

He missed the scent of her hair, the sound of her laugh, the twinkle of her eyes. The smell of roses could recall it all in an instant, bringing pain and pleasure through him like a stampeding herd of hippogriffs.

But at the same time, he knew in his heart that he would see her again. She was simply across the Veil, waiting for him to cross over to her. He often felt like he could hear her speak, the softness of her voice coming from the next room, the brush of her breath against his ear, the brief pressure of her hand against his back.

She was there, and yet not. So how could he wallow in grief, when it would only be a time until he saw her again?

"Great-pa," his ten-year-old great-granddaughter started, her little face so serious as it tilted up toward his, "am I really like Great-ma? Everyone always says so, but I don't remember her at all."

"You never met her, Prim," Scorpius told her, resting a hand on the cold tombstone they had come to visit. "She died before you were born. But yes, you are very much like my Rosie, and she would have loved you very, very much." The tombstone was elaborate, as befitted a Malfoy and, admittedly, a Weasley in this day and age. The words were simple, however: Here Lies Rose Malfoy, Who was all things to all who knew her.

Primrose knelt on the ground, rubbing a smudge of dirt from the crystal vase in front of the carved stone. The vase contained eleven roses, the first seven he'd ever given her with notes, two additional blues for each child they'd had together, a white shot with red for their fiftieth wedding anniversary, and the only charmed one, which had a petal of every color, for when they passed their hundredth birthdays.

In his hand he carried a single flower. With the help of his great-granddaughter, he knelt to the ground, knees creaking with age, and reached out to slip it into the vase.

The black colour stood out darkly against all of the others. It was as close to true black as nature could ever provide.

"Great-pa, why do you always bring that flower here? Why aren't there more of them?" Her curiosity made him smile, a nostalgic expression.

"I first brought this flower to her grave the day I had to bury her," he said, as he'd started the story many times before. "Every year, the day before I come back, I wake to find it on my pillow, waiting for me to bring it again."

It carried no charm other than the stasis charm. Rose was not a ghost. But it didn't change the fact that he awoke to the heady aroma every year before he trekked here.

"And so every year, I bring it again, so that Rosie will know I'm here and always thinking of her." And hoping, every year hoping, that this would be the last year he'd walk up the hill. That this was the last year he'd live without her at his side, always just around the corner.

Prim knew the story of every rose by heart—though some were edited for her age—but like every year, she asked, and like every year, he answered, weaving the tale of his childhood, of his Rosie, for her name's sake. She knew exactly what every rose said, and she read them as the story went on, taking each rose, smelling it, fingering the petals with respect.

She always lingered over the black rose. Scorpius suspected that she was too young yet to fully comprehend death and loss, but on the flip side, her youth seemed to

allow her to understand better than most how he felt that his wife was right there, waiting for him to finish with his life so he could join her.

"Between this life and the next, where I'll see you again, I'll be loving you. Love, me." Her young voice lilted, almost as if in song, as she read the note. He smiled, a sad smile, and Prim leaned forward and hugged him.

"Come on, luv, let's go home," he said, and she helped him off the ground and back down the hill.

~o0o~

A/N: Poems and quotes do not belong to me. Information on colors of flowers was mostly found on various websites. This was written for jade_chan on weasley_fest on LJ.