

# The Streets of London

*by Danu*

A midnight wandering of the streets of London while following the sounds of music leads Severus to right where he wants to be.

Warning: HBP Spoiler included

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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**A/N:** This was inspired from two things: a fanart of Severus over at Illusions (<http://shillusions.com/displayimage.php?pos=-200>) and the piano piece "La Valse D'Amelie" by Yann Tiersen. As always, feedback of any kind is deeply appreciated.

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Strolling along the darkened street, he stopped for a moment to fish out a silver lighter and lit a cigarette. Taking a deep breath, feeling the smoke and held it for a moment in his chest before exhaling. He took a look up at the inky sky, studded with brilliant stars, absentmindedly dropping the lighter back into his coat pocket. His pace slowed, his thoughts turning to the beginning of the night, and to events even before that, to life in general. He wandered the night streets, occasionally taking a drag, the smoke curling around him as it exited his nose. Soon the burning ember between his lips was at its end, and he crushed it beneath his boot before continuing on. He had no real destination; he had just needed to leave that infernal party. A host of people that didn't really want to associate with him, nor he them. Their insipid chatter, it had nearly drove him mad. He had only gone to the bloody thing because he had thought she might be there. And she had been, and he had seen her, if only for a little while.

After the fall of Voldemort, he had enjoyed the release of no longer having to be a double agent, but he still faced the same distrust, the same idiocy, every thing was the bloody same. Only there was no Albus to twinkle merrily at him. Perhaps that was part of the problem. With Albus gone, and at his own hand no less, life was a trifle less colourful.

And then she had come in like a breath of fresh air. It had made sense that with Minerva as Headmistress, there would be an opening for a Transfiguration professor, and she had fit the bill perfectly. Her bushy hair bullied into an orderly and sensible bun, though she carried the same battered satchel filled to the brim with books. She had such a zest for teaching, and she was good at it. Though he had expected no less from her. Her reappearance in his life, especially as that of an equal had stirred something to life in him. He began noticing her. The way her brows would knit together when she was grading papers in the staff lounge. Or the way she would absentmindedly play with an escaped tendril when reading in the library. He breathed out a sigh.

Walking down another side street in his wanderings, his thoughts turned towards earlier in the evening. He had been coerced by Minerva to attend the ball being given by the Ministry. It had been some kind of costumed affair in celebration with the upcoming holiday of All Hallows Eve and the defeat of the Dark Lord. Knowing he would have to wear something other than his usual attire, he chose something different enough that he could get away with, but also an outfit he could feel comfortable in. The knee

length boots were different than his usual footwear, but they went quite nice with the black trousers tucked into them. Next had been the midnight blue waistcoat with black buttons. The white shirt with lace at the cuffs and throat completing the look of Victorian garb. His coat was the biggest departure from his normal attire of all: a deep scarlet frock coat that fell to just above his knees. The inside of the coat held well concealed pockets for both his cigarette case & lighter along with a long, thin pocket for his wand. He had left his obsidian hair loose, and giving a small nod to the figure in the mirror, he left Hogwarts via the Floo network.

Upon arriving at the Minister of Magic's home, he found that the party was just as mind-numbingly boring as always. Trying to make the best of things, and hoping to be able to make this a short evening, he went to pay his respects to the Minister and to find Minerva to say hello. After he began to wander the outskirts of the room, finally breaking away to hallway. Standing in the hallway, he was on the verge of arguing with himself on whether or not he could leave when he heard a faint noise.

Curiosity getting the better of himself, he began to follow the noise, soon recognizing it as someone playing the piano. Seeing a door slightly ajar with light spilling out, he moved to the fringes of the light. Standing outside the door, he listened to the slightly melancholy tune of simple chords and trills. As it progressed and its tempo speeded up to a beautiful blending of notes he chanced taking a glimpse inside the room. The sight that greeted his eyes was one of a beautiful young woman playing a black grand piano. Wearing an evening gown of lilac, its sleeves sat just below her shoulders with a tantalizing amount of cleavage being presented to the viewer. The dress itself seemed molded to her upper body and hips before falling into a full skirt. A simple cameo on a black ribbon adorned her neck. Her hair was pulled up into a delicate twist with a few escaping tendrils falling to frame her face. She played with such passion, a serene smile on her face as she moved to the music she was creating. Watching her, he was touched by her playing, and not wishing to intrude, he left. Missing her looking up, a greeting died upon her lips at seeing his retreating back.

He soon left after that. He didn't wish to see her again, not when it might mean having to watch her be waltzed around the main room in someone else's arms. Not knowing why he didn't just Floo back to Hogwarts, he took to wandering around London. Shaking his head to break him out of reverie, he lit another cigarette. Leaning against a building he took a long drag. Exhaling and just listening to the night sounds around him, he caught that faint echo of music he had heard earlier.

Pushing off from the building, he began to follow the familiar tune to soon find himself standing outside a flat that held one lone window that was lit with light and open. He stood there for awhile feeling gobsmacked hearing the same tune he had heard earlier that night. Also knowing that while she lived at Hogwarts during the term, she kept a flat somewhere in London. Soon the urge to know if it was indeed this particular flat overcame him and he knocked.

He hadn't even known he was holding his breath while waiting for someone to answer the door, he soon got his answer. Hermione answered the door still in her Victorian eveningwear, a look of surprise etched in her features. "Severus?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to disturb you." He made a motion to leave.

"No, please, wait."

He moved back to stand on her doorstep, looking into her cinnamon eyes. She moved closer as she stared back, breathing in the faint scent of sandalwood. Time itself seemed to stop as they stared at one another, as if seeing each other for the first time. She raised her hand to brush a lock of hair that had fallen over his face. He turned his face, and catching the back of her hand with his own, pressed a kiss into her palm. She, in return, moved both her hands to his shoulders before raising onto her toes to press her lips to his own. The passionate kiss was soon broken, and the idea was put forth to move back inside. Severus happily followed Hermione inside, as one lone star twinkled merrily in the nighttime sky.