

Freedom on the Sunrise

by Scarlet Crystal

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Yesterday, she asked me how much I missed him. I tilted my head to one side, contemplating. Ron calls it my "Evil Plans" pose. Well, he is my brother; I guess he's supposed to say things like that. But back to the question, the one Hermione asked me. It was only a little while ago, and I can recall that conversation perfectly.

"Ginny? Are you in here?"

"Yes, Hermione. The door's unlocked. Come on in," I called, putting away the book I was reading.

Hermione pushed the door open slowly and entered my room. Her head was bowed as she looked at something in her hands. Its limp form seemed frail and thin as she made her way through the piles of clothing on the floor. I felt guilty but made no move to clean them up.

"Look, Ginny," she murmured, setting it on my bed. I didn't want to look at it at first, but I knew she wanted me to. I figured I owed her some respect, so I pulled my legs into my chest and peered over the blankets on my knees. I sighed, wondering why Hermione had brought me a dead flower.

I rested my chin on my knees, staring at the remains of a flower. It was a pink one. I used to know its name.

"It's from your garden," Hermione spoke up, sitting on the edge of my bed, running her index finger over one of the soft, torn petals.

"Oh. Are they all dead?" I asked, hoping they weren't. I liked those flowers; I'd been caring for them for the past three months and had grown rather fond of them.

"All that I could see," Hermione replied, folding her hands in her lap. She looked at me, concerned. "Ginny, you haven't left this room in two weeks. Ron and I can't keep letting you hide away like this and Summon food when you're hungry. And, as you can see, your garden is dying."

"It's not my garden," I said hotly. "It was your mother's."

I avoided Hermione's eyes. It was something I never meant to say. When Hermione didn't answer, I swept the flower off my bed in one motion.

"Ginny, why are you doing this? And why now? You've had months to let it sink in and only now do you get all worked up."

"Worked up?" I seethed, feeling my face grow hot. "Why shouldn't I be?"

"Ginny..."

Attempting to calm myself, I said slowly, "Yes, Hermione?"

"You're not the only one who wishes things were different."

I said nothing, pulling the blankets over my head.

"Just tell me. How much do you miss him, Ginny?"

She asked me, just like that. I didn't expect her to speak to me again. I thought she'd leave me there to brood for another week or so. But she asked me. Instead of telling her to leave, like part of me wanted to do, I thought about the question.

But I had no answer. Her question was too difficult for me to respond to. Maybe it was because there are no measurements for how much I miss him. Or maybe it's because I love Harry too much to think of a description. Whatever the case, Hermione left me there after a few minutes.

There's no justice in this world. If there were, I wouldn't still be in this room, thinking about that question. Sirius would be here. Dumbledore would be here. Luna would be here. Harry's parents would be here, too. But that's just it: they *aren't*.

This morning, I made it over to my window. There isn't much to see outside; the garden is still dead. I try to focus on the sky above the horizon. It's pink and delicate, just like flower Hermione brought into the house to show me. The flower is dead. I wish I were that flower.

No. I did it again. I thought something awful that I don't mean again. I must stop *Control*.

But didn't I mean it?

I needed something to focus on, so I blinked hard and glared at the fluffy white clouds drifting lazily by over the roof. Clouds. White and fluffy. Yes. No Harry. No death. No. I'm thinking about clouds, I tell myself. Clouds.

But it's too late; I've already lost control, and the beautiful day outside is blurred as the tears come streaming down my face like they've been waiting to do. I've held them back for three months or more. The calendar says it's been three, but time doesn't seem to keep track of itself anymore. Or is it just me?

He's gone. There was nothing I could do about it when it happened. He and I were sitting outside on a bench earlier that morning, the loveliest morning I can remember. It reminded me of this one. He'd held my hand for the first time and turned towards me.

"Things are going to be different," he promised, his vibrant green eyes intent on staring into my dull brown ones. "There will be more sunrises like this one, without the war we have now."

"How do you know?" I demanded, a small smile creeping over my face.

He took my other hand in his own and leaned towards me.

"I can feel it."

I closed my eyes as our lips met. I dropped all my defenses, letting my fate rest in the bond between our hands. I moved closer to him. He stiffened slightly.

Embarrassed, he moved away. His ears seemed pinker than usual. He stared at our entwined hands. "I'm sorry, Ginny. I don't know what I was thinking--"

But I kissed him again before he could protest.

That was the last moment he and I ever shared, just us two, before the last battle. The sky had grown black less than an hour later. The day disappeared. We joined everyone else as we prepared for battle; Voldemort was descending and we felt the danger growing...

Did I really want to think about that? I discovered for the first time in more than three months that I did. It was surprising, but I didn't question my feelings.

The battle started before we were ready. I lost sight of Harry almost immediately. I was alone on the edge of the fighting, dueling with a Death Eater in a mask. To this day, I still wonder who he was. I wasn't part of the action for long; somebody lit the grass by my feet on fire, then set off an explosion a few feet away from me. I was thrown off the grassy ledge, away from the fire that consumed the field on the plateau where everyone else was fighting. I was knocked out the moment I hit the water, twenty yards below.

I've heard only the accounts of others about what happened next. Nobody saw what happened up close. I do know that Harry saw me fall and jumped after me. He swam to me and pulled me to the rocky shore nearby.

That's when Voldemort found him. He'd Apparated down to the water and was waiting for Harry when he got me out. Dad says he laughed as Harry pulled me to a safe spot away from the water, pulling out his wand. Then he spoke. But Dad didn't hear him; he was twenty yards above us, and the waves and sounds of dueling filled his ears. At least, that's what he told me.

Once Harry drew his wand, Voldemort flicked his wand and cast his first spell. Harry moved quickly away from my unconscious form to protect me from being hit by a stray hex. They dueled; Harry fell. But he raised his wand again. Dad said he knew that he couldn't have intervened; Destiny had to run its course.

The next part of the tale is the part nobody agrees on. Dad says they cast curses at exactly the same time. Professor Lupin says that some other force of magic cast a spell between them. However it happened, Voldemort was thrown off the rocky coast far out over the water. Harry was thrown against the rock cliff behind him. A strange light connected them before it expanded and sent a blast over the world, knocking everyone to the ground. Voldemort was thrown into the untamed waves as the sea engulfed him.

I remember waking up to hear a strange quiet. The sea was calm. Not a wave stirred the water. The battle was over. I looked up; my friends were making their way down to me. I crawled to Harry, who lay with closed eyes by the rock wall of the cliff.

The pink dawn of this morning brightened. Tears still flowed down my cheeks as I remembered screaming, crying, desperately holding Harry's hands and squeezing him, willing him to wake up and speak to me. He didn't move. His eyes flickered slightly. I whispered that I loved him, that he couldn't leave me. His eyes opened a crack. I leaned over his broken body, whimpering for him to speak to me. He smiled at me, and whispered one word.

"Freedom."

It was barely audible, and I heard a sigh escape his lips as he drew his last breath. His eyes closed peacefully and he died in my arms.

The pink dawn of this morning is not turning to blackness like on that evil day. Today is just another day. Mother Nature is just showing her beautiful colors.

I place my hands on the cold window and press my face to the glass like a child. I want Harry to be with me. Today, on this new dawn. I want him to share this peaceful sunrise of freedom with me. But I know that I will never see Harry again, except for in my dreams.

I know that he would want me to bask in the sun on a beautiful day like this and enjoy the wonderful sunrise that he promised me would come one day. And it has, just like he said. I shake my head and smile to myself, blinking away the last of my tears. I've forgotten to trust Harry. He made me a promise. And he never breaks his promises.

I feel suddenly ashamed. I've hidden away in this room for the past two weeks, just like I've hidden my heart inside myself for the past three months. Suddenly, I need to get out of this room. I need to feel the warm air on my skin and see the sunrise with my own eyes and not through some dirty, unfamiliar window.

Without bothering to fix my hair or put on anything over what I'm already wearing (Harry's old cloak over my underclothes), I run to the door and wrench it open. I race past a confused Ron who calls out to me. Without responding, I dash to the front door and fling it open. I run outside with a final burst of speed and fall to my knees on the dead flowerbeds. Panting, I close my eyes and grip the dead plants beneath me. After a moment, I angle my head upwards and open my eyes.

The sky is just as beautiful as I remember. The pink is disappearing as the sun draws even closer to its zenith. I let out an impatient noise. I've missed the sunrise. Angry, I yank a few flowers from the dirt with my left hand.

I neglected that garden, and I feel a bit guilty. Getting to my feet, I rub the dirt off my knees with my right hand, still clutching the frail plants in my left.

I realize then that I don't want to end my life just because Harry left me in this world. I want to see the next sunrise. I want to see its beauty unfold like he said it would. Yes, I miss Harry terribly. No, I will never stop missing him. But I know now that I will continue to live and love him, all at once, if I only try.

Then, an idea comes to me. I squint up at the new day, then at the limp life in my hand. I will plant a new garden. It'll make anyone who sees it happy, including myself. And I'll trust Harry, now that I know that freedom has come at last, as he promised. Freedom has come to me on the sunrise.