

Darkness

by Doomspark

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Midnight. The sky is at its darkest then, a darkness made all the deeper by the pinpoints of fire scattered across the heavens. It's an infinite roll of black velvet with no end and no beginning. And it is bright as the first snow of winter when compared with the shadows across my heart and soul. My hands grip the edge of the railing around the topmost parapet of the Astronomy Tower. We used to stand here and look at the stars together, her arm around my waist, my arm around her shoulder. Often we would share the same cloak. But no more. Now there is emptiness where once she stood. My love. My Hermione.

My head tells me that it has only been a week. It feels much longer. We were in Diagon Alley to pick up supplies for the new term starting soon. I left her to step into the Apothecary, while she went to the bookstore. I heard later that she fell; it was a warm day, and perhaps the heat made her dizzy. Her head struck the stone steps, and my heart died with her. Even the best Healers cannot cheat Death.

I buried her in the family vault at Snape Manse. I suppose there were other people there. It all seemed like a bad dream. I gave her one final kiss and closed her coffin. She was all the light in my life. Now all that remains is the darkness roiling in my heart.

She had come so far. In her first year, she was a know-it-all pest. In her fourth year, she was brilliant. In her seventh year, she became a full-fledged member of the Order. All that year we fought together, comrades in arms, against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. It was only after the fighting was over that we realized what we felt for each other. We married two years later. And now she is gone from me.

Albus insisted I come back to Hogwarts after the funeral. I should've known better. This place holds no comfort for me. It holds only memories of her, and memories of what we had. Shadows have wrapped around my inner core, and all I know any more is darkness and despair. It has gone on long enough. I know my keepers will be looking for me soon; a simulacrum in the infirmary will fool Albus only so long. He fears what I will do, so he tries to protect me from myself. Does he truly hate me so much that he will force me to live?

Whatever I do, it must be quick and final. There is only one sure way to guarantee it, though it is considered a Dark Ritual. I have nothing to live for anyway. I ward the stairs below me and the door. My wards will not stop Albus, but they will slow him enough that he will not be able to interfere.

I focus on what I am doing. Nothing must distract me during this casting. For all my speeches in class about "foolish wand waving", there are times when wands are useful. This is one of them. Though tears run down my face, my voice does not tremble as I speak the ancient words and call down the power of the stars upon myself. Only starlight can chase away these shadows. Only starfire can burn away this darkness and cleanse my soul.

The top of the tower glows with an eerie nimbus as the forces about it spin and grow. It is an angry and violent red. Albus certainly knows by now that I am up to something. Right on schedule I feel him bounce off the first of my wards. I ignore him and continue invoking the ancient forces. The power howls and wails around me, as if it too is crying for my loss. With the final words of the spell, the power looms above me, a fist poised to strike. I wait for it, wait for the moments of agony. Wait for the eternal peace that follows.