

Raindrops on Thursday

by bound_by_passion

Peter came back for Wendy's daughter. (one-shot)

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I do not own these characters. They belong to JK Rowling. I make no money from this piece of fiction.

Please say my name

Remember who I am

You will find me in the world of yesterday

You drift away again

Too far from where I am

When you ask me who I am

-- Within Temptation, Say My Name

--

There is a house on West Lane, in the very middle of the winding road. A tiny little building sitting in a patchwork of green and yellow fields just west of the Pennines. It's an average sort of house; four walls, a few windows and a door, with a garden at the front and back. Not that the garden can really be distinguished from the rest of the moor land. The plants inside the dry-stone wall boundary are exactly the same as those outside. But there aren't any sheep on the inside.

The house itself has walls of white stone, mined from the ground deep beneath. Slightly worn by the wind and rain, but still strong. Ivy grows in every crack and crevice, twining around the wood of the windows like thin green fingers. The glass in the frames is old and distorts the image far more than it should. Slate tiles, imported from Wales, sit proudly upon the sloping roof, wearing the moss that grows upon them like a badge of honour. And it has a red door. A bright red door that peaks out from beneath the greenery, beckoning the weary traveller home.

It's not a striking house, and, were it not the only one for miles, it would be overlooked. Forgotten. It's average.

But then again, there is an advantage in looking average.

--

"Now, what shall we have for tea?" she says to the cupboard. Her muddy-brown eyes sweep over the jars, reading their labels and analysing their contents. "Tomato soup? Minestrone, perhaps? Or noodles?"

There isn't an answer to her question. But she wasn't expecting one. She talks to herself because there is no-one else to talk to.

"Noodles I think," she says and takes down the jar, pouring the brittle curls into a pan full of boiling water. She likes noodles. They remind her of her hair, winding round the plate until they become tangled and wild. And she spends most of the meal separating them because she used to do that with her hair. But she never uses the brush on the noodles.

The last light of the evening pours through the windows, illuminating the wooden floors and wooden furniture. Rugs and throws lie about, their many colours brightening the otherwise boring room. She makes a new one every summer, ready for the cold, hard winter. She can't get electricity this far out. Besides, she can barely afford to pay the gas bill as it is. This year's is a dragon. Just like the one her friend fought many years ago.

She hums softly as she cooks, careful not to burn her fingers on the pan. A woman should only have so many scars, and she's used up her quota. Besides, it is always prudent to err on the side of caution. Especially now she no longer has her wand.

She has her mind. And that, she thinks, is enough.

Anything to convince herself she's not lonely.

--

The night is black and the burner's gone out again.

She huddles down deeper beneath the faded periwinkle sheets, her toes icy and her fingers blue. A cold breeze blows through the bedroom, coming through the flue and the cracks in the walls. It whips across her exposed skin, leaving it reddened and stinging. Her eyes stare up at the ceiling, hidden by the darkness, and she thinks. A dangerous past-time for one so intelligent.

Her mind wanders, flitting from image to image, following the threads of her well worn memory. Faces and names of people she cannot (or does not care to) recall flash before her mind's eye before fading back into the soup she calls a conscience as though they never existed at all. Music fills her ears and scents fill her nostrils: phantoms that feel real. Laughter and love echo through her heart, looking for the home they lost. And she feels lonely.

She wishes for the sleep that will not come.

--

It's raining.

It always rains on Thursdays. From two till six precisely, and not a minute more. She wonders if anyone has noticed. If anyone cares that the weather is always so precise. She giggles to herself, her mind filled with images of Percy Weasley sat upon a cloud, harp and halo in hand, writing reports to God on the efficiency of the new weather regulator. He always demanded order, even from the wildest of things.

She remembers his desk at the Burrow, before he joined the Ministry. Everything had a place. Essays in a neat pile exactly parallel with his box of neatly arranged quills. Paperclips lined up on the desk, and all the staples facing the same way in the stapler. That's where she'd taken his Head Boy badge from, right next to the stapler, after a bet with the boys.

And then she remembers Ron. And Harry. And Ginny.

She stops laughing.

--

There is a rattle at the door.

At first she thinks it is her imagination playing tricks on her. So starved for company that it invents its own entertainment. But then there is another rattle. More insistent this time, and she hears the heavy bang of the lion-shaped knocker upon the wood.

Her heart leaps in her chest, trying to clamber out her throat. She never gets visitors. She lives too far out, in a place too exposed. Besides, there is no-one left to visit. Her parents are gone, travelling with the wind and the rain.

Her footsteps are soft as she makes her way forward, towards the door. They disturb the dust that has settled in the hallway and it irritates her nose, making her want to sneeze. It's been years since she entered this part of the house, but her feet still remember the path to the door.

But she stops mere inches away from the handle, frozen in place. Suddenly opening the door seems like a bad idea. She's comfortable here, alone, and doesn't need any busy-body, good-for-nothing visitor messing up her home and her life.

There is another knock, even louder this time. And the door opens of its own volition. The rusty hinges creak with disuse. Her eyes widen upon the sight of her visitor.

He steps inside.

--

"No thank you, Miss Granger. I do not take sugar with my tea," he tells her, his inky black hair falling over his face as he reaches for a proffered biscuit. She nods, complying with his wishes. She hands him the chipped china cup, wishing she had something better to offer her guest.

He doesn't speak for a long time. He simply sits on her floor, drinking his tea and watching her with his dark eyes. She blushes faintly, feeling self-conscious under his intense scrutiny. She hunches slightly, forgetting she no longer has curls to hide behind. If he notices her discomfort, he does nothing to help.

"Perhaps," he says finally, his words heavy, as though they have taken much deliberation, "it would do for me to hear your explanation."

He looks at her intently. She opens her mouth to speak but nothing comes. For all her talking, she has forgotten the art of conversation. Tears form in her eyes, blurring the image of the man in black robes sitting on her living room floor. They spill down her cheeks, leaving burning trails in their wake.

He takes pity on her then, crawling across and drawing her into his embrace, rocking her slowly. She cries; her sobs are muffled strangely by his robes. He smells of herbs.

--

It is two days (or perhaps ten, for time isn't constant) before she speaks.

"Does it still snow in winter?" she says, her voice cracking slightly. It's not what she needs to ask, but the words she wants still won't form.

"Yes," he answers simply.

"Hogwarts was always so beautiful in the snow."

--

"Why did you come?" She jams her hands in her trouser pockets and waits for an answer.

"I came to find you. To bring you home."

"But this is my home now."

"This is not your home. Your home is with us, not the Muggles."

"I'm not a witch anymore. No wand, no power." She looks down at her feet. "All magic left when I broke it."

"You're wrong, Miss Granger. Power comes from within." He gives her a sharp look. "And I still feel your power."

--

She doesn't speak to him for a week, choosing the solitude of her room to his company.

So lonely.

--

"Teach me," she says. She's given the matter some thought and has come to this conclusion.

"Teach you what?"

"Teach me how to live," she whispers, her eyes wide.

He smiles.

--

They begin with simple exercises.

First he teaches her to levitate stones, holding her palm in his as she concentrates. Her brow creases with effort, pain flaring up at her temples. She doesn't manage it the first time and gets angry, hurling the lump of rock at the wall.

But they try again and she gets better. Within a week she can levitate far more than a stone.

He teaches her other things too. Like creating light and banishing it again. He teaches her how to lock doors and heal wounds. How to conjure fire and how to create warmth. And it is like riding a bike something you never really forget. Only she is riding a unicycle, not a bike, and it is hard.

She perseveres, and in under two months she can cast most spells and charms. She wants to learn more, but wandless magic is limited and she doesn't have the stamina or the confidence within herself to attempt something more powerful. But she doesn't want a wand. Wands are dangerous.

And so, her lessons stop.

--

"Can you grow my hair back?" she asks him one day. Her hand rubs her scalp, the short, baby-thin hair tickling her palm.

He looks up, his eyes locking with hers. They narrow as he takes in her face.

"No." His answer is curt, and she wonders what she did to offend him.

"But you have a wand. It can't be that difficult," she says like a petulant child. She's sick of feeling ugly. "I'm not powerful enough to do it on my own."

He gets up from the table, looming over her. His face is close, and his large, beak-like nose almost touches her own. It scares her to see him like this. A single tear slips down her cheek even as she wills herself not to cry.

"I said no." His breath is so hot on her face that she feels as though her skin is burning.

Beauty may only be skin deep, but it doesn't make her want it any less.

--

One year.

He's been here for a year, and she still hasn't found the words she needs. And she doubts she ever will.

She doesn't know why he stayed, or what stops him from leaving. But she knows that she can't live without him now. She can't go back to solitude.

But she can't face the world either.

--

"Why do you steal my handkerchiefs?" he asks her one morning, and she drops the milk bottle in her surprise. It shatters and glass flies everywhere, cutting her feet and her shins. Tiny drops of blood fall to the floor, mixing with the milk and turning it a pale pink. He tells her not to move and begins to clear the glass from around her, sweeping it away in a single wand-aided gesture.

Next he tends to her feet, choosing to clean them manually rather than magically. She asks him why, and he tells her that the cuts heal better this way.

"Well, why do they have healing spells then?" she asks, her tone light and curious.

He doesn't answer, and it is then she discovers the concept of lying.

--

He lies to her again. And again. And again. And soon she can't tell the lie from the truth.

She asks him about his home, and he lies, telling her it's large and expensive with golden doorknobs and wooden panelling.

She asks him about his family, and he lies, telling her he loves them and that they are waiting for him to return. He tells her about his happy childhood and his dog named Sirius.

She asks him if he enjoyed his job, and he lies, telling her that he loved teaching and wouldn't want any other job in the world.

She asks about the Death Eaters and You-Know-Who, and he lies, telling her that they're gone and that they're never coming back.

And then he tells her that her friends are waiting for her and that she should come home.

He tells her a lot of lies.

--

"Why do you want to be beautiful, Miss Granger?"

The question is unexpected, but she's seen it lurking in his eyes before. And she lies to him, because she too has perfected that particular art.

"I don't. I want to be normal."

Well, more of a half truth than a lie.

--

Perhaps she is starved for company, but one night things change and she finds herself staring at him for far too long.

--

"Will you kiss me?" she asks him, regretting the words almost the instant they leave her lips. He gives her an odd look, a pained expression crossing his face.

"No, Miss Granger."

"My name is Hermione."

"I am well aware of that, Miss Granger."

She gets angry, throwing herself at him and wrestling him to the ground. He doesn't fight back, but she is far too cross to notice. She sits astride his chest, her palms flat against his shoulders, holding him down.

"Then I will kiss you."

And her lips descend on his.

He fights her, but she doesn't let go, her lips stealing something he wouldn't give. His mouth opens as he tries to catch a breath and she forces her tongue in. She explores the inside of his mouth, caressing his tongue with her own, and he stops fighting, kissing her back.

He tastes of peppermint and she of cinnamon. The flavours mix and it becomes too much, the pair breaking away breathless.

"This is wrong, Hermione."

She doesn't care. Not anymore.

--

They do more than just kiss that night. And the next night. And every night after that.

He is a drug, and she just can't get enough. She needs to feel his skin against hers, his breath on her face, his weight on top of her.

She needs to feel him deep inside.

And she can't stop wanting him, too scared to fall from the heights of pleasure he takes her to.

But they are careless and soon they end up with more than they bargained for.

--

"You can't bring up a child in a place like this."

"It's my baby."

"It's not fair. A child needs more than just the love of its parents."

She rounds on him, her eyes wild.

"Life is not fair, Severus. I used to be intelligent and brave and beautiful. And now I can't even step outside of my own home. I just can't leave."

He sighs, pulling the struggling woman close.

"You're still all of those things, Hermione. You just can't see it." He places a hand on her stomach, rounded with his child. "Do you know why I came here?" She shakes her head. "I came to bring you home. When you snapped your wand all those years ago, you deprived the world of your talents, your intelligence and your love. And the world needs you back. I need you back."

And this time there is no lie. This time he means every word.

--

On Friday he takes her home.

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Epilogue

Clipping from The Daily Prophet.

Snape-Granger Severus and Hermione, Amariel Eve Granger-Snape, 7lb 5oz, St Mungo's Maternity Ward.