

All Hallows Eve

by Doomspark

Revenge is a dish best served cold. Deadly cold.

All Hallows Eve

Chapter 1 of 1

Revenge is a dish best served cold. Deadly cold.

All Hallows Eve

The towers are twisted and broken. One, Gryffindor, completely burned to the ground. The castle proper is a crumpled children's toy. Hogwarts is a desolate, devastated place. Not even the grass survived the war; the ground is stark and barren. Sterile. Off in the distance, the single surviving Quidditch goal leans at a crazy angle. It's been ten years.

He comes here on All Hallows Eve, every year. It is penance of a sort to walk through the wreckage and remember what it was like. He's thought about cleaning it up, but the magnitude of that task is daunting. And too, some people prefer things left this way as a reminder. It is not a safe thing to oppose Lord Voldemort.

He stands in the remains of the Great Hall now open to the sky. The shattered tables are damp from the rain yesterday, as are the whitening bones that lie beside and under them. It disturbed him once to know that the bodies were left to rot. Now he shrugs it off. Like a moth to a flame, he is drawn to the High Table, to the skeletons there.

It gets dark early at this time of year; the sun is setting. He lights his lantern and looks over what he helped wrought.

Albus sprawls over the table, still holding his staff. Malfoy tried to take it from his dead hand, and was incinerated on the spot. The burn mark is still there. It will always be there. No one else has touched the staff since.

Minvera lies near Albus, still partly clad in her green tartan. Her wand was taken and snapped, of course.

Next to them is the Potter boy. He's recognizable by the glasses that are tangled, half-melted on the skull.

Flitwick and Sprout, bones entwined in death like the lovers they were in life.

The wind picks up and whistles through the room, like the moaning of the damned. He shudders at the simile and starts to leave. It is full dark now.

A scraping sound behind him, and he turns in horror to see Albus' skeleton rise from its untidy sprawl, and turn to face him with its death's head grin. Behind Albus the others are stirring. Flitwick rolls to his feet and assists his wife to hers.

Terror holds him fast. His ears tell him that the ones behind him are moving, bones shuffling on the cracked stone floor.

Albus takes a single deliberate step toward him, and he screams and bolts, only to trip on a loose stone. Pain shoots through his ankle as he falls. The lantern goes flying from his hand and shatters somewhere. He groans as he tries to rise; his ankle will not hold his weight. He crawls on hands and knees toward what he hopes is the door. The wind howls around him, blowing stinging dust into his face and eyes. It talks, the wind does, and it says, "Traitor!"

He has to stop to wipe the dust out of his eyes. When he looks up, he shudders. The skeletons glow, not with the green/white of phosphor, but with an intensely cold pure white. He can barely stand to look at them.

"Traitor!" the wind proclaims again.

And so he is. He is the one who betrayed Hogwarts, who gave Voldemort entry past the wards.

"You don't understand!" he shouts. "I had to do it!"

The wind howls. "Explain!"

How can you explain to the wind that you've had enough? That you can't bear to see what you might have been any longer? That Voldemort has promised to restore all you've lost – and more, if only you do what he asks. A simple task, really. Just provide entry.

He shakes his head. "I can't."

The wind roars around him knocking him to the ground and shredding his cloak. The skeleton that was Albus stands over him, untouched by the fury of the wind. Somehow that is the most terrifying thing of all. Albus raises his staff and brings it down hard. He feels the shock of pain in his skull. Then darkness.

~*~

From the *Daily Prophet*, November 1, 2008.

The body of an unidentified man was found in the ruins of Hogwarts castle early this morning. He had no wand, and no identification except for initials tattooed on his arm. Anyone missing a relative with the initials A.F., please contact the Wizengamot.