

She Walked In Darkness

by yarrow and thyme

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Chapter 1 of 1

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It was an ugly thing, really. Pansy, for the life of her, couldn't quite remember why she had wanted it in the first place. As she lay curled into a tight ball in the center of her expansive four-poster bed in the manor, she clutched her arm tightly to her chest. As if it would remove the dull ache that seemed to penetrate her skin, her very bones.

When she closed her eyes, all that she could see was the pure terror and disgust etched in every line of Draco's face as he knelt before their Lord, as he had for so long professed his hope to do. For all of the boasting and name-calling over the years, he was truly no more in control of his fate than the rest of them. Pansy thought that the sight of Draco Malfoy bowed and pleading before a madman, tears shining in his startling gray eyes, would stay with her until the day that she died.

She had not slept since that night. It seemed that whenever her eyes began to drift closed, one of the house-elves would appear with a snap of displaced air which called to mind the eerie crack of breaking bone. Or one of the logs on the fire would shift, sounding all too much like the sizzle of a brand upon first touch of skin. At these times, it took every ounce of Slytherin in her to keep her screams behind her lips.

To while away the hours, she tried to recall as much as she could about what had led her to where she was; tried to pinpoint when it had all gone wrong. Had it been that first night? When the musty old hat had settled on her head, had it cried out her doom then and there? Perhaps she would have been better off begging it for the familiar disgrace of a yellow tie and an eager little girl with heavy blonde pigtails for a friend, rather than a slithering snake and the sullen-faced Millicent.

Or possibly it was when she first insulted Granger. Or when she first hexed Longbottom from behind a suit of armor. Or when she first tripped Susan Bones in the Charms corridor. Or when she first kissed Draco. Or when she first caught sight of the dark mark hanging in the sky that fateful night.

Any way she examined it, her path seemed to have been set before her for longer than she could remember.

Of a sudden, a line of light fell across her face. She could not feel its warmth, but its presence stained the inside of her eyelids the color of blood.

With pale, shaking hands, she buttoned her robes and clasped her cloak. Tied the satin ribbon which held the stark white mask to her face, surprisingly cool against her skin. As her fingers worked her boot laces, she felt robbed of breath.

The journey through the echoing marble halls was silent but for the silken hiss of her robes and the click of her heels on the polished floors. And as the huge oaken doors opened ponderously before her and the light struck her form, she shivered.

For though the sky was blue and cloudless and the air warm, she walked in darkness and could not feel the sun.