

A Wish Not Granted

by krachum

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Prolog

Chapter 1 of 1

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Prolog

Yesterday, the air had been stifling, hot and heavy, the humidity and pollution staining the sky to a murky brownish yellow. It had been the kind of day that made it impossible to do anything other than lie in the shade on the balcony hammock fanning yourself while drinking cold lemonade and playing chess. The slow game made endurable only by the fact that your mind had been reduced to a soggy mass many hours before. The exhaustive torment of the inhabitants of this London suburb was mercifully put to an end around midnight when the thunderstorm erupted.

Now the cool air caressed the skin, and the rainy drizzle obscured the few cars that passed, as it closed off the noise of the city, leaving each in solitary peace and contentment, alone with the pitter-patter of the rain. Eloise Midgeon sat meditatively on her window sill, feet dangling out the window, absorbing the soothing atmosphere this pre-dawn hour. It was her time of reflection; thinking objectively was easier when one felt removed and unconcerned. Disconnected thoughts and words chased each other through her mind as she absentmindedly began to fiddle with the hem of her p-jays.

The musical sound of raindrops reverberated as they made their final stand against the laws of physics. Before her stretched out a massacre, the streets pooling with the rest of these brave, yet heroically stupid, drops, who refused to acknowledge that concrete was harder than water. Yet, these raindrops were to be admired, for as soon as they met their end, they immediately rallied, flowing into the sewers to try again some other day. Perhaps they were patient enough to slowly wear down the cement over the passage of time. After all, the great canyons were not to be sneezed at. Or perhaps there is no they, no legendary and never-ending battle between raindrops and ugly concrete. Perhaps things just exist but have no meaning.

No, no, bad train of thought. Existentialism is just too depressing. Don't really understand it anyway. Alright, let's explore something else... Hmm, what to think about?

Rose silk of a dress, shimmering as it is whipped by the wind, on a day near the sea, bright sunlight. The ocean, a vast expanse, infinity, omega. Math homework, don't like that at all. Summer school sucks. Long boring hours of pretending to pay attention. Hatred. Frustration. Restlessness. Pages and pages of meaningless gibberish. Magic is more interesting. Hogwarts...

People often don't think in words, instead they think in images, feelings, sensations... Unless am psychotically abnormal... perhaps.

I suppose it is rather difficult to portray thought in writing.

All those conversations characters in books have with their conscience, as if they were two different people, are pretty stupid if you ask me. When examining a moral dilemma, one does not talk to themselves in that manner. Instead they think more along the lines of, "Should I or should I not? Doing that is stupid and will get me in

trouble... but it is better than the other options... C'mon Ellie, get a grip!"

It is getting grayer outside, sun must be rising. At this hour of the morning, things seem amusingly ironic somehow. And Hogwarts most of all... I mean, I love the place, yet hate it.

Why do we feel the need to laugh when hurt, disappointment, loneliness and hopelessness assail us? I suppose I do subscribe to the theory that laughter is in some ways a coping mechanism. It's the only thing that explains why I broke down in hysterical laughter after receiving my failing grade in Astronomy after I had spent hour upon hour vainly attempting to stuff all of those meaningless star charts into my head. But they slipped out, like sand through my fingers, as I desperately sought to grab hold of a few grains.

The mind is a funny thing. My mind might be a little more screwed than most. After all, who on earth pictures their mental landscape like that of a murky swamp, draped in poisonous vapours?

A swamp that has but one edge, which spreads infinitely forth into the darkness, filled with half sunken logs and rotting weeds. Memories float upon the water, and monsters lurk within the deep, sometimes disturbing the muddy waters only to settle back once more into their fearful sleep. Upon that swamp, I venture forth, a wide-eyed child clinging to a large grubby sheet for warmth and protection in a rickety old rowboat that I cannot control. In desperation I cry out: "Come back to me! Come back to me! Oh, memories I want to see!" I peer through the mists. Relief is when I find them, oh, sweet comfort from the desolation. Sometimes, the information that I seek rests at the surface as beautifully clear and sweet smelling as a water-lily, pure, yet untouched by the surrounding decay. Other times, I search in desperation, only to vainly plunge my hands into the stagnant water, reaching as far as I dare go in an attempt to retrieve the sunken, bulbous mass, which is now nothing more than a shadow.

Yup! You guessed right, I'm not very smart, quite stupid in fact. 'Kay, maybe not that stupid. My marks are above average anyhow. It's simply agony during tests when you almost remember something but can't grab hold of it. It's like trying to grab a gentle summer breeze; it doesn't work.

I hate Astronomy anyways; don't understand what the hell it has to do with magic. All we do in that bloody class is memorize the movements of the planets and the bloody stars. Now to study the physics behind it all would be fascinating, but wizards are into rote memorization for some obscure reason. As far as I'm concerned, I walked into Hogwarts knowing enough about the night sky.

One - It's pretty.

Two - I can recognize the Big Dipper and the Small Dipper.

Three - Because I know how to differentiate the Big Dipper and the Small Dipper, I have no problem identifying the North Star, which is all I will ever need if I get stuck in the woods at night without a compass while knowing which direction I should be heading to.

The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. (You'd be amazed how any people get that confused, I mean, really! You're only witness to it EVERY DAY!)

Thus, I consider myself well enough versed in astral knowledge to face the unknown. As I think that divination is nothing but a load of bull, I have no other use for the subject. Unfortunately, if I want to graduate from Hogwarts, I will have to pass that bloody class. I failed the Astronomy OWL last June with a T; yes, Troll does exist, as I have found out.

I suppose insulting the examiner's intelligence wasn't the smartest thing to do. If I had played the pitiful, pathetic, grateful, blunderingly stupid, but good-heartedly naïve Hufflepuff, I probably would have received a D. Which would have meant not putting up with madman Sinistra (yes madman not madam) for another year while being humiliated by my younger peers, oh well.

Apart from Astronomy, I'm not too bad, apart from practical Herbology that is. Have a tendency to kill things that I blame entirely on my dried-up brown death giving thumb. I am the living proof that the legend that Hufflepuffs are loving nurturing beings who are good with plants is complete coddleswap. I take Arithmancy and Ancient Runes as my options.

Divination is a stupid faux.

Muggle studies are a bit of a joke for any Muggle-born. Naw, take that back, they are the funniest thing I've seen in decades. (Not that I've seen that many decades, but whatever.)

As for Care for Magical Creatures... took that one in my third year, but then dropped out. Under any other teacher than Hagrid, it would have been great, but his fascination with monsters is madness. I hesitated to drop the class for a long while. I don't need to say that when I learned of the Blast-Ended Skrewts, I never once more regretted my decision. In any case, I study the theoretical side on my own.

My life has always been very normal. Apart from discovering that I was a witch that is.

The day my Hogwarts letter came was the most surprising of my life. I have no idea what on earth I performed as accidental magic as a child; neither I nor my parents seem to remember anything. I had never been in danger or threatened; I'm rather passive-aggressive by nature, so I had not lashed out. Need I say that my family was one of the more difficult ones to persuade that magic was real. Poor Professor McGonagall. To this day, I still blush whenever she looks at me in the eye.

I am a witch, and I must admit that that is enough excitement to last me a lifetime. I do not wish to have dangerous adventures like that Potter guy and his friends; I prefer to hear and gossip about them from afar. Struggling against death-defying odds is fun to imagine, but in real life, who would wish for such a fate? I am content, and in a weird twisted way, I am happy with living in the background. A safe and normal witch's life. By Merlin, I hope it stays that way!

And with that last wish, Eloise Midgeon went to get ready for the day.