

Not Now

by acciobook7

An 1100 word serial drabble written for the *page 314* challenge at grangersnape100. If you are not in the mood to be very, very sad, I suggest you don't read this. I had a terrible time getting through this myself. This is the first time I have ever teared up while composing a drabble. You've been warned!

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Chapter 1 of 1

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PART 1

I live for these moments, here, in the solitude of my rooms, late at night **Blessed silence.**

A noise stirs me... **a sound in the night.** He has come for me. I can feel his presence, sense his closeness. I am no match for him. Death is near. I can smell it on the air.

It is interesting to me in these moments that our concept of heaven is one of ecstasy. The joys of heaven. That our concept of hell is pain. The fires of hell. So we don't think it very good not to *feel* anything, do we?

PART 2

I haven't cared for myself properly in days. I stink like a cat that's been caught in the rain betwixt the defaced concrete walls of a city slum's most heavily trafficked alleyway. **Shameful. I was always such a beautiful little devil, as the expression goes. Not now**

My door opens silently. If I hadn't been watching for it, I would not have noticed it breach. ~~He~~was a spy for nigh twenty years, after all...

"Hello, Severus," I call to him softly.

"*Lumos,*" is his only reply.

He looks somehow better these days than he has in the past.

PART 3

His face is fuller, less gaunt, and his frown lines are less pronounced than I am used to seeing them. His stress has diminished somewhat with the passing of his Dark Master, or so it would seem...

"I've been waiting for you," I say while staring transfixed at his wand tip. **I am beyond all pain and sin"**

"But do you feel anything?" he asks me, his voice strained and harsh.

"Is that what it means to be free of this?" I ask, taking a step forward and reaching out a careful hand to grasp his wrist in my palm.

PART 4

I unbutton the cuff of his frock coat and peel back the material, revealing his Dark Mark to the light. **"Is that what it means that you no longer feel?"**

He ignores my question. "You know what I must do, Hermione. I have no choice while he still inhabits your mind. I can not risk him returning yet again—"

I interrupt him, "I understand."

A tear escapes from his ducts and creeps down his cheek. I wipe it away with the pad of my thumb and, as I make to move it away, he grabs my wrist and halts me.

PART 5

He raises my palm to his lips and kisses it gently. The tears are flowing freely now. It is all he can do to suppress the sobs that threaten to escape him.

"I—can—not—do it!" he cries, sinking to his knees in front of me. I caress his head, running my fingers through his hair, my nails brushing his scalp, comforting him.

"You must, Severus," I whisper. "I can't do it myself. He'll stop me before I get the chance."

His sobs deepen, and he grabs on to my robes, bunching the material into balls with his fists.

PART 6

"There must be another way!" he yells into the wool. "Something—"

I place a lone finger against his lips, silencing him. With the same finger I tilt his chin gently upward, forcing him to look into my eyes.

"He lives on in my mind now. And what kind of life is that? I don't like living here myself! What does it mean to live on in the mind of another? Nothing, I think. You aren't really there, are you?"

He sniffs in response.

"Thank you," I continue, **"but I would rather suffer, rather dry up like a husk with teeth."**

PART 7

He nods. "How long do you have," he asks, "until the curse takes effect?"

"Six hours," I reply. *"The spell will commence one full hour after the final sunrise following the first full moon of his mortal death!"* I repeat from memory.

He shivers. I can tell he is unnerved by my demeanor at such a time as this. Who marches to their own death with passive indifference?

I da. What choice do I have?

He stands. He takes my face in his hands and kisses my eyes gently. I let out a breath I didn't know I was holding.

PART 8

He takes my hand and guides me over to the bed. He lays me down atop the silk duvet and kisses me forever. I barely notice him undoing my blouse...

We make love for hours, treating each moment together as if it were our last. In a way, it is.

At the conclusion of our joining he takes me in his arms, and we watch the sunrise together, holding each other tightly as if any slack on the part of one of us would cause the other to disappear. I finally abandon my facade of indifference. I begin to cry.

PART 9

I rise and stand beside the bed upon which we've just expressed our love for the last time. He rises with me, doing his best to keep a steady countenance, though his arm shakes as he raises it in front of him, wand held at the ready.

"Does it hurt?" I ask him.

"No, my love," he answers me in a quaking voice.

I can tell he is lying. I imagine that the moments spent floating somewhere between life and death, anguish and peace, light and dark, are more painful than one is capable of imagining with a cognizant mind.

PART 10

I understand, too, how he must feel, watching the one he loves about to slip away... I felt the same wretched sense of helplessness when I found him lying there in the Shrieking Shack... that is, of course, until I shoved the bezoar down his throat...

When he came back to me, I felt a joy such that I had never known in all my life. A joy, it is now clear, that he will never know for himself.

I stifle a sob, and it is obvious that he is barely able to restrain himself from lowering his wand permanently.

PART 11

"It's the only way," I say for the second time today. "I am the last Horcrux, Severus. You must destroy it—*me*— or he will return *through* me. He will overtake me as he did Ginny, only I will cease to exist. He will become me. I won't live like that. I wouldn't *really* be *living* at all."

He nods once in agreement. He is ready now... at least, as ready as he will ever be. It is time.

His words echo though my mind – the last words I will ever hear – as darkness closes in around me.

"Avada Kedavra."

*All bolded text is from page 314 of Anne Rice's, *The Vampire Lestat*. 'She's the brilliant one. I'm just borrowing.