

<i>He</i> Loves Him

by Celestial Melody

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Notes

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This was originally intended to be my MNFF September One-Shot Challenge entry, but I wrote it in 2nd person instead of 3rd, and it doesn't sound the same if I change it. And, too, I'm a little nervous about this story; it's not my usual style. Please, *please* tell me what you guys think because I'm not sure if I want to continue writing in this style or not. I'm experimenting, which is always weird at first, and I'm really trying to grow as a writer. So.

He Loves Him

The moment you think that you truly *know* a bloke is the very moment when something happens and you realize that you don't know *him* at all. And it's not that *he* lied; it's not even that *he* maliciously meant to hurt you or to shake your trust in *him*. In fact, *he* didn't even notice how you felt when that 'something' happened because you were careful not to show anything. But you still felt betrayed, hurt, lost... And you're jealous; of course you're jealous. I mean, you love someone for years, you pour every ounce of your soul, every drop of your heart's blood into the relationship you two have (even if it's only a platonic one), and then you find out that *he* loves someone else, and your whole world comes crashing down around your ears.

And in the back of your mind, an annoying pipsqueak of a voice is nasally insinuating that *Ah, Rose, you should have known. Oh, silly young thing, you should have known.*

But what your conscience (if the pipsqueak voice can be called that) fails to realize is that you *did* know, on some strange level, and the funny thing is, you didn't care enough to stop. And, really, there's no way you could have because you can't control whom you love ... and you can't control whom *he* loves, either. And when *he* smiles at you for the one-millionth time, and it's in pure friendship, and your heart nearly bursts in a rush of love and pain for *him*, because of *him*... well, then there is no chance for you to stop loving *him*, no way to say, "I never meant for it to happen," because you did, oh God, you did!

And the maddest thing of all is that you three are friends; the fact that you don't hate each other surprises everybody because your fathers never got along. Harry Potter (*his* dad), famous for defeating He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named an ungodly number of times, and his equally celebrated sidekick, Ronald Weasley (your dad), fought constantly with that infamous chiseler, Draco Malfoy, and when you three went to school, you were expected to behave the same way. But none of that old rivalry crap ever took hold within you three; from the moment you were all proclaimed, "Ravenclaw!" you instinctively huddled together for support ... and love.

And, years later, you even now sometimes find yourself taking a mental, distancing trip away from your physical body flanked on either side by *him* and him, and you wonder why you three are friends because surely three people so different can't possibly be friends, but then he says something witty and you come back and you realize that, hell, this is why. For one thing, he is nothing like his father. He's not a Slytherin and, yes, he's proud, but he's also a geeky smart kid with a penchant for Harlequin romances ... which is something that should have tipped you off but didn't.

So you all grew up together, in a sense, and all three of you kept your friendship quiet; of course, everyone at school knew you were friends because, after all, you *were* in the same House, but your fathers didn't know, and that was just fine with you three. And, true, sometimes *he* and he would make little jokes that only they knew the answers to, but you didn't let it bother you that much because they shared a dormitory room and you were in the girls' dormitory and *obviously* there were going to be things going on up there that you would never hear about. So you weren't too miffed, but then things got a little heavier, emotions got a little rawer; boys started liking girls, and you started eying *him* even though *he* was your best friend and your cousin. After all, you can't help whom you love.

But no matter how much you stared, no matter how much you wished *he* never noticed you, never stared at you back. Of course, *he* never noticed any other girls either, so you told yourself that it was all right, that you still had a chance. After all, it was only a matter of time before *he* would wise up and discover that *he* loved you as much as you loved *him*. So you waited. And you waited some more because *he* never seemed to get smart, but still you assured yourself every time *he* gave you that melting smile that *this* was it...*he* was finally starting to come around.

Perhaps you should have paid more attention to him, though, because he never dated any girls either. Then again, he was quiet, and you never thought he would date anyway; privately, you wondered if he might be a fairy ... but only when you were feeling particularly mean. But you never told *him* your thoughts because *he* wouldn't have believed you; *he* was fiercely loyal to him.

Then, in fifth year, everything changed; you could smell the change in the gusty autumn air that whipped through Ravenclaw Tower, and you started *seeing* it everywhere. You began intercepting sidelong glances over bubbling cauldrons of scintillating, putrid goop in Potions, and they weren't directed at you. And suddenly *his* late-night forays to the library increased in number and got longer, and you weren't there because you needed sleep, and you began to hope that those trips really *were* for studying and not for ... something else, but somehow, in the deepest recesses of your jungle-like subconscious, you didn't think so.

Thus, for several weeks, you glared enviously at the girls in the corridors because you thought that maybe *he* was spending quality time cosseted away behind bookcases filled with dusty tomes with one of them. But when Yule rolled around and everyone was pairing up for the Yule Ball, it was a little odd that neither *he* nor he had dates, and it was stranger still when *he* and he both disappeared at the same time during the dance only to show up later that evening reeking of Firewhiskey and flushed red as poppies. And only you knew this because you waited up for *him* in the Common Room after everyone else had gone to bed, happy as clams and drunk on Christmas spirit; and when *he* came in with him, you asked where *he* had been (ignoring him), and *he* burped softly and chucked you on the chin, then slung an arm around him, and marched up the stairs to the boys' dormitory ... and you knew then that *he* wasn't seeing any girls. You didn't know how you knew this, but you did, so you started watching *him*, searching for clues in *his* behavior.

And your inner confusion only escalated during the spring when, during Herbology class, the three of you (along with your baskets intended for collecting quillberry branches from the Forbidden Forest in preparation for an ink-making project) were subjected to the bawdy jokes that spring always brings to the minds of randy teenagers. And you tried to convince yourself that his "basket" comment wasn't a double entendre, but when *he* blushed and laughed, you weren't quite so sure.

And today, during the Quidditch game...the most important game of the year for Ravenclaw and Gryffindor (also the *stormiest* game of the year; the Divination students had been predicting a fierce thunderstorm with possible chunks of unseasonable hail for weeks, and amazingly enough, they were right)...you try not to notice how *he* looks at him because it hurts to know that *he* will never watch you in the same way.

And when *he* says in that quiet voice, "No, he shouldn't be out there. He's *way* too small for this. He's a bookworm, not an athlete. Hell, they only picked him because he was smallest in Ravenclaw," you try to ignore the blatant concern in *his* voice even as *he* tries to hide it with mildly derisive overtones. But when a bright flash of lightning forks out above the Quidditch pitch eliciting shrieks of terror from the spectators, and when that "bookworm" fumbles because the rain has made the handle of his broomstick slick and impossible to grip, and when his gloved fingers...sopping wet...fail to grip and he falls, you can't help but notice that *he* is the first one who leaps to *his* feet, the first one running down the steps that lead to the pitch while you tag behind. And, of course, you're worried, too. Honestly, who wouldn't be? The "bookworm" is your mate, and you are afraid that he might be seriously injured ... but at the same time, you hope he is. Maybe if he is, *he* will learn to love you.

These Slytherin-like thoughts cloud your mind as a smirk appears on your lips, and you fall behind, and by the time you get down to the pitch *he* has gone off with him to the infirmary. You know this because Madam Hooch, mistaking your distress at finding *him* gone, assumes that you are worried about him and tells you that he has suffered a minor fracture to the skull that will be fixed up in no time by Madam Pomfrey. And all the while you're wishing that he had broken his neck and you're wondering why on Earth you weren't placed in Slytherin.

But like the good, docile Ravenclaw you are, you nod and, gathering your robes around you to ward against the chill of the rain, dash off to the infirmary where you are directed into the ward by Madam Poppy Pomfrey, who is nearly blind but still as good a diagnostic as ever she was. (At least, that's what your father and uncle tell you, and they should know.) So, quietly as a church mouse...and you're not quite sure why you're being so quiet...you creep into the second ward and tiptoe past rows of empty beds; luckily, it's late evening, and the grey dreariness outside with its crackling splinters of lightning, its rolling booms of thunder, masks your approach.

Faintly, you can see the glow of candlelight from behind a screen in the ward, and you walk softly toward it, the smallest hint of a smile alighting on your lips...you want to look happy and reassuring for *him* and him, too. For, as often as you dislike him (and it's subconscious, this dislike, for he has never done anything against you), you are still his friend, and he needs your support. So, smiling a very little, you peek around the edge of the screen ... and stop dead.

He looks so pale...and you're frightened. *He* looks so bereft...and you want to hold *him*. They are your best friends, and they need you because he is propped up in bed, pillows all around, behind him, beside him, and *he* is staring with desperate eyes into his face ... and *he* looks miserable. And you almost...*almost*...go in to them, but just as you do, the scene before you changes, and when *he* leans in to brush *his* lips (ohgodohgodohgod, *his* beautiful lips!) against the chiseled, thin mouth of the injured *him*, you are shocked, but at the same time, you knew. And you realize that *he* will never love you in that way. And his eyes flutter open, and he reaches up a pale hand to grip the scrawny neck of the *him* whom you love, deepening the kiss.

You watch, hand pressed to your mouth to stifle the sob that surely emanates from the very depths of your bleeding, bruised heart, and you wait. Then...it must be five minutes later but it feels like forever...after pure, unabashed, *familiar* snogging, *he* pulls back, and you can see the tears running down *his* cheeks in sticky, glistening rivulets of saltwater, and his bony, pale hand reaches up to cradle the salty cheek. This only brings more tears, and soon *his* head is buried in his lap, and he is stroking *his* head and your own hands itch to caress that scruffy dark hair, but you remain rooted to the spot. But maybe you make a noise...maybe you *can't* keep quiet...maybe you thought you were being silent as the grave and you actually weren't...and his silvery grey eyes flick over to your hiding place in the shadows and search through the blackness ... and find you.

"Rose," he whispers in that drawl that you hate, in that pitying, startled tone of someone who meant to keep his secret. And before *he* can see you, you turn and leave. And nobody follows you. And you didn't expect them to because Albus loves Scorpius ... and not you.