

Stillness

by *klschmidt*

Years after his death, some sufferers of Tom Riddle's antics are struck by an unexpected after-effect. Can Severus and Hermione find a way to reverse the outcome? (This will be compliant at least to COS, most canon deaths will be disregarded but maybe not all.)

Prologue

Chapter 1 of 1

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DISCLAIMER: Anything you recognize is owned by JKR and the powers that be in the canon-HP Universe. A huge thanks to my beta, XXX, for her help with this, and to all the TPP mods for the work they do. (Nothing wrong with a bit of brown-nosin', huh?) SWAK! (Or maybe I'm a mod throwing you off!)

AU beyond COS, non-DH compliant, especially EWE! Many deaths have been ignored.

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### PROLOGUE

"But, Argus," Poppy Pomfrey said in her best bedside-manner voice, "she is getting older all the time. For a cat, sometimes things like this just begin happening more rapidly."

Argus Filch had brought his precious Mrs. Norris to see Madam Pomfrey, and he was deeply concerned. Even though Poppy was not a magical vet, she was the nearest Healer and Argus was at his wit's end. "She has been acting strange for about a week now," he said. "It's like nothing I've ever seen before in any being, magical or not."

His concern for Mrs. Norris was justified. She would be following him around the castle as usual, trying to discover any truant mice wandering the corridors when suddenly she'd stop dead-still, looking just as if he had brought her back from a taxidermist. Initially the incidents would last only about half a minute, but with each passing day they were getting longer. Mrs. Norris now stood on the examination table still as a statue. It had been almost fifteen minutes this time. Suddenly she started moving again and appeared to be a bit surprised that she wasn't where she thought she should be. However, in the presence of Mr. Filch, she knew she was safe, and she rubbed up against the gnarled hand that reached out to her.

Madam Pomfrey shook her head. "Amazing! I've not seen anything like this either, Argus. Be sure to let me know if it happens again."

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At the same moment in Diagon Alley, the new editor-in-chief of the *Daily Prophet* Justin Finch-Fletchley was meeting with his chief photographer Colin Creevey. The office had a gentle breeze blowing in from the opened window. It was a beautiful September day and, through the window, a light noise rippled in from the street of shoppers.

Any observer from outside the window would have seen that both men went stone-still at the same moment. Justin came around shortly before Colin did, so he was the one to make the observation that the parchment, which a breeze had swept from his desk, in what seemed a split second ago, was already half-way across the room. He also noted that Colin had not moved for several seconds. Suddenly Colin spoke, continuing the comment he had been making when Justin first observed the parchment's shifting into a fall. "...*phet* could use a few more reporters to help fill the gap left by Rita's forced retirement."

"Colin, hold up a minute," Justin interrupted. "Something isn't right, here. Did you see that parchment fall off of my desk?"

"Oy! How did it get across the room so fast? Is it hexed?"

"So we both missed it. It had just fluttered off the desk, and the next instant it was across the room. The parchment moved, but you were still. Then you spoke, starting in mid-word. I've had moments recently where I feel a bit disoriented. The only thing I can remember it being similar to is..."

Colin finished the sentence for him. "...like something that happened to us at Hogwarts!"

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"Professor Granger!"

Hermione turned away from the board to see who had called her name. All of the students in her Transfiguration class were staring at her oddly. "Yes, what is it?" she said.

"Professor," said the young Creevey girl in the first row, "you turned to write something on the board, and you've been frozen there for almost a whole minute."

Hermione frowned. She hadn't felt anything, but the concern on the young girl's face was genuine. Perhaps it was time to dismiss the class and have a chat with Poppy. *'Time to give the assignment before letting the students leave,'* she thought to herself.

Checking the time, she saw class was almost over anyway.

"I want a foot by tomorrow on the principles of Transfiguring inanimate objects. Class dismissed."

"I hope you feel better, Professor," Miss Creevey said as she left the classroom.

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"The child said it was a full minute that I was totally immobile," Hermione said to Poppy.

"Oh, dear! This is the second incident I have heard about today," Poppy told her. "Argus had Mrs. Norris here because of having similar spells. The last one was about fifteen minutes long."

"Mrs. Norris? What have I got in common with Mrs. Norris?" Hermione groused. A shocked look came into her eyes. She recalled a disturbing scene in one of the Hogwarts hallways. Bloody writing was on the wall. "The Basilisk!"

Poppy dashed to the Floo and threw in a pinch of Floo Powder. "Severus Snape," she said.

A moment later Hermione heard his voice coming through the Floo. "To what do I owe this pleasure, Poppy?"

"Can you come through now, Severus? We need to consult about something urgently."

"Give me two minutes and I will be there. I have a potion that is almost ready to simmer."

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A/N: Anything Goes Challenge Prompt: 90. It's years after the war and those who were petrified are starting to see that their petrification from the basilisk have unwanted side affects. What are they, and what do they do about it?