

**show me**

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/35248843) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/35248843>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling</a>
Relationships:	<a href="#">Tom Riddle &amp; You</a> , <a href="#">Tom Riddle &amp; Reader</a> , <a href="#">Tom Riddle &amp; Original Female Character(s)</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Reader</a> , <a href="#">Original Female Character(s)</a> , <a href="#">You</a> , <a href="#">Billy Stubbs</a> , <a href="#">Mrs Cole (Harry Potter)</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Young Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">Tom Riddle is His Own Warning</a> , <a href="#">Animal Death</a> , <a href="#">placed in wools orphanage</a> , <a href="#">Non-Graphic Violence</a> , <a href="#">Manipulative Tom Riddle</a> , <a href="#">mention of animal murder</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2021-11-21 Words: 1,253 Chapters: 1/1

# **show me**

by [orlon](#)

## Summary

You take in the sting of betrayal as Mrs. Cole leaves you alone in her office to get bandages.

Well, not alone, alone, of course.

Tom sits patiently at your side.

## Notes

please read the tags before reading the fic!!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Tom Riddle was a Weird boy.

You were sure, the moment you laid eyes on him, that he would bring the end of all time.

When you told Billy Stubbs, the only boy who had been friends with you despite being afraid of cooties, he brushed you off and laughed. Tom is a weird boy, he said. He can't do nothing, he said.

You shook your head and pulled on the frayed edges of your clothes. Billy was wrong. Even Mrs. Cole knew it.

Tom Riddle was a weird boy.

But, he can do nothing, just as he can do anything.

Tom Riddle can.

Riddle's Weird can become Strange and Riddle's Strange can become Dangerous.

You hope you will be long gone before you ever see what Riddle's Dangerous will turn into.

Dangerous was a name Mrs. Cole gave to the men on the street. The ones with sunken eyes and grabbing hands. Crooning bitter words and sweeter offerings of a forbidden better life. Promises made to be broken.

You looked at Riddle with his round face stuffed in a book and nodded to yourself.

Dangerous fit him well.

You know Billy wouldn't believe you (or he wouldn't until he had seen Riddle's Dangerousness for himself), Dennis Bishop wouldn't listen, and Amy Benson would laugh in your face.

Nobody would see Riddle's Dangerous until he wanted them to.

You suppose you should be thankful.

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On your tenth birthday, you wish you had never been left at Wool's Orphanage, wish you had never been born in the first place, wish you'd never seen Tom Riddle.

It's a cruel wish, but not without its sentiment.

On your tenth birthday, Billy believes you.

Billy cries all day long, and the small piece of candy you get from Mrs. Cole tastes bitter in your mouth. Tastes ruined.

On your tenth birthday, Billy Stubb's rabbit is hung from the rafters in the playroom.

You're the one who finds it, swinging. Like a metronome. Back and forth, back and forth.

On your tenth birthday, Riddle shows you his Dangerous, and he smiles sweetly at you, red flecks under his fingernails.

You think you can see the blood pooled at his feet, sinking into the playmats.

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Billy doesn't talk anymore. He sits beside you at meals, pushing around food on his plate. Sometimes, on days when he looks especially sad, you hug him.

Sometimes, he cries and begs you to take him away, far, far away.

You comfort him when he's awake, warn him of the better things. But after he's fallen asleep, you whisper back to him, whisper about how you want to go away too.

You both know you can't, but it's a nice dream when it lasted.

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When he looks at you, you know Billy understands.

Tom Riddle is a Strange boy. A Suspicious boy. A Dangerous boy. A Special boy.

A Murderer, you think as you glance at him— his brown eyes staring through you—, maybe not so much a boy.

Not anymore.

Not for a while.

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One day, Riddle abandons a book in the playroom. Curious, you wander over, kneeling next to it carefully as if it would bite. It's a non-fiction book about animals.

It's flipped open to a picture of a rabbit.

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Riddle is Strange.

He talks to snakes while you both were assigned the gardening chore. You try your best to ignore his hissing with the garden snake that appeared. His eyes sear into your soul, crawling up your neck, choking you. It is far too hard to ignore entirely.

Riddle isn't impressed with your attempts. He continues to watch you pointedly, still hissing at the snake.

Finally, when his head melts into a tilted, curious look, you turn to him.

“I’m Tom.” He says. His voice is quiet, a hissing sound still embedded in his voice.

You introduce yourself and glance down at his garden snake. His lips turn up.

“This is Dolos.” You look at his beady eyes and nervously smile. Tom’s own sharpens.

“Hello Dolos,” you say and Tom straightens, so you add on, “Your scales are very beautiful.”

Tom hisses quietly again. “He said thank you.”

You nod and start pulling weeds. Tom just watches you and hisses off and on. You don't say anything. Not at the risk of Riddle’s Dangerousness.

Tom doesn't help until Mrs. Cole comes out.

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You were heading to your room when two older orphans corner you.

They are tall and scary, with loud booming voices and baseless accusations. You vaguely recognize one of them. It’s one of Billy’s older friends. You shake endlessly.

“It was you wasn't it?” He asks. You flinch when he bangs a fist against the wall.

“What?” You murmur.

“It was! You hung Mr. Rabbit from the rafters!” You flinch again his loud voice echoing in your ears.

“No! I didn't!” You cry.

“Yes, you did!”

“I didn't!”

The bruises that lace your body the next day are nothing compared to Riddle’s Dangerously Intense Gaze.

Within the next hour, you're being dragged into the office with that very same gaze walking on the other side of Mrs. Cole.

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You take in the sting of betrayal as Mrs. Cole leaves you alone in her office to get bandages.

Well, not alone, alone, of course.

Tom sits patiently at your side.

“Dolos died.” He says casually. Strange boy. Murderer. You wonder if he killed it himself, but you find him hard to gauge when he's not Dangerous.

“I’m sorry.” You say shortly. You hope it’s the reaction he wants. He nods, oddly solemn.

“One of the boys who hurt you killed him.” He says, eyes peering at you through thick lashes. Your eyes flicker over his face.

“Is that why you're helping me?” You ask. You can't get the tremble out of your throat. He smiles.

“I knew you’d understand.” He says slowly, leaning towards you. “Of course, you’d understand. You’re special, like me.”

You resist the urge to shake your head immediately.

“Special?” You force out.

He grins. “You can do things other people can’t. You understand things other people can’t, you’re special.” He blinks at you, waiting for a reaction.

“I don't,” you stumble, “I don't think I’m special.” You say, Tom’s eyebrows furrowing instantly.

“It doesn't matter what you think.” He responds, almost petulantly. “You are. You even knew I was special before I did! You would watch me all the time. Were you waiting to see if I was special like you? And you weren't afraid of Dolos, and you weren't surprised when I started talking to him! Why didn't you talk to him either?”

You cross your arms, shielding yourself, leaning as far back as you could when Tom leaned in closer.

“Show me.” He demanded.

Show me you're special. Show me you're different from everyone else.

Show me we’re alike.

You freeze. And the moment is saved by Mrs. Cole bustling through the door.

“I must have misplaced these, I swore I put them away in the cupboard...” She murmurs.

Tom is silent as Mrs. Cole wraps your cuts with cloth and bandages. His eyes are Dangerous. You don't look back when you walk past him, hands wrapped around your injuries. You think it’s the worst mistake you’ve made yet.

Because piquing Tom Riddle's interest ensures danger will be slinking at your feet. It will be pestering you for all his affection, which is something you cannot hold back. It is something you'll lose against.

And you, are not special. Not enough to win.

## End Notes

thank you for reading!!! this will probably just be left as one-shot lol

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