

## Twilight dusk

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# Twilight dusk

by [Storiesmadebyaredbutterfly](#)

## Summary

Love is what the dark lord Voldemort lacked. According to Dumbledore, that is. But, in another timeline, in another world, what if love was exactly what made the dark lord more powerful, what made him darker? Or tom riddle jr gets a parental figure he will fight to the death for.

# Evening's prologue

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### Evening's Prologue

*London, 22nd of December, 1926*

On this cold night of December, the sky's orange and golden hues have faded and only the barest light remains. The forming shadows are already beginning to tower over the few unlucky to still be on the streets. Such persons are the truly desperate, the ones that life has beaten over and over till nothing remains other than mostly empty shells. Keeping just enough intelligence to keep functioning, they are only a step above soulless automats. These lonely souls barely feel joy anymore, preferring to forsake it to avoid the crushing despair that'll be the last straw. After all, what is more hurtful than to hope -so strongly it feels your whole body- just to see your hopes be crushed in front of your very own eyes? To be only moments away of finally, finally escaping this growing pit of despair and self-deprecation you had to dig for yourself just to fail, again? No, there's nothing worse than that. So why would the coming new year's celebrations matter? It's not as if the coming year will bring any change. The poor will stay poor and the rich will stay rich. There's nothing really worth fighting for anymore so the day is just another day. Except, for a hunched silhouette toddling with great difficulty away from a dingy street, just a few blocks away from a seemingly innocuous pub named The Leaky cauldron.

Pregnant to the eyes, Merope of House Gaunt cannot give up: her darling baby's so close to being birthed, she has to win the fight for his life! So, she keeps walking away from the magical world she's never been able to be part of, past the neighborhood where she enjoyed an ideal but ephemeral married life (Tom, oh tom, how she still loves him so much), and to the suburbs where she may find some abandoned house to shield herself for the night.

Kick, kick, kick.

Her baby (she's sure he's a boy) has never been more active and it's sufficient to help her ignore the gnawing hunger, the heaviness of her limbs. When was the last time she could safely sleep more than a few minutes, without any worries for her future? The two nights at the Leaky, dearly bought by selling her locket (the only remain of her tattered family pride, curse Borgin, this damn swindler!), are nothing more than an already faded memory. She knows that if she stops now, for only the briefest moments, she'll never be able to get up again. So, she walks. And, at last, her resilience is rewarded, her prayers answered when she hears soft music filling the street. A house, there's a house whose inhabitants are awake. The soft tones are enchanting, but not as wonderful as the Victorian townhouse they led her to, the lights casting a reassuring glow. An ornate door, ornated by a traditional Christmas crown, is framed by a brick facade covered by a dark green ivy. The house seems to have been taken straight from a page of Alice in Wonderland and she's ready to jump into the hole. Up close, she can see the crown's base are thick pine branches intertwined with holly whose fruits are as red as blood and with dainty white winter roses.

Knock, knock, knock.

The music stops. Nobody moves. The silence seems to last a lifetime, no an eternity. Should she knock again? Should she go away to spare herself the indignity to have a door closed in her face or, worse, stay unopened?

Tap. Tap. Tap.

Small footsteps, ringing like the bells announcing the Lord's birth, are approaching, and then, the heavy sturdy door finally opens, the light revealing a fae-like being.

"Yes?"

---

Twilight has always been his favourite moment. It's a moment of peace, of tranquillity after a long and tumultuous day. It's also the moment where the light turns into darkness, a moment of transition, where everything seems possible. Especially close to the New Year. Even though faint, the traces are everywhere, even the trees seem to shudder in anticipation of the new year. But, tonight, there's something more. Hadrian is not quite sure of what, but he can practically taste it in the air. His whole body seems to vibrate. He's already inspected his whole townhouse twice. To no avail. He can't settle. And there's nothing unusual. Well, except the deep silence. A reverent one, as if the three wise men were praying and waiting for Jesus to be born. Something important, life-changing will happen. But, is he ready?

No matter, fate doesn't like to be denied, struggling won't matter: what needs to happen will happen. Resolve settled, Hadrian finally can sit and, to further unwind, choose to play his beloved wooden flute. With delicate carvings, the base covered in small roses, this flute is a thing of beauty. A sentimental heirloom too. He still can remember when daddy gifted it to him when he was but a small boy of 8 years. During the blessed peaceful days of childhood. Oh, if only there were some means to go back in time... More than a decade later, the memories are still so very bittersweet. Hadrian, surrounded by the aroma of the Christmas spices, has lost himself in his memories. Until several deep knocks reverberate through the house. While casting a glance at the chimney clock, he frowns, who could be disturbing him? He knows he's not expecting someone. And nobody would dare come unannounced. Well, even though he would like to, the person doesn't seem to intend to be ignored. With a deep sigh, he leaves his cosy settee and goes to open the door.

"Yes?"

"Please, help me! Just a couple of nights, till I give birth. Please, I can help around the house!"

Well, he wasn't expecting that. A bedraggled woman, dark hair unkempt and greasy, clothes full of holes, looking so very filthy and tired. Except for her eyes, pleading and brimming with tears, are still full of hope and determination. What a contradiction. He really would like to be able to offer shelter, to help her, and be charitable. But he doesn't have any medical training and he's never done well with people suddenly invading his space. And the servants and house elves are nearly all gone on holiday.

“I’m truly sorry but I don’t think I’ll be able to help...”

The distress appearing in her gaze is crushing, and he really hates himself at this moment. But she should go to a hospital. He’s ready to put an end to the conversation by recommending her to some hospital for the poor he knows. Until, as sudden as a thunderstruck, someone’s magic is grabbing his own. And not just grabbing it but holding it tightly. Possessively. This... can’t be! She couldn’t be... She’s not powerful enough, and certainly not the right type for him. Unless... His gaze drops to her belly and he knows, he can feel it in his very bones, his very soul. So many years later, finally, finally, his soulmate has come. And so, there’s only one course to take.

“Wait! I forgot, but I do have a room ready to use. One of my servants had to leave on a family emergency. It’s not much but ....”

“Thank you so much!! I’ll repay you; you won’t regret it, I promise”.

Oh, but I’m already not regretting it, he thought while letting her enter and closing the door. Not while his baby soulmate’s magic still hasn’t let go. He has a feeling it’s going to be a trend. Oh well, he’ll go along. Some things are worth it, aren’t they?

## Chapter End Notes

Hi!

After more than 10 years of not writing, I am now back. With one of my favorite fandoms and pairings!

This first chapter isn't much but it was very important for me to post it today, because it's our dear Voldemort/tom riddle's birthday and because it's a promise to myself for better things to come for the new year.

I hope you'll like it, please don't hesitate to comment or kudos. (I'll probably come back later to fix the format and the minor errors I surely left)

I wish you all a happy Year!

# Evening 1: Mother's Terrors

## Chapter Summary

Not everything is all it seems. Merope makes some choices and Tom enters the scene.

## Chapter Notes

Here is the new chapter!

I'm sorry it took me so long to update but real life was a b\*\*\*\*.

Harry Potter universe wasn't invented by me.

Now, enjoy !

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

## Evening 1: Mother's Terrors

*London, on the 27th of December 1926*

After believing in fool's hopes and being disappointed all her life, you would think that Merope would know better than to believe that everything which glitters is gold. But she was so, so happy to finally be safe, finally being warm and the feeling of passing a threshold and feeling welcomed after such a long time and being so stressed. A bit like entering your apartment after waiting two hours for the locksmith to unlock the door and stressing about the (no doubt exorbitant) amount you'll have to pay before being pleasantly surprised by the cheap rates. Oh, and what a gorgeous Victorian townhall this house is. Ancient light-brown wood floors are wonderfully matched with the red bricks of the walls. The wooden chandeliers with their wonderful-smelling candles. Acacia, peony and rosemary. These magical herbs are all used, amongst others, for protection. And oh, when she saw her room. 'It's not much,' he said. But it's twice the surface of the room she rented at the Leaky, nearly a one-person apartment. A small seating area before a chimney, a perfect place to receive friends. And the big two-person beds and its forest-green hangings and new white bedding. Everywhere, delicately carved dark wooden furniture. A big window offers a nice view of a traditional English garden. In other words, an artfully organized mess of plants, herbs and trees. She can even see a small corner of what appears to be a vegetable garden. To top all of that, an ensuite private bathroom is done in black and white tones. With marble flooring and a big round mirror framed with copper. And that is supposed to be a servant room, a **servant** room! A trend she remarked in all the house is the appearance of nature and, most strangely, always hidden in a corner, a small fairy. Even during the Yule dinner and rituals. Because, in addition to the prayer to Lady Hecate, Hadrian ( 'call me Harry' ) recited a prayer in honour of

the Lefey line. Morgana's line. Surprising, given the bad reputation this witch had and still has in the wizarding world's mind.

This is when she began to see the cracks. To notice the small unexplainable and disturbing details. As pleasant as her host is, there's something fake about him. He smiles but it's the sort of conniving smile, like the one you see on the images of imps who just successfully pulled a trick on a poor unsuspecting person. And sometimes, the way he acts is... She can't express it properly but it's like he's not from this world, like he's different from her. His round, nearly pointed ears and his very pale rosy skin. His unnatural forest green eyes. It's not a mere resemblance, it's like they were extracted straight from. He seems to glide instead of walking and she never ever saw him use his wand. It's strapped in a dark green wand holster on his right arm but it's never out. There's also the way he is treated by the few servants she saw. Deferential, the kind of deference you would expect to be shown to a King, no it's beyond that, towards a God. Well, from a house elf it wouldn't be strange, these small beings always behave like that. But from humans... Nimea, the cook, always bow before Harry and never raise her gaze towards him. Same behaviour from the Puckle, the butler. Such strange names, as if they were characters from a fairy tale. And when they call their master, his name never came easily from their throat. As if they have an apple slice lodged in their windpipe. Like they want and are supposed to call him something else. Secondly, she has remarked that her host is never seen before at least mid-afternoon. Like a vampire hiding from the sun. But she's sure he's not. Apparently, he suffers from a rare malady that tires him a lot and makes his skin ultra-sensitive to light. But one night, when she woke because she was thirsty, she saw him at dawn, going to the charming and beautiful wood he has on the property (the efficiency of an expanding charm!). He was barefoot and dressed in clothes seemingly made of leaves, a flower crown adorning his head. His servants trailed behind him, similarly dressed. She remembers finding it strange but when she asked the next morning at breakfast, she was answered that it was a family ritual. A plausible explanation. After all, there are as many magical rituals as there are wizarding families (existing or dead) that is to say, a lot.

But then, she remarked too that there are parts of the house that nobody wants her to go to. Above all, this strange door where Harry seems to pass all his time when awake. Yesterday, while she went to go to bed, she had a glimpse of Harry, tinkering above something in this forbidden room. Something made of precious stones, given the reflects from the flickering candlelight. Last, but not least, the way he's behaving towards her. More precisely towards her baby. He seems obsessed with her Tom (she's going to name him for his father, no matter the circumstances). An afternoon, she took an impromptu nap in the conservatory and she awoke to Harry caressing her belly and whispering words to it. More than that, as she pretended to still sleep, petrified by the awkward situation she didn't know how to react to, she listened to him talking as if Tom were alive. Promising that they would always be together. Assuring him that he would always be there for his protection. That he would make sure he would be the most accomplished wizard and that they would reign as equals.

Merope doesn't understand this. It frightens her, this obsession. But what can she do? She's always under the watchful eyes of the servant who have returned from their holidays. Besides, even if she were to be able to leave the house undetected, she's so far along with her pregnancy she wouldn't be able to go fast, let alone far. And where would she go? She has nowhere to turn to, given her poverty. Coming back home is out of the equation, given her

family's pureblood fanaticism, they would make her miscarriage or wait until the birth before killing her babe to make her suffer. She's sitting in the sunroom, thinking about a solution while pretending to finish her embroidery for Tom's baby blanket, when her ears pick up the hushed murmur of a whispered conversation. After a lifetime to keep her ears open to avoid her family, she's developed good hearing. One of the few talents she has. Maybe it's the occasion she was waiting for to escape this gilded cage? So, she tiptoes towards the closed door, as quiet as a mouse. Something she is quite skilled at, given her infancy. She always had to be discreet to avoid provoking her drunk father. And let's not forget her sadistic crazy older brother. She recognizes the voices of Velda the head maid and Buckle, Harry's butler. They're the servants who are closest to Harry, having worked the longest for him. She even heard that Harry had been raised by Buckle. This is weird, considering Silver seems younger than Harry. If there are secrets in this house, and she knows there are, then they would know it. This is a golden opportunity she won't let pass through her fingers. She pressed her right ear to the door and focused on spying on their conversation.

‘-So Lord Harry has to leave in three days for the passing of the new year, right? Do you know who's going with him? I don't want to stay with this woman. Can she even be described as a woman? She's staining these halls and Lord...

-Shh! Be quiet and don't call him anything other than Lord Harry! She might not be a powerful witch but she's still magical. In such a magical environment as this house, even she could use an eavesdropping charm! You know why Lord Harry is allowing her to stay. Do you intend to disobey his orders and disrespect him? You know the consequences if you do! Remember what he did last time...?

-Of course, I remember, we all had to watch it! And I was the one, as the youngest serving maid back then, to have to clean the room. There was so much blood! But still, Lord Harry shouldn't have to be in her presence, given his status! Even if the indignation prevails, Merope can still distinguish the tremors in Velda's voice, hears the true fear. What the hell happened? Did such a sweet-looking guy like Harry gruesomely kill someone?

-Good. Then continue playing your part. It's not for long anyway. She's near her term and then we can ditch her. After all, only the little master matters. Furthermore, our Lord needs to finish the protection pendant. Otherwise, with so many dangers and foes, the little master would be defenceless. You know that. Can't you do an effort for the little master? pleads Silver, as if cajoling a cat to relinquish a mouse caught in its mouth.

-Hmph!, harrumphed Velda but then her voice lightens and becomes excited. I'm only doing it for the little master! I can't wait for him to be born. Such a joyous occasion. Lord Harry waited so many centuries for him...

-Indeed. But now, after years of loneliness, his patience is rewarded. So, we have to make it very special. Do we have everything we need for the new year's cleansing bath ritual and intention spell?

From this point, the conversation turns normal. Only servants talking about the tasks they need to complete for the house to run correctly, the food needed, the herbs to buy at the apothecary, etc. Merope has heard enough; her head is spinning with so much new information. So many mysteries. She returns quietly to her seat and thinks. Rearranging her



thoughts and classifying what she just learned. She now has the confirmation that her host is someone important that shouldn't be angered. Someone who is apparently not afraid to use violence. Somehow, she's not very surprised. He always seems so aloof and his eyes... His Avada Kedavra green. So frightening. So, she has to be extra careful when making her escape. More important, does 'little master' refer to her little boy? How can that be when he's yet to be born? Will he have to grow miserable and friendless as she did? Forever bound by duties and crushed by ancestral obligations? No, she doesn't want that for him. She has to leave. Soon. Very soon. Like the servants said, her pregnancy is nearly finished and it won't be long till she can hold her baby. But once again how? Think Merope, think, for your babe! She remembers the last time she was so desperate. It was when she realised her beautiful prince charming would never notice her and help her escape her family unless she bewitched him! Remembers discreetly gathering the ingredients for the Amortentia. Pretending she only was preparing a healing potion for her relatives (she refuses to call them otherwise unless she has to)...

Of course, here's the solution: a potion! Maybe a sleeping potion, to be able to leave without someone stopping her? They seem to be preoccupied with her health while she is pregnant, maybe she can use that to her advantage? For a diversion? And she could use this diversion to steal one of these protection pendants... Given the tone Velda and Silver used to speak of it, it must be a powerful artefact. If not for her, it could protect her little boy. The more the minutes tick, the more Merope has a plan. A foolishly brave, one-shot plan. But a plan. She knows what she has to do to escape. And she will escape, she won't contemplate any other scenario. Her baby's future depends on it. Now, she only has to be careful and patient.

The big day?

The 31st of December.

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*London, on the 31st of December 1926, Wool's orphanage, 10 pm*

Far away, the fireworks are already beginning their beautiful ballet. Even though it's cold as hell, the weather is clear enough for the celebrations to take place. By looking through her windows, Mrs. Cole can see the small colourful dots. She even managed to make the disgusting, ungrateful and disrespectful brats go to sleep without too much of a fuss. The matron of the sad place that is Wool's orphanage is now free to enjoy her whisky. Finally. Ah, if only her fiancé didn't meet this rich spoiled heiress, she could have her own place and not be stuck in this rat's hole. Forced to take care of one of the things she always hated the most: children! Always crying, always wanting attention, always complaining! What rights do they have to complain?! **SHE** is the one who has the right to complain. Running this government place with fewer and fewer funds with each passing year. Preventing the building to collapse. Holding charity events to gather money by buttering up rich people. Trying to make some fools adopt some children only for new children to come. And all of that with barely any help. Only an aging gardener and the young air-brained nurse Martha.

Not that she can't understand why nobody else wants to apply for a position. If she hadn't been forced to accept the position, she certainly wouldn't be there. She takes a long sip

directly from the bottle. Her only joy, her only comfort, her only friend.

Knock, knock, knock.

Did someone knock on the door? No, of course not. It's the fireworks. Or the alcohol. She's all alone to enjoy an evening of peace and drinking.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

TAP, TAP, TAP.

With all this ruckus, she is forced to acknowledge that no, it's neither the fireworks nor her drunk imagination. There goes her evening. Why couldn't she have this only evening of peace?

Grumbling, she hastened her pace to open the door quickly. She can't have this indecent person awake the children or she won't be able to make them go to sleep without at least two or three stories and games. She is joined in the hall by Martha. The girl loves to read romance novels late into the night, the fool. As if true love existed. And she's glad to her presence when she opens the doors to see a half-dead pregnant woman with a puddle of water at her feet. Truly she is cursed. A woman who has begun her labour. Of course, she can't refuse her entrance, or she would lose any reputation. Not that she has a stellar one but she has one and she won't risk it for such a miserable creature. The secrets always come to light one day. Besides, Martha is already helping the moaning woman to the infirmary. Soon the moans turn to loud cries, strong enough to wake up the dead. Mrs. Cole has no nurse training and no desire to see the birth so she leaves it to Martha's hands. Instead, she does a round of all the children's chambers to make them stay in their beds. With the threat of cleaning the bathroom for three weeks, they don't make a single peep. Fortunately, all of her charges are above 5 so they know better than to disobey her. During the 15 minutes she took, not once did the cries stop. It's nearly midnight when, finally, a blessed silence falls.

Deciding it's the right time be present to do the dread paperwork, Mrs. Cole enters the infirmary without bothering to knock. Just as she enters, she hears the unknown woman (she didn't ask for a name and doesn't care) whispers:

'Tom. His name is Tom Marvolo Riddle. Tom Riddle in memory of his father. Marvolo for my family's side. This necklace is his heirloom. Please don't let HIM take my baby and take care of him.'

As soon she lays eyes on the new mother, she knows she won't survive the birth and that these words were her dying ones. Already, she can see the light fading from her eyes. She only has time to plant a kiss on her baby's forehead before her forces abandon her and her grip on the babe slackens. Of course, it would have been too much to hope Martha wouldn't catch the falling baby and that it would die. No, of course! As she approaches to decide where to place her new burden ... ahem, her new charge, the candle's light catches the necklace. Are these precious stones? How?! This girl barely had clothes, how could she have something this costly? As she reaches to take it off the baby's neck (truly a babe doesn't need it and the dead girl won't know it!), she catches the babe's dark and stormy grey eyes. She freezes. Such gaze. This is not normal. At this moment, she realises that since his birth, she

hasn't heard the baby cry. Not even once. While his mother just died, he only calmly played with his necklace. And now, he's staring at her as if he would kill her if she dared to touch him, to take the necklace. It's just a babe, she shouldn't be intimidated but she is. She can't move.

Matron. Matron?! Do I have your permission to give him some milk?' asks Martha, seeming to have already asked the question more than once.

This shakes her out of her stupor enough for her to nod. Then, after instructing the nurse to act as she wants to keep the unnatural babe alive, she flees back to her room. She locks her door with two turns of the key and promptly drinks the rest of her liquor. Even then, through her dreams, she can't forget these demonic eyes...

Meanwhile, in the totally destroyed master bedroom of a Victorian house, a Lord Harry cries for the loss of his soulmate.

## Chapter End Notes

So, Tom is born, yay!

I hope this chapter was worth the wait.

If there are major errors, feel free to respectfully point them and I'll correct them.

I'll try to take less time for next chapter but I make no promise, I'm nearing the end of my university course and have some big paper to write and an internship to find. I'm also trying to have one or more chapters prepared in advance...

Also, I was distracted by new bunny plots and new stories...

What would you like to see next chapter? It will probably contain some episodes from tom riddle's childhood but I'm not sure which one. What are the major ones you feel shaped him and need to happen? Do you want to see small episodes from his childhood or jump right before meeting Harry again and just have the matron tell Harry all his misdeeds?

Don't hesitate to comment, it feeds my soul ;)

Take care!

Smbarb ( Stories made by a red butterfly)

## Evening 2 : Destiny is unescapable

### Chapter Summary

Tom lives a bleak life at the orphanage but the wheels of destiny are turning ...

### Chapter Notes

Hello everyone!

I am so so sorry it took me so much time to update again!

But between a big final paper for my master, the last exams, moving out, then going to Spain for 2 internships, doing the 1st of the internships, taking part in a special online training program....

Well, you get the gist, life was busy and crazy.

And don't even let me talk about mental health problems...

Well, here is the new chapter, in honour of our dear Harry's birthday!

Enjoy!

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

### Evening 2: Destiny is unescapable

*Wool's Orphanage, London, on the 29th of December of 1935*

Outside the window, the snow is falling without pause. There's already a thick coat of snow that nobody can escape but the rich people. Everyone else is forced to trudge through it, to endure the deep cold provoked by muddy wet shoes. It's the season of his birthday but Tom hates it. He hates that his birthday is always forgotten, caught between the celebrations of Christmas and New Year. He hates the stupid other orphans who always get a gift on Christmas, even if second-handed, and then mocks him for not getting one. 'Freaks,' they say. 'Devil's son,' approves the vile Mrs Cole who so enjoys giving him the worst chores. He hates Martha even more, the gentle but cowardly help. The one who pities him and know he's only defending himself but never intervenes and always tell him 'to forgive Tom, you should be more kind and then the others would be too. The Lord says so.' What a stupid drivel. He hates knowing he's more intelligent than them but that he'll get nowhere just because he's not smiling sweetly to every prospective parent. Not that it did him any kind of favours when he used to do it, as he was always sent back to the orphanage for 'terrifying unnatural displays'. Fools. Why can't they understand that it's what makes it better and special? Well, he doesn't care, he'll climb the ladder all by himself and it'll make it all sweeter when he is able to lord it over them. Because he will. There are no other alternatives, he won't accept any future except a brilliant and warm one.

If only he could trace back his family whether maternal or paternal.... He tried before but to no avail. Tom is such a common name, another thing he hates that without knowing his father's family name it's like seeking a needle in a hay stack. He has more clues for his mother's side but it proves to be equally difficult for different reasons. Contrary to his father's side, the names are less common (he never met a Merope or a Marvolo) but without knowing more general things like the area they live, he's getting nowhere. And finally, the more mysterious of the clues: his family pendant. The only possession he has for himself and quite a valuable one. It's a delicate and finely carved piece, made with some of the more rare and pricier materials. Suspended to a thin silver chain, is a butterfly made of ebony. His wings are pale but vibrant emerald and are so finely crafted it seems the butterfly could fly anytime. Curling around the body of the butterfly is a silver snake with onyx as his eyes. This pendant has been with him since his birth according to Martha and since she couldn't lie to save her life, he knows it's true. Moreover, he can't remember despite his superior memory skills even a moment when he didn't have it around his neck. A reminder that he has a family that wants him somewhere because, according to Martha who received his mother's dying words, it is a family heirloom specifically ordered for him. For him and no one else. It's jewel worth a hefty sum of money, something he knows from the only time the matron tried to force him to sell him 'for everyone to have better lives'. Ha! He knew he wasn't included in that and that, even if the other children of Wool would get something, the majority would disappear into Mrs Cole pockets. Likely in alcohol bottles. Back to the jeweller, he estimated the necklace for an incredible 30 thousand pounds. Apparently, it's nearly impossible to have precious stones and silver so pure. And it seems the work of a famous artisan whose work always beautifully represents animals but are so rare few have seen them. Mrs Cole eyes gleamed so greedily when she heard that. Not that the jeweller was any better, Tom knew looking at him he was already counting the profits he would get from selling it to some snotty noble. The royal family was even mentioned.

But Tom refused to be separate from the only heirloom he has, his only chance to find his family. He tried to run and when it didn't work, he snarled and hit and kicked. But then, as the jeweller immobilised him and Mrs Cole tried to rip the necklace from him, the jewel proves to be as special as him. Because suddenly Mrs Cole yelped and shot away from him looking with terrified eyes at her hands. Hands on which were growing big blisters as if she put her hands through a fire for hours. And the jeweller suffered the same effects. Even now, she still has some which make him crows in delight every time he sees them. Serves her right for trying to steal from him while always lecturing him about lawfulness. After that, she never tried again to sell it. Even warned the other orphans no to touch it as it was a symbol of his evilness. The other orphans, always seeking someone lower to make their own situations better, readily got to bully him even more. So very jealous of him. Oh, oh he loves his necklace. Never too tight even if it's growing and never too hot and cold. Never got broken even when Anna tried to destroy it by stomping on it. After he disfigured her, she never tried again and neither did the other orphans. So it's mainly verbal insult and hits. It's painful but he can deal with it. Twiddling the necklace is his favourite thing to do as it never fails to calm and relax him. He even sometimes feels like its get warm in his hands, as if to reassure him. And he needs it too in this dreadful period of the year. Especially since after the last mess, he has the feeling the matron is scheming something which will not do him any good. More unsettling is the strange gleam he now sees in Father John's eyes whenever he passes the man on the way to school. His gut is telling him something dreadful is happening but he doesn't

know what. And if there's something Tom hates above all others is feeling powerless. But whatever it is, he won't go down without a fight.

That's why, before going to the last mass of the year, he has hidden a small knife in his trousers. It's not much but it may be sufficient to buy him some time to escape back to the streets. Of course, chances are that he will quickly be taken back to the orphanage by the useless policeman. Incapable of finding their own things and entirely too corrupted. He looks at the clock and he can't help but feel dread pooling in his stomach. The mass is ending and it feels like the walls are trying to squash him. The urge to laugh hysterically is strong. God, salvation, what drivel! There is no god, it's only an image for weak people to reassure themselves and justify their sins. Oh but look, God made us imperfect so it doesn't matter if I do one (or two, or more) horrible things, I can all make it go away with some donation to the Church and I'll go to heaven. So hypocrite. Don't they remember that their precious Bible is filled with horrible and bloody tales? Rule of thumb, people? But no, it's people like him who are just trying to survive that are the sinners. The time it took for Tom's spirit to wander the Mass has concluded. But he hasn't even twitched that Mrs Cole, who insisted on being seated at his side, gripped him so strongly that he has no chance of escaping.

'Oh dear Tom, don't tell me you forgot? This year it's the orphanage turn to help Father John to clean after the ceremony. And you volunteered because you didn't want the other orphans to miss the special dinner cook by the sisters of the nearby convent, such a kind child.' She simpered with a wicked smile.

'How wonderful, young Tom. Thank you so much, here, please' directs Father John, with an answering smirk.

This definitely is a trap but with the eyes of lingering people, he has no chance to escape without appearing like a crazy child and going to the asylum.

So he obeys and begin cleaning the floor from the muddy tracks left by the people. And then he changes the candles. Mrs Cole is watching like a hawk. But the Father has disappeared God knows where and the dread comes back full force. What is he doing? What kind of trap is he preparing? A clang to his left is the only clue he has that he is in danger. But it's too late. His skull hurts and then he's meeting the floor while everything turns black.

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### *Somewhere in London, the Same Day*

Time. What a strange concept. Passing so fast but at the same time oh so agonising slow. Nearly 10 years. A decade, nothing compared to the billions of years the universe has stood. Nearly 10 years, around 3,600 days of pure agony. Of feeling as if your very soul was crying incessantly for a missing piece. Nearly ten years of missing what you knew made you feel whole and complete. And there is no one to blame but him and his arrogance. He thought Merope too weak and ignorant in the way of Magic to be able to escape. He was so, so wrong. She inherited some traits of her Slytherin ancestor after all. Otherwise, how could she have hatched such a risky plan and pulled it off? While appearing clueless, she observed and memorised the habits of his staff and used it to his advantage. She secretly made quite good sleeping potions and served them to his servants under the guise of trying to be a thankful guest by making Christmas drinks. She even manages to get the house elves, taking

advantage of their need and desire to be helpful to most wizards, especially a pregnant witch. And when the potions took effect, she stole from Silver the key to his workshop and stole the pendant he just completed before running out, without even taking the clothes he gifted her. The fact she stole the pendant intended for Tom is the only solace Harry in this whole fiasco. No matter where his dear little soulmate is, he will be protected. He even could swear that the twin pendant he has around his neck reacted, which meant his little emperor was in danger. It was so hard feeling it, knowing the danger the other part of his soul was in but not being able to help as only a great danger and magical power would enact the special location spell he hid in the pendant. It seems, thankfully and at the same unfortunately the danger wasn't great enough and he kept being unable to locate his errand soulmate. The pendant is, after all, also designed to hide its wearer from everyone but the person wearing the fully linked twin pendant. And Merope elope when the pendants were only half linked. Sufficient for him to feel whether the other wearer is in danger but not enough to locate them.

Since then, each passing year is more torturous than the last. Waiting while not knowing when his soulmate would be born was dreadful. But waiting while his soulmate is somewhere, probably closer to him than he thinks and not being able to see him is even more torturous. But there is nothing he can do other than patrol with his loyal friends slash servants in the hope of finding Merope and his soulmate by chance. He sighs and decides that because of the late hour, it's time to go to bed. He climbs the beautiful marble stairs of his dear Victorian house up till the second private floor. He pauses before the door facing his ensuite. The door to the room he prepared for his dear heart. The rooms that will be forever his, till he has a body in front of him and his soul telling him it's not worth waiting anymore because Lord Death has taken his due. He slowly caresses the wood before turning on his heels and promptly walks into the door of his rooms.

He thinks he has broken his nose. But it doesn't matter, not when his pendant is burning as a raging inferno straight out of Hell. His mind suddenly is assaulted with a strong feeling of terror and helplessness. And it stokes his own helplessness till he is able to link with his dear soulmate and push all the power he can into the other pendant. It takes some time, maybe a half hour before the pendant grows cold again. But Harry is smiling like he hasn't in 9 years. This time, the peril was so grand that the localisation spells were able to override the ones designed to hide. He knows precisely in what neighbourhood, in what town his little emperor his. Of bloody course, he is in London, not too far from him, maybe 45 minutes by car. Only seconds with apparition. His cheeks hurt from smiling so much but once again, it doesn't matter. He has some preparations to make and then, as he hopes he was able to transmit to his little one, *'I am coming for you'*.

## Chapter End Notes

So\* semi hiding behind a wall\* was it worth the wait?

Next chapter: what happens with Father John (not going to be pretty, poor Tom), Harry come saves the day and enacts some revenge. Also, if it can fit it, some devilishly cute Tom.

Fun fact: it took way more time than needed to make sure to find a 29 december which

was a sunday and where Tom wasn't too old ^^

As usual, please don't hesitate to send kudos and comments my way. It feeds my sould and may help feed the muse.

See you hopefully soon.



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