

Beyond All Good and Evil-Part I: Twilight's Dawn

Prologue:

Through the trees of the Dark Forest he could see it, the whole commotion that had gripped Hogwarts castle and its grounds. Taking a deep breath, he set out all his senses, trying to figure out how everything had ended.

There... he could feel it, he was dead. A wave of emotions rushed over him at the knowledge. At last. His greatest nemesis in this life and the previous had passed on. The man who had been responsible for it all, for the ruining of so many lives, for loss beyond imagination, for pain beyond endurance. His pain...and that of others, of people he loved.

Love. His thin lips twisted in a bitter smile. 'Dumbledore, Dumbledore' he thought 'how wrong have you been that I cannot love, but then again you weren't wrong. You knew I can, you knew I'm able to feel, yet you had to go and lie to the world, deceive it all these years, that Lord Voldemort does not have a heart. "The power the Dark Lord knows not". No, I know it; I know it all too well. And that was exactly what YOU couldn't bear - to learn that it's never only black or white. YOU couldn't accept that she chose me and not your so-called "light side". Yet, I won old man - you no longer stand between me and finding her, now I can search in peace and after so many years my quest will end with success.'

This time a full grin crossed the Dark Lord's features. Fools. They thought he was after Potter, because of that prophecy, but it was all a cover. It had always been. For during those years, his real pursuit had remained carefully hidden underneath the supposed search for power and immortality. Not even his Death eaters had even the slightest idea what really was going on. Except one, but no, it wasn't that pompous, whining, irritating Bellatrix Lestrange. Voldemort felt disgusted at the very thought. True, she was a valuable asset, but an asset only, nothing more. He was revolted at the mere image of her being close to him in any way other than strictly professional. Oh yes, he let her think she was all-powerful and in charge of it all, yet he always put her in her place every time she overstepped the boundary, constantly reminding her that she was just another common Death eater. The same as what happened with the husband of her dear sister Narcissa, before he landed himself in jail, like the last idiot on Earth, of course.

No, his confidant was different, different from them all - the crawling, pathetic, ass-licking power-seekers or the other breed, the megalomaniacal, power-hungry bunch of brainless morons. Either way, they were for the most part

practically useless. But his Heir, he was a find and a major one by that. The Dark Lord couldn't take the grin off his snakelike face, he hadn't met anyone with so much potential, he could have almost sworn that the young man could well have been his own blood...

This last thought made pain tear at his heart again, as another sin of the man, whose death he had felt tonight, crossed his mind. He clenched his fists, fury burning in his bloodred, slit-like eyes. The old fool had hidden that as well, but the truth had finally come out like it should. Only it had taken 30 years to do so...

30 lost years...without her, without their child, so long, so achingly long. A time of existence, not life. For there was no life for him, if she were not there...

He cast one last look in the castle's direction, only to see the huge shadows of a fire and the screams of people, some of whom Death-eaters, tore at the night air. He didn't care though, he had another destination.

The forest had become thicker since his last visit. Magic, that was the only explanation, for it had not been long ago at all. Darkness surrounded him completely now, but he could see perfectly and he knew where he was going, a path only known to him, to a place hidden for everyone else but the Dark Lord.

He had discovered it when he had found the Chamber of Secrets in his 6th year at the castle. Apparently, Potter hadn't been clever enough to find it himself, thank Merlin. The tunnel where the basilisk had lived in until 4 years ago, had led the then teenager Tom Riddle to a place, considered just a legend by the others, much like the Chamber itself. But it existed, yet only those who had to, knew it was real...and he was standing in it yet again, in the small crypt, built out of sparkling emeralds, he'd been visiting regularly for the last 30 years - the tomb of Salazar Slytherin.

He had indeed been buried there, his coffin took the centre of the vault, but there was nothing left of his body anymore - the sarcophagus had been empty for quite a long time. Instead, if one entered the tomb now, he would have seen, laying on the black marble surface, the body of a woman of breathtaking beauty. She was young, in her early 20ies at most, her bloodred, wavy hair spreading around her head like a crown of fire, contrasting so well with the blackness of the surface it flowed on. Her alabaster skin was flawless, the almost transparent robes she wore looked like they were designed specifically to highlight, instead of conceal, her perfect figure and her closed delicate eyelids and slightly parted rosy lips gave the impression that she was simply asleep. It deceived him every time, his heart would flutter for a moment and a wild hope would take over him, that this round was going to be different, that she was indeed just asleep. Yet the illusion shattered all too quickly, when, as now again, he took her small hand in his, savoring the sensation of her soft skin,

only to feel its coldness, as well, to realize it was icy and lifeless. And his heart to shatter once more...

"I'm here, my love" he brushed a strand of her flaming silken tresses away from her cheek, his voice trembling with emotion. "And this time the news is good." He was smiling, "I finally found out the truth, our son is alive, he's been alive all these years and we had to live with the pain of not knowing." His eyes burnt again with hatred towards the victim of tonight's raid of Hogwarts. "He tried and he failed, my heart, our son had always been close and even for a long time by my very side. Looks like faith itself wanted to end this of his lies. And I swear to you, my Goddess, I'll find the missing piece, I'll figure out where he's been keeping your soul. Now that he's an obstacle no more, we're close, close to our final goal - bringing back our family and avenging all those who were lost because of HIM." His fingers were caressing her face running over the smoothness of her silken skin, "Soon, very soon." He leant down and kissed her lips passionately, lovingly.

Enchanted fires shone on the crypt's walls, burning forever, a symbol of their love and her powers. She had always loved fire, he mused, and so did he - it reminded him of her, of her spirit. She was a true force of nature and that was one of the reasons he loved her - she was unbreakable, even in the face of death she didn't flinch, just like him...

He felt like staying there, by her side, forever, every single time he came, it felt that way. But the search was still unfinished and now was the time to plunge into it even deeper, for his enemies would be busy arranging a funeral and chasing after the Malfoy boy. And that would leave him free to unfold his plans.

Their lips met one last time before he had to summon his whole strength to tear himself from her. When he finally succeeded, it took the greatest of effort every time; he looked once more back at the tomb. The crypt of his ancestor, a real fairytale enchanted palace of gems, which was supposed to hold the princess. And it did - it held his Queen, his fallen angel and each instance when he left it, all that he remained with was a haunted heart, troubled by memories of pain, musings on everything missed and wild hopes for a future that had, until now, seemed as unreachable as heaven itself...