In the Moonlight

by blue artemis

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Luna sits on the battlements outside of Ravenclaw Tower, watching the grounds in the moonlight. She remembers when it was peaceful, when every day wasn't a battle with the professors, when the worst thing that happened was her dorm mates hiding her shoes.

She sees the headmaster stride across the grounds, Neville in tow. She sees him hand the bruised boy over to Hagrid for his punishment.

She sighs as she moves quietly across the ledge back into the dorm. She does not want to give him another reason to punish her.

She has realized that no one sees as clearly as she does. She cannot hate the headmaster the way the others do. She has seen how deeply he feels each student's pain. The hurt flashes in his eyes before they harden with the knowledge that his protection comes at a price, both to the innocence of the students and to his soul.

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"Luna, how can you say Snape is on our side? I don't believe you. You really are looney." Ginny was incredulous.

"Ginny, the Wrackspurts have blinded you. Where were you sent to detention yesterday? Or last week? What else could he have done?"

Ginny glared while she considered the question, then her gaze softened. "You're right, Luna. I'm sorry. He could've handed me over to the Carrows, and he didn't."

Neville chimed in, "He certainly hasn't turned us in, and the elves and the portraits had to tell him we were here in the Room of Requirement."

"We can't behave like we know, though. It would cause more harm than good." Ginny was thoughtful.

"The Carrows are getting worse, I don't know how many more times I can distract them from Crucioing the little ones," Neville despaired.

"We are going to have to try for the sword of Gryffindor," Luna said calmly.

"What? Why?" Ginny questioned.

"He can punish us by keeping us for himself. We are both of legal age. It will appease the Carrows, and we can glean some information for Neville." Luna punctuated that statement by gazing past Ginny at some spot up on the side of the castle wall.

Neville stared at the two girls, then nodded firmly. "Let's go."

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"You blasted children! How am I supposed to keep you safe if you continue to behave like this?" Snape was so angry he was muttering under his breath. Unfortunately for him, he wasn't quiet enough.

"Take one or both of the girls as your slaves. I will keep the rest in the Room of Requirement," Neville spoke up from his position on the floor.

"Have you all gone bloody insane?" The headmaster was incredulous at the audacity of the three.

"Give them something gauzy to wear and make them eat at your feet in the Great Hall. Or stand them behind you and feed them elsewhere. The Carrows will report you are 'disciplining' us to the best of your ability, and they won't send Bellatrix Lestrange to become your deputy."

"You heard them speaking?" Snape was curious.

"I didn't, but I got that information from a credible source. Ginny, Luna and I are willing to do anything to keep that from happening." Neville sighed.

Snape turned his dark glare on the girls, but not before Luna noted the pride in his eyes. "I cannot keep Miss Weasley. That would get back to Potter and would cause no end of harm. But I will keep Miss Lovegood. Now, Miss Weasley, Mr. Longbottom, get up and brace yourselves against the desk. I need to make it look like you were 'properly' punished."

The next day, Luna was dressed in a gauzy, almost see-through gown and ate all her meals at the headmaster's feet. She did not return to her dormitory that night.

"I apologize for this, Miss Lovegood, but you will have to sleep in the bed with me. They will check for your presence. I know better than to think my chambers are safe from their deprecations."

Luna smiled up at the dark man. "It's all right, Headmaster. Maybe I won't have nightmares if you are there to protect me."

She smiled when the headmaster shook his head at her, then ordered her to the bed. She smiled again when he put his arm around her in his sleep. They both slept well that night.

The next morning, Luna's gown and hair both looked mussed. Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick both looked horrified. Neither one understood her when she told them he kept the Wrackspurts away.

"He isn't really sleeping with you, is he?" Ginny was very worried.

"Of course he is! We share a bed every night. It's very comforting." Luna was quite matter of fact.

"Has he made you have sex with him or fellate him, Luna?" Neville knew better than to ask a question Luna could misconstrue.

"No, he said he wouldn't do that to a student, although I did offer the other night. He looked like he could've used the comfort," Luna responded.

The other two gave startled barks of laughter at that.

Luna shrugged. She had meant it, and the headmaster had realized it. He had kissed the top of her head that night and held her even closer. Luna didn't notice when he berated her in front of the Great Hall, all she could see was the pride and appreciation that flashed through his eyes before he put on the emotionless mask he wore throughout the day.

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Only two things kept her sane through her abduction. First of all, she was glad to talk to Mr. Ollivander. He saw things, like she did. He thought she would make a good apprentice if they both survived the war. The other were her memories of *her* Severus Snape, the one that didn't treat her as if she were insane and held her close at night.

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She ran to the Shrieking Shack that night, after the fighting had mostly died down. She took with her two vials he had given her one night, prior to her abduction. She got there and met Hermione Granger, who had left the knot of grieving Weasleys to see if she could protect his body.

"Help me, Hermione. We need to get both of these into him!"

Hermione saw the determination in Luna's eyes and did exactly what she asked.

She was not surprised when the potions worked, but was absolutely amazed when Luna cried over the headmaster, and her tears helped close the gaping wound on his throat.

"Go back to the castle. You'll be missed, I won't." Luna's insistence won over Hermione's need to help. As she was starting back toward the castle, Hermione heard Luna's voice again. "Tell Ginny and Neville that everything has worked the way we planned it."

Luna was far less surprised than Severus when no one questioned her disappearance. "Those who need to know where I am do. I didn't matter to many people, in any case."

"You matter to me, Luna."

Luna smiled at him, her true smile, not the dreamy look she used as a mask for the rest of the world. "I know."