

NOT WANTED

a *Harry Potter* ficlet

by **Rodo**

WHEN TOM WAS a small child, there was nothing he loved more than watching. He loved watching the sunrays touch a spider web and little beetles running around on the earthy ground in front of the orphanage. But there was nothing little Tom loved more than watching people. He did not care if it were adults who argued over something he did not understand or if it were the other children who played hide and seek. He simply loved it. To him, the world was full of magic and he often wondered why the others could not see it.

When Tom grew older, he found out that the others did not like watching. Or being watched, for that matter. And he realised, that they were eyeing him oddly whenever they thought he was looking elsewhere. And he heard them whisper about him. They were wondering how odd he was and that he was somehow creepy. Tom did not understand that.

When Tom wanted to join the other children in their games one day, they told him, that they did not want him to play with them. Because he was so odd, they said. Because he was crazy. Tom was hurt by that. He wanted to play too. But as they did not want his company, he could do nothing but to simply sit on the steps and watch them.

When Tom asked them for the second time, they refused again. They did the same when he asked for the third time. Tom did not know when he stopped asking, but he did.

One day, Tom asked one of the nurses in the orphanage why he was not with his parents. The nurse ignored him. He told her he knew that every child had a mother and a father and that he wanted to know if his were dead, like the parents of most of them. Most died during the war. But as he could not remember his parents, he wanted to know for sure what had happened to them. Tom was a very curious child, thus the watching. Finally, the nurse told him, that his mother had died giving birth to him.

“And what about my father?” little Tom had asked, but the woman remained silent.

Tom clearly remembered the first day the others wanted to play with him. Hide and seek. Tom was more than delighted and agreed without thinking. Happier than ever in his life he looked for a place to hide. It must have been a good place, because the others did not find him. He sat in a bush all day, until the nurses took him inside. Tom was happy they did not find him. But when he entered the house, all the other children laughed at him. They left him there on purpose he realised, just to mock him.

Tom never played hide and seek again.

On a warm summer day, Tom sat alone in the courtyard; the others had gone to a nearby park. Then he saw it. A beautiful snake, it hissed about how pleasant the sun was and that she would love to eat some nice mice. A nurse shrieked and tore him away. When Tom told her what the snake had said, the nurse gave him a look. Tom learned never to talk about snakes again.

Then little Tom started school. He loved it. He was enthralled by numbers and letters. He discovered the world of books and as soon as he knew enough to read one, he read whatever he got into his hands. He particularly loved Alice in Wonderland. And so Tom stopped watching. He found that there was much more to learn in books.

The other children did not like Tom. And they got worse, the older he became. He was their source of entertainment. They tormented him, with words and sometimes with fists and feet. Tom started to hate them. He cannot remember when, but he started hating them. And he started hating the nurses and educators, because they never helped him. Tom was an angry and sad little boy. All he could do to feel happy, was reading. And thinking about one day, when he would be big enough to take revenge. Someday, Tom knew, he would know enough to crush them all like bugs.

When Tom turned eleven, he was called in the office of the orphanage's manager. He was an old and fat man. Tom thought he was disgusting. But there was nothing he could do, and so he sat down on the uncomfortable chair in front of the desk and waited.

The man presented a letter to him. Written in green ink. Tom opened it. When he finished reading, Tom did not know if he should laugh at the obvious joke or because he would finally be able to leave this hell called orphanage. The manager continued to speak and Tom became overjoyed. He was a wizard, and he would go far away and learn how to do magic. He already imagined how it would be to use it to show all those brats that he was better than they were. He was not just the skinny little weirdo they all saw. He was superior to them.

Before leaving the office, the man handed Tom another letter. Older. Bleached. It was from his mother. Tom opened it with shaky hands. From his mother, whom he had loved dearly, even though he had never met her, who had given him his name. Tom loved his name because it was the only thing he ever got from her, apart from his life.

In the letter, his mother told Tom, that she was a witch too, she told him how she fell in love with a Muggle (a normal man) and how she married him. But then, she was six months pregnant, she told him what she was, and Tom's father told her, that he "never wanted to see her or her demonic brat again". But his mother continued to write about him, mainly about how much she loved him, just because he gave Tom to her.

Tom did not agree with her. His father did not want him. He was furious and felt the urge to tear the letter to pieces, but he went on. His mother also wrote about her family. A noble one. She said his ancestor was Salazar Slytherin. Tom did not know what that meant, but it seemed to be important. And he liked that name.

Then, his mother wrote that she would name him Tom Riddle, after his father. Tom was shattered to read that. He had always loved his name. But on his eleventh birthday, he started to hate it. Just like he hated his father for leaving him and for not even giving him a chance. It was beyond infuriating that he had to have this name. But he could not blame his mother. He loved her. Mainly because she was the only person that had actually wanted him. Everybody else did not. Not his father, not the other children, not even the adults. They were all eyeing him as if he was a monster. But he was not. Not yet.

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