

Title: Shrines to Lost Times

Prompt: Cues. "Memorial" in 2 scenes and 500 words.

Notes/Warnings: I really don't know why this prompt kept eluding me. Everything I wrote sounded stupid. Set in my Regency Romance Novel 'verse. Pre-relationship Emilyanne/Anton. I haven't actually hashed out their characters enough, but this is only the second story set in that 'verse, so I've got time to figure it out before I get on it.

Purple clematis blooms and ivy shield this little corner from sun and rain and prying eyes. She smiles and pulls out a little novel to read as she takes advantage of the warmth of the late afternoon sun and the privacy her little bower offers. The cool marble of her seat is a pleasant counterpoint to the hazy grounds she had to cross to reach the last outpost of her family's lands.

The curtain of flowers and leaves blows in the breeze and she finds herself drifting comfortably as the day rolls slowly onward. So lost in her own world, she never sees the man watching her from across a bubbling creek that separates their lands.

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A torrent begins as she's strolling at the ragged edge of a creek that separates her from the home of her childhood friends. There's a box in her room that she keeps as a shrine to her youth, faded with the years that separated them until there's only time for her to be remembered by her brothers and no one else. Inside the worn little chest are little flowers woven into a crown, smooth stones from the creek bed. She can count memories by the trinkets inside her little box. But the rain pours down as she contemplates years gone by and she barely has enough time to splash across to hide out in the miniature temple that provides the only reliable shelter nearby.

As she shakes out her skirts, resigning herself to how hopeless it is to think she may get dry any time soon, she is joined by a man. He's twice as soaked as she, cursing lightly and mussing his hair in an effort to shed some of the excess water.

He jumps as she lets out a soft chuckle, and turns in her direction, dark eyes trying to make clear the situation. She catches her breath at his striking visage, but covers quickly, gesturing lightly at his person. "I thought only pups dried themselves that way, but it appears I was wrong, milord." She softens the turn of phrase with a smile and a muffled chuckle.

His lips quirk up in a rueful smile. "All men are dogs, my lady. But I did not realize that all women have as venomous a bite as a snake."

She inclines her head. "Touché." She presses a hand to her chest mockingly, adding, "though I am wounded you think all women snakes, Antonin." She takes pleasure in watching him become dumbfounded that she would know his name. She steps forward and rests a hand lightly on his arm before kissing his cheek lightly. "And I wanted you to

know that all the Doyles are sorry to hear about the loss of your father.”

It is long moments before he can recall himself enough to speak. “Emilyanne?”