

Title: Memory Lane (Excess Film Cut)

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Prompt: Cues. "A place where nobody goes anymore" in 65 minutes (4-21-05).

Notes: regency!verse. Anton reminisces. Still quite the romance novel. Not sure if I want to keep this as is, or grow it out separately as a story for this verse. WC-318.

At the eastern edge of the Berrisford estate, where the Darlington woods grew rampant and began to eat away at the manicured lawns of their neighbor, sat a ruined folly. Anton's father said it was a symbol of misspent youth, the excesses of previous generations. The old man could very well say so, after having devoted much of his youth to saving his family name from destitution. The excesses of previous generations, indeed.

When he was a child, Anton can remember watching his brother Michael traipsing about with the Darlingtons—Simon, Oliver and David Doyle—in the woods whilst he learnt the workings of the estate. Where the boys around his age would be playing heroes and villains, Anton was balancing ledgers and becoming a proper estate manager.

He first met Emilyanne Doyle there in the folly, halfway between their shared lands. At least, that's what his mother told him before she died. They'd met there during a game of hide-and-seek on the gardens, breathless and giggling. They were of an age, though Emilyanne was closer to his brother than himself. There had been a brief smile, and then Anton had cracked his arm tripping over one of the stones that had fallen loose from the roof, and ended the game early.

Anton remembers, sometimes, that ruined old grotto, half overgrown with ivy and rough with broken stones. No one goes there anymore, being deemed too dangerous for use, but not dangerous enough for removal. Anton has half a mind to remove it himself, after all the use it's done him. His arm still aches in the worst storms, a reminder and a warning, he imagines. But some part of him cannot seem to let it go. Something about it calls to him.

One day, he thinks, he'll return to the edge of the woods, sit in that ruined folly, and figure out what's calling for him there.