

I Hope You Dance

From the moment she was born, Meghan Black had been the last in her family to do everything. She was the youngest, the baby, the tag-along. Loved, yes, valued, yes, but still the youngest and the last. It had filled her with a sense of injustice since she was old enough to understand the word.

But today she had a different sense from being the youngest and the last.

Being the youngest means everyone else's were just practice.

Being the last means this is the one people will remember.

And she planned to make it that way.

"What are you smiling about?" her husband asked her as they prepared for their first dance in a small antechamber.

"That old saying. 'Three times a bridesmaid, never a bride.'" Meghan rubbed fussily at her face, inspecting herself in the mirror. "I don't think it's true."

"I know it's not true." Neville Longbottom stepped closer to his wife, turned her around, and slid an arm around her shoulders. "I never meant to let it be."

"I love it when you say things like that," Meghan purred, and reached up to draw him down for one quick kiss. "Ready?" she murmured into his ear.

"If you are."

Meghan nodded. "I am."

"Then I am." Neville offered her his black-sleeved arm. With his other hand, he drew his wand from the pocket of his black trousers and tapped a panel on the wall.

Out in the hall, the chatter of the wedding guests died away. "Ladies and gentlemen, the bride and groom in their first dance," Harry's amplified voice announced. "As usual, redefining terms to suit themselves."

A chuckle ran through the audience—Meghan's endlessly creative arguments as to why she should be allowed to marry early were well known to most of those present, as was her parents' eventual capitulation, resulting in today's wedding on the second anniversary of the end of the Second War.

"Please welcome Neville and Meghan Longbottom, dancing to—how appropriate—*I Hope You Dance*."

Applause.

Meghan took a deep breath and drew herself up, feeling the floor under her bare feet, acutely aware of the way the flowing, sleeveless white gown hugged her upper body. The introduction began to play, and Neville's grip on her arm changed subtly, telling her he was ready. She responded to that grip, leaning into him with the trust she'd never found misplaced, as the doors opened to blinding lights.

Here we go.

Meghan came back upright, standing on her own two feet, as Luna began to sing somewhere beyond the lights.

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder

A step away, reaching out and up. Behind and beside her, she could feel Neville mirroring.

*You get your fill to eat
But always keep that hunger*

A spin to face one another.

May you never take one single breath for granted

Double hand-clasp.

God forbid love ever leave you empty handed

A moment spent gazing into each other's eyes before Neville twirled her into a double floor spin and back up.

*I hope you still feel small
When you stand by the ocean*

Meghan made herself the barrier Neville could not pass, and then the one he could.

Whenever one door closes, I hope one more opens

A light leap, and strong hands around her waist, lifting her higher and farther than she could ever have gone on her own.

Promise me you'll give faith a fighting chance

He set her down and bowed formally to her, prompting her curtsy.

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance

A moment based on the complicated steps of a pattern-dance, but much more intimate, with hands caressing hands and faces, stolen looks and secret smiles.

*I hope you dance
I hope you dance*

Meghan whirled out of the dance to stare far away, hands clasped at her heart, until Neville's hands settled around her shoulders and she relaxed into his chest with a sigh.

I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance

Neville slumped now, dispirited, until Meghan turned to catch his hands in hers and tugged him a few steps with her.

Never settle for the path of least resistance

Meghan essayed a jump and wobbled, tried again and nearly fell.

*Living might mean taking chances
But they're worth taking*

Neville hurried around in front of her and beckoned her, and she leapt to him, landing neatly in his embrace.

*Loving might be a mistake
But it's worth making*

They pushed away from each other angrily and faced away, each glaring into the distance.

*Don't let some hell bent heart
Leave you bitter*

Both sagged as though weary, then slowly allowed their thoughts of turning around to become visible.

*When you come close to selling out
Reconsider*

Meghan's eyes traveled upwards to the star-studded ceiling, Neville's only a second behind her.

*Give the heavens above
More than just a passing glance*

Slowly, in perfect time, they turned to face each other again and reached out their hands.

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance

With three running steps, Meghan closed the distance between them, and Neville swirled her back into their pattern.

*I hope you dance
(Time is a real and constant motion always)
I hope you dance
(Rolling us along)*

Meghan could hear Harry, Ron, and Draco harmonizing around Luna's melody line.

*I hope you dance
(Tell me who)*

I hope you dance
(Wants to look back on their youth and wonder)
(Where those years have gone)

The pattern paused with the music. Meghan looked at her hand, held in Neville's, and smiled at her partner. He smiled back and slowly reached over with his other hand to take hers.

I hope you still feel small
When you stand by the ocean

They began to rotate, walking slowly, in time with Luna's words.

Whenever one door closes, I hope one more opens

Meghan could feel her smile growing as she kept her eyes locked with Neville's.

Promise me you'll give faith a fighting chance

Neville spun Meghan through a crossed-hands twirl and back again without breaking the circle.

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance

Meghan and Neville froze as the music stopped. Then—

Dance

They were spinning eye-blurringly fast. Feet almost touching, moving too fast to think about, hands locked around each other, only their own counterbalanced weight keeping them from falling.

I hope you dance
I hope you dance
(Time is a real and constant motion always)
I hope you dance
(Rolling us along)

Meghan caught a breath and leaped forward. Neville's hands slipped from hers and down her body to her waist, catching her there and holding her posed above his head as he continued the spin alone. The guests broke into applause.

I hope you dance
(Tell me who)
(Wants to look back on their youth and wonder)
I hope you dance
(Where those years have gone)

Neville slowed his rotation, lowering Meghan to his shoulder, then letting her slide down his body to the ground, her arms around him and his around her.

(Tell me who)
I hope you dance
(Wants to look back on their youth and wonder)
(Where those years have gone)

Their faces were so close that the natural conclusion to the song was foregone.