Harry Potter and the Dark Protector

by Sheogorath

Summary

When the Dursleys abandon Harry in hospital after a gardening disaster, Severus Snape is sent to locate 'the brat', only to find someone very different to his expectations.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
Once the man in front of him had sat down, refusing his offer of a lemon sherbet, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, began to speak.

"It seems that Vernon Dursley went out with young Harry earlier today, Severus," he began. "However, when he returned to his home, it seemed that the boy was no longer with him. When my agent in Little Whinging enquired as to the reason for his absence, Mrs. Dursley informed her that the child was in hospital, but I cannot understand why anyone would just leave a child there and not stay with them, or why the nursing staff allowed it. This is hardly the Seventies."

"And you are telling me this because...?" Severus Snape, professor of Potions at the school, enquired.

"I need you to visit the Dursleys and find out exactly what they have done with Harry. It's very important that we know he's safe."

"I'm sure the brat will be fine, and is probably having the time of his life with all those nurses fussing over him and cooing about his petty accomplishments."

"That may be so," Dumbledore stated, "but we still need to know his whereabouts so that he may be protected adequately. Do try to remember, Severus, that he is also Lily's son."

Snape sucked in a sharp breath at this, then abruptly left with a handful of Floo Powder flung into the fireplace in the Headmaster's Study.

After stepping out of the green flames burning at the Hog's Head, Snape left the wizarding pub, then transfigured his clothes to muggle attire before apparating to Little Whinging. Then, once at the suburban village, he followed the directions Dumbledore had given him, noting the pulled up flowers in the weed infested beds. Barely holding back a snort of derision, the Potions Master walked up to the front door and pressed the bell.

The front door opened, and a thin, horsey woman appeared from behind it, saying, "What do you want? My husband hasn't arrived home from work yet, so if you have some business with him, you'll just have to come back this evening."

"You always were more miserable than your sister, Tuney," Snape said, causing the woman to recognise him instantly.

"Severus Snape!" she spat. "You get out of this house right now! We'll have none of your kind around after we've just got rid of one freak!"

Instantly, Snape was pointing his wand at her as he asked, "Would that freak be Harry James Potter?"

"He was even freakier than most of your kind! That's why we had him put away, because he might have hurt my poor Diddykins one day!"
Rather than asking why Petunia believed that, Snape simply growled, "Where did you leave him?"

"Vernon took him to St. Peter's Hospital, then left him there once they agreed to assess him. The boy is crazy, pulling up flowers instead of weeds after I told him clearly which ones to pull up, and stacking up tins of food in the lounge whenever he's not in his room. He even insisted on taking a ragged old blanket with him when we told him he wouldn't be coming back!"

With her last words, Petunia gave a dismissive sniff, and the Potions Master felt like hexing her into a pegasus before leaving her to the tender mercies of her husband. However, he simply turned on his heel with a growled, "I will return!" then left for the nearest bus stop in order to travel to the hospital.
I changed Harry's diagnosis in this chapter because Autism is named Autistic Disorder only in the ICD-10. In the ICD-9, which would have been the manual in use in 1986, Autism was named Childhood Autism. BTW, that shouldn't have took as much searching as it did. I pray for the day I can access Google instead of Bing.

"May I ask whether you're family?" the woman at the reception desk asked.

"Yes, I'm the cousin of Harry's father," Snape lied smoothly.

"Very well, he's on the Children's Ward. If you just follow the signs, you should find it fairly easily."

"Thank you, Karen." With that, Snape strode down the corridor away from reception, following the signs to the Children's Wards.

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"So, what's wrong with Harry?" Snape asked, watching the boy in clothes far too large for him as he repetitively dug into the contents of the sand table with one hand, then let the grains slowly trickle from his fist, humming tunelessly as he did so.

"Well, one of the pediatric psychiatrists assessed him and found that he's not mentally ill, but there were still concerns, so we had a behavioural psychologist see him and she diagnosed Childhood Autism."

Suddenly, the pieces of the puzzle that were whizzing around Snape's head all clicked into place. Autism. That would explain why Harry liked stacking things and had pulled up the wrong plants while weeding, as well as his current behaviour.

"So, what happens now?" he asked.

"We've been in contact with Social Services because Harry's uncle abandoned him to our care and a hospital is no place for a child to stay long term if it can be helped, but once a social worker arrives, they can make the final decision about where he goes."

"I was hoping that Harry would be able to come home with me, but I don't expect much what with being a single man and all."

"Well, if you're the only family remaining, that increases your chances, but Social Services will still need to consider whether it's in his best interests."

Just then, a cheerful looking woman walked into the ward and introduced herself to the nurse as Gail Newton before being introduced to Snape in her turn.
"Good, good," she said. "I \textit{was} thinking about placing young Harry in foster care, but depending on your circumstances and if you think you can cope with a mentally disabled child, then we would definitely prefer to place him with you unless he has other family willing to take him in."

"Unfortunately not. Both sets of grandparents are dead, so the only other family the boy has is the aunt who allowed her husband to abandon him here."

After this, Gail asked the Potions Master for some form of ID to prove who he was, and he willingly produced it, thankful that he had thought to transfigure the handkerchief in his trouser pocket into a fake driver's licence while waiting for the bus that had dropped him off. He then answered several questions and asked some of his own before finally being allowed to approach the Boy Who Lived.

"Hello, Harry," the nurse said. "This is Gail, your social worker, and Severus, your cousin. Wouldn't you like to come and say hello?"

Harry continued to dig in the sand with his right hand, but with the other, which he had been holding twisted in an awkward position by his left shoulder, he held onto the edge of the table as he began to rock back and forth, his humming trailing off into low moans of, "Not Harry. No, not Harry. I'm Boy, I'm Boy."

Taking two steps towards the boy, Snape squatted, then said, "Boy, will you please turn around and look at me so you can hear what I'm saying?"

When Harry hesitantly turned around, the Potions Master breathed a sigh of relief, then continued.

"Please listen to me, Boy. I will call you by your chosen name for as long as you want, but you should know that your real name is Harry James Potter. Your parents named you that and they loved you very much, so it is absolutely true."

When Harry finally responded several moments later, his speech was clear, but its content was rather disturbing.

"If my parents loved me, why did they get drunk and crash their car so I would be left behind to be a burden on those who work hard to feed and clothe a worthless freak?"

At these words, Snape's heart broke, and his mission ceased to be one for Dumbledore and became personal.

"Listen, Boy," he said, holding out a hand to the child. "You are \textit{not} worthless, nor are you a freak. Also, your parents did \textit{not} die in a car crash, they were killed by a very bad man who is now gone. Whoever told you all \textit{that} rubbish was telling nasty lies."

By now, Harry was rubbing his forehead with the clawed fingers of his left hand, his bitten fingernails too short to scrape the skin and do any damage. He canted his head to one side to eye Snape critically, then asked, "My aunt and uncle lied?"

"Yes, Boy. It would seem that they did."

"Why?" This question was whispered.

"I don't know. Perhaps your they were jealous of your parents' brave attempt at saving you from the madman who killed them, an attempt which made martyrs of them."

"What's a martyr?"
"A martyr is someone who dies in support of their cause. The cause your parents died for was ensuring you lived."

"What were their names?"

"Your father's name was James Potter, and your mother's was Lily Potter, although her surname was Evans before she was married."

"Really? You swear?"

"Yes, Boy. I swear on my life that that is the truth."

"Thank you for telling me. Now I will be your Harry if you want me to."

"Oh, child. You already are my Harry, but what you are called remains your choice."

"I will be Harry, you will tell me more," the boy said. Then he reached out with his right hand and laid it on the Potions Master's arm, adding, "Severus."
Chapter Two

Once Harry had been discharged from the hospital's care, Snape noticed that the boy seemed to be missing something.

"Harry," he said. "Where is your blanket?"

Pointing to a girl of about fifteen, the boy answered, "I gave it to her. Can we go now, please?"

However, the Potions Master realised that if the blanket was important enough to Harry that he wouldn't leave it behind at the Dursleys, then his 'gift' was clearly involuntary.

Going over to the teenage girl that Harry had pointed out, Snape said, "Why did you take Harry's blanket?"

"Because he's a stupid freak who deserves it!" she responded, equally quietly.

"Well, I am the same kind of freak that my cousin is, and if you don't stop bullying others simply because they are different, then I can cause you such pain that you will never forget it for as long as you live. Now, return his blanket to him."

"What if I don't want to?"

Instantly, Snape cast Legilimens on the girl, and half a minute later, she left to get the blanket from her locker, looking quite pasty.

"What did you say to Jackie?" asked the nurse, who had heard nothing of the exchange.

"After she initially refused to return Harry's blanket, I simply informed her of the fact that it isn't nice to pick on people just because they are different, especially when they are much younger, and I also told her that since she is now of the age of criminal responsibility, then she could get locked up if her bullying led to tragedy. I apologise if I went too far, but I must protect my cousin."

"No, that's perfectly understandable. I will check that Jackie hasn't bullied anyone else, and if she has, then I'll make her apologise and return anything she has taken as well as giving a report to her parents. I'll also keep a closer eye on her from now on. Thank you for letting me know."

"You're welcome."

Just then, Jackie came back with rather torn and dirty piece of cloth and tried to give it to Snape.

"You should return it directly to its owner rather than to me," the Potions Master said. "You should also apologise to him for taking it in the first place."

Begrudgingly, the girl did as she was told, then retreated to her bed, keeping a wary eye on Snape as she did so.

The moment his blanket was back in his hands and Jackie had turned away from him, Harry dashed
to Snape and thanked him, then agreed to hold his hand while on the journey to Hogwarts.

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While leaving the hospital, Gail stopped to arrange a visit to Spinner's End with Snape, then once she had walked away, he turned to Harry only to see him busily engaged in arranging the leaflets in a rack on the wall near the X-ray Department.

"Harry, what are you doing?"

"These have to be put back right."

"Do they just have to be put back correctly, or are you the one who has to do it?"

"They have to be put back correctly."

"Can I do it then? I know a way that's a lot faster."

Giving a nod of consent, Harry stepped back, then watched in silent astonishment as the leaflets re-ordered themselves, then straightened themselves up, their creases vanishing as they did so.

"How did you do that, Severus?" the boy gasped, his eyes huge.

"I used magic."

Instantly, Harry backed away, saying, "You used a bad word! I always have my mouth washed out with soap and water for using that word!"

The Potions Master ran over his previous sentence in his mind to try and figure what the bad word was, then said, "Harry, magic isn't a bad word. It's merely a word that describes the special powers that you and I have." However, the boy wouldn't believe him, so he stopped a passing porter and said, "My cousin believes that magic is a bad word. Would you be so kind as to inform him whether it is or not?"

"Hey, kid," the man said, bending down so he was at Harry's eye-level. "Magic's not a bad word, and whoever said it is was telling a really stupid lie. Okay?"

Harry, who had been looking away from the man speaking to him, nodded reticently and clung to Snape's hand, whispering the formerly forbidden word over and over as he walked through the corridors of the hospital. Silently, Snape cast a wandless spell to reorder all the leaflets in the racks throughout the building - it would be helpful to the muggle guardians of Autistic children as well as himself - then once off the grounds, he looked around to check there were no witnesses before apparating back to Hogsmeade.

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The moment the two wizards arrived at their destination, Harry pulled away from Snape with a look of fright on his face, and the Potions Master knelt down to talk to him.

"Harry, I'm very sorry. I should have realised that you would need apparition explaining to you."

"What is apparition?"

"That's the form of travel I just used to get us here. We are now in Hogsmeade in Scotland, and not far from Hogwarts, the school where I teach Potions. I should also tell you now that I'm not actually your cousin, I only said I was so none of the muggles would stop me bringing you safely back to the
Wizarding World."

"What are muggles?"

"Muggle is the term we use for people who don't have magic; your relatives, for example."

"Can we still pretend to be cousins? I like you."

"I'm afraid not, unfortunately. There are too many people who are aware that we are not family."

"Then I will be your son!" With that, Harry launched himself at Snape and wrapped his arms around the man's neck, and when the Potions Master failed to respond out of bemusement, he found his arms being picked up and placed around the small shoulders. Once the hug was over, Snape made sure to explain Floo travel to Harry on their way to the Leaky Cauldron, then after they had reached the pub, they were soon off to Hogwarts in a whoosh of green flame.

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After stepping out of the fireplace in the Headmaster's Study, the two wizards were invited to sit down by Dumbledore and offered tea and biscuits, both of which were gratefully accepted. Then Snape gave a full report of everything that had occurred before he left the Children's Ward.

"The thing is, Albus, the social worker called Harry mentally disabled, yet his responses to me indicate an intelligence that is at least above average. It would make me feel better if his mental age was assessed by a professional from our world to reveal what it truly is."

Dumbledore nodded. "I would agree, but in the meantime, I must make arrangements for Harry's care. He cannot go back to his relatives since they have rejected him despite my warnings, yet it is imperative that he be brought up away from his fame. That's why he should be returned to the Muggle World."

At this, Harry looked up from Fawkes, whom he had been stroking, and he asked, "Are you part of this 'Muggle World', Severus?"

"No, Harry. I'm part of the Wizarding World."

"Then I won't go, I want to stay with you." Then, turning to Dumbledore, Harry added, "You won't take me away from my daddy."

"Harry-" Dumbledore started, only to be cut off.

"You can't call me that, you must call me Boy. Only Severus gets to call me Harry."

Sighing heavily, the Headmaster started again. "Boy, your daddy is dead."

"No, he's not! Are you, Daddy?" Harry shouted, anxiously clutching onto one of the sleeves of Snape's robe.

"I'm sorry, Albus. Harry expressed a desire earlier to be my son, but I didn't take him seriously at the time because of my other duties." The Potions Master shrugged helplessly. "What are we supposed to do?"

"We give the child what he wants," Dumbledore answered. "Are you willing to do that, Severus?"

Chapter End Notes
The reason Snape's Legimency caused Jackie to obey him is because he used it to pass along a small part of his experience of the Cruciatus curse.
Chapter Three

Once Snape had said that he would be willing to look after Harry, he and Dumbledore discussed the pros and cons of childcare for nearly an hour until they had come up with a plan between them.

"Well, Boy," Dumbledore finally said. "It has been decided that you may stay with Severus for a year, and if you still want him to be your daddy after that time, then he can adopt you."

"No! I want him to be my daddy now!"

"Harry, Harry, it's all right," Snape soothed. "I will be like your daddy over the coming year, except that you have the chance to change your mind. Then, if you don't, we just make it official."

"Can I still call you my daddy even before it's official?"

"If you really wish to call me that, I am not averse to it."

"Averse?"

"Averse means to be strongly against something. Since I am not averse to you calling me Daddy, that means you may do so."

At this, Harry again flung himself at Snape and wrapped his arms around the man's neck, then once he was enfolded in return, he said, "Tighter please, Daddy."

Immediately, the Potions Master tightened his grip around Harry's shoulders, and the child groaned with the release of his tension.

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Over the next few hours, Harry was introduced to the house-elves and had something to eat, then he was given a bath and was measured before Snape shrunk a set of his own robes for his son to wear until more clothes could be bought the next day, which was, luckily, a Saturday. Of course, Harry had to be helped with this since the fastenings, simple as they were, were completely beyond his fumbling fingers. After this, he was put to bed with a story from 'The Tales of Beedle the Bard', then Snape gently pressed a kiss to his messy hair before leaving the new bedroom in his quarters.

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Sometime in the night, Snape was woken up by a rustling and low thunking, and he got up to find out what it was, discovering the source upon entering the living room of his quarters.

"Harry, it's late. What are you doing?"

Stopping in the middle of stacking the contents of Snape's library, the child said, "I can't sleep, Daddy."

"I know, darling, but it's a bit late to be stacking things, don't you think? Can you read?"

Shamefaced, Harry shook his head. "I'm a retard, my aunt and uncle say so."
"Oh, hush. You are not retarded. In fact, you are one of the most intelligent six-year-olds I have ever known, so don't call yourself that horrible name again. All right?"

"Do you really mean that?"

"Of course, child. I may lie to others in a good cause, but I could never willingly lie to you. You are so precious to me that I know how important the truth is to you. Now, I will teach you how to read, and until you can, I will make books read out loud for you so you have something quiet to do until you fall asleep. Deal?"

Smiling, Harry agreed, then picked some books that would read themselves to him until he fell asleep.

And as he drifted back into his own dreams, Snape felt some sympathy towards anyone who had to put up with a child stacking tins in the middle of the night. Anyone, that is, except the Dursleys, whom he felt deserved the annoyance and more for their extreme over-reaction to the habit of a bored Autistic boy.

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The next morning, Snape woke up and got himself ready, then woke Harry and helped him brush his teeth and hair. However, once his shrunken nightshirt was off, he refused to put on the robes he had tried on the previous day.

"No, no, no! Want Dudley's old clothes!"

With that, Harry took off, running from Snape's quarters and up a flight of stairs, bumping into Hagrid, who was on his way to see the Potions Master.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! Now why is a naked little wizard runnin' through the halls? Yeh look too young ter be a student here. Where are yer clothes?" the half-giant asked.

"I don't want to put them on," Harry answered, too fascinated by the large man to be shy of him. "How did you get so big?"

"I were born ter be big," Hagrid replied. "More important, where's the person who's supposed ter be lookin' after yeh?"

"My daddy's in the dungeons, where we live."

"Is yer daddy Severus Snape?" Upon Harry's nod, Hagrid continued, "Then let's get yeh back ter him before he worries too much."

Just then, however, the Potions Master himself appeared.

"Oh, Harry. Please don't run off like that again, you made me very worried. Thank you for finding him, Hagrid."

"Tha's all righ', I was on me way ter see yeh, anyway."

"Now, Harry," Snape continued as if there had been no interruption, dressing the boy in the nightshirt he had worn the previous night. "What did you mean when you said you wanted Dudley's old clothes earlier?"

"They were the clothes I was wearing yesterday."
"The over-sized ones?"

Harry nodded. "There wasn't enough clothes for two children, so Dudley would have new things bought for him because he's bigger than me, then when he grew out of them or wrecked them, they would be passed on to me."

"You actually prefer those clothes?"

Harry gave another nod.

"Why?"

"Because the other ones are scratchy."

"Scratchy? Scratchy how?"

"All over. There's no escape from it, and it hurts."

"Very well. Why don't you come back to our quarters and I'll try to make the robes less scratchy for you, all right?" Just then, Snape noticed Hagrid, who was still waiting to speak to him. "Ah, Hagrid. Is there something I can help you with?"

"I was comin' ter see if yeh'd finished tha' potion fer me, but I can come back later if yeh want," the half-giant explained.

"Oh, Hagrid. I'm sorry, but I've been so busy that I completely forgot to brew it. I tell you what, I'll start it before I go out, then you can come back for it this evening when it should be finished."

"Tha's great. It wasn' urgent anyway, so I'll see yeh this evenin'. Maybe I'll see yeh later, young Harry."

With that, Hagrid walked off in the direction he had come from, leaving Snape and Harry to return to their quarters.

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Now back in Harry's bedroom, Snape examined the problematic robes, only to find nothing wrong with them, so he cast a modified Protego on the child before asking him to try the clothes on again. However, Harry still looked unhappy.

"What's wrong this time, Harry?"

"Now I can't feel them at all. It's weird!"

"Well, since I don't know how to make the robes less scratchy, I thought I'd simply shield your skin from them until we can get you other clothes that won't cause the same issue."

"Really? How?"

"You're going to come with me so you can choose things in the colours you like, and we can use the dressing rooms so you can feel the fabrics against your body and check they won't be scratchy. Now come on, we have to get you dressed for breakfast, then I have to make a start on Hagrid's potion before we can leave."

Having said this, Snape shrank a pair of his socks and helped Harry put them on, then he did the same with a pair of his shoes, tying them for the boy after he tucked the laces down the sides of them.
because he was unable to tie them himself.

"I'm a retard, aren't I?" Harry asked, self-deprecatingly.

"Hush, now. Just because you can't learn some things as quickly as other people, it doesn't make you retarded. So stop calling yourself that, okay?"

This time, Harry's nod was eager and accompanied by a huge grin.

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After breakfast, during which Harry spent his time combing Dumbledore's beard with his fingers, much to the elderly wizard's chagrin, the Autistic boy helped Snape prepare the ingredients for Hagrid's potion, then once it was bubbling steadily, they set off for the Headmaster's Study in order to Floo to Diagon Alley.
Chapter Four

Once Harry and Snape were in the Leaky Cauldron, they quickly left for the yard at the back, then were soon through the magical archway that the Potions Master caused to appear. After this, they went to Gringotts Bank, a huge building that was opposite the entrance of another alley that made Harry shiver just to look at it.

Because of the potions he had invented and the royalties he received, as well as his superior skills in brewing, Snape was a lot better off than his chosen lifestyle might otherwise suggest, and he decided to treat his son to clothes from Twilfitt and Tatting's. So, once he had taken out a large amount of money from his vault, he had some of it changed for muggle money, then left the bank again, securely holding Harry's hand.

The shopping at Twilfitt and Tatting's was a complete disaster, and the two wizards left without purchasing anything after Harry declared the only two options of material for underwear completely unsuitable, linen being too cold and scratchy, and silk being too bouncy and rubby.

"What do you mean by 'rubby'?" Snape enquired, but Harry was now on the verge of a meltdown, holding onto the edge of a shelf as he rocked back and forth, moaning, "Too rubby, too rubby," over and over, and the Potions Master decided to leave it. Instead, he said, "Come on, we'll find something in Madame Malkin's."

Once at the robe shop, Snape asked the proprietor what the fabric in the underwear she sold was.

"I have linen or cotton. Is it for yourself, Master Snape?"

"No, it's for my son. Harry, say hello to Madame Malkin."

Looking down at the ground, Harry said a quick "Hello," then returned to rubbing his face against a royal blue vest made from knitted cotton.

"What's wrong with the child?" Madame Malkin asked, a look of concern on her face.

"He's Autistic, so he experiences the world differently than most people do," the Potions Master answered.

"Is it contagious?"

Snape sneered as he responded, "No, it's a developmental condition he was born with."

"Oh, please forgive my ignorance! It's just that I've never met an Autistic person before."

"You won't have done. You find them only in the Muggle World nowadays, since witches and wizards who show the slightest sign of any abnormality are done away with by toddlerhood. Hence the lower than average numbers of squibs. Some families just couldn't wait to see if their child's magic would show itself. Of course, that may change soon, thanks to the decreasing numbers of Purebloods in our world."

Madame Malkin shuddered at this, exclaiming, "How horrible!"
"Indeed. May we look around?"

"Absolutely, examine what you like. I can just clean any dropped items with magic after you leave."

Giving the woman a nod of gratitude, Snape turned to Harry.

"Hey, do you like that?"

"Soft," the child said, nodding eagerly, then he turned to a nightshirt made of brushed cotton and rubbed his cheek against that. "Ooh, this is even softer, Daddy! It's much better than the one I wore last night! Can I have it, please?"

"You may have three of them along with seven vests, seven pairs of underpants, and twelve pairs of socks. I would also like you to choose the material for two sets of play robes and one set of dress robes. You'll have to be fitted for those."

Within half an hour, Harry had made his selections, declaring none of the socks on offer to his liking, then he stood on the stool as directed, having no problems until Madame Malkin's tape measure was flying around him, causing him sensory distress as it pressed itself against places on his body that he didn't like to be touched. Because of this, he he kept jumping away from the magical item until Snape, having finally lost patience, gave him a shake and told him to stand still until he was measured. After this, Harry did as he was told, tears streaming down his face all the while.

Once the measuring was over, Snape said, "I'm sorry, Harry. I shouldn't have shook you. However, you had to be measured so we can buy you things that fit properly."

Instead of accepting the apology, however, the Autistic boy yelled, "You're not my daddy! I hate you!" as he jumped down from the stool. Then he stamped on the Potions Master's foot and ran from the shop, taking off down Diagon Alley with Snape in hot pursuit.

The two wizards had only run a few feet when all of a sudden, Snape saw his charge disappear right before his eyes, which caused him to stop still in amazement. The boy must be powerful indeed if one of his manifestations of accidental magic was apparition! Realising that Harry likely wouldn't know enough places to be able to apparate far, Snape searched all the shops of Diagon Alley, and when he couldn't find his charge in any of them, levitated until he was above the buildings and scanned the area, finally spotting him in a huddled heap behind Ollivander's.

Descending quickly, Snape stood Harry up and gave him a gentle swipe on his bottom, saying, "That's for running off and putting yourself in danger." Then he hugged him and added, "And that's because I love you and am so glad you're safe. Don't ever run off like that again. I realised that shaking you was wrong and I apologised for it. I promise that I will never do so again, all right?"

"You swear?"

"Absolutely." With Harry in his arms, Snape again levitated until he was back at Madame Malkin's, then descended and finally put his son down again before adding, "Now, let's go back in and buy the things you chose, then we'll go into Muggle London to buy your other things."

After returning to Madame Malkin's, Snape put a set of Harry's new underwear into the pouch that hung from his belt, then bought his charge some games, toys, and a few sweets, including a large bear that he decided to get Professor Flitwick to charm so it would hug Harry as hard as he hugged it. He thought this would help with the boy's obvious sensory issues, which should have the knock-on effect of calming his behaviour.
Once the shopping at Diagon Alley was done, Snape and Harry set off for Muggle London, where they both had a good time buying several sets of muggle clothing, twelve pairs of sports socks, and two pairs of trainers and one of shoes. After this, Harry had his eyes tested at a muggle opticians, then was promised his first pair of new glasses after a few days.

On the way back to the Leaky Cauldron, Snape said, "Stop here a while, Harry," then divided the contents of one of the carrier bags he was carrying amongst the others. With that done, he put up a Disillusionment charm and removed the Transfiguration spell on Harry’s robes and cape, then spread the bag out flat on the ground and untied his shoelaces, telling him to step out of his shoes and onto the bag.

Once Harry was stood on the plastic in his stockinged feet, Snape took out his new underpants and gave them to him, and he managed to get them on after a bit of a struggle with getting them the right way round. Once that had been done, he had his socks changed for him, then he managed to pull on a new pair of jeans. After that, Snape cast a warming charm on his son, then took off his cape and robes, helping him with his new vest, T-shirt, and jumper after he managed to put the first two items on backwards and turned his jumper around in trying to get them straight. The Potions Master then fastened the jeans and helped Harry to put on a pair of his new trainers, then he zipped him into the new windbreaker they had bought at the last shop they had been in before going to the opticians.

Now that Harry was fully dressed in his new clothes, Snape took off his glasses and repaired them before charming them to be the same as his prescription, then rearranged the contents of the bags again before shrinking them and putting them away in the pockets of his muggle trousers, knowing that they would find their way into his pouch when he removed the Transfiguration spell on his robes. Finally finished, he dropped the Disillusionment charm, grasped Harry's hand, and continued on his way.

✱✱✱

In the control room of New Scotland Yard, an officer watching the monitors that were part of the CCTV system that was being trialled began paying close attention to the man and child who had stopped as the man began spreading the contents of one of his carrier bags amongst the others, probably in preparation for a shoplifting spree. Then the officer's jaw dropped as he saw the subjects literally vanish before his eyes, staying invisible for several minutes before just as suddenly reappearing, this time without the bags and the child wearing different clothing. The officer watched for several more moments as the duo walked along for a bit until the boy started throwing a tantrum over something, the man comforting him for nearly half an hour until the screaming and crying stopped, then they carried on and were soon out of the area covered by the cameras.

At this point, the police officer finally picked up the phone to call the incident in, and as he was waiting for someone to pick up on the other end, he thought, 'A good smack on the bum is what that child needed, not cuddling and cosseting.'

✱✱✱

While walking away from the place where he had got changed, Harry suddenly stumbled, scuffing his new trainers, and as soon as he saw that the pristine whiteness of the first new shoes he had ever worn was spoilt before he had had the chance to really wear them, his already strained resources snapped and he broke down into tears. Immediately, Snape stopped, and seeing the scuffed toes of his son's footwear and guessing that to be the source of the problem, cast a wandless and wordless Reparo on them, then told Harry that his trainers had been mended. However, the Autistic boy was now beyond being aware of anything, never mind what was being said to him, and his meltdown continued for nearly half an hour before it ended as his mind finally calmed down with the emotional
release, passersby tutting and telling Snape either to slap him or to have him locked up in an institution all the while.

Once Harry's crying and screaming had quietened down to a few muted sobs and hiccups, Snape informed him of his repaired trainers and received a hug for his efforts, then he set off again after promising his son that he would always fix his shoes if they ever got scuffed again.

And in the control room of New Scotland Yard, the police officer watched as a man and a child walked along the street, the boy falling and the man picking up his son to comfort him before they carried on their way. He was then relieved of duty and given sick leave with firm instructions to make an appointment with a psychiatrist.
Chapter Five

Because of the events during his shopping trip, Harry was quite tired when he got back to Hogwarts, so once Hagrid's potion had been completed and delivered, he was given supper and a bath, then was put to bed, where he fell asleep quite quickly.

✱✱✱

Waking up from a rather strange dream in which the all of the Dursleys were killed by flashes of a sickly green light, Harry could hear something moving in the lounge, so he quietly got up and went to see what it was, coming face to face with one of the house-elves.

"Hello. What are you doing?" Harry asked.

"Tippy is tidying up for Masters Snape and Harry," the creature responded.

"Oh, that means I must be a house-elf as well, then. I used to do that for the Dursleys."

"Really?" Tippy asked, eyeing Harry critically.

"And all the cleaning, along with painting, gardening, clearing out the gutters, and anything else my aunt and uncle thought of for me to earn my keep."

Tippy nodded happily, then said, "Harry doesn't look much like a house-elf. Maybe he could be doing something to improve his appearance?"

After examining the little creature in front of him, Harry put his hands over his eyes for several moments, then when he took them away again, they were almond-shaped and set at an oblique angle. Then he put his hands over his ears for just as long before revealing auricles that, while not long and bat-like like those of his companion, had grown upwards by an inch and were now pointed.

"Harry is looking much better," the house-elf said, then he went back to tidying, this time with the child's help.

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Waking up at a leisurely eight o'clock, Snape got ready for the day, then went to wake Harry, his consternation knowing no bounds when he saw that the boy was nowhere in the room. Frantically, he searched his quarters, then dashed into the corridor to try and find his son.

As he fairly ran along the corridor towards the stairs to the ground floor, the Potions Master called Harry's name, then was filled with shock when, from behind him, there was a loud crack and the
Autistic boy's voice answered, "Hello, Daddy. Is there something you need?"

Slowly, Snape turned around, and there, looking as if he had just stepped from the pages of a Tolkien novel, was Harry, grinning from ear to pointed ear.

"The other house-elves just taught me how to pop so I can get around more quickly," Harry continued. "It's really easy. Watch!"

With that, he disappeared with another loud crack, then with yet another, again appeared behind his daddy.

"Harry," Snape said, turning around, "you're not a house-elf. Whatever made you think you are?"

"Don't house-elves do all the household jobs?"

"Yes, of course they do."

"Well, that's what I used to do for the Dursleys to earn my keep, and now that you hold my contract, I can do them for you and earn all the things you bought me yesterday."

"Oh, Harry, I don't have a contract for you. Nobody ever did. You're an under-age wizard. That means all the clothes and toys I bought you yesterday are yours by right, not privileges that have to be earned. And the only way for you to earn the sweets I bought is to be on your best behaviour, nothing else. Now, how did you change your eyes and ears, and how can you apparate in the castle when it's supposed to be impossible?"

"I'm not apparating, I'm popping, and I learnt it from Tippy and the others after getting rid of the block that was stopping me learning." By now, Harry was slowly wiggling the fingers of his left hand pressed to his face close by his eye, and rocking slightly on his feet as he spoke. "And I don't know how I changed my eyes and ears, I just changed them."

Without another word, Snape scooped Harry up, then was running for the hospital wing, his son kicking and screaming all the while.

* * *

Once inside the cool, white room, Snape put Harry on an unoccupied bed just as Madame Pomfrey came bustling from her office.

"Now, now, Severus. What's all this noise about?" she asked once Harry had quietened down and was scrubbing at his arms and legs where the sensation of his daddy's hold still lingered.

The Potions Master pointed at his son, saying, "I had hoped that Harry is a metamorphmagus, but it seems that his current appearance is the result of accidental magic, unfortunately. Is there anything you can do for him?"

"Professor Snape, I am used to treating the results of hexes, jinxes, some curses, and Quidditch accidents. Metamorphosis is quite beyond me. I shall have to refer the child to the Accidental Magic Reversal Department."

Snape nodded. "Please tell them to hurry."

* * *

Two hours later, Snape sat with Madame Pomfrey and two members of the Department of Magical
Accidents and Catastrophes in the office of the infirmary, listening to their assessment of his son's condition.

"I'm afraid the damage is irreversible," the woman said. "It seems that Harry has somehow made significant changes to his DNA not only to alter his features, but also to get around the restriction preventing apparition within the grounds of Hogwarts. Basically, to all intents and purposes, the child is no longer human, and will remain whatever he now is for the rest of his life. I'm sorry we couldn't do more."

With that, the Accidental Magic Reversal Squad left the hospital wing, and Snape sat for several more moments, shaking his head in bemusement.

* * *

"I'm an elf?" Harry echoed, unable to quite believe what he was hearing. "What kind of elf?"

"You're a forest elf, the best type of elf to be."

"So I'm not a house-elf?"

"No, darling. I told you earlier this morning that you're not a house-elf."

"Oh. Can I pretend to be a house-elf?"

The Potions Master sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose before answering, "Very well, but for no more than half an hour each day, and the house-elves are not to let you do anything that is dangerous for witches and wizards of your age to do. All right?"

Harry nodded happily, then popped to the Great Hall to see what was for lunch, leaving his daddy to walk there from the infirmary on his own.

* * *

"Hello, Harry," boomed Hagrid as the child appeared in the seat beside him with a loud crack. "What's happened ter yer ears?"

"I've become an elf!" Harry announced happily. "Daddy said so."

"Oh, this foretells disaster!" Sybill Trelawney, professor of Divination, wailed. "I've always said that a witch or wizard would one day be able to change their species, then will come forty days and forty nights of nothing but rain, bringing about the end of the Wizarding World as we know it!"

"Dry up, Trelawney, yeh great prune!" Hagrid replied rudely. "Everyone knows yeh' re jus' fakin' it."

"I'll have you know that I have a great gift," Professor Trelawney sniffed.

"Yeah, a great gift fer predictin' the death o' one student each year. Funny how those prophecies never get fulfilled, isn' it, if yer gift is so great?"

Professor Trelawney again sniffed haughtily as she turned away, then Snape entered the Great Hall and sat down next to Harry, who was stimming as a result of the argument that had just taken place.

"Hello, Harry. Have you been causing trouble for Hagrid?"

"No! No! I've been good, Daddy. I promise!"
"It's all right, darling. I was only joking. Haven't you got anything to eat yet?"

"I don't like it."

"What's wrong with it?"

"It's all runny. Food should be solid, not runny."

"All right, why don't you have beef sandwiches instead of tuna mayonnaise ones, and salad instead of soup?"

"With horseradish?"

"If you like it."

"Ugh, yuck! Sneezy."

The Potions Master sighed heavily, then called for a house-elf, saying to it, "My son would like roast beef sandwiches and salad, please, and he doesn't like horseradish, so make sure not to put any on."

"Yes, Master Snape," the creature responded before disappearing with a loud crack, then five minutes later, the requested food appeared in front of Harry, who dug into it with a will.

"Are you enjoying that, Harry?"

"Yes, Daddy. Thank you."

With a small nod of satisfaction, Snape turned back to his oxtail soup.
Chapter Six

Chapter Six.

The next couple of months went smoothly enough, Snape finally managing to enrol Harry in a special school the day before he and his son had to go to Spinner's End for Gail Newton's first visit, during which they learned that Social Services would allow the Potions Master to raise Harry, since the social worker could tell how happy her young client now was. For five days a week after this, Harry would pop to Troup House School in a village called Gamrie, then return to Hogwarts full of stories about what he had done that day and all the little happenings he had observed, such as the time a girl had opened her mouth and puked on the floor of the assembly hall without any warning, and how the school caretaker had sprinkled sawdust over the vomitus and swept it up.

Every week, the Autistic child came home with some evidence of what his class had been doing during free period - Merlin knew he would likely never be an artist - and during his first Show and Tell, he showed his ears to the other children and told them about being an elf. Thankfully, Snape had already explained Harry's ears away to the headteacher, claiming they were a congenital deformation, and although he wasn't sure that the woman quite bought it, none of the staff remarked further about the unusual shape of the boy's appendages. In fact, after the Show and Tell, Snape got a letter that informed him of his son's 'wonderful imagination' and telling him that he must be so proud to be raising 'such a brave child who makes the most of even his deformities'. The Potions Master had laughed out loud at that one, then screwed it up and thrown it into the fire.

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Today, which was a Thursday, Snape was reading a letter that had come tied to the leg of an eagle owl. Lucius Malfoy had written to Snape to inform him that his son, Draco, seemed to have come down with mumblemumps, and as the head of the Malfoy line did not feel confident in the skills of the healers at St. Mungo's, he was asking his old friend if he would treat the scion of his house.

Having read the parchment, Snape sneered and started to write a refusal. After all, he and Malfoy were hardly friends, what with the older man having been in his fifth year at Hogwarts when Snape was in his first. Yes, Malfoy had got to know him quite well during that year, but that was only because of his duty as one of the Slytherin prefects. And while Snape was Draco's godfather, that unhappy duty could just as easily have been conferred on Nott or any of the other Deatheaters.

Just then, the Potions Master's quill stopped moving as a sudden thought occurred to him. While it was true that his son had some friends in school, they were muggle friends, and neurodivergent besides. Perhaps it was time that Harry be introduced to another magical child near his age, one without a developmental disorder. With this in mind, Snape tore up the parchment he had been writing on, then took up a fresh one to write his acceptance of the job. Luckily, Harry had a half term holiday starting the next Monday, followed by a day of teacher training, giving all the children ten days' holiday. This meant that Snape wouldn't have to pull him out of school if his treatment of Draco did not work as quickly as planned.

✱ ◆ ◆ ◆

"Do you want to take Sergeant Cuddles with you?" Snape asked as he was helping his son pack for their journey to Malfoy Manor the following afternoon.

"Won't people think I'm a baby?"
"They shouldn't, most children your age have soft toys. And even if they do think that, we can just explain how your teddy helps you with your sensory needs."

"I want to take Sergeant Cuddles with me," Harry said before wandering off into the lounge to stack books.

Snape shook his head and chuckled at his son's distractibility, then went back to packing the small robes and other clothing.

* * *

"Ah, Severus, my old friend. So glad you could make it. And who is this small person?" Lucius Malfoy said once Snape and Harry had arrived through the Floo.

"This is my son, Harry. Harry, say hello to Mr. Malfoy."

"Hello to Mr. Malfoy," Harry said, looking at the floor.

"Why does the child not look at me when he is speaking to me? What's wrong with him?"

"Harry is Autistic, so is extremely nervous of new people. In fact, I'm surprised he took to me as quickly as he did."

"Autistic? But there has not been an Autistic witch or wizard in... well, at all."

"Yes, well. Not every pureblood parent eradicates their 'little problems', and I believe that there may be those muggleborns whose Autism is not as obvious as Harry's and whose differences were passed off as a manifestation of their magic."

Lucius nodded thoughtfully. He remembered a girl in Severus's year, Lily Evans, who had not only been academically brilliant for a Gryffindor, but had also been just odd enough that her housemates had often picked on her without really understanding why. A situation that had not been helped by her friendship with the man in front of him. Suddenly, he asked, "What is wrong with Harry's ears?"

"Nothing, I'm an elf!" came the rather surprising response, then Harry, feeling suddenly scared after his outburst, turned and buried his face in his daddy's robes.

"An elf?" Lucius enquired, looking askance at his former schoolmate.

"Indeed. A rather unfortunate incident involving strong accidental magic that permanently changed my son, who now has elf magic as a result."

"Well, be that as it may, would you be willing to see Draco now?"

"Of course. Please lead the way, unless you wish me to settle Harry in his room first."

"Oh, Dobby can take care of that. Dobby!"

There was a loud crack, then a house-elf appeared, squeaking, "What is master needing from Dobby, sir?"

"I am unsure as to the wisdom of leaving Harry in the care of a house-elf, Lucius," Snape said. "One was involved in the incident which caused him to turn himself into a magical being."

"It will be fine. Hogwarts elves are not used to anybody under the age of eleven, whereas Dobby has been involved in the care of my son from his birth. I assure you, no six-year-old is beyond the
creature's capabilities. Dobby, I would like you to take young Harry here to the room prepared for him and help him to unpack, then unpack Professor Snape's luggage for him. If there are any problems with these tasks, you are to get him, not me. Is that clear?"

"Dobby will be doing it right away, Master Lucius!"

With that, Dobby grabbed the hand of his new charge, who shrieked and batted the house-elf away before disappearing with a loud crack, then he reappeared in Snape's arms, causing Malfoy to blink in surprise.

"How did the boy apparate through my anti-apparition wards, and without splinching himself?" he demanded, turning an accusatory eye on the Potions Master.

"As I have already explained, Lucius, Harry is an elf, which means that no barrier will be effective in preventing him going where he likes or doing what he needs to in order to get there. Now, Dobby, you can't just grab Harry, he doesn't like it. Instead, you must allow him to prepare for it."

"Dobby is being sorry for hurting Master Harry, sir. Perhaps Master will still allow Dobby to show him to his room?"

Saying this, Dobby held out his hand, and once he was on the floor again, Harry hesitantly took it before both elves and all the luggage disappeared with yet another loud crack, leaving Snape to wonder if his son would be the first six-year-old beyond Dobby's capabilities.

* * *

Snape had just finished replacing the cold flannel on Draco's forehead when he saw his patient staring at something behind him.

"What is it, Draco?" he asked. "What are you looking at?"

"What is it?"

Just then, the Potions Master heard a small voice say, "Daddy," and he turned around just as Harry continued, "Daddy, I don't feel well."

With that, the Autistic child collapsed, and Snape was only just in time to catch him before he hit the ground.
Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven.

When Harry opened his eyes again, he coughed for several moments, then asked, "Daddy, why does my tummy hurt?"

"Because you have elf flu, darling," Snape replied. "Now hush and try to rest. You want to get better quickly, don't you?"

However, Harry was unable to rest, as from the moment Snape had said what was wrong with him, Dobby, who was also in the room, had begun wringing his ears and slamming his head against the wall.

"Bad Dobby! Bad Dobby! Dobby is making masters ill and must be punished!" the house-elf squealed.

As soon as he could, Snape rushed over and restrained him, saying, "Dobby, stop. If you continue this noise, then Harry won't recover as easily as I want him to. And anyway, you didn't make him ill."

"Dobby did not? But Dobby has just recovered from elf flu himself, so must have passed it on to Master Harry."

"Dobby, you didn't. Harry fell ill only today, so he got the flu yesterday at the latest. That means he caught it from one of the house-elves at Hogwarts. Now please, if you're going to stay, you must be quiet to allow him to rest. All right?"

"Yes, Master Snape. Dobby will be quiet. Dobby thanks you, sir."

"That's quite all right. Now, if my son needs anything, you are to find me and stay well away. If we are lucky, you haven't caught elf flu from him already."

Having said this, Snape left the room to brew potions for both Harry and Draco, who were now sharing a room so that Dobby could keep an eye on them both. Once his daddy had left the room, Harry fell asleep again, too ill to even notice that Sergeant Cuddles wasn't there.

* * *

Now that both boys were sleeping and the potions for them were simmering, Snape sat down to read Harry's case file, which the Social Services in Surrey had sent him a copy of at his request. It made for interesting reading, revealing the fact that the Autistic elf hadn't said a word until he was five years old, and once he did, his first words were a complete sentence rather than a couple of syllables. It also stated the fact that he was unable to read or write as a result of rather severe dyslexia, although his maths ability was only marginally less than that of his cousin, Dudley, making it clear that his intelligence was only slightly below average. This assumption had been backed up the following year by Harry's score on the WISC-R.

Snape was puzzled by this last because at Troup House, Harry's scores in maths were amongst the best, and some of the other Autistic children there were mathematical geniuses. With this fact in mind, Snape decided to find an IQ test that didn't rely on literacy and test his son with that. His mind now made up, Snape returned to his bubbling potions to finish them and decant them into phials.
"Thank you for looking after the boys, Dobby," Snape said as he entered the room. "Will you administer these potions to Draco, then get him some lobster bisque for his lunch and get chicken broth with a slice of dry toast for Harry?"

At this, Draco used a slate he had been given to communicate with to write, 'Dont I get desert?'

"If you finish all your bisque, then I will ask Dobby to make some custard for you, Draco. Is that all right?"

Malfoy junior nodded happily, then wrote, 'Wots rong with him, Uncle Severus?' and pointed at Harry.

"Harry has elf flu."

'He dos not luk like a howse-elf.'

"That is because he isn't, he is a forest elf. Now, let Dobby help you eat your food, then rest so you can get better. All right?"

Draco nodded, then sat up in bed and eagerly ate his bisque while Snape helped his son with his broth, then he went to sleep, having completely forgotten about the promised dessert.

Over the next several days, both boys came on in leaps and bounds, Harry being moved back into his room once he recovered, although he visited Draco every day afterwards to be taught Wizard's Chess and other games that could be played on a bed. However, Draco could not help but notice his guest's stimming, and decided to enquire about it one day.

'Why do you rok and moov your hands like that awl the time?' he wrote.

Harry looked at the incomprehensible shapes on the slate and gave no answer.

'Why dont you ansa me? Cant you read?' Again, Harry simply stared at the slate, and Draco wrote, 'Youre just a stupid freek,' before giving the item to Dobby to read the words out loud.

"Dobby is not wanting to insult Master Lucius's guests, Master Draco, sir."

However, Draco insistently tapped the slate, forcing Dobby to read what had been written, and the moment Harry heard the phrase 'stupid freak', it went echoing around his head in Dudley's voice, triggering a severe meltdown.

Hearing the high pitched shrieks coming from his son's bedroom, Lucius Malfoy ran from his study, and the moment he saw Dobby holding down Harry, he tore off his cravat and presented it to the house-elf saying, "Take it! You are no longer in my employ for assaulting your betters!"

Immediately he was freed, Dobby let go of Harry just as Snape entered the room, and the Autistic child began banging his head against the wall. Draco, looking very frightened, was curled up against the headboard of his bed.

"Draco, what did you do?" the Potions Master demanded, but the blond boy only grew even more pale as he shook his head in denial.
Even though Dobby was now under no obligation to answer, he said, "Master Draco is making
Dobby read something that is distressing Master Harry, and Master Harry is hurting himself. Dobby
is trying to stop him, but then Master Lucius is freeing Dobby for his pathetic attempts."

Snatching up Draco's slate, Snape read its contents, then said, "If you ever call people such names
again, not only will I have myself removed as your godfather, I will also make your time at Hogwarts
a living hell! And believe me when I say that I will hear of any future occurrence."

At this point, Dobby snapped his fingers and Sergeant Cuddles appeared in his arms, then he went
over to Harry, who immediately stopped injuring himself to grab the bear and squeeze it so tightly
that it seemed to have him in a chokehold.

Seeing this, Snape said, "I understand that you have been freed, Dobby. This being the case, I
wonder if you would consider working for me so that you can help look after Harry. You seem to
understand his needs very well."

Nodding his head eagerly, the house-elf said, "Dobby would be very happy to have Master Snape
hold his contract."

With that, he snapped his fingers again, a scroll of parchment appearing in his hand, and he unrolled
it for the Potions Master to sign. Once this had been done, the parchment disappeared with another
snap of his fingers. After this, Dobby waited until Harry had calmed down sufficiently, then
accompanied him back to his room.

Once the two elves had left the room and Draco was back in bed, Snape turned to Malfoy senior and
said, "You have just lost yourself a valuable servant, Lucius. May I suggest that on the next
occasion, you ascertain the facts of the situation before acting upon it? The word 'freak' upsets my
son immensely because it was the only thing his relatives ever called him."

Having said this, the Potions Master swept from the room to go and check on Harry.

    *   *   *

For the rest of time that he attended Troup House, Harry always popped there with Dobby in tow,
and after the first week, Snape received a letter saying how much progress he had made in regards to
his meltdowns. This caused the Potions Master to smile, knowing they would be just as severe if it
weren't for Dobby invisibly restraining the Autistic elf to prevent him harming himself.
Chapter Eight

Two weeks after returning to Hogwarts from Malfoy Manor, Snape discovered Raven's Coloured Progressive Matrices, and the following day, a Saturday, he tested Harry's IQ with them, rather surprised when the test result showed it was 126, fifty points higher than the elf had achieved on the WISC-R. It was then that the Potions Master realised that Harry must have been artificially maintaining his maths scores below those of his cousin's for some reason, something that would require high intelligence.

"Harry, why did you never do better than your cousin in school?"

"I used to, but every time I did, I would be locked in my cupboard without anything to eat for one day for every score that was higher than his, so I learned to do badly. Can I go and help Aunt Pomona now?"

"Yes, you may," Snape replied, and Harry happily ran off. Once Professor Sprout had ascertained that the Autistic boy was very diligent and could follow instructions impeccably once he had heard and fully understood them, she had trusted him to help her with ever more dangerous plants, and today he was to re-pot mandrakes with her, something that not even second year Hogwarts students got to do!

* * *

The following afternoon, Harry was busily engaged in putting together a 1000 piece animated jigsaw puzzle of a Quidditch match with one hand and stimming with the other when his daddy said, "Harry, Draco Malfoy is here. He says that he wants to say something to you."

"Harry?" said a new voice. "Um, my father explained to me why calling people names is wrong, and... well, I'm sorry I called you a stupid freak. I promise I won't call you anything else bad ever again."

Harry didn't answer for so long that Draco thought his apology had been rejected, and he was just turning to leave when the elf asked, "Would you like to do this jigsaw with me, Draco?"

"No, it has too many pieces for me. Can we play Exploding Snap instead?"

Harry looked helplessly at his jigsaw, which would have to cleared away by suppertime at the latest, and Snape said, "It's all right, we can leave it out for the night just this once," then was immediately bowled over by a very grateful hug from his son.

After that, Harry got out the Exploding Snap cards, then he and Draco had a very enjoyable game filled with lots of bangs until Lucius Malfoy came to collect his son.

"Draco, come. It is time for us to leave. Harry, I do hope that you will visit the manor again. Your company is beneficial for my son. Severus."

With that, the Malfoys left, and Harry returned to his jigsaw for the next fifteen minutes until dinner arrived.

The next day, Snape enacted his plan of revenge against the Dursleys with Dumbledore's full
On Tuesday morning, once the morning post arrived, Petunia walked into the kitchen with one of the brown envelopes that always filled Vernon with such joy, and he fairly snatched it from her. Once he opened it and read its contents, however, his happiness turned to confusion and misery.

After the address of an unfamiliar DHSS office followed by Vernon's National Insurance number, the letter said:

Dear Mr. Dursley,

Since it has come to our attention that one of the children for whom you were claiming Child Benefit did not have the money spent on him, we must ask you to come in on the 26/11/1986 at 2:45 PM and bring any relevant identification documents and all bank statements with you. I must warn you that any failure to attend this appointment will be seen as a tacit admission of benefits fraud, and all appropriate actions will be immediately taken against you.

Yours sincerely, Peter Ashbourne.

Department of Health and Social Security.

Vernon dropped the letter onto the kitchen table, sick and stunned. How had they known? It wasn’t like he had told anyone his name when he had dumped the freak at the hospital, and the boy was too retarded to know his uncle's surname. Then it came to him; those freaks of his sister-in-law must have had something to do with this! Well, he would show them. He would attend the appointment and prove that he had done nothing wrong, then they could go play their sick games with someone else.

His mind made up on this point, Vernon Dursley began planning his excuses as he got ready for work.

The following day, Snape received a letter from the Gringotts goblins which informed him that the misappropriated funds should soon be replaced into Harry's vault.

It was now the morning of Christmas Day, and Severus Snape was laughing as he was being half-strangled by a very joyful Harry, who had just received two 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles, one animated with each of the different species of dragon in the Wizarding World, and the other having a moving photograph of a close match between Holyhead Harpies and Puddlemere United, which the Welsh team had ended up winning. Then the Autistic elf snatched up one of the Chocolate Frogs he had also received, thrusting it at Snape and saying, "Christmas present for you."

"Thank you very much, Harry," the Potions Master replied, dropping the sweet into his pouch and determining to unobtrusively place it back with the others later. He much preferred Firewhiskey to chocolate.

After this, Harry sat on Dumbledore's lap, running his fingers through the elderly wizard's beard.

"Do you like my beard that much, little elf?" the Headmaster asked.

"Yes, it's like Andrex," came the puzzling response.

"What do you mean?" Snape enquired, having seen the toilet tissue in shops as a child and not knowing how it related to Dumbledore's beard.

"It's soft, strong, and very, very long."
Even though Harry didn't understand what the two men's laughter was about, he nevertheless joined in, sensing that it wasn't against him.

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Down south in Surrey, a very different scene was being enacted.

"It's all right, Pet," Vernon said, his arm around his wife's shoulders as they sat on the couch. "We'll get through this, I swear."

In front of the small artificial tree that had taken the place of their large Fraser fir, Dudley was in tears as he realised that he had only five average sized gifts in place of the twenty huge ones he had been expecting, and that he had only one NES game when he had requested six.

"I'm sorry, my darling Duddykins," Petunia cooed. "We just can't afford anything better for a while since the lay-offs. Your father was very lucky to keep his job as it is, and he had to take a huge paycut to do so."

Unfortunately, this was not enough, and her son's tears of disappointment soon turned into shrieks of rage when he tore the wrapping paper off his game to reveal not the copy of Metroid that he had been hoping for, but Legend of Zelda instead.

"Now, now, Dudley," Vernon cautioned. "If you break those, then they won't be replaced and you'll just have to do without."

Still crying, Dudley picked up his Christmas presents and stormed off to his room. This was so unfair! Not only did he have to have less food and presents than he was used to, it was very often the things he didn't like. Not only that, but since his family had become poor, his gang had deserted him, only Piers Polkiss remaining loyal to the six-year-old who was finally losing weight rather than piling it on.

In the lounge, Vernon said, "This is all that freak's fault, I'll bet. He's said something, and instead of it being taken for a delusion like it should have been, he's been believed. Well, I'll soon sort him out!"

In tears herself by now, Petunia could only nod in response to her husband's rant.

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Back at Hogwarts, Harry had just unwrapped a huge piece of silvery cloth, and he took it to Snape, asking, "What's this, Daddy?"

"It's your first daddy's Invisibility Cloak," Dumbledore answered. "It helps you to move around unseen."

"Oh, you can have it then, Daddy," Harry said, giving the cloak to the Potions Master. "I don't need it."

"Are you quite sure, Harry?" Snape asked, shocked and touched by the gift.

The Autistic boy nodded. "My elf magic helps me to be invisible when I need to be, but I can never think of anything I need to be invisible for."

"What about other people? What if they want to be invisible with you?"

"Then I can just make them invisible as well," Harry replied before starting to put together one of his
new puzzles, contentedly munching on a Chocolate Frog as he did so. He would get his daddy to charm his new books to read themselves later on. He was very much looking forward to hearing the one with the picture of the toy rabbit on the cover.

* * *

Later on, as Harry was going to bed, Snape fed him a potion to make his brain malleable, then gave him a small dose of Dreamless Sleep before putting on the bedside cabinet a parchment that he had charmed to begin reading itself once his son was deep in slumber. The spell and potion together were designed to reform Harry's brain and relieve his dyslexia at least to the point where it was moderate, although it would not reduce his Autism in any way since it didn't seem to be causing him undue distress, and the Potions Master felt that he had no right to interfere in that way so long as this remained to be the case.

* * *

The moment he woke up, Harry saw the strange parchment on his bedside cabinet and examined it curiously, trying to find out what the words said. Then he realised what he was doing, and he dashed into the lounge, shouting, "Daddy, Daddy! I'm not a retard any more!"

"That's because you never were, Harry. Now, tell me what you mean."

The elf held up the parchment he had been studying and said, "The shapes make sense, Daddy! I don't know what they say, but I can tell that they're words."

"That parchment contains a special spell to ease the dyslexia that was stopping you from being able to read, Harry."

"Oh. So I don't have dyx-dyx-dyslexia anymore?"

"I think you will probably always have it, but it seems to have been eased enough that you will be able to learn to read like you want to."

Once this had been said, Harry flung his arms around his daddy's neck in an excess of gratitude, then asked him to teach him to read again.

For the rest of the day, Harry had a very enjoyable time learning how to read the letters of the alphabet, and by the end of it, this was joined by huge sense of achievement as he looked at the shaky letters he had produced in graphite. All in all, it was an extremely happy elf who went to bed on Boxing Day of 1986.
One January afternoon, after Harry had come back from helping Professor Sprout in the greenhouses, Snape decided to ask him something.

"Harry, Pomona has told me how helpful you are to her and how you never pull up anything you shouldn't. So I'm wondering why you pulled up the flowers in the Dursleys' flowerbeds and left the weeds alone?"

"Well, Aunt Pomona always tells me exactly what should be growing in the greenhouses and what shouldn't, but all my aunt told me was to leave the pretty flowers alone and pull up the others. I didn't know that the pretty ones were the weeds."

As Harry went off, calling for Dobby, Snape nodded in understanding. To a child, dandelions, speedwell, and Queen Anne's lace in full bloom probably did look prettier than begonias and nasturtiums that were losing their petals. Especially an Autistic child, who would probably find the colours of the cultivated flowers too bright.

* * *

At the same time in Surrey, Vernon Dursley was standing at a counter in Spelthorne Police Station, talking to a desk sergeant.

"Very well, Mr. and Mrs. Dursley. If you'll just take a seat, I'll make a phone call to my superiors so your claims can be investigated."

Satisfied, Vernon and Petunia sat on a couple of the stackable plastic chairs provided, then were startled several minutes later by four constables surrounding them.

"Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, would you please come through?"

"What's all this about?"

"We can explain that if you'll just come through to where we can talk privately."

"No! Come on, Petunia. We're leaving."

Without another word, the two PCs grabbed Vernon and the two WPCs grabbed Petunia, and the woman was quietly but firmly escorted through a door into the back of the police station as her
husband was dragged in, kicking and struggling all the while.

Over the next half hour, the Dursleys were teased mercilessly by the police officers, and while Petunia remained quiet and withdrawn, Vernon became enraged, at one point even shouting, "I am not a ruddy cabbage!"

Mercifully, it was just a few more minutes afterwards that the Dursleys were taken from their police cells and put in the back of a van to be taken to the psychiatric ward at St. Peter's Hospital for assessment.

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As Dudley was leaving his classroom to go outside and wait for his mother to pick him up, the school secretary called him back.

"Dudley, dear. Could you please go to the Headteacher's office? There's someone here to see you."

Scowling in suspicion - no one ever called him 'dear' - the now merely overweight child nevertheless did as he was asked, only to discover that the person with Mr. Barr was not his mother nor even his father.

"Dudley," Mr. Barr began hesitantly. One never knew what might throw this child into one of the unpredictable rages that were so much worse than his cousin's had been. "It seems that both your parents are in hospital, so you're going to have to go into care for a while."

Dudley was so shocked by this that all he could do was gape as he tried to take it in. He was going to get put in one of those orphanages that his parents had taken the freak to. Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing, though. He had often missed his cousin, especially since three quarters of his gang had abandoned him. Beating up the retard upon successfully finding him during a game of Harry hunting was good therapy after many types of disappointment.

"Did you understand that, Dudley?" the unfamiliar woman asked, smiling kindly.

"You're going to take me to an orphanage like the freak, aren't you?" he blurted out.

"What? No, you're going into foster care. What's the freak?"

"Oh, nothing. So when can I see Mummy and Daddy?"

"I'm afraid you can't see them yet because they're not well enough, but we'll see how they are after a week."

A whole week? Dudley couldn't wait even a day!

"I want to see them now!" he roared, crocodile tears threatening to spill as he screwed up his face in preparation for a tantrum.

"Now, none of that, young man," the social worker said, her own face suddenly becoming stern. "If you behave like that, it might be decided that you'll make your parents' conditions worse, then you won't get to see them at all."

It was an uncharacteristically quiet Dudley Dursley who climbed into the social worker's car to be driven to his new foster home.

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Just two days into their 72-hour assessments, it was decided that Petunia Dursley was suffering from folie à deux as a result of her husband's mental illness, which had been tentatively labelled as paranoid schizophrenia, and she was moved into a separate ward. Sure enough, after just a few weeks, Petunia not only ceased to express delusions of being targeted by her six-year-old nephew, but also became less quiet and withdrawn, and was soon released from hospital as a result. Vernon, on the other hand, talked even more about 'what that freak and his kind have done', and his diagnosis became firm. Not long after it was decided that he should no longer see his son due to the nature of his delusions, Vernon attacked the juvenile visitor of another patient, a dark-haired, hazel eyed boy with glasses, and upon being found to be too ill to understand the nature of his crime, was transferred to Broadmoor until such time as he recovered, at which point his case would be referred for sentencing.

Once she got out of hospital and had her son returned to her, Petunia Dursley moved away from Little Whinging, unable to bear the shame of being both a single mother and a grass widow due to her husband's schizophrenia. Thus it was that she decided to move back into her parents' house in Preston, which she had not been able to face selling since their deaths the year before her son was born. Surprisingly enough for her, while Dudley complained about moving away from his friend, Piers, he made no fuss otherwise.

* * *

Upon learning of the detention of the Dursleys in hospital for psychiatric assessment, Severus Snape gave a huge smile of satisfaction. It hadn't even taken use of the Imperius Curse as he had feared it might, yet his revenge for his son was complete.

"What are you smiling about, Daddy?" Harry suddenly asked.

"Oh, I was just thinking it was about time for you to pop back from school," Snape replied. "Now I get to have the best time of my day as I listen to you telling me about yours."

After that, the two went with Dobby to Hogsmeade for ice cream, then Harry Flooed to Malfoy Manor to spend the weekend with Draco.

* * *

On Monday afternoon, Harry was again helping out in the greenhouses.

"Professor Sprout," he said. "Charlie hasn't got his ear defenders on yet. I don't want him to get knocked out by your mandrake."

Immediately, Pomona Sprout looked up and said, "Well, hurry up and put them on immediately, Mr. Weasley. As young Harry says, we don't want you to get knocked out!"

Giving the Autistic elf a grin and a nod of thanks for the warning, Charlie Weasley put on the protective gear before Professor Sprout demonstrated how to re-pot the mandrake.

"As our mandrakes are only seedlings, their cries won't kill yet," she calmly said once everybody had taken their ear defenders off again. "However, they will knock you out for several hours, and as I'm sure none of you want to miss your Hogsmeade visit this evening, make sure your ear defenders are securely in place while you work. I will attract your attention when it is time to pack up. Four to a tray - there is a large supply of pots here - compost in the sacks over there - and be careful of the venomous tentacula, it's teething."

Simply allowing his honorary aunt's words to wash over him, Harry got straight to work. He had
done this so often that it was now second nature to him.

Once the Herbology lesson was over, Harry popped back home, calling for his daddy as soon as he got there.

With a loud crack, Dobby appeared, saying, "Master Severus is currently busy in the kitchens, but he will be seeing Master Harry soon."

"Why is daddy in the kitchen, Dobby?"

"Dobby cannot say because it is a surprise, but Master Snape won't be long now."

With that, the House-elf disappeared with another loud crack, then once Harry had washed himself as best he could, Dobby apparated back into the Potions Master's quarters, this time with Snape, who was bearing a covered tray.

"Pomona told me what you did in her lesson, and I believe that deserves a treat. So I've cooked sausage, chips, and spaghetti hoops for our dinner. Whoa, careful!"

At this news, Harry had flung himself at the Potions Master, who had to take a step backwards as he was hugged to avoid dropping the tray. After this, the human and the two elves had a very enjoyable meal, then Harry went to finish his jigsaw for the last time before he started back at school the next day. Quite frankly, Harry was very glad to be going. He was used to being at school for five days of the week unless there was some kind of holiday, and teacher training days were most definitely not holidays. Why couldn't they just have them during half terms and the summer holidays instead of making him miss school? That's what he wanted to know!
Chapter Ten

It was now the second day of the school summer holidays, and Snape and Harry had escorted the students on the Hogwarts Express to London Euston along with the Potions Master's colleagues before Flooing back to the school, where they and Dobby were finally packing to leave after having spent a rather lonely night in the usually busy school.

"I still live in my childhood home at Number Twelve, Spinner's End in Preston. Do you think you can remember that, Harry?"

"Of course I can, Daddy. You're the one who says I'm not a retard!"

No, you're not, but new details are often hard for people of your age to remember just at first. Come on, put Sergeant Cuddles in your toybox now."

"I can have him straight back afterwards?"

"Of course you can, I promise."

Reluctantly, Harry put his teddy bear into the container, then anxiously watched as it was shrunk and put into the backpack that Snape had bought him so he could be sure of not losing it.

Once Snape had packed the rest of the shrunken items into his own backpack, he put it on, then sent Dobby and Harry into the Floo ahead of himself before swiftly following so he could keep his promise.

The moment that Sergeant Cuddles was out of the re-sized toybox, Harry dropped to the floor, hugging it and muttering, "I really don't like the Floo. I'd much rather pop."

"Well, once the holidays are over, you and Dobby can pop us all back to Hogwarts. How does that sound? Now, is there anything you would like to do, maybe go to the park or something? This town used to be quite ugly, but it has improved vastly since it was made a smoke control area when I was a child."

"Can I watch telly, please? I've never done that before."

"Unfortunately, I do not possess a television, but if we go out somewhere, I can purchase one on our way back. Dobby, would you like to come with us?"

"That is all right, Master Severus, sir. Dobby will be happy to be getting on with the unpacking, but he hopes that you and Master Harry have a good time."

"Come on, Daddy. Let's go to the park so I can play on everything!"

Laughing, Snape put on his lightest jacket before grabbing his son's, then he accompanied the Autistic elf out the front door.

* * *

After a rather enjoyable hour on the swings, seesaw, roundabout, slide, and climbing frame, Harry's ear was suddenly caught by music that somebody was playing on a ghetto blaster, and he began
bopping to the melody, clapping his hands as he did so.

Not having noticed this, Snape was on his way to test his glamour on Petunia Dursley, whom he had spotted with a child that surely couldn't be hers.

"Good afternoon."

"Good afternoon. Is there some reason you have approached me?"

"Yes. You see, my son and I have just moved to the area, and he hasn't had the chance to make any friends yet, so I was wondering if your son could play with him."

"And you are...?"

"Oh, please forgive me. My name is Tobias Panse, and my son's name is Harry."

"Petunia Dursley. Dudley is my son. Sweetie! This gentleman would like to know if you're willing to play with his son because he doesn't know anyone here yet."

"Yes, all right. Where is he?" the now average weight child asked.

The Potions Master was just about to answer when he heard somebody exclaim, "Hey! Take a look at that kid with the pointy ears! He's clapping in perfect time to the song!"

Snape looked around, and sure enough, it was the Autistic elf who was unconsciously the centre of attention as he clapped to the tempo of 'I Feel Love' by Donna Summer.

The moment the song came to an end, Harry began to slope off back to the swings, then it started again, the owners of the ghetto blaster having rewound the tape, and his daddy groaned as he again became lost in the music.

"Pointy ears?" Petunia hissed, becoming nervous at something 'unnatural'.

"An unfortunate congenital deformation," Snape lied smoothly. "Harry likes to pretend he is an elf because he has grown to hate being called deformed."

"People can be so cruel, can't they?" Petunia clucked in sympathy. "I do hope my Duddykins isn't like that."

A couple of minutes later, the song had come to end again, and the people playing it were finally leaving the park, so Dudley approached the boy he didn't know was his cousin thanks to an amulet to glamour his scar Harry had been given by Filius Flitwick two weeks after moving in with his daddy.

"Hello, I'm Dudley. What's your name?"

The Autistic child looked up suspiciously, but although this boy had blond hair, he wasn't the juvenile blue whale of his nightmares, and besides that, this wasn't Surrey.

"I'm Harry."

"Hello, Harry. You have the same name as my cousin. Why do you have such weird ears?"

"Because I'm an elf."

"Oh, but... Okay. Shall we play on the swings?"
Harry nodded happily, and the two boys were running towards the equipment when the elf suddenly stopped.

"Oh, look."

There was such a note of sorrow in Harry's voice that his cousin couldn't help but stop to see what he was looking at. Just on the inside of the hedge surrounding the play area was a branch that Dudley had broken off in an earlier attempt at climbing the tree it was now hanging from.

"Oh, leave it. It's just a broken branch, and Mummy says there's nothing we can do."

The human boy was then surprised when the branch suddenly lifted from the ground and moved to the place it had been broken off from, soon looking as though nothing had ever happened to it. Once this had been done, Dudley was startled by the elf collapsing onto the ground, where he curled up in the foetal position and went to sleep.

Dudley ran towards his mother, shouting, "Mummy, Mummy! Mister! There's something wrong with Harry!"

Immediately, Snape ran towards his son and cast a surreptitious diagnosis spell on him before picking him up, saying, "Because Harry is Autistic, he sometimes uses energy very quickly and becomes easily exhausted as a result. He'll be fine once he's had his sleep out."

With that, the disguised Potions Master walked away to find a shop that sold TVs as he had promised, Petunia finally preparing to leave with Dudley around quarter of an hour later after he had played on the swings and the roundabout.

"Mummy, that boy Harry's an elf."

"Now, Dudley, you know that there's no such things as elves."

"But he really is, Mummy! See?" Petunia looked at what seemed to her to be a perfectly ordinary sycamore of around ten years old, which her son was pointing at, and said, "What about it?"

"That's the tree I fell out of, but Harry mended it. He really is an elf!"

It was then that Petunia recalled how her son had tried to climb the tree and fell out of it, breaking a branch on his way to the ground, and she became extremely uneasy. Then she reminded herself that hatred of magic was what had got her locked up on a psychiatric ward for several weeks and put her husband in Broadmoor. Not only that, but while the strange child could have easily hurt her son, he had instead concentrated his energies on healing the tree.

"All right, Dudley, I believe you. You mustn't tell anyone else, though. Harry and his daddy come from a world that ordinary people aren't supposed to know about, so we must try to keep their secret."

"If it's a secret, how do you know about it, Mummy?"

"Because your aunt married a man from that world. Your cousin was their son."

"Oh. Can I have fish finger sandwiches with ketchup for my tea?"

"Yes, you can."
With that, the two walked home, where Petunia put the promised fish fingers under the grill.

Back at Number Twelve, Spinner's End, Harry was sleeping in his bedroom, to which Snape had sent him with Dobby before purchasing the TV he was now setting up in the lounge along with the portable aerial and signal booster that he had bought at the same time. Once he was finished, Snape went upstairs to wait for his son to awaken.

"Harry, what did you do that made you so tired earlier?"

"I healed a tree."

"You healed a tree?" The Potions Master couldn't imagine how repairing some caterpillar damage would exhaust a child's magical core as it had obviously done to Harry's.

"Yes. The tree was hurting because somebody broke one of its branches off, so I had to help it. Was that naughty?"

"Oh, darling, of course it wasn't naughty. You just should have come to me about it first so we could help the tree together. That way, you wouldn't have got so tired and we could have done it when no muggles were around."

Harry had forgotten about being careful with using magic outside of Hogwarts and Hogsmeade, and he apologised profusely.

"That's all right, Harry," Snape replied. "Do you want to watch some television now?"

While the Autistic elf was being entertained by Colin Baker's Doctor, his daddy sat at the kitchen table to write to the Ministry of Magic and explain the events at the park that afternoon.
Chapter Eleven

Chapter Eleven.

Waking up on Sunday morning, Snape got out of bed, then stopped still in bemusement. Normally, the double bed that had belonged to his parents was up against the wall because there was so little space in the master bedroom for it, but now it was in the middle of the room with plenty of space all around. The next thing that shocked the Potions Master was when he looked in his wardrobe to select muggle attire for the day, only to discover that it was now walk-in. The moment he was dressed, Snape went to his son's now much larger room.

"Harry, did you make the house bigger?"

"Yes, Daddy. Do you like it?"

"Very much, but won't the neighbours wonder what happened to their houses?"

"Silly Daddy! I made it like the TARDIS, of course."

With that, Snape remembered the television programme his son had watched the previous evening on BBC One and the strange police box in it, and he wondered how the elf had used an expansion charm on a building when no other wizard had ever got it to work on anything much larger than a chest. Then he sighed and began planning his next letter to the Ministry as he went downstairs and got breakfast ready with Dobby.

Once the breakfast things had been cleaned and put away, Snape wrote his letter and sent it, then went into the lounge, where Harry and Dobby were watching Sunday morning cartoons.

"Harry," the Potions Master began hesitantly, having hoped to avoid this. "While I know you were only trying to help by making the house larger and I'm very grateful, I need you to stop casting magic on your own. It's actually against the law for you to cast magic at all, so I need you to promise not to cast magic without me unless it's to save someone in danger."

"That's all right then. That tree branch was in danger."

"I meant yourself or a human being," Snape reiterated.

"What about Dobby?" was the Autistic elf's indignant rejoinder.

"All right, you may use magic to save the life of a living creature, but if it involves anything else, including plants, rocks, and soil, then you must come to me. Do you understand?"

Harry hastily agreed, then returned to watching cartoons with a careless arm flung around Dobby's shoulders, both elves equally fascinated by what they watched.

* * *

On the thirty-first of July, Harry was just sitting down to breakfast when he heard his daddy say, "Happy birthday, Harry."

"It's my birthday today?"

"Yes, of course. When did you think it was?"
"I didn't even know if I had one, so I always imagined it was the same as Dudley's."

Well, it isn't. It's today, and you've got some presents waiting for you in the lounge once you've eaten your breakfast. Now slow down, they'll still be there no matter how long you take to eat your food."

The moment that Harry had put the last bite of Bran Flakes into his mouth, he got down from the table, still chewing, and left the room with Dobby in tow. Moments later, Snape heard shriekes of delight, then his son came dashing back into the kitchen to give him a huge hug of gratitude before running back to the lounge to open his gifts. Shaking his head in amusement, Snape gave a wry chuckle before joining the elves in the other room.

As at Christmas, Harry had two more 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles, a pile of books, and a bag of assorted sweets. The moment he had unwrapped everything, he climbed onto his daddy's knee and asked him to read one of his new books.

"Wouldn't you rather read it yourself?"

"I like hearing you read to me. You never miss any words out."

"All right, just one chapter then."

The first chapter of 'Watership Down' later, Snape took Harry to the park with a picnic lunch so Dobby could get on with the preparations for his birthday party, to which Draco Malfoy along with the Weasley twins and their younger siblings had been invited as well as Dudley Dursley, who had no idea of his relationship with Harry since the elf had decided not to let him know upon being informed of it.

"The Dudley in Lancashire likes me, but the one in Surrey hated me," the Autistic child had said. "I want him to keep on liking me."

Over an hour after reaching the play area, Snape saw the Dursleys come through the gate to it, then Dudley separated from his mother and ran over to the Potions Master.

"Hello, Mr. Panse. Is Harry with you?"

"Of course, although you might have to wait to play with him since I'm sure those girls would be disappointed if you took their 'baby' away," Snape replied, pointing to the climbing frame.

Dudley looked over, and sure enough, the elf was being held by a girl a year younger than him as she pretended to feed him with an imaginary bottle.

Immediately, the blond boy dashed over, asking, "Harry, do you want to play hide and seek?"

"Go away, you can't have him! He's being our baby," one of the girls said, only for Harry to escape at the first opportunity so he could play something less boring.

After finding Dudley for the umpteenth time, Harry put his arms around him and kissed him on the lips, saying, "I'm going to marry you when I grow up."

"Don't be silly, two boys can't marry each other."

"Nuh-uh! Daddy says my godfather's married to another wizard, and my daddy knows everything. So we can marry each other if we want to."

As Dudley was going home to get ready for the upcoming party, he decided to say nothing to his
mother of what his friend had said. He had the distinct feeling that she wouldn't approve.

* * *

The party that afternoon was a great success, with various games like musical chairs and pass the parcel before Remus Lupin appeared as a magician and impressed even the magical children with a corporeal patronus. The werewolf looked quite fresh since the next full moon was over a week away.

"Thank you for allowing me to see Harry again," he said. "I know how you feel about me, so I'm very grateful."

"Actually, it isn't you I hate. I save my animosity for Black, who was entirely responsible for creating that dangerous situation."

"Nevertheless, thank you. I was wondering if I might have a relationship with my cub?"

"Of course you may. In fact, I am quite surprised that you had not approached me about this sooner, and that is why I requested your services today."

Upon meeting this new person, Harry was very nervous and clung to his daddy, making Lupin chuckle.

"He's just the same as when he was a baby. In fact, I thought Harry wasn't going to get to know me, Sirius, or Peter at all. Although he never did come to like Peter, simply couldn't abide being left alone with him, which is why he never got saddled with baby-sitting duty."

* * *

Over the rest of the summer, Harry got to know his godfather's husband and his relationship with Dudley deepened even further, until the time to leave for Hogwarts came.

"I'm leaving tonight. Me and Daddy have to Floo to Hogwarts."

"What's Hogwarts?"

"That's the school where my daddy teaches."

"Do you go there?"

"No, I won't go until I'm eleven, but maybe you can come with me when I do," Harry said with all the faith that only a child is capable of.

After this, the two boys said their goodbyes and parted with a kiss, then returned to their separate homes.

* * *

Once back in Moray, Harry soon settled back into a routine of school, which had become a lot easier thanks to the easing of his dyslexia. Then, on the anniversary of his arrival at Hogwarts, Snape took him to Gringotts in Diagon Alley.

"We need to speak with Master Graspclaw in regards to an adoption," the Potions Master said.

"Very well, Master Snape. If you'll just follow me."
After following the goblin through a doorway and to an office, Harry and Snape were soon sitting across a desk from a goblin who was far older than the ones behind the counters in the main area of the bank.

"I understand that you wish to adopt someone, Master Snape." Upon receiving confirmation by way of a silent nod, Graspclaw continued, "Is this the individual you wish to adopt?"

"Yes, and Harry also wishes to be adopted by me. In fact, it was his suggestion in the first place." After saying this, Snape comforted his son, who had his head buried in his daddy's side with sensory distress caused by the crowds in the alley.

"Very well, then. If both of you will place a drop of your blood on this parchment and sign it with your names, it can be registered at the Ministry of Magic this afternoon."

"Harry, I need to prick your finger to release a drop of your blood. It will probably hurt when I do so, but the pain shouldn't last long. All right?"

The Autistic elf nodded and wrote his name where indicated on the parchment, then was delighted when his daddy picked him up and swung him round, saying, "That's it. You're now officially my son!"

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Four years later, Harry was disappointed to learn that Dudley wouldn't be attending Hogwarts with him on account of his being a muggle, but he was happy when Professor McGonagall called out, "Snape, Harry!" just before the sorting hat placed him in Gryffindor with the Weasley twins.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

Because of the popularity of this story, I've decided to add a short epilogue. Enjoy!

Epilogue.

At the beginning of his Hogwarts career, Harry had many issues in class because he couldn't learn what he was being taught. Eventually, however, accommodations were added into the curriculum for him, and he thereafter came on in leaps and bounds.

Once the Autistic young man graduated the magic school, thirteen years after he had left Number Four Privet Drive and the year after he had defeated his parents' murderer once and for all, he kept his promise to marry Dudley, and with the aid of his elf magic, was able to give his cousin three children. Although the special educational provisions that had been put in place for the ever increasing numbers of Autistic students were not needed for James Sirius, the eldest Dursley-Snape, Harry was grateful for them not only when Albus Severus turned out to be an Aspie, but especially when Lily Luna was diagnosed as an Autie like her mother. Perhaps she would get on with Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy, an Autie for whom hatred had been taught to Rose Weasley, one of his year mates, but who could not hate for long himself, even with just cause.

Right now, all in all, Harry Potter felt as though he was the luckiest man on the planet, and it was all because his aunt and uncle had decided to abandon him for his 'freakishness'.

End Notes

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