When All is Lost One is Found

by Rinoaebastel

Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG
Prologue: Another Year at Hogwarts

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

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September 1975

The train’s clattering repeated with a familiar rhythm as he tried to find the girl he was searching for. He hadn’t been able to find her on the platform. It’d been too crowded with happy families that came to say goodbye to their kids. Sometimes he envied them because his family was the opposite.

He’d had to come to the station alone every year except the first. His mother had dared to accompany him that first year and had suffered the consequences at the hand of his disgusting father.

He dreaded going back home every year. Having to abandon Hogwarts’ relative peace for a house filled with screams, pain, and the sounds of his father striking his mother.

The smell of alcohol on his muggle dad’s breath hit his nose along with the memories, and his stomach contracted for a moment. He was thankful that the year had just started and soon he wouldn’t need his parents. He’d be free. He’d have his own house, a job, and a new robe. Maybe he’d have a cloak as well. He always loved how they moved with the wearer. His father would never spend money on clothing when alcohol was so much more to his liking.

A shiver ran down his spine and he tried to remove the image of his alcoholic father from his mind.

Now he had Lily.

He wasn’t alone anymore.

He still found it a miracle that he could meet such a wonderful girl that understood him. They were neighbors and shared an ability to do magic. That had drawn them together when their families rejected them.

She was the only company he would seek. He hadn’t managed to get out and see her in during the summer holiday, so he’d missed her.

Walking around the narrow corridor of the train, he looked in the different compartments. He saw some of his Slytherin mates, but he didn’t recognize many people. It wasn’t surprising considering he always preferred the company of a book.
After looking in several booths, and getting some strange looks from the people in them, he finally saw a girl with long red hair at almost the end of the wagon. When her face turned to the side, he could see how much she had changed and how pretty she’d gotten.

Though he saw her from where he stood, she had yet to notice him. A smile spread on his face. Maybe he could surprise her. Maybe she had missed him too.

He raised his hand with the intention to knock on the window, but he noticed that a few of the Gryffindor girls were glaring at him from the inside. His smile vanished.

He knew that look. Mockery, conceit, hate, disgust.

Then the whispering started and ever so often they’d shoot smirks at him, as if they were complicit in something that would bring grief upon no one but him. Lily looked at the window, and with a much too polite gesture, acknowledged him by bowing her head.

He could only bow back and remove his presence from the window as he regained his composure. He was disappointed but would wait to see if she sat up to greet him properly.

“Seriously, Lily, how do you stand his presence? The way he looks at you all the time is so creepy.” He heard the muffled voice from the inside and closed his eyes as he refrained from punching the wall.

“Yeah! And don’t forget that ugly face of his. It makes me want to vomit.” His frown darkened as another girl pointed out the cruel reality of his appearance.

“You should be careful with that Slytherin stalker.”

Grinding his teeth, he pushed away from the compartment wall and walked off, not wanting to hear more.

Stalker? He only wanted to share a tiny moment with his friend. Those girls were just insufferable and loved to mock him.

Every year this happened in some form or another.

What was wrong with wanting to spend time with his friend? If it were anyone but him, nothing would be wrong with it, but he was a disgrace in the eyes of all. No matter how many times he heard the jeering, the insults, or saw the hateful looks directed at him, he never got used to it. Being abused was never something one grew used to. He wished he could curse them for every single bit of pain he felt.

He found an empty compartment and entered it, closing the door hard enough that he could hear the door and window vibrating for a few seconds afterward.

He slumped on the seat and looked out the window at the green landscapes. Even if he was heading towards another form of torture, at least in Hogwarts he could use magic and learn.

He couldn’t wait for it.

AN: This is just the beginning of a ride that I hope you like. If you have time, tell me what you think. And many thanks to my dear friend and Beta. This wouldn’t have been possible without her.
Chapter 1: Realizing Reality

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

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Chapter 1: Realizing Reality

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June 1976

He thought James Potter was a dyed in the wool git. Everyone in Slytherin would agree, but almost everyone in his house hated Gryffindor so that wouldn’t be unusual. It wasn’t outright said, but even some members of other houses felt Gryffindors were favored amongst the staff. They were the powerful, the popular, the good-looking, and seemingly always got everything they desired.

And they hated him. Since the day he stepped into Hogwarts, he was the smartest in his class. He was the one almost all of the teachers were happy to teach despite his Slytherin loyalty. But his skills and intelligence only created jealousy and envy from a certain group of students, and pain for himself brought forth by James Potter and his friends.

He looked down at the table as the food appeared in front of them. It was a banquet fit for kings, but he wasn’t hungry. He couldn’t tear his gaze away from Potter and Lily. She’d been the most important person to him. The person who accepted him and had shown some affection toward him.

Then he was hit with the reality that he was alone and always would be. Potter had Lily, and any semblance of a friendship they once had was gone.

He stood and grabbed his books. If he didn’t get out of there he might do something that would lose points for his house.
He crossed the great hall and went down to the lake. He could sit there for hours, reading, correcting, studying potions and creating new spells. The prefect Malfoy and most of his housemates praised him for that. Slytherins might be like snakes, low to the ground and out of the way, but they were worth as much as anyone else. His feet guided him by instinct until he reached what he deemed his spot. He sat under the willow, closed his eyes and took a deep breath, relishing in the smell of the freshly cut grass.

He opened his book and started reading. Every so often he wrote in the margins to correct some measurements and improve the effects of ingredients. If he were to attain a position as a potions master, he had to be better than everyone else. If he gained more skill in something Lily was interested in, maybe it would open her eyes and show her that he wasn’t bad because he was curious about the Dark Arts. Why wouldn't he be? They were practical and could keep egocentric men like Potter in line.

A bunch of laughs interrupted his thoughts. His lips pursed and he hid his face with his book, wishing it were possible to conceal his entire presence. He knew those laughs as if he’d created them himself. He had to remain calm and ignore them. If he did that, then maybe they’d ignore him. Severus leaned so close to his book that his nose brushed its pages. He took slow, deep breaths to calm himself. After years of humiliations, mockery, and the loss of everyone he dared to care about, he didn’t want to deal with them if he could prevent it.

But he refused to be afraid of them. He was a Slytherin. He was proud, powerful, and intelligent. He could cope with this. Normally, he ignored the pesky pranks, but it didn’t seem to dissuade the group. All he wanted was to be left alone, but that was clearly too much to desire.

“Look who’s here,” Potter said. “Snivellus, you still haven’t washed your greasy hair? I thought we’ve been through this. You’re good in potions, so why can’t you make something to clean yourself with?”

He looked up at Potter through the curtains of his hair hanging over his face and narrowed his eyes. His hair was not greasy. His work around potions only made it appear that way. Not that anyone would come close enough to touch it to find out.

The gang led by Potter laughed. His body stiffened. Why him? He never said a word of hate toward any of them until he was attacked the first time. Even now he rarely said anything. He didn’t want to be like those disrespectful idiots. So why did they never leave him be? Was it because he was silent? Because he loved Lily? Because his appearance was horrid?

When he saw a brown boot near his leg, his breath quickened and his stomach lurched. He dared to look up at the man he hated. He ruined everything. Always ruined everything.

“Come on, Snivellus. Snake got your tongue?” He tilted his head like a curious dog and his eyes were filled with mirth. Severus withheld the urge to correct him on the idiom.

Trying not to fall into his games, Severus stood, touching the tree with his hand for leverage. He had to get out of there. With no acknowledgement of Potter’s presence, he moved away, trying to escape without confrontation. With each step, he struggled to control his loathing. They followed him. He could practically feel their steps on the grass behind him.

“Snivellus, you’re a coward.” He heard Sirius say and his blood boiled. Hypocritical mutt.

As if the dog had heard his thoughts, he cut in front of him. He was forced to look up for a second. He turned around and saw Potter with his wand in his hand. Severus showed his wand but, in a blink of an eye, he was wandless. He felt like an idiot for letting his guard down enough to be
He darted forward, trying to grab his wand, but failed.

He felt a jolt through his joints and muscles, making them useless in supporting his weight. He fell face first into the grass. As he lay there, taking in the scent he loved, instead of it calming his fear, it transformed it into rage.

“We just wanted to know how you did on the exam. There was no need to try and walk off. Well, now I guess you can slither off instead, but you wouldn’t want to leave your wand would you?”

He tried to move his arms and hands to push himself up, but it was to no avail. After this, he would never be this weak again. Never.

“You have no right to ask me that. I’m going to make you pay for all this.” His voice was muffled by the dirt getting in his mouth. He wanted to stop him with his power. He was smarter than Potter, he could do it. “Arrogant arsehole,” he muttered.

“That’s a very dirty thing to say, Snivellus. Since your mother never washed out your mouth, guess I’ll have to.” He pointed his wand at him.

Move. Come on. Move! He thought, panicking at his next words even though outwardly he had little reaction.

“Scourgify.”

The curse reached his mouth before he could do anything. Soap and water filled his insides and a wave of nausea hit him, but he wouldn’t give them the pleasure of watching him vomit. Even if he did have the opportunity to stain their freshly polished boots.

“Leave him alone, right now!”

He felt his chest constricting as he recognised the voice. No. She couldn’t be here. She couldn’t be a witness to this humiliation. He didn’t want her to see him being this weak. This was the worst thing Potter could have done to him. What kind of man could he be for her if he was taking the actions of nothing more than a slimy worm trying to breathe in the dirt? He could never protect her.

“Why are you doing this to him?”

He doesn’t need a reason.

“He deserves this because he exists. That’s a good enough reason. . . Though, if you go out with me I might just leave him alone,” Potter said.

I want him dead. How dare he try to use him as a bargaining chip to win a date with her?

Still trying to make his body react and fight off the spell, he let a small growl vibrate in his throat. It didn’t go unnoticed by his attackers. Potter’s attention and Sirius’s smirk came back to him.

“Levicorpus,” Potter said. He felt his body levitate as if someone tied a rope around his ankle and was lifting him by only that. His head hung a few feet from the ground, and the blood rushed to it, making him dizzy.

His robes covered his face and his shirt fell a bit, showing his stomach and ribs. Moments later, he slammed back onto the ground. His nose popped and a pain shot through it and his jaw. Then, he felt a warm wind where he shouldn’t have and realized, to his mortification, why.
The complete humiliation was done. His own spell had been used against him, the one someone stole with a glance at his book. He heard people laughing and mocking his old grey underwear. He didn’t dare look at Lily.

He heard her voice, again, pleading with them to stop picking on him. His anger fueled. He didn’t need her help. He wanted her to leave.

He tried again to get up, but someone had petrified him.

“Stop this!” Lily said.

He managed to look at her and all of his repressed pain and anger returned. The look in her eyes said it all. Her pity hurt more than anything those bastards had done to him today. No, it wasn’t hurt. He clenched his teeth a few seconds and then let the anger rush through his body and out of his mouth in the form of words. “I don’t need you around. I don’t want you near me you filthy mudblood.”

He thought he might feel regret after seeing her reaction, but he felt nothing anymore except rage and hatred. She deserved this. She was friends with Potter and now out of reach. He was only the pitiful neighbor kid who was only good for helping her until she found better people.

But he was powerful. A half-blood prince.

He could endure this idiocy alone. He didn’t need a woman’s pity. He didn’t need anyone’s pity. He didn’t want it.

“Fine, if you want to act like that. I thought you were different but I guess not. I’ll let them wash the rest of you then. You probably do need it.”

Shame crossed his face and he couldn’t hide it under his long hair. He could only snarl as he heard the frantic demands for him to apologise from the stupid gang of torturers. Hypocrites. All of them. Lily included. She joined their mockery with no remorse. It was amazing how one could turn so quickly. He was an idiot for loving her.

But then she rejected Potter and left. He could barely make out her back as she disappeared out of sight. It was better this way. It was better she hate him. Anything was better than pity.

He was pathetic. Completely and utterly pathetic.

But he was not pitiable.

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Severus remained in a fetal position until the last of the students got too bored or too tired to laugh at his expense. The marauders were long gone, or so he thought. Time tended to distort when one is getting mocked by so many. He took several deep breaths as he replayed what just happened. He was hurt and in the process he hurt Lily. Surely she’d realize he hadn’t been thinking clearly. But did that matter since he knew better? He called her a racist word stemming from the stupid ideological bullshit Malfoy and others were proud to talk about. He wasn’t even pureblood. He couldn’t be like them, so he wanted to prove he could be better.
Today he reached the supreme degradation. He’d almost been free to have his life, to be respected as a man. Potter stole it.

He dared to look up. The sun was setting on one of the worst days of his life. He inhaled, cringing when pain shot through his nose.

He summoned up the courage, and then with shaky arms, put his palms on the now wet grass and tried to push upward. He felt a hand on his shoulder and his body froze as if he was a victim of another spell. But he knew he wasn’t this time.

“Severus. Don’t worry mate. We will make them pay. You’re one of us.” Those words of acceptance relaxed him in an instant. That was the only thing he wanted. To be part of something. To become powerful, important, and respected.

“Avery,” he managed to whisper, his throat hoarse. “They outnumbered me. I couldn’t do anything.” He forced his voice to remain calm and was proud he’d managed it.

“We know. It doesn’t matter now, but they will not get away with what they’ve done. Don’t worry, Malfoy will speak positively to the Dark Lord about you.” Avery removed his hand from his shoulder. “Stand up, Severus. We know you’re powerful. We know you can pass our tests with little effort.”

He heard Avery’s footsteps fade, leaving him alone to recover his dignity.

He waited a few moments, then mastered his weak body state and stood up with an elegance he never thought he’d possess. Like a man whose presence made the world quiver. A man created through his years of life and completed today. He was on the first steps to freedom.

But first, he’d have to cut ties with the blood that disgusted him. He’d take the first step in becoming a strong man by making sure he never acted like his father.

And that meant he had to rectify a mistake he made. A mistake that degraded someone he cared about.

Then, with the help of a few of his fellow Slytherins, he would take further steps to become a man he could be proud to be.

AN: I think that this was an important point of Severus life that made him change so it was a complete need to show this. I hope you enjoyed and if you have time, let me know what you think! Until next week. :)
Chapter 2: From Snivellous to Severus

Chapter Summary

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Droplets of warm water caressed his skin as he rubbed off the grime from a day he wanted to forget. He cut off the water and started drying off. As he did so, he avoided looking at the mirror. He wasn’t an attractive person and that was probably one of the many reasons why Lilly was out of his reach. Clearly, she didn’t go on personality if she hung around Potter, so he was out of luck in that aspect as well. He wasn’t a fool. He loved her but held no hope that she would ever reciprocate, and his chances went into the negatives after today’s incident.

Still, she shouldn’t have been there. She shouldn’t have looked at him when he was… He pressed his hands against the sink and forbade his thoughts from going any further. After cleaning his towel with magic and dressing in clean clothes, he walked out into the common room and glanced at the clock. It was dinner time, but he knew he wouldn’t be able to stomach a meal.

There was something more important he needed to do.

He left the common room, but instead of going to the dining hall he directed his footsteps toward Gryffindor tower. He would wait for her there.

-/-/-

Hours passed and he stood patiently, watching as all the idiotic Gryffindors with their full
bellies walked to their common room. He even had the displeasure of watching Potter and company returning. Since he was in the shadows, they either didn’t see him or paid him no mind. They were nothing but presumptuous walking chunks of human defecation. Then, he heard her voice. He started to shake so he took a deep breath to try to calm down. He could do it. But he needed to be alone with her.

Gathering what little courage he had, he step out from the shadows and cleared his throat. Not exaggerated, yet loud enough to startle the group of Gryffindor girls. He didn’t care what they thought. His main concern was the problem with Lily.

She was staring at him with such a cold stare that he momentarily forgot what he was there for. He gathered his thoughts and began. “L-lily... May I—”

She turned away from him and walked towards the fat lady’s portrait. A pain shot through his chest. She didn’t want to talk to him.

He couldn’t let things stay like this. He’d made a mistake and... and she was the only friend he had. If he lost her he’d... “W—wait please I just want to...” He avoided looking at the other girls, but he didn’t need to. He knew they wanted to hex him.

“You want to insult me some more?” she finished for him. “Wasn’t it enough to call me mudblood? What you said hurt, Severus. I expected more from you.”

“I-I-I...” Stuttering! He was bloody stuttering!

_Expected more from me. She should expect the same from Potter._ Of course he’d be held at fault, golden boy could do no wrong. Still, she was his friend. She was worth swallowing his pride for. But before he was able to do it, she’d already disappeared behind the painting.

His voice frozen and his legs didn’t respond to his orders to follow. But what did he expect? A familiar spark of anger coursed through him, taking the place of pain. He was treated like garbage in front of her, and a single word shouldn’t have turned her against him. It wasn’t an excuse for what he called her, but she should at least hear his explanations. Couldn’t she recognize that he said the word out of fear and shame?

He stood there staring at a single spot. He could feel the painting staring at him, but he didn’t care. The lights went out indicating he had limited time before the teachers started to patrol. But losing points wasn’t going to make him move. He couldn’t. She was important to him and if he couldn’t do this, he was no better than Potter.

He climbed a few of the stairs in front of the fat lady’s portrait. Her eyes were on him, like a panther stalking her prey.

“You should go back to your common room, boy. I know you aren’t a Gryffindor.” She told him as he climbed the last stair and stood in front of her.

“I know, but I need to speak to her,” he managed to reply with a respectful tone when what he really wanted to do was yell and demand the painting contact her.

“It didn’t look like she wanted to talk, boy, and you deserve it.” Hearing those harsh words made him clench his jaws until his teeth hurt.

“I still want to talk to her.” He took a deep breath. “Could she come out, please?”

“If she hasn’t already, I doubt she will now. You’ve been standing there for an hour, go away.”
At hearing how he lost track of time, he frowned and glanced away from the painting. Even an object judged him. An enchanted object, but an object nonetheless. He needed to change his life or he would end up like his pitiful father.

“Then I will wait here.” He sat on the floor, taking a position in front of the portrait, and crossed his arms, sticking his hands in his sleeves.

“What? No, boy. You need to go to your house. You can’t stay here.”

“I will stay even if I have to sleep here. I don’t care.”

“For a bogart’s arse, you’re one stubborn Slytherin. She won’t come out.”

“Then I will stay here forever and you will have to endure my stubborn Slytherin presence.” He let out a tiny grin, a rare occurrence, and said with a steady voice, “Call her.”

She sighed. “Fine, wait here.”

“Of course.” He almost laughed at the way the painting tried to take back control of the situation by ordering him to do something he’d already expressed his intentions on doing.

He heard the muffled sound of footsteps coming in his direction.

He inhaled several times as the sounds grew closer. In the hour he waited, he’d pictured various scenarios in his mind. Using his brain brought calmness to him and calmness resulted in a level head.

The frame containing the fat lady moved to the side and Lily appeared like a portrait of Morgana. Her fiery locks were spiraling out of control, as if she was standing in a strong wind before emerging from the rooms. Her eyes were narrowed, and her arms were folded across her chest. This was it. This was his chance to explain.

“Severus. What do you want?” He opened his mouth to speak but his voice froze again. She gave him a few seconds before saying, “I’m going back to bed then.”

He found his voice when she turned to leave. “I’m sorry Lily. I came to apologise to you. I… I didn’t mean for—”

“I don’t want to hear it, Severus,” she answered as if she’d had a response prepared.

He never thought Lily could be like this. The lack of sentiment from her felt wrong. They were always close until people started to talk about him. Things changed and he wasn’t the same boy she liked anymore. If she ever truly liked him. Still, he didn’t want to leave without trying his hardest to get her friendship back.

“I’m so sorry, Lily. You know tha—”

“I should tell you where to shove your apologies, but I don’t want to be vulgar. I told you that I don’t want to hear them. I only came out because the Fat Lady told me you threatened to sleep here. We don’t want to dirty our halls.”

The slight cringe she gave after the last line, a gesture that indicated she regretted saying it, did little good to alleviate the pain it caused. Ugly, filthy, rotten, greasy, and now he was dirt. That about covered every piece of grime people called him. He’d take the abuse from everyone around him if he could erase ever hearing it from her lips. This situation should’ve made her empathetic to the way he
felt, but instead she ignored anything he’d gone through.

“I didn’t intend to call you a mudblood. I was just...” His voice broke and he lowered his head more.

“Let me guess, you let it slip?” There was no compassion in her tone. “I defended your actions for years. My friends didn’t understand why I talked to you. Tried to convince me not to, but I did anyway because I liked you.”

She did that for him? Defended him to Potter and those bastards?

“I was an idiot. I should’ve listened to them. You want to join you know who, don’t you?”

He remained quiet even though what she said wasn’t exactly the truth. He didn’t have aspirations to join the Dark Lord necessarily. All he wanted was a place to belong. A place to feel . . . valued.

“We’re no longer friends. You take your path, and I’ll take mine.”

She didn’t have to say it outright for him to know she was choosing Potter. She didn’t care about what they were losing. No. He couldn’t let this. She didn’t even take time to consider his apology or the effort it took to make it. This didn’t seem like Lily at all.

“Don’t go, please. I said I didn’t want to call you that. I was just ash--”

“You call everyone else like me that, Severus, why am I the exception?”

He loved her. That was the difference. He couldn’t treat her the same way because she was, despite all, his equal. But he wasn’t hers. The malice in her eyes revealed a truth he was too naive, too young, and too trustful to think it could ever come from her. He was nothing to her. Perhaps he never was anything except a crutch to lean on when she had no one who understood what she was. Severus Snape. Good to be around until someone better comes along.

He straightened his posture and took a deep breath. “Okay, Miss Evans.”

He turned as he heard a gasp come from her. Then he took his first step away from her.

And there in front of the Gryffindor rooms, he let her, his last friend, go.

No. He didn’t let her go.

She left.

She left just like everyone else did.

/-/-

When he reached the Slytherin common room, he threw open the passage and stomped inside, walking so fast the students moved out of his way before they were hit. His robe billowed behind him like bat wings, appearing as if they were making him move more quickly.

How could she do this? She knew where he came from. What he had to live with. She knew his father was an alcoholic muggle who forbade magic. His mother and he were subjected to his drunken insults and despicable treatment. They were nothing more than slaves to him. He spent all
the money on alcohol and didn’t care if they had money for food or clothes. With Lily, his supposed best friend, he thought he had found a place. But now…

He was hurt, he was pissed, and he wanted to kill someone.

A hand touched his shoulder and he shook it off. He twisted around to glare at the person who touched him.

“We heard what happened. That mudblood doesn’t deserve your loyalty, Severus,” Avery said. He almost snapped at him for calling her the derogatory name, but held his tongue.  He hated that word.

“She should have understood,” added Mulciber.

“We’re your true friends, Severus.” Avery’s words felt right. They were like him. They liked the Dark Arts. They helped him and thought he was important enough to one day be in the presence of the second most powerful wizard of the world.

He nodded, giving them his silent acceptance. He would become a new person. He’d become powerful and respected by all. He would never let himself be caught off guard again. Never again would Potter treat him like he was worthless. No one would.

Snivellus died that night, and Severus Snape was born.

AN: This chapter hurt to write but in the need to understand him, we need to look at his life… So we will be visiting his past for a while. If you have time, share your thoughts and hope you enjoyed this tiny step on Severus transformation to what he is.
Chapter 3: Hello Darkness, My Old Friend.

Chapter Summary

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AAN: Dates are taken from the Severus Snape timeline on The Harry Potter Lexicon.

June 1978

He looked down at the yellow parchment in his hands. This was the day his life would finally change and he’d be able to move forward, not as a student, but as an apprentice. He would work hard to achieve his dream of becoming a potions master. And he intended on becoming one of the best, if not the best, one in the wizarding world.

When graduation day was over, he’d immediately begin working under Slughorn. His ever-present frown deepened. He knew Slughorn had been disappointed that it was he that wanted the position rather than Lily, but she had other plans for her life with the disgusting Potter. Or that’s what it looked like when he saw their abominable displays of affection.

He shook his head of the images and refused to let them ruin his mood. For the first time in a while, he was actually happy. Granted, he hadn’t been completely miserable since their friendship ended, but that was mainly due to throwing himself into his studying. During that time he’d learned more about the dark arts and invented new spells and potions. The memory of betrayal would occasionally rear its ugly head, but it didn’t have the sharpness that it once had.

He’d even tried to hate her, and almost succeeded thanks to her association with Potter. Instead,
he’d chosen to block her out. He knew how to avoid the places he’d known they’d be and sat nearer to the door at the Slytherin table rather than near the front.

He wasn’t foolish enough to deny that he still had feelings for her, but he’d gotten used to them. They were like an ache that showed up periodically but disappeared as quickly as they came.

When he reached his room, he gently folded the parchment and set it on the table beside his bed. He exhaled, removed his robes, and tossed them on his bed. He opened his trunk and searched amongst what little belongings he had. Finally, he grabbed a faded dark green robe and put it on.

He was showing Slytherin colours and he was proud of it. He went into the common room. It looked different from the last time he’d walked through it. Serpents twined around the black stone columns, but they looked as if someone polished them to make them shine. It was a simple detail he caught with no effort. He would make a good spy.

My name’s Snape. Severus Snape. He almost laughed at the thought.

His frown formed into a smirk. It was time.

His companions arrived a few minutes later and congratulated each other. Today was the most important day of his life so far.

-/-/

The group walked silently, crossing the dungeons and the halls until they reached the Great Hall. The place was filled with flashing lights, a cacophony of noises, and the mixing of familiar scents. Turkey, pork, chicken, and a few foods he’d never tried until he came to Hogwarts. It was one of two things he would miss. That and learning about magic.

The room was decorated in colours from all the houses, green, yellow, red, and blue. The four long tables were filled with the different kinds of dishes and drinks. Today was a day to celebrate and even the rest of the students who weren’t going to graduate felt joy. It was clear because of their childish attitude. They drank without control, toasting, shouting and picking on each other with strange pranks he would never understand.

He sat next to his classmates and soon, his non blood family. Soon the conversations had dulled to a pleasant hum and people focused more on eating and conversing with the person next to them.

In between some bites, the light disappeared from his eyes as a small figure in the distance crossed the horizon. The flying shadow started to grow and the elegant movements approached the window. It was definitely an owl. The bird swooped into the hall, paying little heed to the way the windows were shaped, yet easily avoiding a crash. It was alone. The only owl of the night so far.

His throat constricted when it flew to him. No one ever wrote to him.

The owl made a proud sound as it landed at his side. The little bird jumped with a funny movement and looked at him with its big eyes, waiting for him to grab the message attached to its leg.

He withheld the urge to rush, he didn’t want to look pathetic or betray any other emotion, even though he was excited. He removed the message and gave the bird a piece of meat. The bird flapped
its brown wings and flew away, not caring if he had a response. His companions glanced at him but didn’t bother to say anything about the letter he received.

Severus let his eyes wander around the envelope. White, plain, like a normal letter should be. He slowly lifted the seal on and removed the letter. He unfolded it and began to read.

The contents paralysed his breath.

Part of him couldn’t believe what he read, but the other part had known it would happen someday. His mother was dead. His bastard father killed her during one of his stupid drunken tirades.

He squeezed the paper so tightly it crinkled in his hand. How dare that muggle do that to his mother?

And he’d only be in jail for what? Twenty years? That was nothing in exchange for a witch’s life.

“Hey, Snivellus, why aren’t you eating anymore? Did you finally choke on your own smell?” He regretted that there wasn’t a seat further away from the source of his mockery. He looked at Potter and stared until the man shifted uncomfortably under his stare.

“Mind your own business you overrated git.” His voice was in such a low growl that Potter’s eyes widened.

Then he rose from his chair with a slow elegancy that not even the most refined professor could muster.

He looked at the mutt and then at Lily, who was beside Potter. Her face was no longer stern. In fact, she looked concerned.

He wanted to make them all suffer…

He had endured enough. He moved his wand, which was still under his sleeve, showing new agility he’d never used before, and cursed the dog with a silent spell. He bowed to his house companions and walked out of the hall with the letter still in his hand.

When he stepped just outside the door, he heard retching and yells of disgust as Sirius Black regurgitated slugs from his mouth. At the same time his toenails grew outside his shoes. He contained his laugh as he walked the corridors, but he couldn’t hold back the smirk on his lips.

“Severus! Wait!” He froze. His rational mind was not pleased with the power she had over him. He didn’t turn to look at her. She moved in front of him so he’d have to.

“What do you want? Are you going to blame me again? I’m a potion’s apprentice now, not a scapegoat. Find someone else.”

“No, I’m not here for that. I… We haven’t talked for the past two years.”

Severus often found himself speechless around her, but now it wasn’t out of regret or fear, but confoundedness. How did she have the nerve to…? “And whose fault was that? You told me we weren’t friends. You said we’d go our own paths. That’s what I did.” She knew where he liked to be. If she’d wanted a friendship again, she could’ve initiated it. “You can’t have things your way only when it’s convenient for you, Evans.”

He got a slight satisfaction at seeing her cringe. “Sever-”
“It’s Apprentice Snape, and excuse me, I need to be going.” He tried to walk away but the woman dared to grab his arm.

“Please don’t join them. You could come with us.”

He yanked his arm away from her so quickly she stumbled. “And do what? Play servant to your precious Potter? You may fall on your knees before him, but I refuse. Do not for a moment make our distance my fault. It was your decision.”

“Severus, I wasn’t-”

“I’m sick of all your games. Whatever it is you want, you won’t get it from me. ”

“I don't want anything except for you not to ruin your life. Don’t make the mistake of joining them.”

“I’ll be recognized for who I am and the work I do. Respected and no longer the dirt under anyone’s shoe, especially your Potter’s. If that’s a mistake, then I’m gladly making it.”

“B-but…” She sighed.

He studied her. She was once his dear friend, and then she became the woman he loved unrequitedly. He couldn’t bear to be around her. He had his own path to follow and it was unlikely it would ever cross hers again. Her and her future family would never have to put up with the burden of Severus Snape. And eventually, she would fade from his memory. With hard work and study, he could push her into the part of the brain where hazy memories and foolishness resided. He knew he could do that someday because since her self-imposed distance with him, he’d grown proud of his accomplishments and relished in the company of his new companions.

“Go away, stupid Gryffindor.” It was better if she thought he hated her. His feelings were a contradiction. He hated parts of her, yet he also had a hopeless desire to be able to share a life with her. But she didn’t love him. He would not try to convince her she should, and he wouldn’t try to force her into it.

He resumed his walking and turned the corner. He stopped and rested his back against the stone wall.

“He doesn’t want to talk to me, James.” He closed his eyes for a moment, relishing in the pain he had inflicted on her. He wanted her to feel the way he felt the night she left him standing outside the Gryffindor rooms.

“He was always dark,” James said.

Potter was lying. He hadn’t gotten even close to being “dark” until he realized if he weren’t he’d always be nothing more than a pawn for people like Potter. When he met Lily, he’d had hope of becoming better despite his father trying every way in the world to bring him down. Then Potter fostered darkness in him, gave him reasons to hate, and Lily finished the job by rejecting his friendship over a word slipping out during a stressful time.

“That’s not true,” she said, catching him off guard. “He was good. He still is and I can see that. He just needs—”

“He loves you.”

His eyes narrowed and he glared at the wall in front of him as if he could melt it away. Damn
him. First he humiliated him for years and now he spilled his deepest secret.

He wished nothing but agony for them.

He pushed away from the wall. With a blackening heart, he disappeared into the darkness that was now his home.

AN: Here we are. Another step has been made that turns Severus towards the Darkness. If you have time, leave your thoughts around, I would be happy to heard them! Till next week.
They didn’t leave for Hogsmeade until the other Hogwarts students had boarded the train and the night had fallen. None of them spoke as they made their journey, the only noise breaking the silence and announcing their approach were the leaves and branches crunching and cracking underneath their feet.

Tonight, his life would change along with his friends, Avery, Mulciber, Rosier, and Wilkes. They were going to join an elite group. Even though he was a Halfblood, he had the honor of catching the group’s attention. He tucked his hands in his sleeves and wiped his sweaty palms on the fabric. He had to make himself relax. He refused to show weakness in front of these people. If he did, he could be disposable. He knew what the Dark Lord did, but if he gave him free reign to live and accomplish his desires, then he’d do whatever ordered.

“There he is,” Avery said with a low voice. Severus looked ahead. In the distance, near a large house, they saw a man with long blond hair. He stood straight, chin held high, and was clothed in black. In his hands he held a cane with a silver serpent top. As they approached the man, he saw it was Lucius Malfoy, their old prefect for Slytherin.

When they arrived, Lucius greeted them with a sly smile, and then with a fast movement, raised his cane to them. It was either an invitation to touch it or a warning not to come closer. Severus decided to let the others act first.

Each took a step forward and touched the cane. Malfoy pulled out an old silver watch and
looked at it as if he were bored.

“Aren’t you coming, Severus?” he said. “You-know-who is expecting you as well, my friend. No need to be cautious.”

He grunted at his words, extended his arm, and touched the cold metal with two fingers. His other hand was hidden inside his robes, clutching his ebony wand because he wouldn’t have time to prepare if he needed to protect himself. Not that he’d have much of a chance against the Dark Lord or the Death Eaters if they decided he was unworthy.

Their bodies twisted into amorphous masses of flesh and bone for a few seconds until they once again returned to their normal forms. As soon as he recovered his eyesight, Severus looked around.

They’d apparated inside a large hall illuminated with multiple yellow candles. Several pictures of monsters known for their bloodlust hung on the wall. There was a green rug on the floor with a Slytherin symbol, which was an indication that this was the house of a pureblood. The only furniture was four chairs in each corner of the room, as if this room served a specific purpose.

Chills went down his spine as he felt a presence at his back. He almost ran but locked his knees and forced himself to remain stationary.

“Ah, Malfoy, these are the ones?” The snake-like voice was so cold it could freeze a lake if the owner wanted it to. With his head raised and his posture like that of a soldier, he turned to look at the man he was expecting to meet, the Dark Lord. A powerful wizard second only to Dumbledore.

“Indeed they are, my lord,” replied Lucius in the most submissive tone he’d ever heard. He’d never seen Lucius lower himself in front of others.

His companions followed Lucius’ gesture of respect; he followed suit. He felt the Dark Lord’s presence getting closer and maintained the pose.

_Do not show your emotions. Do not show your emotions._

“They are promising, Lucius, just as you said they were.” Every word the Dark Lord spoke sent a new jolt through him. “Stand up, young men. You are here to become a part of our distinguished group that will one day rule this world and rid it of those filthy mudbloods and muggles.”

Thrill shot through him at having yet another goal to work toward. He could get rid of muggles like his father.

“But, I understand that we don’t have all purebloods here tonight, is that right, Lucius?”

Severus stiffened. The Dark Lord’s goal was to get rid of muggles. Why would he accept a half-blood in his circle? Why had he been so stupid not to think of that?

“Indeed, my lord.” Lucius approached him. “This is Severus Snape and I speak in his favor. He is skilled in potions and—” The Dark lord raised his hand, cutting off his words. He smiled and moved to stand in front of him.

His eyes, which had a mild tone of red, looked fascinated. He wondered what deeds the Dark Lord had done to get that shade of colour.

“Let him speak for himself, Lucius.”
“It’s an honour, my lord.” Now it was the time to show who he was. “Lucius is right. I have a
talent in potions, and I have been admitted to become an apprentice under Slughorn. I estimate that I
will be a Master in a year. I also have an affinity to the Dark Arts. I love to study and create my own
spells, my Lord.” When he stopped speaking the Dark Lord appeared even more pleased.

“Your skills could be useful indeed, but you are not a pureblood.”

“I am not, my lord. My father is a disgrace. His muggle ways corrupted my mother’s
pureblood. He didn’t allow either of us to use magic in the house. I discovered that he killed her, and
I wish to make him suffer. Muggle justice will not do that. Their ways are… infuriating.” It was the
first time Severus felt comfortable enough to voice his rage.

The Dark Lord moved around him, studying him as if he were the most captivating thing he’d
ever laid eyes on.

“And how do you wish to serve me, Severus? What do you want to achieve by being at my
side? Do you think you are enough?” The Dark Lord’s voice was cautious but curious.

He didn’t think he was enough now, but he could be. “I want to develop my knowledge on
Dark Arts. I want to use my skills for you, but I might not be a man suitable for the front lines. But I
thrive in the shadows. There, I can serve you greatly. I am subtle and patient, my lord.”

“And what do you wish to achieve?”

“Respect and knowledge,” Severus answered without a tinge of doubt in his voice. He even
stared at the Dark Lord's eyes. They were fierce, but Severus could distinguish a trace of pride in
their depths as well.

The Dark Lord resumed his slow circle around them and proceeded to question the rest of the
group.

Severus studied the situation in silence. As a Halfblood he knew the chances to stand out were
at a minimum, but under this man he could learn things no one else would teach.

The Dark Lord stopped in front of them and pressed his palms against each other as if he was
going to pray.

He wanted to be part of this selected group. He wanted to be important. He wanted to feel like
he had a place in this disgusting life. He needed this. This was his opportunity.

The Dark Lord smiled.

“Gentlemen,” he said. “Lucius spoke about you with honor and care, and I find that his words
are true. You will be the next generation and will join my ranks to create a new world. Under my
command, all of you will find greatness, power, and more knowledge than you could ever dream.”
He glanced at Severus. “And that respect you seek,” he said as if only addressing Severus with that
last statement. “If you wish to join me now, this is the time. Step forward or leave. This will be your
only opportunity, so you must choose carefully.”

Severus was the first to make that decision. He didn’t care if he had to sell his soul. It was
already damned. His heart was destroyed, and he only had this dream left. He stepped forward. He
didn’t notice how his companions followed him.

“Perfect,” the Dark Lord said and removed his wand from its place inside his robes.
“Lucius, come next to me.”

The blond man did as instructed and extended his arm, revealing a black mark. It was a skull with a serpent twined around it. The serpent’s body went through the skull’s mouth. The serpent’s mouth was open, revealing its fangs.

It was terrifying and alluring at the same time. The Dark Lord pointed his wand at the mark and after murmuring some illegible words, it acquired life of its own. The serpent closed its mouth and slithered around Lucius’ arm, not yet emerging from its place in his skin. Lucius’ body was tense and his arm shook, the motion so slight that someone who didn’t know him that well wouldn’t notice. The serpent stopped, its eyes focusing on him.

The serpent lunged forward, blood erupting from the wound and staining Lucius’ skin. The reptile’s body grew, and his mouth opened, fangs glistening as dark venom dropped from them.

His fangs sank into Severus’s arm. His blood started to burn and sweat developed on his forehead. He bit his tongue to keep from screaming. His arm felt as if led was weighing it down. He fell to his knees, cringing when they made impact with the floor.

The snake broke its bite and retreated, probably so he could bite the others. Then he heard their screams.

He looked down at his arm as his veins swelled and turned black. The black tendrils of the poison joined together, forming an undistinguishable mass until it started to reveal itself as the mark he saw on Lucius arm. A tattoo that made him the Dark Lords servant.

The pain started to fade but he still felt his fingers twitching and the new addition to his skin pulsing. He stood on shaky legs and glanced around him. He was the first to stand, proving his strength. He was determined not to falter even though his body wanted nothing more than to collapse. He felt the Dark Lord’s eyes on him and his grip on his arm strengthened.

“You know, Severus, I think I have a job for you.”

“What do you desire, my lord?” he replied.

The dangerous wizard extended his arm, inviting him to come forward. Severus took a deep breath and managed to take some steps towards him.

“Lucius told me you have some fine skills apart from potion making, ones like Legilimency.” Severus pursed his lips, thinking carefully about his answer. He knew more than that. He knew how to protect himself against that kind of spell. He could use it to take advantage of other’s minds and much more. For some reason deep down, he knew he needed to be cautious in revealing all his skills.

“I have them, but I don’t use them much, my lord. As you know, they are not allowed in public and much less as an apprentice in Hogwarts.”

“Ah, but you won’t be an apprentice forever, Severus. Someday you will have a position of importance there, and you could be my useful spy.”

Severus digested his words as his mind raced with the idea. A spy? Under the nose of the greatest wizard of the world? That was indeed an ambitious but dangerous position.

“You will learn here with us. You will perfect your skills like you did this year, but for now you can go.” It appeared this position was not negotiable. “Go, Severus, do your apprenticeship. Become a Potion Master as you desired. Become useful to me and then, while you are there...
achieving your dreams, act normally. Get Dumbledore to trust you, and I will trust you with what you have given to me.”

AN: I confess that I loved writing this chapter too much. I ran wild with the creation of the Dark Marks. I wanted to be different so… well this is the result. Let me know what you think about the chapter, and until next week!
Chapter 5: A Place to Belong

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 5: A Place to Belong

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

Note: Took liberty with when Snape heard the prophecy. Several timelines say it could possibly be in late 1979, but a date in early 1980 or spring 1980 is more likely. So I picked Feb 1980 after looking at weather averages for England and Scotland.

February 1980

Several years’ worth of dust covered filled bookshelves in his childhood house, Spinner’s End. The place was dark, filthy, wet and half rotten. It was a small house in a poor neighborhood, but it was his now that his father was gone. There were too many unpleasant memories there for him to be able to call it a home. In every section of the squarish house, he had a memory to loathe. His father drunk on the sofa, his mother bleeding in the kitchen, his father attempting to drown him when he was in the bath.

He spent two years perfecting the skills he’d need for his future, but now he had nowhere to go, to call home.

His body fell into a chair behind him. Even after all of his efforts, he’d achieved nothing. He served the Dark Lord, but he was still a low rank Death Eater. He spied in all the years of his apprenticeship and now that he was a Master of Potions himself—after only a year and a month—he felt useless and discarded. He was still labeled as a Half Blood, and because that, he was more
disposable than the others.

His face relaxed, his scowl disappeared, and he lowered his eyes to look at the object he held between his fingers. He caressed it and felt a mild ache in his heart. She could have been with him. Now, she was Potter’s and was going to have a child with him. She even dared to invite him to her wedding to that bastard. His stomach turned, and he closed his hand, hiding the silver ring. It was the only remnant he had from his Pureblood line. His mother’s family ring.

It was tempting to follow in his muggle father’s habits, but he wouldn’t lower himself to the level of a despicable alcoholic. Instead of dwelling in self-pity and jealousy like that bastard, he would get himself out of it. To do that he needed to secure a position in Hogwarts.

He wanted to remodel the house so he would have a place to get away at times, but funds didn’t permit it. The only money he had was what his mother left in Gringots, and he preferred to leave that for food. He used magic to fix the putrid floors and the cracking walls, but he couldn’t create miracles.

The glass in the window nearest to him began to vibrate. His gaze darted to it but he showed no outer signs that he was adversely affected. His spy training taught him to hide every trace of emotion. Fortunately, the cause of the vibrations was a ball of feathers looking at him with impatient eyes. He picked up his wand and with a wave, the window swooshed open, letting the animal inside. Severus untied the paper and opened it, ignoring the fat bird pecking around his dirty furniture. It couldn’t make it look any worse.

“I Albus Dumbledore, accept the request for a job interview with Severus Snape.

Present yourself tomorrow, in room 8 at the Hog’s Head at 18:00.

Sincerely,

Albus Dumbledore

Headmaster of Hogwarts, School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. ”

Severus’ emotions came to the surface as his brain processed the words. His mouth dropped open and his eyes scanned the letter repeatedly to make sure he read it correctly. The old wizard had finally noticed his applications? He turned the paper to see if there were further instructions or someone playing a joke, but he found nothing. Also the wax seal of the school at the end of the letter was real. He looked at the fat bird, which stared back at him, and noted that its eyes held an odd, amused twinkle.

He waved the bird off with his hand. Should he reply? No, the letter itself was more like a summons than anything he could refuse. He would be an idiot if he did. This was what he was waiting for. It was a place to grow his influence and seek information without suspicion. If he were accepted as a teacher of Defense Against Dark Arts, he would be more useful to the Dark Lord, and he’d be doing something he enjoyed.

“Thank you, owl. I suppose I don’t need to reply.” The owl extended its wings, and left, returning him back to his solitude.
He allowed a small smile to push onto his lips. If accepted, he wouldn’t have to come back to this pitiful place, and he could gain better information for the Dark Lord. He had wanted more promising news or information from his stay as an apprentice at Hogwarts, but he never found anything that pleased him enough.

He was punished for his failure, not severely but enough to have the feeling engraved in his brain. He wanted to please him now. He wanted to prove he could be better than everyone else and was deserving of an important position inside the Dark Lord’s circle.

-/-/-

His coat fought valiantly against the wind coming towards him but he still had to withhold a shiver. He had forgotten that the little village of Hogsmeade could become so windy and cold, but he didn’t mind the weather. Summer was hell for him due to the way he dressed so this was a welcome relief. If it weren’t for his nerves he might dare say he was comfortable.

People in light robes were laughing around the street. Some were talking about sunbathing, a muggle absurdity he never understood. What was the point of getting a tad darker if it was going to fade?

He continued his path until he spotted the wooden sign with a Hog’s head painted on it. His breath quickened with his steps. Merlin, his feelings were uncontrollable. There were still some situations that, no matter how skilled he was at Occlumency, managed to trigger an uncontrollable wave of emotions.

When he was in front of the small, dirty structure, he peeked in the windows. There were not many customers inside. He closed his eyes for a moment, breathing in and out. He needed to get that job. He needed to impress Dumbledore. The man that thought he was a lost cause because of his love for the Dark Arts.

But now he had the ability to change that.

He managed to enter without incident, and as he expected, he received glances from the drunken customers. He ignored them and went straight to the barman. They should clean this place more often, but it would probably be futile since people were always stomping in and out of here from the street.

“What do you want, young man?” asked a man cleaning a round table. His face was pale, his eyes resembled the greyish blue sky outside, and his mouth, hidden under a small mass of white and grey hair, was formed into a frown that seemed stuck that way.

“I have an appointment in room eight,” he replied.

“Oh, yes, with Mister Albus Dumbledore. He is interviewing a woman right now and using my tavern for his own needs and wants...” The anger of the man against Dumbledore made him wary for a moment. “You will have to wait. Those are the rules.”

When the man left, he narrowed his eyes. He despised that kind of man. Unfortunately, he was surrounded by them. He looked around and found a chair to sit on. He folded his hands and rested them atop his crossed legs. Waiting was an art that required patience but this time he was concerned.
What if that woman applied for the same job? What if he lost his opportunity before even entering that room?

He shouldn’t be insecure. He was not a child anymore. He was skilled, he was a master, he was intelligent and Dumbledore knew him. He knew how good he was and… He clenched his jaw. He was a Death Eater for Merlin’s sake! This was absurd. He shouldn’t feel like he was waiting for a punishment at school rather than attending a job interview.

He stood up and looked around until he spotted the stairs. With a subtle movement, he walked around the tables, avoiding the bartender’s presence. Fortunately, he wasn’t in sight. He touched the dirty railing, cringing at the grime that came off onto his fingertips, and climbed the stairs as silently as he could.

When he reached the second floor, his eyes searched the area. It was a corridor similar to a cheap muggle hotel. There were doors on each side of the hallway. Now he just needed to find the right one. With soft steps he counted the numbers mentally and stopped at room eight. He stepped closer to the door and listened.

Silence.

Did the bartender lie to him? Was he that easy to fool? He was about to storm away when a cry broke his thoughts and replaced them with doubt. What was happening? A cry came from that room.

"The one who has a power to destroy the Dark Lord will come forth soon…” His heartbeat increased. “Brought into existence by ones who have challenged and withstood him the destroyer will be born as month seven fades…” The woman voice was hollow, as if it weren’t her speaking but rather a demon that had taken over her body. He waited for her to say more. He knew exactly what the woman in that room was doing. He moved his head closer to the door and licked his lips.

“Sybill?” He heard Dumbledore’s confused voice, but that didn’t matter now. What he was hearing was the key to attaining a spot within the Dark Lord’s inner circle.

Something hit his shoulder hard; he lost his footing and was thrown backwards. When he raised his head his eyes saw the barman.

“What are you doing here? Get out. I don’t take kindly to rule breakers, young man.”

He didn’t respond. If what he heard was correct, he needed to go tell the Dark Lord.

“Don’t dare come back here.”

Severus glared at the man and withheld the urge to yell back at him. He turned, stormed down the stairs, and out of the dirty building. He might have lost the chance to get a job at Hogwarts, but he managed to discover something that could please the Dark Lord.

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AN: So here we are. I'm starting to twist a little the storyline to make it sense regarding the things that Severus will do. Yes, it still follows the basic plot of the books but, I will add some changes ^^. Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this part and leave me your thoughts if you can. Till next week!
Chapter 6: The Catalyst

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 6: The Catalyst

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

Note: The timeline does not fit exactly as it would in the books. This is deliberate. It’s around the same year, but not the same month.

A wave of heat hit his face but he paid it no attention. He walked so fast his legs ached, and he had to be careful not to stumble as he put less attention to the way he walked and more attention into seeking an uncrowded place. He needed to disappear before Dumbledore noticed and caught him. He knew he was a Death Eater, yet he still called him for a job interview. But he couldn’t worry about that right now.

He avoided the people and the children traveling up and down the streets until he found a small alley. When he was covered in shadows, he raised his wand and disappeared from Hogsmeade. When he felt the symptoms of apparating receding, he opened his eyes. He could vaguely make out the structures around him due to the heavy fog, but he knew where he needed to go.

The sound of his feet stepping in mud accompanied his steps until made his way onto the pavement and then upon a stone step. He raised his arm with haste, and knocked a couple of times on a large door. His heart hammered against his chest and he tried to calm his breathing before the door opened.

“Who is it?” a dry voice said. He was relieved that it was his friend guarding the Riddle’s
“It’s Severus, Lucius. It’s an emergency. I seek an audience now."

“You know that’s impudent for you, Severus. Why do you need an audience with the Dark Lord?” he asked when he closed the door behind him. “Also, show me your mark. You know the rules.”

“Damn, I don’t have time, this is urgent.” He pulled up his sleeve ripping it in his haste. His eyes locked with Lucius suspicious ones and remained there until he pressed his wand on the mark. When it reacted with a reddish glow, the man put away his wand and smirked.

“You really need to buy some new clothes, Severus.”

He shoved his arm out of Lucius’ hold and resumed his path, trying to enter into the depths of the mansion.

“Don’t stop me this time, Lucius. My audience with him doesn’t concern a potion project to raise his powers,” he said before the blond man could question his insolence.

When he reached the door to the room that housed the Lord and his inner circle, he didn’t hesitate. He pushed the doors open and never stopped walking. His eyes remained on his Lord as he entered. He didn’t falter. Not even when he heard the other Death Eaters’ gasps and condemnations. Right now, he was the king of the place. He was important because of the information he held.

His legs stopped when he reached the Dark Lord’s throne. He kneeled, showing that even entering with power, he was a loyal, submissive servant.

“I-I’m sorry, my lord. He didn’t wait for me to—” Malfoy started to say.

“Severus, what issues bring you here? You interrupted a reunion and you know that this isn’t your place, yet.” The s in each word came out in a hiss that was similar to the way he talked to serpents, a discipline that only few people in the line of Salazar Slytherin possessed.

“I apologize for my behavior, my lord, but my intrusion is necessary. If you seek to punish me later, I will offer no resistance.”

“No! I will punish you now. You don’t have the right to be here stupid half blood.” A woman’s outrageous cry filled the room, and Severus fixed his eyes on her. She had her wand ready to curse him.

“Stop it, Bella. I know Severus would never defy me in this way unless it was of extreme importance.” Severus eyes went back to him. “Speak.”

After taking a moment to calm the rage the woman had caused within him, he parted his lips cautiously.

“As you know, I was seeking a place at Hogwarts so I could better serve you. I had an interview today. When I was in the place to meet Albus Dumbledore, a prophecy was made and it is related to you, my lord.” He heard some feigned gasps and incredulous snorts. He didn’t care about them. His lord had his attention fixed on him. His eyes were open and his face was perplexed.

“And what kind of prophecy was it, Severus?”

“One I fear you must see for yourself or it will be hard to believe.” Severus replied as he felt all
eyes on him. Those leeches wanted his glory. He was the spy. This was his information and he would be the one to deliver it and reap its benefits.

“Show me, Severus.” The Dark Lord rose from his throne and looked at him. He knew what was coming and prepared the images in his mind for him to see. The Dark Lord raised his wand and pointed it at his face. “Legimens.”

A harsh pulsation attacked his brain, and he let the Dark Lord in. Even being allowed, the power he possessed felt as if it were tearing his brain apart. His jaw tensed, but he refused to cry out. As the Dark Lord looked at images of his time at Hogsmeade, his power and anger grew in an instant. The Dark Lord reviewed the images more than once, torturing him in the process with his magic and emotions.

His body slammed into the stone floor. His head throbbed, his face was numb, and he tasted blood in his mouth. He almost smiled at the palatable fear that filled the room.

“How is that possible?” he shouted. “But it’s true that Dumbledore was there! This is no laughing matter. It is truth.”

“M-My Lord. What it is?” he heard Bellatrix ask.

Merlin, how he was enjoying this. He put his arm on the cold floor and managed to push his body back up into his kneeling position. The blood flowed to his lips, staining them red.

“This cannot be! I am the most powerful wizard! No one can beat me!” The Dark Lord ignored the woman and continued raging. “Malfoy!” The blond man stepped forward, stumbling slightly. Severus looked at his friend, and Lucius gave him a confused look.

“What do you need, my lord?”

“I need to know which children will be born at the end of July or an estimate around that time.”

“It will be done. C-can I ask why, my lord?” Lucius said as he bowed deeply and moved his hand to order the task to others in the background. Two death eaters left the room.

“Severus got important information. Someone who is merely a baby now will have the strength to vanquish my power and end my reign!” The Dark Lord pointed at Severus and inhaled. “Your brother did me a great service. Now I can be prepared and exterminate the threat to us before it becomes problematic. I am proud you are one of us, Severus.”

Though his pain made it less enjoyable, for the first time in decades, he felt satisfied and proud of himself. Now he was useful and earned the right to be respected. He was important and had a place to belong.

“Thank you, my lord. My wish is to serve.”

“Come with me, Severus. I want to talk privately with you.”

The Dark Lord’s arm extended, inviting him as if he was the most privileged and important man in the room. With a bow of courtesy, Severus followed his silent steps to the oak door that led to the private room.

The room was dim with only the fire in the fireplace illuminating it. There was a polished desk and a fine armchair made of leather where the Dark Lord sat. The semi-human entwined his fingers
and his posture relaxed the most Severus had ever seen it do.

He also found himself more at ease in the room. He could breathe better here since there was no one there seeking to backstab him.

“This won you my favor, Severus. Be sure of it.” The Dark Lord told him after a long silence. “I know you wanted this, but you needed to prove yourself for me and the others. You are so like me that I was waiting for this moment. I’m proud of you, my friend.”

“Despite the circumstances that made me reach your favor, I have to say thank you, my lord.”

“The prophecy was incomplete, right, Severus?”

“I fear so, my lord. I was caught before hearing it all. I am sorry.”

“You gave me a value advantage here. We will kill this obstacle and the problem will be solved.” The man rose from the chair. “I want you to continue as a spy, and if you get in Hogwarts, stay there. Any information I get regarding the situation and Albus Dumbledore is appreciated.”

“As you desire, my lord,” Severus replied. He was unsure if Dumbledore would request his presence again. He probably already knew that he heard the prophecy.

“For now, I want you in a safe position. You could insinuate yourself in his circle and learn more about this prophecy if it’s needed.” Severus nodded and a soft knock reached their ears. “Enter!”

He stepped to a side when he felt the door opening and the force of the Dark Lord’s anger.

“My lord, we have news.” Avery said at his back, his words almost muffled by his quick breath.

“Speak.”

“We found two families that fight against you that will have boys born at the end of July. One from the Longbottom family and the other from the Potters.”

Severus legs shook and his eyes opened slightly wider than usual but not enough for anyone to notice anything odd. That couldn’t be. He dared to look at the Dark Lord as he felt his chest tighten.

“Longbottom is pureblood. But the Potter’s . . . Severus, the mother is a mudblood, right?”

His lips parted and his hands threatened to shake. Lily...Lily’s kid…

“Y-yes my lord.” No. This couldn’t be happening.

“We found our target. Avery, inform the rest and start gathering information on the Potter’s whereabouts.” The man bowed and exited the room, leaving him and the Dark Lord. He wanted to escape right now before he fainted. “It must be him, Severus. He is like us, like me, a Half blood. If anyone has the power to do that, it must be someone like me.”

Severus’s stomach lurched. Sweat concentrated on the back of his neck, making his hair stick to the skin there. Lily . . . If he marked the Potter’s kid as his enemy Lily was in danger. And because of him. He needed to...he couldn’t...do something.

“M-my lord...are you sure?”

“You doubt my reasoning, Severus?” the Dark Lord said menacingly.
“It’s not that…I” His voice failed. His defenses were falling and crumbling. This wasn’t good for him and Lily was going to die. He knew the Dark Lord couldn’t be stopped. He was too powerful. “The woman…the mother. I…” He fell to his knees. “Please, my lord, is there a way to spare her life?” He finally asked, knowing that the man he had in front of him never did favors for people. After what he did, asking and risking his life for her was worth it.

“She was your toy?”

He felt a shiver mapping his back. He couldn’t tell him he was in love with a mudblood. It would be his death. He took a deep breath and tried to remain calm but he knew that the Dark Lord could smell his fear.

“I-I know she is not a pure witch but she was special, and I liked to torment her husband.”

Merlin, if the Dark Lord used legilimency now…

“I see…I understand. The guilty pleasure of the forbidden.” The Dark Lord smiled warmly to him and his lips parted. “Don’t be afraid, Severus. Many of your brothers are guilty of the same mistakes, but you know I must kill the child.”

“Of course, my lord. I would never assume otherwise,” he replied fast and with no fear for the first time. “I just wanted to know if your eminency could spare the mother. I know it’s an egoist plea, my lord, but she is the only one I’ve ever felt . . . desire for.”

The Dark Lord was surely enjoying this. He had a curved smile and eyed him with interest.

“If the mother doesn’t get in my way, I have no reason to kill her. She is a mudblood of course and only for that she should die, but sparing her is a simple reward for your good services,” he finally said after more moments of torturing silence.

Severus took a deep breath and moved into a deep bow. He couldn’t believe that the Dark Lord accepted his request. He never did that with other Death Eaters.

“That’s the only thing I could ask, my lord.”

“Then don’t worry, Severus, you will have your toy back. Now, please leave. I need to prepare this attack with the utmost care. I know the woman won’t be a problem since she is a mudblood, but her being a part of that damnable Order of Phoenix will complicate things.”

“You can count on us, my lord.” He stood but his head was still bowed. The tenseness in his body was dissipating since his lord promised to spare the life of the woman he loved. He looked one last time at the wizard before he left the room.

Minutes later he was outside and at a place where he could control his mind and emotions once again. A place he could let them show without fear.

It was only when he reached his dirty home that he let his body collapse. His barrier, the perfect mask of composure fell, and his body shook as if he were in the middle of winter with no protection from the cold. His throat was tight and burned. Hot tears fell from his eyes. He bit his lip, tasting the blood already there and creating new blood with his own teeth. He’d been happy that she’d been spared, but the more he thought about it, the more he realized the request had been futile. Not because he thought the Dark Lord wouldn’t keep his word, but because Lily would not let him.
AN: And his doom begins along with another change of his life and mind. I have to say that I did this immediately after Severus heard the prophecy because, why would he wait? He has juicy information for his master and he is desperate to connect with something. To find his place. So it made sense to me to be this way. Anyway, let me know what you think on this chapter, and see you in two weeks!

PS: I'm going to start posting both versions on Saturday :*
Chapter 7 A New Purpose

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 7: A New Purpose

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

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Note: This does not follow the book timeline exactly I changed the order for the sake of my fiction. Just wanted to let you know just in case confusion occurred. In this fic, Potter is not born at the time Snape goes to Dumbledore for help.

May 1980 (Please read above note)

He paced back and forth, waiting for some news. Each day that passed wound his nerves even more than the previous day, and they were going to kill him at this rate. He’d always considered himself a master in hiding his feelings, yet they were ready to spring forth and ruined all he had done so far. The scary part was that he wasn’t sure if he cared.

Several months had passed since he’d heard the prophecy and revealed it to the Dark Lord. In that time he’d been jumpy, had nightmares, and got sick often. Though he’d been promised that Lily would be his price and safe, he knew that it wasn’t going to work. Not only because of Lily’s personality but because the Dark Lord was becoming frustrated, angry and more dangerous and careless with his wand. He didn’t care who died as long as he lived. The promise that the lord made to him was meaningless.

And because of this, because he betrayed her, and because he knew deep down he was on the
wrong side, he was going to commit an action that he considered mad but necessary. An action he’d been contemplating since he revealed the prophecy.

He was going to betray the Dark Lord for her.

Severus took a deep breath. With a soft movement, he waved his wand and disappeared. He needed to be sure no one tracked him. Thankfully, he was still in the Dark Lord’s good favour so he wasn’t suspicious.

Merlin, he should’ve died already, or better yet, should’ve followed Lily’s advice two years ago before he graduated.

The environment changed and the forest now surrounded him. He knew he was detected already; he would be a fool if he didn’t know, so he put away his wand and waited. He forced his posture to remain upright; he locked his knees to prevent their trembling. He exposed himself deliberately to the danger.

The trees moved calmly and he dared to enjoy the view he had for the last time. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, taking in the smell of grass. He listened and picked up the sound of the flow of waters in the brooks. Hogwarts never changed. It had been the only home he truly ever knew, and he hadn’t realized how much he missed it until he stood there.

His eyes shot open when he sensed a presence. A white flash crossed his side and his wand flew away from his cloak and into the darkness. Fear came back to his senses. He turned and saw Dumbledore pointing his wand at him.

Severus hadn’t expected a welcome, but he hadn’t thought the beginning of the meeting would go like this. Now, he was powerless and he only could kneel in front of him and surrender.

“D-don’t kill me, please. I mean no harm.” He raised his hands in a gesture of peace.

“I have no intention of killing you, Severus.” The wand stayed pointed at him nonetheless. “So, do you bear a message from your master, or are you here on your own?” He noted a tone of skepticism in the last bit of his question.

He wiped his palms on the inside of his sleeves.

“I am here on my own volition. This has nothing to do with a request from him.” He let his emotions break through his barrier a bit. “I came here to warn yo—No, that’s not true. I came here to ask something of you. Please, just hear me out. Then whatever you want to do to me, I’ll let you.”

“I’m not cruel like your master, Severus, but I do question what a Death Eater could want from me?”

At his question, he breathed easier, but his body remained tense. Dumbledore’s magic surrounded them waiting for him to speak. He took a deep breath, summoning courage. He had to tell him everything if he wanted to help Lily.

“The Prophecy…”

“Ah, yes, I know you overheard that. The question is how much did you tell your master about it?” His voice had taken on a stern quality, a rarity for him.

“I just told him about the child. He...He’s going to kill her though. He’s going to kill Lily Evans.”
“Lily Potter,” Dumbledore said.

He cringed as if Dumbledore had hit him. “P--Potter,” he corrected. The word tasted like dirt on his tongue.

“The prophecy says nothing about her. It talks about a child born at the end of July.”

“You know I know that. If it’s about her child then he’s not only going to kill the child. He’s going to kill her. He’ll kill them all. Especially if he finds her before the child is born.” Merlin, why did that occur to him only now?

“If it means so much to you, then would your lord not let her go? I wouldn’t be surprised if you were rewarded for betraying her. Why don’t you beg for the mother in exchange for the child?”

Dumbledore wasn’t going easy on him tonight, but he didn’t expect or want the man to do so. He didn’t deserve any kindness.

“I did. Though it makes little sense considering she’s still pregnant. So to kill the child he’d just go ahead and kill her.”

The man’s jaw tensed and then with the most disgusted voice Severus had ever heard, he said, “You’re revolting.”

He wanted to run and lock himself away somewhere he could die, but he wouldn’t do that until he was sure he exhausted all things to keep her save. “I know.”

“You aren’t even worried that her husband and child will die? Ah, I suppose not since they’ll be room for you in her life if they are out of it.”

It had gotten to the point that nothing the wizard could say could make him feel worse than he already did. He hated Potter, he didn’t care about the baby, but she did. Love was taking care of someone and caring about their desires above your own. For her he could forget the pain he’d suffered if it meant she lived a happy life.

He lifted his head and looked into Dumbledore’s eyes. “Then please protect them all. Keep them all safe.” With those words small amount of weight lifted off his shoulders.

“And what shall you give me in return, Severus?”

He was taken aback that Dumbledore would ask that. It was something more akin to what the Dark Lord would ask. Wouldn’t protecting Potter’s family be beneficial to the Order?

“I will sell my soul to you if that’s what you ask. I’ll do anything. I swear it. To protect all of them. They’re doing a good job avoiding him right now, and the Dark Lord is angry at this, but I don’t know how long they’ll succeed.”

“I’ll protect them in any way I can. I have your promise, I’ll keep mine.” His wand flew to Dumbledore’s hand.

Severus could only nod. This was best for everyone involved. He was useless, they were not, and it would always be that way. His death would bring nothing good or bad to the world. He would die and be forgotten. Alone in life, alone in death, and alone in a disremembered grave covered by dirt and weeds brought forth by time.

Severus bowed his head again. “Thank you.”
“Get up, Severus. We should talk man to man.”

He nodded and managed to stand. Dumbledore handed his wand back to him. “But…”

“I believe you, Severus.”

Had he been in the same position as Dumbledore, he wouldn’t have been nearly as trusting to a monster who betrayed the woman he loved.

“I will tell you anything you want, but I’ve only had the Dark Lord’s favor for a few months. I know he’s targeting the Potter’s because of the prophecy.” He said and then looked around, fearing someone had heard him.

“Do not worry, Severus. Contrary to what he says, Voldemort can’t hear his servants when he is not present.” Severus could only nod. This man wasn’t the most powerful wizard for nothing. “I understand that you were to become a spy at Hogwarts, and that you are skilled in Occlumency and Legilimency?”

How did he. . . “Y-yes… I know a few things I taught myself, and I learnt things from the Dark Lord’s instruction.”

“Indeed.” For the first time that night, Severus saw a flicker of a grin. He wasn’t sure what that meant since grinning with anything but condescension was foreign to him. “I want you to work for me, Severus. This will be the price you pay. You are going to change sides.”

Severus nodded. “I was prepared to die either at your or the Dark Lord’s hands today.” He lowered his arm. “I only want her...and her loved ones safe.”

The old man nodded. “I’ll do what I can.”

“What do you want me to do?”

“You will spy for me, Severus.” His body trembled at the prospect of going back. “You will stay within the Death Eaters and then give me any information you get. If you don’t let him know about this, you’ll be safe.”

Despite knowing what he’d done, the man still found the words to reassure him. At least spying was something he was accustomed to, and he’d become skilled at it. “If that’s what you need, I will, but I need an excuse to come here without raising suspicions. Especially if it’s frequently.”

“We’ll work on it. For now, act as you always have, and we will keep them safe. I will arrange the preparations.”

Severus bowed in gratitude. With Dumbledore protecting them, protecting her, she would be safe. He would gladly risk his life for this new purpose.

AN: As I said before, I didn’t follow the exact timeline that I’ve seen in all the timelines. According to the timelines at hp.lexicon and a few others, by the time Snape goes to Dumbledore, Harry is already born. In the timelines for some reason Snape waits several months to tell Voldemort about the prophecy and then goes to Dumbledore. And some of the
timelines are contradictory in that even. In this fic I switched it up quite a bit.
Chapter 8: ...And They Fall

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 8: . . . And They Fall

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Warning: Small mention of suicide. May be triggering.

October 1981

The wretched day had come, and there was nothing he could do. The Dark Lord was on the move, and he’d ordered all of them to stay behind. He hadn’t risked much in his new “position” so far. He learned from Malfoy that the Potter’s location had been discovered, and he’d managed to send an owl to Dumbledore. There was a traitor on their side that had given Voldemort the information.
He looked at the clock. Only ten minutes had passed since he’d sent the information. Though he normally prided himself on patience, he couldn’t stand summoning that virtue right now. Not when it involved her life. He’d done everything he could to ease the worry coursing through him, but nothing worked. So now he paced.

On his fiftieth pace, fire shot through his arm, and the mark burned as if he’d been shot there. He bit back a yell and fell to his knees. He grabbed his wrist, and squeezed, trying to concentrate on another less potent pain. His breathing was so erratic he couldn’t get enough oxygen into his lungs with the brief inhales. His vision blurred. He needed air. Merlin, just one breath. This wasn’t a normal call.

He clawed at his sleeve and fell face first onto the floor as the pain spread to his other limbs and his torso. His head pounded. What was this? It couldn’t be revenge. As far as he knew, no one had noticed his betrayal. He moved to his side, curled into a fetal position, and let out a cry, hoping it would alleviate even a small percentage of his anguish.

Then the pain was gone.

The burning sensation changed into a warm caress. A few minutes passed until he could move his fingers. When he felt his strength returning, he looked at the dark mark. His eyes widened. It was red and disappearing.

His mind ran through the reasons this would be happening until it hit him. If the holder of the curse dies the mark disappears. That meant the prophecy had . . . The Dark Lord was . . . Lily!

He moved his body into a sitting position and barely managed to grasp his wand due to his numb fingers. He needed to find out what happened.

Summoning all the will he had within him, he managed to stand. One hand gripped his wand and the other held onto the edge of a chair so he could remain upright.

How he could find them? His lack of oxygen earlier had slowed his thinking.

He glanced at the dark mark once again and saw it was almost gone. If the Dark Lord was dead, that meant he’d found them. If he focused on the remnants of his power, he might be able to track where the Dark Lord was before his demise. He could go to him. Like many times he had needed to do so.

But the other Death Eaters would be there. A shiver crossed his spine at first, but then he used some reasoning. If he showed up, there was nothing to say that he wasn’t doing his duty among them.

He pointed his wand at himself, closed his eyes, and searched around, focusing on the curse until he disappeared.

When he opened the eyes he saw a lonely two story house crumbling in front of him. The structure was folding in on itself. The wood was creaking, threatening to give way with the slightest jar. The roof had a large hole with jagged and burnt pieces darting upward toward the night sky and downward into the home.

He heard a cry and his heart constricted. No. No. He protested, refusing to give in to what he knew to be true.

With small and cautious steps he walked towards the broken door. His palms were sweating,
and his legs were still shaking, but now it wasn’t from the receding pain but from what he knew to be in the house. He stepped into what was left of the hall. A baby’s cry accompanied the creaking and cracking sounds of a crumbling house.

No one was soothing the child. No one was there.

He forced himself forward, following the cry.

She should’ve been there, soothing the kid.

_She has to be there._

_Merlin, please._

Losing her to Potter seemed so insignificant now.

He sped up, taking the stairs, two by two. He jolted to a stop when he noticed a hand hanging down from the last stair. Potter.

His eyes were open, his face showing the terror he experienced before death. He met Potter’s lifeless gaze. He could read the horror in them and almost felt pity for the man.

Lily was gone. He knew it. He stepped over Potter’s body and the environment constricted around him. The air was thick with death. He’d dealt enough of it to know that familiar scent and the aura that sank into the skin the moment someone stopped breathing. He let one hand rest on the wall as he walked. With the growing tension, he was unsure if he could lift one foot without falling over.

He froze in the doorway to the nursery for what felt like hours. The baby’s cries were a distant echo as he looked upon his one love. Though it took less than ten seconds to get to her, it felt too long. He took her into his arms and pressed her against his chest. The flowery scent of the woman he knew was gone. The room smelled of ash. Her body smelt of it. Ash and remnants of magic.

_No. No. Please. Take me instead._ He said to anything that could possibly read his mind. Even the bloody muggle god. The reality of her missing breath, the lack of movement of her chest against him, tore his control away. There was not a curse comparable with the feeling of this cold shell in his arms. She wasn’t here anymore. He couldn’t grasp it.

His cry echoed in the room, rivaling that of the child’s crying. His hot tears fell on her skin, right where hers would be if she cried. They rolled down her cheeks.

He should have died. Not her.

He hid his face in her red hair and his tears became uncontrollable.

“Li—Lily. I’m sorr—F—forgive me…” Cold. She was so cold. His Lily wasn’t cold. Even when she was angry with him, she was not cold. Never.

His heart died with her and the pain consumed his sanity.

He stared over at the kid. A baby had killed the Dark Lord. Lily wanted him to live, and probably had died in a brave way to save the ones she loved. A brave Gryffindor.

And he was a cowardly Slytherin just like Potter always called him. He should have been here protecting her, protecting them, even if he had to defy the Dark Lord.
But he left it in the hands of Dumbledore. And the wizard, the most powerful wizard in the world, had failed.

With slow movements he placed Lily’s body on the rug. When her back rested on the soft material, he grabbed her hands and lowered his head to place a chaste kiss on her cold knuckles.

“Goodbye, Lily. I will see you soon.”

AN: This was so heartbreaking to write... and hard Sigh. Let me know what you think and lot's of huggles. This March and April are going to be chaotic for post due a trip I have and doc visits. Sorry for the inconvenience but I will try to give you as much chapters I can. Probably it won't be one until April.
Chapter 9: His Penance for Her

Chapter Summary

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Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 9: His Penance for Her

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

Warning: Talk of Suicide. May be triggering.

His body slammed into the muddy ground and he remained there for a few seconds before pushing himself up, his hands sinking down in the ground as he did so. The cold rain was relentless in hitting him, chilling him down to the bone. Scotland’s skies had decided to cry with him or were assisting him in hiding his tears.

Taking a deep breath, he managed to stand. He spotted the gates of Hogwarts in front of him. The gates opened to him as if they’d noticed his need to enter and seek help. Tonight he’d accomplish the last good deed he’d ever do in his unworthy life.

He didn’t know how much longer he could handle her loss, but he would for as long as it took to at least talk to Dumbledore. The castle doors opened to him and the candles lit themselves as he got to each one. The castle was helping him.

Him. A Death Either. Or a former one. He still couldn’t be sure.

“Mister Snape?” A rough female voice came to his ears. He halted his steps. “Is that you?”

“Yes, Professor McGonagall.” His voice was a whisper, and he hid his face from her. “I need to talk to the Headmaster, please. It...It’s urgent.” He tried to keep his voice steady, but he failed miserably.
She nodded and grabbed his arm. In her eyes he saw pity. He hated pity.

“Follow me, Mister Snape,” she said with a soft voice and let go of his arm.

They didn’t talk as they walked, so only the echoes of their steps filled the castle corridors. It made him walk a little lighter and breathe a tad easier.

When they reached the gargoyle statue, she muttered a few soft words and invited him to follow her with a gesture of her head. At least she wasn’t judging him like she did when he was a potential Death Eater under her tutelage.

When he put a foot on the stairs, they moved alone, carrying them until he saw the door to the Headmaster’s office. She pushed the door open after knocking twice, and he stepped in after her.

It was time.

The last time.

“Minerva?” The old man looked up from his parchments with confusion until his eyes directed at him. “Oh, I see you have company with you. Severus, what can I do for you?”

His breath stalled and his eyes widened. Apparently, he was still oblivious to the events that took place that night. Merlin, it wasn’t bad enough that she’d died. Now, he had to tell Dumbledore.

“The…” He tried to control the moisture forming on his eyes. He didn’t want to cry in front of them. “The Potter’s are dead. Their child is alive.”

McGonagall gasped. “That’s not possible. They had a fidelius enchantment and Mister Black would never—”

Dumbledore interrupted McGonagall’s words when he lifted a hand.

“Phineas, go see if your relative is at home. Fawkes, go and alert the order. Transport them to Godric’s Hollow,” Albus ordered, his voice much lower than it normally was. The picture disappeared at the same time as the phoenix did. “Did you say the baby was alive?” Severus nodded. “And your former Lord? Do you know something, Severus?”

At his question, he extended his left arm and uncovered it. The mark was still there, but it looked like a scar.

“It burned before I went to check on the Potters. When I arrived I discovered that he murdered them. I thought it was going to kill me at first, but the pain faded.” He heard the steps of the old man coming closer to him.

Dumbledore grabbed his wrist, making him look up.

“It appears Voldemort lost his power.” Severus shivered at hearing the name. “And I suppose he wanted to kill his minions with him when he did this.”

“Or just torture us,” he added as he felt Dumbledore’s fingers near the mark.

“Headmaster, Sirius isn’t at home,” Phineas said.

“Convenient,” Dumbledore muttered.

“Albus, do you think he would betray them?” McGonagall took a step forward.
“He wasn’t a good man,” Snape said. “Not nearly as much as you think.”

She looked at him, trying to freeze him with her eyes. “At least he didn’t join you-know-who’s side.”

He sneered and was about to open his mouth to retort when Dumbledore cut them both off.

“We have pressing matters. No arguing.”

A silver tortoise appeared from the floor and spoke. “There was a fight in the presence of muggles. It was Sirius Black and Peter Pettigrew. Black betrayed the Potters to Voldemort, and Peter tried to keep him from doing it. We have reports of Death Eaters retreating and hiding. We have confirmed both James and Lily Potter are dead. The child is still alive.”

“Y-you need to get him. Lily protected him. If I could apparate there by following the Dark Lord’s power to them, so can the other Death Eaters. You need to put him in a safe place. That’s . . . that’s what she would have wanted.” Severus said.

The room was silent for a moment and all eyes were on him.

“Minerva, please.” He heard Dumbledore say. “Go and fetch Hagrid. I want him to get the child, Harry is his name, and take him to this address.” The man waved his hand and a piece of paper appeared. “If you wish, wait for me there. I need to speak with our young Severus for a moment.”

The woman took the parchment.

“Mister Snape,” she said with a tiny hint of respect that would’ve surprised him had the situation that night been different. She left the office. Right now, he was apathetic to everything but the death of Lily Potter. Just a little longer and he could leave.

“You are no less of a man if you mourn the loss of your loved ones, Severus.”

At his words, a small cry escaped from his throat and he fell apart again. His back collided with a wall, and his body slid down until he was in an awkward position with his knees up against his chest.

“I-I trusted you.”

“I know.”

“You were supposed to have kept them safe and hidden, but you didn’t do a good job and now she is dead. She’s not here anymore. She won’t be coming back.”

“She and James made a mistake that resulted in their deaths. They were too trusting. They risked their own lives by revealing where they were. Did you think that Voldemort would let her live?”

“I didn’t think he would, that’s why I told you what I’d done. That’s why I took a risk in trusting you!” He knew he couldn’t truly blame Dumbledore for her death, but he needed to lash out at something or someone. Anger was familiar. It made him forget pain, love, happiness, and not regret missing them. Anger was an old friend that stayed with him in light and shadows, always giving him strength and keeping him from being weak.

But he knew it wasn’t fitting. “I lost her anyway.” He closed his eyes and covered his face with his hands.
“And now you have given up on your own life.”

“I loved her,” he said. “I have no reason to live now.”

“But you still could do much, Severus. You’ll never forget her. You will never be rid of the hurt, but you learn to live with it. You live on for their sake. You have much you could do for good.”

“I don’t want to hear that,” he snapped. He didn’t want to hear anything about living with pain, and what he could do for other people. It was always what he could do for others. No one gave a shit about what he wanted or needed.

“You could even find another person to cherish.”

He jerked his head up and narrowed his eyes. “That’s an insult to what I feel for her!” The thought that his feelings were weak enough to fade made him sick. No one would ever compare to Lily.

“Excuse my insensitivity, Severus, but I don’t want you to kill yourself and throw your purpose away,” Dumbledore replied with a tiny smile.

“I’m not worth saving.”

“Oh, Severus, you can cast a Patronus, can’t you? You aren’t like other former Death Eaters.”

“How do you know that?” he asked softly, remembering the form of his Patronus. Even it will mock him for life.

“You can always try to cast it. Prove me wrong then.”

Damned old man. What was Dumbledore trying to achieve?

He grabbed his wand and closed his eyes. With soft movements, a silver mist appeared at his side. He didn’t want to look at it, but he felt its presence.

He heard a soft chuckle come from the older man and immediately wanted to hex him. That would be one way to commit suicide, but knowing his luck, the man would still spare him.

“It seems things are like you said. A soul with a sense of mockery,” he replied with a sarcastic tone as his patronus continued nuzzling him, seemingly trying to lift some of his despair.

“Don’t be so harsh with yourself, Severus.” He heard him sigh and take some steps towards him. “I will need to go with Hagrid. I want to talk to you more, Severus, so stay here and don’t kill yourself before I come back.” He chuckled again. “At least you still have some company.”

From the corner of his eyes he saw Dumbledore pointing at his patronus. He wished to remain quiet. He didn’t want to be judged anymore by that man. It was his life and if he wanted to end it, he damn well would.

Dumbledore left him there. At least he had some time to himself now, but the nuzzling continued. His patronus wanted him to look at it. He should’ve made it disappear but something deep inside wouldn’t let him. His eyes finally looked at the doe.

He raised his hand with his fingers extended. The doe took a step closer and touched his palm with its silver nose.

“I’m so sorry,” he whispered. He felt a lick on his skin.
Then he let himself fall back into more crying. He could mourn her quietly in the solitude the old professor had given to him. For a while.

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He didn’t know how long he’d been sitting in Dumbledore’s office. He’d long lost track of the time and the number of tears he shed.

Slowly, the magic of his Patronus disappeared as if some secret duty had been completed.

“The child is still alive and safe, Severus. Thank you for telling us. I found your owl on my way back.”

He hadn’t heard his return. An error that it could’ve cost him his life if he’d been anywhere else, but he didn’t care about that now.

“She would have wanted it.” He tried to get up but his legs were asleep. He felt back against the wall. “I should go, sir. I’m not needed here anymore.” He waited for the tingling in his leg to disappear, but even his energy was drained. His body didn’t want to cooperate.

“The child looks like Potter in everything except those eyes. Those eyes come from his mother. You remember those unique eyes, don’t you?”

“Shut up!” Her image plagued his mind and burned his body from inside as his heart ached with guilt.

“I can understand why you feel guilty. After all, it was you who told the Dark Lord about the prophecy.” He wanted to kill the man but he was right. He was always right. “I take much of the blame myself as well.”

“Let me go. Please, let me end my life.”

Dumbledore held a gentle expression on his features. “What good will your death bring to the world?” He was a coward and Dumbledore was making sure he knew it. “You say you loved Lily, Severus. Then honor her memory with actions that she’d be proud of.”

What did he mean? He had nothing else to do in his life. He had ruined enough lives with his mistakes. With his very existence.

“I’m not sure what you’re trying to say,” he said.

“Make sure Lily Potter didn’t die in vain, Severus. Help me in protecting her son.”

He looked at him like he’d lost his mind and shook his head. That was absurd. Completely absurd. He’d done that already, and he wasn’t in danger anymore. The kid had lived.

“The Dark Lord is dead. The child doesn’t need any more protection than what he already has. I’m not a fool. You are just trying to manipulate me.” Dumbledore just wanted to keep him dwelling in his pain. He wanted to keep using him just like the Dark Lord had.

“The danger the boy faces has not ended. The Dark Lord will return.” The old wizard sounded desperate. “You know this, Severus. You know the prophecy, and your mark hasn’t disappeared completely. You know he is coming back, and the boy will need all the help we can
give him to defeat Voldemort.”

He took a deep breath and closed his eyes, digesting the words he heard. Dumbledore was right, again. He could still feel the mark’s curse, but the time of the Dark Lord’s return was uncertain.

He clinched his fist, feeling his nails digging into his skin. It was for that git Potter, but it was also for her. He owed her, and nothing was more important to a mother than her child.

He put his palm against the wall and looked Dumbledore in the eyes. There would be no more mourning. He could be useful. More useful than anyone else because he didn't care if he lived or died as long as he ultimately paid a small portion of his penance to Lily.

“If I do it, I want to impose one condition, Headmaster.” The man nodded. “You need to promise me that you will never tell anyone that I’m going to protect the kid.” The last thing he needed was that kid near him, knowing him, and thinking he was his servant.

“You want me to promise that I will never tell anyone what a genuinely good person you are inside?” Dumbledore let a small sigh escape him. “I will respect your desire, but I think it’s absurd.” He heard the man say with a strange, condescending tone.

“It’s still my desire, Dumbledore. I don’t need that boy to like me. It would be a mockery.” He hated his task already, and it would be several years yet before the kid would be old enough to have anything to do with the wizarding world. Every day he would be the reminder of what he could never have. “I will need a cover to do this.”

“Of course, Severus. I already thought of it. I know I can trust you with this and with all other matters. Your life will be at great risk. You will need to be a double spy at the same time you protect him.”

“My life is not a concern.”

“Maybe now it isn’t for you, but in the future, things can change.” Dumbledore muttered and he pursed his lips. “You will be a professor here. That will help you get information from him and to him. It will also help when he returns. You will have a privileged spot after all.”

“You planned this.”

“Maybe I always had faith that you were good, Severus.”

The man was a fool. “I have done things that—”

“You only scared people and brewed potions. From what I heard, you never killed for fun. You are better than that, Severus.” Dumbledore extended his hand. “Welcome to Hogwarts, Professor Snape.”

AN: Huggles to all and let me know what you think. Till next chapter.
September 1991

The sorting hat finished his song like usual, but this was anything but a typical year. This year his comfortable life of grading papers, teaching classes, and scaring his students would change. Now he had another job to do, and while a part of him was eager to do it, another part dreaded it.

He had created a dark, rough reputation for himself to make his task easier. But not all was a facade. Years had passed and the pain had been unbearable to the point that he closed his heart away to help deal with it. It was better if no one got close. He knew that he would die with this mission. In a way, he was doing anyone that tried to get close a favor by rejecting them.

The new kids moved enthusiastically in the great hall. He knew this year’s batch of annoying brats were problematic. After all, he was intolerant when it came to those with a lack of discipline, and he would administer it if he felt the need. It made him look like an ogre or like the bat of the dungeons, as they loved to call him, but it had to be done. His role was to teach them the cruelty and responsibility of life.

McGonagall started to call out the names and he intertwined his fingers, waiting for the boy to appear.

“Granger, Hermione.” A small girl came forward, muttering to herself. That one was strange.
She was clearly nervous, and she showed intense intelligence in her eyes. Yes, that one had some brains in that furry little head of hers.

“Gryffindor,” the sorting hat said. The girl ran to the rival table.

He rolled his eyes. Pity. She looked promising. Now it was going to go to waste in that house. Ravenclaw or Slytherin would’ve suited her better.

“Potter, Harry.”

Though he expected it to come, it still jolted him out of his comfort zone for a moment. He forced himself to remain impassive, but he moved to catch a better look at the boy.

That black mold colored hair, those glasses, that face . . .

“Gryffindor!” the hat called out after a few deliberations.

He wanted to vomit. The boy was almost a mirror image of James. He was the spawn she’d made with Potter, and there was none of her in him.

Their eyes met and he immediately took back his previous statement. This had to be fate mocking him. Everyday Harry Potter was in his class he’d be reminded of his loss and mistakes.

He didn’t think he’d be able to hate the boy more, until he saw Lily’s eyes staring back at him.

-/-/-

October 1991

He almost laughed out loud at the absurdity of what happened. A troll. In the castle. In his dungeons. It was ludicrous and everyone knew it, yet all the accusatory fingers pointed at him. Why think logically when they had the perfect scapegoat in the greasy bat of the dungeons? He could practically smell the deception and had the culprit in sight. He had been pressing Quirrell about it since he was the one missing at the Halloween dinner. He was the one who came screaming about a troll.

It was a diversion as much as it was a way to place more guilt on him. But he was the proverbial guilt magnet, so if Quirrell thought this was going to get to him, then the man didn’t know who he was up against. He walked the gauntlet on guilt; nothing in this world could make him feel any worse than that night in July.

He was smart enough not to fall for the distraction and went to check on the philosopher’s stone.

Crossing the corridors as fast as he could, he ignored the teachers going to his dungeons on a troll hunt and began ascending the stairs. When he was sure no one was around, he allowed himself a tiny chuckle. A troll.

His muscles protested as his legs took the stairs one by one faster than he ever had before, a pain issuing with each step. He needed to get into better condition. All these years in the quietness of
Hogwarts had made him physically weak.

He didn’t stop to take a breath when he reached the top of the stairs. He rushed toward the door. When he heard a faint growl, panic spurred him to go even faster. The door was open. He picked up the pace even more.

The three headed beast lunged at him. He leaped back. Pain shot through his leg and he fell. The dog’s bark tortured his ears as he tried to lift himself from the floor. He looked up as a constant barrage of pain assaulted his leg. One of the dog’s muzzles was trying to reach for him, but his head was too big to get near.

He cursed his carelessness. He pressed his hands against the stone floor and lifted himself to his feet. He looked down at his leg and saw an angry red bite through his torn trousers.

He glared at the beast and with a movement of his wand, slammed the door, blocking Cerberus from his sights.

As he headed back, he sealed the door and corridor with wards so no one could trespass until all was calm. Dumbledore should’ve done that instead of going after a troll.

He held onto the wall as he limped down the steps, blood leaking onto the stairs as he moved. He would need to take a day off and get some potions to heal faster.

AN: If nothing happens again, I will start with the same publishing rhythm as before. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think!
Chapter 11: Exhausting Troubles

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

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Chapter 11: Exhausting Troubles

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February 1992

He fell back on the sofa, melding his body against the soft seat that seemed to engulf him. He was about to doze when his mental to-do list bombarded his thoughts. He needed to look over his class essays, but he didn’t have strength enough to do much of anything, much less read written forms of idiocy. Not today. Watching over a quidditch match to make sure Potter didn’t break his neck was draining enough. He had to admit that he’d feared for the boy’s life. He wasn’t sure who cursed the broom in the past match, but it wouldn’t have been difficult to do so when said broom belonged to an inexperienced child.

He had his suspicions just as Dumbledore had. He thought it was Quirrell, but without proof he couldn’t do anything. Weeks of spying on him and spotting him in the darkness near the third floor had made him suspicious and wary of that man’s actions. Quirrell knew how to play innocent. He knew not to fall for the act.

Dumbledore had asked him to watch the man, without explaining why as per usual when it came to the older wizard. At first he’d been curious as to why, but now that curiosity was fading. This wasn’t the same Quirrell that was here a year ago, and by adding more complexity to the year,
there was a dangerous artifact in the castle’s depths that needed to be guarded.

He swallowed.

He’d acted as judge during today’s quidditch match to make sure that no one made another attempt against Potter’s life. At least no one set his robe on fire this time. The embers were a spell he’d seen before, but he couldn’t quite recall where. His work for the order, protecting and checking to see if someone had disturbed the enchantments on the Philosopher’s stone, was enough to occupy his mind. Now, he had Potter to deal with all the while watching him smash Slytherin morale in quidditch too. Like father, like son. The way the Potters ruined everything for him, everything he loved, astonished and angered him at the same time.

He rubbed his face and closed his eyes, letting his head rest on the arm of the seat. Sleep tried to claim him, but he couldn’t allow himself the luxury of rest. In a few minutes it would be his turn to watch the third floor.

His door opened and an unannounced visitor stormed into his living quarters as if they owned the place. Lifting his head, he saw that the intruder was indeed who he expected.

Anger rushed him.

The old fool had time to come down here but not enough time to do his part in protecting the boy. He placed all the weight onto his shoulders and gave him the duty to protect a child that looked just like the man he hated.

“You should’ve been there,” Snape said, not giving the headmaster a chance to sit before starting the conversation. He didn’t bother sitting up either. He was as comfortable as he could be considering he was never relaxed to begin with.

“I assume everything went fine. You didn’t find the culprit?” Dumbledore said and sat down. He reached into his tunic. “Lemon drop?”

The offer of a sweet brought further irritation. No, he didn’t want a bloody lemon drop and wouldn’t dignify the stupid question with an answer. “It would’ve been less suspicious if you attended the match instead, and I kept watching the third floor. No one would’ve dared to hurt the boy in front of you.”

“You promised to protect the boy, Severus. It’s your task no matter how arrogant you think the boy is. You should not judge the boy over the sins of his father.”

“Don’t try for a moment to make me feel guilty. I said I would protect him, but I can’t do everything Albus. I can’t be in all corners of the castle all the time.”

“All right, Severus. I’ll attend the other matches as much as I can, but the rest of the time falls on you. I trust you can do that.”

“Of course.”

He would have to learn to keep his temper controlled and his memories of the late Potter suppressed. He needed to have a clear head and the rage wouldn’t help his focus. He hoped Potter wouldn’t fall into more problems if he kept a closer eye on Quirrell.

But he wasn’t confident that would be the case.
May 1992

Potter had demonstrated numerous times that he and his friends were troublemakers. The boy had the nerve to wander at night with an invisible cloak that his father had owned. Dumbledore had called him an hour ago and told him of yet another nuisance he had to be on guard for. Then, not even a few minutes later, asked that he put another protection spell around the Philosopher’s stone because he was going away.

At least now he knew why he always felt as if he were being kicked out of nowhere as a teen. He’d had his suspicions on who did it, but no one would’ve taken the word of a seedy Slytherin verses a golden Gryffindor. Now young Potter was following in his father’s footsteps, only he was in much more danger than the elder Potter had been. Not only did he know that Potter’s eyes were on him at times, he feared the idiot would try to look for the stone for himself.

A few nights ago, he knew someone had been watching his threatening conversation with Quirrell, forcing him to confess who he was working for. Now he knew who that someone was.

Everyone feared him, probably even more now if that were possible, and it could be used to his advantage. With every month that passed, he knew Quirrell was twisting and manipulating a plan that would ultimately place the blame on him.

He heard the suspicions in whispers and saw it in Potter and Weasley’s eyes. He wasn’t worried. They had a snowballs chance in Hades at solving the puzzles that he’d set up. The only way they’d get past is if they took the girl with him. As annoying as she was with trying to show her knowledge in inappropriate moments, he had to admit she was extremely intelligent.

She was a muggleborn and had a different way of thinking. That made her handy to whatever cause she chose to lend her skills to. It irked him that she was like him at that age, though he’d never been anywhere close to being that presumptuous.

A whisper came to his ears and he crossed the shadows and moved around the corner that separated him from the voices.

The three of them stood there speaking about their new mischievous plot. If their words hadn’t been enough, the look in their eyes revealed that they were up to something. This was especially true when Granger’s wide eyes met his.

They were speaking of stealing the philosopher’s stone of course. The boy he was protecting wanted to steal an item he was protecting.

Weasley and Potter turned and he offered a smug smile.

“Just what are the three of you doing here in the shadows on such a nice day? You’d better be careful or one would think you were up to something you shouldn’t be. Right, Potter?”

Each of the three had their own roles just like the ones in the elder Potter’s own gang. Potter was the mastermind like his father. Weasley was clearly the buffoon, and it baffled him what good he was other than to be bossed about. Granger was clearly the brains and moral compass. Yet, she’d defend her Gryffindor friends no matter what they did.
It was disgusting to see history repeat itself.

Their quick answers and gulps of nervousness gave them away. Granger was the only one that looked down at the ground and showed any sort of remorse.

They scurried away when dismissed. When they were out of his sight, he turned and walked down the corridor. He’d have to talk to Minerva about those three, go have his blasted bite tended to again, and then do his rounds.

It was going to be a long, troubling day, and it fit perfectly with the school year he’d had.

Thank Merlin it was almost over.

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AN: In these first years I’m only going to focus on some important parts about Severus and his little development. Hope you like it and let me know what you think! Until next week!
Chapter 12: Flying Cars and Petrification

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

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September 1992

He threw the newspaper against the wall. Merlin, he hated his work. He wouldn’t be lying if he admitted there were times he’d rather be in Azkaban than in his position. Every time he thought he forgot the past, released the anger into something constructive, he was brought back to it.

The younger Potter was just as much of a foolish fame seeking git as his father had been, and the pattern of praising Gryffindors for being foolish had not stopped.

Potter and his sidekicks went unpunished for his trip to retrieve the Philosopher’s stone before Quirrell. Not only that, but he was being hailed as a hero. A hero for breaking rules that would get any other student from any other house suspended or expelled. This was going to make the young Potter even more arrogant than his father had been.

Potter hadn’t even gotten a berating. Instead he got a special invite to have dinner in Dumbledore’s office. He’d crashed a flying car into the womping willow and such irresponsible, not to mention illegal, act was being rewarded! He could relent that Potter was more important than his father, but it was a terrible idea to forego punishment just because he was the boy who survived the Dark Lord. He needed to learn that everything had consequences. It was as if Dumbledore was babying him.

Contrary to what many thought, he got along fairly decently with the other professors, even
Minerva. He bantered with them about quidditch, though he did so in a neutral, unsmiling manner that made any outsider think he was above talking about it. He had intellectual exchanges during a drink at the three broomsticks, but had to put up an act that he was obligated to attend. Still, as a Slytherin he could feel the Gryffindor favoritism practically radiating off of many of them. This was especially obvious when it came to Dumbledore.

Didn’t he realize that this favoritism was putting the whole wizarding world at risk? He knew what it was like to be forgotten, to be the odd one out, the ignored, and that could prompt people to strive for attention and power, even at the risk of their own safety and the safety of the world as they knew it.

He stormed down the corridors, trying to calm himself while the others were winding down from the welcome feast after effects of stuffing themselves. It was going to be another long year if Potter decided the rules didn’t apply to him and if Dumbledore went along with it.

But he knew that was exactly what would happen.

-/-/-

Halloween 1992

The fake bats flew around everyone’s heads as the occupants of the Great Hall ate the special Halloween desserts and meals. Things he just had no interest in. He looked down at his pie and forced himself not to frown any further. It was like an offer to a vampire with a thirst for blood.

He stabbed the pie, the contents seeping up through the holes in the crust like blood from a body. He pushed the image out of his brain. Strawberry. It was just strawberry.

He glanced at the other professors then out at the students who were stuffing their faces with the food. He never ate much anyway, so eating like a pig was not part of today’s goals. Especially not since he noticed the absence of a certain troublesome group. He couldn’t be full if he needed to move quickly.

The Weasley brat never missed desserts and much less during a special meal, so something had to be happening. Likely to do with Potter.

He didn’t hear the headmaster’s dismissal, but rose when everyone else did. He followed the other teachers group as per habit until they parted ways. He searched every corner around him, walking forward until he was forced to stop when a mass of people stopped in front of him.

What in the seven circles of hell was going on?

He looked over the many students and saw Potter and his friends. There was a cat hanging from its tail next to them. He looked at the wall.

The Chamber of Secrets? Enemies of the heir beware.

Then Draco spat the ill word that still haunted him. He shivered involuntarily as his own voice speaking the word echoed in his brain. Malfoy had called Granger a mudblood.
He wanted to punish Draco for it, but he couldn’t. He couldn’t blame Draco for saying it since he was the son of a Death Eater and followed the old beliefs. If he said anything, made any action that would show he didn’t agree with those beliefs, all the plans and work he had put in through the years would be in danger.

He focused back on the situation. It was clear Potter and his friends had nothing to do with it.

Upon a soft command from the headmaster, the students left the area, leaving only himself, Potter and his two friends, Filch, McGonagall and Dumbledore. He took a deep breath and took a step forward. Fitch looked like he wanted to kill Potter, and no matter how much he despised the young man, he couldn’t let him be killed. “There’s a simple answer to this. “

“Oh?” snapped Filch.

He leveled his glare at him and the hall felt as if it’d grown colder in seconds. “There’s a saying, in the wrong place at the wrong time. I do believe this to be the case. Potter does not have the…guts… to do something like this.”

He saw Potter’s eyes widen but ignored it.

“Yes, that seems the most likely circumstance,” Dumbledore said. He approached the cat’s body and studied it.

Even though he’d defended Potter, he still didn’t think the headmaster should let them go without being questioned further. “Though I don’t believe these three miscreants did this, it does not explain why they weren’t where they were supposed to be.” He leveled his sights on the three students once more. “Are you up to something, Potter?”

Potter swallowed. “No…No, sir. I …We were with Nearly Headless Nick and…”

Weasley interrupted him. “We weren’t hungry and decided to—”

“To skip the meal and go to sleep,” Potter finished their broken tale and his lips formed into a smug smile.

Granger muttered something under her breath but said nothing aloud to help with their story.

Any idiot with half a brain could tell they were hiding something. “I think you and your friends are not being completely truthful. Making up lies deserves a punishment. I think removing Potter from the quidditch team would be an equal punishment.” He enjoyed every word and every glare he received from Potter. “It wouldn’t do for the quidditch team to have a dishonest player.”

That would teach him some responsibility.

“I think that’s unfair, Severus. I don’t see why the boy should get punished with that.” Minerva’s intervention made him turn his head to look at the woman. He kept his face neutral. He was suggesting it for his safety for Merlin’s Sake.

“I agree,” Dumbledore said. “Unless you have something to tell me, then you three should be getting back to your house.”

He almost stomped the floor like an angry child. They couldn’t be serious in leaving the boy unpunished.

What was Dumbledore playing at? One moment Dumbledore protected the boy, the next he
was letting him risk his neck.

Potter shook his head and the three rushed away from them, just under running speed. He watched until the group turned the corner then he turned his gaze onto Dumbledore.

The old fool had the nerve to smile at him.

“That is not the way to treat him now, Severus. They had witnessed a scarring event and were in the middle of the mess.”

What a poor excuse.

“I do not want to talk about your war with Potter, Severus. We have more pressing matters. The cat has been petrified and the Chamber of Secrets has been opened. We might have a serious problem.”

He fell into indifference. “This time I’ll need a complete explanation about this. I don’t for a moment want you to blame my house without substantial reasons. When it says heir, I assume it’s referring to the legacy of Salazar Slytherin.”

The headmaster nodded. “Minerva will accompany you, Argus, to take Mrs. Norris to the infirmary. I will talk with Pomona about getting some mandrake.” He looked at Argus. “I’m sure Severus will do the potions needed to get her back to normal. Don’t worry, my friend, she will back on her four legs soon.”

The caretaker nodded, holding the cat close to him, as he followed Minerva down the hallway. Severus crossed his arms, waiting for the headmaster to spill the truth.

But the old man was contemplating the bloody scribbling with worry. If the great Albus Dumbledore showed that emotion, it was a serious thing indeed.

He would wait and he would listen.

AN: Hope you enjoyed the chapter and thank you for reading! If you have time, let me know what you think. See you in two weeks!

PS: I want to thank all the anons comments. I wish I could reply to all of you, so I tell you this. Thank you for supporting the story. It means a lot to me. Cute Bear hug to all of you!
Chapter 13: Exploding Potions

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 13: Exploding Potions

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked. Originally this took place in early December according to time lines. I moved it back to November. It has no bearing on the plot.

Late November 1992

The class carried the typical noises that came with a double potions class. Bubbling cauldrons with their pops and crackles accompanied the hits of knives chopping or slicing ingredients. The fumes weren’t as strong as they normally were, but that was only because everyone wasn’t at the same level in the potion. Soon, the classroom would be permeated with the scents of their projects.

He stalked around the tables, studying each cauldron as he passed, some more intently than others. He took a deep breath and clinched his teeth. Half of the idiots in this class did something wrong.

He zeroed his focus in on Longbottom, whom he equated with the atomic bomb the Americans dropped on Japan in the 1940s. If he was ever in charge of naming a nuke, he’d call it the Longbottom. If anything powerful like that killed people in the wizarding world, that would be the boy to make it . . . and not with intention.
He stalked toward “the Longbottom” and he started stirring faster, making the situation worse. If he couldn’t work properly with him watching, then his schooling would end quickly. Especially, if he did all the potions the way he was doing this current one.

An ingredient slipped from Longbottom’s hand and he resisted the urge to roll his eyes. “Stop that nonsense, boy. Do you want to kill everyone in this room with that thick brain of yours! Be more careful!”

“I… I’m sorry, Pro…Professor Snape.”

Where was that brat Granger. Usually, she was helping him. Though not fond of her doing so, at least she ensured they’d survive the class when he wasn’t looking. He spotted her from the corner of his eye. She was adding the last ingredient to the potion and looking satisfied with herself.

His gaze moved over to Potter and Weasley. Their potion was a disaster, but they didn’t care. When he got to Hogwarts, he took advantage of everything he could and put in effort when it came to each task he was assigned. He expected his students to do the same, so it irked him when they didn’t.

Even Longbottom tried his best. He was an ignoramus that tried his best, but he still did it…

_Bloody Hell, I just praised Longbottom._ He checked to make sure the fires under the cauldrons hadn’t frozen over.

He sighed and turned his attention back to Longbottom, who was as pale as Nearly Headless Nick. “You should be boy, you near—”

A loud crack followed by several screams interrupted his berating.

He jerked around and saw a potion had exploded, its contents splashing on the skin of those around it, sending the smell of burnt flesh into the room along with the, thankfully, small amounts of smoke. At least the swelling potion was made past the most dangerous step. If it hadn’t been… He shuddered inwardly.

What in the hell happened?

That didn’t matter at the moment; he had to take care of these children first.

He rushed over to the front of his desk. “All those affected form a line. I’ll give you an antidote.”

When they didn’t listen to him, he raised his voice as high as it would go. “Stop bloody crying and get in line!”

The room fell silent, but occasional whimpers emitted as the students did as directed.

First he’d heal them, and then he’d find the culprit. He took a deep breath. He knew no Slytherin would’ve done this in his class. They would know better. This would’ve never happened in the other classes either. Ravenclaws knew the dangers all too well. They valued getting potions right even though they did experiment, and wouldn’t risk their grade. Hufflepuff were naïve, but they kept to the recipes and wouldn’t risk hurting anyone.

That left one house, and he had his suspicions directed on three particular members of said house.
He set about fixing the affected students, his anger growing with each student he helped. This kind of dangerous act couldn’t be permitted.

It was unexpected. He always thought that if an incident occurred in his classroom it would be the nervous Longbottom having an accident. These students were much too young to take a potions class. He’d brought it up to Dumbledore several times. He wanted to increase the age of his students and make potions a class for the older students, and in some cases, allow exceptional students to take them in their second year. Dumbledore said he’d consider it, but he never got back to him on it.

After the last student was healed, he made them take a seat. He stalked over to the exploded cauldron. Even if this potion went wrong, there shouldn’t have been this much damage to the cauldron. He narrowed his eyes and looked inside it.

His lips twisted as he levitated the strange object from the bottom of the cauldron. He knew someone had done this on purpose, now he had evidence in his favor. Someone was going to pay, and since this was a muggle invention, he knew exactly who to blame.

“Who was the idiot who threw this into a potion?” He felt annoyed he had to keep up this front when he already knew who did it. “Did you leave your brains outside this morning? You could’ve killed the entire classroom, if not the entire castle, if the potion had been in a different stage!”

His eyes turned to Potter. The boy held a neutral look upon his face, but through his eyes he could tell that he was the guilty party. He had to withhold the desire to hex him. Lily would’ve been livid at him doing this, but his father... No, his father would’ve laughed.

He took a deep breath and straightened his back. Every student lowered their heads.

“No one is willing to admit it? Very well,” he said. “Students in Slytherin may go,” he said. After they left he looked at the rest of the students. “You all disgust me. Risking your classmates’ lives for a prank. I want an extra essay, same size as your normal ones, about swelling potions and their dangers. In addition to that, you are to write a thousand lines of: I will not throw explosives in the cauldrons. These are due by tomorrow. Now get out of this room.”

The classroom left, some of them muttering as they did so. Maybe if they suffered a bit for Potter’s actions, it will teach them to call him out on them, and it would teach Potter to think of others before doing something so unsafe. If Dumbledore wasn’t going to teach him a lesson, then he would.

When the last student left, he waved his hand and the classroom was clean. Moments later, the tables were repaired.

He took a deep breath and walked into his office. He needed to take a brief break before his next class came in. More Gryffindors, but at least Potter wasn’t among them.

He paused and glanced over at his storeroom door. He hadn’t left that open...
Chapter 14: The Voice of a Snake

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 14: The Voice of a Snake

December 1992

He didn’t wait for the idiot assigned as the teacher for Defense Against the Dark Arts before he entered the room and navigated his way through the students. Despite all the stress he’d been undergoing lately, today was starting to look up. Today, he’d have the opportunity to show the world, or at least the worshipping students, just how “amazing” Gilderoy Lockhart really was. The man was a shame to anyone that studied hard, worked hard, and taught at Hogwarts or any other magic academy around the world. Gilderoy was somewhat intelligent, according to his former professors, but his vanity and ego got in the way of him ever putting effort into something.

Dumbledore had revealed his suspicions about Lockhart’s accomplishments, and he was inclined to believe they were accurate. Minerva had said it best when they learned of Lockhart’s hiring, “What could be learned from such a vain, celebrity-hungry man?” Dumbledore had said plenty.

Maybe that “plenty” had been a stab at humour. The students would learn from him all right. Learn how not to be an egotistical eejit and what it can do to you if you take that path. They would slowly learn that Lockhart was not someone to look up to. They should forge their own paths and learn from mistakes of others, not exalt someone as the paradigm of what it meant to be a good wizard.
At least the powers that be at Mahoutokoro and Ilvermorny had the good sense to “politely decline” his offer to speak there. If they did he’d have little doubt he’d leave some student without bones, much like he had Potter, or unleash dangerous creatures on the classes without having any idea how to fight them.

He could’ve taught this class, had wanted to, but Dumbledore refused him the position. Dumbledore wouldn’t tell him outright, but he could tell the man thought his resolution weak and was afraid that teaching this class would push him back toward his ways when he followed Voldemort.

He was snapped from his thoughts when the students cheered. He almost rolled his eyes when Lockhart climbed upon the runaway with the flourish of a model rather than a wizard about to duel. The sighs and shrieks of the female students turned his stomach. Naïve pubescent idiots.

When he heard his name, oddly cordial coming from Lockhart, he stepped upon the platform. He paid no attention to Lockhart’s explanation of the duel and instead waited until they began. Both saluted as a courtesy and went to their positions.

They turned, both taking up dueling stance. Lockhart smirked. Seconds later he smashed into a wall. Snape had never been so satisfied with himself.

His eyes scanned the platform, and then fell on Lockhart as he was standing, babbling nonsense about letting him win. He growled and crossed his arms, watching as the fake hero started teaming people up to practise.

When he saw Potter it was like a beacon of light trying to show him an opportunity to make the boy pay for his unfair pardoning since he came to Hogwarts.

He took a step down and walked towards them, grabbing Malfoy’s shoulder in the process without speaking a word. The boy went with him willingly. Today, Draco would be the karma teaching Potter humility.

When they stopped in front of Lockhart and the two inseparable friends, he had to push down a smile. Potter took a step closer to Weasley as if knowing what he had planned.

“Professor Lockhart,” Snape said, “I think it’s better if we pair him with Malfoy. It would be beneficial to the inter-house relationships and they match skill levels.” He squeezed Draco’s shoulder. “Weasley has a disastrous wand, and has less skill than Potter, and it would be far more beneficial to have someone near his skill level as his partner.”

“Ah, excellent idea, Professor Snape,” Lockhart said. “And who would you suggest we match Mister Weasley up with?”

Snape looked at Weasley. “Mrs. Norris.”

“That’s Filch’s cat.”

“Yes,” Snape said dryly, “and Weasley would still probably lose.”

Weasley growled and muttered something under his breath that he couldn’t make out.

“She’s still petrified isn’t she?” Lockhart said as if he were considering it.

“Where am I losing you?” Snape asked.
Draco laughed as Weasley and Potter glared at him.

Lockhart coughed. “Ah, let’s handle that when we arrive at it, shall we? Mister Potter, Mister Malfoy, if you please,” he said. “Begin dueling.”

Snape paid no mind to who Weasley was paired with, but made sure it was not Granger, choosing to assign her to someone more befitting her skills. She looked oddly relieved when he directed her to someone as soon as he spotted the boy approaching her.

The dueling started and he was pleased when he saw that Draco set out to hurt Potter as much as he could. He went about checking the other students since Lockhart was more focused on bragging to a small gathering of students that he’d yet to assign partners to.

A scream echoed through the hall and he directed his gaze toward it. His mouth dropped open slightly but nothing else betrayed his shock.

Potter was luring a serpent. Speaking the same language the Dark Lord used when talking to Nagini. How could this be happening? Why was it happening?

The other students kept their gaze on Potter and the snake, their faces an ashen shade and their eyes wide. He recognized the snakes behavior as one ready to strike, but it calmed slightly when Potter spoke to it. He raised his wand and dismissed the spell.

The serpent disappeared in an instant but the fear did not.

If Potter spoke Parseltongue he might be the heir of Slytherin. But that made no sense. It was not Potter’s style. Not when one of his friends was a muggleborn.

But again, the Dark Lord was a half-blood that lost his way and sought purity he didn’t have.

He looked around the room at the other students, and though it made him feel a bit sickened, he felt a kinship with Potter. He knew those looks. He hated those looks. They still haunted him from time to time when his mental barrier to the past dropped.

“Go, Potter.” He whispered the two words, but he knew the child had heard him since he ran away with this friends.

Potter was in even more dangerous territory and protecting him would be increasingly complex from now on.

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AN: I think that Snape could perfectly emphasize with the situation of “hate looks” and “ostracism” because he lived it. He knew how it feels. And that, my dear lovelies, would be a key element. Hope you enjoyed and let me know what you think with a review. Until next week!
Chapter 15: The Prisoner of Azkaban

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 15: The Prisoner of Azkaban

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June 1994

It was the twentieth newspaper that he’d thrown in the trash so far this school year. Sirius Black was the latest man in the news and his decrepit face taunted and laughed at him. It was annoying enough to see Lupin on a regular basis. The wolf had almost killed him in the past, and now he had to deal with his mocking.

That wasn’t the worst of it. After Lupin had the nerve to mock him in class in the form of a dummy, Dumbledore still expected him to brew the Wolfsbane potion for him. If it weren’t for the safety of the students, he would’ve spit in it, rendering it useless.

But he’d had experience with the fear and close death at the claws of a werewolf and wouldn’t wish it on anyone. Even Potter.

He snatched up the smoking cup and crossed the empty corridors as he headed towards Lupin’s office. At least Black’s attacks were causing people to be wary about lingering around the castle. He was still confused as to how Black was capable of entering the castle without aid, but Dumbledore had either remained silent like always, or he knew but didn’t want to put the blame on his precious Gryffindors. He knew the other classes weren’t so stupid as to let him in.

He pushed the office door open, not bothering to knock. He paused when he took his first step passed the threshold. “Professor?” he said and furrowed his brows when no one responded. He
looked at the small storage room and noted it was wide open and no one was inside. He glanced at
the desk and spotted a parchment. He walked over to it and gently placed the cup on the table beside
it.

It was a map of Hogwarts complete with not only names of the houses, and areas in the land
surrounding the castle, but also of names of people. Moving.

His throat went dry. Potter and Granger’s names were nearing the whomping willow. They
were in a tunnel he was extremely and unpleasantly familiar with. Lupin was following them at a
quick pace as well.

How could he go out like that without taking his Wolfsbane first? Did he not care that he was
a danger to the students. He’d long become familiar with Potter’s idiocy, but Granger, she was
proving to be as much of an idiot as her friend.

He grabbed the map and dashed out of the office. He ran through the corridors and through
the Great Hall, thankful that he’d gotten in more exercise in the past year.

When he felt the grass under his boots, he ventured to look forward. The whomping willow
was frozen. That meant Lupin was there because he was the only one that could tame that tree.

His heart slammed against his throat and he looked down at the map. Only his name was
showing now.

It didn’t matter though, because he knew where he needed to go.

He jerked to a stop at the tree’s root. He checked the tree over once despite its frozen state, it
wouldn’t do any good for him to be mistaken and end up getting smashed into a paste or hurled into
the lake. When satisfied it wouldn’t wake up, he took a deep breath and forced a step forward.

He pushed back his thoughts, thinking of the safety of his students, of protecting Lily’s boy,
and crawled into the hole. They were lucky there were clouds in the sky, but he didn’t know how
long it would be before the wind whipped them away and with it, the only protection from the moon
and what it turned Lupin into.

With each moment he kept pushing back all the fear he’d felt being there. He pushed back the
memories that bombarded his brain as if they were trying to get him to admit to being a coward.

The tunnel was darker than he remembered and lacked the growling that he’d once
experienced as a youth. That growling was replaced with voices. They grew louder the closer he got
to the end of the tunnel. He slowed his movements and used all the stealth skills he’d attained during
his service under the Dark Lord. He removed his wand from his sleeve and skulked even closer until
he could distinguish the voices: Lupin, Potter, Granger, Weasley and . . . Black.

Sirius Black was there.

So it had been a Gryffindor to let him enter the castle, and that Gryffindor had been Lupin.

He reached the end of the tunnel and pushed slowly, the creak from the door masked by their
voices.

The light in the room was dim, but he could still see well. He climbed the old ladder, testing
each rung before he ascended. When he got to the top, he remained in a crouched position. He froze
when their voices went quiet. Had they heard him?
He counted to ten and kept his wand pointed at the door. When satisfied no one was coming, he crept closer.

“Why are you doing this? I kept your secret! You earned my trust and you just threw it away!” Granger’s voice was angry but he could hear specks of pain within each word.

“I shouldn’t have doubted you would figure it out,” Lupin said. “What gave me away?”

“Professor Snape’s work about werewolves. It’d been so sudden and coincided with your disappearance that I put two and two together,” she said.

He couldn’t help but grin at that.

But almost as soon as the grin appeared, it ended and he chose that point to burst through the doorway.

“Expelliarmus.” Black’s and Lupin’s wands came to his hand.

He smiled at their surprised faces. At how Lupin raised his hands and tried to explain. He wouldn’t listen to any excuse, but in the back of his mind he knew Dumbledore would try to ease what they’d done.

His eyes darted to the children. Weasley was hugging his rat and his leg was injured, bleeding, but not to the point it was life-threatening. Granger had her back against the wall and Potter was in front of her, trying to play hero again.

Snape glared at Sirius. This was the man that betrayed the Potters. He was the reason for Lily’s death. “What a wonderful surprise to find both of you here.”

“Severus, you should liste—”

How dare he use his first name like they were friends? He pointed his wand to Lupin to silence him. “Shut up, wolf. Dumbledore didn’t listen to me when I told him you couldn’t be trusted. I hope you get the dementor’s kiss right along with Black.

“Snivellus, you’re wrong every time you put your greasy presence in front of us.” Snape took a step forward, placing the point of his wand on the man’s neck. He could feel his magic scorching Black’s skin. It was one of the most pleasing sensations he’d ever experienced.

“Just give me a reason.” Snape took another step. “Please,” he said, following with a snarl that would’ve rivaled Lupin in his wolf form.

Unfortunately, Black wasn’t stupid and chose to shut his mouth.

Then, before he could react, someone shouted and jolts of pain stabbed into his back and he fell. He could’ve sworn he heard his skull crack right before he lost consciousness.

AN/ Hope you like it! I definitely loved this and next week chapter too. It might be because it’s one of my fave books but… Oh well you will see and tell me what you think on the reviews :P
Chapter 16: Triple Idiocy

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

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Chapter 16: Triple Idiocy

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June 1994

He opened his eyes and immediately regretted it as the dust around him swirled and the room spun. He forced them to stay open and tried to move into an upward position. A metallic taste coated his tongue. It was blood. He must’ve bit his tongue when he lost consciousness.

What in the seven circles of hell happened?

When he tried to move again, this time forcing himself to sit up, a sting shot through his head from the back all the way to the front. He braced one hand on the floor to make sure he didn’t fall over, and then blinked a few times as if it would help the spinning.

No one was around. Why was he in the shrieking shack? He gave in and closed his eyes. It was as if that action brought forth what happened earlier. He wasn’t sure how earlier though.

“Shit,” he muttered. That idiotic child. He’d been trying to save those brats and Potter attacked him. Where were they now? Did Black take them?
He opened his eyes again, relieved that the reeling had eased somewhat, and got to his feet. He immediately placed a hand against a wall just in case. It wouldn’t do for him to fall over and knock himself out again.

Licking his lips, he took a step forward, grunting as his knee threatened him with a steady ache. He ignored the pain and went towards the exit, not caring about the massive hole in the wall. Maybe the cause was another spell of Potter’s. He sat at the edge of the trapdoor and slowly climbed down. He needed to find them.

The tunnel’s silence made his senses focus even more. The walk back seemed longer than it was when he was coming here. Granted, at the time he hadn’t been injured.

He forced his steps to quicken when he heard a male scream. He rushed forward, climbing up the hole, the dirt and stones, and twigs scarring his hands and gathering under his nails. When he got out of the hole, he saw the three students in front of them, terror on their faces. They were hugging each other, with Weasley between Potter and Granger.

He took a step toward them but froze upon hearing a rumbling growl, a growl he still heard in occasional nightmares. He twisted around and spread his arms to cover the children.

His nightmare was there in his true form. It was there with salivating tongue and dripping fangs. The smell of wet dog came to his nostrils.

The amber eyes fixed on him, but he steeled his nerves and refused to budge. He was unsure if his refusal to move was foolish bravery or cowardice not allowing him to move. He was the lost prey that it wanted to devour.

The animal raised his paw and claws slammed into his chest, making him fall backward. He felt the hit against the rocks in his back more than the embedding of claws.

His ears registered Granger’s scream and then another growl.

“No!” Potter’s voice made him reach out. He tried to grab him to keep him from rushing forward.

“Potter!” When he saw Granger trying to do the same, he stopped her, refused to let another jump into danger. “Don’t be as foolish as your friend!”

Another howl sounded in the distance and the growling ended. They waited a few minutes in silence. He cursed in his head when Potter was nowhere to be seen. Now he needed to find the boy while he protected these two. He couldn’t leave them alone with a werewolf on the loose.

“We need to find him.” Granger had stopped struggling, so he released her from his grasp.

“Yes, Miss Granger, but it would be insane if I let you and this weakling chase a werewolf.”

“Hey, I’m hurt!” Weasley said, his vocal volume just under yelling.

He didn’t bother turning to look at the boy as he waved his wand, lifting him and placing his body onto a floating stretcher. “Shut your mouth, Weasley. Your bleeding is enough to make us vulnerable so please, don’t use your mouth and make us even more detectable.”

 Worthless idiots.

“You’re hurt too, sir.”
“Who cares about him,” Ron muttered, he noticed she shot him a look but couldn’t quite make out what she was trying to express, and he honestly didn’t give a shit.

Instead, he bit back the urge to yell at her for stating the obvious and in a calm voice said, “And whose fault is that, Granger? I’m here because of your friends’ stupidity. I didn’t think you’d be such an idiot along with him.” He could tell his words wounded her, but he didn’t have time to care.

“Hermione is not an idiot. She’s trying to he—”

“Ron, don’t—”

Snape glared at Weasley then directed the same cold look at her. He raised his chin. “If you want to be helpful then I suggest that you take your wand out and control your friend. Get him back to Hogwarts. Do you think you can manage that?”

“No, sir.”

“No?” he raised an eyebrow at that. It wasn’t like her to go against authority when she was directly ordered to do something.

“I can’t leave Harry alone, sir. Please let me go with you.”

Snape studied the girl. He’d never known such loyalty. It was admirable at least.

He pursed his lips. “You’d probably try to go on your own if I didn’t allow it,” he said. “Very well, Granger.”

“Hey, what about me?” Ron said.

Snape glanced at him. “You are to go where you’re most useful.” He waved his hand at the stretcher and it took off at a much faster speed than what anyone else would use.

“Shit!” he heard Weasley yell as he went out of sight and back to Hogwarts.

He thought Granger would protest what he’d done, but she looked fascinated and then muttered, “Wand-less magic, I need to learn that.”

He had to withhold a smile at her curiosity.

Then he moved. He pressed his hand against his chest, the blood leaking onto his palm. Thankfully, the injury wouldn’t cause him to lose a significant amount of blood. He was grateful that the werewolf hadn’t use his fangs or he would’ve had to join Lupin in drinking Wolfsbane next month. His throbbing head was the biggest source of annoyance. His thoughts were cloudy and his vision looked as if a light fog coated his surroundings.

He heard Granger moving behind him, but put the majority of his focus on his surroundings, trying to find some trace of Potter among the shadows and trees. When satisfied Potter wasn’t hiding there, he chose a direction and continued onward.

He couldn’t stop. He couldn’t fail Lily, and he refused to let that blasted werewolf have the boy for dinner or let Black kill him. The man had been nowhere in sight since Lupin transformed. Maybe he was using Lupin as a distraction so he could escape from Potter. Now, like a fool, the boy had entered the forest.

He looked up at the sky as he waited for Granger to catch up. Dementors were flying away,
quicker than usual, a sign that they were being forced away rather than searching for anything or leaving of their own accord, and there were far too many of them. Waves of them.

He headed in the direction they came from and felt dark thoughts try to take over his mind. Chills shot up his back and he felt the skin on his arms prickle.

He climbed down a small hill and saw part of the lake that was surrounded by trees. That place was usually rife with animal activity, but there was not as much as an owl hooting. He raked his eyes across the area and stopped when he saw a few shadows moving at the very edge of the lake. He crept toward it, keeping his wand dim enough not to be detected but illuminated enough that he could see where he was stepping.

When he crossed the distance he darted behind a rock and peered over it, he heard Granger behind him, but barely. She was as good at stealth as he was. If she survived Potter’s idiocy, she’d be a hell of a witch when she was older.

He waited a few moments to see if the bodies would move. When they didn't, he approached. He leaned down and checked their pulse. He relaxed when he felt Potter’s pulse. Black was alive as well, though he was less relieved at that. He moved to transform two rocks in to stretchers but saw Granger had already done so.

He levitated the two bodies onto them and glanced around the area to see if Lupin was lingering. He couldn’t care less where that wolf went as long as he left them alone. Him being punished for aiding Black would be ideal, but having him gone was enough.

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He couldn’t believe it. An Order of Merlin of third class offered to him. For catching the blasted Black and saving the irresponsible Potter. He’d heard it straight from the minister’s, who was now walking beside him, mouth. At one time it would’ve felt surreal, it would’ve felt pleasant, but now it felt empty. He was satisfied he caught Black, yet it still meant nothing to him.

No matter what he did, he’d never been seen as a good one, and as he aged he found himself caring less. Found himself happiest in his dungeons, brewing his potions, and being left alone with his guilt.

Today, a day filled with things he thought he’d always wanted, was a day of annoyances.

But he’d still get that Order of Merlin. They only needed to check on Potter. The minister wanted to talk to the boy and—

A loud rumble ripped through the area. He whipped out his wand and pointed it at the source of the noise.

“What was that?” the minister said.

“It sounded like an explosion from the…” With a growl, he took off running, ignoring the words of confusion from the minister at his back.

No.
This couldn’t be. He must be wrong.

As he took the stairs in twos, he forgot his mauled chest, he forgot his tired body. He continued forward until he reached the upper battlements of the tower.

Something collided with his feet. His wand pointed at the night and he ordered in silence to open the darkness to his eyes.

A burn shot across the palm of the hand holding his wand. The pressure almost made the delicate pattern dig into his skin. He contained his need to blast away the rest of the wall and pushed back the thought of checking to see if a corpse was lying in the grass below them. He knew there would be no body. He knew what happened.

He pushed back a scream of rage. How did Black escape?

Potter. Potter did something.

He twirled and climbed down the stairs.

All inexplicable things were caused by Potter.

The boy would pay. He would make sure of it. Not for ripping any Glory away, or making a fool of him, but for letting a killer loose. He would punish that boy with no one being any of the wiser. Every wrong step, he’d be there to make sure Potter’s years at Hogwarts were as close to torture as they could be.

Dumbledore was in front of the infirmary door. How could this man let this happen right under his nose?

“He has escaped! Potter has something to do with this Dumbledore and you can’t deny it.”

Oh, but he would deny it. He knew he would.

“Potter is inside the infirmary, Severus. I doubt he did it.”

Of course you fucking do. The calm voice enraged him more.

“Maybe he apparated away? Some mages can do it without a wand,” the minister tried to add.

“Only the headmaster can do that. The castle doesn't allow it,” Dumbledore said. “I just left Potter under Pomfrey’s care.”

“Don’t play with me, Albus.” Severus had enough and took a step forward, slamming the door open and walking towards the three students that occupied the infirmary.

Always them. Meddling into business that didn’t concern them.

His eyes found Potter. The boy’s eyes held defiance. Hate. After saving him, that’s what he got.

He looked at him the way Lily had after she aligned herself with the elder Potter, leaving him alone.

“What did you do you stupid child?”

“Professor what do you think you are doing? These children need rest not a brutish interrogation,” Madam Pomfrey said.
He kept his focus on Potter.

He could see it. He could see pieces of Potter’s memories in the deepness of those green eyes.

He’d done it.

“They’ve been here the entire time, Severus. For as much magic we have, we are still unable to be in two places at the same time or divide ourselves.” Dumbledore’s words were right but wrong at the same time.

He knew that the old fool was hiding something too.

This whole room was full of liars and secret keepers. He glared at the man.

Whatever Potter did, whatever his precious Gryffindors did, they were never wrong. They were never going to be punished.

He even knew Lupin wouldn’t be punished for his actions.

Without saying another word, he stormed out of the infirmary.

Dumbledore followed him and when they were out in the hall, said, “I have my reasons, Severus.”

Severus glared at him. “I bet you do,” he said with the most hate-filled voice he’d ever directed at the elder wizard. When he saw Dumbledore’s eyes widen, he stalked off. Today was further evidence that no one cared. It was time to take out his own justice on people.

He would slip some information to his Slytherins and make those foolish Gryffindors pay for their actions. Vengeance was sweet.


AN: Next month is going to have a weird update schedule. Two times per month but with two chapters due their length. Hope you liked it and leave me a comment with your thoughts. Until next week!
Chapter 17: Threat

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 17: Threat

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January 1995

The shadowed ceiling with a floating dim light bored him. He was tired yet unable to fall asleep. He’d tried the muggle method of counting sheep to keep his mind off this year’s events, but it failed to send him into slumber. Just when he thought Potter couldn’t get into anything more dangerous, he got stuck in a blasted contest of death that was magically impossible for him. This time he knew it wasn’t Potter’s fault he was in the situation.

But the unknown behind that wasn’t the only thing making him tense. He found himself hoping for Potter’s death. As the year progressed he felt himself become crueler and colder.

And it scared him.

His dark mark was getting clearer, so he suspected that the Dark Lord was behind this fate thrust upon Potter. The Dark Lord was recovering his strength and with it, his memories of past mistakes tried to take the most dominant position in his mind.

To add to his own worries he had found that his boomslang skin was missing from his stores. Only Potter had the nerve to steal from him.
Anger sparked and he put no effort into restraining it since he was alone. It was a challenge when he was among people to never let the full force of his rage out. It was especially difficult when the cause of the anger was the irritable Potter, his useless sidekick Weasley, and Granger. That miserable know-it-all was falling to the boy’s clutches. If she continued on this path she’d soon put no effort into anything and her knowledge would suffer.

When he was cruel to her when Malfoy hexed her teeth, he knew that was going a bit too far. It was just that she was young and naive and he hated she could fall into Potter’s dangerous life. He hoped his indifference woke some of the logical sense he knew she had.

He sighed. It reminded him of the situation with Lily, except of course he had no close attachment to Granger the way he had Lily. In that circumstance, he had to be cruel to her. She was a muggleborn, cursed by Draco. As someone under the awakening Dark Lord’s service, he couldn’t show any kindness to someone like her.

A scream tore him from his musings, and he launched from his bed. He stumbled a bit before limping lightly to his office door. He opened it and looked toward his cabinet of potions. It’d been opened and the contents spilled as if someone had been caught rummaging inside it.

He tore open the door that led to the corridor to find Filch and Moody there. They had a golden egg as well. A champion’s one.

“What is the meaning of this?”

“I have proof, sir!” The man lifted the egg with both hands. “The poltergeist stole this.”

Why would Peeves do that? That spirit was mischievous but not in that way. It was not a thief.

A rough noise came from the stairs, making him turn his head in that direction. After a few seconds, he looked back at the egg.

A connection.

“Potter,” he growled. “He is here. It’s his egg. He is with his invisibility cloak. Always breaking the rules aren’t you, Potter? I caught you now stealing from me boy.” His smirk grew and he started to walk around the cold stones, ignoring the fact that he was sans slippers and was only wearing a grey nightshirt. He extended his arm and tried to catch him.

If he could catch him he’d be able to prove that it was Potter meddling with his stores so he could prepare polyjuice

“Snape, you are behaving oddly tonight,” Moody said. He turned his attention to the auror. The disturbing eye fixed on him.

“I’m not.”

“What if I checked in your office? A pet doesn’t change when his owner is away. Not as significantly as you supposedly have anyway.”

He swallowed at the accusation. Though Moody was an auror that had put almost all the Death eaters in Azkaban, he had no reason to incarcerate him. He’d been cleared by Dumbledore.

He took a step to the side. “You’re free to do so. You won’t find anything because I am not the same man I was.”
While it was true that he wouldn't find anything, the latter part of his statement was partly a lie. This past year proved that the darkness would remain in him as long as he lived.

“Oh, I’m not so sure of that.” Moody answered with arrogance. “Go away, Snape, before I am tempted to find something to jail you for. You know I am capable of it.”

He wanted to bite back, but instead the threat left his body numb. Did he have something that would incriminate him? He took a step back when he realized his Dark Mark would be enough for that man. He’d probably make up lies as well, and they would believe him.

He feared Azkaban as much as any wizard, so he turned and left before Moody carried out his threat.

AN: These month chapters are short so I will post double on the same day with a week break in between (this is for give me time to translate and for not sink you with notifications each week). The motive which they are short? Dates, story flow, scene coherence and cliffhangers. So that’s why I don’t’ have equal length in all chapters but I want to be fair because I’m a reader too. In a couple of hours I will post the other chapter to not overwhelm with notifications. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think ;)}
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

March 1995

After checking a label of one of his many bottles, he took note of the quantities missing. He was right. Ingredients used to make the polyjuice potion were gone. A set of gillyweed was missing as well.

And these ingredients were missing on a regular basis. Potter and his friends were the only culprits that he could think of. There was no other person with enough stupidity and courage to steal from him.

Someone knocked on his door, but before he could invite the person in, it opened. Moments later, someone called his name, his voice filled with nervousness.

At least the man had the decency to close the door this time and didn’t spurt nonsense and worries in the middle of the corridors with students around. The man had been trying to talk to him for a while, and he’d been avoiding him.

He didn’t need another worry. He didn’t need to confirm what he already knew to be true. He’d had enough with watching Potter risk his life in those foolish challenges. Now his Dark Mark was becoming active and showed him a future he didn’t want to come.

He’d have to go back to the Dark Lord, kneel at his feet, and explain what he’d done in the
past years. He’d be tortured if the man wasn’t pleased. He would be back to the days of even less
sleep, and two lives he’d have to balance.

“Karkaroff.” The man was in a slight panic. He was showing his mark freely in the office.
“Hide that.”

“Neither of us can deny what’s happening, Severus. He . . . he is coming back. We should go.
We should run. We are traitors and you know what he does with those.” The accent became so thick
on the man’s tongue that it sounded like another language.

Severus had grown used to the risk. He’d been at risk since the day he’d decided to betray the
Dark Lord, but Karkaroff didn’t know what he was doing. The worst he’d have would be temporary
torture.

“Do what you want to, Karkaroff, but I am not running. I have no reason to do so.” He
narrowed his eyes on his arm. “And do what I say. Cover that. You’re putting a lot of people at
risk.”

The man repeated his previous words. “You can’t deny the fact that he is coming back,
Severus! That he is going to…” The words of the man died and his shoulders dropped. “There’s no
use talking to you.” Karkaroff opened the door and froze.

Severus angled his head to see what had stopped the man. Potter was there.

Stupid Karkaroff and his lack of secrecy. It was surprising that he wasn’t in Azkaban or dead.

How much did Potter hear? Why was he there? Was Potter trying to steal from him again? This
could be the proof he needed without checking the boy’s mind.

Karkaroff pushed past Potter and rushed down the hallway. From the look on Potter’s face, he
knew the boy had seen the mark.

How wonderful.

“How are you planning something again, Potter, or did you want to steal more of my ingredients?”
The boy’s eyes moved to him, startled to find him there.

“No sir. Of course not. I was just…passing by.”

His eyes bore into the boy’s, trying to see something, trying to feel something more than a twist
of emotions, but the contact was avoided sooner than desired.

“It’s obvious you are doing something, so be a brave Gryffindor and do not lie to me.” His last
words came with a special emphasis as he slowed down and lowered his tone. “You are stealing
from me. I know it’s you. But your luck and your blasted invisibility cloak wouldn’t save you from
veritaserum. Does your brain know what it is, Potter?”

The boy shook his head. “A kind of juice, sir?”

“It’s a potion that draws the truth from liars. One drop and even the Dark Lord would spill all
his secrets if I wished to slip it into his cup.” His voice lowered. “So imagine what a boy like you
would reveal if you consumed it.” He was pleased to see the boy swallow.

“I don’t have anything to hide.”
“Do you take me for a stupid man, Potter?” He took a step forward. “I know you are brewing polyjuice again and stealing from me. I’ll find out why and make you pay for it. This time the Headmaster won’t come to your rescue.”

The boy’s eyes narrowed with hate. The same hate that Lily had shown him. That James Potter had shown him. His teeth clenched and before he could stop himself, he slammed the door in the boy’s face.

He couldn’t stand those memories looking at him.

Not now.

Not when everything was crumbling down again and he was powerless in stopping it from happening.

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AN: Hope you liked it! He isn’t innocent at all, and his insecurities, his darkness… I wanted to be them present. With Moody around, the Dark Lord coming back… Our Severus is a mess. Well. Hope you liked it and see you on, July 15th. Until then, lots of huggles and thank you for your support.
Chapter 19: Back to a Double Life: Part 1

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 19: Back to a Double Life: Part 1

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June 1995

The sweat fell from his neck and his bones ached from the need to maintain a stiff, strict posture. He couldn’t deny that he’d felt the desire to run away like Karkaroff at the first itch. At how he felt the need to grab his arm and scream.

He needed to check it, but couldn’t since they were still in the middle of the blasted challenge and Potter was still inside the labyrinth. He had to make sure he was safe. Dumbledore was here, but he wasn’t a Potion’s master and potions were usually needed during this event.

He locked his knees at the first sign of weakening legs, but couldn’t contain a growl. Albus took his blue gaze away from their focus on the labyrinth. “Severus?”

The mark felt like it was going to rip through his skin and melt his arm. The only time it’d ever hurt this much was when the Dark Lord had disappeared. He opened his trembling hand, and he forced it to still.

“The mark it’s--”

A scream of joy interrupted his words. They turned their focus on the couple that appeared at the labyrinth’s exit. But one body was too pale. It was too quiet and still.
He looked at the other boy, bloodied and bruised. In an instant, he knew that everyone had been deceived. He knew that today one student had died and a monster had risen. It was just as Dumbledore predicted years ago when he asked for his aid. His time to protect the boy from the Dark Lord had come.

The joy turned into mournful and terrified screams the second people realized what had happened.

All this year had been a plot under their noses. But who? No teacher from this place would harm Potter and no one reeked of being under control of someone.

When he looked again, the majority of the students were crying and trying to comfort each other. The teachers tried to calm them down and get them to the castle in an orderly manner.

This was madness.

He couldn’t find Potter among the chaos, and Albus was distracted with consoling Diggory’s father. That young man didn’t deserve this. That family didn’t deserve to be ripped apart the way it was.

Another innocent victim.

And Potter was in the middle of it. The prophecy was right, and that was why Potter always was involved with something related to the Dark Lord.

He needed to find the boy because whoever did this wouldn’t stop now that their master was alive. The fanaticism of the old Death Eaters was too high to ignore. So he tried to walk to Dumbledore, ignoring the burn on his arm. He paused when blue eyes met his, an understanding crossing between them saying that he too had noticed Potter wasn’t there.

Dumbledore started to walk towards him. Snape turned toward the castle and moved, walking slowly until the headmaster caught up to him.

“Alastor Moody took Potter. He might not be what we thought, Severus. Go get some veritaserum and join me in Alastor’s office with the minister as fast as you can. I’ll go with Minerva and keep him from hurting Potter.”

He inclined his head. “If you’re sure.”

“I can handle it, Severus, but if things get messy I will need your wand there too.”

They parted ways and broke into elegant runs with their robes flying behind them.

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The first thing he did was to send the message to the minister by flue. While the man came, he went to his stores and picked up the veritaserum vial without taking the time to read the label. It was the privilege of being an organized man. He made it back to Dumbledore’s fireplace in time to see the minister cleaning his robes.

“Professor Snape, I was expecting Dumbledore to give the prize to the winner.”
“There is no time for that. Accompany me, sir, if you please. Dumbledore and Potter are in danger.” He didn’t wait to see if the man would give him a word back and headed towards the Dark Arts Office. He heard the minister following behind him as he took his wand out of his sleeve.

When he slammed open the door, he saw the headmaster immobilizing Moody against the seat and Potter in a half-conscious state at the side. With his wand up, he rushed towards them. He uncorked the vial in his other hand before Dumbledore could claim his attention.

He forced the man to open his mouth, poured the transparent liquid inside it, and then held it shut.

He smirked when he felt the man swallow, and saw Minerva’s ropes tying him tighter against the chair.

The minister came to their side.

“What is the meaning of this, headmaster?”

Albus turned to look at the minister.

“With the goblet’s odd behavior we’ve suspected someone was involved with it. We’ll know who it is in a moment.”

Severus took the man’s flask and smelled it. “This is polyjuice,” he muttered and raised his wand towards “Moody”. “Revelio!” A gold light erupted from his wand and hit the man.

Barty Crouch. How is it possible?” Dumbledore asked.

“Wasn’t this man at Azkaban? Perhaps Black wasn’t the only one to escape last year,” the minister said.

“My father freed me because of my mother’s plea. He hated me, but he did it for her. He left her in Azkaban and used polyjuice until she died to keep the disguise.” Crouch licked his lips, a bit of spit coming out of the corner of his mouth with the actions. “Then I killed him. I put Potter’s name in the goblet. I serve the Dark Lord and helped him return.” He looked at Snape. “I’m not a traitor like you that scurried away. I gave glory to the Dark Lord and almost did what no other could. I almost killed that pathetic boy that stole our lord’s power. You did nothing when you could have.”

He wanted to punch the man in the face, but held his temper in check. He held the eyes without changing his expression at all. He felt the eyes of the minister and Minerva on him, doubting him.

“Where is Alastor Moody? Did you kill him too?” Dumbledore asked.

“No, he is alive in the trunk. I needed a fresh supplement for the Polyjuice potion. I took the other ingredients from Snape’s stores. It was easy since he tends to blame Potter for everything.”

Dumbledore moved over to the trunk and opened it.

“Minerva, stay with Severus. Minister, I assume you want to take this man into custody and to interrogate him further. He is our proof that the Dark Lord came back and that he’d used Harry Potter. Alastor and Harry will come with me to the infirmary. They need attention,” Dumbledore ordered in his characteristically subtle way and everyone agreed.

Then, he was alone with Minerva and the Death Eater. A long night was ahead of them.
“You feel it, right?” Crouch said. “The Dark Lord is calling us and you know what happens when you don’t come. Don’t you.”

He gripped his wand tighter. Yes. Yes, he knew what happened.

“Severus?” He ignored Minerva’s worried call and pressed his wand further into their prisoner’s skin.

“You don’t know me.”

The door opened again. Their skin prickled and spikes of cold shot down every nerve ending in him. His pulse quickened and he took a step back from his position when he saw the cause.

Neither Minerva nor he could move when the black mass flew at their side and bent toward Crouch’s face.

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Anger festered in the room. Crouch was soulless and being dragged to Azkaban as nothing more than a lump of flesh. Now they were there in the infirmary around Potter, his friends, and even the blasted mutt. The rage was tangible.

And for once, he shared the same feelings that the majority of the room felt. They were still discussing the decision to give Crouch the kiss of death with Fudge. It took all of his restraint not to wrap his hands around Fudge’s neck and choke him in muggle fashion. He could see how it would release some hostility.

The bloody bastard was denying it! He was denying the Dark Lord was back. Even with all the evidence presented. It was tempting to press his still burning mark against the minister’s face and brand him to the point it would be obvious to everyone that the Dark Lord had returned.

After the lull in the discussion, he stepped forward. He had to do this. They couldn’t fight the Dark Lord alone. He pulled up his sleeve, letting his secret out in front of the children that already distrusted him.

His Dark Mark, alive and as fiery as the first time he took it, was exposed to all.

“Look at this if you don’t believe,” he snapped, barely holding in an insult toward Fudge. “It makes me want to rip off my arm. The Dark Lord calls his servants through this mark. He’s calling for them even now.” The minster trembled and took a step back as if he were going to run. “You have to do something!”

The minister looked away, fear and disgust on his face. “I don’t know what you all are up to, but he’s dead. No one comes back from the dead.” He tossed Potter a bag, then, as if their downfall hadn’t been revealed, put on his hat, and left the infirmary. He let his sleeve fall back to cover the mark. “Coward.”

“So Severus, he’s a scared man. His reaction is normal.”

“So you aren’t going to run?” Minerva asked.
“I am not like that man or Karkaroff. I am not a coward.”

“I expect no less from you, Severus. I have faith in you,” Dumbledore said and gave a smile that both irritated and calmed him.

“Before you go, I want you to know. We have to work together. Keep the grudges at bay. At least until this is all over. We have to be strong and trust each other.”

What in the…Was he talking about Potter? Was he going to inform him of his work as a double spy? Putting that kind of faith in that weak child was risking not only him, but also the entire wizarding world.

He opened his mouth with the intention to protest, but the Headmaster turned his eyes from him to Potter’s bed.

Was that man really going to…?

“Come, Sirius. It’s time to let the old grudges be buried.”

He meant Black? He couldn’t be asking him to play friend with someone whose tormenting still haunted him. The dog moved from Potter’s bed and narrowed his eyes.

The dog took the human form of a man he despised with his whole heart. He was less decrepit as he had remembered, but it was still the same face.

“Now, both of you shake hands to start a new beginning. We need both of you to trust each other as allies.” Dumbledore’s order made him ill. He could see equal disgust in Sirius eyes.

He extended his hand. This meant nothing to him, but he’d do it to placate Dumbledore. Fortunately, he worked alone so the contact with the mutt would be at a minimum.

Sirius took it. They squeezed each other’s hands as hard as they could. They kept their gazes locked and didn’t give up the grasp until the headmaster cleared his throat.

“All right. Now, Severus. I ask you again, are you still willing to do what you must do? I know you’ll be in more danger than almost any of us, but you’re the only one that can do it.”

He’d told the man a thousand times that he was sure. He wasn’t a kid making a decision on what flavour ice cream he wanted. “I am.”

“Then, good luck tonight, Severus.”

He turned and felt everyone’s eyes following him as if he were going to his execution.

And he just might be.

AN: Heh… Hope you liked it. This is another one of my faves of the past. How he show the mark, how his fears come, how his pain returns… Our Severus, under that stoic face is human. I hope you liked it and tell me what you think if you can. I will post the second part in a couple of hours :*
August 1995

The summer was as horrid as he’d expected, and having Sirius Black seated in front of him now reminded him of all those years of suffering. It was icing on the cake of having to deal with the Dark Lord while double spying.

“So tell us, Severus. How was your meeting with the Dark Lord?” Dumbledore’s voice made him turn his eyes away from trying to burn a hole into Black’s skull. “Did you have any problems?”

His voice was as cold as his expression. “No,” he said, lying. The dark lord had bestowed upon him, and a few others, a cruciatus torture that lasted for hours. “The Death Eaters, as I expected, are wary of my return, but Dark Lord accepted my explanation.” Dumbledore nodded. “They won’t let me in the more private meetings unless the Dark Lord requests my presence, and he hasn’t since his return.”

“So you are useless as always.” Sirius’s intervention made him turn his eyes back at the dog. He didn’t hold back his hatred toward the mutt.

His nerves were still shaking due to the Dark Lord’s “welcome,” so it was especially difficult to keep from casting that curse himself onto the mutt.
He might be powerless now, but he knew the Dark Lord would start calling for him again.

Convincing his master had been an awful task but he had managed to twist the orders the monster gave to him long ago, and use them to his benefit. He had never stopped being a spy. He had collected information and he was inside of Hogwarts, gaining Dumbledore’s trust. He made the Dark Lord give him the benefit of a doubt.

Besides, he knew that the Dark Lord needed any support he could get and wouldn’t deny anyone “loyal” enough to come back to him.

“At least I go out and do something, mutt.”

“Quiet, both of you,” Dumbledore interrupted. “Severus, you know your position is important. Be cautious and continue as you are. We can’t have you let your guard down now, my friend.”

“It won’t happen, headmaster.” The mutt snorted. His temptation to hex him increasing to the point he had to grab a cup of tea to keep from grabbing his wand. “Do you need to say something or did you choke on a raw chicken bone? Maybe you should go for a plastic toy next time.” He leaned forward. “And some of them squeak!”

Sirius’s smile disappeared.

“If there is no more need of me, I’ll be going. I have some work to do.”

“Back to your little potions?”

Snape smirked. “Why, Sirius, someone has to make the spray to keep you from defecating in the house.”

Dumbledore sighed. “Be careful out there, Severus.”

He placed his cup on the table and stood. The headmaster knew that he should let him go before the mutt attempted to kill him. Besides, he knew that the Death Eaters were monitoring each other and it was better to stay visible for them. He’d do his usual at Hogwarts. Brewing, gathering ingredients, and cursing the heat as he walked to Hogsmeade once per week.

He hoped he could gather information soon to help, but he dreaded that he’d have to become an active participant again. He wasn’t sure if he could destroy another soul for the greater good.

But whether he was prepared or not didn’t matter. He needed to fall into the darkness to give the others a chance to destroy it.

When he closed the door behind him, he let a long breath escape from his lungs.

Still holding the door handle, he rested his head on the wood, fixing his eyes at the top of the dark stairs. He found a pair of brown eyes looking back at him.

He’d forgotten that the Granger girl was here.

It was disturbing that she saw him like this. Saw his vulnerability.

This girl should try to stay safe with her muggle parents. If she were caught during this war, her death would be particularly tortuous since she was a muggle-born.

She was only there because she was Potter’s friend, and once again, a spark of admiration of her loyalty flashed in him.
Dropping his hand from the handle, he straightened. He turned only letting her see his back, as he walked towards the door.

AN: Well... what can I say? They don’t like each other much but I always imagined Severus had a cruel dark humor so... XDDD Okay, hope you liked it and leave me on the comments your thoughts. Next chapter will be on 5th. I have some issues and I still don’t want to overwhelm with notifications.
Chapter 21: The Pink Terror

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 21: The Pink Terror

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September 1995

Classes resumed the same way they did every year, but Hogwarts as a whole was going through many changes. Changes that he knew few people liked. It wasn’t enough for them to have a war to plan and a school to protect while the mighty Potter galloped around with reckless stupidity, now they had to be wary of the ministry. According to him the staff was filled with dangerous teachers who wanted to coup d'état.

The minister was paranoid and dumb enough to think that if he denied something enough, it didn’t exist. He wouldn’t admit that the Dark Lord had returned and that Harry Potter was in the middle of it all.

Now they had terror in pink in a new position there at Hogwarts. All because of that bastard head of the ministry. They couldn’t speak freely, and the students had to be exposed to the so-called “knowledge” of the rodents who taught Defense Against the Dark Arts.

He was used to putting up a mask and had no problem in behaving as he always had. He was a cruel bastard and a strict teacher that fascinated that demon in pink. He once heard she had a thing
for him, to which he responded mentally that he’d rather have dog-form Sirius Black hump his leg.

He knew that she was a Slytherin and a lover of pure breeds. He chuckled to himself for a moment. If she liked pure breeds then the mutt would be good for her. She’d probably be desperate enough that even him shitting on her leg would make her—He wiped that thought from his head as soon as it came. He wouldn’t even expose the dog to that woman.

She might be a servant of the Dark Lord under cover, so he was more cautious than usual. He knew that Potter and his friends were plotting something, but he’d ignore whatever they were doing. If it caused that terror in pink some trouble, he was more than happy to turn a blind eye. But that didn’t mean he wouldn’t take joy in punishing Potter if the situation warranted it.

“I am impressed at how you keep these brats quiet. I read your file, Professor Snape. I had to as the inquisitor of Hogwarts.” The high-pitched voice made him turn his eyes from one of the student’s cauldron, but he didn’t turn to acknowledge the woman. Maybe he should shove the squeaky toy he got for Black, an “anonymous” gift that would show up at Grimmauld place, down her throat to shut her up.

Or maybe he could poison her or just let Longbottom brew next to her. Surely, the boy would make a mistake and cause half her face to melt off.

“Of course. It’s your job.”

The woman cleared her throat. “I saw that you’ve applied for the Professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts position every year since you started working here, yet you never got it.”

“Obviously, as you can see.”

The woman smiled at him. “I like you, Professor Snape. You’re the most efficient person around here apart from Professor McGonagall and Argus Filch, but the direction of the school. The discipline. It’s far too lenient.”

“Yes,” he said. It made him sick that he had to agree with her. Dumbledore never punished Potter when others were expelled from the magic school for less.

Though he doubted they shared the same views on the type of punishments that should be implemented.

Her attention came back to him. “Do you know why you never got your post? A man like you could fit the post perfectly. These boys need discipline, not foolish hand waving.”

Those boys needed to know how to defend themselves.

“To acquire that information, I suggest you ask the headmaster. I am not aware of why he always denies me the post.”

“All right, Professor Snape, I’ll do that. I want to talk to you later about the results.” The woman took a step back, leaving his personal space.

“I would be thrilled to know.” He withheld a cringe when the woman gave a high-pitched fake laugh. She even dared to put her hand on his arm.

“Until later, Professor Snape.”

He and the other students all relaxed when the disgusting woman left. Now he’d have to
fumigate his robe sleeve. Another giggle at his back made him turn. It was Weasley. He took the notes in his hand and whacked the back of the boy’s head.

“Turn to page three hundred. Copy it 50 times and have it on my desk by the end of the day.”

-/-/

The awful office greeted him with a group of meows that made him want to leave immediately. They were as high pitched as Umbridge’s laugh. The fake felines were looking and meowing at him as if he were their new toy to play with.

“Oh, Professor Snape. Come in. My, you are punctual.” The woman waved and retrieved a paper that he supposed was his qualifications.

“I am here as you requested.” He bowed and took a seat, careful not to touch anything else around him, especially with bare hands.

“Professor Snape you passed with the most excellents than any other person.”

He smiled, but it never reached his eyes. Of course he did.

“You and I, as I recall, have the same ideals.”

“Yes,” he said.

“And as I stated before, there is a lack of proper discipline in this school. I will need to interrogate students soon, and I wish to ask you for veritaserum.”

He steeled his surprise behind his cold expression. That had been an unexpected twist.

“Professor Umbridge I would be thrilled to aid you, but as you know, the use of veritaserum on students is as illegal as poisoning them.” The woman laughed, pleased at his pause. He knew that he had her in his clutches. “I have some in stock that I had wanted to use for a time with Potter. The brat is always plotting and creating trouble, as I am sure you are intelligent enough to see.”

The woman's smile became intense.

“Do not worry about that, Professor Snape. I will make sure the law is revoked in this case. It's a necessity to use it so we can maintain the order and stop delinquents that could become a danger.”

He nodded as he registered the information. Did this woman have that much power? Was Fudge so blind in fear that he let this corrupted woman without morals do as she pleased? Perhaps she took advantage of his fear that the Dark Lord really came back.

His mark reminded him that all this wasn’t a nightmare. It had burned once, and he’d gone to his master. Little by little, he was starting to gain his place back into the inner circle. Even if it was,
for now, to give them the status of the school and Dumbledore. It was strange that the Dark Lord hadn’t mentioned Potter, but that could’ve been only when he was present. He still wasn’t allowed at the private meetings.

For now.

“In that case I will provide it to you when you need it. I would be pleased to know that those students can keep no more secrets about their activities.” He didn’t need to feign on this. He knew how frustrating it was to hear lies every day. But despite his threats to Potter about using it against him, he knew he wouldn’t. He wouldn’t use it on any student.

If he wished, he could enter their minds when he pleased. But he wouldn’t do that either. It wasn’t moral and he didn’t want to lose what little faith people had in him. Despite how idiotic they were, he was their teacher and he’d vowed to protect them. Not to betray their fears, their secrets, or their worries.

He knew about humiliation all too well. What this woman was attempting went against what he stood for. If one drop of veritaserum touched a student tongue, it would humiliate them forever. Sometimes, there were things that needed to be kept secret.

“I will tell you when to deliver the vials. Until then, good afternoon, professor.” When Umbridge dismissed him, he saw a self-satisfied smirk flash on her face.

When he closed the door, he gave his own smirk. She’d get her vials, but with a little scent, the woman was stupid enough to mistake water for veritaserum.

AN: Here we are. I hope I am back permanently but I am not completely healed and neither full back at home. But step by step… I hope you liked the chapter and if nothing bad happens, I will see you next week!
Chapter 22: Teaching Against His Will

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 22: Teaching Against His Will

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December 1995

It was unusual for Dumbledore to call him a few days before the student’s departure for the holidays, and even more so in the middle of the night. The man hadn’t given explanations and only said he needed to talk to him. It would be naive to assume that it wasn’t concerning the Dark Lord.

When he stepped upon the last step, he heard voices dissipating.

When he opened the door, he only saw Dumbledore in the office, looking at the fireplace embers dying. He waited for the headmaster to acknowledge him. After a few more seconds staring at the fireplace, the headmaster turned his body towards him.

“Ah, Severus, here you are. I am sorry for the hours but we must talk.” Dumbledore placed his hands on the desk. The old man looked pale and concerned. “What I feared. It happened.”

Frowning he took a step forward. “What are you talking about Albus? Did the Dark Lord attack somewhere? I wasn’t summoned?”

“That’s not exactly. He entered Harry’s mind. He did it while he was using Nagini to attack Arthur
Weasley as he patrolled near the department of mysteries. You know what is in there, right, Severus?”

A connection between Potter and the Dark Lord could put everything they were working toward in danger. But how long had Dumbledore suspected this, and why didn’t he do something to circumvent this situation before it happened.

The prospect of the Dark Lord probing Potter’s mind at a distance made him shiver. His master could get access to anything Potter saw, including, him. Thankfully, he was never kind to Potter. Never let his mask fall when near the boy.

He focused on Dumbledore’s question. There were many things in the department of mysteries to know about but… “The prophecy?”

“Exactly. He wants it. I’m sure that he will start using this connection with Potter.” Dumbledore’s voice was filled with dread and despair. He’d never heard such a tone come from the man.

“And what do you propose we do to avoid it? The boy is not an occlumens, and he has a lack of discipline for it.” Dumbledore fixed his eyes on him.

No.

He couldn’t want him to…

“You will teach him.”

“No, find someone else.”

Dumbledore slouched ever so slightly. “You’re a skilled man and you know how the Dark Lord will intrude on him. You won’t be easy on the boy, and that’s why it should be you.”

“You can do the same as I can. I won’t risk my position because of Potter. That boy can’t do it, and I have no time to teach him. I haven’t the patience or the desire to let him get a chance to see inside my mind.” It was risky. It was absurd. He couldn’t let that boy near him.

“You will do it and that’s final, Severus.”

“And what if the Dark Lord sees it? What if Potter slips my aid to him? He will kill me.” His voice lowered into a threat. “Do you not care for the implications? For what could happen when the Dark lord asks about it?”

“You can tell him I ordered you to do it, but you are putting no effort into it. You can say Potter is too stupid. There are always excuses, Severus.”

“If, by some slim chance, the boy succeeds, it will point straight to me teaching him.” He crossed his arms in front of his chest. “It’s a stupid idea. Too risky. Especially when you have the skills to teach him.”

“Don’t, Severus. You are going to do it because the boy needs you. I can’t risk my plans either.”

And there was the truth. Albus didn’t want to teach the boy for the same reasons. Potter could possibly transmit the Order’s plans to the Dark Lord.
His plans, his safety didn’t matter. Well, it wasn’t as if he didn’t know that already.

“You will start in January. Right now, he’s at the Weasley’s residence.”

Without another word, he left the office. No more arguing. It would do no good.

He knew that he was just a tool but risking his life in a manner like that was crossing a line. His skills with occlumency were one of the most useful defenses he had. So carelessly just to preserve his mind. How could he trust a man that didn’t at least consider his opinion?

All this time he trusted Albus as much as he could. For years, he’d had to act blindly because the man refused to tell him the full plan. Sometimes he wondered if he’d be better off with the Death Eaters. At least he knew where they stood. They were blunt with him.

He climbed down the stairs before they moved on their own, but he didn’t go to his dungeons. Right now, he needed a walk in the cold. He was an object to be used and tossed away, but now Potter was one as well.

When the cold night air hit his face, he closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

Occlumency with Potter. He had never thought that he would have to do such a thing, and less in this age. The boy wouldn’t learn much, if anything, from him. Occlumency required trust and that was something neither of them had with each other.

Potter would fail and Dumbledore would have to deal with the consequences of his actions. He’d be lying if he said he didn’t look forward to it a bit. That was the darkness in him speaking.

Dropping his shoulders, he looked at the sky. Why couldn’t the boy be more like Lily?

He would have to remove some memories before he did this. He couldn’t stand the thought of letting the boy see how his father had humiliated him. It would only fuel the boy’s arrogance and make him think he had power over him.

Potter would fail in this task. The only thing that the boy could achieve was to irritate him more.

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AN: Hope you liked it. Things will start to… get “twisted” soon :P Let me know what you think and till next week if nothing wrong happens! :3
Chapter 23: Teetering on Edges

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 23: Teetering on Edges

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March 1996

He muttered under his breath as he stormed down the hall. He had to get to his “duty”. Draco had distracted him with some stupidity about stealing a gift from another Slytherin. The boy apparently hadn’t learned he couldn’t steal in Hogwarts. No matter if the boy felt overly important because his father was a Death Eater in the Dark Lord’s service.

His godson was acting like the king of the place and reminded him of Potter. At least they were natural enemies, He couldn’t imagine them teaming up. That would truly make his life impossible.

Opening the door to his office, he saw that all was quiet. At first, he thought that Potter decided that he was too good to wait for him. When his eyes scanned the room past his desk, his skin chilled and his throat constricted.

He wouldn't dare…

But he knew that the boy would indeed do it. It was actually happening. The light around the boy, barely viewable due to him blocking the pensieve, was a sign they’d been activated and free to witness. Potter was witnessing what he feared him seeing. What he wanted to keep private.
His hand collided with the boy’s shoulder and ripped him away from the pensieve.

His nostrils flared and when his eyes locked on the confused boy’s face, he felt like he was going to combust from fury. He could imagine how the boy would spread his private tale of torture to his friends.

“S-sorry, sir, I was curious and—”

“You think you can stick your nose in all places, Potter?” His interruption came with a guttural voice as he took a step towards the boy. He had wanted to hex him, punish him, but right now, he wanted to kill him. No matter if he had a debt to pay or a promise binding him, Potter had crossed a line. “That you have a right to do so?”

He had been doing everything for this brat, risking his life, risking his cover and this was the thanks he got? He hadn’t expected praises from Potter, and he didn’t want them, but he expected his privacy. This invasion went too far.

“I didn’t know...”

“Don’t try to fool me.” He took a step closer to the boy, looming over him. The boy had the good sense to take a step back. “So did you have fun, Potter? Watching what a good person your father was with his companions? Did you have fun watching him bully people?”

“He wasn’t like that!” This boy was truly dumb and his denial was right up there with that of the minister’s denials. Even after he witnessed memories, he still defended his father.

“You never knew your father, Potter. I did. The only reason you heard any praise about him was because he was a quidditch player, a Gryffindor, and they’re the favored house. Ever notice how other people from other houses never said anything good about him?”

A spark of realization crossed the boy’s face, but it faded as soon as it came.

“He was an arrogant fame seeker like you, Potter.”

“You’re lying. He was a good man.”

Severus stopped and almost growled at the boy. If he didn’t release some hostility, he would kill the kid.

He snatched a vial from a shelf beside him and threw it so it shattered right beside Potter’s head. “Get...out...” he said. His voice was so cold that even he wondered how he was controlling so much anger.

Potter’s green eyes showed fear. Those eyes were the only thing keeping him from strangling him. “I said get out and don’t dare to come back!” This time the boy turned and ran out of his office.

He pointed at the door and shut it before turning and slamming his hands down on the table. He gritted his teeth, running through all the reasons why he shouldn’t go after and hex him. He needed something more than trying to reason that the boy was needed. The fact he was doing this for Lily was becoming less of a good reason.

With a scream of rage, he raked the books off his desk. His fists collided with the wooden desk until his knuckles hurt. When he felt the resulting pain, he focused on it.

The thought of giving it all up, of going back into a legitimate service with the Dark Lord, came
to his mind. It was tempting now. Merlin, it was tempting to see those Potter loving idiots grovel in the mud.

No. He couldn’t give in. He stood there in his office, taking deep breaths and trying to lock away the dark thoughts and bad memories.

If Dumbledore had listened to him, this wouldn’t have happened. No one on this side ever listened. He wasn’t good enough for good or evil. So there he tottered. Unable to leap either way without a bad outcome.

AN: Ops. I forgot I had to post double today due length and story wise. Have fun and let me know what you think! Our Severus is at the edge :( Till next week my dears!
Chapter 24: Lured

June 1996

Umbridge had called him to her office. While he dreaded the interaction, deep down he was curious at what she wanted. Since she’d “earned” her new position, he’d been inwardly laughing and enjoying all the miserable attempts she made in trying to extinguish the problems that every teacher, student, and ghost created. He’d been adept at avoiding aid to her ever since she’d proclaimed herself Headmistress of Hogwarts.

He had to admit that he got further enjoyment at the fact she targeted Potter frequently. He could tell the current environment was slowly perturbing the boy.

His mind went back to the time Potter’s vial fell and smashed into pieces when he accidentally hit it with his finger when taking notes.

Another perfect zero for Potter, and he’d relished in giving it to him. Adored the hateful look Potter had bestowed upon him.

He knew that he was being vindictive and he didn’t care. He said he’d help protect the boy, not
keep him from suffering. Besides, the boy didn’t need to become a skilled Potioneer. He had Granger to brew illegal things if he needed it.

“Did you call me…?” His words stopped when he opened the office door. A couple of Slytherins was holding Granger and other Gryffindor students at wand point. Potter was restrained in a chair with rustic ties.

How could those idiots let the woman catch them?

“Severus, thank Merlin you are fast. We have a problem. That one we talked about and how we need to make this young man realize he can’t break the rules at will. I need more veritaserum.”

The verbiage that Umbridge sputtered in that moment made him look at the boy then back to her, his eyes filled with indifference. More veritaserum? If he hadn’t have given her water she would have poisoned the students she interrogated.

“All right, but I will need to brew it since you have used up all that I have prepared.” He sniffed. “Even though I suggested that two drops were enough.”

“I was in desperate situations. A little more didn’t hurt.”

He pursed his lips. “Indeed not.”

“How much time do you need? We’re in a hurry.” He lifted his eyebrows at her stupidity. And this woman worked for the ministry?

“A month,” he replied without emotions even though he was enjoying how this irritating woman was at the edge of pulling out every strand of her hair. “If you don’t require anything more, I need to start.”

Umbridge released a cry of frustration. “You are as useless as the rest of them! Get out of here, Snape, and keep in mind that you are now on probation.”

Narcissistic fool. He would not allow himself to be bested by this woman. He knew Dumbledore would come back as soon as she was thrown out and dealt with.

“How thrilling.” His mutter earned a glare from the woman, but he ignored her and glanced at Longbottom, who was deathly pale. “I am eager to poison Potter, but unfortunately it’s still illegal.”

“I said nothing about poisoning,” she said as though she wouldn’t exactly be opposed to it.

“It would take too much to poison him. He would die before we could give him an antidote. He’s stubborn and would prefer to choke in front of us rather than tell us anything.”

He enjoyed the glare he earned from Potter, but it faded when he saw a small hint of panic in those green eyes.

Why was he here? What was he trying to do before he was caught?

He looked at Granger. She had that look of unstoppable thinking. As if she was trying to voice something. The temptation to explore her mind came to him.

“Be gone, Professor Snape, I’ll call you if I need you again. I have matters to discuss with these troublemakers.”

Umbridge’s dismissal interrupted his intentions as he moved his eyes away from Granger. He
bowed and turned.

He would have to contact the rest of the staff to stop this as soon as he left this office. Even if they had to hex this woman to do it.

“Padfoot! He has him.” His hand on the handle stopped when he heard the boy using the Black mutt’s nickname. “In the place he wanted to get to.”

The idiot. Someone needed to teach him the art of secrecy.

“What is he speaking of, Professor Snape? Do you know something? Are you working with Dumbledore too?”

He knew that the Dark Lord would be able to do this since the boy failed in Occlumency. As he had failed teaching him. But was it the truth? Would he risk himself for that mutt? He would check if what Potter was saying was true before taking action. He turned to face them, faking a clueless indifference.

“I don’t know what the boy is referring to. Probably an animal of some kind. A pet. Or he might have hit his head. Kids have terrible imaginations these days, and Potter always likes to make himself seem more important than he is. That’s why he exaggerates publicly and foolishly,” he said, trying to knock some sense into the boy without spilling as freely as he did. “Goyle, stop choking that brainless boy. You might kill the last brain cell he has, and I don't want any more incidents in potions. He’ll end up blowing up the entire castle.”

-/-/-

He rushed into his quarters, paying no mind to the fact he’d slammed the door open and knocked a picture off the stone wall. He had no time to waste.

He ran over to his fireplace. The first thing he had to do was figure out if Potter was being lured into a trap or not. He grabbed some dust. With a harsh throw, he tossed it into the flue. He took a deep breath and stuck his face in it.

“Sirius!” he called as soon as he saw the living room. The house was still covered in dust, a testament that Sirius made no effort to tidy up. On a table was the package he sent. Opened. If he hadn’t been in such a hurry, he would tease the dog about it.

He waited. The house was silent. He tried again. “Damn, you useless dog, answer if you are there!”

“Snape?” A confused voice came from inside after a while and the man came into the room. He was alive and well. “What are yo—?”

“Good,” he interrupted. “So you are not being tortured. Your godson is a failure with Occlumency.”

“What? Snivellus don’t you dare—”

“The Dark Lord has penetrated the boy’s mind, and he thinks he is torturing you at the Mystery Department. We need to act fast. Potter might already be in danger. He’ll probably go there. You
“I will go help.”

“No. You know Dumbledore’s wishes. You can’t be seen again.”

“Don’t tell me what to do, coward. You’re the one who has your hands tied being you-know-who’s pet.”

“Don’t insult me, Black, and it’s not my orders, it’s Dumbledore’s. Do what you’re told.” His voice lowered to an almost imperceptible tone and his words melded with a growl. “I have to go. I need to protect the boy before he gets himself killed.”

He cut the flue connection and straightened. With a wave of his wand, he erased all trace of his use of it. The last thing he needed was that horrible woman trying to throw him from his position at Hogwarts.

But now he needed to find a way to tell Potter that Black wasn’t hurt and that the Dark Lord had fooled him just as Albus predicted he would.

With fast steps, he made his way to Umbridge’s office. When he was in front of the door, he took a deep breath and opened it.

Crabbe, Goyle, and Draco were on the floor, vomiting out everything they’d eaten that day. There was no sign of Potter and his friends. Shit. That boy was going to be the death of him. Of course, he expected that, in fact, he welcomed it, but only when his debt was repaid.

He moved his wand and the disgusting noises stopped. As tempting as it was to leave the vomit on the floor to annoy Umbridge, he cleaned it with a spell.

“Where are they?” The boys were still taking deep breaths and shaking, but he was patient. He knew they wouldn’t let him down.

“Granger and Potter... went with Umbridge to the forest,” his godson said. “The rest used a trick on us.”

“Will you be able to go to the hospital wing by yourselves?” His voice was still cold but the anger melted for a moment.

“Y-yes sir...”

Severus nodded and rushed away. He had a group of reckless students wandering in the forbidden forest to worry about. No wonder Granger got involved. She was only one person against a group, and he knew how peer-pressure worked.

Crossing the castle grounds as fast as he could, he finally reached the forest, not caring if there were students out of place on his way. He was about to cast a tracking spell, but pause when he saw a flock of birds flying away, likely due to being disturbed by something.

He clutched his wand so hard his knuckles became white. A pack of threstals was flying outside the school’s grounds... carrying humans on their backs.

The boy was going to be killed if the Dark Lord was waiting for him. His master didn’t play with minds without a purpose.
Albus was away, and he couldn’t help Potter now without revealing his double game.

Letting his head drop, he took a deep breath. Relaxing his hand he looked at his wand and pursed his lips, he had to do this at least.

He waved his wand. Little by little a silver mist spread across the shadows under the trees until the form of a doe appeared. His breath failed as he looked at it. Every time he saw it, every time he felt her presence, his battered soul cracked again. He hated to cast it, to look at her.

“Find Albus and tell him Potter has been lured to the Ministry Department by the Dark Lord.” The doe turned away and disappeared. His own Patronus knew it was a constant torture for him, but his feelings still claimed it and it would remain like that until the end of his life.

He looked up at the sky and smelled rain in the air. He’d done all he could.

Now, Potter’s life was in the Order’s hands.

AN: Sometimes, I think he must feel really useless on certain events. He tries his best but still… Hope you liked the chapter and let me know what you think. Until next week :3
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 25: Curses

Disclaimer: I don't own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it's not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

June 1996

He never thought he was the pacing type, but these events proved him wrong. He wasn't sure how long he'd been moving back and forth even though he occasionally looked at the clock on the wall. He'd gotten no news. His mark hadn't burned once, so that was a good sign at least.

He feared for the kids the most. They weren't prepared to engage in battle with some of the most fearsome Death Eaters. This school didn't properly train them for that type of fight.

Taking a long look at the fireplace again, he finally stopped his movements and let himself fall onto the couch, making a small sound when his body collided with the soft material.

He moved his hand around his hair, massaging his scalp in the process.

If the boy had caused other students to perish he would. . .

As he let the thoughts run wild in his brain, a small spark came to life in the fireplace, catching his eye in an instant. He pulled himself out of the sofa to cross the distance in a few steps.

"Severus?" A small voice came from the embers, but a face didn't appear.

"I am here, Madam Pomfrey. Do you have any news?" He tried to sound emotionless.

"Yes, they are back, Severus, but I need your assistance now. One of the students got hit with a dark curse."
He heard the worry in her voice. If she called for him, then the student had to be on the verge of death. She was the most skilled mediwitch he'd ever known.

"Step aside, please, so I can go in," he replied and took a deep breath. Now he needed to focus on saving a life instead of taking one.

He entered the fireplace and his body was sucked up by the chimney. In an instant, he was in the office of the hospital wing. Pomfrey was waiting for him. The woman's eyes were red, and dark circles draped under them. Her hands were gripping the small apron she wore.

She walked over to him and dusted off his robes with her hands. This woman treated him like he was still a small boy she should care for. He would only admit to himself that he was touched by her care.

"Come with me, Severus. She was unconscious when she arrived."

He followed her fast steps. More questions rose inside his mind with her brief explanation. When he crossed the hospital wing, he spotted the Weasley boy, who had some burn marks on his skin. His sister was sitting with him, concern on her face. Longbottom had a bleeding bump on his head, and Lovegood had a few cuts. Potter was nowhere to be seen, so he was probably with Albus. If Potter had died, the Dark Lord would've already summoned him.

But someone was missing from that group. His stomach sank. Of all the people . . . Pomfrey slowly opened the curtain, and revealed he was right.

They stepped closer to the bed and Pomfrey closed the curtain to give her privacy. The girl looked pale but relaxed.

"Symptoms?" The smartest witches were always the ones who suffered. She was the one that always paid the price for Potter's stupidity.

"She doesn't react to stimulus and her muscles indicate loss of strength, but for now, she breathes normally."

"Do you know who hit her?" He pulled out his wand to examine her by himself, checking her vitals with small pulses of magic.

"Lupin said it was Dolohov and that the spell that hit her was purple. It hit her chest."

At soon as he heard the name, he cursed internally and focused his wand on her heart.

A small growl escaped his throat. "She has an irregular heartbeat. Damn, those stupid kids."

"Severus, you were stupid too at that age," the woman replied.

"I never went seeking problems."

"That's true," she acknowledged.

He finished examining her. "Miss Granger got hit with one of Dolohov's favourite curses. The body starts to malfunction and extinguish the life subtly while the victim is unconscious. It makes it harder to track and fix when the victim merely looks asleep."

"Are you telling me that she is going to die?" There was panic in her voice.

"Not today." Not while he was around. After studying the girl's face, he moved his wand
again, chanting some words in a whisper. Her body glowed purple in some parts, mostly inside her heart. "She is going to need some healing, strength, pain and other potions to recover from this. For now, we need to keep this from spreading as I brew the remedy. Hand me a vial, please."

The woman removed one from her pocket and handed it to him. He began to whisper again, sealing the movement of the curse. After some moments, the curse was chained under small green cords. Severus took a deep breath. The witch was lucky.

He grabbed Granger's arm, and with another movement of his wand, opened her skin to fill the vial with her blood. A key ingredient for her cure.

When satisfied with the amount of blood he gathered, he healed her skin with a slow caress of his wand and looked again at her. He hoped she wasn't suffering much in her unconscious state.

"You will be able to brew it soon?"

"Yes, I'll be back in six hours. If the containment of the curse wears off, you will have to call me again." He turned to the mediwitch. "Meanwhile, force healing and strength potions into her." He probably didn't need to tell the woman that, but he wanted to make sure since she was so distraught.

The woman nodded and smiled with relief. He tried not to show his unease. It was the least he could do, after all, he was their guardian whether he liked them or not.

"Thank you, Severus. I'm glad you're here. Merlin, these kids are so adventurous."

A smirk crossed his lips. He didn't know if that was the right word, but this old woman was always too kind.

"I will leave you then. I need to work on this as fast as I can."

"Yes, go, go. I will take care of her meanwhile. The other children are fine." She dismissed him but before taking a step out he looked at her again.

"And where's Potter?"

"He is with Albus."

Severus nodded and made his exit. At least the boy came back safe and apparently unharmed. Unlike his friends.

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The hot vapors coming from the cauldron weighed his hair down. His hand never stopped stirring the liquid as he opened the vial with his thumb, letting the cork fly to a random spot in his laboratory. He dropped her blood into the cauldron, watching how the ingredients mixed with it with no problems. That was a good sign. If the purple traces vanished, he would have the remedy faster than he expected.

After a minute, a smirk crossed his lips. No trace of purple.

He filled some vials, making sure he had enough for extra doses if the curse was resistant in her. He doubted that would be the case due to the results he saw already at the cauldron.

He closed the vials and placed them on the wooden desk at his right.
The heavy door opened and his eyes moved to the intruder, knowing it would be someone from the staff. Students were incapable of touching his wards.

When he saw a silver robe and a white long beard appear, he turned to greet the man he was seeking for answers. "Headmaster," Severus said with respect as he set the last vial on the table.

"I assume that's Miss Granger's cure," the old man said with a sincere smile as he closed the door behind him.

"Indeed. It only needs to rest for a brief time, and then I will administer it personally. I need to see if it works properly."

"I expect no less of you, Severus." He took a step forward. "We have some time to talk while the potion rests?"

"Yes. I assume Potter and his friends went to the ministry because they fell for the Dark Lord's trap."

"They thought they were doing good, and you are no saint here, Severus. You stopped occlumency lessons with Harry."

Severus eyes narrowed and he placed his hand on the table next to him, harder than he intended. "That kid had crossed the line. He shouldn't have looked at my memories. We discussed this already, Albus. I don't need to constantly remember my humiliation."

"I know… I suppose I was a fool to expect this effort from you."

"You are lucky you get it at all!" he said, this time his voice going full volume and bouncing off the walls into an echo. Dumbledore's eyes widened. "Do you have any idea? Do you even care what the hell I go through for someone I don't like?"

He couldn't hold it back anymore. All of this had been building up for years and seemed to pour out of him as easily as if he'd taken veritaserum.

"Severus…" His voice was calm and that angered him even more. He felt like he wanted to goad the old wizard into striking him down.

"How dare you even for a moment think I don't put effort into what I do? I know nothing about your plan, but I still go along with what you say like a pet. If you were to say bark, I'd do it. Sometimes it's worse than being under the Dark Lord."

"I don't torture you, Severus."

"You do, but in a different way. The Dark Lord's methods are almost preferable!" He took a step forward. "Do you want to know something? You're pushing me, Headmaster. Right back to him. You don't know how close I came to saying to hell with everything here. I'm fighting it but…"

"You won't go," he said and gave a twinkling smile that instantly calmed him. "You're stronger than that.

He wished he could believe that. He didn't think the man believed how close he really came. He sighed.

"I'm sorry, Severus, if you felt that pushed. Perhaps, I should've—"
"Never mind, just tell me what happened. I don't want to postpone Granger's cure more than necessary." That was partially true, but he wanted to just forget the fact he'd spilled his emotions to the older man. It was best to push them back.

"The children fought bravely even when the order came to their aid. Potter, Granger, and Longbottom were the last ones standing." Severus arched an eyebrow at the last surname. "But I came late. I couldn't stop Bellatrix from killing Sirius. And I couldn't stop Dolohov from cursing Granger."

He saw the old man bowing his head. He knew that feeling of uselessness, even when you have the power to stop a tragedy. Though he wouldn't mourn Black, it was regretful they'd lost an order member. They needed all the people they could get.

"I suppose Potter didn't take it well."

"No, he didn't. He chased Bellatrix and Voldemort appeared. I had to fight him to protect Harry. He almost possessed the boy, Severus."

If he hadn't been that pathetic with his Occlumency, all of this could have been prevented. "He could fight it? He could throw the Dark Lord out?" His muscles tensed, worry showing in his eyes. If the kid was a potential vessel again, no one was safe and his work was as good as useless.

"Yes, at the end he did. With love, Severus."

"Knowing this, I suppose the Dark Lord won't attempt to possess him again? He thought he was safe from that power already."

"We will have to make that assumption," Dumbledore said.

"I will have to be alert at the next meeting with him. Perhaps, he will reveal something. I'm still in his inner circle due to my position at Hogwarts, but I'm not a trusted member. Sometimes he still doubts if I'm with his cause, Albus."

"Don't worry. I still don't want you to give up on your life easily, so we will feed him information soon." Severus glared at his jovial eyes. "I will leave you be and we will talk before the term is finished. Please, make sure Miss Granger survives"

"Of course. We can't let a brain like that vanish. If it weren't for her, those idiots would be dead already."

"Don't be cruel, Severus. There was a hint of a laugh in his words as he stepped past the threshold and out into the corridor.

"You know I am merely stating a fact, Albus."

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When he was alone again, he let his shoulders drop. For now, he hadn't failed in his task.

But he'd been close…

He grabbed one of the vials and studied it. There wasn't any fluctuation in the liquid, so he allowed himself a small smile.

It was time to break that curse.
An: So here we are. First I want to send my prayers to those who were affected on Mexico. Kept strong! Secondly, new schedule. There will be two chapters per week with one week break (to let me catch up with translations and betaing xD) Heh. Things will start to twist slightly from here :P
Hope all of you liked it and let me know what you think. Until Saturday!
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 26: Curse: Pt 2

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June 1996

The hospital wing was almost in the same state as when he left. The only difference was that the previously occupied beds were empty and only Granger was here. Shouldn't her friends be at her side? He shook his head. Considering the privacy that Pomfrey gave her before, the woman likely had banned them from here.

With the potion in hand, he walked to her bed and set the vial on the bedside table. He heard some light footsteps coming behind him and knew it was Pomfrey. She never let anyone enter without permission when there were patients here. She always knew when a person crossed her domains.

He lifted the wand to send a pulse of magic through Granger's body. In an instant, the curse and the seal appeared. It hadn't expanded much.

"I checked a few minutes ago. It's stable for now." He heard Pomfrey's voice behind him. "I assume you completed the cure before you expected?"

"Yes." He looked at the old woman. "I might need your assistance. This might hurt her."

"Do you want me to restrain her?"

"If you think it's necessary, Madam Pomfrey," he replied. He grabbed the vial.

"You don't need to be so formal around me, Severus. I've known you since you were a small boy."
"And that's precisely why I should treat you with respect," he muttered, feeling an annoying sentiment rising. He didn't need to get close to anyone, and less to the woman who healed him all the time and knew his humiliation so well. He was grateful for her aid and she had his respect.

"You're a difficult young man," she replied and waved her hand to restrain her patient with white magic ropes.

He ignored her words and uncorked the vial as his eyes returned to the unconscious girl in bed. She had lived through more horrors than most at her age. How old was she now? Seventeen? If he remembered from the meetings, she was older than her classmates were. It made him wonder why she came a year later.

Pursing his lips, he dismissed his curiosity and moved his hand until it was at the back of her neck. With a small movement, he lifted her head and put the vial closer to her lips.

"If she doesn't swallow you will have to make her by force."

"I know my work, Severus." She pointed her wand to her throat.

He separated her jaws and poured a small quantity of liquid into her mouth, but it remained there. They waited patiently, watching if her body responded naturally.

After a few seconds, the girl swallowed and he let out a small breath. He turned his head to check for the curse. When he saw it was still there, he repeated the action, giving the young girl small sips that she'd be able to manage. After five sips, Granger's body gave a small violent shake and she whimpered. Good. She was responding.

With a small smile, he looked again to the sealed curse inside her body and saw the purple web receding from her limps and organs.

When he saw her relax further, he repeated the treatment until the last drop in the vial was gone. The purple webs concentrated on her heart in a mass and finally vanished.

That little witch was lucky.

He closed his eyes and with a gentle movement, he let her head rest again on the pillow. He left the empty vial on the table.

"Vitals?"

"She is stable. The pain made her blood pressure a little high and heart rate unbalanced, but now the beats are normal. I will administer some magic treatment for that, don't worry."

"I will brew some potions for her body recovery, and she should take another dosage of this one to make sure we eradicate the curse."

"Yes, she will need stronger healing potions for the organs."

Severus nodded and took a step back from the bed.

"Flue me if her condition changes. I will give her another dosage tomorrow, and if I'm not satisfied, a third dose." His serious eyes moved to the old woman. "This is not a curse to take lightly."

"You are the expert in this field, Severus. If you think that would be best, then so be it. She
"No, not if the curse is totally erased." A soft voice accompanied his words. "I should go now. She might wake soon."

"And you don't want any student to think you are their hero, of course."

He looked at her, his face showing distaste for her words. He despised that kind of attention.

Of course, she knew that all too well.

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The days passed in relative calm. Summer was warming the castle, a thing he despised because of the heat but loved because good weather meant the students would spend most of their time outdoors, leaving him more relaxed. Only the bookworms would be inside, and they were his favorite type of students. They left people alone, focused on their studies. But at this time, the most efficient one was still at the hospital wing while her friends were enjoying the sun. He would've wished terrible sunburn on them, but that meant more work for him brewing potions he'd rather not brew.

He grabbed the last vial that he had to give to Granger and looked at it. Just for an extra precaution, he would give her this one.

Before going to the hospital wing, he removed his cloak and left it draped across his office chair.

Crossing paths with only some kids, who expertly avoided his path, he managed to reach the hospital wing. He expected it to be deserted like every time he came to restock the potions for Pomfrey and Granger.

"I'm sorry…" A female whisper reached his ears when he went toward the room and his feet halted. "I-I'm so sorry…P-please…"

He heard a rustle of clothes and hard steps coming toward him. He didn't move and looked to find the intruder. When he found the dark untamed hair and green eyes in front of him, his gaze turned to pure hate.

"Lamenting more losses, Potter?" The kid glared and he enjoyed every loathing feeling that radiated from him. "You should have closed your mind."

The boy hid his eyes and didn't bother to reply as he left the room.

When he made sure he was out of his presence, he resumed his path until he was in front of the only patient, one who had silent tears running down her cheeks now. Merlin, why did he have to deal with this stuff? He thought his job would be cut and dry; he foolishly hadn't predicted the intricacies past his spying.

"Miss Granger, I'm glad to see you're conscious again." Her head turned with a gentle movement and she tried to remove the tears with her hand.

"I'm not," she muttered before looking at him and saying, "Thank you, sir." It was strange not to hear disgust, fear, or hatred come from a student. No, from her he heard… Self-loathing. He dismissed the thought. Granger had nothing to hate herself over.
"Madam Pomfrey told me that you are feeling better, but I still insist on you taking this last dosage to make sure the curse has disappeared completely."

"If you think it's best, sir, I will take it." She looked at him, a sad smile on her face.

_Merlin, this is absurd._

He sighed and sat on the stool next to the bed.

"I don't have time to deal with the childish attitude that Potter always surrounds you with and makes you suffer with, so please, be glad you are alive." At least he maintained his stoic mask while he spoke, trying to comfort the girl in some manner.

He extended his hand and presented the vial to her. She accepted with a shaking hand, but she didn't drink it. She just stared at it.

"Maybe it would have been better if I got hit by this curse before." She caressed the vial with her thumb, avoiding his eyes.

He couldn't stop feeling concerned by her words. Where was the stupid Gryffindor bravery? It was disturbing hearing this young woman talking like that.

He wouldn't scold her for saying that. He would be a hypocrite if he did. "Drink," he said.

When she looked up at him, he saw a copy of his old pain. Was her experience at the ministry that life altering? Then it occurred to him. Someone had died, someone she liked, and it was her first time in real combat.

"Thank you, Professor." She moved the vial to her lips and drank it in small sips

He waved his wand before tapping her shoulder with it. There wasn't a trace of curse left in her system and everything was running perfectly. Then when he lifted his eyes again, he saw her looking at herself with her lips parted.

He could feel the questions forming in her brain and tried not to roll his eyes.

"It's a spell to see traces of dark curses and which organs are affected. In case you were wondering, a thing that I'm sure you're doing." He explained in a monotone voice and ignored her still shocked face. "It appears you are healed, Miss Granger. Probably free to run off to another reckless adventure." He finished with a reproaching voice and removed the spell from her.

"I tried to convince Harry not to go, sir."

"I'm sure you did, and it's one of the few things you always seem to fail at." He rose from the stool and hid his wand under his robes, showing the same indifference as always. "Potter's actions are the result of his incompetence, there's no reason to blame yourself."

She finished the vial, silently, not defending her friend. She was too quiet, too hurt.

And he couldn't stand it.

After putting the stool back in its place, he walked away from her bed. He was done here.

"Thank you again, Professor Snape."

At hearing her soft words, he looked at her. Her eyes were as lifeless as a Death Eaters. He
bowed his head and walked away as fast as he could.

That look. Damn that look. She'd looked at him as if he were a treasured ally.

She'd looked at him as if he were . . . a friend.

AN: Well, hope you liked it, we are starting to mess a little :P hahaha. Let me know what you think and I will see you on October 4th.
July 1996

Calm overcame him as he saw the last train leave in the distance, but he knew it wouldn’t last for long. Calm never came when the Dark Lord was involved. He had to return to his service. Had to go back to the death, torture, coldness, and arrogance among the fanatics with stupid ideals. Ideals he’d never truly agreed with. He’d only joined them to gain respect, to fit in, and to further advance his knowledge in the Dark Arts.

But in some ways, he fit in well. He was no saint and had just as much blood on his hands as any of them even if he hadn’t actually committed the atrocities himself. He’d managed to avoid most of the Dark Lord’s raids, but he’d been the messenger. If it weren’t for him, if he’d have flown away and hidden, many people would still be alive.

Like Lily.

Closing his eyes, he broke his view of the landscape. He refused to think of her more than necessary. He took a deep breath and headed to the Headmaster’s office. First that master, then back to another one. A darker one, but one that he also was a pawn for. And that one didn’t like his tools to delay. The Dark Lord knew exactly when he was free to go to him.

When he finally reached his destination, he touched the statue with his wand and said the password. The stairs moved, allowing him access. When he reached the wooden door, he knocked and opened it to enter the old man’s office. With a quick scan of his eyes, he noticed Dumbledore staring up at one of the paintings.

“Headmaster?”

The man turned. “Severus, come in.” His reply was too soft. Sounded too resigned. Too tired.

He crossed the room and waited in front of the main desk until Dumbledore sat. The old wizard extended his arm, wordlessly telling him to sit. He complied. They remained in silence for a few minutes.

“I suppose you have plans, Albus?” Severus finally asked, having enough of the silence.
The sparkle in the man’s eyes was fading, and he looked so much older than usual. “I fear this year is going to be complex for you. I must ask you to go back to him and give him some aid.”

“Aid?”

“Yes, we need to build a stronger trust between the two of you. I must tell you that the aid I have might end in murders and in Voldemort getting more power in the ministry.”

Severus swallowed. This was his job. He had endured it for years, and he could do it again.

He only nodded.

“I will give you the old location of Amelia Bones. It should please Voldemort, but there’s a risk they still could find her and . . .”

“Kill her,” Severus finished for him when he saw the man was having trouble.

“The Dark Lord is getting more daring, Severus. I am afraid he might even venture to attack the school.”

Severus shook his head. “He won’t dare try it with you here. He’s terrified of you.” The Dark Lord was a murderer with fanatic ideals, but he wasn’t a fool.

“We are at war, anything can happen, and that’s why you must discover his plans. There is a possibility he could use our students. We have to protect them.”

The man worried for them of course. He did as well to a lesser extent. Most of them were incompetent, disrespectful, and arrogant children, but some could have a bright future. And he supposed even the idiots didn’t deserve to die.

“I will do my best, Albus.”

The old man smiled, the twinkle in his eyes returning for a few seconds before fading once more. “I know you will.”

“I assume you will have a busy summer too?” His way of asking about further plans. He knew he wouldn’t get details, but he might get some hints.

“Indeed. I might even need the young Potter’s aid this time.” Severus frowned when he heard his words. “There will be some changes in classes too, but I will tell you when you come back. Now, go to Spinner’s End and contact your Lord.”

His face muscles tensed at hearing his last words but he was right. He wasn’t a free man. He did have a lord. Two of them in a way. He’d only had a tiny taste of freedom when he was friends with Lily.

He bowed his head, exited Dumbledore’s office, and walked to his quarters. He wouldn’t waste time with the trivialities of wishing goods summers to his colleagues and hoped they didn’t find him. He wouldn’t be having a good summer, so the well wishes were futile.

He opened the door to his rooms, and motioned to his trunk in the corner of the room. He motioned to the wardrobe and his clothing started folding and packing themselves. He then added pain and healing potions. He wouldn’t need his books since he had plenty at his “home”. With another motion, the lid on the trunk closed and locked.
He was glad he didn’t have many belongings. He never cared to buy anything other than useful books or the required ingredients and materials for his potions. Those were the only things he cared for.

He shrank the trunk and picked it up. He was about to leave the room, but froze and looked around it. He would miss it. Not the teaching Gryffindor parts but the place itself. This place had become his home and his safety. It was almost funny since, as a student, this place was as hellish as Spinner’s End.

Thankfully, he didn’t need to deal with that abuse anymore at Spinner’s End. Just faded memories.

He grabbed his cloak, and with one last look, left his quarters. His smooth quiet ending was interrupted when he reached the great hall. Minerva smiled at him and patted his shoulder as if he were still a small boy. Then the rest of the teachers waved him goodbye and even forced him to carry some food that the house elves had prepared for his departure.

Merlin only knew why they even dared to look at him. He knew that he wasn’t the most open person in the world, not even liked, but despite all, they treated him with decency.

With a small bow in their direction, he left Hogwarts’ domains and safety.

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Silence became his companion during the days he had to wait for the Dark Lord’s call. He’d sent a signal across his mark the exact minute he’d arrived at his home, but the Dark Lord hadn’t required his presence. He wouldn’t go there unless summoned. He didn’t want to be tortured for insolence.

Placing the book in his hands down on the small round table beside him, he released a frustrated sigh. Almost a week had passed and he felt the tension building in his body. Not because he wanted to go, but because his information could get useless as each day passed. The consequences of that was yet another added risk to his life and position.

He knew the Dark Lord was plotting something big and his presence was unwelcomed. If that weren’t the case, he would’ve been called already. The Death Eaters were always planning chaos.

The Dark Lord left him out and that was a sign of distrust.

Then, as if fate was having pity on his angst, his arm burned. His hand grabbed the skin, trying to soothe the pain even though he knew it would do no good.

Wasting no time, he focused on the Dark Lord’s presence and disappeared.

When he felt his body whole again, he found himself in the center of a dark room, on top of a dirty green rug, and surrounded by people dressed in Death Eater’s robes. In front of him, the Dark Lord extended his arms, welcoming him with a proud smile.

He bowed in front of him, showing deep respect.

“Severus, rise. You had something to tell me?”
He did as ordered and relaxed his body, showing no emotion.

“Yes, my lord, I have information in regards the location of Madam Bones.” He saw the Dark Lord’s eyes glitter for a moment. Murmurs sounded around him. “Dumbledore himself told me.”

The Dark Lord rose from his throne and the lights came to life as his steps neared. He tried not to look around to find where the location of this summoning was, but the decoration of the place was similar to Malfoy’s tastes. Too gaudy.

“Tell me, Severus.” The Dark lord stopped in front of him and looked him in the eye.

“She was recently seen in muggle London, near the Tames River, my lord. But I fear she might have moved already. This information was given to me a week ago.”

“We will see. She likely hasn’t gone far. That woman is good with duels but she is a woman after all. Females love their conveniences.” Some of the Death Eaters at his back laughed. “I want half of you searching for the woman. When you find her, summon me. I will be the one to dispose of that traitor.”

“You won’t need our help, my lord?” A random man dared to speak. Dark Lord’s smile vanished.

“No. I want all of you to keep her in the area, and of course, you can cause some damage and have fun with the muggles.” His red eyes turned to him. “And Severus, this time you have to join us. After all, you are on vacation.”

The muscle of his neck tensed but he managed to nod as if no pain disturbed his body. This time he couldn’t avoid it.

“As you wish, my lord.”

He closed his eyes and bowed again. Merlin, he would have to be careful. It was hard not to kill when one was ordered to do it. But he had the chaos in his favor. No one would be watching as to whether or not he killed anyone.

“Good. Now then, come with me while your brothers search.” The man extended one of his arms inviting him as his fellow Death Eaters began following orders.

When he got to the Dark Lord’s side, they walked along a corridor. The paintings were shrouded in shadow so he couldn’t make out who was in them. The house was still unfamiliar. They entered a comfortable and homey looking room. Two black sofas were situated on each side of the fireplace. The only paintings on the walls were landscapes. The desk in the far corner was void of any items.

“Sit,” he said, taking a seat on one of the sofas. Severus followed suit but couldn’t force himself to relax. Not in the presence of that man.

Not anymore.

“Severus, did you know that your godson took the mark this week?”

“No, my lord, but I’m sure he’s thrilled. But he is only fifteen. You think he can serve you well when he is so young?” It was a risk to ask that, but he needed to figure out what he was going to be used for.
“Almost sixteen, but the age doesn’t matter. I have assigned a task to him but... I need you to keep an eye on him for me. To even aid him if he is incapable. I’m sure that will be the case since he carries the blood of a Malfoy. His father’s only use is his home.”

“If it’s your desire I would be pleased to, my lord. But I will need to know the details behind what he’s tasked with.”

“As intelligent as always, Severus. I will tell you in due time. I don’t want this to reach the wrong ears. It would make your situation even more complex.”

“I assume no one else has to know then?”

“That’s right.” The Dark Lord fixed his eyes on the fire. “For the accomplishment of this task no one else needs to know.”

“Then I feel honored that you thought of me, my lord.” If he were his younger self, he would’ve been thrilled at his assignment. Now, it was a burden. If little people knew about it, then this operation was likely going to be the most serious and dangerous thing he’d done so far.

“You are like me and you served me well, even if you got relaxed when I disappeared.” Severus tried to contain the bile rising inside his esophagus. He wasn’t like him, not at all.

“I apologize again for that, my lord.”

“You were punished, you paid like the rest. But you are redeeming your faults with your work, Severus. You are the perfect man who will be in the perfect place for this.”

Severus mouth went dry and his lips parted. The perfect . . . place. Dumbledore was right. Something was going to happen at Hogwarts.

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AN: Here we are! Evil plotting and Severus in the middle of all. Hope you liked this interaction and all the trials he has to endure under his two masters orders. Let me know what you think and if all is well, until Saturday. :*
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 28: Treading

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

July 1996

The robes he hadn’t used in decades felt more like weights on his shoulders rather than a simple fabric covering. The weight of what they meant made him walk a little heavier when no one was looking.

He looked down at what his fingers grasped. The worst part wasn’t the robes, but the white mask that would hide his identity for the most part. Bronze patterns marked the outline of the holes for his eyes. The mouth had long bronze fangs that joined with the lower ones. He’d liked it when he was young, but now it was a symbol of dread.

With a small twist of his wrist, he turned the mask and lowered his face to cover himself as he closed his eyes. When he opened them, his vision was limited, and his breath was more noticeable to his ears.

He moved carefully, getting used to the new sensation. For a few seconds his vision blurred and his breathing increased. It was as if he couldn’t get enough air. He was chained, he was paralyzed, he wanted to remove the mask and never put it back.
He needed to get out.

A hand hit his shoulder jerking him away from the feeling of panic he was experiencing.

“Well, well, this is like old times.” He managed to distinguish the male voice but said nothing. “I hope you haven’t lost your skill with the wand in your years of spying, Severus.”

He pulled away from the hand.

“Don’t get in my way, Avery. You won’t like my curses.” He threatened with finesse before walking towards the room where the rest of the higher Death Eaters were waiting. Maybe he’d “accidentally” hit him.

He entered the room. Everyone already wore their masks and robes, so it was almost impossible to know who was who unless you were part of their inner circle. At least he wouldn’t have to deal with most of them. With the failure at the mystery department, there were some empty seats in the room; Lucius’ seat was one of them.

The Dark Lord appeared in front of them and smiled briefly before vanishing.

The time had come.

People began disappearing after their master, one by one, following the hierarchy order of power they held. And then, after the seventh one, it was his turn to follow the Dark Lord.

When he found himself at his new location, the destruction had already begun. Muggle houses were on fire, and the Dark Lord was nowhere to be seen, but each Death Eater knew what their duty was. He had to act like one of them. Thankfully, he never showed enjoyment during things like this, so to show it now would be out of character. All he had to do was keep a neutral demeanor.

He forced himself to move through the people and raised his wand to aim at the bridge. He was going to be part of impeding Bones escape. He wished he could’ve avoided this and helped the woman instead. He waved his wand, the metal on the bridge bent, and part of the bridge that crossed the Thames easily collapsed into the water.

Then the screams reached his ears.

Some of his associates were tormenting some muggles that tried to escape their flaming homes. They were pursuing them, making cuts on their skin, and mocking them while they ran. He pushed back the bile rising in his throat.

He had to continue.

Waving his wand, he forced the muggles that were around him into the river a considerable distance away from the bridge, hoping they could swim and escape. It was the best he could do without giving himself away. He then pointed his wand to the highway and the road exploded with the central pillar that supported the bridge.

The laughs around him grew but he ignored them and watched as the rest of the bridge crumbled like it was made of paper, folding itself in two pieces and falling into the river. The impact of the weight made the water move like a wave, almost drowning the people he’d thrown there before. He cringed. He realized now that he’d made a mistake in trying to save them the way he had. There was nowhere for them to go.

Some Death Eaters walked to his side of the river, pointed their wands at the muggles in the
water, and started dunking them underwater, holding them there long enough for them to drown. Others were taking pleasure in letting them out of the water to catch a breath before dunking them again, delaying their death. All of them were doing this under anonymity.

Cowards.

A wave rushed through the Thames and he put his arm down. He couldn’t torture people like this.

“Come on Snape! There is one free for you!” A man shouted at his side. He pointed his wand to a woman with brown hair. She was periodically rising to the surface and spitting out water, struggling to swim. “Just do it before she dies on her own.”

A maniacal laugh ringed in his ears as he closed his eyes and extended his arm. If he didn’t drown her quickly, there was a good chance someone else would torment her before her death. He knew he’d want a quick death if he were in that situation. Grasping his wand harder, he muttered a curse that broke her neck and forced her under the water at the same time.

He had to… He had to…

If he didn’t he would be suspected. The hand that held his wand trembled, and he tried to compose himself before someone noticed.

The echoing laughs became louder, almost covering the screams that surrounded the zone and the cracking of the fire that devoured the houses. This was an inferno, and he was in the middle of it.

Then his eyes saw the woman’s corpse coming to the surface, the water spreading her hair like an untamed mass. His breath stopped when another image crossed his brain. Her brown curls resting on a pillow as she remained unconscious, lying in bed, her skin pale, dying…

No…

He clenched his teeth. The image of the silly girl didn’t leave his mind. What if he had to do this to her someday? Or to any of his students?

“The master killed her! Disband!” Another male voice yelled from crossed the street, waking him from his state.

He blinked and saw that the Death Eaters next to him had disappeared. He waved his hand and followed their actions, each one going to their safe place until things calmed down and their master called them.

When his knees touched the old rug in his home, he’d never been so grateful to be there. Finally alone.

He jerked the mask off his face and threw it across the room. He rested his palms on the floor and took several deep breaths. Sweat coated his forehead, a bead of it running down his long nose and hitting the rug beneath him.

He hadn’t taken a life since he was a young, stupid boy, but the pain on his soul was the same. His chest hurt, the guilt consumed him. But he had to do it for Lily. To help to destroy that monster and to protect her son.

That woman would be his hardest kill to deal with so far. She’d resembled that young Gryffindor that he respected.
He got to his feet, tore off his robes, and tossed them to the floor. He always did this after a kill to release the negative energy. They smelled like smoke, a reminder of the death that surrounded him moments ago. He’d almost blown his cover. He’d gotten distracted by the most absurd image his brain could conjure. He’d become paralyzed in the middle of a battle, or more accurately termed, a massacre.

And it was by a vision of someone that wasn’t remotely close to him.

A deep growl vibrated in his throat. He needed to relax. He needed to compose himself and strengthen his mask. He had to be ready for when the Dark Lord called him.

AN: Hope you liked it and let me know what you think on the comments. Severus really has to make harsh decisions, and deal with the consequences. In a few Hours I will post another ;D
August 1996

August. The heat of the sun was brutal and the wind was nonexistent. His white shirt stuck to his torso, and his hair was sticking to his face with sweat. No matter how many cooling charms he put around the house, the burning rays from the sun always turned it into an inferno. He couldn’t wait to be back at Hogwarts in a week. Even if he had to go to boring meetings about the classes for the next semester, at least castle was colder.

He needed another shower.

“Severus.”

He looked towards the room’s entrance. The Dark Lord was there.

“My Lord.” He bowed. “What do I owe the pleasure of your presence in my home?”

The Dark Lord moved around, studying his surroundings as he traveled. He stopped to caress some covers of the dark art books on the shelves.

“You and I are so similar. We even share a disgusting muggle father.” The man hissed and dropped his hand. He turned to him. “I came here to inform you of your task. The one we talked
about in July. It’s one of the most important things we will accomplish. If the boy has the ability to carry it out that is. If not, Severus, I trust you will know what to do.”

Severus looked at him and nodded. “I will not fail you, my lord.”

“We will see, Severus.” The Dark Lord smiled at him, but his eyes were still cruel. “Draco is going to help us attack Hogwarts, and he will kill Albus Dumbledore.”

“My Lord?” This was crazy. Even if he weren’t on Dumbledore’s side, he thought it foolish to entrust something like that to Draco. He didn’t know exactly what thought process the Dark Lord was using, but it was a poor one. It made sense that he wasn’t confident of the boy at least.

“You will aid him. Your position at Hogwarts is valuable and advantageous for this. That’s why you’re the one that will ensure this plan won’t fail.”

He made sure his shoulders didn’t tense at the thought of what was going to happen. If this was successful, if they manage to dispose of Albus… He would’ve shuddered at the thought if the Dark Lord weren’t staring at him.

“My Lord, if I have to take charge of the matter, my cover will be discovered. I won’t be useful for you anymore as a spy.”

“Perhaps not as a spy, but you have plenty of uses. You sell yourself short, modest as always, Severus. If Dumbledore falls, you will get Hogwarts to control. You are a skilled wizard, Severus.”

Apparently, the Dark Lord had his life planned already and he could only agree. At one time, that praise would’ve thrilled him. “I’m honored to be of value in many ways, my lord.”

His voice lowered into a menacing tone. “If you fail, you will pay along with Draco. Keep that in mind.”

“Of course, master.” He bowed, accepting his fate.

“Oh, and knowing you will need some aid there, I will give you Wormtail as a reward for your information with Bones.”

“There is no need to, my lord,” he replied softly, not wanting a cowardly spy at his home. He knew he was still being tested. “I have to return to Hogwarts soon, and this month I have plenty of meetings before the school starts.”

“Then he will come at least until you start your work, Severus. He will be your servant.” The way he spoke left no room for argument.

“Then you have my gratitude, my lord.”

He had to comply. That meant sleepless nights and no relaxing in the slightest. He’d have to be on guard all the time.

“We have some other information regarding one of your students, Severus. Potter’s mudblood friend. I’m wondering if we should dispose of her.”

No. Merlin, not her again.

“It would be beneficial? Perhaps that would only make Potter’s crusade against you more brutal.” He replied softly, trying to remove the idea. “You’d give them something to unite over.”
“It is possible,” he said as if contemplating what he’d said. “But, it’s come to my knowledge that she’s alone now. Apparently, she’s not staying with her friends and the order is not protecting her. If she wasn’t a mudblood, she’d be worth trying to recruit.”

He almost threw up right there. Not only at the thought of her being one of them, but also at how irresponsible she was being. She knew how risky it was to be alone nowadays with everything going on, especially considering her close ties to Potter. This would have to be fixed.

“Maybe it’s a trap I’m not aware of, my lord. The order isn’t likely to give up watching her considering her ties. She is not a pureblood, but as much as it disgusts me to say it, she is not an idiot like other mudbloods. She’s not stupid enough to let herself out in the open suddenly when she was extremely careful before.”

The Dark Lord made a low hum. “Yet, another reason you are valuable, Severus. It does indeed look suspicious. We will not risk it. After all, she will die sooner or later. By the time we are done, no mudblood will be breathing.”

He was relieved that the Dark Lord was cunning and not impulsive.

“I will be going now. I will send Wormtail soon, and I will contact you as our mission progresses.

“I will be waiting, my lord.”

“And remember, be discreet. This operation should not be discovered, not even by your fellow Death Eaters.”

“As you command.”

Voldemort looked at him and nodded before disappearing.

AN: Mmmm pressures, pressures. Let me know what you think and until next week!
August 1996

The only light that illuminated the small bedroom came through the window, showing the slightly reddish face of Severus. He moved around. To one side. To the other. He threw off the sheet that covered him and growled. He stared at the ceiling and extended his arms to each side of the bed, trying to cool down his body. It was futile.

He had an invader in his home that he didn’t trust not to poison him with his cooking, or curse him during his sleep. But the main cause of his insomnia was the fact he hadn’t received a single word from Dumbledore. He hadn’t even been summoned to meetings.

He closed his eyes. He needed to sleep but he couldn’t since he couldn’t deliver the information he had. He focused on his breathing and surroundings. He felt that his intruder was already unconscious to this world and that was the only time he could let his guard down. But only for a couple of hours.

When he sensed a flash of light near him, he opened his eyes and looked at the window. A huge red bird was blocking the view from inside his house.

His body reacted in an instant. He got up, grabbed his wand, and pointed at the bird. He lowered it when he realized who it was.
“Fawkes?” It flew over to him and landed on his shoulder. Was Dumbledore finally calling him? His talons gripped tight and then a burst of flame covered his whole body along with the phoenix.

The first thing that he saw when the flames disappeared was the pictures looking concerned. He looked around the room and his eyes fell to the scattered parchments on the desk and floor, and the ink tipped over. He trailed his eyes across the floor until he spotted a broken ring and a hand reaching out from behind the desk.

“Albus!” In two large steps, he was at his side. He flipped him onto his back.

He checked his pulse and saw the Gryffindor sword on the floor not much further away from the headmaster. When he felt the heart beat, he sighed in relief. He was still alive.

He searched the wizard and cringed when he saw his hand. Everything clicked.

With a movement of his wand, he revealed the curses nature just as he did with Granger’s. It was deep black, rushing through his muscles, veins, and nerves. He swallowed. This could kill him soon if he didn’t act fast.

He muttered enchantments on the rotten hand, trying to seal the curse, but each time he tried, it broke the confinement.

How long had he been suffering with this? It definitely wasn’t new.

Waving his hand, he tried to contain the curse again, charm after charm, until the seal managed to remain stable. But he knew the spreading wouldn’t stop. Not with this kind of curse. He should have called him before this happened.

But Dumbledore hadn’t called him. Fawkes had likely gone to get him on his own.

“How is he?” He heard one of the portraits speak with a shaking voice.

“He’s dying.” He didn’t have time to waste with sugarcoating anything. “Fawkes, I will need your tears.”

He waved his hand and a full vial of transparent liquid appeared at his side. He hoped this worked. It wasn’t the same curse Granger had, but the base for that curse could work for this one.

Watching the bird at his side, he uncorked it and offered it to the phoenix. Then the bird lowered his neck and let some tears drop inside into the vial.

He mixed the new ingredient with the potion, and it turned to a golden colour. The healing properties should strengthen the effect, and with luck, slow the spreading. The whole hand was affected up to his wrist.

“Help me get him in his chair,” he said to the bird.

He moved the chair. The bird helped him grab the unconscious wizard and lifted him until he was positioned in the chair. The bird then flew to a side of the desk.

“Enervate.” A tiny light hit Albus’ chest and he waited. After a minute, the old wizard fluttered his eyes and gasped.

Severus put the vial against the old wizard’s lips. “Drink.” With each sip, he cast a spell on his
hand, watching the reaction of the seal and checking to see if it healed some of the damage that the curse had made.

He heard the man gargling once, but he didn’t feel any compassion.

“Are you an idiot? Why in the hell would you put that ring on when you knew it was cursed?” He forced the rest of the contents down the man’s throat. “And don’t even try to tell me you didn’t know it was cursed. You knew better to even touch it at all.” He sighed and sat the vial on the table. He’d done his best in slowing the spreading.

“I…I was a…” He took a deep breath. “A…und…undisciplined fool. It was a temptation.”

“How long have you been cursed, Albus?” He was tempted to shake the man. “It’s amazing that you’re still alive!” He hit the desk with his hand. “At this point I can’t do much. It will spread. This curse is designed to kill. From what I’m seeing I assume you tried to break it yourself. You damaged the ring and made it spread faster.”

“It wasn’t my best idea.”

Severus almost slapped the old man for making it sound light. Like a joke. “No, obviously it wasn’t.”

“You have my thanks, Severus. Not only for the delay of this death.” He looked down at his hand. If nothing were done, his entire body would take on the same appearance. “How much time do you think I have?”

His anger faded and he looked away. The thought of this man dead made him ill. First, he had to deal with the Dark Lord’s plans and now this.

“I don’t know. This spell can’t be kept stable forever. I…I would guess a year.” He took a deep breath and saw Dumbledore smile from the corner of his eyes. How could that man smile at a time like this? “I can try to find something to gain more time but—”

“Don’t waste your time with a foolish old man who is already sentenced to die.” He could only part his lips at his interruption. How could he know that…”Yes, Severus, I’m referring to the plan to have Draco kill me.”

He turned his full attention to Albus. “I got that information a few weeks ago. How did you learn about it?”

“I knew this day would come. Seeing how the Dark Lord is trying to get his power back again, I knew my time walking among the living would end.” The man closed his eyes.

He didn’t answer the question fully, but Severus hadn’t expected him to. “I see.”

“So tell me, what information did you get?”

He grabbed the chair that was on the other side of the desk and placed it at the side. He’d try something to help whether Albus wanted it or not.

“The Dark Lord doesn’t favor the Malfoy family much. He doesn’t like Lucius, and so he lacks the same faith in Draco. He doesn’t think he can kill you. It looks more like he’s setting up a punishment for him just to spite his father.”

“Drama in the ranks then?”
Severus shrugged. “It doesn’t surprise me. He’s condemned to die if he fails. I was asked to look after him. To make sure he succeeds.”

“And if he fails, you die as well. If the mission fails, not if he fails.”

“I hoped we could all survive with your aid, Albus. It’s obvious the Dark Lord wants to punish me as well because he suspects me.”

He raised his dark hand. “Ah, don’t you see? I am condemned to die too. There is an easy plan here. For the good of everyone.”

“Are you actually considering letting him kill you?” The loss of Albus was something they couldn’t afford.

“Severus, I have asked a lot of you…”

“No.” Severus said.

“You have to be the one who does it, my friend.”

“When I think you can’t ask more of me, you end up doing it.” How could he ask him to commit murder? It would slice what was left of his soul into even more pieces.

*Insane.* He closed his hands until he felt his nails jabbing into his palm.

“Because you’re the one that should do it. Not right now of course.”

“Oh, I should give you time to write your will then? A few minutes?” His voice was full of sarcasm.

He smiled as if their conversation was the most normal thing in the world. “The time will come once the Dark Lord’s plans come to fruition. We can be sure that it will happen this year.”

This man showed no fear in dying. He was also serious about killing him. He couldn’t do that. He couldn’t kill Albus Dumbledore. He was used to being hated, so being the most hated man in the world didn’t bother him. No, what bothered him was that it would endanger his true purpose. It would destroy his goals. Losing Albus would devastate their plans.

“I know you didn’t expect this, Severus.”

“Why do you want me to kill you? If you are so intent on dying, why not let Draco kill you instead?”

“By killing me, you’ll become the most trusted servant for the Dark Lord. That will seal a position to return even more information to the order. Draco’s soul is still pure, we can still save him.” Dumbledore reached over with his good hand and clasped him on the shoulder. “I should’ve done the same with you. Help you. I’m sorry for that.”

Severus yanked away from his hand. He wished he could curse him, punch him, and strangle him. How he wished he could hate him. But he couldn’t even if he had rage building up inside him. He didn’t want an apology. After all those years of being treated less than both Potter’s, of being the target, the pest, he was apologizing. He didn’t think he had forgiveness in him, but he found that he did. A little, but it was there. But he’d never tell Dumbledore that.

“And my soul? Does that not matter?”
“I’m dying a slow painful death, Severus. You’ve killed before, but this time not only will you do it to save the soul of a young man; you’ll be saving an old man from suffering and humiliation. Any other death eater, maybe even young Draco, would enjoy my pain. They’d prolong it as much as possible. Then they’d desecrate my corpse. My time has come.”

The blue eyes pierced him, and he felt the man trying to move the last piece of compassion his heart hid. If he thought about it that way, it made the task ever so slightly easier. It was true that by killing him he’d spare him from the brutality. He would die at hands of a friend and not of an enemy. If he were in the situation, he’d want the same thing.

“I’ll do it,” he said.

“Thank you, Severus.” The man relaxed as if all his problems had been solved.

“Whee…When you fall, Hogwarts won’t be safe. It will fall under his control.”

“When that time comes, do I have your word that you will do everything you can to protect the students.”

“Yes, but it won’t be easy for me. The Dark Lord will expect discipline and the muggleborns will be in danger, if they’re here at all. I know he will place me as headmaster but he will appoint who he wishes for the teachers.”

“I understand that, but I have faith in you, Severus.”

He just wished he had faith in himself.

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AN: Yep. It’s the moment to show how I wanted to explore his relationship with Dumbledore, to show how is changing. How he is forced to do things he doesn’t want to and even then, he tries to have strength to do what he is asked for. Let me know what you think and see you on Saturday if all goes well.
Chapter 31: New Term Distance

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 31: New Term Distance

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______________________________

September 1996

The scorching feeling around his hand persisted. No matter how many times he put his skin under cold water, or how many chilling charms he used, the fire persisted. He could almost see the bonding lines that circled his skin, anticipating his death.

Every day that passed added another piece of complexity to his life. To his mission. And this unbreakable bond was just another thing that increased his chances of dying. Though he once didn’t care when he died, now he wanted to live long enough to watch the Dark Lord fall. Not just in death, but in pride.

Dumbledore walked in circles in front of his desk as he waited for the old man to digest the information he’d just given him. He could see that the blackness of the old man’s hand had spread above his wrist in the past week.

That curse made him feel useless. He wanted to give him more time. He wanted his mentor to live.
“Show me your hand, Severus.”

He followed his order.

The man tapped his hand with the wand, and three slim flaming cords appeared.

It seemed like people loved to choose his destiny for him. He missed having a little control in his life, but at least with the students coming he could change his role for a few hours each day.

The old man put his wand away and the lines faded.

“It is indeed an unbreakable vow. I’m not sure how Voldemort will react to this.” The wizard looked at him with worried blue eyes.

“He won’t be thrilled.”

“Hum… maybe it’s a plan to make sure you die with Draco.”

“No, Narcissa wasn’t faking. I will deal with it as always.” He realized he spoke more as if he were going for a light walk than if he were going to be tortured.

“It’s a serious thing when you have to be tortured, Severus.”

“I’m used to it.” Temporary pain didn’t matter, and the Dark Lord wouldn’t kill him yet. Not while he was still a useful tool.

Silence filled the room and the old man started to walk in circles again.

“At least this came at the appropriate time. It seems like these events are showing our destiny.” He frowned at his words. “You will need to kill me, saving your life and the soul of the boy.”

His lips twisted. He didn’t want to think about it because it would torment the rest of his existence. A mercy kill. He had to think about it in that way.

He wanted to take back his agreement, but knew this was the only option. The damn old fool was right and he hated it.

Dumbledore sat down. “We should end this conversation now, but I want to talk to you tomorrow. You will need to follow Malfoy’s movements and try to discover his plans.”

“I will try, but he doesn’t trust me anymore because of his father’s fall in the circle.”

“What do you can, Severus. I trust you.”

/\-\-\-\-\-

The hall was crowded, hot, and loud. The children and the young adults were hugging, joking, and sitting at their tables. The rest of the teachers were in the same position as him, sitting at the table and waiting patiently.

This year there would be changes.
He began tracing the rim of the cup with his finger, wishing the time would pass faster. This event was always tedious. He always felt drained after being in an environment of hyperactive children. At least the food was good. For once, he actually had an appetite.

Not paying much attention, the first year students entered the Great Hall following Minerva. Like each year, the sorting ceremony started, and name after name, all the new years were sorted in their houses. There were new kids to teach, but no one looked very promising. It was frustrating to teach people who didn’t appreciate the knowledge.

Then, Dumbledore rose from his seat when the event finished and the crowd stopped its irritating cheers and howls.

He looked up.

“Welcome to Hogwarts to students new and old.” He spoke with the same gentle voice that he always used. He saw some of the tenser students relax. “We have a new addition with us this year. I want you to greet Professor Slughorn. He will teach potions to all courses.” A murmur started to fill the room, and he couldn’t help but smirk in anticipation. “And Professor Snape will teach this year’s Defense against Dark Arts.”

“What? No!”

He moved his eyes to the person who spoke and wanted to gloat at the kid’s irritation. At least he’d get some enjoyment tormenting the arrogant brat and his . . . When he looked in that direction, Potter only had the Weasley ignoramus at his side. Where was the know-it-all?

He recalled the events of the last year. Was she all right? Had the Dark Lord gone after her? An irrational worry suppressed his joy, and he started to search the Gryffindor table. They could not lose her as a student. She was too intelligent. He searched each student, trying to find her. His back tensed.

It was then that he saw her presence in a corner. Her eyes were fixed on her plate and her brown untamed curls covered half of her face, quite more unruly than usual. She was hiding, trying to pass unseen and staying far away from her, what seemed to be, former friends.

Did this have something to do with that event at the infirmary when she was hit with the curse?

His scowl deepened and he tried to study her from a distance without it being noticeable. He could try to use legilimency, but he was sure she would notice his entrance into her brain.

She looked at him as if she felt his gaze. She held no fear or anger. Just sadness.

He was startled when she smiled at him, a small one but it was a smile nonetheless.

“In addition to teaching Defense of the Dark Arts, Professor Snape will also be teaching an advanced potions course. It’s a gift for our most brilliant students. This optional course will replace regular potion classes for those who chose to take it. The list to enroll will be on the dungeon’s classroom door.

He felt the despair and tension around the room. From almost everyone but her. Her eyes were still on him but now the smile was wider and there was a twinkle in her eyes that rivaled Dumbledore’s twinkle. He knew he’d have at least one student.

He moved his eyes back to Dumbledore just as he finished his speech.
This year was going to be strange.

AN: Mmmm Morphing stories :P Hope you liked it and later I will post another chapter.
Chapter 32: A Class of Three

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 32: A Class of Three

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September 1996

His dungeon’s domains had been divided, but at least his living quarters remained the same. After all, he was still the head of the Slytherin house. Now he shared a classroom, or rather it had birth a twin. Now there were two doors instead of one, next to each other. The right one, was his advanced class, the left, was Slughorn’s normal potions class.

The room was smaller, a possible consequence of the lack of students that were going to attend this opportunity. It had two doors inside, one that still connected to his office, and the other to the potion ingredient closet. It had four stone pillars in each corner and three large wooden tables. Each one had three cauldrons, distillation equipment, and a proper place to prepare the ingredients.

The door opened slowly and he didn’t bother to look. He knew who would be attending.

One Slytherin, one Ravenclaw, and one Gryffindor.

At least the classroom was quieter this way. This would be a potion class that he could enjoy teaching.
When the rustle of robes, books, and materials finished, he looked up and stared in silence at the attendants. The Slytherin was an ambitious boy that wasn’t under the clutches of the Dark Lord, the Ravenclaw was a meticulous girl that was perfectionist to the point it would drive a normal being mad. Then, the last one, the Gryffindor. Her. The know-it-all and the brightest witch of her age.

He parted his lips to speak. He would get straight to the point and was confident that these three would be able to grasp his words first listen. “I won’t deal with trivialities, I won’t tolerate stupid mistakes. All of you have chosen to be here. To learn like an apprentice to a master rather than a young student. You didn’t cower away like the rest of your classmates. If you don’t qualify and keep up, I won’t hesitate to throw you out with the mediocre brains. I won’t tolerate disrespect. You all know how I teach, so I don’t want to hear complaints.”

The pupils nodded.

He couldn’t help but notice her tired eyes. It was the first time he saw her that close since he’d helped her at the infirmary. She was different. She looked like she had the weight of the world on her shoulders.

He waved his wand and a box appeared in front of him.

“We will start with strengthening healing potions. It’s a simple task. It’s a kid’s game in comparison of what you will have to do here.” He opened the lid to uncover three blue vials. “I want you to think, to improve it by your own means. Get a potion and start. You have two hours.”

The last one to grab the vial was Granger. She looked even worse close up. Drained of energy.

Hadn’t she recovered fully from the curse? If not, then it would be his fault. Maybe he should check if there were remains that he didn’t eradicate, or ask Madam Pomfrey.

The young witch uncorked the vial and smelled it, trying to decipher the ingredients first. The others just assumed it was a normal healing potion and of course, they made a mistake. Then she put the contents in the cauldron and started to work.

He studied her movements with a subtle look. Her agility and concentration looked the same as last year when she brewed, but her confidence wasn’t there.

He frowned and grabbed some parchments. He would check her later if he had the time.

The fumes and the boiling noises spread through the room. When the students were sweating, it was time to stop.

“Put your mixtures in the vials.” He relished the fact there were no groans or words of complaint about not being finished.

He watched as they cleaned their tables, cauldrons, and materials, as effectively as any master did, after they had placed their concoctions in their vial.

“Before you go I want you to write an essay of fifty inches about what you did today and why. You have until next week.”

The first two placed their vials on his desk. The last one was Granger and she did it with a small unsure movement. She didn’t move away as she stared at the vial she’d set down.

“Is something bothering you, Miss Granger?” The words left his mouth without control. He was going to regret this.
Much to his surprise, the witch only tensed and said, “It’s nothing, Professor Snape.”

He grabbed his wand and tapped the young girl’s shoulder. Then his eyes looked around her body to detect some curse residue he might not have eradicated.

She was looking at him with bafflement, but he didn’t care.

“Professor, what was that for?”

He ignored her, trying to see if he had made a mistake. When he was satisfied that there was no more curse, he removed the scanning charm.

“A simple checkup,” he said, but that probably wouldn’t satisfy the witch.

“Thank you, sir.” She tangled her hands to play with her fingers. “I...you saved my life.” A pang hit his chest. Life debts weren’t something that should be played with. He was destined to die to pay his, but she didn’t need to.

“You don’t owe me a debt, Miss Granger. It’s my responsibility to take care of students.”

“Not when they are out of Hogwarts, sir.”

She was right but... “I don’t care, Miss Granger. You don’t owe me a thing. So, go. You have other classes for sure.” He dismissed, not giving room for an argument.

She nodded and put her bag strap over her shoulder.

“Thank you again, sir. For the concern,” she said and smiled at him.

She left the classroom more relaxed than any student he had in his classes.

Did he worry? Of course he did. A brilliant witch was a rarity. He’d been worried about her from the first time he’d seen her in a dangerous situation with those fools. She was also his student. His responsibility.

He looked at the new potions and arched a brow. Hers had an intense blue colour and the other two were opaque. Was she comparing her work with the others? Perhaps her mentality of always being right was ending. He hoped so because that meant she had finally learned some humility.

AN: Looks around innocently. Okay he is empathizing with her. Let me know what you think and hope you liked it. See you next week!
Chapter 33: Shaky Duel

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 33: Shaky Duel

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September 1996

The first and the last days of the school week were always the worst. Today was Friday so the kids were louder and thought they could get away with more for some reason. Perhaps they could with other professors but not with him. He was the same no matter what day of the week it was.

Granger got up from the table. She was alone again and he noticed she hadn’t touched much of her food. The whole week had been the same. She ate a little while sitting at the corner of the table, focused on her book almost the entire time, and then left with no one following.

His eyes searched the table until he found Weasley and Potter together. They looked like they didn’t have problems. As if the girl never existed in their lives.

He rose from his seat with quiet elegancy and followed Granger. He had a class to teach and he was going to enjoy it immensely.

With quick steps, he reached her in the corridor that went to his classroom. He felt her eyes on him and his steps became slower against his will, matching her pace. The look she offered to him was strange. Gratitude and respect.

“Good morning, professor.”
He only replied with a bow and forced his steps to go faster, breaking any kind of contact. After a small walk, he opened the door.

A smirk crossed his lips as he saw some startled students. He continued his walk until he reached the teacher’s desk. Granger came in a minute later, taking a seat in the last row. Another strange behaviour that peaked his curiosity.

He looked at her and saw a brief smile as she put the book on her table. What in Merlin’s name was wrong with her? He refused to accept more gratitude from her.

He turned around, not wanting to deal with that right now.

Thankfully, the classroom started to fill and the chatting stopped. He didn’t have much patience today. Not when the groups he was teaching were Slytherins and Gryffindors.

“All of your classes in this subject have been mediocre and taught by unsuitable professors. In taking this course with me you will learn the reality of the Defense against the Dark Arts.” He moved his hand, uncovering the multiple pictures with grotesque images in movement. “All these are curses and their effects. You need to look at them so you can learn the consequences of using these curses. It will teach you to respect these arts and fear them. It will give you pause when you think about using them in unwarranted situations. Also, in knowing everything about them, you will have a chance of protecting yourself against them.”

He paused for a moment and studied his students. The reactions were as expected. Very few students were calm. Some looked horrified at the pictures, while others looked as if they were going to vomit. And Potter was infuriatingly controlled. Not even cowering in disgust. The boy was just defying him with his eyes.

With another movement, his wand appeared in his hand.

“Keep your books in your bags. You have already wasted five precious years looking at the theory. We will start practicing, and you will look at the theories by yourselves.” A rustle filled the room. When all was silent, he crossed his arms. “We will start with non-verbal spells. Can anyone tell me what they are and why they are important?”

No one raised their hand, not even Granger. His lips twitched at the abnormality. He was sure she knew. She always did. Instead, she cowered at his glance, hiding from him, from getting attention. Respect was one thing, but hiding knowledge and not participating was completely different. This was out of character for her. She had always wanted to prove herself and raised her hand until she became irritating, but now she was literally hiding.

“Miss Granger, I require your memory to teach these brainless classmates what they should already know.” She tensed. She definitely didn’t want attention.

“Yes, sir.” She straightened her posture a bit. She wasn’t a coward when challenged, and he almost smiled at that. “This type of magic consists of forming spells without speaking out loud. Also it gives the spell caster an advantage if the opponent doesn’t know what he is going to be hit with.”

“Correct, Miss Granger. Thank you for your superior intellect, but is still too straight to the book.” He heard Malfoy laughing and tried not to roll his eyes. But she had a small smile. She knew he’d just given her a compliment and constructive criticism. Merlin, his student’s brains were totally disastrous if only she had noticed.

Today, she was a mirror of him when he was sitting in that class, in that same place, and he
let himself feel a kinship with her for a moment.

“Pair up and start practicing simple enchantments and hexes non-verbally.” He knew this was going to take months. They were too behind in this.

As he saw the students moving, he found her again. She was trying to find a partner, but she only received negations, until she found Neville. The boy was an idiot in things, but at least he didn’t hold a grudge against her. Though why the students were treating her the way they were was still a mystery.

As much as he didn’t want to admit it, she would be the first to master this way of fighting.

Like he had in his younger days.

With a wave of his wand, the tables moved around until they were situated around the walls along with the chairs. Some of the students that were still sitting fell on the floor. After a minute, all students were in pairs and waiting for his instructions.

“Begin,” he ordered and the voices rose. All of them failing at the first attempt. “I said non-verbal, Potter!”

The kid stopped to look at him with an annoying look. “What? I wasn’t the only one that—”

“Shut up and ten points from Gryffindor. Next time keep your shouts lower, I heard you over everyone else. Or better yet follow my instructions and cast non-verbal. That way you might not get loved ones killed.”

He saw the boy gritting his teeth and in a fast movement, his wand lifted to point at him. How easy it was to bait him. His short temper would put him at risk.

“Don’t say things you don’t know, bastard!”

The class went quiet.

Severus wanted to kill him. Hypocritical teen. Judging him without knowing a thing. He looked at him with murderous eyes. How he wished he could punish him with more than just removing his free time.

“Detention, Mister Potter. For a month with Mister Filch,” he said sternly. “Continue practicing.”

The class obeyed him as their fear was rejuvenated with this exchange. He moved around, observing his students. All of them were failing at the magic call. He went around correcting them. Then he found Neville and Granger. She didn’t have her arm raised at all. She wasn’t making efforts to defend herself. He couldn’t blame her of course. She was paired with Neville after all.

“Don’t let your guard down even if your opponent is incompetent, Granger!” he barked and after a brief look to him, she nodded.

“Right, sir. Sorry, sir,” she replied, this time focused on what she had to do.

But then, he saw her hand trembling uncontrollably. Was she scared? Something like this shouldn’t have scared her after all she’d been through.

He looked at her with confusion, trying to see the duel from the shadows of the corner he
was in. No spells came from her wand and the shaking never stopped in the whole hour left. She even got disarmed by Neville.

The students rushed away the moment they were dismissed, but he still had his back pressed against the wall, thinking on the events he’d seen today and linking them with the others he had witnessed. His concern for the young witch was growing. She appeared depressed most of the time, but today she’d been scared. She was traumatized by something to do with fighting. He’d seen it in seasoned wizards before.

Then, his ears caught Weasley and Granger’s voices outside and he moved closer to the door.

“You know how he is. He needs time to deal with what happened, and you aren’t making it easy for him.”

Severus knew the situation had to do with Potter but it was interesting to have it confirmed further.

“I-I know...but...I apologized but... he avoids me. And you do too, Ron.” Her voice sounded like she was at the edge of tears.

“Well, you’re strong and he isn’t. He needs me more. Sorry, but he is my best mate.” That boy was stupid. He didn’t have to avoid one friend to help another. His mind harked back to Lily. Before he messed up with his comment, she’d been friends with both him and the Gryffindors.

“You are... You know what, fine! Go with him. I don’t need any of you!” He heard a grunt and some steps. “But still tell him I’m sorry.” The footsteps faded and he heard a small sob.

He tensed in response and something inside him twisted to the point he felt repulsion for the boy and sympathy for the girl. He knew what it was to have an apology rejected.

His emotions took control of him and he walked outside. The girl was silently crying with her back against the wall.

“I’m sorry, Harry,” she barely whispered, once, twice. Merlin, that boy didn’t deserve any of her tears after all he dragged her into. After almost killing her.

“I should take points from you for making my corridor wet,” he snapped, not out of anger toward her but toward the two boys.

She looked up, startled, and when she acknowledged his presence, her cheeks became slightly red.

“I-I’m sorry, sir. I will go.” She tried to clean her tears from her face with her palm.

He let a long breath escape from his lungs and his anger seemed to fade with it. He couldn’t believe this. How easily his mood changed.

“If someone has to apologize, it’s him to you.”

Her eyes went wide. “I-I don’t think so, sir. He hates me. I don’t know if I can ever be forgiven.”

Her misery made his anger rise again. What was she talking about? If she made a mistake with Potter and apologized, no matter what she’d done, she should’ve been forgiven for it. Or at the very least not treated like a pariah. After all the boy dragged her into, he had no right to hold a grudge. Despite how much his curiosity ate at him, it was none of his business.
But then again, if it affected her performance in his classes, then it was his place to be involved.

“You have someone around to forgive you. Work for it.” Her eyes looked at him with wonder, tears forgotten. “You are an annoying Gryffindor. I’m sure you can do it.”

Her eyes softened and a shy smile formed on her lips.

“Thank you for your words.” She bowed low. No one had ever bowed like that to him. “I will try my best and will follow your advice.”

She straightened, and he studied her. There was no mockery at all. Never from her.

“All right, Miss Granger. I don’t want you to flood my corridor again.” A simple joke escaped from him.

“No points deduction, sir?”

“Not today.” He crossed his arms. “Go away. You have classes and time to solve your problem this weekend.”

“Thank you, Professor Snape.”

She walked away and he tensed.

Being thanked sincerely so often tended to do that to him.

AN: Okay, we are starting to develop the…mystery? And their… let’s say, interactions. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. Till Saturday if all goes well.
Chapter 34: Meeting

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 34: Meeting

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September 1996

Severus’s form molded against the sofa, and he cringed at the henhouse that the first week teacher’s meeting had become.

When the euphoria calmed down, each professor sat around the circular table of the teacher’s room. Finally, he could breathe, and consequently, become bored. They started to revise each course and each subject they were going to teach the rest of the year. It was a necessary routine to balance the level of the knowledge and the workload for them. Still, he didn’t care.

This year Defense Against the Dark Arts had priority thanks to the raise of Voldemort, and he had to make sure that the stupid Potter and his friends were skilled enough to survive. They were too green at it because of the lack of discipline and effort.

A worry crossed his mind as he remembered the shaking hand of the girl.

“Severus, is there something you want to add?” He heard Dumbledore’s voice at the head chair. “I heard you already imposed the first detention and on Mister Potter.”

He placed his dark eyes on him, daring him to say it was inappropriate.

“He was disrespectful when I corrected him. I’m merely giving him a consequence to his
behavior. His morals are atrocious.”

“Of course, Severus,” Dumbledore said.

“I find your assessment a bit unfair,” McGonagall said. “He is a little stray with rules and always looks like he is in the middle of everything, but he is not that horrible, Severus,” McGonagall said.

“He pointed his wand at me in class.”

McGonagall’s eyes widened and she shirked. “I see. Yes, that must be dealt with.” The other teachers for once agreed.

“Granger seemed odd the other day in Defense. In fact, she’s seemed odd since her last adventure with Potter.”

“She is as excellent as always in my class,” Minerva replied.

“Anyone else notice any strange behavior with her?” Dumbledore asked.

“Well, she isn’t spending any time with Potter or Weasley,” Flitwick added.

He looked at Dumbledore, seeking answers. He must’ve known what was happening. He was the one who threw the Dark Lord from the ministry and protected Potter in the end.

“I’m sure there’s nothing to worry about. Miss Granger is capable of dealing with the events that happened last year,” Dumbledore said after he broke eye contact with him. “I’m sure of it. She is the brightness wit-”

“She is depressed,” he interrupted with a growl. He’d seen muggles dismiss mental issues and the results had been disastrous. For a witch it could be even more so. “And that can affect her magic.”

“Who doesn’t get depressed these days, Severus? But as the others said, she is doing excellent in the rest of the classes. Maybe it’s you who intimidate her too much,” Dumbledore replied, not accusing but clearly blaming him.

“In potions she’s doing exceptional,” he said. “Not behaving quite as oddly, but very different.”

“I’m sure she’ll be fine with time,” Dumbledore said with a sickening voice full of faith.

He wasn’t convinced. She was human after all. Always supporting her fool friends and doing everything for them. He knew that if she were isolated she would crumble in the end. Like he did. But after years, he learnt and managed to fight alone. She didn’t have years, and he didn’t want her to end up like him.

“Things will be right with time, Severus. Don’t worry.”

He didn’t worry. Not for a Gryffindor. “If there is nothing more to add, the meeting is dismissed. Severus come to see me in a little while.”

“Yes, headmaster,” he replied with a polite voice as he left the room. Then he looked at McGonagall. “Minerva?”

“Yes, Severus?” He waited until the rest of the teachers disappeared from the room.
“Do you know what happened to Granger at the ministry?”

“I know the same you do. She was hit by the curse and was one of the last of our students to fall.” She tapped the armchair repeatedly with her fingers.

“I wonder how that could affect her friendships. Also, I wonder if it is related with the aversions she has in Defense,” he said, finding the words difficult to express.

“I don’t know, Severus. She might just be affected by the fight she had. It’s perfectly reasonable. It was her first serious fight with people who wanted to murder her. That would affect anyone.” She took a deep breath. “But like Albus said, she is strong. Give them space and the opportunity to deal with things on their own.” The woman smiled to him as he nodded. “We can’t teach everything, Severus.

“I agree with the giving time, but I just hope that no one gets killed because of it.”

“I thought you didn’t worry for Gryffindors.” Minerva looked at him with joy.

“I don’t.”

She patted his hand and stood. “You’re a good man, Severus,” she said before leaving the room and a bewildered Severus behind.

AN: Okay, here we are, showing the privacy of teachers. Let me know what you think. In a little, another chapter that follows this one.
Chapter 35: Shattered Trust

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 35: Shattered Trust

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September 1996

Dumbledore had been silent the moment he’d walked into the office and sat down. He assumed that being asked to come had something to do with the order. Now the normally peaceful silence had grown tense and uncomfortable. His neck felt stiff and his lower back ached from sitting in the high backed chair for too long.

“I want you to keep from giving Harry too many detentions,” he finally said.

“Why?” he replied. “If he deserves them, then he should get them.” He knew even the other students saw how Potter was treated by other teachers. He’d heard Ravenclaws, Hufflepuffs, and his Slytherins talking about the favoritism shown to the brat. One of the few indirect compliments he’d ever gotten from students was that he was a balance to said favoritism.

“Harry is going to help me some nights. I need him.”

“He is incompetent. I doubt he is useful.”

“It’s vital for his fight against Voldemort, Severus. Please try to be less harsh.”

A key instrument to the fight, and he wasn’t aware of it. “And why didn’t I know about
“I don’t want to give you all the information. You spend too much time with the Dark Lord.”

His lips parted with incredulity and he let his arms fall. He was a spy. His spy. If he hid things from him, how was it supposed to help?

“It’s all because you order it,” he snapped.

“It’s a precaution.”

“I never gave you reasons to distrust me, Albus. I endured kills, torture and you don’t tell me even though I put up with those things.”

“You know it’s a wise plan of action. If he accesses your min—”

“So now you don’t trust my skills either? He is only able to see what I willingly show him and you know it.” A small sarcastic snort came from his throat. “You ask too much of me, Albus. The only thing I gain is becoming a target to both sides!”

He said he trusted him, but he always kept secrets that could help him end this war. If not that, then telling him these things could make it easier for those who will have to fight. He’d always known he was a tool, but he thought some part of this man cared for his well-being. All he knew now was this man was a manipulator. Albeit for the greater good, but still a manipulator.

“I do trust you, Severus, but what I’m doing with Harry will be his mission. I believe he is the one capable of doing it.” Albus looked at him with sad eyes.

“I see.” He was hurt that he didn’t tell him about that mission of Potter’s when it was his task to protect him. His life was linked to that purpose. His debt with Lily and the fall of her killer was the only things that mattered to him.

“Still, I…” Dumbledore seemed to be pondering something. “Honestly…” He slouched. “I think you’re the only one I can trust with it. It will ensure the eradication of Voldemort’s existence.”

He waited.

Dumbledore’s eyes became concerned. “Harry… He shouldn’t know until it’s necessary. He might not be able to do what he needs if this information gets to him when it’s not right.”

Dumbledore lifted part of his sleeve, showing him how the darkness had extended up to his elbow. He thought it would’ve gone slower than what it was. He’d have to try to find something to slow it further.

“After my death—“

“I can still try to do something to slow it, Albus.”

“Don’t argue with me, Severus. Let me speak. In a time after my death, there’s going to be a moment when the Dark Lord will fear for his serpent’s life.”

“Are you referring to Nagini?” He found himself asking in confusion, trying to seek more answers with a dumb question.

“Yes. That will be when the Dark Lord is most vulnerable. You must tell Harry. It will be when he starts protecting the serpent, keeping it at his side all the time.”
“What do I need to tell Potter?” Dumbledore always drew out conversations to the point of annoyance.

Dumbledore covered his cursed arm and closed his eyes. “When Voldemort went to kill Harry, Lily Potter got in the middle to protect him. The curse rebounded. The fragment of Voldemort’s soul attached to the only living thing it could find.”

His stomach sank. “It attached to Potter. That’s why he can speak with snakes and look into the Dark Lord’s mind.”

“Yes, a part of Voldemort lives within him.”

“If there’s something of the Dark Lord inside Potter, that means he’ll always survive.” Was all he’d done to protect the boy pointless? “Potter has to die.” The words tasted bitter the moment he spoke them.

“Yes, and Voldemort must be the one to do it. It’s almost like suicide.” The old man looked drained as he spoke.

This changed everything. His life, his debt, his purpose, and his promise to her. Redemption was impossible for him. Everything he’d done was in vain. But Dumbledore couldn’t be that inconsiderate. Could he?

“For all these years I thought we were protecting him for her.”

“We were protecting him because it was necessary,” Dumbledore said.

His face betrayed him and he lost all the control he had. His eyes showed fury, his scowl was deep and his nostrils flared. He couldn’t believe what this man had done. He was a damned puppet master as much as the Dark Lord.

“You didn’t fucking care about anyone did you?” he said, reverting to language he didn’t normally use. “You’ve been raising him like a farm animal. Raising him strong only to have him die.” He shot from his seat and stalked towards the older man, who was now on his feet.

“Don’t be surprised, Severus. How many men and women have you—”

“You have used me to lure yet another person to their death. Used my pain against me.” Right now killing him seemed like the biggest favor he could do for the order and the world. The hate he held towards Dumbledore nearly rivaled what he held for the Dark Lord. It almost overrode any hostility he had for the elder Potter and his son.

“You have come to care for the boy?” The tone of his voice only served to flame the fire of his hatred.

“You think it is him I care for?” His wand fell from his sleeve to his hand and without removing his harsh eyes from the old man, waved it. “Expecto...Patronum.”

A small stream of light came from his wand and took the form of a silver doe. It moved, jumped, and without looking at its owner, disappeared.

The patronus still knew it hurt him to look at it. It was a shadow of his lost love. The reason he lived, the reason he protected the boy, the reason that he would die. That was the only way he could repay his mistakes.
“It’s still the same after all these years,” he said with a small voice, one that almost contained guilt. It was tender and loving, like an adoring father to a son.

But the sound of his voice no longer mattered. All of his trust in this man had disappeared. This revelation had weakened him. He would continue to protect the boy as long as he could despite his fate. Because he wasn’t a coward and it was the right thing to do.

“Always.”

AN: Yep I know this is sooner than in the normal story, but, for the sake of mine I had to twist it ;D I hope you liked it. This is an important point of the story because, like the title says, it’s a point of change for Severus and Dumbledore “alliance”. Let me know what you think and see you on November 1st!
Chapter 36: Similar

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 36: Similar

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

September 1996

The soft wind caressed his skin. The black cloak moved at his back, making a calming sound as the hypnotic movements continued. Sometimes, this quiet environment was accompanied by a flapping sound or a hoot. The battlements of the owlery always gave him peace.

And he needed a fairly quiet place to think.

The conversation he had with Dumbledore repeated inside his mind as his heart suffered the feeling of betrayal. He’d let himself be used for an objective, but he had been deceived about the why.

He was tempted to stop his services and leave the boy, but he was a man of his word and had to carry through with the mission. He’d protect the boy as well as he could until the time came. Living just another day was valuable to someone like Potter.

He closed his eyes as a gust of air moved his hair.

Dumbledore was a manipulative man. He used every pawn he could acquire if that meant he could free the world from the Dark Lord. That murderer, that corruptor of souls. He was glad he still kept a part of his heart. He was glad he could feel even the anger and bitterness in his life. He needed to focus on his emotions, or he would be lost to the darkness.
The Dark Lord was the reason for the despair everyone was suffering. If Potter had to die to end it, so be it. The problem was that he might not be capable of giving the information to Potter when the time was proper. He wasn’t naive. His probabilities of dying were high if he was going to kill Dumbledore. Both sides will eventually want his blood. He could outrun them for a while, but not long. He was still a man who needed to sleep and eat.

He could trust no one. Not even Albus as he demonstrated a few hours ago.

He was not a fool anymore. He looked at the vast forest in the distance and the calm path that went toward the lake. He rested his shoulder against the wall and enjoyed the view for a moment. His heart and dark feelings had calmed partially.

A lonely figure interrupted his view. He arched an eyebrow when he distinguished who it was. Granger. She still was alone, so she likely hadn’t resolved her issues with Potter and the Weasley.

They were stupid if they let her go as an ally. Potter would’ve already died if not for her.

He noticed how the woman sat at the edge of the lake. She removed a book from her bag and started to read. That view reminded him of his teenage self. Friendless, focused on his studies, enjoying a good book at a quiet spot. He furrowed his brows. She could be the key. Maybe he could count on her. He could try to confide in this young witch. She was near Potter, she would be with him until the end, and she had brains enough to see reason and keep secrets.

But the most important thing of all. Is that with time, he could trust her because she already did with him. He wasn’t deaf. He knew she defended him to her friends when he had those meetings with the order at Grimmauld place.

She could accomplish his tasks in case he failed. She could aid him. She could be his ally.

If he brought this up with her, it would add more weight to her shoulders, and he didn’t know if he was capable of being another Dumbledore.

But he didn’t have to be as long as he didn’t conceal things that would put her in danger. He could be better than that. She was always in the middle of danger anyway.

Maybe he could test her. Then he could let her decide. It would be the fairest thing. He wouldn’t deceive her like Dumbledore had him.

And he had to admit that he also wanted to do this so she wouldn’t be alone. That she’d have something more to focus on. He knew a brain like hers thrived on new challenges and busyness.

He removed his eyes from her calm figure and turned around. He needed to think about this more before making a final decision.

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The classroom was quiet when he entered. A thing he found pleasant after the two days he’d been unable to sleep. He wanted to lie down on his bed again and think through his problems, but he had obligations to attend to. And they were staring at him from their seats.
With a couple of big steps, he moved to his desk and let himself fall on his chair. He waved his wand and words appeared on the blackboard.

“I don’t want to hear a word. No questions. This potion requires concentration, discipline, and extreme precision. In 18 years, no student has ever been able to brew the Draught of the Living Dead. A small sip of this to an enemy disposes of him indefinitely. Keep that in mind. Remember the smells and the correct colour. All the characteristics that help you to recognize it. Show me what you are capable of.”

After his words, the students gathered the ingredients and placed them on their working space. He wanted to see if they were as skilled as he was at their age. His eyes darted along his three students. All were excellent, but Granger was by far the best of the three. The healing potion she’d given to him the other week was more potent than the other two.

Even in her current mental state, she’d managed to brew something that might help her in the future. He wanted to try to teach them as much as he could with the upcoming war. Things that could be useful in hard times. Things he knew would help with what Death Eaters loved to use against people.

One of the benefits of being a potioneer for the Dark Lord was that he knew what he used most of the time.

The clock’s tick accompanied the bubbling noises around the dungeon. His students were suffering; he saw it in their wet hair, their discarded robes, and the constant stirring. Even Granger was having difficulties cutting the sopophorus bean.

He put his palms on the desk and lifted himself. It was time to take a closer look at what they were doing. He was confident enough that their skills wouldn’t cause an explosion, but they could still kill themselves with a mistake.

From the right side of each table, he studied each student’s movements and concoctions. The Slytherin one had a bad colour and the Ravenclaw girl stirred too much. When he was about to looked at Granger’s work, something hit his chest.

His eyes fell down to find the culprit and his frown deepened. A sopophorus bean had hit him.

He looked up and found Granger’s body frozen. Her knife was in her hand, her mouth was open, and her eyes looked at him with surprise. It was interesting that he didn’t feel the need to shout at her. Not after all he was witnessing recently. He almost laughed at being hit by a bean.

“I’m sorry, professor. It’s hard to cut.” She picked up the bean from the floor and tried to cut it again. She failed.

He moved to stand beside her. He grabbed the hand holding the knife and turned it until the blade was on its side. He pressed down and crushed the bean. Removing his hand, he took a step aside and looked at her.

“That is what makes a potioneer a master. Don’t follow the books too faithfully. Use your brain,” he whispered as if he was gifting one of his secrets to her.

“Thank you for the advice.” Her smile didn’t fade.

“Five points from Gryffindor for attacking me with a bean.” He said with a neutral voice as he walked towards his desk again. He heard the students’ chuckle, including Granger, and allowed
it.

When he found his seat, he studied the students. His eyes fell on Granger. She was still smiling. He could tell she was starting to get a tiny bit of her confidence and strength back.

The streams continued invading the classroom and each minute the smells came closer and closer to that of a corpse. This was when he knew the time was over.

“Fill a vial and bring it to my desk along with your papers.” He ordered with a calm voice.

After they cleaned their workspaces, they placed their vials in front of him and the papers next to them.

“With a simple look I can tell that no one managed to do it correctly.”

The Ravenclaw looked distressed and the Slytherin hurt. Granger just lowered her eyes, ashamed.

“You can go.”

The students bowed politely and gathered their things to leave. It was one of the things he liked about this selected classroom. They choose to learn under him.

He grabbed the papers and stopped to look at the brief scribbling of one. This was an abnormality.

“Miss Granger, a moment please.”

The young woman stopped and turned to him. “Is something wrong, sir?” The girl said as she took some tentative steps back to his desk. He never lifted his eyes from her essay.

“Apparently your brain got confused with what I asked.” He saw her eyes looking at him with a brief perturbed glance. “I asked for fifty inches, not fifteen.” He smashed the paper against the table.

Granger jumped in response and her arms cuddled a book. “I thought you said…I’m sorry.” Her eyes avoided his.

“You know I don’t want people slacking off here.”

“I wasn’t…I’m sorry, professor. I made a mistake.”

Looking at her, he controlled his emotions under the neutrality of his face. She was a potential disaster, but she had managed to do her tasks correctly, at least in every subject but Defense. And she wasn’t exactly a normal student considering what pressures she had with Potter and the Order.

She would become better. She had to if he wanted her as a potential ally and substitute if he failed.

“Repeat it, Miss Granger.” The girl looked up at him with astonishment. “I want it for today. I don’t care if you have other things to do. I don’t want another mistake in this classroom, so take it as your last chance.”

“Yes, sir.”
He noticed how the confidence in her voice returned and knew he’d made the right choice.

AN: Twists? :P I hope you liked it. Let me know what you think. He is really empathizing with her because he is seeing his years of solitude in her. In a little you will have the next chapter!
Chapter 37: First Step in Trusting

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 37: First Step in Trusting

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September 1996

He tapped his quill on the parchment a few times. His eyes were focused on the last word he’d scribbled. Correcting the essays of his potion’s students always showed him how wrong they were. Even the most brilliant ones. The Ravenclaw and Slytherin weren’t as good as they thought. As for Granger, she still hadn’t come with her essay. She was running out of time.

He put the quill down and stretched his arms and legs before he stood. With quiet movements, he grabbed an old book from his desk and moved around until his hand was on the door handle. When he walked into the hall, his senses became alert by instinct.

Fortunately, he knew students didn’t crowd the corridors at those hours. It was the perfect time to return a book to the library.

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A kid almost collided with him when he entered the library and scurried away before he could say anything.
He walked to Madam Pince’s desk.

“Oh, as punctual as usual. Thank you, Severus,” the woman said as he handed her the book.

“It’s a pleasure, Irma. I fear some student massacred the book before I borrowed it.”

The woman opened the book to check the damage. “I can’t believe it. I should check who’s done this and—” A loud laugh broke the woman’s words. He saw her pressing her lips tighter and her neck muscles showing. “Those kids. They’ve been like this all the afternoon even though I told them to be quiet.”

Irma rounded her desk and started to walk around the bookshelves as he followed her with his eyes. Maybe he would just leave and let the woman vent her irritation at the students.

Taking the liberty of looking at the list of borrowed books that the woman spread across the desk, he found the book name and signed his name beside it. Irma growled as she walked back to the desk.

“I’m thinking on expelling them from the library. Those students of yours may be smart, but they have the behavior of drooling baboons.”

“Are you talking about my potion’s students?”

The woman nodded. He went towards the bookshelves. He stopped at the corner when he heard them talking.

“So what do you think? Do you think you could find a rat in that hair of hers?” A male voice reached his ears.

“Probably, it looks dirty. And did you see how she dresses? I saw her coming from the Hogwarts express and she has horrible taste,” a girl voice replied. “She didn’t even manage to do Snape’s essay right. I don’t think she’s as smart as they say. She’s probably faking it all and cheating.”

“She is a mudblood, what do you expect? There’s no way she can be as smart as she seems to be.”

His frown deepened. His memories of using that word flashed in his head. His mistake, his fault, her death.

He took a step forward, revealing his presence. The Slytherin and the Ravenclaw were whispering under books and in front of them, not too far, the back of a young woman with a bushy hair trembled.

He made a fist and he was tempted to slam the boy’s head against the table.

He moved until he was at the back of the two students, knowing his shadow was appearing on the wooden table with each step he took. He hoped they would start crying in fear.

“If you would pay more attention to your potions than your hair and clothes, perhaps you wouldn’t be doing abysmally in my class.” His voice had a tingle of cruelty as he said each word slowly, making sure it stuck in their brains.

The two students tensed in front of him and Granger turned to look at him.
“Prof-”

“Fifty points from Slytherin.” He interrupted the boy who had dared to address him. “And fifty points from Ravenclaw.” The two students lowered their heads.

“Granger, you still have thirty minutes. Don’t fail.”

With those last words of acknowledgement, he turned and left the library, not lingering a moment to watch her response or any other strange look she could gift to him.

He couldn’t stand it. That word, the bullying, still haunted him to that very day. He thought he’d come to terms with it, but with each new event he’d learned he hadn’t.

What made it worse was that he saw himself in that Slytherin when he used that word.

With shaking hands, he opened one of the cabinets and put his black wand against his temple. A long silver cord appeared as he pulled the wand away from his skin. Guiding the memory with a few pushes of his wand, he let it fall into a brown bowl filled with liquid. When the cord touched the liquid, a brief light appeared.

He went to his bathroom and splashed some water on his face. He closed his eyes and rested his hands on each side of the sink.

Granger shouldn’t have to deal with that kind of pain. Idiot classmates shouldn’t mock her just because she cared more for her intelligence than doing the things they enjoyed. But the world was always unfair to the bright.

How long had that bullying been going on? She was a quiet girl that only enjoyed her studying. Nothing harmful. She wanted to learn and was repeatedly mocked for it. Even her friends had abandoned her because of some mistake she had made.

Opening his eyes, he watched his mirrored self. She was alone like him. Dealing with the hurt, the pain of being ostracized by everyone. They used her and gave her burdens she had to deal with alone.

She needed someone to trust, and he needed someone to trust too. Someone to continue his plan if he failed. Maybe they could help each other, and his supposed plan wasn’t as insane as he thought. Maybe it could work. She was perfect for the job.

But it was her decision.

He grabbed the towel and dried his face. After a brief look to his tired eyes, he walked back to door that led to his office, one he had left open in his haste.

When he looked in his office, he froze.

She was there.

He watched her actions, curious about what she would do. He hadn’t heard her enter due to not putting up his wards. She moved in front of his pensive and his body tensed. He should’ve moved. He should’ve shown her he was there. To stomp in rage over to her and throw her out like he had Potter.

But instead, he moved to a side and hid his body in the shadows. Her eyes were looking at the pool of floating memories and her frown was marked. Was she tempted? Would she be as
disrespectful as Potter?

Her fingertips caressed the edge of the bowl and a spark of light shone in response. Then she closed her eyes, yanked her hand away, and turned her back to the pensieve. She walked over to his desk instead.

She didn’t look, and the possibility of her looking at them before he came back was nonexistent. She wouldn’t have had time.

This was a sign he couldn’t ignore. It was a show of true respect towards him. He was the most hated man at Hogwarts. He had had many secrets anyone would love to know and use against him if the chance was given. But she hadn’t looked. And that meant more to him than anything else she could’ve done.

Leaving the corner with a quiet movement, he showed his presence but the girl was still silent. Her eyes were roaming around the papers on his desk. She hugged her essay and two books against her chest. This girl needed to sharpen her senses.

“Miss Granger.” As he expected, she jumped at his voice. The girl opened her lips and her amber eyes looked at him, surprised. “I assume you finished the essay?”

“Yes, Professor. Fifty inches, no less.” With a complex maneuver of her arms, she managed to give him the papers without dropping the books in her arms.

He accepted the papers and gave them a quick view to check her words. It was the exact length he’d asked for. She usually tended to put more words, but this time she didn’t. Apparently, she didn’t want to lose this last chance.

“Thank you for this, sir. I know you don’t give many second chances.”

He silently accepted her gratitude and sat down. It was now or never.

“Lately you seem to thank me too much, Miss Granger. You’re going to ruin my reputation.”

The girl frowned. “I’m merely expressing what I feel towards your actions with me. You’re helping when you don’t have to. I know I’m not the most liked student around.”

“You definitely aren’t. It appears that not all Gryffindors stick their heads in other’s memories like Potter does.”

The girl blushed at his words but he waited patiently to hear her excuse. He wanted to know why she hadn’t done it. Why she respected him when she had no reason. He’d never been a saint with her.

“I respect your privacy, sir. It’s not in my place to do that, and I never knew Harry did it. If I had, I would’ve chewed his head off.”

The last words caught him by surprise, but he wouldn’t stray from the topic. “Apparently the bottle of cockroaches I threw at his head scared him enough to keep silent about it.”

He heard a low growl. “You probably scared the soul out of him. He’s too stubborn to learn, so I figure that is why he never told us.”

He raised an eyebrow. Did she just partially agree with him? That was unexpected. “Is that so?”
“Just to let you know, sir, I would never betray someone that way. If I grew to know you, it
would be through whatever you let me know. I have no desire to know people through a pensieve
without their permission.”

That was enough to start a tentative trust with her.

“If I’m not mistaken, I assume you just said you’d like to know me?” His eyes focused on
hers and she bravely maintained the connection.

“W-well…I…” Her arms gripped the books harder against her chest. “I know it’s not my
place.”

“But?” He encouraged her to continue.

“I’d like to know you better. I know you aren’t as bad a person as everyone insists you are.
And you’re a good teacher even if you are sometimes...”

“Rude? Cruel? Bitter?” He supplied the words with a half smile. It amused him that she could
imply those things.

“In a simple manner, yes, sir,” she said with a defying voice.

She was strong too. She could do it if he guided her and prepared her well.

“We will see, Miss Granger.” He rose from his seat. “But for now, detention on Friday with
me after dinner. Don’t be late.”

The young woman gasped and looked at him with astonishment. She probably thought it was
because she overstepped her boundaries, but that wasn’t the case.

He would put his plan into motion soon, and if all went well, they could become allies in this
unfair world.

AN: Little changes…and plots starting to get in motion. I hope you liked it and let me know
what you think. I want to balance all what Snape is, so, he can be cruel sometimes with the
people he despise. Besides, hearing that word that marked his life, has it's issues that makes
him pay more attention to Hermione and notice the surroundings. Anyway, I work on this
Saturday and I’m not sure if I will be able to post but I will try on Sunday if I can’t. Until next
chapter.
Chapter 38: Only a Quill

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 38: Only a Quill

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Friday in September 1996

“Class dismissed.”

A huge wave of breaths reached his ears. Some students let their bodies fall for a moment on the floor, sweating, and others were injured slightly by small hexes. For his irritation, the only boy who was on his feet was Potter. He had to admit that it was good he was improving on spell casting, but of course, he was incapable of doing it non-verbally.

His eyes rested on the rest of the class that was still trying to compose themselves. No one had but he was sure that if Miss Granger were her normal self, she would be the first. Another thing that irritated him.

She needed to fix her emotional state and friendship with those two idiots or she would be useless to fight in the war.

Maybe he should ask Minerva to talk to her.

He blamed Potter and Weasley the most. After all she’d done for them, they still acted like she didn’t exist. In return for her not being around them, their idiotic behavior seemed to increase.
Merlin, even the Weasley boy had dared to kiss a girl in his class. An interesting fact considering he told Granger he was focused on his mate, Potter.

Good friends indeed.

A blond head caught his attention right before the owner left the room.

“Mister Malfoy, a word before you go.” The boy turned and looked at him with disgusting superiority.

The class had seemed to stop their movements at their colliding eyes, waiting for a reaction of submission. The boy just showed him his back and walked from the class without saying a word. Whispers rose from the students, but he didn’t pay attention to them.

Malfoy had just ignored him as if he were nothing. How dare he!

His lips formed a straight line. He had to remember this was completely normal after the fall of Malfoy’s family from the graces of the Dark Lord, but the boy was being stupid if he didn’t even share his plans with him. If he were a normal student, he would have paid the worst punishment he could have given. But the boy was the Dark Lord’s puppet and that made him untouchable. He couldn’t blow his cover.

He was going to get them both killed at this rate.

He heard a snap in his hands and looked down. The quill in his grasp had broken in two.

“Out,” he said with a threatening voice as a desire to stab the broken quill into someone grew.

The students were wise to not remain near him and they scurried out like rabbits.

He sat down and covered his forehead with his hands as he felt a headache coming on. He needed to find a way to get to him.

A brown feather slid on his desk and in front of his range of vision, confusing him for a moment. In an instant, his hard features took control of his face and looked up to find the intruder.

His scowl faded.

Her eyes were soft. Softer than he had ever saw on someone looking at him.

“I have a spare quill, Miss Granger.” Then he saw a brief half smile crossing her lips and he rose from his seat with haste. He couldn’t look at it.

“It’s a token to gain your trust, sir,” she replied softly. She didn’t sound offended.

“Oh, I see. It’s a bribe to tell you my secrets.” Sarcasm hit his voice and he grabbed his belongings from the desk.

If she had come near him with no ill intentions, this was another good step, but now wasn’t the place or time.

“It might be.” He felt confused that she was so committed to pursuing a friendship. “Do you need help with Malfoy?”

His movements stopped and he looked at her.
“I don’t and that is not your task, Miss Granger.” Even if she became part of his plans, she wouldn’t be near another Death Eater. At least, for now. “I ask you to not try to become a brainless hero and go after him for unimportant issues. Besides, I saw you are still incapable of holding your wand without shaking.”

Granger’s eyes changed. She lowered her head, trying to hide her face with her brown curls.

“I’m trying,” she whispered.

“That is a pathetic excuse.” The girl looked up with fire in her eyes and her shame disappearing. “Just fix things, Granger. If you don’t even try you won’t gain a thing.”

He finished grabbing the rest of his things. His hand hesitated for a moment when it was near the quill that rested on the desk. After a brief moment, he picked it up and put it on top of his books and papers. His eyes moved to her and he could perceive the tension on her, but he saw a brief flicker of joy in her eyes.

Only for a quill.

“Don’t forget your detention.”

“I won’t, sir.”

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It was time.

This was it, the moment when he would determine whether he would be alone in this or have an ally in case he failed sooner than expected.

Would she be brave enough and choose his side with no regret? He wasn’t a good man. Never was. He made mistakes, he killed people, and he chose to be with the Dark Lord in the beginning. He wasn’t free of blame no matter what he did. He was tainted.

And she needed to know it so she wouldn’t fool herself in some mistaken fantasy of him being a hero.

He should have took a calming draught, but he hadn’t expected to be affected that much. There was no turning back if he went through with this tonight.

With a small movement of his arm, he tapped his head twice with his wand. In an instant, he felt the charm taking effect, invading each piece of his body to merge with his surroundings, making him invisible to the eyes. An uneasy feeling grew inside him, letting him know the charm worked without the need to check if his body looked like a dungeon wall.

Taking another deep breath, he managed to regain control of his senses. He looked to his side.

The clock marked eight.

The door opened as he expected, revealing the young woman with a startled look. She had tried to open it with the handle, but her presence had alerted his wards and the door opened for her. That way, no one would be able to enter to interrupt.
Granger moved with cautious steps, looking briefly at his desk. Then he heard a tiny sigh coming from her lips. Was she relieved? Anyone would be. But he knew she was different from those brats.

Her eyes stopped on a parchment with her name. Her essay was already marked and corrected with a considerable amount of red ink. She smiled and walked around the room. She stopped just where he wanted her to.

“No wonder why people would like to look at your secrets, Professor. You are so careless with your belongings.”

He tilted his head as he heard her words. Maybe she was aware he was there. But then her lips pressed together as a paper got her attention. His note.

She grabbed it between two of her slim fingers. Her movements were so slow, almost as if she feared that the parchment was going to curse her.

“Know me if you dare.” She read it aloud twice, probably making sure she’d read it well. She looked around the room as if she was being watched and someone had planted a joke for her. She was right to be cautious.

When the young woman was satisfied it wasn’t a danger or joke, she rested her eyes on the small bowl. His memories were there, waiting for her to make a decision.

Run or stay.

Her fingertips caressed the edge of the object. Her frown was deep in concentration and his heart stopped for a moment.

She crumbled the paper in her fist and bowed her head until the liquid touched her face.

Severus exhaled loudly. Now the hard part was starting.

With a flick of his hand, he finished the disillusionment spell and moved from the corner to his chair. It would take a while to see all he had left for her today. It was moments from his childhood up until he took the mark.

He closed his eyes and tried to remain calm. After a few minutes, a loud and trembling gasp filled the room.

That was the signal.

Opening his eyes, he found the young woman breathing hard, still with her eyes on his pensieve, looking dumbfounded at what she’d seen.

She turned to him, acknowledging his presence. Her lips were parted and trails of tears were visible on her cheeks. An uncomfortable feeling grew inside him.

“There is no need to cry about my childhood. It’s long gone, Miss Granger.” He grabbed a quill, the one she gave him, to make himself busy. He couldn’t look at those pitiful eyes.

When she took a step toward to his desk, he realized she wouldn’t let it go.

“Your father—”

“Was a despicable muggle that loved alcohol and used violence towards his family.” He
interrupted harshly. “I didn’t show you those to pity me. I despise pity.”

“It’s not pity… I’m… it’s just unfair. That along with all that things that the Marauders and Lily did to you.” His eyes looked into hers and found a hint of anger in them. “Is that why you took the mark? For what they did? Because you didn’t have a place to belong to?”

“I’m assuming you are starting to see me.” This was what he wanted. What he needed to show her.

“I saw, but I couldn’t feel what you felt,” the woman said, not satisfied with his reply.

“That’s the tricky thing with pensieves.”

“Don’t toy with me now, professor. Explain to me. Why did you show me this?” Her demand almost made him smile.

He closed his eyes for a brief moment and extended his arm, inviting her to take a seat in front of him. She complied.

“As you know, I’m a spy for the order. My probability of dying this year has increased exponentially due to a task Dumbledore has given me.” He paused to see if she was still following him. She nodded. He was sure she was keeping her questions to herself. “For that reason, there is a piece of information I want to share with you in case I am no longer around to do it.”

“Just that simple? All these theatrics just for—”

“I trust no one, Granger.” He interrupted with a harsh voice. “I need to know if I can trust you, and if you trust me despite what I will have to do and what I’ve done.”

“That’s why you want me to know you. To make sure I won’t share your secrets. I wouldn’t betray you that way, sir. I think I proved that to you the other day when I didn’t stick my head in your pensieve like other Gryffindors.”

“You did and also your behavior with me lately is more proof I can trust you.” He intertwined his fingers. “With my background, I have to be sure. I won’t lie to you, Miss Granger. Not even Dumbledore wanted to share this information with me, and he wouldn’t want me to share this with you either. If you decide to collaborate with me, you will be a target. It will be dangerous. Even now, I’m possibly putting you at more risk than you already are by being friends with Potter.”

“I understand, sir. I know this must be important if you need to use someone like me.”

“My intention is to have an ally, not to use you.” He clarified with a frown. “I might die this year or the next one. I will try to not put you in danger if it’s unnecessary.” He looked at his hands. “If you agree with this, I will show you more of my past to build trust and teach you Occlumency so you can keep the information safe.”

“I—I saw what you went through, so I understand why you’re careful with people. I want to be there for you, sir.”

And he believed that. She wouldn’t betray him or sell him for power. She would be loyal and stubborn in her task.

“Completely Gryffindor,” he replied with a smug smile.

“It’s what I am, sir.” She looked at him proudly. “I understand what it is to make mistakes
and not be forgiven for them. Not to be trusted anymore.”

He wanted to understand what she was referring to in her situation. He would have to make an effort into gaining more of her trust as well.

“If you are my ally, Granger, I will be there for you too. You won’t be alone, but don’t expect me to treat you differently in class.”

“I didn’t expect anything like that, sir.” She seemed insulted that he’d mention it.

“Good.”

He grabbed the quill and a piece of parchment. He felt her eyes on him as he wrote a couple of words. This situation was going to be awkward, but he hoped it would change in time. They already had the respect and it was a good step.

“Professor....”

“Yes?” he replied without looking up from the parchment.

“That ritual...When you took the dark mark. Do you still have the bite?”

His hand stopped moving and he straightened. He extended his left arm towards her and carefully rolled up his sleeve.

“Satisfy your curiosity, but don’t touch it. You can alert the Dark Lord by mistake.”

As he continued writing on the parchment, he let her look at his mark. After a moment, his quill stopped. Her fingertips were hesitating on his skin. She was touching his wrist in a manner that sent an uncomfortable shiver up his spine.

With an abrupt movement, he moved his arm from the table, breaking the contact and startling Granger. All in a silent exchange. It had been strange for anyone to touch him. As innocent as it was.

He ripped off a piece of parchment and handed it to her.

“A schedule for our extra sessions. If it’s acceptable, learn it now and burn it. You will have to make excuses about studying somewhere if someone asks.”

Granger picked up the parchment and nodded. After a minute, she took out her wand, made a motion, and the paper burst into flames.

“Perfect, sir.”

“Then I will see you on Tuesday.” He dismissed and went back to look at the essays he’d already corrected. He needed an excuse to avoid looking at her. It was going to be hard to get used to her presence and having someone to talk to and trust.

He was going to open to her, and he was never good at those kinds of things. He only did it once with Lily and ended up hurting her and being hurt. He just hoped that this time, it wouldn’t cost another life.

Granger retrieved her leather bag and walked to the door. When he expected her to leave, she turned and the feeling of her eyes on him returned.
“Thank you for this chance, Professor Snape. I won’t let you down.”

His hand trembled at the sincerity in her voice. In an irrational impulse, he looked at her. Her eyes were shining with joy.

Then the girl left his office. She knew she wouldn’t get a response, but she still voiced her thoughts and her gratitude, creating a chaos of emotions inside him.

He’d been the only one that had treated her like a normal person and not a genius or something solely to be used. She did the same with him.

A half smile came to his lips and he looked back at her essay.

AN: The first step has been made. I admit I love this chapter and it’s simplicity with the gestures. I think, they are tentative and more now they will start with this new..."alliance". Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on saturday.

PS: There will be some companion draws to this fic. For now I posted the one of Chapter 36 on my DeviantArt.
September 19th 1996

The great hall was crowded as breakfast appeared on the plates. He’d tried to come half an hour before to avoid the contact, but it was in vain. There was always a gluttonous student around. But if he had to label the worst of the worst, the brainless Weasley would win. He didn’t have nearly the manners of his siblings, and from what he knew of Missus Weasley, she’d be appalled at the table manners. The boy munched with his mouth open, and talked before he swallowed. At least he didn’t have to keep an eye on that table.

But he did anyway because there was only one person that interested him. The Gryffindor girl. She was still sitting alone and focusing on a book. She needed to make up with Potter and he wondered if she’d tried again or if it were Potter and Weasley that were stubborn and unforgiving no matter what she did or said.

Worrying now wasn’t a priority. They still had time. The Dark Lord wouldn’t move for now, not while Malfoy hadn’t completed what he asked for. His eyes looked at the old man sitting in the center of the teacher’s table. He still looked healthy outside but he knew the curse was spreading. He threw the napkin on the table. The feeling of letting him die doing nothing, angered him. And now he was going to be his executioner.
A mass of birds flying towards people interrupted the rage that threatened to consume him again. Some dropped things on the students’ heads, others delivered them in a professional manner. The fun was in the ones being pecked at and the students who received howlers from parents.

His eyes went back to the Gryffindor table, searching the possibility that Potter suffered under the owls too. Instead, he found Granger holding a small package. She looked surprised at first, but then a small smile crossed her lips. Granger stood and started to walk away, probably to his classroom. She was hugging her package like it was the most precious thing in the world. But something was different today. Her face turned slightly and looked at Potter and Weasley as if she expected something to happen.

She waited at a small statue near them. The Weasley girl noticed and smiled at her, but the rest didn’t acknowledge her.

He noticed how she lowered her head, having no other option than to resume her walking as she saw the rejection from her supposed friends.

And yet they call him a heartless bastard.

/-/-/

When he reached his potions classroom, his three students were already there.

He walked to the front of the room and faced the class. He crossed his arms and glared at them. The students were unfazed. Granger didn’t look as unhealthy and tired as she had in previous classes. It seemed she was growing less affected by her friends’ stupidity and whatever experience she had last year at the ministry.

“I have studied your potions and your essays. All of you have interesting theories but the results of what you did need testing. Unfortunately I can’t start injuring students on purpose to test the potions, so from now on we’ll start studying different types of poisons and venoms and learn how to treat them.”

A hesitating hand raised and he unfolded his arms. He was surprised but maintained his neutral mask.

“Yes, Miss Granger?”

“It might sound like a stupid question, sir, but I’ve always wondered about those unidentified venoms. Is there a formula to counteract them?”

“There isn’t any formula. Only a Master Potioneer could do it, but even it could fail.” The worry in her eyes grew. “There are ingredients that could slow the poison, but to remove it from the body is a different thing. It requires constant trial and error until you stabilize an antidote for that specific poison and for the specific person who is affected.”

“Then if you are poisoned by an unknown source… What could you do? The bezoar will work?”

He wondered what she was thinking about. Maybe the Dark Lord’s serpent?
“Sometimes yes, other times no. You just have to be lucky if it slows the poison until you reach a hospital. My advice is for a person to have one with them at all times.” He was giving her a hint, and he knew she’d gotten it.

“Thank you, professor.”

“Studying all the listed antidotes will take us a few months, so get your ingredients and take notes. Learn them as well as your birthdates.” His voice became colder. “First, scorpions.”

He waved his hand and a list of different kinds of magical scorpions appeared on the blackboard. In each one, the effects of the venom appeared and the ingredients necessary to create the potion appeared beside that.

“Get started with the first. You have one hour.”

-/-/-

Her eyes were on him as his office door opened to let her in. With a silent nod, he turned his back to her and picked up his wand to start casting warding spells and silencing spells.

“I assume that you were discreet coming here.” He asked as he looked back at her.

“Of course. Not even Professor McGonagall noticed.” She came closer to his desk. “Still you forget that no one will bother to ask me.”

He glared at the girl. “Don’t be so dramatic, Miss Granger. Maybe Miss Weasley would.”

She gifted him with a sarcastic snort, and he arched his eyebrows. “She is with Harry. He’s her priority.”

Not bothering to reply, he walked to one of the chairs and waved his wand, transforming one into a comfortable seat that looked like an overgrown pillow.

“Sit.”

She complied. She left her bag hanging on the back of the hard chair and sat on the pillowed one. Then he felt her eyes on him, waiting for an explanation.

“The arts of legilimency and occlumency tend to be painful, as Mister Potter should have told you. It’s an insertion into a mind. Some have a natural skill to repel and others fail miserably like your friend.” She pursed her lips but he continued, ignoring the gesture. “I will try to be gentle for now to let you get used to the feeling. Eventually you’ll learn to recognize it and expel me from your mind. Is that clear?”

“Yes sir but… I have some questions if you don’t mind?” Granger hesitated and he crossed his arms. He had no other option than to comply.

“Go on but don’t waste much time.”

“Is there a way to perform legilimency without the person noticing, or is it always always noticed because it hurts?”

“There’s always a trail that reading minds leave. The first is the pain. If it’s done with violence, it can end in brain bleeding. I saw the Dark Lord using this skill to seek information until the victim died. Sometimes he used it for fun to torture people.” He saw her taking a deep breath. “This is why
you need to learn how to fight the invasion. So to answer your question. Yes, it’s always noticed even if it’s in a subtle way.”

“Okay,” she whispered.

He unfolded his arms and took a step towards her. Was she scared?

“I don’t intend to kill you, Miss Granger. It would ruin my goal of becoming allies.” He assured with a neutral voice. “That is the reason why we’ll start gentle.”

“You didn’t start with Harry in a subtle manner.”

He huffed. “Potter couldn’t wait. We have time for now.” He parted his legs, one forward, one at the back and raised his wand. “Are you ready?”

“Yes, but I have a request.” She lifted her palms towards him, as if that could try to stop a spell. He relaxed his fighting stance and with a gesture of his head, he urged her to speak. “If you see something related to my time at the ministry department, please don’t look or try to look more.”

“Hm,” he said.

“You have to trust me with this. You have to respect my wishes, as I will with yours. If not, this alliance you speak of would be a lie.”

The determination in her voice made him smile internally. Little by little, she was returning to the good parts of her old self. If this trust developed, maybe she would tell him what happened. Maybe Albus was right when he said to give her time.

“Alright, Miss Granger. I won’t look at those memories.” A low tone accompanied his words, showing the seriousness of keeping to his word.

The young girl nodded. Her hands gripped the armchairs, preparing herself for his intrusion.

The spell left his lips and in seconds, his mind was in hers. Connected to her memories. Her feelings poured inside of his and mixed. Fear was present as an old building with fences came into view. Kids were running around and she was in a corner, alone in a muggle school. The scenery changed as the feeling became that of curious surprise. He saw Minerva explaining about magic to two adults, likely her parents. Then memories of Hogwarts startled him. After that, he got a feeling of sadness as the two idiots rejected her. The troll almost killing her and a blue fire on a dark coat came though as adrenaline.

Then there was a flash of her with a smile on her lips when she was proud of answering something right.

He felt a small push in his brain, blurring the image for a second. She’d already figured out how to do it, but she’d need to get stronger.

Lowering his wand, he retired his presence from her, trying to be as gentle as possible.

The reality of his office came back to his eyes and he heard the young woman breathing fast. Her forehead was sweating at the effort she’d made. Merlin, she was skilled in almost everything.

Walking to her side, he removed a handkerchief from his sleeve and offered it to her. She accepted it when her eyes focused back on him and her ragged breath calmed.
“Pretty good, Miss Granger.”

“I caught you, sir! It was strange, but I felt you at the end.”

“Indeed you did. It’s admirable…”

The girl looked surprised at his words but then, her eyes softened as another true smile showed on her lips.

He walked over to his desk.

“Thank you, sir. I appreciate your words.”

He had seen her loneliness, her feelings of pride as she proved her knowledge. But why did she have to do it so obnoxiously?

“Miss Granger, you know, you don’t need to answer all the questions all the time just to seek approval.”

“I felt like I had to.”

He turned with a raised eyebrow. “Care to explain why? I have to admit that it’s the behaviour that irritates me the most about you.”

“Well, I’m a muggle, and I didn’t have friends even before I came to Hogwarts. I have a hard time making them. I wanted to prove that I could be an equal. I came late to Hogwarts because I wanted to prepare. I wanted to be at the same level as the others, and I wanted to prove myself.”

“You don’t need to prove anything, Miss Granger. Those that need to know, already do. Teachers know. I understand you wanted to fit in. I did too at one point, but you don’t need to be an annoying know-it-all and disrespect others in the process.”

“I never mean to disrespect,” she said with hurt in her eyes. “And you were more confident in yourself.”

“Like you, I learnt most things by myself. I wanted to be acknowledged for my abilities, but I never sought attention all the time. You did and you also remove the opportunity for others to learn when you answer everything.”

“I don’t want attention.” She bit her lip for a moment. “I like to be quiet, and I never intended to do ill.”

He let a little smirk appear on his lips. “I wonder if you’ve matured or you are just too affected by whatever happened to you.”

“Well, I’m sorry for being a stupid child who made mistakes.” She finally snapped as she got up from her seat. “You can’t blame me for thinking it was the only way. I had no wizards in my life growing up and limited ways of knowing how to adapt. And you made mistakes too. I’m learning.”

Silence conquered the room as she finished talking. He was losing his patience with this socializing. But she was right. He shouldn’t blame or judge her.

“I know, Miss Granger. I’m just pointing out a fact to help you learn to be more conscious of your actions. You demonstrated you are learning today. Your question today at potions, it’s what I want. I want interactions that can make everyone learn. I want people to answer when I call on them,
not spitting out information.”

She slouched back to the pillowed seat. “I never intended to be a nuisance, professor, and I’m glad that someone finally explained it to me.” She closed her eyes and caressed her temples.

He needed to get away from this conversation. “Does your head hurt much?”

She opened her eyes; there was no mark of hate for what had happened. Just gratitude. Again.

“It’s a light headache. It will pass within a couple of hours, right?”

“It will. You don’t need to worry since the exposure was low.”

Granger rose from the seat and walked to him. Her steps were more confident. An interesting change just for sharing a couple of memories and thoughts.

She offered him back his handkerchief.

“You may go. I will see you next week. At that time, I will show you another memory in my pensieve too. Later we will practise Occlumency again.”

“Thank you, professor. I’ll be here.” She took her bag that was still hanging on the chair and went towards his door.

“Oh,” he intervened before she had her hand on the handle. “And five points from Gryffindor for setting my robes on fire.”

AN: Looks around innocently. More mystery and some difference solving? Let’s call it like that haha. Hope you like it and let me know what you think. Till next week.
Chapter 40: Sharing His Darkness

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 40: Sharing His Darkness

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

September, 1996

Her lips were parted when she removed her face from his pensieve. He appeared calm, but inside, his body and mind was going crazy. He had shared his most guarded secret. His reason for doing what he was doing and why Dumbledore trusted him. But not only that. He’d shown her his work under the Dark Lord, his betrayal as he gave the prophecy, and his brief participation in some attacks. It had been unavoidable. He had tried to be a non-active member, but in the end, he had pointed a wand to kill.

It was still a thing he had to do.

The girl closed her eyes for a moment, probably processing the dark side of him or maybe regretting in becoming part of this plan now.

He waited for her to speak or to run. This was probably the worst thing he could have shown her, but it was better for her to know now rather than discovering it later.

Her eyes opened and with unsecure steps, she walked to her pillowed chair. For now, she was still not running.
Silence filled the room and he didn’t know how to behave. He had exposed his deepest darkest secret and regret to her. A risky move indeed. He needed to be sincere and not treat her how Dumbledore had manipulated him for fourteen years.

“You…” Her voice failed. He felt the compulsion to cross his arms in front of his chest, but he turned his back to her.

“Yes, Miss Granger?”

“You were the reason that…”

“Yes, I was. She died because of me.”

“But you tried to save her. You turned against him because of her. Because you loved her.”

He wasn’t prepared for this. Not at all. Discussing his love life with a student was absurd.

“And she died anyway,” he muttered softly as he felt the shadow of an ache crossing his heart.

“So I was right. You were on our side this entire time. You want to help Harry because of her. That’s why you saved us countless times… But you loathe Harry.”

“Oh, I do. I despise him”

“You know he isn’t at all like what you showed me of his father.” She complained and he grunted at her words. “But… I get it. He has her eyes and his looks. It... It must hurt you.”

He took a deep breath and he pressed his palms on his desk, lowering his head and keeping silent. This was harder than he’d thought it would be.

But he had wanted this. He had to go on. He wasn’t a coward.

His muscles tensed as he felt a hand touching his back. She wouldn’t dare...but he was suddenly afraid to move. Afraid to acknowledge he was showing his vulnerability freely, and she was trying to ease him.

This was completely insane.

“I suppose it isn’t my place to ask, but do you still cling to her memory?”

“If I don’t, I might kill Potter myself.” His voice was abrupt. He moved his head so she could see his face and looked at her with menacing eyes, warning her to not continue pushing. Her hand dropped and his shoulders relaxed. “I’m sorry, Miss Granger but I don’t feel like discussing this today. Maybe some other time I would feel more open to it.”

He turned his full body towards her and she took a step back.

“It’s understandable, sir.” She inhaled deeply and regained her Gryffindor courage to look in his eyes again. “Can I ask another thing before we start with my Occlumency session?”

“Go ahead.” Even if her questions hit him with dreadful feelings, she was smart enough to understand.

She went back to sit in her chair. Was she gathering courage? It was interesting to see how this girl thought carefully about what she was going to ask.
“I saw you killed some people.” She paused and looked up at him. “I thought you only spied.”

“I wanted to only do that, but the Dark Lord knows I’m too skilled for him to not use me when it’s necessary.”

“You are a soldier. I understand that.”

It was a miracle how he wasn’t letting his anger rule over him. But this was a different situation. There was no judging tone or look coming from her. She was just trying to understand him.

“Not a soldier Miss Granger. At once I thought so, but I’m more like a puppet for both sides.” She winced. “It’s true, Miss Granger. I’m just a tool for him and Albus. I’m disposable when my worth fades.”

She scowled and her fierce eyes were on him. He got a feeling that she didn’t agree with that.

“At least you don’t look like you are a madman who loves to kill.” Her strong voice filled his office and he tilted his head.

“You’re right. It’s not a thing I enjoy.”

“Does the guilt go away?” Her voice became serious, tentative, and she avoided his eyes again, making him wonder why she was worried about that aspect.

“I assure you, Miss Granger. I won’t kill myself before it is necessary.” A slight sarcasm hit his voice, a thing that made her face look back at him with fury.

“Please, don’t joke about that, professor.”

His lips parted at her plea. That reaction was unexpected. Why in Merlin’s name would she care about that aspect? He had been horrible to her all these years, and most of his students wouldn’t care if he disappeared one day.

But he had to remember that this girl wasn’t like them. She never hated him, even after all he did. Maybe she was too good for this world.

“I apologize.” He closed his eyes and bent his body to her. “To answer your question, no, the guilt never goes away. You do learn to live with what you did. It’s hard, but you learn.”

Granger nodded at his words, but her eyes remained uncertain.

“You didn’t have an easy life.”

“You saw me at my worst, my voluntary service under the Dark Lord, so tell me, Miss Granger, do you still want to be my ally?”

“I wouldn’t still be here if I didn’t,” she replied quickly, not stopping to think about her answer.

He summoned his wand and pointed it at her.

“Then prepare yourself, Miss Granger. I won’t let you fail.” He warned with a small smile. She replied with one of her own.

“And I won’t let you fail either, sir. You don’t have to be alone anymore. You have me now, with Gryffindor loyalty included.”
AN: So...more secrets revealed to Hermione and more stress for Snape? Let me know what you think. In a little you will have another chapter ;)

Chapter 41: Another Session

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 41: Another Session

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October, 1996

The wind was blowing and the temperature was perfectly suited to his preferences. The day was so relaxing that he could almost forget the crowd of students talking around him.

He could almost forget his problems here. He could almost forget that the man at his side was suffering from a curse that was killing him. Glancing up, he saw the first brown leaves flying freely around the room. Autumn had finally come and with it, once less month of living.

He looked down at his toast covered with honey and his coffee. Another simple pleasant thing he loved. He let a small smile cross his lips and had no fear that anyone would catch it. No one paid attention to the bat of the dungeons except maybe Granger. And with her, he was finding he could care less and less.

She hadn’t shown much improvement in her last two sessions, but the girl had managed to play with her thoughts and let him see what she wanted. But he was still able to enter her mind with no effort.

They had talked too. Her questions weren’t as annoying as usual and she no longer demanded an answer from him. She gave him the choice to answer or not with no complaint if he didn’t.
memories were horrifying at times, but she still stayed.

And he was starting to feel glad she was there. He had forgotten what it was like to have someone to talk to. To not be scrutinized. To not be a target of hate. He took a bite of his toast, about to savor the honey on it, when he felt a gaze on him. His shoulders tensed.

He looked to the right and he found her. At the Gryffindor table, looking openly at him with a small smile and an amusing eyes. She even had the nerve to meet his gaze.

Then sudden nervousness hit her and she looked down slightly. He was learning to read her. She wasn’t who he’d once thought she was. She was just a girl who never had a place to belong.

Without thinking, he muttered the spell, wanting to know what was inside her brain right now. In an instant, a feeling of regret and a need to apologize surrounded him. Again.

The empty black space he was seeing morphed to a small storeroom. His potions storeroom. Then the girl, younger than she was now, appeared. He couldn’t believe what he was seeing. He couldn’t believe that she was the one that did this and not Potter.

He saw her grabbing an African boa skin and running back to his classroom. He could see himself in anger, trying to find the student that made his class half sick because of the exploding cauldron.

Tricky girl.

Part of him wanted to laugh; another part was outraged to find out what she did. It was so Slytherin of her.

A panicked feeling surrounded him and he found himself being pushed from her mind. That’s exactly what she should be doing.

He blinked softly, his eyes were still on her, but now she appeared to have the constitution of a scared white bird caught by its predator.

Leaving his unfinished toast on the plate, he dabbed his lips with the napkin and stood. Not wasting time to say goodbye to his colleagues, he made his way to the Gryffindor table.

Half of the table went quiet when his feet stopped at the corner next to the young woman who had the nerve and the cunning to outsmart him in her second year. They began their conversations again when he glared at him.

Her eyes were on him. Her cheeks acquired a brief red colour. He could only show a pompous smile to her, one that she avoided for a moment but her brown eyes came back to his presence.

He would be a fool if he didn’t admire her bravery.

“So, Miss Granger…” he said in a soft voice. It was good she was on the corner and alone. “I’m wondering if I should give you detention for life, but it’s admirable you had kept that secret from me since the start.”

She arched an eyebrow and touched the book she had at her side.

“Well, professor. You didn’t warn me this time. It was unexpected.”

“And you detected me.” A small praise that only she would understand. “But keep in mind that
no one would warn you in battle or during capture.”

“Thank you, sir.” Some students were looking at them, probably wondering if she was in trouble.

“Detention, Miss Granger after dinner,” he said with a neutral voice, less quiet to let the nearby students hear it. This wouldn’t be a change to her schedule since they will have an occlumency session today. “Now get up and come with me.”

He turned around and started walking until he found a solitary corridor.

When she got to him, she said, “Professor, I’m sorry if I made you uncomfortable at breakfast.”

“Apology accepted. You know the detention is for keeping up appearances.”

“Of course, sir. Still, I think I deserve a punishment. I-I did it out of necessity. It was for the investigation we had of the chamber of secrets.”

He crossed his arms, letting his cloak fall to his sides.

“You were the one to brew the polyjuice potion. You wasted my reserves for a failing potion. Yes, I should punish you, but I won’t. You forgave me, so I will do the same for your past mistakes. Punishing you would do no good since you clearly regret your actions.” He narrowed his eyes. “But don’t do it again.”

“Oh, no, sir. I won’t, but the potion worked.” A smug smile crossed her face and he looked at her with curiosity. “But I won’t explain it to you now. I’ll keep it for our session.”

“We will see if you can hide it from me then.”

“I will try my best, sir.”

-/-/-

A golden hourglass spun, blurring the images as the metal circles moved with a pattern he couldn’t decipher. Rage and injustice were feelings he could decode in the unconnected images he was looking at. She was getting better.

He pushed further, strengthening the magic and the blur started to disappear. He saw the girl punching Malfoy as the images settled. Euphoria filled her. A cauldron appeared in a bathroom with an apparently working polyjuice potion. Then, the girl appeared, looking at herself in the mirror, covered with hair and with yellow eyes. The image focused on the pupils until they morphed into a straight line. The memory zoomed out and he could see the image of a giant serpent. The basilisk.

Then he saw Potter in a field in the dark. He remembered this well. The Dark Lord returned that night. She was scared again, as she understood what had happened. The image changed and a group of students were practicing spells in a room he couldn’t recognize. A dark forest interfered and a giant appeared as a crowd of centaurs rampaged.

Umbridge’s laugh filled his ears and instantly turned his own emotions into disgust and hatred. The image fused and the woman transformed into Malfoy, mocking her, cursing her with an enchantment. His cold face appeared and he could only swallow.

The girl trusted him and he had only smacked her in the face with cruel words about her teeth.
He let her go, cutting the connection as he lowered his wand. She had suffered more than he’d anticipated. And not only because the cruel childish behavior of the students and Potter. He had been a horrible person to her too. Not just a strict professor but a bully as well.

It was the first time he had felt guilty because of it, but it was something he had to do. He had to be as hated as possible. Especially with a Gryffindor girl that outsmarted every Slytherin under his care.

He moved his eyes to her. Her lips were parted, she was breathing hard, and the sweat was visible on her skin. She wasn’t the perfect girl that everyone thought she was and mocked her for. Like him, she wore a mask to fulfill a role and keep up appearances.

“Miss Granger, I feel the need to apologise.”

“You were cruel.” Her voice had a dangerous tone.

“I was and I still am. It is a necessity. I’m a spy and half of the Slytherin families are either Death Eaters or are supportive of them.”

“I understand, sir, but you looked like you hated me.”

“I did, mainly due to your association with Potter, but I misjudged you. I didn’t know how you were.”

“Well, I didn’t misjudge you because everyone said you were a cruel bat of the dungeons!” She was as bitter as he was. “But I understand. You have lived more. You are more hostile with the world that treated you bad. And of course, you had to shut down the mudblood in front of Slytherins.”

Her self-revulsion astonished him. “Don’t call yourself that,” he snapped, making her jump in her seat. He pinched the bridge of his nose. “Never call yourself that again. You deserve as much respect as anyone.”

He let his hand fall and he looked at her. Her cheeks reddened and her eyes were shining with tears.

Merlin, he didn’t know how to deal with this. He tapped his desk with his wand and a teacup appeared. He picked it up and offered it to her.

“I’m sorry for snapping at you,” she whispered as her trembling hands grabbed the cup.

“My behavior was improper so your anger is acceptable.” He dismissed it, but he was satisfied at her apology.

She wasn’t like Lily.

He walked back to his desk, giving the girl her space and time to calm down. He grabbed some parchments and started to read and make the corrections he considered necessary.

“I messed up my focus when you used a stronger version of the spell.”

“You have improved, but you need to get better. This is the only way. I will be increasing the potency of the spell as you advance in your abilities to occlude your mind.”

“I still think you can read me like an open book.”
He looked up with a serious face and noticed how she was biting her lip. “I can, but for as much as you’ve been practicing you are already very skilled. Even more than I thought you’d be. You just need to control your emotions and discipline your mind better.” He went back to covering the essay with red ink.

“Professor, can I ask you something?” He gave her permission with a nod. She took a deep breath. “You are a master occlumens, but you maintain this mask of indifference all the time? Don’t you drop it? Don’t you ever have a nice time and laugh?”

The movement of the quill stopped. His eyes focused back on her. “If I drop my guard I might get killed.”

“But don’t you desire to do so?”

Did she feel bad for him? Pitied? No. She had said she didn’t pity him. Desires… He only desired one thing and couldn’t obtain it.

“I’m used to this, Miss Granger. Don’t worry about it.” He treated the topic with no importance. “But your friend is enough to make me feel rage quite often.”

“Then you don’t feel?”

He sighed. “I do, like any other being. I just don’t show feelings or let them control me often.” He had to wear a permanent shield not only for his task but because it was easier to deal with people that way.

After the silence carried on for ten minutes, her voice broke it. “Should I go now, Professor?”

“Go ahead, Miss Granger. Enjoy your night.”

He saw her lifting her half-open bag to her shoulders. He didn’t know how that bag survived for six years and wasn’t complete shreds by now. Then he noticed a familiar envelope in it and curiosity picked at him.

“Is that part of whatever you received in September by owl?”

“Yes, I didn’t know you noticed.”

“I’m a spy, Granger. My work is to notice things.” He almost felt the urge to laugh. Just almost. “I assume it was important as you have it in your bag?”

“Well it’s my parent’s present for my birthday. It is an album full of pictures of their last trip. I didn’t want it to get damaged so I kept the envelope.”

He remembered she was alone all day that day, at least when he saw her. Damned Potter and her stupid friends even rejected her at a time like that. He was a loner who didn’t need anyone, but she was young. She needed to live, to have some joy in her life. Not betrayal, not a war.

He turned his focus back on his essays to stave off his anger at Potter.

“Are you all right?”

He lifted his head at the closeness of her voice and found her presence at his side. The concern in her eyes was readable.

“Nothing out of the ordinary. I’m just considering skinning your friends alive and developing a
potion with them.”

Then he heard her giggle. A high sweet sound that should’ve been unfitting for the place they were in.

But it wasn’t.

AN: There are some small details that can be related later but, giggles, I will let you enjoy and discover them. So this is another chapter I like because it’s a curious step they make. You can see how they are starting to… “respect” despite their anger with past actions and forgive, or felt guilty in Severus case. LOL…Well let me know what you think. This chapter is little but has tons of things. Until next week and hope you enjoyed!
Chapter 42: Battle Scars in Class

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 42: Battle Scars in Class

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October, 1996

The new golden trio couldn’t be more idiotic. But it was fitting. Perhaps the name should be changed to the intellectually inept trio instead. A brainless girl whose only skill was looking at the Weasley boy had replaced their only member with brains. It was disgusting. He could almost see how the magic of that girl created hearts instead of curses.

But part of him was glad that Granger didn’t have to deal with these idiotic people, even if they were her supposed friends.

She was again, practicing with Neville. Another potential disaster but at least she wouldn’t be harmed by his spells. Though, he wasn’t as incompetent in this class as he was in potions.

He moved around his students, looking at their dueling stands and their supposed spells. They still were unsuccessful with the non-verbal spells, and he had more things he needed to teach them. Soon, whether they knew how to do them or not, he would have to move on. He needed to cover all the dark magic the Death Eaters used if they’d were to have a chance in surviving the coming battles.
Because Dumbledore wouldn’t be here.

His eyes searched for a certain blond haired boy only to see nothing. Ever since the confrontation with Draco, he’d ignored all his calls. And now he was going through this blind. He had no idea how Draco was going to achieve the assassination of Dumbledore.

He would have to find a moment to grab the boy and have a word with him. But it was hard to find a proper moment. Hogwarts was always full of life and the only quiet and secure place were his domains. Draco wasn’t stupid to put a step near them. He might be a coward child but he was intelligent and cunning.

He went back to observing the students as a whole. More than a month and a half had passed and they were still at the same level they were when starting. Why weren’t they focusing? They didn’t deserve to have this kind of training unless they put their full effort into it. A scowl invaded his face as the irritation grew. He crossed his arms and waited. This will be their last class on this subject, no matter what. Much to his distaste, he needed to continue.

A cry filled the classroom and the wand moving stopped.

He looked around to find the source as he untangled his arms in a slow motion.

Neville was on his knees holding his stomach.

She’d been successful? Was she recovering her confidence?

His eyes moved from the student in pain to her. Her wand hand was shaking. She grabbed her wrist with her free hand to still it. He heard a whisper from her but he couldn’t make out what she said.

She had achieved it, but she didn’t look as proud as she should’ve been. She appeared scared with her actions.

He walked closer to the pair and looked at Neville for a brief second, but after seeing he wasn’t in danger, he ignored the boy and his eyes went straight to her. She hadn’t noticed him and her face was becoming paler.

“Miss Granger, after a month and a half you achieved it. I was expecting you to dominate this skill on the first day, but it seems that even you can find things difficult.” The girl finally blinked but her face remained in the same state when she looked at him.

“All of you write an essay on the next chapter of the book. We will start with the unforgivables next time. Class dismissed.”

Some of his students rushed out as if his classroom had a plague, others wrote down the assignment before leaving. But she didn’t move.

“Snap out of it, Granger,” he said as he noticed how the new trio was trying to help Neville stand up.

She closed her mouth and took deep breaths. “I-I’m okay.”

He wasn’t a fool. She wasn’t okay at all. He’d seen enough tortures to recognize a broken spirit.

“You are not.” She lowered her head and bit her lip. “Go get your things and try to relax
today.” She did as he said but his eyes followed her movements. She gathered her things and gave a look of regret to Neville and the rest of her friends.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath before take a step towards them. Their eyes noticed her intentions, but she continued until she was almost at their side. Brave little Gryffindor.

“I’m sorry, Neville.” She tried to smile, looking only at the boy.

He waved a hand with indifference. “Hey, it was my fault. You know I’m not good at blocking.” Even if he was a disaster, at least he had some common sense. Perhaps he wouldn’t try to intimidate the boy so much from now on. “It’s something to work on, right?”

He raised an eyebrow at that, but then noticed how Potter’s grip on the boy’s arm tightened.

“You should be sorry. Your hormones are crazy,” Weasley said.

“Hey sto—” Neville tried to interrupt but Weasley continued.

You can’t be trusted anymore Hermione.”

Had he just heard right?

“You are right…” Her weak whisper fueled his wrath.

How could they? She was the only trustworthy witch around and that idiot boy had just made her feel miserable with a lie.

“You seem to forget I am here. In this class it’s to be expected you will get hurt dueling.” He prowled towards them. Miss Brown cowered at Weasley’s side, Neville looked like he was going to faint and Potter just stared. “You are an idle-headed gobshite, Weasley.”

“A what? You can’t just call me a name lik—”

“Detention with Filch for being an ignorant child. And of course, Mister Potter will accompany you. Since you are best friends you would want to share the punishment.” The boy’s green eyes became murderous.

“Get out of my classroom.” Neville and Brown almost ran out of the room. Weasley followed them. Potter threw him a hateful glance before leaving as well. He shouldn’t have inherited her eyes. It reminded him of her rejection. Now Granger had to see that in the same type of eyes.

“You don’t have to give them detentions because of me, but it seems that I have to thank you again, professor. For snapping me out of my...” She didn’t finish.

He let his arms fall to his sides. Always grateful and always brave. “I was merely correcting, Mister Weasley,” he replied with a smirk as he noticed her playful eyes on him.

That was a curious way to look at him. “And dragging Harry into it too, of course.” She didn’t sound annoyed but intrigued.

“You asked if I feel things. I feel joy at making his life difficult, Miss Granger. As an ally, I have a responsibility to defend you, do I not?”

He wouldn’t let them break the confidence she was regaining with him. No one had the right to say she couldn’t be trusted.
“I know, sir, but you also told me that I have to work to earn forgiveness.” Her eyes regained the stubborn fierceness as much as her voice. “And I won’t let you down. This is my problem and I will resolve it.”

She had taken his advice to heart and he couldn’t help but respect her more for that. But upon seeing today’s events, something else occurred to him. “Sometimes, Miss Granger, one can never get forgiveness no matter what they do. I want you to remember that just in case.”

“I will. Just in case.”

He looked down at her hand. “You managed to do a non-verbal spell, but your hand is still trembling.” She took a deep breath as soon as she heard his words and her eyes looked away from his. “Don’t be ashamed of it, Miss Granger. I’m sure your hesitation is normal for whatever experience you had.”

He would have to continue to help her overcome this until she could hold a wand normally again. If she didn’t conquer her fear she would likely end up dead.

AN: Problems…problems… Stubborn pair, defending instincts coming? At least, the thing is they understand each other in more ways they know…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. In a little I will post another chapter. Enjoy!

PS: I should say that her friends are behaving like brats but Harry is more like…still dealing with his emotions and not noticing the others.
Chapter 43: Like a Warrior

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 43: Like a Warrior

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October, 1996

Sitting on one of the sofas of the teacher’s room, his eyes focused on the headmaster. He was only half listening to what his colleagues were saying. He didn’t care if a student got better in transforming a toad.

The old man was pale and if one paid close attention, they would spot a shake of his arm ever so often.

He’d tried to do a counter curse with some experimental brews, but they were unsuccessful. It would certainly be easier if he had the headmaster’s collaboration. He needed to check his symptoms so he could adjust the dosage of pain relieving potion, and a sample of his blood would help as well.

His eyes narrowed every time a small shake appeared. It was a miracle that no one had noticed how he was decaying. How he was losing his life little by little. Dumbledore would die before he had to kill him if he didn’t find a way to slow down the curse. He felt like a failure. He didn’t want to kill him even though he’d manipulated him almost his entire life.

His body tensed as the blue eyes focused on him.
“Severus.” The conversation around them stopped. “Is there something you want to add? You look like you are going to strangle someone.”

He knew perfectly well why he was angry.

“How does that differ from my normal expression?” he joked before he could stop it.

All the eyes in the room widened, but he ignored them. “No. I have nothing to add.”

The old man nodded and Severus folded his arms.

“Then I must praise you and Minerva. I heard that Miss Granger is the first one to cast non-verbal spells in your class. I suppose this means she is recovering.”

He wanted to tell him that he was only partially right. The old man was confident but he hadn’t seen her hand shaking.

Being unable to do magic was a shame.

“After her, some others achieved it, but unfortunately not as well as her,” he replied with a cold tone.

“Good. I didn’t expect less from you, Severus. We need you to prepare the children with Tom gaining powers.”

He kept his face neutral but inside he was filled with disbelief. He’d never brought up the Dark Lord topic in a staff meeting.

An uncomfortable silence filled the room until McGonagall moved in her chair. His eyes turned to her and she looked concerned. “Albus, do you think they will attack?”

“It’s possible. We have aurors around, but it won’t be enough if he decides to attack with all of his forces.” The headmaster put both hands on the table and his body bent to come closer towards them. “We can’t deny it. This is the safest place now, but we must be prepared for that possibility.” He gave a gentle smile despite the seriousness of the conversation. “Can I count on all of you?” A silent nod from everyone was the only response. “Then the meeting is dismissed. You’re free to return to your classes. Severus, I know you want to talk with me so wait here.”

His lips tightened in a fine line as he heard the last words. Was the old man finally getting some sense in his brains about his wellbeing?

When everyone left, Dumbledore tumbled back onto his chair and slouched.

Severus moved to Dumbledore’s side. The old man closed his eyes and offered him his arm. Severus grabbed his wrist carefully with the tip of his fingers, touching him as gently as he could.

He rolled up the old man’s sleeve and a gasp escaped from his lips. The darkness covered him up to his shoulder.

“Sir, I need to slow this down or you will only live for five more months.”

He saw how the old wizard smiled with sadness. “Sir?”

Severus kept to the topic. “Does it hurt?”

“It’s starting to. Enough that I’m not sure if I can last as long as you predict.”
“Do you have another symptom apart from the pain and shaking?”

“Not for now. I assume you need my blood?”

“It would be wise if you want me to try to slow this down more. The potion I used on you was designed for Granger’s curse, so it’s expected that it didn’t last.” He released his hand.

Opening his cloak, he retrieved an empty vial from one of its pockets and uncorked it. With his other hand, he grabbed his wand and pointed it at Dumbledore’s darkened hand. A small incision appeared and the blood dropped in the vial until it was filled. He waved his wand and healed the injury.

“For now this will be enough to find something to slow it down.” He muttered to himself, not satisfied with the situation. “Later, I could try to stop this curse.”

“No, Severus. I’m not letting you do that. It will only endanger your place.”

Severus grunted at his calm response and looked at him with a fury. “You are insane. We could still stop them. Stop Draco and heal you.” He hit the table, making it vibrate for a few seconds.

“You can’t even talk with the boy, Severus, and let’s be realistic, you made an unbreakable vow. I’m old and disposable. Harry is the one that has to survive. You are the key to him doing that. You hold the information that will help him and can save him in numerous attacks if present.” The man smiled as he noticed his trembling fist. “He needs you, not an old naïve wizard whose life and magic is being drained. This is a curse of the Dark Lord, Severus. I won’t survive no matter what you do. You need to accept that fact.”

That stupid man was right. He was the one that could help him from the shadows. To fool the Dark Lord and help Potter and his friends avoid his traps. At least, most of them. He hated when all his manipulations made sense.

“I will start to work on easing the pain and slowing down the curse. You are still needed no matter what you think. You kept the Dark Lord at bay.”

“Not anymore, dear boy. He wants to kill me, so I think his fear of me and this place has vanished. We all must do what we have to do, and my time in this war is finishing. You will be the hero this time, Severus.”

Avoiding the old man’s eyes, he moved away from him and left. He couldn’t stand his presence even though he admired his resolution.

Dumbledore wanted to fall like a warrior and not like a senile useless wizard that was stupid enough to get himself cursed by a temptation. He knew how stubborn that man was, so he would do as he asked because he understood that sense of honor.

He would like to die like a warrior too.
Chapter 44: Snowy Closeness

Chapter Summary

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November, 1996

A layer of snow covered everything around him, and it was the most calming view he’d had in some time.

He took a deep breath, tasting one of the firsts weeks of November. The first and weak rays of the sun blinded him for a moment as it rose. Raising his hand to protect his eyes from the light, he took a step forward, feeling and hearing the snow crunch beneath his feet.

He took a deep breath and adjusted his cloak before continuing his quiet pace; enjoying the silence and the brief time he could relax as he walked around Hogwarts’ domains. He wanted to take his time, but knew he couldn’t. He had to complete his task before the students noticed the new snow and potential damage they could do with the cold substance.

When he reached the line of trees that marked the entrance to the forbidden forest, he began to study the roots, removing some of the snow with his bare hands as he checked each one, not caring if his skin burned in the extreme cold. The headmaster was lucky that the herbs he was seeking didn’t grow in the winter, but could still be found. The effort the purchase them would be
bothersome.

The herbs were in a common place, but they were hard to find. Fortunately, this magic imbued forest provided plenty of roots to check. Roots plagued by unicorn’s urine were essential for these types of plants to grow. He just hoped he didn’t have to go too far into the forest. The centaurs were still furious from the previous year’s events, and he didn’t want to deal with them.

He spotted another root, and after cleaning it off, noticed it was rising from the land. A good sign. He crouched and removed more snow to check if there was a trace of the plant.

He frowned when he didn’t spot any. He would be too lucky if he found them on his first attempt.

Putting his hand on the stem, he raised himself from the ground and went to the next tree, repeating the process.

More failure.

Severus let a sigh escape from his lips and closed his eyes. If it wasn’t so important, he would’ve used this as a detention punishment, but he didn’t trust them to remove this root. The pull had to be precise.

Feeling a warm pressure on his leg, he opened his eyes and his body tensed, reacting with instinct at a possible attack. His hand was already grabbing his wand, pointing at his side.

But his lips parted as soon as he was greeted with a soft meow. He looked down and saw a ginger furball nuzzling him. Where in Merlin did this cat come from? Normally the student’s cats didn’t wander this far from the castle. They tended to be stupid if they did since they were supposed to sense the danger coming from this area.

Then the cat with yellow defying eyes looked at him. A smirk crossed his features. No, this cat wasn’t stupid. He knew exactly where he was.

“What are you doing here, furball? Didn’t your owner tell you this is a dangerous place?”

The tail smacked him on his knee and he was sure that it had been on purpose. He tried not to laugh at that reaction. Too stubborn, too intelligent. The cat reminded him of—

“Crookshanks!” The cat’s ears moved towards the sound, but he didn’t walk toward the voice.

So he hadn’t been mistaken.

“Professor,” the young woman greeted him with a ragged breath when she got a couple feet in front of him. “I’m sorry about him. Crookshanks stop disturbing him.”

The cat meowed and leaped onto his shoulder as if he did it every day.

“I assume this feline is yours?”

She smiled sheepishly. “He normally doesn’t behave like this with others, and he doesn’t tend to disobey me.”

“Well, he must have a good reason,” he said as he straightened to full height. “He seems to be a rather intelligent cat, for being a cat. But considering his owner, I’m not surprised.”
“That can be explained. Crookshanks is half Kneazle.” She tilted her head, looking at the cat who was now hearing their exchange. “He likes you.”

“It appears so,” Snape said.

“It means you’re definitely trustworthy, sir.”

He arched an eyebrow.

“I thought I was already, but I suppose I should feel honored to have it confirmed by another being.”

The cat meowed in his ear and started to purr. Merlin, if another student came around right now his reputation would be ruined.

She nodded.

As pleased as he was with the exchange out of their sessions, he had to get back to work. He lifted the cat from his shoulders and handed him to her. When the cat was in her arms, he started to purr and closed his eyes against her clothes.

She kept looking at him, with curious eyes and a shade of a smile on her lips. Starting to feel uncomfortable, he walked to the next tree.

She followed him. “What are you doing?”

He noticed how she dropped the formalities and went straight to the question, and he didn’t care that she did it. It didn’t feel like an attack to his position or his authority. Without turning to look at her, he crouched and removed the snow with slow movements.

“I’m looking for a specific plant that grows at this area. It would be useful for a potion I’m working on against dark curses.”

“I thought only certain types of fungus and mushrooms could grow here now,” she said as she kneeled next to him with the cat still secure in her arms.

“It’s called Cypripedium calceolus.” He said before moving to another covered root with his other hand.

The young woman gasped and her eyes filled with enthusiasm. From her reaction, he knew she must’ve read about the plant before.

“Lady Slippers?” she whispered when she got closer to him, almost putting her boot on his black cloak. “Yellow Lady Slippers? You can find them here? In this Forest?”

He almost smiled at her excitement. “We have unicorns and they have their benefits, Miss Granger. All is possible. Of course, in winter they won’t be green or bloomed.” He wiped away more snow and saw what he was looking for. He reached down in the ground and pulled it at the perfect angle instead of cutting it.

She leaned over him, getting closer and not flinching away. She wasn’t fearful of him at all. He kept his gaze on the plant.

“Is this..?” It was only a root, nothing beautiful, but she looked at it as if it were in full bloom.

“Sprout used to teach how to cut them but no longer since they’re rare now. Only a master
knows how to cut or in my case, pull, the plant. For this potion I will only need a small portion of the root, so I’ll either try to cultivate it myself, or give it to Professor Sprout for her research in cultivating them.”

She studied the small plant. “You will have enough with only a piece of this?”

“If I don’t fail. Even being small, it’s potent enough.”

He was about to pull his hand away but she grabbed his wrist. An uneasy feeling crossed his spine. He had almost jumped, startled at her gesture. He scowled, but she didn’t see him. Instead, she was focused on his hands.

“Your hands are so red. You need to wear gloves next time.”

“It would be hard to gather herbs with them,” he replied calmly.

She let go of his hand. “You could get thinner ones and wear them to remove the snow.”

He rose from his position, feeling his knees protesting for a moment. “Don’t concern yourself with such trivialities. I’m used to doing these things.”

The witch nodded before rising from her position too. For a quiet second, they just stared at each other until her cat, started to purr. The yellow eyes focused on him. It felt like the cat was studying him, trying to decipher if he really was a trustworthy person. It was uncomfortable to be judged by an animal too.

“Then I shall take my leave, Miss Granger.” He walked past her and toward the castle.

“Ah! Professor, wait. Just a moment.” He heard her call him and his feet stopped. The witch was in front of him again in a second. “I was wondering if we could have another session on Saturday. I’m not going to Hogsmeade because...Well, I thought I could do something productive. I still have to polish the technique even if I can do the basics.”

Her hesitation showed.

His eyebrow arched.

That was unexpected. Seeking her free time to learn wasn’t strange but to learn with him was. It was normal that she didn’t want to go to the village if her friends still refused to talk to her, but she could do things by herself.

He found himself wanting to see her. Wanting her company on a quiet Saturday.

“I have no objections. Come anytime in the morning. I will be correcting papers.”

AN: Ops... Another favourite chapter here. This one has a companion draw that will probably post later on DA. To the chapter...Sweety closeness? Thigns twisting? Mmmm. Let me know what you think on the reviews and see you on Saturday!
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

Chapter 45: Reality Calling

November 1996

He graded the parchment with cruelty, almost ripping the paper with his corrections. He went through each essay not stopping to read who the owner of the work was. He didn’t care. He just wanted those students to learn even if he had to point out every comma they misplaced. He didn’t think they’d be this bad, but the Defense Against Dark Art essays were worse than the ones in his old potions classes. At least now, the students in Defense didn’t have to resort to throwing a book of theory at a Death Eater’s face. Though, if they didn’t learn to do the spells faster and more accurately, it might be a better option than using magic.

Taking a deep breath, he continued with the next essay, torturing the paper with red marks. The quill didn’t stop even when he heard a soft knock at the door.

“Enter.”

He heard a soft click and the door opened. Granger stepped in, looking more cheerful than he’d expected. It seemed like the harsher the sessions were, the more cheerful she became. He’d been using more of his power in the spell, challenging her slim mental walls. For now, she had
succeeded for a few minutes but she still needed to last longer and be more stable. Their secrets depended on it.

“Good morning, Professor. Is it a good time now?”

Severus finished the sentence and left the brown quill at the side of the stack of papers.

“I see that you are still using my quill in the end.” Her joy about that simple fact was strange.

“It’s a nice quill.”

She didn’t respond and walked forward. She placed her belongings on the chair in front of his desk as she always did and walked towards the pillowed chair.

Picking up his wand with two fingers, he stood and walked around the desk until he was in front of her. Her arms were resting on the chair arms and her shoulders relaxed. It didn’t look at all like she feared his spell.

“You look confident today, Miss Granger.”

“I am, sir. Perhaps I can master this skill in a month or two.”

A snort was his first response, but her relaxed attitude didn’t leave her.

“No matter how good you are, you won’t. Maybe in four months it’s a minimum possibility.”

“Want to bet something?” she asked in a playful tone and his eyebrows arched with surprise.

“That would be highly inappropriate, Miss Granger.”

She laughed softly in response. “Okay, sir, but it could be fun.” His eyes commanded at her to not follow that topic of conversation but the joy in hers didn’t leave. “How long did it take you to master occlumency?”

“A little less than eight months, but I thought you wanted to practice today and not waste time talking to me.”

“Talking to you isn’t a waste of time, professor.”

“Clear your mind now, Miss Granger. No more talking.” He pointed his wand at her.

She nodded in response and moved her legs, seeking a comfortable position. Then he cast the spell with force and without warning.

Her walls waited at his intrusion, tall and strong, trapping him in darkness. Now he had to test how long she could resist his full power. She had achieved a potent protection but it wasn’t enough. He was good at legilimency, but the Dark Lord was better. If she couldn’t resist him, she wouldn’t be able to resist the evil wizard.

He tried harder and found her resistance was withstanding his assault.

A small crack appeared on the side and he pushed through. A source of light illuminated the dark confinement. This was the end.

The darkness faded as the barrier disintegrated, crumbling piece by piece, and disappearing before touching the illusion of the floor he was on. Like a puzzle, he started to perceive the image of
her memories until he saw himself in front of her.

He almost felt his own guilt among her feelings of shame and fear. He had never seen this memory before but he knew what this was. He swallowed, anticipating what was coming.

A howl pierced the memory and his illusion turned, shocked as he knew what he had remembered here. His own battle with this werewolf when he was only a kid. But he didn’t stop to linger on those memories. He focused on her.

Now he was using his own body to protect the kids. He noticed her hand clawing his arm. A movement he didn’t remember feeling. A safe feeling reached his brain and he studied the girl with more curiosity.

It was amazing the respect the young witch had for him considering the way he acted toward her that year.

The werewolf mauled him and the false eyes winced as he saw himself fall with her. Her body was shaking for a moment and the fear stroked him. Then the vision changed.

She was running with the same lack of air he had witnessed with Lupin, but now, she was in a dark corridor.

A loud thump reached their ears and he looked to the side. The Weasley boy had fallen in front of her. His body tensed in response and he almost reached for his wand. She crouched and forced the body of her former friend under a desk to hide him. A laugh broke the silence.

This was her adventure in the ministry. He’d given his word not to look. This was her most warded secret. His temptation to know was as sickening as the irrational fear he perceived. He didn’t understand how this girl could have moved at all. How a mere student had managed to duel a skilled Death Eater.

Closing his eyes to avoid the foreign emotions and panic, he muttered and cancelled the spell. He would honor his word and this alliance as she had done before.

But whatever happened there was still affecting her. She hadn’t tried to resist. He looked to her and she was shaking, sweating, and her brown eyes were lost in space.

He should have cut the connection before he saw that. He reached out and put his hand on her shoulder. A weird attempt to comfort her.

“I apologize. I thought you could push me out,” he muttered when he saw her blink. “I wasn’t sure where I was at first either.”

She locked her brown eyes with his. “Thank you for stopping.” She looked down at her lap and gripped the chair’s arms as tightly as she could. “I couldn’t do it...”

“You just need more practice, Miss Granger. This is an experience you have no control over even in a conscious state, so don’t feel bad for not being able to do it with your mind.”

“But I’m trying and... and I still tremble when I try to cast an offensive spell!”

He could feel her frustration without the need to enter her mind. A witch not being able to use her magic the way she wanted was always negative.

He sat down in the chair next to her. She was his ally but was he the correct choice to guide
her in this problem? Dumbledore was better suited to this sort of thing, but he said to let her solve the issue on her own. But sometimes one couldn’t do things on their own, and he didn’t want the girl to freeze on a battlefield.

“Maybe you should talk about it to deal with it,” he finally spoke, offering a solution.

“To who?” she snapped. “I can’t talk with those two idiots because they don’t want to talk to me and the problem is with them. I can’t with you…” She closed her eyes for a moment, calming her rage and he let her. “I can’t talk about it...I can’t risk... I just...”

“You ask me to trust you, but you don’t trust me, Miss Granger.”

“I do trust you, professor, but I need time. I need to know how to deal with this.”

“There is a probability you won’t know until you do it.” He stood and walked to one of his cabinets.

He rummaged around them, noticing how the room had become quiet. She was probably thinking about his words. When he found what he was searching for, he grabbed it and closed the cabinet before walking back to her. He handed her a white towel and she took it.

“I just don’t want to lose this alliance because of my actions.” Her soft voice almost didn’t reach his ears but his neutral expression melted.

Lose an alliance? He stored that in his mind to add with the events at the ministry. As far as he knew, the only one they lost was that useless dog.

“You don’t have to worry about that, Miss Granger. I was the one who offered, knowing that you had problems related to that incident.” He took a deep breath. “But I ask you this. When you are ready to deal with it, talk with me or I will interfere. I need you to survive.”

“I...will consider it. Thank you, professor,” she said, her voice muffled by the cloth over the bottom half of her face.

Severus nodded. “Make yourself presentable, Granger. We will go to have lunch now. It’s almost time.” His order wasn’t strong, giving her the opportunity to refuse if she wanted to.

She didn’t. After fixing herself up with the towel and some magic, she moved to his side. Her bag was over her shoulder.

“Let’s go then.”

He moved toward the door, knowing she was following him. He opened the door and let her exit first, clearly surprising her with the gentlemanly gesture.

Their walk through the corridors consisted of comfortable silence. The students hadn’t come back from their trip so all was calm and quiet. Granger wasn’t noisy and he was glad they shared that trait too. She wasn’t even loud when around Potter. The pieces he’d seen in her mind, pointed to that. She was the voice of reason in that group. Or at least, she was when she was a part of the group.

She was walking beside him, her curly hair brushing his clothes ever so often. She was a head and a quarter shorter than he was, but she still managed to follow his pace.

The sound of quick steps halted their walking.
He pursed his lips waited for the student to reveal himself. She took a step back, a sign that she was going to let him do his job. That she recognized, understood, and respected his authority as a teacher.

An old woman with nurse dress and apron appeared, breaking his expectations. She gasped as soon as she noticed him. “Severus! Thank Merlin you are here. Please, come quickly, we need your help!” the woman shouted.

He gave a brief look to Granger; worry was readable on her face.

“I will see you next week then…” he heard the young woman whisper.

“Miss Granger, you come too. You may know something!” Pomfrey said as she came towards them, looking like she was going to grab them by their ears if they didn’t follow soon.

If she hadn’t said it, he was going to suggest she come. Severus nodded, and they resumed their walk, faster this time, as they followed the mediwitch to the infirmary.

“What happened?” he asked as they went through the empty corridors.

“Katie Bell was cursed at Hogsmeade.” The old woman was panting but she never stopped walking. She was after all, devoted to her job and to her patients.

He heard a small gasp coming from his back. Without a doubt, Granger was already going through a thousand questions in her mind. He would likely be answering the ones she couldn’t figure out.

“How’d it happened?” he asked.

“Her friend said it was a necklace. Potter had brought it. I hope you can examine it and help Katie. I’ve managed to stabilize her for now, but she is unconscious. I don’t know the extension of the curse or its nature.”

“Potter?”

He felt a small pull at his cloak and didn’t dare to look back at the young woman following them. He wasn’t sure if she was trying to say something or to support him.

“You can ask them yourself. They’re in the infirmary,” Pomfrey replied as she opened the doors, revealing an angry and worried Minerva looking at the three students with her.

The transfiguration teacher looked at them as soon as they neared and arched an eyebrow, but continued questioning the boys.

Severus walked pass them to the small bed where Miss Bell was. When he stopped at the side of the bed, he noticed that Granger had stopped at the door. Probably, not knowing where she should be.

“Come here, Miss Granger.”

He heard footsteps come up beside him. He looked at her and then back to Katie, wordlessly telling her to watch.

He tapped Katie with his wand, seeking for the trail of the dark curse he already sensed next to him, confirming that necklace was cursed as much as her.
Her whole body began to glow. A trail of a red was tangled from her neck to her brain, which it had affected first. This was designed to kill, and her mind was silently melting.

“She needs to go to Saint Mungo now!” he yelled as he started to chain the curse, casting his own spells to do so. He looked at Pomfrey “Give her stimulants to keep that thing from eating her mind.” The woman instantly got the work, and Hermione moved out of the way.

“I will go with her right now,” Pomfrey said as she made a floating stretcher appear. “We can’t do anymore now. She needs a specialist to remove the curse from her brain without damaging her further. I know you could try it, but I’m not risking it, Severus.”

He bowed his head, accepting her judgment. “And I would not venture to try it. I’m not a healer.”

They watched as the old nurse walked to the fireplace with Miss Bell and then disappeared.

The entire room was tense as he turned and levitated the necklace in front of him. He needed something to focus on other than the despair permeating the room.

“Will she be okay?” His eyes widened as he heard Granger’s voice followed by some surprised growls, but he didn’t stop checking the item.

“I don’t know, Miss Granger. It would depend on the neuro-healers skills. Repairing minds is always risky,” he replied, coming back to his neutral voice. He wouldn’t let Potter see any emotion from him even if he had just answered Hermione Granger with no mockery.

“Do any of you have something to add?” McGonagall asked.

“Just that it’s Malfoy who did this.” His hand froze as he heard Potter’s arrogant reply.

He lowered the necklace and turned around, glaring at the boy. His accusation was probably true, but the damned idiot didn’t need to go and investigate. It would end in another adventure that would probably throw him right into the Dark Lord’s hands. If he could incriminate Draco, they could stop him legally, and Dumbledore would be safe. At least, until he died by the curse he had inflicted upon himself.

“And do you have any proof of that?”

“No, I just know.”

It was difficulty not to roll his eyes at that. His instincts were right, but they needed more than gut feelings. This wasn’t a student stealing a quill; this was an attempt to assassinate.

“Just knowing isn’t enough evidence.”

“He’s right, Mister Potter,” Minerva said with much more grace than he ever would be able to muster. “Accusing someone of attempted murder is grave. You have to have evidence.” Minerva sighed. “Go back to your common room, or go to lunch.”

The trio of friends nodded and moved, ignoring Granger’s presence. When the steps faded, the young woman sighed and Minerva, who had noticed the exchange, gave her an encouraging smile.

“Did you come to see Miss Bell?” the elder woman asked, and he noticed her eyes darting towards him for a second.
“Madam Pomfrey asked me to come because I might know something but…” She lowered her head for a second, avoiding the teacher’s eyes. “I didn’t go to Hogsmeade today. I was studying and I was going to the Great Hall to have lunch when I found Professor Snape and then she found us.”

Minerva’s eyebrow arched again. Granger had a talent of transforming the reality instead of lying, but he was sure the old woman didn’t believe what was said.

“Then you should go eat, my girl. You work too hard,” the old woman replied with a soft voice and Granger nodded.

“Thank you, professors. I will see you later,” she replied before leaving.

It was then, when Minerva turned to him. He remained with his usual control. This woman wouldn’t intimidate him, not since she had seen him at his lowest moment.

“She’s still at odds with her friends? She looked happier this month, so I thought they solved their differences.”

The young woman was happier indeed, but apparently, it was because of their alliance rather than those brain-dead idiots.

“Maybe she found something better to do with her time,” he replied.

“I haven’t seen her with anyone other than Neville in classrooms. It looks more like a working team rather than a close friendship.”

“A disastrous team, but certainly better than before,” he replied.

She glared at him. “He is skilled. You put him under too much pressure and the poor boy gets blocked,” she said.

“He needs to learn to work under stress. Life is not easy.” He noticed how the woman’s rage grew, so he decided to change the subject. “Do you know who that necklace was intended for?”

The woman’s fury vanished in an instant and her brows furrowed. It was enough to confirm his suspicions without her voicing it.

The first attempt to follow the Dark Lord’s wishes had been made, and his promise to Albus was creeping up on him.

Reality was calling.

AN: She is worried to lose him, He is surprised she thinks like that and could feel…that deep. Heh. And yep, their small little bubble of relaxation breaks with the problems that surround them. Still, despite all…they are staying close to each other ;). Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on December 6th!
Chapter 46: A Greater Fool

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 46: A Greater Fool

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

November, 1996

The liquid in the cauldron started to simmer as soon as the blood mixed with the new experimental potion he was trying to create to slow down Dumbledore’s curse. He hoped this one worked. But potion making was never an exact science. Each new curse and each person could respond differently. Having his blood eased things and made the success more likely.

He added the chopped Lady Slipper root and began stirring the mix clockwise with a metal rod. Slow, patient. If he hurried, he would ruin it. He had to keep an eye on every change so he could fix it if something went wrong.

But for now, all was working fine.

“Severus,” a small voice accompanied the noise of his laboratory’s door opening. Dumbledore entered the laboratory with slow, heavy steps. With this potion, he might be able to walk a bit lighter and feel a little better.

“Please, take a seat, sir. The potion is still not ready”
He followed his directions, letting himself fall on the chair. At least he didn’t have to feign about his condition in here. Manipulator or not, the headmaster was still a man suffering, and for the sake of others, had to put on a facade to appear strong and invincible.

“How are you feeling? Any changes?”

“The same,” he replied as Severus heard the sound of rustling robes.

From the corner of his eye, he noticed the old man’s upper body. The curse had passed his shoulder, reaching half of his chest. Swallowing at the view, he returned to the potion as he heard the rustle again. There was no need of words.

“Since the other potions slowed the process, this might give you more time and less pain.” He stopped stirring and turned off the fire, letting the potion rest.

He organized his tools and with a cleaning spell, all appeared like new. He then dared to turn around to look the headmaster in the eye. He knew how hard it was to fake not being in pain. He’d had to do it many times.

It was necessary to survive.

“I heard about Malfoy’s attempt to kill me. The boy has started to move.”

Their eyes met but Severus didn’t find fear or concern in the blue eyes.

“Yes. Miss Bell’s curse was removed from her brain but she is still recovering.”

“We are lucky to have you. I assume you didn’t know about this plan?” the old man asked as he put one of his hands on his chest, probably trying to calm his pain.

“Unfortunately, I did not,” he replied sternly. He felt like his loyalty was being tested.

“Don’t look at me that way, my boy. I meant no ill.”

Letting a grunt out from his throat and distracted himself with putting up his tools.

“I am doing what I can without having to kidnap the boy and tie him to a chair. It’s tempting, but if I treated that boy poorly, it would get back to the Dark Lord. The brat is almost as bad as Potter.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Really?”

Snape looked over his shoulder at him. “I said, almost.”

He heard a short laugh, but Dumbledore said nothing.

He looked to the cauldron instead of the tired headmaster.

He grabbed his wand and summoned the contents into a cup. The texture and colour looked perfectly mixed with the base. No rejection occurred after the resting time, which was a good sign. He offered the potion to the headmaster.

The old man grabbed it with his healthy hand and raised it with a smile, as if he was trying to toast him. He took a sip, grimaced, and then swallowed the contents of the cup in two large gulps. “Thank you. It tastes horrible though. Perhaps in the future you could make a lemon flavored one.”
“We will see if the spreading slows,” Severus said, ignoring the joke. “You will have to tell me before it reaches another limb of yours instead of hiding it.” There was a hint of annoyance in his voice. The desire to point out his irresponsibility in this matter was too hard to resist.

“I just don’t want to worry anyone. The pain is already receding, so I assume this will do its intended job.”

“Still check yourself. Even if it doesn’t hurt it doesn’t mean you aren’t being affected from the inside.” He opened the cabinet, searching for a strengthening potion. When he found it, he snatched it and closed the cabinet. “This will help you to recover faster. You don’t look well. I’m surprised no one noticed.”

The old man took the vial and shrugged. “I’m as good of an actor as you, Severus.”

It was questionable whether Dumbledore was as good of an actor, but he was definitely a greater fool.

AN: Coldness, anger but...Severus cares. Hope you liked it. I know I said I wasn’t going to post this week and it’s a small chapter but I noticed that Christmas is coming so...chaos schedule is near too. Hope you enjoyed and let me know what you think. Until Saturday!
Chapter 47: Nightmares

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

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Chapter 47: Nightmares

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November 1996

The books were spread around the small rectangular wooden table, opened on different pages and showing various kinds of curses and their counter curses. Most of the text was strikethrough and the margins were filled with small elegant handwriting, almost making the book illegible for anyone except its owner.

The brown quill moved with haste as he wrote new notes with the material he was gathering from the books and from his experience through the years.

A book had answers but not for everything. There were variants, situations in which things could change in a second. It was hard to predict what some of his brain-dead students would do, but he’d managed to keep them alive so far. It was made even more difficult by the fact they put no effort into the class and didn’t even look at the material most of the time. They didn’t realize the value in having a former Death Eater teaching them how to fight.

He had a few bright students, but there was only one person that was as meticulous as he was. Unfortunately, the rest of the students avoided her like a plague now that she didn’t stick with Potter. If they’d stuck with her instead of him, they might’ve learned something. She was the brains of that group. He was going to have to intervene if things didn’t get better soon, but right now, he intended
to make her strong on her own. She had to gain confidence. She needed to learn that they needed her, but she most certainly didn’t need them.

A soft knock interrupted his trail of thoughts. He frowned at the door and then checked the clock to make sure he hadn’t lost track of time. It was two in the morning. Usually, only Dumbledore would be awake enough to come down here. The only other way someone would come is if there was a problem with one of the Slytherins. The latter was more probable since the headmaster had taken a trip to Merlin knows where.

He was glad to know the man took advantage of the working potion, but he also had a greater chance of being killed every time he left.

After leaving the quill inside the inkpot, he rose from his seated position on his green rug and walked towards the door. He formed his scowl and opened the door. A shivering girl, with her arms around her body was waiting in his office. The messy brown hair was unmistakable.

The young witch looked at him as soon as she noticed the door opening, and with tentative steps, came near him. In the small amount of light filtering into that room, he could make out how pale she was, how her eyes looked red and puffy like she had been crying.

“Miss Granger? What are you doing here? It’s past curfew.”

Her response was to come closer. She wasn’t well. But why seek him? It was risky to come here to the dungeons.

“I-I didn’t know where to go…” She looked defenseless, lost, and alone.

Closing his eyes, he let a tired breath escape his lungs and opened the door fully, silently offering her entrance to his quarters.

A tiny hint of surprise crossed her face at his gesture, but her steps didn’t hesitate as she entered. She looked around, taking in her environment.

He closed the door behind him and noticed where her eyes focused. She was so predictable. Her eyes were focused on his shelves.

“Sit down,” he said, breaking her enchantment with the books.

The young witch nodded and walked around the small space, avoiding his work scattered around the table and the rug. She sat on the black sofa in front of the fireplace.

He was glad she hadn’t touched his notes.

“I’m sorry… It seems I interrupted.”

“It’s just my classroom notes.” He closed the books and piled them on the table. He sat his parchment on top of them and placed the brown quill she’d given him to the side. When he finished, he sat in the green winged chair across from her.

She kept her arms locked around her as if she were cold. He knew the signs of a broken person, and the woman before him was definitely one. He didn’t know how to help her with that, and even if he did, he wouldn’t know why she was in such a state.

She kept silent, paralyzed, and he didn’t know if his presence eased her.
“If you are not comfortable you could go to McGonagall. I’m sure she would be glad to help you despite the hour.” He wanted to let her know that she could stay if she wanted, but also that the option to leave was there.

Granger looked at him and shivered before she looked back at the fireplace. At least that could warm her. “I trust you more. You understand me.”

No one had told him that before. Not without a false voice. She just sought him for his support and his company. Because she trusted him that much. In that little time.

And he found himself trusting this girl too. More than he’d ever trusted anyone. Even Lily.

“What put you in this state, Miss Granger?” he asked, trying to encourage her to talk. In response, she sighed deeply and her muscles tensed. “If you need to talk about it. I can offer an ear to listen, and perhaps some advice if I am knowledgeable in what plagues you.”

She looked at the small flames dancing in the fireplace. “I’m having nightmares.”

His back tensed and he let his black eyes show concern for her. He could understand it perfectly; he had suffered with them ever since his first kill.

“With time, they will ease,” he said, his voice barely above a whisper but still loud enough for her to hear.

“But they will never go away, right?” Her voice sounded as if she lacked energy.

“No, they won’t go away.” He wouldn’t lie to her with some idyllic dream. Experiences could be healed, but most of the people never forgot them without some assistance. And usually that assistance was some chemical dependency of some kind or some other damaging methods.

“Do you have them too?”

He closed his eyes at her soft voice and sighed, letting his backrest against the chair.

Though he wasn't uncomfortable with the conversation, it did feel foreign. He’d never had anyone to talk to these things seriously with.

“Yes.” His reply was weak as he tried not to remember the numerous times he relived his discovery of Lily’s corpse or heard the screams of people who were tortured to death.

“I take some solace in the nightmares.”

She looked at him confused. “Solace?”

“If I didn’t have nightmares about them, it means I’d be a monster like the Dark Lord.”

“I…I see. That makes sense.”

Her robes rustled but he didn’t look at what she was doing. He was ashamed to be open with someone again. It was easier when she just looked in the pensieve instead of asking him directly.

He was surprised that she didn’t press him more for details. Instead, she walked around him, looking at his books, and ignoring him. Apparently, she understood his ways with situations like this as well. He was a private man, lacked advanced social skills, and liked his quiet and solitary life.

The hands on his shoulders startled him. She was a brave woman for touching him.
“Maybe one day, we can tell each other about these torments, but I’m glad you trust me as much as I do you.”

He stood, leaving the winged chair and letting her hands fall on it. He walked towards the fireplace and rested a hand on the green curtain that covered it at the sides.

“It’s an option I could concede,” he finally answered, not moving any inch of his posture. “For now, I could give you a dreamless sleep potion if you desire.”

He didn’t look back at her even when the rustle of clothes came back to his ears. The flames were soothing him as they sparked in front of his eyes.

“I feel better. Your company helped a bit.”

It was odd to hear that considering they didn’t engage in much of a talk, and all this time he thought Granger was more of a talker. Someone that didn’t relish in silence like him. It turned out he was wrong.

“You still need your sleep, Miss Granger. You have classes tomorrow. I advise you to take it when you leave.”

His words mutated her relaxed face into a worried frown with tensed cheeks and neck muscles.

She took a shaky breath and nodded.

He walked into his bedroom, went to his private potions cabinet, and searched around the numerous sections until he found the potion he wanted. He picked it up and walked back to the living room.

When he reached her side, he extended his arm, offering her the blue potion. She looked at it, then to his eyes. A mixture of gratefulness and worry crossed her features.

“You won’t become dependent on it if you use small doses sparingly,” he said, knowing that she would be cautious enough. “I assume you know the dosages.”

“Yes, but…” Her voice broke, and she lowered her head.

“But you don’t want to depend on it,” he said. “I know, but you need it. At least, today.” He spoke with a stronger voice, not giving her the option to reject it. She was too disturbed and affected. The need to come down there, seeking his support, was enough reason to have it.

He knew she wanted to object even more, and he fully expected her to, but instead she took the vial.

Pain shot through his nerves, and his fingers went numb. He was glad he’d handed the vial to Granger when he had. By habit, he reached up and closed his hand around the mark, trying to sooth the pain.

His dark mark was burning.

And it was an inopportune moment. He wasn’t alone and this witch wasn’t stupid. Trying to maintain his neutral facade, he took a deep breath and removed his hand from the mark, feeling the intensity of the pain increasing with the action.

Her eyes were on him, studying him as intensely as she studied her books. She wasn’t fooled
for a moment.

“He’s calling you, isn’t he?” she whispered with a hint of worry in her voice. “Go, Professor. You need to before you get in trouble.”

He was surprised at how calm she took his summoning, and how there wasn’t a hint of disgust in her voice at the thought. For the first time since being summoned while speaking with someone, he felt more human and less like a tool. She gave no pity, just understanding.

Without responding, he went back to his bedroom to retrieve his Death Eater’s robes and his mask. He walked back into his living room and noticed she was looking at him with worried eyes.

He donned the robes and glanced back at her. Her eyes were shiny as if she were trying to suppress tears.

“Go back to your room. This will take a long time,” he said before he put on his mask. She was one of the few people outside the Death Eaters who knew the design of his mask. Perhaps it would help her if she ever needed to recognize him when he wore it.

The witch offered him a small encouraging smile before her form disappeared and his body morphed and travelled to where he was summoned.

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AN: One of my favourite chapters here. Or better said…the beginning of some successive chapters that are my favourite LOL. Let me know what you think. I know they are more and more building their trust with tentative steps and hope you like it. I appreciate all your words and it makes me happy to know that this story is being liked. Thank you for your support. Always. :* See u next week!
Chapter 48: As Smooth as Broken Glass

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 48: As Smooth as Broken Glass

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The Dark Lord greeted him with a smile. As soon as he apparated, he kneeled in front of him. He was alone in a room in the Malfoy manor. After the head of the family’s failure, he’d set up his main base here. It wasn’t that he was comfortable here, but more that he wanted to make the Malfoy’s suffer and worry about his constant presence.

“My lord,” Severus said.

“Severus, rise, my friend.”

He stood and waited to hear the reason he’d been called. He watched as the Dark Lord walked around the room.

“Tell me how Draco is doing.”

At least he could tell the truth in this. “The boy doesn’t tell me his plans, my lord. He attempted to curse the headmaster, but failed.” The Dark Lord turned to him. “He managed to use an ancient object with a mortal curse. The curse melts the brain of the victim. It didn’t reach him and a student ended up getting in the way.”

The Dark Lord nodded. “You must guide him Severus. You’re one of my most skilled Death Eaters, and Draco needs to learn from you. Use your information to help him in his task.”
"I have tried to help him several times, my lord. He rejects it, even going as far as to avoid me. I assume he wants to prove himself to you first since the task is so great." He wanted to defend the boy but at the same time not come off as insubordinate. This was the best he could do for Draco.

The Dark Lord’s eyes narrowed and his lips twisted with fury. It was clear that his words hadn’t appeased him in the slightest. “The severity of this task means that he should not fail! Killing that wizard will give us the key to this world and our reign. His pride should not get in the way!”

The thought of his world and his reign of blood supremacy made him sick. “I’ll give it my all to make sure he doesn’t fail, but if he’s unable to do his task, I will do it, my lord.”

“I have no doubt of that, Severus,” he said. “I heard Narcissa hindered you with an unbreakable vow.”

“I agreed for the sake of our mission, my lord. I know how important this is, and if I have to give my life for it, I will.” Severus bowed his head and hid his repulsion with no effort.

“I expected that, my friend.” The man sat on one of the sofas and a cup appeared on the table next to him. He picked it up and took a sip from it. “I have need of your skills tonight, Severus.”

He almost gasped at that. “Yes, my lord.”

“Since Lucius’s leadership failed, I don’t trust others with important missions. I know you prefer the back lines, but I need you to do this. I trust your talent.”

He dreaded killing another innocent, but he didn’t have the option to refuse if he wanted to live another day.

“I live to serve, my lord.”

/-/-

The incompetence of his fellow Death Eaters amazed him. They put so much effort to impress the Dark Lord that it caused them to make reckless mistakes. He’d had to watch the group he was with like they were children. He had no choice but to watch them and himself, otherwise all the failure would go onto him. He would’ve loved this position of power a long time ago. He had to complete this mission well to save more people. If this succeeded, it would be another step to gain the Dark Lord’s ultimate trust.

He peered out from his hiding spot, and then when the ministry patrol moved, he signaled his two companions to follow him. They had to take those two guards out before they could get to their target. The way they patrolled was incautious, so it was no wonder the Dark Lord was gaining ground in this war. But the minister wasn’t as intelligent or focused as the Dark Lord. The new minister was harsh, but still didn’t do what was needed at the times it was needed.

He waited until the patrol disbanded at the doors of the house, and then it was time. They walked toward the house, hidden under the various shadows that draped over the environment.

When they reached the sides of the house, he raised his wand, checking for wards and curses he might have to counter. When he found one, he scowled. This was why the Dark Lord wanted him here. Avery and Mulciber had never been good at this. They were just going to rush in if he hadn’t
held up his hand to stop them. He set about solving the curse and within a few minutes, had it quietly disabled. Then, he lifted the window with a wave of his wand and his followers entered the dark room.

He followed them as soon as they took covered positions and cleared the place from another unwanted presence. Silently, he tried to find their target’s location, searching for another source of noise other than their breathing.

A footstep reached his ears, his heart jumped with adrenaline, and his fingers itched with nerves. Extending his arm, he pointed to the ceiling with his wand. His followers nodded and opened the door to seek the stairs.

A crack on the stairs made him stop. He looked at them, indicating for them to keep their positions. He waited a few beats until he heard footsteps moving once again. Then they moved until they were in front of an oak door. He looked to see if they were ready. The nod they gave was enough for him. His muscles tensed, and as slow as he could, he turned the handle.

The door exploded sending his body flying towards the stairs until his back collided with the floor, sending a sharp pain through him and knocking the air out of him. He looked at his shoulder and found a long piece of wood, similar to a stake but not quite as large, embedded in his shoulder. He gritted his teeth and broke a large piece of it off. He pulled his robe away from it to conceal the rest from his fellow Death Eaters. It wouldn’t be in his best interest for them to see he was injured, and it wouldn’t be wise to pull it completely out. He registered a scream and focused on getting his breathing back. With every inhale, the piece of wood felt as if it sank deeper into his flesh. With every exhale, it felt as if it were being pulled out.

“Imperio!”

That target hadn’t been as foolish as he’d thought, and he noted to never underestimate someone again. This time, he’d been the reckless one. He pushed himself up and rushed up the steps just as his fellow Death Eaters emerged from the room.

“That was a great fly, Snape.” He could hear the smugness in Avery’s tone and wanted to curse him, but as always, refrained.

“Repair the damages,” he ordered and shook his robes as if nothing happened. He paused when he felt a sharp prick in his shoulder. “We also need to make sure we eliminate any possible witnesses.”

“Sure,” Avery said with a mocking tone. “Let’s go do some house work, Mulciber.”

“I will check the neighbors and eliminate them if necessary.” Of course, he wouldn’t do that. He would obliviate instead. “You inform the Dark Lord of our success. I might have to return to Hogwarts directly due to the lack of time I have left. I can’t go missing there.” His comrades nodded and began repairing the destruction.

This hadn’t gone as smoothly as he’d thought it would.

AN: Snape doing non-scheduled work and trying to ease the damage…And of course, showing he is not a machine….or a vampire *giggles* Hope you liked it and let me know what
you think. See you next week!
Chapter 49: Tending

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 49: Tending

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The room materialized in front of his eyes as his body solidified. He hadn’t been able to get home as quickly as he’d hoped. He’d had to erase an entire muggle family’s memories because they were going to call the police after hearing the commotion in the house.

He almost attacked when a high-pitched yell of surprise greeted him as soon as he stepped inside his living room. She was still here despite him telling her to leave. It was clear from her eyes and her more disheveled than usual hair that she’d been asleep. A book fell from her lap as she darted up from the sofa.

“You’re back!” She walked over to him and grabbed his arm as if checking him for damage.

He yanked his arm away and removed his mask. “Didn’t I tell you to go back to your room?”

“I couldn’t. Not when I knew you were going to the Dark Lord so I spent the time reading.”

“I couldn’t. Not when I knew you were going to the Dark Lord so I spent the time reading.”

“My books I assume,” he snapped. He threw the mask on his winged chair. She was taking too many liberties with his offerings. Too fast for his taste and faster than he’d expected.

“Well, I knew you wouldn’t like me to ignore what you told me to do, and I’m sorry for that, but I’m not sorry to have waited.” Her tone turned just as hostile as his and she scowled. “I wanted to make sure you didn’t pop in half dead.”
He was flattered even if it was an absurd action. Both of them knew that his destiny was to perish sooner or later.

He shook his head, hiding a smirk. He couldn’t and wouldn’t punish her for staying. He’d picked her because she was loyal and stubborn.

“As you can see, I’m still alive, so you can go, Miss Granger,” he said as he began removing his Death Eater robes. “I think I’m going to take a nap before breakfast, and it would do you some good to do the same.”

His hand hit his shoulder, moving the piece of wood, and he grunted before he could stop himself. She gasped and came closer.

“What are you-?”

She moved her hand in the direction of his shoulder. He flinched when it got close and she jerked her hand away.

“You’re covered in blood, sir!”

He clenched his teeth as he removed the robe and tossed it in the same place the mask was resting.

“Sir! You’ve been stabbed!”

He did his best to ignore the pain along his shoulder, but it ached with every movement. “It’s nothing. Don’t concern yourself over a small injury.”

“Small? That’s small to you?”

“Yes.” He’d had worse.

“There’s a piece of wood sticking out of your shoulder!” she said, half-incredulous and half-angry.

He refused to look at her as he grabbed the mask and the robe. “Leave.” He walked into his bedroom.

“Let me help you.”

He heard her plea from the doorway. She’d followed him but had respected his inner quarters by not entering.

“I don’t need help, Granger.” He dismissed with a slim tone of irritation and raised his arm as he did in class before she spoke another word. Her stubborn nature matched his and they could clash forever if they desired. “It’s nothing to worry about. I’ve had worst injuries, and I can take care of myself.”

Her body rested against the doorframe and she exhaled. “That was before. You aren’t alone anymore. You have help now.”

His actions stopped.

His breath quieted.

His heart struggled.
Her involvement and intrusion was much more than he had expected. He hadn’t wanted someone to take care of him when he came back injured. His wounds were his own punishment for his faults, and were his responsibility to treat and mull over.

With the intention to make that clear, he turned around but the witch wasn’t resting on the doorframe anymore. He took a deep breath and got the items to tend to his wounds.

With his hands full of bandages and potions, he sat on the edge of his green four-posted bed and placed the items on top of the blanket.

He unbuttoned his shirt and had one arm out of the sleeve when he halted his movements. Footsteps were heading toward him at a quick pace. He narrowed his eyes when he saw Granger enter the room with a metal basin in her hands.

He’d been wrong about her leaving. She even rummaged around his belongings to find a basin and entered his room. She sat the basin down on a table and sat on his bed.

She removed her wand from her sleeve and the bowl filled with water as soon as she tapped the metal. “Well, let’s get this out.” She bit her lip in thought. “Hum…how should I go about it?” she said more to herself than to him.

He raised an eyebrow, reached up to the wood, gripped it, and yanked it out.”

“What the bloody hell!”

“Language, Miss Granger.”

“Sir! You…You…”

“I can take care of this myself. It’s a minor wound. I’ve been worse and managed to heal myself.” He removed his shirt all the way.

“Minor wound my arse,” she muttered in a similar manner he would’ve. She grabbed one of the cloths, sank it in the water, and then removed the excess water from the cloth. She placed it on the wound, cleaning it.

Rage should’ve been coursing through him. Or shame. But instead, his emotions were conflicted because no one had ever helped him like this before. Other than Pomfrey, but he only went to her as an adult if he had no other choice.

“And as I pointed out before, sir, you are not alone, so I’m helping you. Please stop being stubborn.”

“This is highly inappropriate, Miss Granger. You are a student and my ally, not a nurse.” Her scowl developed into a soft smile.

“Allies tend to help each other, so your reasoning is faulty.”

Damn woman using his words against him. He closed his eyes and sighed deeply. “Don’t try to outsmart me, Granger.” He spoke gently to show he wasn’t infuriated at her.

“She said softly, “let me help. I’m not going to sleep anymore, so I might as well make sure you’re well, professor.”

Tired of arguing, he relented with a nod. Lily never helped him when he was hurt. She always
justified why he was hurt, or left him alone until he spoke to her. She tried to stop the attacks when they were committed in front of her, but she never took the time to help him after the fact. Not physically, not mentally.

He grunted when a pain rushed through that area, jerking him from his ruminations. She threw the bloody towel into the basin and he felt her move closer to study his wound.

“I think you have something more in the wound. I felt something.”

“Probably left over splinters.”

“Do you have any tweezers?” she asked.

“Potion’s cabinet,” he said.

She disinfected them before he got a chance to tell her to do it. She grabbed the towel and dabbed off more blood. After rinsing the towel again, she moved closer with the tweezers.

She took a deep breath. “Okay, I’m going in.”

He almost chuckled at the way she spoke. “I’ll cover you.”

She froze. “Did you make a joke?”

“The wood, Miss Granger.”

She came closer and he felt a pull in his shoulder much deeper than he expected it to be. The skin around the injury overstretched as the splinter pulled free. Then she went about getting the smaller splinters. Every so often, she’d use the cloth to dab the injury and rid it of blood.

She tossed the tweezers into the basin when satisfied all the splinters were gone. She held the cloth against the injury.

“It’s bleeding a lot.”

“Just keep pressure on it. It’s what usually happens.”

He felt her hands shaking as she applied pressure. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine.”

She kept checking the bleeding regardless of his reassurances. It seemed as if she thought he would bleed to death. If she was this concerned over a wound like this, he didn’t want her around during one of his larger ones, and especially not during the times he came back after being tortured by the Dark Lord. Thankfully, they were few and far between.

Her body relaxed from its tenseness when’s she pulled away the towel and it only had a small amount of blood on it.

Her eyes moved briefly to his, letting him read that her mind was running. She never stopped thinking. She never stopped wondering.

“Ask witch.”

She bit her bottom lip for a moment. “I-I’m not sure if I should.”
“Just do it. You will see it anyway one day in the pensieve.”

“Was...Vo- You-know-who, the one who did this to you?”

“He doesn’t make it a habit to hurl pieces of wood at people,” he said. Though that would be a highly preferable form of punishment compared to what he does.

She laughed.

“He didn’t do it. I had to go to a mission for him and was caught off guard,” he said, even surprised at himself for the joke he’d made.

She looked at him skeptically. “I find that hard to believe, professor.”

“I’m not perfect, Miss Granger. You must have noticed that in the memories I shared with you. I’m human. I can make mistakes and I can die.”

At his last words, she looked at the blood on the towel.

“Should you take a blood replenishing potion?” she asked, making him arch an eyebrow.

“It wasn’t that much blood.”

“But you--”

“Just disinfect it and help me bandage it.”

She grabbed the potion, opened it, and poured it on his shoulder, making him hiss. It was supposed to be poured slowly and she knew it. He looked at her and she had a small smirk on her face.

She’d done it on purpose. How Slytherin of her.

“How are you able to apparate in here? In *Hogwarts, a History*, it says it’s not possible.”

“Only the headmaster and I can apparate in these rooms. He allows me to since I spy for him.”

“Can another person apparate with you?” she asked as she picked up a bandage and unrolled it.

“No. That privilege is only for the headmaster.”

She started bandaging his shoulder with more than needed for the wound. He was about to say something about it, but her next words caught him off guard. “It’s unfair that you have to deal with all you do.”

“It’s the life I have to live after all my mistakes. It’s my personal nightmare,” he whispered with a tired voice, his muscles relaxing and pain increasing as the adrenaline disappeared from his body.

She finished bandaging him and looked up at his face. “I hope I’m not part of the nightmare.”

She was so different from anyone else he’d spoken this closely with.

“Your presence is acceptable.”

A smile crossed her lips and seemed to lighten up her entire face. He never thought such
simple words could bring so much genuine joy to someone.

He summoned his wand and walked to his wardrobe. He needed fresh clothing and it was almost time to start the day. He pulled out a shirt and put it on as fast as he could without straining his shoulder.

“Grab your things. I will accompany you to Gryffindor tower.”

She nodded and left the room to go into the living area.

He buttoned his shirt, grabbed his black coat, and dressed until he was donned in his full daily attire.

Her smile was still on her face when he spotted her, this time it was a timid one.

“You want something?”

She held up the tome in her hands. “Um…Can I borrow your book? I’d liked to finish it.”

He turned and nodded. Giving her more privileges than he had given to anyone. If it ended some of her nightmares he’d let her go through his entire personal library.

When she turned toward the door, he said, “Grab the sleep potion, Miss Granger.”

She twisted her lips with disagreement but picked it up.

Such a stubborn woman. . .

AN: Heh. Another favourite chapter here. There is weakness but there is caring too. Hope you enjoyed this “Step” Because now, they are really getting comfortable around each other and we know how difficult Snape can be. Let me know what you think and see you on Saturday!
Chapter 50: Echoes

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 50: Echoes

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December 1996

The wind blew around the area hard enough to move the trees and occasionally crack a branch, but not heavy enough to require staying indoors. The snow covered everything, even the paths frequently used by the students, and the coolness had iced over the lake where the giant squid resided. Like the mermaids, the cephalopod migrated to the bottom of the waters and slept until spring. It was a curious specimen indeed, but they weren’t here, in front of the lake, to study the magical creatures that surrounded Hogwarts.

Severus took a deep breath, relishing the cool air in his throat. His black cloak moved profusely in the wind, making him appear more dangerous than ever in front of the students looking at him with watered eyes. They were suffering in the winter weather as much as he was enjoying it.

A gust of wind passed across them. He ignored the feeling of the cold cutting his uncovered skin and didn’t refrain from making a cruel smirk when he saw some of his most annoying students, Potter included, shivering. He could even hear their teeth chattering.

How he loved winter.
“You’re probably asking yourselves why we’re having a class out here, and are probably tempted to complain about it.” He looked around them. Though there were a few looks of curiosity, the majority of students had their eyes narrowed at the winds whipping around them. “You aren’t going to get to choose your surroundings during a real fight, so you need to learn to fight in all conditions. The only way you’re going to be near a warm fire is if they’re throwing your dead body on it.”

He looked over them, and his eyes found Granger at the back of the group. She was paler than the others were, but only shivered every few seconds. The typical Gryffindor scarf covered her face, but she stood straight and didn’t look nearly as weakened as the others did.

He moved his gaze away from her and looked at all the other students.

“Duel in pairs you have not dueled in before. This will be your final term test.”

At this, his students groaned and his smirk returned. They should have expected that since they were a week away from Christmas holidays. He knew Granger was likely the only one who had expected it.

He watched the dueling pairs form, and made sure that no student kept their usual partner. They wouldn’t be fighting the same person repeatedly in battle, unless there was some sort of stalemate or rivalry, so they needed the various dueling experience.

After approving most of the pairs, he looked at who Granger was paired with. Potter. He wanted to order a change but knew it was best he not. Both for her sake and for the sake of being impartial. He couldn’t show her favoritism even though she was his favorite student. This was a bad choice, but he wondered if she chose him or he chose to duel her. She had managed to use some spells in the months, but she was far behind most in the class to the point the Longbottom was slightly more skilled than her now in dueling.

Then he noticed it. The determination in her eyes. The bravery. She knew what he was thinking and was telling him to leave her be. She was opposing him without words, and he had to admire her for that.

“The pairings are good. At least you all can do something right.”

He caught a flash of a smile on her lips.

“Begin.”

Various shouts of spells filled their surroundings. Most of his students failed because of the misspeaking of their words due to the cold, others because they failed to move their numbed limbs correctly. He could even saw them drop some of their wands on the snow due to their cold fingers. They needed to deal with this. He knew that most of these students would fight with Potter sooner or later.

If they didn’t learn to use their wand in the most extreme conditions, their world was doomed.

He hated that they would have to stain their hands with blood in this war. He despised the fact they’d have psychological scars on them for the rest of their lives even if they won.

His hand touched his shoulder. She had never asked anything in return. She never did. Not with her friends and not with him.

She did what her conscience told her. Some people would call her foolish for being good in
times like these, and he would agree with them, but he also liked her because of that characteristic. He was lucky to have finally let himself open slightly to the young witch.

A chant echoed and he looked up to the source, frowning as the familiarity of the words reached his ears. He found Longbottom being suspended in the air by his ankle near the willow tree. His partner was Weasley, who had a smirk of satisfaction upon his face. Longbottom was being abused at the same place he’d once been. Some students stopped their duels to laugh at Longbottom. To his credit, Potter did not.

He gritted his teeth. Fighting someone was one thing, but torturing the person and gloating about it was disgusting. That was not fighting.

He stalked over to the tree. “Back to dueling! All of you know better than to stop a final exam for something like this! A mark off for everyone here. Weasley, lower him.”

Weasley did as instructed, but glared at him as if he’d ruined his day. If he could, he’d ruin his entire life. He waited until the Slytherins were out of earshot before glaring at the redhead. “Detention for a week, Weasley. This is a duel not a circus performance. Longbottom, defend yourself and stop surprising me with how much of a failure you are.”

A sharp cry caused him to jerk around and search for the source. A body went flying towards the lake, smashing through the layer of ice and water. He didn’t have time to move before he saw a mass of brown curls sink into the icy depths.

It was silent at first, but then a bunch of cruel laughs followed. He glanced at Potter without moving his head. He wasn’t laughing. He and bloody Longbottom, who’d come up beside him, were the only ones not laughing. He waited for her to come back to the surface. She knew how to swim and she was resourceful enough to use her magic to get out of there.

His memory flashed to the girl with fluffy brown hair dying by his hand in the Thames. He had to force his arm to not tremble. During that time, he’d seen a flash of Granger, dying instead of that girl.

Then the laughing stopped. Granger wasn’t coming up from the cold lake.

Merlin, she wasn’t coming up.

He shot off running, fighting against the thick snow that tried to slow him down. At the same time, he removed his cloak so it wouldn’t weigh him down. He had to reach her. He couldn’t let her die. He wouldn’t.

When he got to the edge of the lake, he blasted a bigger hole in the ice, the pieces shooting up into the air and down onto the ground and the students. Then he leaped in. The cold water prinked his skin like tiny needles embedding in every pour all at once and his limbs were already going numb.

But he dove deeper. He had to find her before it was too late.

Why hadn’t he reacted sooner? He preached about not freezing in battle, but he’d done it. He shouldn’t have let her duel with Potter knowing her condition.

He wordlessly cast a spell to light the murky depths. His lungs started to protest, and he became aware of the lack of oxygen to his brain. He pointed his wand to himself and made a bubble around his head to replenish his oxygen.
There was only one other time he’d been so desperate, and that was to save Lily. He casted another illumination spell, and as if Merlin was blessing him, he saw her the moment he did so. She was floating in some underwater weeds. She wasn’t tangled but he saw a small stream of red coming from her head.

When he reached her, he cast a bubble around her, but as feared, she didn’t react. He grabbed her body with his arm, encircling her waist and pushing her closer to him. He pointed toward the lake floor and cast a spell that would help their trip to the surface go faster.

When he broke the surface, he felt the water of his skin and hair nearly ice over instantly. Pushing his body and hers to the edge of the lake, he tried to maintain the calm his students didn’t seem to have. Some were just looking, others were crying. He felt slightly warmer and looked up to see Longbottom had cast a warming spell and was helping get Granger further upon land. Where were Potter and Weasley?

“Go tell Pomfrey to prepare a bed,” he said through a gravelly voice.

Longbottom took off without hesitation. The one he thought to be a useless coward was the only one that had helped.

He pushed himself to his feet and pointed his wand to her. He obligated her body to expel the water in her lungs. After what felt like hours but were only seconds, she coughed. And it was the most beautiful noise he’d ever heard. Then her chest moved, taking in breath.

Her face was as white as the snow around her and her lips were blue. He summoned his cloak and cast a warming spell upon her and it before wrapping her in it. The entire time the students just watched.

If they were like this when an ally was hurt, then the world was doomed.

He lifted the girl into his arms.

“Is…Is she alright?”

“Detention for an entire month, Mister Potter.”

“I thought she would defend her…herself. She didn’t even lift her wand,” Potter said. He was on the verge of tears yet made no effort to help her when she hit the water. Even if he were sincere, it didn’t move him.

“And yet you still attacked her,” he snapped, “makes me wonder if it was intentional.” If it were an enemy he would understand, but he thought even the students had common sense not to attack another student when a wand wasn’t raised. Not when the duels were assignments.

“Prick,” he heard Weasley say as he set off for the castle.

AN: Another favourite chapter here ^^. Things are changing and the truth will be revealed soon. Hope you enjoyed and let me know what you think. This chapter has a draw as a
companion piece that I will post later on DeviantArt. Until 27th and Hope you have a nice Holidays and wish you a Merry Christmas.
Chapter 51: Intervention

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 51: Intervention

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

His arms were crossed, his back straight, and his eyes locked on the two women in front of him. Though he appeared to be paying close attention, his mind was still processing the worry and fear going through him. He wanted to find a place to scream and blow something up just so he could release the tension in his body. Instead, he used his years of experience spying to suppress his emotions and focused on his next course of action. He needed to get that witch to recover, no matter what he had to do to do it.

He needed to get her back to normal, but for that, he needed the truth the girl had been hiding.

She needed to confide in him with everything, every fear, every dark secret she had. If she were insecure about that still, he would give her every bit of darkness within him first. He wanted her as close to the way she was before as he could get her. Of course, she’d never fully be back there after whatever trauma she went through. Trauma during battle forever changed someone in various ways. But she could regain her skill, her intelligence, her drive, and her courage to do what was needed when the times came.

The reason was quite simple for this drastic measure. If she couldn’t survive for herself, she would be a useless ally. Or that’s what he wanted to think as he cruelly suppressed his extreme fondness for her.

He watched Granger sit up and follow Poppy’s instructions. Her reflexes and motions seemed
to be as good as ever, but she still had no spark in her eyes. They were as empty and as cold as his were.

The elder woman walked over to him, and looked at him with a soft expression. His lips tightened.

In a low voice she said, “She will recover, Severus. There is no permanent damage. Thank Merlin you got to her in time.”

“So she’s being released already?” he asked, wanting to know if she was strong enough for his intervention.

“Yes. I would like to watch her overnight for that head injury, but I figure she wouldn’t go for that.”

“A patient’s, especially not a student’s, desires never stopped you before.”

The woman gave a little chuckle. “She’s gone through enough. Since it’s not extremely serious, I won’t put more stress on her.”

“I see.”

A silence drifted between them for a few seconds before she sighed and placed a hand on his shoulder. She squeezed it.

“If it weren’t for you, she’d be dead.”

“Hm.”

“You’re a hero, you know.”

He almost rolled his eyes. “It’s my job as a teacher.”

It was her turn to give him a barely audible, “Hm”.

The woman looked back at Granger and he followed her gaze. “Will you escort her? I don’t want her to go on her own.”

His only reply was a nod and the elder woman went into her office. He looked back to Granger and saw she hadn’t moved. She was just staring down at her lap with her hands gripping the sheets.

She was almost gone. If he didn’t intervene before something else happened, she might even take her own life.

He moved to the edge of her bed. When he was next to her, she made no movement. She didn’t acknowledge his presence at all. She was becoming as hollow as he thought he was, and he refused to let her become anything like his present self.

He couldn’t let her give in to her torment and misery.

“Get up, Miss Granger. You and I need to talk, and I’d prefer to do it in a private place.” She still didn’t move. “Also I despise the smell of the infirmary, and I’m sure you do too. Let’s go, Her--Miss Granger.”

The near slip of her name on his lips made him cringe. He was thankful for the mistake since
it made her head snap up and her slightly swollen eyes look at him. He even saw fresh tears fall down her cheek. His throat constricted the way it had in the cold water.

His lips parted, with the intention to speak harshly to make her jump out of that bed, but before the words came, she moved, untangling the sheets from her body and pushing herself to the opposite side of the bed. She sat up and he walked in the direction of the door slowly enough that she could walk at his side if she wanted.

But she didn’t do it.

She stayed several paces behind him, and remained silent. He knew she’d follow him so he made his way to his office.

She reminded him of an abandoned puppy following the only human being that showed some affection for it. It was disturbing to watch this woman act this way.

He opened his office door and left it open after he entered, letting her decide her new fate.

He waited patiently, confident that she’d enter his office. He wanted to tell her to come in, but it had to be her decision. He knew he could be intimidating, even for her, and he didn’t want to intimidate her into doing what he wanted.

Breath after breath, he stayed still. He heard soft footsteps enter the office and the door click.

“I’m sorry.” Her weak whisper made him turn his head.

She was sitting on the pillowed chair he had transformed for her sessions. Why did she feel the need to apologise?

“Care to elaborate?”

“You could’ve died saving me. I failed you. I thought I could duel Harry, but I misjudged. I took too big a step and… I thought I could do it.”

“Let’s be clear, Miss Granger. I jumped in that lake after you of my own accord. I knew the risks.” He sighed. “But, I’ll concede that you have been a disaster in Defense ever since the ministry incident.” The sad eyes came back to his. “And you aren’t going to survive if you continue like this.”

“I know. Maybe it would be better if you found someone more competent. I’ve tried to overcome this but I—I just can’t do it.”

“I don’t want anyone else, Miss Granger. There is no one more capable and more trustworthy than you are. Everyone hates me, and you are one of the few people I don’t despise. If you want to back out, you can.”

“…I don’t want to, but …” She broke the contact and lowered her head. “I don’t know what to do anymore. I’m utterly useless.”

“You and I are going to deal with this right now, Miss Granger.” She looked up at him with wide eyes. “You are going to tell me what happened and I will help you in conquering your fear. I will hear your insecurities, and I will help you to deal with them. You are my ally in all senses of the word. If you want more of my secrets to feel equal, then you may have those too.”

This was it. He had done it. He had offered all his full support to this broken woman. He was silently begging her to accept. To not lose the bravery he admired in her. Running from the pain was
easier than dealing with it. He was angry with his fellow professors for not seeing she needed support, and angry with himself for not offering more of it sooner. Because of her intelligence, the others treated her as if she wasn’t normal. That she was above the worry and the pain. That she could just brush it off because she was smart. But he knew that wasn’t the case. She was human, and humans could fall.

He had needed her support more than he’d thought, and now he would give his to her. Even if this doomed his solitary life. And he wanted this young woman to survive long after he was gone.

“I-I'm not sure if I’m prepared.” Her entire body seemed as if a light tremor had taken over it. “Professor, I’m not sure if I can deal with it.”

“You have to take that first step, so stop cowering in fear and do it.” He crossed the room and stood in front of her. He smashed his hands down on the chair arms on either side of her. His body bent until his eyes were at the same level as hers. “Don’t stop moving, Granger. Now, stand up and show me how strong you are.”

He wanted to pull out her bravery with intimidation. To push her to a limit that she wasn’t willing to cross without being pressed into it. He hated having to go this route, but it was clear now he had no choice.

Her breathing became erratic for a few breaths, and she tried to push further back into the chair to gain some distance. But then, in the end, her body slouched and she looked away from him.

After seeing her reaction, he said in a soft voice, giving up the intimidation, “If you don’t let me in, I can’t help you. And I want to do that.” He sat in a chair opposite her.

“I-I don’t want you to judge me,” she said in a voice he could barely hear. “I don't want to lose your company too.”

Judge her? Hadn’t he proven that he wouldn’t do that?

“Miss Granger, I doubt you could show me anything that would cause me to run away. I’m not free of sin and I’m not hypocritical enough to judge someone on theirs.” He notice her uncertain eyes focus on him. “I’m not a fool like Potter and Weasley, or any of your other backbiting classmates, so don’t place me in the same category as them.”

She looked at him for a full minute, to the point he started to become uncomfortable. “I’m sorry, you’re right. You’re nothing like them.” She gave a sad chuckle. “I suppose I’m not behaving like a true Gryffindor am I?”

He huffed. “It doesn’t matter. It is a house that only partially fits you.”

A smile flashed on her lips, and then she took a deep breath. “Pensieve or will you use Legilimency?”

He almost smiled at her decision. Instead, he uncrossed his arms and removed his wand from his sleeve. Pomfrey assured him that she had no concerning effects after her lake experience, but he would try to be as gentle as he could.

He pointed his wand at her. She shook slightly, something she’d never done in any of the other sessions they had.

“Show me everything, Miss Granger. If you do, you won’t feel pain.” He spoke softly, trying to relax her.
She closed her eyes and nodded as her hands gripped the armchairs tightly. “Okay, do it.”

Then, he cast the spell that would reveal her anguish and the secret that had been torturing her for so long.

AN: Almost there to know Hermione's guilt?...Anyway, I admit I’m nervous about the reveal...maybe as much as Hermione heh. Hope you enjoyed it and Hoped you had a good Christmas. I wish you a Happy new year when it comes. Let me know what you think about the chapter. See you on 3rd of January!
Chapter 52: Cause of Anguish

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 52: Cause of Anguish

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

Darkness surrounded him, and the environment was silent for the first thirty seconds he was there. He heard a single ragged breath when footsteps approached his location. He guessed he was in a room in the Department of Mysteries, probably the one he’d seen when Granger let her walls drop during a previous session. A Death Eater entered the room with a light flying around him.

Thanks to that small amount of light, he’d spotted Granger before Dolohov. She was under the desk, the body of Weasley with her, unconscious with some disgusting creature attached to him. She was hiding as best she could, but it wasn’t good enough. The man found them, and he felt her fear spike the moment a sick laugh came from Dolohov’s mouth.

The Death Eater pointed his wand at her. The bile rose to his throat, burning him with no mercy. Was he the one that broke her? He didn’t want to think about the things this man used to do to muggles and muggleborns. If Granger had suffered under this man for more than a curse, he would kill him when he had the opportunity. He might even do it anyway if the chance was given to him.

He felt a rush of thoughts coming from Granger. She thought so fast that he was unable to understand them. She knew she was a spell away from death. He could feel it. The panic, the agony, the fear.
A scream echoed in the room.

He smiled at her movements and her bravery. The Hermione Granger he knew wasn’t the same as this one. This one could canalize those negative feelings into casting charms faster than a Death Eater.

Her stunning spell hit Dolohov on an arm. He rolled his eyes and fell to the floor. That spell wouldn’t last long. She should’ve gone for something stronger.

Dolohov’s curse would hit her later. He’d make her pay for her audacity.

He wished he could warn her, and have it do some good, but he knew that wasn’t going to happen.

Granger moved under the desk and dragged out the unconscious and heavy body of the Weasley boy. He heard her ragged breath with each pull until she placed the arm of the boy around her shoulders, her intention to carry his dead weight along with her was clear. It was the moral thing to do, indeed, but it was stupid.

Dolohov wouldn’t care about the Weasley boy if he were already unconscious because the Dark Lord’s orders were to get the prophecy and Potter if the occasion presented itself. But Granger had defied the Death Eater and she wouldn’t be safe until he was dead.

Granger sent a brief look to the unconscious murderer. He followed her as she went to another room.

Her effort carrying the brainless boy was remarkable, but she was losing her strength by doing it. She stopped and looked around to check for other Death Eaters. When satisfied no one was around, she carried the boy to a small closet. With some struggling movements, she managed to place the boy in the closet. “I’m sorry, Ron. You’ll be safer here.” He arched an eyebrow as she closed the door, trying not to make more noise than necessary.

She’d saved that boy and all she got in return was his distance and rudeness.

Her hand gripped her wand tightly; she took a deep breath, and moved to the next door. He followed her, dreading to see what the next part of this memory offered even though he’d likely seen worse.

She turned the handle and the light washed over her. Her hair had become a furious mess of twisted curls. Some of her clothes had been sliced and there were splatters of blood in various places. The sweat ran down her forehead. Her eyes were fixed on what was happening in front of her.

The order was fighting the Death Eaters. Longbottom and Potter were trying to fool Lucius with childish games not letting him get the prophecy as they passed the orb to each other. At least it was working. In the higher tiers, he could distinguish Black fighting Bellatrix. This must have been when he’d fallen into the veil.

Then, the orb fell onto the floor, smashing into pieces, and with it, Lucius’ place in the Dark Lord’s circle.

Dumbledore arrived shortly after and everyone stopped except Bellatrix. The woman laughed, the insane sound bouncing off the walls and making it seem like the room was filled with many of her rather than only one. She waved her wand and Black’s wand flew from his grasp.
He looked to his side. Granger lifted her arm and pointed the wand in Bellatrix’s direction. He could see fear and rage threatening to take over her, and then she cast the spell. A slight shake of her hand was enough to twist things from good to terrible.

Because of that single tremble, the spell went off course and the explosion intensified due to what it hit. It threw Black off balance and a green ray hit his chest. He froze, and then his body tipped over, falling through the veil.

Granger’s wand fell from her hand, capturing his attention as the shock overtook her features. Her eyes focused on the spot Black had occupied just seconds ago. He felt her brain screaming and a sudden need to vomit rose from his stomach.

She fell to her knees and whimpered. A feeling of guilt hit him. It was so strong that it rivaled his guilt for what he’d done to Lily.

The memory blurred slightly, letting him see the affection that Potter had for the deceased man as they embraced, as they laughed, and Hermione stood with them, smiling. Then another memory hit. This one was her walking alone in the first year. More and more memories flooded her head. The pattern repeated in a vicious circle, not letting her focus on the present. It was determined to destroy her from the inside out.

He wanted to fight Dolohov when he saw the man cast the curse. She fell.

-/-/-

The darkness twisted and he found himself at Hogwarts again, but not inside of his office and looking at her. The room was gold and red, with a fireplace and some sofas being occupied by half-asleep students.

She was with her essays, writing slowly when a shadow covered the light coming from the fireplace. Her brown quill stopped, and she looked up to find the brainless Weasley staring at her.

“Ron...I....” She avoided the Weasley boy’s eyes. “How is Harry?”

“He is coping and of course missing Sirius.”

“I don’t know what to do,” she said.

Instead of consoling her like a friend should have, he narrowed his eyes. “You should’ve stayed with me. None of this would have happened if you had.” His dry reply made her close her eyes, and he turned his back to her. “I thought you were smart, but I guess you aren’t in everything.”

Weasley walked away, and the memory faded.

AN: First of all, Happy New Year to all. Now…eh…I wonder if I should run away. I’m Nervous about what you would thing. It might look like a simple act, but, even something that
simple can change everything. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on 8th.
When his vision returned, he was in his office. He focused on Granger, her form blurry, and waited for it to clear. His frown deepened when he saw tears running from her eyes. He slipped his wand back into his sleeve. Merlin, the problem was much deeper than he’d thought. He’d had suspicions, but for some odd reason it never occurred to him even with all her questions, that she’d been the cause of someone’s death. He knew there’d be no returning to anything close to her old self. She was now almost as damaged as he was, and he hated that they were equals in that too.

“It’s my fault,” she whispered and looked down at her lap. “The perfect Gryffindor, the know-it-all, made a mistake and killed her best friend’s only family left.”

“Stop!” Her head shot up and she looked at him with wide eyes. “I know how you feel, Miss Granger, but you don’t have to let what happened control you.”

“Harry lost the only family he had because of me, and I selfishly think of myself too. I can’t cast spells because I’m afraid I’ll lose control again. I might hurt someone else. I keep running other scenarios through my head. Would Sirius have won if I’d just left things alone? Why’d I get prideful thinking I—”

“Prideful my arse,” he snapped. “You had good intentions. Though I do understand, as do you, why Potter needed time. I think he will come around soon,” he said. “And I must say that I’m impressed you managed to stun a Death Eater.”

Her brows furrowed. “Sir I—”
“Many could be to blame besides you. Yes, it was your wand, but there was more involved than that. Things that shouldn’t have happened. Potter shouldn’t have dragged unprepared teens to a fight. We can even go a step further and say Black was foolish. He broke an order to stay at home. He brought his death on himself.”

He started to pace his office, trying to relieve some pent up anger so he wouldn’t snap at the witch before him. He had a lot of work to do. She had no problem remembering the spells, so he had to get her used to dueling with someone. That setup could desensitize her. As he did that, perhaps her guilty feelings would fade slightly. She had to get better. If she ever made up with Potter, she would be in danger and have to fight to kill.

“Hear me, Granger. I have killed so I know the difference between an accident and a murder. You are just like everyone else in this world. You make mistakes. You need to learn from them and live on. Make yourself stronger.” His voice was stern but not hostile, and he knew she’d be able to tell the difference.

“Still, I killed someone. The fact it was an accident doesn’t change what I did.” Her last words broke with a sob and he shook his head with a gentle movement.

“You accidentally killed him.” He sat down next to her. “You were one circumstance in what caused his death. I know it’s impossible to completely stop, especially at this stage, but you still need to move on from it. We are at war, deaths happen. It’s cruel but true.”

“How do you deal with it?” How can you be so calm?”

“I have years of practice in controlling my emotions. Even I lose control sometimes, but I release it when I’m alone. It does no one any good if I become unhinged. When I go into battle, I put all my focus on the present.

“Every life I take hurts me, but the first is still the worst. After a while, you manage to be able to convince your mind it was for a good reason. It doesn’t bother you much less, but you live.”

Then she broke down, and he waited as she cried. This young witch needed companionship even more than he did. She didn’t deserve this. He found himself regretting that he hadn’t continued teaching Occlumency to Potter. Maybe he wouldn’t have dragged everyone to the ministry if he’d continued the lessons.

But the boy couldn’t have learned it. He didn’t have the dedication or the type of mind that could.

Something pressed against his shoulder.

A brown curly lock of hair fell over his arm. When he comprehended the situation, his muscles tensed, but he found himself unable to move away. Not until the warmth on his shoulder left.

What did she just do?

“Thank you for not turning your back on me like everyone else,” she whispered.

His confusion disappeared as soon as he heard her words.

“You will have an ear to listen here. No matter what, don’t hesitate to come to me, Granger.” The offering had been made. He hoped that his instincts were right and he wasn’t being led toward another betrayal.
The young witch nodded, her eyes were still red, but the shadow of a smile was on her lips.

“As you can with me, sir.”

“When you finish your exams, take a vacation. Take the time to calm yourself and go over your emotions, but don’t dwell. If you do decide to stay at Hogwarts, you can come to me anytime, but our sessions will stop until January. I want you to deal with your fear problem. I’ll give you defense lessons in private.

“But…”

“You need to use your magic or you will die. You are a muggleborn in a wizarding world and if the Dark Lord succeeds, you won’t have a chance.” If he were honest, she might not even have a chance after this course, and especially not if she didn’t get back to her brave, tough, Gryffindor self.

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AN: I want to hug both of them here… Well… here it is… another thing that will make them get closer. The guilt…Hope you liked it and don’t want to kill me ^^ Let me know what you think and see you on Saturday.
Chapter 54: The Dual Pleasing Invite

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 54: The Dual Pleasing Invite

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December 1996

He watched as his students added the final touches to their potions. Only simmering could be heard throughout the room. He felt their nerves spiking with the last minutes of the test.

His eyes rested on Granger. She was focusing on her stirs, her lips moving silently as they counted. Their talk had calmed her somewhat, but he knew the witch still blamed herself and the fear of failure was still active within her.

He understood that fear. He’d made mistakes, lots of them, but he wouldn’t let her fall into darkness the way he had.

The bell rang, signaling the end of the class and of the term.

“Fill the vials and place them on my desk, now.” Without hesitation or complaint, the three students filled their vials with antivenin. Each one had a specific venom and had to develop the remedy without knowing its nature. From what he could tell by color, all the students did quite well.

One by one, they left the vials on his desk before turning their backs to him to clean their
cauldrons and their workspace. The first one to finish was the Slytherin, and after grabbing his things, he turned and bowed to him.

“Have a nice holiday, sir.” He nodded in reply, not letting the severity of his face drop, and he watched the boy leave. Some of his house still respected him, but Malfoy’s actions were creating tension inside Slytherin. The boy was a true serpent, able to slip away every time he tried to talk with him.

His eyes focused back to his classroom, and he noticed Granger’s delay on gathering her things as the Ravenclaw left, not bothering with saying goodbye to him. That was what he preferred.

Placing his focus on the remaining witch, he relaxed and waited, knowing by her behaviour that she wanted to talk to him.

She turned in his direction, her bag crushing her shoulder under the massive number of books that she had. He had to hide a snort as she came closer to him.

“So, Miss Granger. I assume you are going home and want to wish me a good holiday?” A small hint of soft teasing escaped his voice. Most people would have considered it as a cruel mock, but the glint of her eyes and her smile widening confirmed that she didn’t consider it such.

“Not this year, sir. I wanted to spend it here. I heard that only a handful of students are going to stay, so it would be calm enough to put my thoughts in order and...” The witch hesitated but he waited patiently. “I could spend more time with you too. I-If you allow it, sir.”

With others, he would have reduced them to tears already, but not with her. He found her nervous babbling amusing, but her words were surprising. People tended to avoid him, not want to spend time with him.

When he nodded, her smile widened even more, to the point it looked like she was trying to overstretch her mouth.

He grinned. “But let’s calm things down during the holidays. I might kill a student when they come back if I don’t get a rest from the constant academic babbling with no sense.”

She looked offended. “I don’t say things with no sense.” She bit her lip for a second. “Not always.”

Her face turned serious and she took a deep breath.

“Something wrong, Miss Granger?”

“Um... Are you aware that Professor Slughorn is having a winter party for some students?” she asked.

“I am aware. That man has always loved to surround himself with people he thinks will be great,” he replied with a bored tone. Slughorn sought glory under the wings of others. He liked being able to say, “I taught him or her” as if their accomplishments were his more than theirs.

“Well, I’m invited to this club of his.”

“Why am I not surprised?”

She let a grin flash on her lips. “The thing is that I have to go to the party, and I thought that... maybe...”
“Spill it, Granger, I don’t have all day.”

Her cheeks flushed and her lips parted again, but no voice came from her.

Out of words? Her? That was strange.

After a moment, her eyes changed, the fierce bravery practically burning in them.

“I wanted to ask if you would like to come with me.”

His eyes widened. Had she just invited him? To a party? With Slughorn?

No one had ever asked him to a party for the sole reason of spending time with him. Merlin, he’d never thought he could experience these kinds of feelings. He had given up on friends and social interactions when he chose to give up his life to destroy Voldemort. To pay his debt to Lily.

He swallowed as the name tainted the joy and corroded it with pain. It was a nice cascade of coldness to bring him back to reality. Granger was waiting for his response.

“I was invited already,” he said.

“Oh.” She sounded a bit disappointed.

“I wasn’t going to go, but seeing that someone with brains will attend, I think I’ll attend.”

“Really?” Her tone was so happy, so hopeful. He was going for her.

He gave a single nod.

“So, I expect to see you then.”

“We will see, Miss Granger.” His voice was filled with a tone of indifference though he felt anything but that. “Now, go get to your other finals.”

“Yes, sir,” she said. She switched her bag over to her other shoulder and practically hopped out of the dungeons.

It was odd to make someone happy in such a small way.

But it was pleasant to do it.

_________________________________________________________________

AN: What had just happened here? Mmmmmm Changes… perhaps…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think! I know these chapters are short but I wanted them to make sense and not throw them when they don’t fit. See you on Wednesday!
Chapter 55: Friends?

December, 1996

This had been an idiotic idea, and the moment he walked in, he was reminded why he hated Slughorn’s parties. Loudness, gaudy decorations, too many curtained off sections of the room, and teenagers acting either like toddlers or like randy university students. Some looked at him and greeted him in a way they never would outside this party.

Hypocrisy and falseness. He despised it.

One of the more infuriating things was what he was about to do. A few hours ago, Dumbledore tasked him with telling Potter he was leaving and to wish him a good Christmas. He wondered if Dumbledore did that just to annoy him a bit. He could’ve easily done it himself.

He didn’t wish people good holidays if he didn’t sincerely wish it for them. And even then, it was rare.

Potter was standing like a statue in the crowd as some people were talking with him. As famous as he was, it was expected, but it irritated him even more that he had to wait to pass the message as if he were waiting to speak to some idol.

His eyes drifted to yet another nuisance of the evening. A seventh year Gryffindor who was behaving like a degrading piece of filth. It was clear from Granger’s expression that she was thinking
the same as he.

McLaggen’s hands couldn’t keep to themselves and would randomly touch places on her that showed a lack of respect for the witch. His teeth ground when he witnessed McLaggen’s attempt to lower his hand to an improper area. She slapped his hand away, and he laughed at the look that crossed his face. That boy acted as if he had a right to touch her there.

He’d made a move to intervene, but she’d noticed and shook her head, wordlessly saying she could handle it. It was his responsibility as a teacher to intervene, but he would wait until he finished this task.

She seemed to be handling it well, so he put his focus back onto Potter. He was now talking with Slughorn. This was his chance. He knew the professor wouldn’t mind a brief interruption.

He managed to reach the group around Slughorn and his ears caught words about Potter being a prodigy in potions. He wanted to snort at the absurdity. When he arrived at Slughorn’s side, the teacher said, “Oh, Severus, we were talking about Harry’s skill in potions. You must be proud of him since he was your student.”

His eyes turned to Potter with suspicion. When the boy avoided his gaze, he knew he was cheating somehow.

“It must be a talent that developed in a day. I recall he was a mediocre student.” Oddly enough, he didn’t say it to be cruel rather than to just state a fact. Considering how much he disliked the boy, mediocre was a compliment.

“You’re just too strict, Severus.”

From the corner of his eye, he saw Potter scurrying to hide behind one of the many golden curtains in the room.

“Excuse me, Horace. I need to attend to a matter with Potter.”

Without waiting for his reply, he left the man with a confused expression and walked straight to the curtain, opening it with a harsh movement of his arm. He was greeted by a disgusting sound as a boy spilled the contents of his stomach near his shoes.

His nostrils flared and his body remained unmoved.

“Detention for a month McLaggen.” From the corner of his eye, he saw Potter trying to get away. “Stay where you are, Potter.”

The boy flinched. “Yes?”

“The headmaster told me to tell you that he won’t be around for the holidays and to wish you a Happy Christmas.”

Surprise flashed across his face. “Where’s he going?”

Ignoring the boy’s question, he dedicated a dull look to him, and walked away.

As he walked with the intention of going back to his dark corner, he studied the area in disgust. Just when he reached his corner, a hand grabbed his arm and pulled him. His body tensed, he summoned his wand, and pointed it at the perpetrator’s neck.
“Sorry. I—it’s me, Professor.” He lowered his wand when he realized they were in another curtained space, and Granger had been the one who dared to snatch him.

“Don’t do that again. I could’ve killed you,” he said. It was hard not to yell at the witch for doing something so stupid.

She lowered her head, presumably hiding her regret. He looked down to confirm that what he perceived was real. Her hand was still gripping his arm. No one had ever dared to do what this witch did. With a soft pull, he broke the contact, letting her hand drop as he took a step back.

Granger looked at him with those eyes filled with . . . disappointment?

“You have my apologies as well,” he said.

“It was my fault, sir. I should have assumed you would react that way.”

He found himself unable to maintain the anger that he had.

“Did that disgusting creature with you finally leave?”

She wrinkled her nose. “Merlin, I hope he did. He was a bloody octopus.”

“Language, Granger,” he replied with an amusing tone.

“Sorry, sir, but you curse more than me.”

“At least I have better taste than yours when it comes to the selection of partners.”

She looked confused. “You didn’t come with anyone.”

“Exactly.” He lowered his body towards her, trying to appear menacing.

She laughed. “Well, I invited him because he was already going and he seems to be one of the few people around that doesn’t treat me like a pariah.” Her voice lowered at the last part of her sentence. "Though I wish he did."

"Yes, I understand why."

She raised her head slightly. "My taste is quite different, I assure you."

“Red-haired brainless boys?” He mocked with a clear distaste. Why was he even having a conversation like this with her?

“No.” Her tone was clear. “Not ever. He is—was like a brother to me. It would be strange if I were interested in him that way.”

He hadn’t expected nor needed her to explain that much. Before he could respond, he felt a shiver on his back as an uneasy feeling grew.

It happened whenever she went further than what they had established in their alliance. He had noticed the pattern as his mind recalled the other times he felt the slight and sudden spark in his feelings.

They were looking at each other in silence as the murmur around them raised. The curtains provided them more privacy than he thought because people preferred to spend their time surrounded by others.
The young witch took a step forward, removing some of the distance they had between them. He straightened his body, regaining some terrain with his height.

“What are we?” she whispered, almost with an imperceptible voice that made him think he didn’t hear her clearly.

His breath stopped and a sense of panic grew in him. The need to leave that instant was as strong as his love for potions. What was she implying? If she was implying something at all. It was an absurd question. She was his student and his ally.

“Nothing.” His voice responded harsher than the normal tone he used with her.

Her head dropped for a moment and he felt he had just crushed her. Hurt her like the others had.

“I thought that we were friends,” she replied, looking back at him with a renewed glittering inside her brown eyes, making them softer when one looked at them.

Were they? Perhaps they were.

He had to admit, his life had become more interesting with her in it. He'd shared things with her that he hadn't with anyone else. She'd seen sides of him he often kept hidden, and made him discover sides that even he didn’t know he had.

Their talks and their time spent together had been a necessity at first, but he didn't have to talk to her about her cat or about her type of men. He didn't have to allow her around when they weren't working together. Friends did those things.

A sigh escape from his lips and he almost smirked. Friends with this know-it-all. Who would've thought? “I suppose we are.” He finally admitted and hoped that she didn’t develop the habit of hugging him like she did with her former friends. That would be not only improper but also unnecessary and unpleasant.

She smiled. “I’m glad, friend.”

He rolled his eyes and she giggled.

A crash sounded and their heads darted towards the source of the noise. Without a word, Severus pushed the curtain away and saw the cause.

Malfoy…

This was his opportunity to talk to the boy. Filch was shaking him, telling the attendants that the boy was sneaking around.

With long steps, he walked towards them, pushing the students to the side until he reached his target.

“I will take care of him, Filch.”

Filch turned to him. “Of course, Professor.” The man shoved the boy towards him. He put his hands on Malfoy’s shoulder. The boy glared.

Without looking at the curtain Granger was behind, he guided the boy in silence, feeling all eyes on them until they left the classroom. His steps didn’t slow until he reached a dark, solitary
corridor.

He let his control fall and pushed the boy against the stone wall.

“What in the world do you think you are doing?” He had no time for being subtle or passive with him. That method failed already. “You careless boy.”

“I’m doing what I was chosen for,” Malfoy answered as his face showed pure hate.

“You don’t know what you are doing. Trying to kill the headmaster with a cursed necklace. That’s idiotic.”

“I was chosen! Not you! It’s my time to earn his favour. I won’t let you steal my time of glory like you did usurping my father’s place!”

He wanted to slap the boy. Power. Power. Power. He was so sick of that word. The Dark Lord was using the boy like he did all of them. It was clear to everyone that Lucius’ punishment occurred because of his own mistakes.

“Are you insane, Draco?” He was paler than normal. Skinnier. He looked as if he hadn’t slept in days. The stress was eating him. “You need help. Both of us know you can’t do it. You are not a murderer. I made the vow to your mother. You’re going to get both of us killed.”

Draco gave him a smug smile. “I don’t care. It’s your problem not mine, and I don’t need your help.” The boy moved his shoulder, freeing himself from his hand, and walked away from him.

His eyes followed the dark figure. The essence of his godson. Whatever good he had inside of him was dying as his plot moved forward. Dumbledore was right. He would have to do the killing to keep the boy from darkening his soul.

He tried to negotiate, but the boy was totally out of his reach and no one could be saved if they didn’t want to be.

He knew that all too well.

AN: Friends…Who could have guessed it? *giggles* I admit this is another chapter I adored writing and that marks another important step. It was fun to mix the contents of the books, of the movies and my own imagination. Let me know what you think and hope you enjoyed. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 56: Start of Holidays

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 56: Start of Holidays

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

December, 1996

Only five students stayed behind during the season, and he knew all but one would avoid him. The only contact would be during meal times, and that would consist of sitting in the great hall. The environment became calm, relaxing, silent, cool, and he loved it with all that was left of his heart.

Although the tranquility seemed to reach him, he couldn’t rest most of the time. He still had to make some potions for Dumbledore and had more experiments to do until he decided that it was impossible to beat that curse. It was a stupid thought indeed considering his expertise in the Dark Arts. That curse was designed for the perfect kill.

He knew it, the rational part of him was sure of it, but he refused to wait until the time to kill the headmaster arrived.

And when his brewing was done, he could start his other plans. Preparing Granger was going to be difficult when she still feared her magic, but he was sure the witch could overcome the obstacle. She was stronger than she thought. He had seen it with all she had to endure.

He walked to the Great Hall and the doors opened for him. The teachers looked up, a few with smiles on their faces as a greeting. His eyes moved around the lone table in the middle of the Hall.
The only free chair was next to Granger and McGonagall. He would be lying if he said he wasn’t
glad to see her. Glad she stayed.

This Christmas was going to be different.

He walked over to the table and sat next to her. No words of recognition came from him. After
all, their alliance and friendship needed to stay a secret. If the older wizard found out, he would act
and stop any involvement. He didn’t want anything to possibly get in the way of his plans.
Dumbledore’s plans were inalterable, but he wanted his own. If the old man didn’t fully trust him,
then he would not fully trust the old man.

“Severus, I hope you find the arrangements of our new eating space comfortable?”

He found Granger’s company quite acceptable, but it was something that only the two of them
knew.

“If Miss Granger only uses her mouth to eat and refrains from asking me so many questions,”
he replied with a dry voice as he started to serve himself some of the food in front of him.

“You know you like the girl, Severus,” McGonagall said and turned to Hermione. “Ignore him
and enjoy, dear. You can ask whatever you wish. I recall this is the first year you’ve stayed.”

“Yes, professor. I wanted to have some peace here and try to fix some issues now if I can,”
Granger explained.

He took a piece of roasted beef from a tray, grabbed his knife and fork, and started to eat.

“I see. Severus informed us a tad about them, but wasn’t completely forthcoming. We know
you’re capable of overcoming whatever you set your mind to,” the old witch said with a proud voice.

“I beg to differ,” he said after he swallowed. He looked up at them. “And that’s why I’m
going to give her more classes.”

The polite chatter amongst the other teachers stopped and they all looked at him as if he’d lost
his head. A smug smile came to his lips.

“We talked about this, Severus,” Dumbledore said, the warning in his voice clear.

“I can’t let another incident like Potter’s happen in my class. I’m the defense teacher, so I will
act as I should.” His tone of voice left no room for argument.

“Are you fine with this, dear?” McGonagall asked.

“I am. Actually, Professor Snape talked to me after the incident, and I know he can help me.”

Can. Not Think. Can. Her voice held no doubt. She even appeared proud that he was helping
her.

“You have other tasks to attend to, Severus,” Dumbledore said.

“I’m aware,” he replied dryly, not caring about the headmaster’s thoughts on the matter. She
needed help. These sessions would be easier if the other teachers were informed too. “We agreed to
start after the holidays, so don’t worry yourself if she comes back with scratches or if a classroom is
used after hours.”

The angry look in the headmaster’s blue eyes was satisfying.
“Don’t be harsh on her, Severus. For Merlin’s sake, she is still a child. A girl,” Minerva said.

“I’m not a child or a girl,” Hermione said.

“Dear, you are—“

“She is a young woman, not a childish girl,” Severus said, cutting her off. “If she can participate in the upcoming events, I think she warrants being called a woman even more. She’s needed for the future, and don’t you dare deny that. She and her foolish friends are incorrigible.”

Minerva pursed her lips but finally let a sigh escape. He savored the victory.

“Still, my dear, if he is too rude you can come to me, and I will smack him back to his senses.”

“I’d like to see you try it,” Severus replied, earning a laugh from McGonagall.

Hermione giggled. “Thank you for your concern, professor.”

He resumed eating his meal, ignoring the occasional bewildered look from the staff that remained.

AN: Defiance is always fun. And recognition too heh. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. I will see you on 27th!
Chapter 57: Guard Up

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 57: Guard Up

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December, 1996

He was at the point of wanting to throw his cauldron against the wall. All ingredients were useless against that damn curse. He had isolated every trace he could, but nothing could be done. He had known it, but hadn’t wanted to admit it. Dumbledore would die no matter how many potions he imbibed. Its nature was like the killing curse. It had only slowed because Dumbledore managed to break the ring that held it.

He’d failed. Not even his knowledge was enough. That imitation of a dark serpent moving around his cauldron was the proof.

He exhaled and covered his face with one hand. It was impossible to save him.

A small noise outside his lab made his head snap up. Someone was in his quarters.

The only one who dared to enter without being announced was the headmaster, and he didn’t want to see or talk to him now. Even though he was just a pawn to the old man, he didn’t want the man to die and leave him alone in this plan.

But he wasn’t alone. He had Granger now. He shouldn’t forget that she was in his plans too. This was going to be hard on her as well.
He summoned his wand and moved to the door. With Draco’s planning, he had to be even more careful about people entering his quarters unannounced.

He opened the door. Without a sound, he peeked around the corner and sighed in relief when he saw the back that was looking at his bookshelves. It amazed him she hadn’t come back earlier.

With a smirk, he moved, his footsteps like a shadow caressing his stone floor. When he was closer to her figure, he stopped. That girl needed to sharpen her senses.

“Miss Granger.”

She jumped and turned around, her fluffy hair hitting his chest.

“P-Professor! Don’t do that! You almost gave me a heart attack!”

“I told you that you should not try to sneak up on me.” His tone was amused this time rather than stern.

“I didn’t know where you were, and didn’t want to intrude in places I shouldn’t.”

“Invading my living quarters is already intruding.”

“Oh, come on, Professor, I’ve been here before. I’m a responsible witch. I’m not going to break your things or—”

“You already took the liberty to grab a book,” he said, interrupting her babbling.

She muttered and after a few seconds, she shook her head. “Never mind. I was looking for you.”

“What can I do for you, Miss Granger?”

He didn’t have time to register that she’d grabbed his wrist, until she was pulling him towards his office door. It was unnaturally easy to let her guide him since she caught him off guard.

“Miss Granger.” His tone became threatening as he regained his body movements, stopping, and not letting her move him anymore.

No one had dared to do something like this before.

Her smile beamed at his reluctance. “Come on,” she said.

“Just where am I supposed to be going?”

“I’m just being a good friend and trying to get you some fresh air,” she explained with no shame as she dared to pull him again. “It’s snowy, calm, and cold. It’s perfect for you!”

He allowed her to move his body again. Her skin felt soft and warm against his despite the coldness as they crossed the corridors.

The cold wind hit his face as they entered the courtyard. He was thankful that the castle was almost empty now. This would have spread foolish gossip around for sure.

The girl shivered when she let go of his hand and adjusted the Gryffindor scarf draped around her neck.
“Want to go for a walk?”

“I’m already here. It would be a waste not to enjoy it.”

She put on her gloves, and he put his hands inside his robe pockets. He made the first step, the snow softly crunching under his foot.

She followed him without difficulty as he was offering a slower pace, so she could walk at his side. She accepted it in an instant. Her footsteps matched his and they drew a trail in the snow together.

He enjoyed this moment, but he was also somewhat angry with himself. He had just dropped control of the whole situation, of his mask, for a brief moment. That failure wasn’t acceptable because it could cost him his life.

But maybe, when they were alone, he could let himself indulge. She wasn’t going to judge him for what he was. She wasn’t going to try to kill him or betray him. She already knew the atrocities he committed, the mistakes he made, and the work he had to do.

“What are you thinking?”

“Things you should not concern yourself with.” His response was neutral, but her question didn’t feel intrusive. “And you, Miss Granger?”

“Well, I’ve been reading, trying to learn how magic abilities get compromised with feelings and how to fix it.” The witch took a deep breath and looked away. “It seems I need to become stronger.”

She didn’t trust herself much. That was why she sought to fit among others. It wasn’t a crime to be intelligent, but people were cruel with those who were different from them. Those experiences could easily develop those kinds of negative emotions.

“You’re strong and you will overcome this, but sometimes, there are moments in which one needs help. Don’t be ashamed for it or think less of yourself because of it.”

Her steps halted. He stopped and looked at her. She was staring at the willow tree he despised. “I don’t understand how you’re not affected with all the things that people say. It looks to be impossible for me to brush it off. No matter how much I try there is always one person who looks bad at me or mutters hateful words.”

Her pain matched the one in his heart. She was as lost as he had been. No, she lost more. She had lost her friends. He never had any. She had to endure the humiliation as much as him. The sickening jokes and the mockery filled with envy and cruelty. She shouldn’t have to.

And now she sought guidance in him. How amusing since he had once disliked the girl. Now, he respected her. He was now her friend, as she loved to point out.

“I learnt to not care about what they say. There are still things that can affect me easily. Potter is one of them.” He took a deep breath, touched her shoulder, and looked her directly in the eyes. “There will always be people who won’t like you, or what you do. You’re the one who has to decide whether to let them affect you.”

She took a small, trembling breath. He wondered if she hadn’t thought about it as something that simple. But he hadn’t either until he had lost everything.
“It’s easier to say than to do.”

“Then think about this, Granger. What are those pointless words going to do to you? After all, they are just words coming from a stranger. Usually it stems from someone that envies you. Why should that have an impact on your life? They don’t deserve your time or worry.”

“I thought that maybe there was something wrong with me since I always prefer to study or read instead of going to things like parties or Quidditch matches.”

He huffed. “Don’t’ be ridiculous. You just have other interests. I would prefer to do the same. If they don’t respect that, it’s their problem. Not being a sheep has consequences good and bad.”

“What if your friends judge you too? Her eyes came back to him and a small guilty feeling came to his chest. He was guilty of treating her poorly and would have to continue in front of others.

But the genuine malice had been gone for months. “If they are a true friend they will accept you as you are and forgive your actions as much as you forgive theirs.”

“You are a true one then.”

“I try to be,” he replied. “I expect you to be the same.”

“I already forgave your supposed bad treatment, if that’s what you are implying.”

He nodded and removed his hand from her shoulder. He turned his back to her, his cloak rustling with the strong winds. “I am still not a nice person, but with you, I find myself, let’s say, more sociable.”

He heard a small chuckle. He was pleased to see her mood slightly improved. “I like you for who you are, friend. I have seen you, remember? You showed me.”

He started to walk again, guiding their steps away from the lake.

One day they both would be strong enough. He had distracted the witch today, but he knew it was too soon to rest just yet. She needed her confidence in her magic back.

“You know, I like spending time with you. I feel better. I feel like I belong somewhere… if that makes sense.”

His feet stopped.

She was a muggleborn that had always been ostracized. He was a half-blood that suffered the same. He understood her desire to belong perfectly.

“Just be what you are, Granger. Don’t be like me and make foolish mistakes just to seek a place. You already have one,” he replied without as much as a glance toward her as he looked out into the distance. He didn’t want her to change because people wanted her to. He valued her for who she was.

It was nice to have someone around.

It was nice that it was her.

A hard sound came from his back, his eyes widened as he saw dozens of white remains flying around him.
Did she just attempt to…

When he turned to look at her, Granger’s face held surprise upon it. He smirked proudly as a warm feeling invaded his chest. She hadn’t expected his magic shield at all.

“I’ve had my fair share of snowballs hurled at me, Miss Granger. Do you think I’m foolish enough to not have my guard up?”

Her body slouched. She frowned and walked past him, toward the castle. Likely assuming he was annoyed.

He called his magic, creating the object he desired as he summoned the ingredients. When it was ready, he aimed and with enough strength to reach her, he threw it.

The snowball hit her shoulder, and she gasped and darted around. He was a bit shocked at himself, but didn’t show it.

But he was having fun.

He grinned. “Guard up, Miss Granger.”

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AN: I find this chapter cute...*giggles* They are warming more and more... I had to post earlier this week due an event I had to work on. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on next Saturday.
December, 1996

Green sheets and a thick comforter pressing against his body kept him warm against the cold environment of his dungeons. It was a pleasant cold December morning. It was unfortunate that Christmas had to go and mess it up.

He’d never liked Christmas. Never had a reason to. As a kid he wanted to celebrate, but was never able. He’d never had a Christmas tree because it was always too much effort to put up, or a waste of time, a waste of electricity or whichever excuse his father made. If his mother made an effort, it would result in drunken abuse from his father. Presents never existed until he became a teacher at Hogwarts. The only ones who dared to give him something were Minerva and Dumbledore.

The desire to stay in bed was appealing. In the end, he decided to give in to temptation and snuggled further into the covers. He closed his eyes and was about to nod off again when a purring came to his ears. His eyes shot open.

Granger’s cat was there, with its ginger fur and his flat face staring at him with his orange eyes. How in the world did that fluff ball get into his living quarters? Examining him more as they dueled with their eyes, he noticed that the animal was waving with his tail, comfortable and happy in his presence. But why was the animal there. What did it want?
It came closer to him, squeezed under a small gap in the blankets, and proceeded to nuzzle his neck. He caressed the furred head. A smile spreading on his face as the animal meowed in acceptance.

“What are you doing here, furball?” he said with a rough voice, a consequence of just waking up. “Shouldn’t you be with her? It’s Christmas and she’s alone in that tower.”

The cat used his whole body to caress him until he turned, hitting him in the face with his tail. The animal left the blanket’s warmth and trotted toward the foot of the bed. He looked in the direction. There were gifts there like every Christmas, but instead of two, there were three.

Did she . . . ?

Elves would place the presents there, so she probably sent the cat to make sure he opened it. A strange feeling of excitement hit him. He sat up and moved closer to the gifts. The cat patted the silver package with his paw. The other packages were green like always. He knew the long box contained Scottish Whiskey that Minerva sent. He only used it when she visited and wanted a drink. He waved his hand and sent it to the kitchens.

He moved his hand to grab the other green one and the cat hissed.

“I’ll get to it. Be patient.”

The cat sat down roughly and he almost laughed. The animal was so much like her that he couldn’t help but be fond of it.

He opened the package, and as expected, there were the Slytherin socks that Dumbledore always gave him. He waved and the socks went over to his trunk.

A sudden rush of nerves touched his body. He couldn’t believe he was having that kind of sentiment over a gift.

The cat moved the silver package towards him with his paw.

After a deep breath, he picked up the package. It was soft. He unwrapped the paper and saw black material and a card. He picked up the card first.

“To my friend, from your friend,” he read aloud and the purring started again.

He didn’t deserve such good treatment.

He sat the card to the side with intentions to keep it on a section of his desk, where he saved important things, and picked up the black cloth.

It was a scarf. As he studied it, he noticed there were some irregular knots, but it was beautiful in its imperfections and simplicity. He caressed the material until he got to the end. There was a small silver serpent embroidered there. She’d taken the time to make this. For him.

“I will have to give her my thanks,” he replied and folded it. He would wear this frequently.

The cat meowed and jumped off the bed. He started to get up, but paused when a particular fragrance reached his nostrils. He put the scarf closer to his nose and smelled, trying to decipher what it was. It was fruity and floral but with some other sharp, sweet touches.

Surprisingly, he couldn’t place the scent.
He was planning on keeping to himself today, but now he felt the need to both send her a gift and make an appearance at the Christmas dinner. She’d managed to turn a day with bad memories into something a bit more pleasant. He had a friend now. He wasn’t alone.

-/-/-

A soft knock interrupted his placid evening. When he gave permission to enter, the handle slowly moved. He smiled and set the book he was reading on the table beside his chair as a mass of brown hair peeked from the barely opened door.

It was almost time for the Christmas dinner celebration, but she could’ve waited in the Great Hall. He was glad she didn’t.

“Am I interrupting?”

“Come in, Granger,” he said, hiding a chuckle in his voice.

The door opened further and he stood. He grabbed his robe and slipped it over his clothing.

She entered the room and he let surprise cross his expression as he spotted an item hanging over her shoulder. Her face was beaming and she walked toward him as if she were the proudest person in the world. He didn’t know if she’d like the gift, but it was clear she did.

“Why are you wearing that? You won’t need your books at the dining table tonight.”

She stroked the small brown and red beaded handbag. “I just wanted to wear it to show my appreciation to you. Thank you for it. The charm will be so helpful, but I’m not familiar with the power of it.”

“The extension charm is undetectable. You’ll be able to fit anything in there that will go through the opening. There’s a weightless charm as well, so you won’t have to strain yourself when carrying so many books.”

“I’ll still use my old bag for school right now. I’ll use this for special instances. It’s precious.”

He hadn’t expected her to feel that strongly over the gift. He grabbed the scarf she made and put it around his neck. When he looked at her, her already present smile had brightened even more.

He gave her a slight nod. “I’m happy you like it. This is a special gift as well. I like it very much.” He felt like a young boy learning how to express gratitude.

“Shall we, Miss Granger?” he asked. In a rare show of friendliness and courage, he offered his arm to her.

She accepted the offered arm without the slightest hint of hesitation.

He never would have expected this kind of sociality with Granger. Neither of them were masters of extroversion.

Looking down at the young witch he was guiding along the dungeon’s corridors, he could say he was grateful. Even though she got on his nerves sometimes with her nonstop questions, he truly liked the witch.
If this were another time, if they had been kids in a time of peace, things would have been different. They could have been best friends despite the house rivalry. He knew that she would have acted differently from Lily because she knew the feelings of being an outcast.

“I wanted to ask you something, but I don’t know if you will answer me.”

“You’ll never know if you don’t ask,” he replied.

“I wanted to ask about Malfoy. There is something going on with him, right?”

The amusement left his features and he pursed his lips. Sooner or later, she would connect the dots. But for now, he didn’t want to put her in a riskier position. She was the plan B if he died.

“Don’t make assumptions before knowing everything, Miss Granger. All I can say right now is that it’s related with what we do.”

“I overheard Harry and Ron talking about him being on their side, and I was thinking that maybe they’re right.” His face twisted with disgust. She would know eventually, but she needed to learn to be patient. “That will put you in more danger, won’t it?”

“No more than I already am.” He sighed and with a soft, almost pleading tone, said, “Don’t seek answers until I tell them to you. I don’t want you to be a target unless necessary. You’re a beacon for trouble, so enjoy your relative safety for now.” She looked at him with incredulity and he gave her a smirk. “It won’t help. Be patient.”

“Okay, sir, but please tell me if you need my help. I’m here for that too.” Her words carried the sincerity of her heart.

“You will know everything when the time comes. I won’t keep important information from you.” He resumed their walking, forcing her gently to continue with him since their arms were linked. “Now, let’s hurry before the headmaster makes us wear party hats as punishment.”

“I think they would suit you, sir.”

After a few more minutes of walking, they saw the light and heard some kind of horrendous magic singing coming from the end of the corridor. Severus removed his arm from hers since they were keeping their friendship status a secret.

She didn’t resist his action. He walked ahead of her, and she followed him toward the lights of the Great Hall. His steps halted before they entered, and he turned to look at her. His face wore his always-present mask of indifference.

“Happy Christmas, Miss Granger.”

She gasped. The look of shock, then happiness, on her face was worth summoning the courage to say the words. Then, she lowered her head. The rarely felt emotion of being happy overcame him with her next words.

“Happy Christmas to you too, Professor,” she said softly.

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AN: Oh yes…they did…exchange presents or better said… they thought on each other…and I twisted small things again. Hope you enjoyed this small moment and let me know what you
think. See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 59: First Name Dueling

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 59: First Name Dueling

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January, 1997

He moved his wand between his fingers, back and forth. Waiting. He was waiting for her to come and start their new task. Doubts flourished in his mind as to whether or not his method would help her, but he had no choice but to try. She knew how he was, how curt and cruel he could be. How tough.

Perhaps she realized he was one of her last chances. That weight was heavy, but all he could do was try his best. He needed her to get her magic back. He wanted her to get it back for her own sake even more than for the goals he’d set. He wanted to know that she’d have some chance of surviving when everything fell down around them.

She’d soon learn what he knew of Dumbledore’s plans. Know the twisted secret Dumbledore had regarding Potter. She was too good not to go fight with them even after the way they treated her, so he wanted her at the best she could be.

His wards trembled and his office door opened. The slow way it inched open was an indication that it was Granger even if he hadn’t been expecting her.

She entered, her lips barely formed into a smile. When she closed the door behind her and
turned back around, that smile was gone.

He rose from his seat, and he saw the familiar fear he saw in some of this other students. She didn’t try to hide her emotions from him.

She was better in Occlumency, almost ready to maintain secrets up to a certain point of torture and Legilimency. She’d never get to the point of holding out for too long. A brief mistake, a tired mind, could betray anyone, and they had no time to strengthen her much more in that.

“I will ask this once, Miss Granger. Are you ready to fight your fears?”

She trembled under his words, but remained standing there. He was a dark wizard and challenging her. She was aware of his power and skill. She knew the dark things he’d done both in the name of Voldemort and out of necessity to keep his spying a secret.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

“Yes,” she said. No stammering. She didn’t know how brave she was. She was conscious of the darkness that crawled and stretched around human hearts. Had learned the Dark Lord wasn’t the only cruel monster around.

He pointed his wand at her. He saw her shiver. He didn’t falter.

“Fight me.”

Her hands closed into fists. She bowed her head, and her body trembled.

“Miss Granger, fight me.”

She looked up at him. Tears in her eyes. “I don’t want to hurt anyone, and especially not you.”

He almost lowered his wand at that, but remained firm. Fear was rooted deep in her soul and mind.

“You’re a kitten compared to me,” he said, making his voice cold. “I am aware of this battle. You are a witch, Granger. Be brave and duel me or I will make you regret it.” His eyes narrowed. “I can hurt you.”

It would be difficult for him to do it, but if necessary, he would. He’d exhausted other means of helping her, now cruelty was the only way. He’d have to make her realize there was nothing wrong in defending herself, and with him throwing spells at her, she’d become a better duelist.

She did nothing.

Move damn you. Move. Wake up.

“She’s a witch, I believe in you.” This was his last gentle option.

She lifted her lowered head and gasped.

He waited, his wand still pointing at her. He fully intended to carry out his threat.

Then her wand was in her hand, and her posture straightened. A part of the proud, strong, Hermione Granger had surfaced.

She took dueling stance.
He cast a sting spell nonverbally.

She saw it.

“Prot—” It slammed into her arm and she yelped, her hand flying to the area he hit.

He took a breath but kept his cold expression despite his excitement. She’d tried to protect herself. Her mind was slowly accepting her ability to fight again.

“Stop pitying yourself,” he said. “Try again.”

He cast another spell.

It hit her, and she hissed. She bit her lip, drawing blood.

“Magic is part of you. You can control it!”

“I can’t!” You saw what happened!

He cast another spell, bringing her to her knees. He took a single step toward her. “Stand up.”

She looked up at him. “You’ve seen the things I’ve done, yet I still use magic. We are humans who make mistakes, Granger. Stand up and defend yourself! Show them how strong you are! Stop being unintelligent and stop letting those fools take who you really are away from you!”

Her eyes narrowed at him, and she got to her feet.

Good. He hoped she’d forgive him for his words later. He wanted to think their friendship was strong enough.

He sent another spell before she raised her wand. It shot toward her the light flashing in the dim room.

Her arm darted up. “Protego!” The spell rebounded on the shield. When it shot toward him, he dispelled it.

He grinned and put his wand away. She did it! It was small, but it was meaningful.

Her breath was ragged, her chest heaving with every inhale and exhale. Her hands still gripped her wand as if it was her most prized possession. Which it was.

When she closed her eyes, he took some soft steps towards her. This was the first step on her path to healing.

He placed his hand on her shoulder. She opened her eyes. No anger. She’d realized his reasons for saying what he did.

“You can do it . . . Hermione.”

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AN: Drastic measures… and more familiarity with this new month. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 60: Polyjuice

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 60: Polyjuice

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January, 1997

He hadn’t intended to call her by her name, but the shock had been effective enough to get her attention. But there was no excuse for the second time. It somehow escaped his mouth before his brain could process the words he was speaking. He couldn’t find it in him to regret it when she didn’t stop smiling at him after recovering from their duel. She was even smiling when she left. Proof yet again that she was nothing like the one other person he’d thought was a true friend. Lily wouldn’t have forgiven him. Merlin, she probably wouldn’t have seen what he was trying to do.

He hadn’t seen her at all the rest of the week other than in class. She was a student with a full workload, probably more than what the teachers assigned, and enjoyed it. He’d been the same way as a student.

But an odd uneasy feeling always came when he went certain lengths of time without speaking to her. He’d seen her in the Great Hall, not a trace of hostility on her face. Just a smile. She looked tired but nowhere near the levels she had before she finally used her magic in a duel. She looked at him fondly and treated him just as good, if not better than she did the other professors. She knew she got odd looks and whispered about for doing so. Called names for it. But she did it without shame.

That’s why he’d give her another piece of his memories today and would continue the occlumency lessons. She was almost ready. He didn’t want to rush it too much, but soon he would probably be dead. With every meeting, he knew the chance of the Dark Lord killing him grew. When he served his purpose to him. He would die. That was a given
He closed his eyes to let them rest. His nights had been sleepless, a common occurrence with a mind full of plans and worries and made worse by the fact he had to kill Dumbledore soon. He played possible scenarios in his mind every night.

He was thankful his back was to the door as he heard the rustle of robes coming into the classroom. It wouldn’t due for them to see him in a somewhat weakened form. He turned and saw his three students walking to their respective seats and workstations.

He glared at the Slytherin when the boy practically threw his book on the table.

Time to focus on his work.

He waved his hand and the recipe started to appear on the blackboard. He crossed his arms. “Polyjuice potion. Extremely useful and extremely dangerous if not brewed correctly. Brew with the upmost caution.”

The Slytherin student raised his hand. He gave permission to speak with a nod of his head.

“Sir, isn’t this a seventh year level potion? I heard they don’t even brew it anymore either.”

“This is a high level class. All of you are capable of brewing this without mistakes.”

He glanced at Granger. She tilted her head. She knew he was daring her and she was right. He was interested in seeing what she could do with a proper workplace rather than a filthy bathroom. She’d brewed it in her second year, but now he looked forward to the results since she was wiser now.

“You will have to inspect all the ingredients for the proper ones. I did not label them. It is important that you know how to identify them properly. There won’t always be someone holding your hand when you brew.”

He waved his wand and multiple ingredients appeared before them. He deliberately put incorrect items among the correct ones.

“You may begin,” he said.

The students went up to the ingredients. With only slight hesitation, Granger gathered what she needed.

He watched the students go about brewing the potions.

Through the entire class, his eyes kept going back to her. She did everything with the utmost care. She checked each ingredient twice before adding it to the cauldron. It took a great deal of restraint to keep from laughing at the way her face crinkled at the scents.

Minutes formed into an hour, and her focus never wavered until class ended.

“Put a stasis charm on the potion. You’ll continue with it next week,” he said. The students did as told and went about their usual motions before leaving.

As always, she took her time so she could be the last to leave. She walked closer to the door, but then stopped and turned to look at him. “You know, if I weren’t scared, I would’ve hexed you back for this and for the other day.”

“Then I expect you to overcome those desires too, Miss Granger,” he said, letting his mask
drop so she could see his amusement.

“You calling me by my first name somewhat made up for it.” She shrugged. “See you soon, Severus,” she said, his name coming out in a whisper.

She turned and practically bounced out of the room.

“Impertinent witch,” he muttered with affection before starting on the rest of his work.

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AN: Crumbling over insecurities….? Granger a little pissed? Mmm…Let me know what you think and hope you enjoyed it. See you on Wednesday.
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 61: Beautiful Souls Aren’t Lies

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January, 1997

His younger self’s words were filled with misery, need, and regret. He could hear the plea in each syllable and knew it would have no effect. Looking back, he even knew at the time that they would do no good.

Lily’s reply spat out of her mouth and his stomach twisted. He watched his past self’s expression as his heart shattered into pieces. Then an unexpected feeling hit him. Anger. He felt more anger than sadness towards the red head that abandoned his friendship.

Lily disappeared behind the Fat Lady’s portrait and with the action, the memory faded. Darkness surrounded him again and he was cast back into the present. Back into reality.

He blinked, and his eyes slowly adjusted to the candlelight in his office. Granger was looking down at her lap, her face hidden by her brown curls. The ticking of a clock and their heavy breathing were the only noises in the room. He decided to let her speak first.

She lifted her head and looked at him. Her eyes were full of fire, her brows furrowed, and her breathing was rough. He’d never seen her so angry.

He’d shown her memories of him talking and plotting with Voldemort. She’d seen him murder people and let others die. Showed her his helplessness in those situations. So, why was this memory constantly coming back to her? Why was she enraged at it? She was getting better at Occlumency, but hadn’t been able to stop that memory since last month. And this memory had no relevance when
it came to what they needed to do.

“T’m sorry. I’m sorry I can’t forget that!” She shot from her chair and paced the office.

“Why do…” he trailed off when she turned to him and focused on his face. She was close enough to touch him, but far enough that if someone were to walk in, though an unlikely thing to happen, it wouldn’t look improper.

“She…She… I’m sorry, but I don’t know how you could just fall for that witch. And still like her after the way she acted.” She spat the words as if they were a bitter potion. He should’ve been angry with her, but instead he felt blank. He hadn’t been innocent, but the more he heard Granger give her view on the situation, the more he realized he hadn’t been the only one in the wrong.

“I don’t see why you care about what she did so much.”

His eyes widened when she looked away, her lower lip quivering. She folded her arms and walked back to her pillowed chair, her back turned to him as he waited for a response. She used to just spout out things before she thought better of it, now he knew she was thinking over her words.

“You’re my friend.” Her voice was soft and foretold that she was on the edge of tears.

“Granger it’s—”

“I hate her.”

He gave a rough laugh. “You don’t have the capability to hate.”

“I want you to be happy. I hate that you cling to the memory of her. If she were a true friend, she would’ve at least listened! She never deserved you.”

Deserve? Well, she was right. She didn’t deserve a man like him. But an itching in his soul knew that Hermione didn’t mean it in the same way he thought it.

“If you recall I was the one who insulted her,” he said. It felt enlightening to talk to someone in depth about the situation. She was the only one that knew what truly happened during this time.

“She lacked any sense.”

“Or she had a lot of it.”

“You were hanging in the air, you were under a lot of stress, and you were embarrassed. Unless she’s never said anything out of anger, then she has no right to stay angry with you for so long. If I was in your position, I probably would’ve said regretful things too.”

“You weren’t a dark wizard who was going to the Dark Lord,” he tried to refute.

“You weren’t either at that time. You liked the Dark Arts, but you weren’t going there yet, were you?”

That’s right. He wasn’t. At the time of the bullying, the positions within The Dark Lord’s ranks hadn’t been offered outright.

She jerked around to face him.

“If Lily was as kind and as smart as everyone said she was, she would’ve thought on it and forgiven you. I wouldn’t have turned my back on you. I wouldn’t have gone to those I knew made
you suffer. It seems like she was only using you for company, then when she found, supposedly, better people, she needed to cut you out.”

That was cruel. He wasn’t sure if Lily would go that far, but it did make sense. She tried to get him to go with them near the end of their school years, but was it because she was actually concerned, or did she have other reasons? She knew he was a strong wizard, and it would’ve done them good to have him on their side.

That revelation hit him like a fast flying snitch. One of his legs shook, and he had to lean against his desk.

She sounded so sure. She acknowledged his failures without judgment and knew he wasn’t perfect. And she’d brought up things he rarely thought about, or rather, he forbid to let himself see.

A chuckle left his throat. If she’d been in school with him, he had little doubt she would’ve cursed Lily.

“Why in the hell do you think you have to die for her?” The rage was gone from her voice.

Her sudden change threw him off. He wasn’t used to being around people whose emotions went from one extreme to the next so suddenly.

He had to avoid her eyes.

“She was killed because of my actions,” he said. “I have a debt to her. It has very little to do with what happened in our school days. Though that incident did push me closer to the Dark Lord.” His voice had never sounded so weak.

“I don’t want you to die,” she whispered.

He gasped and looked up. She was closer to him. Her brown eyes burned into his dark ones. He hadn’t heard her approach, and just now noticed that she’d grabbed his arm and was gripping his sleeve tightly.

So many emotions washed over him that he didn’t know how to sort them. His throat constricted. For the first time in his life, he was unable to move. He kept trying to force his gaze away from hers, but it was as if she’d cast a spell to paralyze him.

Too much depended on him. The world was at stake. Potter had to live to make Voldemort fall. He had to make sure that happened. If he didn’t then many people would die. People like Granger. He had to make sure she lived.

That thought helped him tear his eyes away from hers, but he made no move to pull away from her grasp.

Even if he lived, he would have to pay for his crimes with the Death Eaters. He’d rather be dead than go to Azkaban or get a Dementor’s kiss. He was still a monster regardless of what he was doing now.

“Why should I live? To let the sins I’ve committed torture me each day?” His voice became harsher, but he knew she heard more than that. “Why would I want to live a lie and remember the pain of an unrequited love and abandonment?”

“I—I’m not a lie.”
Dear Merlin… this young witch was so stubborn. So remarkable.

“And indeed, you are not.” The hand on his arm tightened and he moved that arm so he could grip her sleeve for a moment before he released it. He’d allow himself to give her that small hint of affection. “And I’m glad for that.” He didn’t want to cause her any pain, but she had to accept that his life would end soon.

She pulled away. “Am I bad for that? Am I terrible for wanting you to live?”

“No, it just shows your beautiful soul, Hermione.”

And it gave him even more resolve to make sure she’d have her best chance of surviving.

AN: The conversation that Snape postponed at the beginning…now…it arrived and with strength. Hope you like it and let me know what you think. Happy Saint Valentine! to all the people who celebrate it. *Sending lot’s of love to you and see you next Wednesday.*
February, 1997

The students around him were exhausted and disappointed with their lack of success. Their instructor wasn’t incompetent by any stretch and the instructions he gave to the students were well spoken, but he neglected to mention that no one ever achieved apparating on the first try.

He was amused at watching the students’ prides disintegrate, but that didn’t mean he wanted to watch. If Pomfrey hadn’t practically begged him to come in case an accident occurred, he wouldn’t be here. It was Slughorn’s duty, but she’d implied a lack of faith in him. That was understandable after what had happened with Weasley.

When he heard another student yell out of frustration, he rolled his eyes. After a heavy sigh, he looked at Granger and saw amused brown eyes looking at him. She laughed and smiled at him. That smile faded seconds later as she threw her focus back into apparating. She failed

“That will be all for today. I’ll see you next week. Don’t fret, you will get it eventually,” the instructor said.

“I wish to speak with you Miss Granger,” he said as the students and his fellow instructor left the Great Hall.

“Yes, sir,” she said.
They left the Great Hall and made their way outside. He reached into his robe, pulled out the scarf she’d made him, and wound it around his neck.

“How was your first apparition class?”

They began a leisurely pace, staying closer to the building and out of the sight of most of the windows.

“You were there,” she said.

“I was, but I only saw you fail once, whereas I was exposed to the others failing several times. Also, I want to know your thought process through doing it.”

“I see. Well, it’s frustrating. I understood the directions, but without any experience with the feeling, it’s hard to grasp how to apparate.”

As usual, she made perfect sense. He often wondered why teachers didn’t let the students experience it before teaching it. He stopped and she stopped with him, their arms brushing. The inappropriateness of what he thought about doing crossed his mind. It wasn’t inappropriate because he was a teacher, but because it was him. Or at least it would seem that way to most.

Other teachers wouldn’t have second thoughts of offering if asked. This was why he waited for her after that class. But the other professors knew he was helping her with something, so that made it slightly less of an issue.

“We are going to remedy that. Come with me.”

From the corner of his eye, he saw her confusion but ignored it and started walking once again, faster this time. He waited for her when he reached the iron fences of the school.

He placed his hand on the metal and waited until the magic registered his status as a professor and opened the gate.

“What are you…”?

With his grip still on the half-opened gate, he extended his free hand.

A shiver ran around his spine as her warm hand fit snugly into his. He took a deep breath and closed his hand around hers.

A cold wind moved his hair from his face at the same time her brown curls caressed his chest and neck.

He opened the gate further and stepped outside it, taking her with him.

“Is this safe?” she asked.

He knew she was asking both for his reputation and for the outside world in general.

“I’m a professor helping you with an assignment. You are with me, and I won’t let anything happen to you.”

Her cheeks flushed, her eyes softened, and her body relaxed. The expression she offered him was warm enough to melt the snow away.

“Are you ready?”
She nodded and took a step closer to him, their bodies millimeters from touching, and their eyes never leaving each others. He focused on his magic and performed the charm, disappearing from the terrains with her.

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A smile threatened to tug at his lips when she gasped at their surroundings. She took a few small steps forward and looked around her, spinning once.

He had to admit, he too had the same reaction the first time he came here, minus the spinning of course. Large cloud adorned mountains loomed in the distance, the bushes directly in front of them obscuring their bottoms and making them look as if they were spouting from them due to perspective. The sky was bright, but covered completely in grey clouds. The sound of water in a stream disturbed what would’ve been a silent area.

It felt nice to bring joy to someone after all the times he’d brought pain. It felt even better knowing that he brought joy to her.

“You seem to like this place quite a bit.”

The brown eyes found his. “It’s beautiful.”

“This is Glen Etive. I come here when I need a change of scenery and in times I want to be uninterrupted.”

“I’m flattered that you took me to your secret place.” Her voice ended in a tease and he looked back at her, his lips slightly parted.

“Since we’re friends, I figured I should do something for you. Don’t you think it’s a fair trade?”

He smirked at her, but it fell when he felt a tickle in the hand that was still covering hers. He didn’t pull his hand away even though he knew he should.

“You do many things for me already, Professor. More than I can ever pay you back for.”

“Yes, but most of those are as your mentor as well, not only as a friend. This is different.”

And he found himself wanting to do more and more. Her friendship was different. It was true. This blunt witch changed him in the short span of their friendship. Though those changes would never be seen by anyone except her.

His mind had replayed the conversation they’d had about Lily many times. He’d tried to grasp onto some anger for what Hermione said, or some pain, but there was nothing but amazement and a realization that he’d thought of what she said before. He’d ignored the thoughts until someone had spoken them aloud. He’d just been too stubborn, too stuck in his own self-hatred, to acknowledge it.

Lily never loved him, and she never would have. He’d put her upon a pedestal because he’d been in love with her, and revered her now that she was gone. It was easy to remember the good things about the dead while ignoring the bad. He’d pointed out all the bad things about himself, making Lily seem like the paragon of virtue. He admired what she did for her son, knew that she meant her kindness towards him, but she was not perfect. Far from it. Gryffindors often refused to acknowledge their downfalls because they were held up as a paradigm of the houses.

Granger was different. The only reason she was in that house was because of her bravery. He
was convinced of that. She was much too Ravenclawish. Unlike Granger, Lily made no effort in finding him to befriend him. She had her little group, and he was not welcomed to it until she found out he was going to the Dark Lord. He was a strong wizard and she knew it. He suspected the only reason she’d welcomed him then was for her own benefit. She’d only needed him when she was in the Muggle world and when she wasn’t used to the wizarding world.

He’d been a passing tool for her. Never a real friend. But that didn’t mean he would give up his goal. He owed her, like he’d owe anyone, for what he’d done to cause her death. He would continue his mission now, but he would no longer use his love for her as his reason. The warm feeling he once held for her had disappeared, and now that he thought about it, it wasn’t recently either.

Months ago, when he saw his patronus, he realized he only felt discomfort and hopelessness instead of even a wisp of warm feelings or even mourning. Now, his main goal would be to bring the Dark Lord down by helping her son and to redeem himself as much as he could for his sins. He helped that monster become stronger.

Though Granger was undoubtedly the best thing that ever happened in his life, that didn’t change the fact he was an important pawn, and her friendship wasn’t enough reason to damn his purpose.

“Well, I’m glad this is different,” she said after a period of silence. She squeezed his hand. “You are more than a mentor for me.”

“Good.” His voice vibrated inside his throat, the nerves betraying him, but he maintained the deepness. He had to focus. He cleared his throat with a cough, and then said, “Did you register the feeling of apparition?”

Her brows furrowed for a second and she nodded.

“Yes, I think so. It was strange, it felt like my body twisted and floated in darkness for a second. It was slightly different from a portkey but similar too. At least the concept on how the bodies are affected with magic.” Her intelligent rambling made him chuckle. A light flush covered the apples of her cheeks. “I’m showing too much excitement?”

“You wouldn’t be you if you didn’t,” he dismissed with a flat tone.

She giggled and a tingle went through him again.

This was insane and he needed to stop it. He needed to calm himself. He needed to put distance between them to recover his composure. Put up his walls to defend himself.

He felt another soft movement against his skin.

“W-we should go back, Miss Granger.” His voice stuttered and a rise of fury extinguished the nerves. How could he lack control like this? It wasn’t acceptable. It was dangerous. For him, for her, for the whole plan.

Her eyes looked at him with confusion and he tensed.

He couldn’t wait anymore.

Leaving no time for her to answer, he channeled the magic and apparated, materializing their bodies back in front of the castle’s gates.
I’m not sure what to say…*Laughs* Snape is getting…a tiny bit affected? and his thoughts are growing with each day that passes. Anyway, I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. And before I forget, apparently this fanfic is nominated to the finals of Hermione's Haven Awards 2018. I didn’t know anything about it so I want to thank whoever did it and considered the story as quality material. ¡See you on 3rd!
Chapter 63: Battlefield Realities

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 63: Battlefield Realities

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February, 1997

“Come on, Miss Granger!” he growled as he pointed his wand at her face. “Curse me!”

She was breathing hard, sweating, and her hand shook as if it was going to drop her wand at any time. Forcing her through this hurt him almost as much as her, but it was necessary. He had been distracted enough the past weeks.

He had to focus on helping her recovery and improving her skills. She would become better than she ever was. She would become a fighter. A remarkable duelist.

She had potential and skill; she just needed to conquer her fear. He was determined to have her survive this war.

It would be his final gift to her.

She had progressed. She didn’t hesitate in lifting her wand around him anymore.

He knew she hated him during these lessons, but at least she wouldn’t hate him permanently. She’d get angry and curse him, but he expected that. Had he been in her shoes, he’d probably feel the same way.

“Granger! Do it! ”

A tiny growl escaped from her lips in response.
Her wand stopped trembling and the muscles in her hand tensed and gripped the wood.

He gave a barely there smirk. One not strong enough for her to see, but good enough for him to know he was doing it. *Almost there.*

With a violent movement, she waved her wand, fueled by irritation, and cast her spell.

“*Stupefy!*” Her ragged voice echoed, and he blocked the spell. The spell was strong but his reflexes were better.

She finally did it! After four classes of trembling hands and hesitation, she had done it and she still had a shadow of determination in her eyes.

“Again,” he ordered.

She casted various spells, throwing them with a strong voice and motions as if hurling all her anger, her guilt, and her pain at him. He blocked them all.

An even louder cry of anger accompanied her last spell. It was powerful enough that he had to repel it and send it to a corner of the classroom, reducing a shelf and its contents to dust. Fortunately, there was nothing of value on it.

She took a deep breath and let her arm fall to her side.

“You did it. You used your magic.”

He thought she’d have a look of accomplishment on her face, or at least feel happy about it. Instead, her face was as neutral as he kept his. “Yes, but I still killed a man with it.”

He hid his ebony wand in his coat.

“It was an accident. You need to accept that.” He knew it wasn’t that easy, but he wasn’t one to attempt to say anything more than that. He wasn’t a therapist. If her incident hadn’t had to do with magic, he would’ve suggested she go to one of the muggle ones.

“I’m learning to, but someday I will have to make the decision to kill someone in this war, and I don’t want to use my magic for that.”

“That’s exactly what war makes you do.” He wished he could be sensitive about it, but it wasn’t in him to do so. He had to be realistic in what was happening. “In wars you must choose your position. Be a victim and die accomplishing nothing, a murderer that satisfies their thirst with every life they take, or someone who defends themselves and their friends with everything they have. Black knew the risks when he went to the ministry. There are casualties in every war.”

“Is that what you try to say to yourself about the people you couldn’t save?”

His face showed disgust for a moment, but he knew Granger didn’t mean to hurt him. In fact, he was relieved she was so blunt.

“I’m darker than you, Miss Granger. You’ve never wanted to hurt others.”

“That’s not true at all. I want the monster that has you chained to die. I want to hurt people who hurt you.”

His eyes softened. She warmed his heart, but she was so wrong.
“You would never do it. You’re not that kind of person.”

A light blush covered her cheeks. “You… You didn’t answer my question.”

He tried to think of a way to word his answer without saying something that would throw her back into distress.

“I’m a spy. I choose my battles. I have to decide whom I can save and who has to perish for the sake of the many. I have to ensure that people like you survive this war so the world doesn’t go to hell anyway.”

“What if we fail to destroy the Dark Lord? Things will go to hell anyway.”

He’d thought of that. “That enters my mind a lot. I have little faith to be honest, but lately, I’ve had hints of hope inside me.”

He walked over to his desk to put some distance between them when she took a step forward. If she gave him any affection right now, he didn’t know what he’d end up saying. He spoke again when he heard her move towards him. “It’s your intentions that count,” he said. “You’ll have casualties, and people will despise you if it’s someone they love. But you look at the greater good. No one comes out of a war without being hated by many.”

He felt her stop closer to him, but he wasn’t sure if she was within arm’s reach.

“And you think your death is the greater good? Is that what you really want though? Casting away the fact you think you have to die, what do you truly desire, Severus?”

His stomach lurched when she spoke his name. His shoulders became rigid. Familiarity. This woman was too close to him. No one had ever recognized that he had desires for things. He hadn’t even been willing to recognize it until this witch came into his life. He knew what he wanted, but it was not to be.

“Finish the reign of the Dark Lord and be free of my torment.”

She walked up to stand at his side. “I refuse to let you be alone. I’ll help you.”

He turned his head and looked at her. Her brown eyes bore into his. He hadn’t realized he’d leaned over his desk, showing a weakened posture to her. Her face was so close to his that when she breathed his hair moved.

“What have you decided to be?” he asked, his words soft but stern.

“A fighter who supports you, her friends, and knows how to defend herself.”

Why did she set him apart from her friends? He was her friend. She’d said that numerous times. He had a suspicion of why she did it, but he pushed that back and denied it. It was too outrageous.

“Then I will teach you how to truly fight the Dark Arts.”

AN: More steps in overcoming her difficulties with harsh practices and more support from his part…Mmmm Hope you like it and let me know what you think! See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 64: Pretty Polyjuice

Chapter Summary

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When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 64: Pretty Polyjuice

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February, 1997

As the last minutes of class finished, the metal sounds in the classroom stopped. The last step of the brewing had ended. He looked at his students. The Ravenclaw and Slytherin were looking down instead of at the front of the classroom. Instead of looking at him. Granger was focused on her cauldron and biting her lower lip. Now they would add the last ingredient and then test to see if they did the potion correctly.

He waved his wand and six small boxes floated out of his ingredient closet. They floated down and rested on his desk with a soft thump.

“Come and take your last ingredient.”

He saw the Ravenclaw girl falter in her step as she moved away from her desk. He knew the Slytherin was nervous from the way he rubbed his hands together.

It was amusing that the only student he truly liked came from a house he despised. The three walked up to his desk and looked at the boxes.

The Slytherin eyed everything and his hand hesitated over a box before grabbing one of the hairs in the box to the far right. A human one.

The Ravenclaw girl chose a chipmunk hair from the box in the middle. This was going to be interesting to watch for sure.
Then there was Granger. She ran her eyes over the boxes several times. She bent down and studied each group of hair in each box. Then she caressed some of them, checking the texture. She made her choice, looked at him, smiled, and went back to her desk.

“Now, use your choice and drink.”

“All of us?” The Slytherin boy complained with a high-pitched tone.

He should’ve expected this reaction since he never made his Slytherins test potions on themselves.

“Yes, all of you. You won’t die from this.”

His tone of indifference made the Slytherin’s shoulders fall, but he obeyed. He threw the hair into the potion just like the rest of his classmates.

Granger glanced at the vial in her hand and cringed. She knew the potion would taste terrible. She took a deep breath and drank the bottle’s contents.

He pushed back a smile as the three students started to transform. When the commotion of transformation ended, the Slytherin boy started to laugh and Hermione threw murderous glares at him.

“You have a tail a-a-and long teeth!” The Slytherin said in between deep laughs. “And your face—”

He was unmoved by the Slytherin making fun of the now half-animal Ravenclaw. However, he would’ve enjoyed it more if the Slytherin had messed up as well.

“Why don’t you shut up?” Hermione said, but not in her voice.

He looked at Hermione. She was now formed into a tall blond woman. She placed a hand on the upset girl’s shoulders, showing a sympathy he’d never be able to muster.

Hermione looked at him in an almost pleading manner.

“Go to the infirmary,” he said to the Ravenclaw even though the potion would eventually fade. She’d be able to hide from other students there until it wore off. He could’ve ended the spell, but he wanted the students to feel the full effects of the potion.

The Ravenclaw nodded, grabbed her things, and ran out of the classroom with her books held over her face.

“Your homework is to do an essay about how to differentiate hair types,” he said. He glanced at the Slytherin. “And you will make sure she gets the information.”

His tone made the Slytherin stop laughing.

“Ye—yes, sir.”

The Slytherin grabbed his things and left, shutting the classroom door behind him.

He turned his attention to Hermione. She was frowning and gathering her things.

“Why did you show pity for her?”
“You couldn’t stop him. I know he’s a Slytherin and it’s important for you to keep up a
front, so I refused to allow her to continue to be bullied.”

“She deserved it. Don’t forget that she mocked you.” She gave him a soft smile.

“I didn’t care about what she said.”

“You know that’s not true,” he said. “I’m not a nice man and thought she should pay for
that.”

She let out a soft chuckle and looked at him with kind eyes even though she didn’t look like
herself. “You’re right, it’s not true, but I don’t want anyone feeling the way I do. Since I know how
it feels, I think it’s right to stop it as best I can when I see it happen to someone else.”

He crossed his arms. “Your good heart is infuriating sometimes,” he said, this time earning a
full laugh from her. A laugh that sounded nothing like hers, and he hated that. He couldn’t wait for
this potion to end.

“You have a good heart too. You’re just protective. It’s nice.”

Protective. She was right of course since he vowed to do his best to make sure she survived
a war, but he was protective in small ways as well. When she was in some sort of uncomfortable
situation, he wanted to make sure she made it through unscathed.

When she’d asked him what he’d really wanted, he’d answered her with half-truths. At the
time he thought it was a fully honest answer, but that night as he was about to sleep, he realized he
wanted more. Something he could never have.

He did want to get rid of the torment. He did want to bring down the Dark Lord. He wanted
to pay his debt to Lily, but he wanted to live. He wished he could do all that and survive.

He knew there’d be no happy ending for him, that’s why he never dared to think of it until
now. Even if the Dark Lord fell and he didn’t.

“Well, I won’t make it obvious,” he said. “Even if I wouldn’t mind hexing some students
into oblivion.”

She laughed and then looked down at herself. “Should I wait for this to wear off before I
leave? Was it wise to let the Slytherin go?”

He hadn’t thought of that. With the current situation regarding security, they might think the
Slytherin boy was an intruder. Of course, they’d know better once the potion wore off or if he told
whoever caught him.

“Do what you think is best, Miss Granger.”

She laughed. “I’d be arrested unless you told people otherwise. And the boys probably
wouldn’t stop gawking at me. This is such a pretty form.”

“You’re prettier in your own form, Miss Granger.” The words left him before he thought
better of it. He felt like he was under a confundus charm.

She gasped and a few seconds later, spoke, “Thank you. No one has called me pretty
before.”
He wanted to dart out of the room. His mind screamed at how stupid and inappropriate it was for him to say something like that.

But she didn’t seem to mind, and he was no longer the coward he thought he was. If he could lie to the Dark Lord’s face, then telling a girl he thought she was pretty, a harmless word, was nothing.

But he had to tame what he knew was flaring inside him. Especially now that they hit and he spoke them before thinking. But compliments weren’t that bad. Friends complimented each other when warranted.

Yet he knew it was slightly more than that, and from her reaction, he realized he wasn’t the only one having those issues.

If they’d been living in another time. With no Dark Lord and no wars, perhaps what was brewing could’ve been something. A close lifetime friendship that would eventually make the world realize he wasn’t always a cold monster. He truly didn’t care about what the world thought of him, but some acknowledgement like that would be nice.

He pushed the thought back and took a deep breath.

“You’re welcome, Miss Granger,” he said with a steady voice.

AN: Mmmmm Confusions, the liberation of tongues… Hah. Hope you liked it and let me know what you thing. The last update I forgot to say that the fanfic achieved the Runner up on Hermione’s Haven Awards 2018. So I thank all of you for your support, for your reviews, for your love to read. Thank you <3
See you on Saturday!
Chapter 65: Emotion Evoking Owls

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 65: Emotion Evoking Owls

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He entered the Great Hall just as the students started to eat their lunch. He kept his gaze to the ground and remained deep in thought as he walked up to the main table. He knew some of his fellow professors were staring at him, but he didn’t care.

He’d thought he’d come to terms with what he’d said earlier to Granger. Assumed that he’d accepted his actions right then. But he hadn’t. Many thoughts had bombarded him, heading in all sorts of scenarios, some likely, others not so much.

All he knew was that unless she left his life, he wouldn’t let her go. He wouldn’t push her away. In his death, he’d be able to grasp onto the fact he’d had someone special in his life.

He sat down and a plate of food appeared in front of him. It was a rare steak with a side of peas and some garlic potatoes. He focused on its scent rather than remember hers. Put all his thoughts into the taste as he ate the meat, relishing in the tender way it pulled apart in his mouth as he chewed.

He looked up, in her direction for a second before focusing back on his food. She was at the corner of the Gryffindor table, her appearance back to normal. She had her nose stuck in her book and a quill and scroll to her right. In the quick glance he saw she was looking better than she’d had since the fallen out with Potter and Weasley.

He was about to eat a spoonful of peas when something slammed into his back. The peas flew off the spoon, one of them landing in a goblet. He shot up from his seat, wand out, his reflexes controlling his actions.
Everyone went silent. He felt all eyes on him and glared out at the students. They quickly went back to eating and talking. He looked down at the owl on the ground.

From the corner of his eye, he saw Granger looking worried.

“It’s only an owl,” Minerva stated.

“Thank you for that enlightenment,” he said. “But I am sure you would’ve had the same reaction if it had barreled into you,” he said. “If not, then you should probably practice your defense.” He didn’t like speaking that way to Minerva, but it was important to keep up his arrogance.

He leaned down and picked up the owl, which was a bit loopy from the hit. He sat it on the table and took the paper from it.

The bird swayed back and forth, and took a step. Right into his potatoes. The other professors gasped, but he raised an eyebrow at the thing and almost laughed. It was… cute. And pitiful. One eye looked to be facing the students while the other looked at him. He waved his wand at it, casting a spell. Its eye straightened and its dizziness ceased.

He took a generous piece of his steak and fed it to the owl. He nearly jumped when it nuzzled his hand and then flew away.

He ignored the surprised looks on the other professors’ faces as he opened the letter and began to read. His lips pursed when he saw where it was from. His jaws tensed with every line he read, and his grip on the paper tightened.

He stood, wadded up the paper in his right hand, and stalked out of the Great Hall before he lost all of his composure.

As he stepped into the garden, he took deep breaths of the cold air. He kept his wand in his robes. If he didn’t he might destroy something. He stepped down onto the thick snow and thought of the positives of what happened.

He could go to Spinner’s End and destroy the last trace of his miserable past.

With violent steps, he stormed through the snow towards the gate. He’d burn the place into ashes. He didn’t care if it was where he lived. Didn’t care that he now legally owned it. That man bought it. It was where his despicable muggle father murdered his mother. Where he’d been beaten numerous times while his mother struggled to get up off the floor. It was a place that brought memories that still haunted him on nights when he contemplated how he became the man he was now.

Once Dumbledore’s plan came to fruition, it would be the first thing people went after anyway. Now he could burn away some of his sadness and hurt.

Deep down, he knew it wouldn’t do any good. Those things were already branded in him forever.

The metal gates crashed against each other when he pushed them open. He exited the grounds not thinking about whether or not the gates closed behind him.

He stopped at the apparition point. His body was so tense it started to ache. He closed his eyes, taking deep breaths as the wind blew around him, blowing snow off the trees and creating the little specks of ice that hit against his face.
Then something crashed against his back, something warm and soft. He felt a head rest against his back. A pair of arms moved around his waist.

And hugged him.

AN: Yep, I’m posting a day early. I got a lot to study and I wasn’t going to manage to do it tomorrow. Let’s see how this week goes and see. Anyway, Don’t faint my dear readers with the cliffy. Hope you like it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday! I hope, if not it will be some hours before,

Oh, there is a companion draw to this chapter you could find on DA in a couple of days (If the amount of papers doesn’t eat me.)
Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 66: Touch

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This was insane.

She wouldn’t do this.

She wasn’t that foolish.

He was in denial until her scent reached him. A scent similar to his own.

Yes. Yes, she was that foolish.

And he was foolish enough to stand there. Weak enough. He should’ve pulled away, but her warmth froze him more than the cold around him. He was thankful that this particular area wasn’t viewable from the castle thanks to the large line of trees.

“Whatever happened...Please let me go with you.” He felt her voice against his back as she spoke. The soft gentle rumble sent a chill and calmness through him.

He didn’t want to calm down. He wanted to get lost in his rage. He wanted to push her away. Curse her. He wanted to...to...He wanted to stop fucking lying to himself.

“Get the hell away from me,” he snapped.

She didn’t move from her massive and daring intrusion of his personal space. She squeezed him
“I told you to get the hell away from me, Granger.”

“No! I don’t care what you try to do, I won’t leave you here.”

He tried to force himself to move, but if he jerked away too quickly, she’d fall and get wet and possibly hurt on the rocky ground.

Yes, he’d tell himself that was the reason. Not that his reasons were because he actually wanted her comfort. That he truly desired the peace and tranquility that she gave with her presence.

“Foolish girl! You don’t know what is going on, so go back to the castle and—”

“I may not know it, but I know you’re upset. Tell me you stubborn man!”

This girl. This stupid… Damn her friendship and that Gryffindor loyalty. Loyalty he admired. And if anyone was an idiot here. It was she.

“I could hurt you this time if…” His voice came out softer, trying to convince her to go.

“You won’t. I have faith in you. I trust you, and I will help you.”

He could tell from her voice that she didn’t carry a hint of doubt, but he did. He didn’t understand this witch. She constantly challenged him, surprising him with new or rare experiences. This hug was one of them. This support was one of them.

He raised a trembling hand and placed it on one of hers. She was just as stubborn as he was.

“Very well,” he said and apparated away with her.

-/-/

They arrived in his house. Just a house since this was never a home. Hogwarts was home right now. Later he wasn’t sure. Everything was the same as when he left it. His dusty bookshelves and messy living room greeted them.

He took a breath, released her hand, and pulled out of her hold. Instead of turning back, he took a step forward, avoiding her and focusing on his bookshelf. Those books were the only things he could consider his. Standing in this place was nearly as sickening as bowing in front of the Dark Lord.

“Is this your house?” He lifted his hand to touch one of the many books. He’d make sure to bequeath them to her in his will.

“The Rogue Alchemist,” he muttered as he picked up the book with a slow movement. “It was my favourite book when I was a kid.” He took a breath and closed his eyes; the rage had subsided, replaced with mild anger and melancholy. “It was the only thing my mother could ever buy me.”

“S-Professor…” The care her voice carried almost made him fall on his knees like a desperate man that thirsted for affection as much as water. “I’m here for you. Would you… would you tell me about this place? Without a pensieve.”
He didn’t deserve her, but the need to keep her in his life became intense. He knew he wasn’t an easy man to understand, but she had the miraculous ability to do so.

She had thrown herself into the path of his consuming rage and melted it away.

He didn’t feel alone anymore. He realized it the moment her arms moved around him and she refused to go despite his anger.

His fear to show his humanity to her had faded, what little doubts he had about her were gone.

“I’m a difficult man with not many words to offer.”

With a small piece of bravery, he turned to face her. Her posture was relaxed. She had no anger, no fear, and no disgust on her face. Just acceptance.

“I only care if they have truth behind them. We are quiet people, but that doesn’t mean we don’t feel.”

He moved towards her and offered her the book. With careful hands, she took it.

“I want you to have this and the rest of these books when I’m gone,” he said, with the gentlest voice he’d ever heard himself speak.

“I…”

“For now, I’ll keep them in my shelves in my quarters.”

“Why not keep them here?”

He took a deep breath. “I… I want to destroy this place. No, I need to do it.”

Granger hugged the book to her chest.

“No one will care if this place burns down. It will probably be done once I’m dead anyway. I’m surprised it hasn’t been done yet considering the way everyone hates me.”

“I don’t,” she said, voicing something he knew already but treasured to hear regardless. “I never have hated you.”

“Like I said, you aren’t capable of hate, but I’m grateful to hear it.”

“But why do you have to destroy it now? Did something happen?”

She had demonstrated that he had nothing to fear, but still, right now he was scared of how much he needed her support and friendship. This young witch, this gentle soul… Merlin, fate was so cruel. He knew someday he would hurt her when he died.

He walked to one of the old ragged sofas and took a seat.

Lowering his head to hide his face behind his dark hair, he entangled his hands with each other and started to order his thoughts.

She startled him when her palm touched his hands. He closed his eyes and focused on her skin against his, as if he could gain strength from her.

“You saw the owl I received today.”
“Yes, you were very sweet to it.”

“It brought news,” he said as if she couldn’t guess that already. He took a deep breath. “My father is dead.”

AN: Oh, Severus… Again, this chapter will have another draw as companion piece that I will post later…Let me know what you think! And see you later ;)}
Chapter 67: Burning Away the Past

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 67: Burning Away the Past

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It was exactly ten of his heartbeats before she squeezed his hands and spoke. “How do you feel about it?”

“Glad, but I wish he had suffered more,” he answered with honesty. “Muggle jails nowadays are better than most flats. He deserved to rot in a putrid torture chamber.”

“You never spoke to him at all after…”

“He never apologized. He didn’t leave any kind of letter before he died. Just this bloody deed that I don’t want.” He looked at her. “If he was your father would you have spoken to him after he murdered your mother?”

“No, definitely not.”

“I only stayed here because Dumbledore refused to let me stay at Hogwarts most of the time. Just in case the Dark Lord came. It would look too suspicious otherwise.”

“Dumbledore knows about your memories here?”

“He does.”

She caressed his hand with her thumb.
This would’ve been so different if he had been alone. Never in his wildest dreams would he have imagined a kind woman holding his hand at a time like this.

“If I could, if it would bring comfort, I would burn down the department of mysteries.” She squeezed his hand. “But I have to remember what happened and learn from it. It happened for a reason, and I think I’ve grown as a person because of it and because of you.” She smiled. “You are you, because of your past, as bad as it is, and I like you.”

His eyebrow arched. “Are you trying to persuade me not to burn this place, Miss Granger?”

“Definitely not. I want you to do what your heart desires, not what others order or even ask you to do.”

At that, he could only chuckle softly.

“I doubt I have a heart.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. You have, you just don’t let it show.”

“I want to destroy this place. The lessons have already been taught and have done me no good.”

“Then I will support you. Get the things you have good memories of and conquer the ire and pain that this place creates.”

“That was downright poetic.”

Her eyes sparkled, and he felt lighter.

“Let’s see what we can find other than your books.”

“All right, Miss Granger, but don’t get too excited. There aren’t many things that deserve to be saved.”

She nodded and enveloped the book with her arms. A nice place to be without doubt.

He scolded himself and stood. He walked over to the bookshelf and began shrinking the tomes.

“Should I transfigure a box for your things?” He made a noise. “I’ll take that as a yes,” she said, her tone showing no offense or annoyance in the slightest way.

He noticed the books he shrank floating towards her and turned. “Don’t you think ill of me since I don’t have many things and still want to destroy a house?”

“No, of course not. I only care if something hurts you. If it does it must be destroyed.”

He walked into a nearby room and returned with a deep red and black mug.

“A dragon?” she said as he handed her the cup. “I figured you’d have a serpent.”

“I was a very young child then and didn’t know of the magical world yet. I was like any other kid and dreamed of it. Especially of dragons.”

She placed the mug in the box, treating the ceramic with care.

He relaxed his body and let a soft look cross his face for the first time in years. And it was
because he wanted to.

She looked up when she was satisfied with her arrangement of the items in the box. “Um… Do… Do you wish to save anything else in here?” Her voice sounded raspy and she redirected her gaze away from him.

“No, Miss Granger. In fact, there’s nothing more in this house, so it’s ready to burn…” His voice trailed off as a memory came to his mind.

With quick steps, he moved to a desk and opened it. After finding a small compartment in the drawer, he whispered some words. It clicked and he pulled out a small black box. He wouldn’t have forgiven himself if he’d forgotten about his mother’s family ring. He put it in his pocket.

He turned back to her and removed his wand. He pointed it at the box in front of her and it shrank. She picked it up and handed it to him.

“What do you need me to do to help?”

“Just use the fire spell you used on me,” he said. “But do try to avoid my clothing.”

She laughed nervously.

A yellow bolt came from his wand and slammed into one of the walls, breaking the wood into various sized pieces. He did several more walls that way. When he smelled smoke, he looked at her. She’d already ignited the furniture and a set of curtains with holes in them. He turned back to the wood and set it on fire.

“Sir, I was reading about a young man named Frank Thompson. Did you teach him during the time he went missing? They didn’t give dates in the book.”

Her trivial topic surprised him. How could she think of that at a time like this?

Maybe she was trying to transform this into a less tense time by bringing up something unrelated. He tried to recall the subject. When he remembered the topic, he withheld a groan. Of all the things to bring up…

“Only you’d be able to find that to read. No, he was in school long before my time. I do know that he went missing during apparation class.”

“Do you know what caused it? It never mentioned what happened.”

“Didn’t you read the theory?” he asked, surprised that she overlooked that part.

“No, sir, it wasn’t there. But the rumor is that he umm… That he asked what would happen if one apparated and…

Her discomfort and her blushing cheeks made it a struggle to keep from laughing.

“Trumped, Miss Granger, or to be ruder, Fart, while apparating. As you can see, the results aren’t good for some reason.”

“Surely, through the years a wizard has accidentally passed gas while apparating,” she stated and he tried to think why in Merlin’s name she was so concerned about it.

“Not after Thompson disappeared. When we wizards teaching the class tell you to release all your stress. We mean all of it. The syllabus gives you instructions on that.”
“No one reads the syllabus except people like me,” she replied.

“If they don’t read the syllabus then they will face death by gas.” He huffed. “If I judge the smells wafting from Potter and Weasley, I would say they either read the syllabus quite thoroughly or decided bathing and wiping were optional.”

She paused in her actions. “Merlin! Did you just make a joke?”

He shrugged. “Take it as you will,” he said and set back to work in destroying the house around them. It would be a while before the fire picked up enough for the environment to be a danger.

“Hum… so if passing gas does that, what would happen if someone shi—”

Merlin. No. “I refuse to answer any more questions regarding apparating and bodily functions.”

Hermione smiled. “You’re the only person willing to answer all of my questions. Though, I would be ashamed to ask anything as asinine as that to anyone else.”

Minutes passed as they moved around each small room until he noticed the structure becoming compromised. Without a word, he moved over to the witch and gently grabbed her arm.

“Let’s go, this should be enough,” he said.

“You don’t want to make sure it fully burns?”

“It’s destroyed sufficiently whether someone comes to put it out or not,” he said.

She smiled and nodded.

“And thank you, Miss Granger. For insisting on coming.”

“You’re welcome, sir,” she said.

And then they disappeared as a relic of his terrible past burned away.

AN: Surprise…? I’m a little unsure about something in this chapter but I hope you liked the trivialities inside the awful deed he is just doing. Let me know what you think and will see you on Wednesday around some…hour. I still need to organize my life.
Chapter 68: Training and an Unanswered Inquiry

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 68: Training and an Unanswered Inquiry

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February, 1997

The silhouette in front of them waited, the wooden wand pointing at her. If it’d had been animate, it would’ve been anticipating Granger’s next attack. Severus observed her technique in silence with his arms crossed. Whatever skills she had before were unrefined. She’d never been the best at Defense despite her marks, but months of lack of practicing and insecurity had made her worse.

“Raise the wand higher.” She adjusted the wand height and pointed to the practice dummy.

“Bombarda!”

Her shout echoed, bouncing off the walls enchanted with a silencing spell. There was no hesitation in her this time. She had been casting the spell for a couple of sessions, but she hadn’t put her heart in it until now.

A tiny ball of fire launched across the room, disappeared, and then exploded in front of the dummy, breaking it into thousands of pieces.

After two months of suffering, of hesitating, she’d finally conquered the spell that had brought the death of Sirius Black. She’d accepted her magic fully.
Her eyes were fixed on the destroyed dummy. Unblinking. Then, within an instant, she was looking at him with a full smile. “I did it!”

She ran toward him. At first, he thought she might run into him, but she stopped a few steps away. He didn’t think he could take another one of her embraces. He hadn’t forgotten how comfortable it had been.

He still couldn’t figure out what her mysterious scent was, and hadn’t been able to get it out of his mind. He knew the thoughts of her would not leave until he figured it out.

“I’m not blind.” His reply came out with a dry emotion. She giggled and he rolled his eyes. “It’s good progress. Now we can start with more spells I wish to teach you.”

Her body tensed. “Teach me?”

He didn’t know if she was surprised or scared. “Yes. I told you I would teach you the first day we started this. You’ll duel with me just as you did that day.”

She bit the inside corner of her mouth and looked away from him. He didn’t want her to back down, she needed the training, and he wanted her strong.

“Have you changed your mind?”

“No, I haven’t. It’s just that…Well, I couldn’t stand if I hurt you.”

He felt something inside his chest. An anxious feeling that constricted his heart. He forced himself not to think about it.

“Once you do, you’ll be a remarkable duelist. Which is what we need you to become. If you hurt me, I will allow you to mend it since you need to learn more about that as well. I know it won’t be serious because I’m sure you don’t want to kill me… For now.”

As soon as his last words came out, the witch slapped her hand against his chest. She jerked her hand away as if burned, and averted her gaze for a second time. The silence that formed after was as oppressive as the need to get closer to her.

He was about to break the silence but she did it first. “Don’t be an idiotic man.”

His eyes widened at her bravery, but he let himself laugh. He was lucky to find this kind of camaraderie near the end of his life. He could treasure it without worrying about her alienation after he was gone. No one would ever know about their friendship. If they did, it would be her choice to reveal it.

“Then don’t be so insufferable,” he retorted.

The awkwardness faded as quickly as it came.

“Just for today, but only because you asked so nicely.”

It was odd that he was starting to have fun with her. He, Severus Snape, had duties, he had work, but never fun.

“Sir?” she asked in a serious voice. His thoughts of fun faded instantly. He studied her and saw she was hesitant about something.

“What is it? Go ahead and ask. If I can’t answer I’ll tell you.”
“I’ve… I’ve noticed something.”

He snorted. “That’s something you’re hesitant about revealing? I’ve got news for you. If that’s a secret you’re trying to keep, you’re failing miserably. You’re the most observant person I know.”

She frowned. “It’s about Professor Dumbledore,” she said, ignoring his teasing. “Is he all right?”

He wasn’t surprised she’d noticed the change where others had not. Dumbledore hid his illness well with the help of his potions. Granger knew how to hide her own pains, although hers was more mental. Still, it was only natural she’d eventually see that not all was well with the headmaster.

“Why do you ask?”

“I noticed on Christmas that he seemed different. I’ve been thinking about it on and off. I think his state has something to do with what you have to tell me and want me to hide with occlumency, right?”

He kept his face as neutral as a corpse. She was too smart for her own good. He wanted to tell her, but now wasn’t the time.

“Miss Granger…”

“You aren’t going to tell me.” Her voice trembled while speaking the sentence. “You don’t trust my ability? I block you all the time now.

That was true, she’d become extremely accomplished in occlumency. Picked it up much quickly than that idiot Potter. “It’s not the right time. It’s nothing more than that,” he said. ”it has nothing to do with whether I trust you or not.”

She wasn’t ready to hear that he would become the murderer of the most loved and powerful wizard of their world. That the old man was dying anyway and sending her friend to his death.

He would become the most hated man in the world and Potter would have to die to defeat the Dark Lord.

“I swear to you, that I will tell you when you need to hear it, but I’ll say you are on the right track.”

Her only response was a nod.

AN: More dueling and showing off the intelligence from Hermione’s part, but Severus… Oh, Severus…Let me know what you think and hope you enjoyed. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 69: The Emergence of a Lioness

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 69: The Emergence of a Lioness

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February 1997

He wound the scarf Granger had given him tighter around his neck as he walked to the Quidditch match with the other teachers. If he could’ve avoided this, he would’ve, but it was important for him to support his house. Especially, when it was a match between Gryffindor and Slytherin. Ever since Potter showed up, Slytherin morale was at an all time low.

He rolled his eyes as everyone cheered as loud as they could. The Hufflepuffs aligned with the Gryffindors this time, but the Ravenclaw’s seemed to be split down the middle, with some cheering for Gryffindor and some cheering for Slytherin. They usually picked based on which team had better stats or strategy.

With a sullen face, he sat next to Minerva in the first row. The old woman was waving a flag with her house colors, but it seemed like her heart wasn’t entirely into it that day.

“Who do you think will win this time, Severus? Our team has lost some good players, but we gained some excellent ones too.” He could tell from her voice that what he suspected was indeed the case.

He didn’t care, but he had to pretend to. “McGlaren is an idiot and your star Potter is having another detention.” He looked at the Gryffindor towers. “At least you have the advantage that Ron Weasley isn’t stopping balls with his head.”
The woman huffed and her flag movement stopped. She looked at him and placed her hands on her hips, displaying her stern Professor McGonagall behaviour.

“At least my team doesn’t play dirty.”

They were Slytherins, what did she expect? Besides, they weren’t dirty. They were just resourceful and took advantage when they saw a chance. That’s how you survived. If you didn’t do it, someone else would. “You don’t get through life always playing fair.”

He looked away from her and out at the crowds, searching for his friend. Minerva’s eyes stayed on him for longer than comfortable, but her focus eventually went back to the game.

He ran his gaze across row upon row of people until he found who he was looking for. He’d wondered if she would come considering her hesitation with crowds as of late and her dislike of Quidditch, but she was there.

Then she looked towards him, their eyes met across the way. The cold seemed to disappear when she smiled at him.

Then someone hit her, breaking their eye contact. When he saw red, short hair, he gritted his teeth. That brainless Weasley had bumped into her as if she were nothing but an obstacle that he could force out of his way. The temptation to rip his head off was immense.

The cheers grew louder from the students as the game started. Protectiveness swarmed his instincts when Granger stood from her seat. The Weasley boy said something. He could only see anger in the brat’s expression and couldn’t read his lips. The way her eyes narrowed was enough to tell him it wasn’t something she liked or wanted to hear. But she wasn’t tearing up. Wasn’t shaking. She had fire in her eyes.

He almost laughed when Granger made a fist and punched Weasley, turning his head so hard with the hit he nearly fell against the girl sitting beside him. He smirked. That lioness was back and he couldn’t be more proud.

His eyes detected movement and focused, noticing how Granger looked up with elegance and ignored the rant of the girl who was trying to defend the stupid boy. With refined calmness, she raised her head and focused her gaze on her “friends”. She looked at the girl, said something, and walked away with such a flourish of her robes that it made him envious. The people she left behind appeared stunned with her actions.

He waited until he couldn’t see her anymore and, begrudgingly, set his eyes on the game. He glanced at the scoreboard and smirked. “It seemed I was right about that McGlaren. No skills at all. Just arrogance he can’t back up.”

“Severus, don’t rub salt on the wound,” the old witch said.

He actually let a small laugh escape him. “I’m serious, Severus. I’ve had enough with Albus’s secrecy. I don’t want to have to endure your gloating too.”

His smile faded and his eyes focused back to the field. “He’s always secretive, Minerva.”

“Not like this. He looks constantly drained, and he is leaving Hogwarts often. He’s never done that.” The woman’s worry was palpable on her trembling voice.

“This is not the place to talk about the headmaster, you know.”
And when is it a good time? He doesn’t tell me a thing.” She turned her head to look at him with fury. But he knew her ire was directed at what the headmaster was doing rather than at him. He was glad people were focused on the match at the moment. “He talks to you. You’re his friend.”

He shook his head. “I’m not.”

“But—”

“Dumbledore uses me and orders me to do what he thinks is necessary. I don’t have his trust. I’m not his friend. I’m only a weapon and a pawn to him.”

“You know something though, don’t you?”

“Don’t ask me things you know I can’t tell. Ask him.”

“I already did. You know how he is. He always avoids answering me.”

“Even if I wished to share the information, I can’t.” At least, not with her. He had chosen his ally already.

Minerva was a good witch, but he couldn’t bring himself to trust her fully. He liked and respected her, though it took a while for her to gain that from him. A weak sigh reached his ears and from the corner of his eyes, he saw the old witch’s head and shoulders slouch. A tingle of guilt sparked inside him. “I’m sorry, I can’t tell you more,” he found himself saying.

“There’s no need to say that. I understand. My apologies for pushing you, Severus. Thank you for being as honest as you can. I know you have a complicated task ahead of you.”

He gave a nod and looked back at the match just as the Slytherin seeker extended his arm to grab the snitch.

She had no bloody idea.

-Severus mourned the end of the cold weather. While it wasn’t anywhere near hot, it was warm enough to melt away the snow, and green grass was slowly shooting up from the ground.

This change in weather usually brought good moods, but it darkened his. Usually. Tonight, it wasn’t as bad as it was in the passing years.

He had a free night with no detentions, no hall monitoring. He took this opportunity to indulge himself with a few pieces of honey and butter toast as a dinner in his quarters.

But he had company. A feline who’d decided his lap was the perfect place for a snooze.

The cat came to his dungeons so often that he wondered if Granger sent him there when she felt he needed company and she wasn’t available.

He looked down when he heard a loud purr. The feline had flipped over on his back and was looking up at him with orange eyes that held just as much curiosity as his mistress’s eyes.

He rubbed the cat’s stomach, and the purr grew louder. “I see why she sent you here today,” he said. The feline turned around and moved closer to his waist, cuddling against him. Before he could continue, a soft knock sounded at his door. When it opened, he knew immediately who it was.
“Professor?” a female voice said. The feline raised his head, recognizing the voice as much as he did.

“Come in, Miss Granger.”

She entered the room. Her robes were gone, but she still wore her uniform.

“I was going to ask if you had seen my cat, but it seems it’s here.” Her words were calm, and a hint of a smile appeared on her lips as her eyes moved to the feline. He meowed at her and cuddled into his lap.

“Is that so? I had the impression you sent the furball here quite frequently.”

He picked up the cat and stood. It quickly moved up to his shoulder, rested his head on top of his, and meowed. Hermione covered her mouth to stifle a laugh.

He removed the cat from its position and held it out to her. She took a few steps forward and took him.

“You know, I don’t send him often. Maybe once or twice a week. He comes to you on his own.” She scratched him on the head. “He likes you a lot.”

He walked over to the fireplace to tend to it. “I find that surprising. You know I’m not the most loved man here. Very few would seek out my company.”

She moved to stand at his side. “Well, your company is my gain and their loss,” she said. “Crookshanks is a little like you.”

He straightened and looked at her. “Oh?”

“Misunderstood and alone for a long time, and no one took the time to get to know him like I did. I wanted to. And I discovered something very special in doing so.”

“Please, Miss Granger. Don’t equal me with a project to save because you pity me.”

“You know I don’t feel that way.”

His stomach twisted when a desire to hug her hit him. He forced himself to remain still even though he knew she’d welcome such an action.

“You should go. It’s almost curfew,” he said.

A hint of sadness flashed across her face but she gave a nod. “Okay, have a good night then.” She turned and walked toward the door.

A question he’d been pondering came to his mind. “Miss Granger,” he said just as her hand touched the handle. She turned to him, curiosity on her face.

“May I ask what Weasley did to spark your anger at the game? I might add a touch to his suffering during my personal payback.”

The feline looked at his owner, waiting for her response as well.

“He told me that I was pathetic for not trying to fix things and instead choosing to spend more time with Slytherins.”
That boy was stupid. She had tried to fix things and was only rebuffed.

He’d noticed that members of other houses had started to talk to her more. Even the Ravenclaw girl in his advanced potions class, had started to befriend her.

That fool.

“Maybe I shouldn’t have hit him, but it just made me so…” She growled instead of finishing her sentence.

“Miss Granger, he deserved more than a punch. Next time, hex him.”

And then she laughed so loud that if he hadn’t had a charm on his rooms it would’ve probably echoed throughout the entire dungeon.

AN: Rippling the bubble a little and letting them interact with others and see the changes they are making on each other. I wanted to show the change in Hermione too as the time had passed but the interaction with her “friends” is not the last one, as neither is Severus and McGonagall ones. People have a lot to mend…and our pair is melting down? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on April’s 4th.
March, 1997

His class waited in silence with their eyes focused on him. The mystery of what waited for them today would soon be revealed. He’d taken measures with a scent-inhibiting spell to make sure he wouldn’t be affected today. The last thing he wanted was to remember the smell of his lost love and end up poisoned with memories of her.

He extended his arm to the blackboard and waved his wand revealing the instructions.

The students all gasped.

“Before you say anything, Miss Granger, I know it’s illegal but this is a special class.” His voice lacked of malice unlike in the earlier years. “I have special permission to teach this potion.” He glared at the Slytherin. “As long as it does not leave this class.” The boy tensed.

“Is that clear?”

“Yes, sir,” they all said.

“Amortentia.” He named the potion with a bored voice. “The most powerful love potion and the most dangerous potion overall if it falls into the wrong hands. You can imagine what makes it so
dangerous.”

“Yes, sir,” they all said again.

He nodded once. “Begin your work.”

He knew Hermione and the Ravenclaw wouldn’t try to sneak out the potion, so he’d keep his focus mainly on the Slytherin after they finished. For now, he would have to keep every ounce of his attention on their techniques. This could go wrong in several ways.

He watched as the students added their ingredients. The vapors emerged from the pots, creating a light pink mist in the air. Thankfully, it wasn’t enough to make one fall with fake affections. It was enough, however, to bring forth a bit of giggling from all three students. He was glad he’d blocked his sense of smell. It would be humiliating if he let their potion affect him and started giggling himself.

His students stirred, chopped, and did every single step with perfection that made him proud to be their teacher. He had to admit he was with the best students. Yes, there were a few others he wished were there, mostly Ravenclaws and Slytherins, but he actually enjoyed this trio. There was no goofing off and very little worry on his part that they would do something else dangerous.

His eyes moved to the clock. They should be finishing the concoctions soon and, from what he could see, they appeared to be on time.

“Ten minutes.”

The students remained calm unlike the other classes who would’ve rushed the mixtures and eventually mess them up.

Hands moved, adding the last touches, the last ingredients. The fumes turned a hue between pink and purple. The students quickly covered the cauldrons instead of giving in to their curiosity about what smell was underneath the lid.

A majority of wizards and witches had no desire to know the scent and avoided it. He considered that a mistake. If they’d smelled the scent, it could save them from incompatible marriages and the process of a wizarding world divorce. They wouldn’t have to rely on emotions alone.

“Time is up.”

His students left the tools on their workstations and put their hands at their sides.

“Tell me something that wasn’t in the instructions that you needed to know as you prepared the potion.”

His eyes moved to Granger who did nothing. She knew. He was sure of it. He was proud that she was holding back and giving the other two a chance to answer.

From the corner of his eye, he saw the Slytherin raise his hand as an uncontrollable giggling escaped from his throat.

“Yes?”

The boy giggled again. “Sorry, sir.” He coughed. “The side effects weren’t listed in the book, sir. If you didn’t know they existed, the laughter could possibly distract you from the brewing.”
He smirked and nodded.

“Uncover your potion and smell it.”

The boy looked stunned. “Sir…”

He wasn't fazed by the reaction. “It's the final test to see if it's done correctly. As advanced potion students, you need to smell this once. Some wizards find it a weakness, but I think knowing your tastes helps you make the right choices.” The boy nodded, and with a shaking hand, lifted the lid. The fumes hit the boy's face.

His pupils dilated, an indication it had taken effect.

“Name what you smell.”

“Books, white chocolate, and ocean water,” the boy said.

“Good. Close the lid.” Snape nodded and walked to the next row, in front of the Ravenclaw girl who was looking surprised at the Slytherin.

Crossing his arms in front of her, he waited for the student to repeat what she had witnessed. The girl swallowed and opened her cauldron. The effects repeated on her and he waited for her to speak.

“I smell sawdust, parchment, and oncoming rain,” she finally answered and lowered the lid.

From the corner of his eye, he noticed the Slytherin had a silly look on his face. The girl blushed and looked down.

Merlin, those two were… He honestly almost laughed at that. It was like something out of a novel.

He walked over to Granger. She stood before her cauldron, looking down at the lid. She was biting her lower lip and her hands were shaking.

He saw fear in her eyes. She expected something.

Did she fear it was Weasley? She said she didn't have those kinds of feelings towards him, but feelings could change. People could change. He was proof of that. Perhaps in the years ahead Weasley would be a better person. It didn't matter because he wouldn't be around to see it. Even if it turned out to be the red-haired idiot, he would remain her friend until he died.

He stepped closer to the table. “Go ahead, Miss Granger. Open it.”

Her hand shook as she grasped the handle on the lid and lifted it. She bent her head and took a deep breath.

“I smell healing potions, old books, and . . .” Her eyes widened, her pale skin reddened, and her lips parted.

He forced himself not the freeze the way she did. Was she upset? Happy? Indifferent?

“Miss Granger, sometime this month,” he said. He feared that it was Potter. He would almost prefer Weasley to that boy. Not because it would be another Potter taking his friend, but because he knew Potter's fate. But healing potions would make no sense as a scent for either of those males.
“It’s Alfalfa Honey.”

It was hard for him to keep his mask of neutrality. From her reaction, he could tell she knew who it was.

Alfalfa honey in their area was hard to come by. One had to have it shipped from… Several irrational thoughts bombarded his brain. It was just out of the question. She wouldn’t be that stupid.

But it had nothing to do with being stupid. It just happened.

Maybe it was a boy from the muggle world. That would be the most reasonable explanation.

His stomach twisted. Not because it might be a muggle but because he actually hoped it—No, no he didn’t. She was just his friend and that was all that was proper. He banished the thought.

“Very good, Miss Granger,” he said, struggling to keep his voice even.

This was impossible.

He turned around and, forcing his normal pace, made his way back to the front of the room. He faced the class. “All of you brewed it successfully. These smells show you the person you love most. Everyone has three scents to identify them no matter what.” He paused, letting the students digest the information. He wanted to immediately dismiss them, but he had to continue.

It would look suspicious if he ended class even a minute earlier than usual. “That is the power of this potion along with being a fake love potion. It shows our deepest desires and attachments. For your homework, I want you to write an essay about what you have smelled and do research on each scent for next week. Class dismissed.” He turned his back to the class and went about erasing the blackboard.

After the room fell into silence, he summoned up the courage to turn around, fearing that she would be there to talk about what the smell was.

The room was empty.

It was the first time she hadn’t stayed.

**AN: Here we are, back again… and…Don’t faint? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think about it. See you on Saturday!**
Chapter 71: Focus on Formality

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 71: Focus on Formality

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March 1997

Severus’s growl echoed through the room of requirement as a spell shot past his cheek. It was close. Too close for someone of his skill verses hers. And he knew why she’d gotten so close.

He was distracted.

He’d been dealing out a high rate of detentions this week ever since what happened with the Amortentia.

Each time a student passed him, he stopped to track the smell. He still hadn't found that sweet honey fragrance she desired. It only appeared during his breakfast, covering his toast sometimes.

He had been plagued by his irrationality until Minerva had to stop him, breaking his circle of ire when he was about to punish another Gryffindor.

From what he learned from studying the foods on the tables, none of the students had the type of honey he ate. He even went as far as to study the plates of the other professors. So the only possibility was either muggles or other wizards. For some reason, it took a few days for him to realize that it didn’t have to be either him or a muggle.

If he were willing to accept all possibilities, he would say he was jealous, but that was absurd.
The thought of being the person she desired was laughable. Maybe it was because he was the only one supporting her. Still, he knew that friendship wasn’t a thing that presented itself in Amortentia.

If he thought more about it, her deep affection could explain some of her reactions toward him. She was of age so it wouldn’t be unusual for her to feel that way for an older wizard. But she was still young and foolish and love only increased that.

He swallowed and he lowered his wand slightly, almost getting hit with a spell. His body moved, avoiding it, and he stumbled, almost falling on the floor like a novice. He growled.

His eyes fell on her, threatening, angered at her feelings. If they were true, it would complicate everything.

She hadn’t behaved that oddly in the past few days, so maybe she knew she shouldn’t fool herself. Shouldn’t set herself up for disappointment. Maybe she was upset that it was him. If it was. Not that it was. If. If it was.

A pain crossed his chest as conflicting emotions hit him.

Did he care for her more than a friend?

Everything he’d done for her flew to his mind. He had supported her, given up his privacy and quiet time for her. He wouldn’t do those kinds of things for anyone.

But friends did that.

Even if he were to have feelings in that way, it didn’t matter. It couldn’t be more than friendship since he had no life left to give her.

He felt miserable for that. Usually his misery was accompanied by rage, but this time it was accompanied by a deep sadness.

It was then that he noticed that no more spells flew towards him. He looked at her. She’d dropped her fighting stance and her brown eyes were fixed on him. He felt warmth at the concerned look she was displaying.

“Are you alright? You’re distracted and you don’t get distracted easily.”

At this rate, he would be killed the next time the Dark Lord summoned him.

“Did you practise your spells?” His question held a cold tone, marking the distance he wanted to have with her right now.

He needed to stop feeling so relaxed with her. He needed to stop their closeness because the closer he got, the more he wanted to stay. But he realized it wasn’t for his sake, for Dumbledore’s sake, or even for the sake of the goddamn wizarding world. It was because if by some freak act of fate he were the man she most loved, it would hurt her more when she learned everything and when he died. He didn’t want her to hurt any worse than she would already.

“Ye—Yes, but I might have been distracted this week.”

Merlin, not him, please. He did not want to be the cause of her distraction. He just wanted her to live on and help her. By being a distraction, it put her at risk. If she died and he was alive when it
happened, he wouldn’t be able to go on. It would hurt worse than wh—

“I see,” he said, forcing his thoughts back to the present.

Granger lowered her head and covered the other half of her wand with her free fingers.

“Did I do something wrong?” Her voice was merely a whisper but it was loud enough for him to hear it. He heard pain in her voice.

He had hurt her already, even if his anger wasn’t directed toward her. It was more at himself, at his confusion, at his doubts, at his despicable wild thoughts that shouldn’t appear. His control was split between his heart and his mind, something that hadn’t happened in so long that it scared him.

He couldn’t let her think his distraction was because of her, because if she did, she would only feel guilt for that. He didn’t want that for her.

“No…” he said gently.

Her body relaxed and, in turn, he allowed himself to relax.

“It—the…the potion…” She looked away from him and gripped her wand even tighter with both her hands.

He wanted to walk toward her, but he summoned up the restraint to stay where he was. Was she going to tell him? He couldn’t let her do that even if the curiosity was eating at him. He needed to turn things back to formality.

“Lift your wand, Miss Granger. We need to practise again.” His voice regained his stern tone, ordering with no option of refusal and achieving what he sought. Her head snapped towards him, her lost eyes finding focus again.

AN: Smarty ones…but oh they are so insecure too...But Severus... Hope you like this, the tension is growing along with the confusion. Let me know what you think and see you on next Saturday...;)}
March, 1997

Severus took a small sip of the tea, careful not to burn his lips on the hot cup. When the liquid touched his tongue, he almost smiled at the taste. After a week, finally he had managed to calm his mind. Thankfully, nothing had been lost due to the reckless stupidity of his emotions.

He rested the cup on its saucer, the porcelain meeting porcelain greeting him with a soft clink. He unfolded the magical newspaper and scanned it, looking for specific topics. The newspaper was mostly boring repeated drivel, but that was welcomed for now. Fortunately, there was no news of any more attacks by the Dark Lord, but he knew that would end. Soon, the world would fall into darkness piece by piece, controlled by terror and fear.

A spark of light caught his attention at the corner of his eye. He folded the newspaper and set it on the table next to him before walking over to the fireplace. Flame after flame appeared until a large green fire developed in front of him.

Someone was trying to communicate with him and there was a good chance that the reason was a problematic student. Dumbledore was avoiding him as if he had a disease worse than the curse afflicting him. He took the potions just to survive long enough to be killed.

The old fool.

He heard rushed and slightly panicked voices through the flame. He frowned. Whoever it was could at least come up with what to say before they contacted him.
A familiar voice hushed the rest.

“Severus? Are you there?” Pomfrey asked.

He straightened and put his full attention into the conversation. “I am. What’s the problem?”

“Thank Merlin you’re there. We need you in the infirmary. Mister Weasley has been poisoned and we need you to identify the venom. Potter used a bezoar on him so he’s safe now.”

His scowl deepened as each word reached his ears. Poison? Potter? Bezoar?

Weasley had been poisoned? How did that happen? He snorted. With the way the boy ate at meals, it wouldn’t have surprised him if he hadn’t accidentally grabbed some and downed it himself.

Though he didn’t know the cause, he knew who likely caused it. Something like that didn’t just suddenly show up at Hogwarts.

“I’ll be there soon.” With a wave of his wand, he extinguished the flames. He donned his robes and left his rooms, making sure to ward them well before he left.

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His long black robes floated behind him, a consequence of his fast pace. He could have used the flue transport, but that would be hindering since he had to decipher a poison. Flue transport left a small trace of ash in the hair and skin, making his sense of smell less than ideal for detecting a poison. He learned long ago that the slightest item or circumstance could cause inaccuracy.

It took a few minutes for him to reach the infirmary. He opened the doors and saw several people with Pomfrey. Dumbledore, McGonagall, Slughorn, and Pomfrey were gathered in a circle like a group of strategising quidditch players. When the group seemed to relax, he felt an odd sense of appreciation.

He walked in their direction. When he got to them, they moved out of the way so he could pass them. He stopped next to McGonagall and looked down at the bed. Weasley was unconscious. His skin was pale but he was unsure if that was due to the poison or his normal pallor. He never paid enough attention to the red haired terror to notice. There was a light coating of sweat on his forehead and a small bruise at his temple, but his breathing was even.

Potter sat on the left side of the bed, while Miss Brown sat on the right. She was holding his hand and looking at Weasley as if he were on his deathbed rather than just unconscious.

“The poison source?” he said.

Slughorn handed him a bottle covered with a brown paper bag.

Slughorn was more incompetent than he remembered. He may have been his master, but he had surpassed the old teacher long ago.

“How did this happen?” He asked with a slow voice before raising the bottle close enough to smell the contents. Liquor but with an odd scent to it. And it was clear what the scent was.

“Well, we were celebrating that Mister Weasley was free of a love potion. I was saving that liquor for Dumbledore as a present, but I decided to use it for the occasion. Weasley took the first sip.” The old Slytherin hesitated. His eyes avoided the headmaster as if he were the one trying to kill Dumbledore. This of course, wasn’t the case.
The headmaster and he knew that it was another one of Draco’s attempts. But how was the boy able to get this into Hogwarts?

Perhaps he had underestimated the boy as much as the Dark Lord had, but he was still sure that he wouldn’t be able to kill the headmaster.

“Potter saved him. Don’t worry anymore, Horace.” Minerva’s hand travelled to the old Slytherin’s one. An encouraging gesture she shouldn’t give.

“But I couldn’t move. If it wasn’t for that prodigy of a boy....” the old Slytherin said and Severus frowned.

That man was a Potion Master and needed to know how to react without hesitation. He should have been the one to put that bezoar down Weasley’s throat. He turned his back to them so he wouldn’t let any antipathy toward his old master show. He focused on deciphering the intrusive smell.

A bunch of curly brown hair moved past him and toward the three teens at the bed. He looked at Granger when she stopped. Her breath was ragged, and her cheeks were flushed.

Why was she here? Why was she worried after everything that the brainless boy had done and said to her?

That was a dumb question. She was kind-hearted. Of course, she would still be concerned.

Hatred practically wafted off Miss Brown, whereas Potter tried to avoid Granger’s eyes. Clenching his jaw, he locked his eyes on Potter’s head, picturing how the broken bottle would look smashed in his skull. He banished that thought and settled for accepting the desire to smack him across Weasley and into Miss Brown. They had the beds to help with whatever injuries the two muttonheads would sustain.

Granger was better than all of them. None of them deserved Granger’s friendship and worry. He hadn’t been a saint, but at least he fixed his mistakes and acknowledged them. He was even willing to admit that he could’ve been, and probably would’ve been, nicer to more people if he didn’t have the Dark Lord breathing down his neck.

“H—Harry…” His eyes moved from Potter to look at her. “How is he?”

Granger had stopped closest to him, as if seeking his strength. “Why are you here? You’re not even his friend anymore.” Miss Brown snapped.

“I just wanted to know how he is. I heard what happened and…”

“Just go away. No one needs you here. He doesn’t want you. No one wants an irritating girl nagging them every hour of the day.”

“I don’t do that you brainless oaf.” Granger’s voice answered strongly, but he saw how her body stiffened.

“Right, that’s true. You just kill people.”

Granger took a step back as the tension in the room increase.

And the worst of all was that the all-mighty Potter had no reaction to her words. He just stared blankly as if he were in some kind of trance.
She raised her head and straightened her posture. “At least I’m not a coward that hides behind people and cruel words just to make myself look better to someone whose affection isn’t worth a grain of salt. I might survive all this Lavender, but I guarantee unless you focus more on getting smarter instead of your nails and crushes, you’ll get your throat ripped out.”

He heard the gasps of the professors behind him. His pride in her soared even though he knew she would feel bad about those words later.

Granger took a step closer to him and turned slightly. He could see her eyes were shining as tears invaded them but didn’t quite spill over. Her throat was tense and her lips as a straight line.

For a brief moment, her eyes found his and broke a part of his heart. Then, she walked past him and the other teachers with her head held high.

She left the room without as much as a stumble in her step.

AN: Some of you asked more about interaction with Harry and Ron…well, things are starting to get in motion and reality is catching the pair ^^ Anyway, hope you liked Hermione’s growing and the silent support despite the circumstances…Let me know what you think and hope you enjoyed. See you later ;3
Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 73: Enough: Part 1

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He waited until he heard the doors shut before turning his regard back to the teens at the bed.

“What was... that?” Slughorn asked, stunned at Granger’s actions.

“Confidence,” Snape said with a stern voice. “Miss Brown overstepped her boundaries in terms of respect to her fellow student.”

“And she didn’t?” Brown said, aghast.

“She only responded the way anyone would. I suggest that you spend the rest of the month giving Filch some company.” He wished he could extend that to Potter as well, but he knew a few people in the room wouldn’t agree, and he didn’t have a reason as of yet to deal a detention out to him.

“That’s not fair! She’s a murderer. I wouldn’t be surprised if she didn’t put the poison in there after—”

He growled out. “Another month.”

So dull.

So predictable.

So bloody stupid.
“But Professor—”

“And the next month too,” he stated. “If you keep going Miss Brown, so will I.”

The girl looked at McGonagall and he almost laughed. Granger was her precious student and she had been ostracized long enough. The old witch had been suffering for her and worried for months. “You heard him,” she said.

The girl slouched. “All right, Professor Snape.”

“We should take our leave and let them relax. They have had enough stress today and giving all of them detentions won’t help,” he said but didn’t take away the punishment already given. His blue eyes moved to him. “Severus, please study that poison and find the source.”

His words were there only for show. Both of them knew who the source was.

From the corner of his eye, he noticed Minerva’s lips tightening. The old woman was still left out, and she always would be until both of them were dead. Perhaps beyond that as well depending on what Dumbledore prepared before his death.

He doubted that his true work would ever be known, but he’d be dead so it didn’t matter. Right now, he only cared if Granger knew the truth. She was his true support. Not the headmaster, not the Order. Just her. Just that young witch with immeasurable intelligence and a mind full of questions.

“I will, Headmaster.”

He bowed his head slightly and watched as everyone left. When he was sure Pomfrey was back in her office, he glared murderously at the three children in the room.

“You’re a terrible, pathetic friend, Potter.”

“But I…she…” He looked down at his lap and fisted his hand in his robes.

He wanted to shake the boy until he lost what little brain cells he had, but he forced himself to turn his back to them. He took off walking before the boy got a chance to respond. He’d had enough of their excuses and of Granger suffering at the hands of those fools.

He paced quickly through the halls, his robes billowing behind him. There were only a few students in the halls now, so he was able to quickly navigate the areas while being lost in his thoughts. As much as he didn’t want to, he needed to fix the situation. Not only because Potter and his brainless friend would need her, but also because she needed to stop being miserable. He wasn’t enough, and he’d be dead soon even if he were.

A lump developed in his throat and he swallowed. His lips formed into a snarl that would scare anyone in his way. A few months ago, thinking that wouldn’t have bothered him. He’d been perfectly fine on his own, and being the most hated teacher in Hogwarts had been a pleasure.

He enjoyed pressuring his students to get the best out of them. He wanted them to achieve something in their lives. Of course, not all of them would, but it would bring a hidden pleasure for him to see those that did. It had in the past at least. He likely wouldn’t see this new group graduate. He wouldn’t lie and say he didn’t enjoy being cruel to some of them, but it mainly was a necessity to make the Dark Lord see him as completely evil.

For a long time, he thought he was. Until that witch entered his life. Now he wanted to be her
guide, her supporter, and he wanted to protect her.

His lungs started to ache and he felt a stab in his chest. He slowed down, but someone watching wouldn’t have been able to tell it.

He got to his office door and realized something that made his blood boil and made emotions he didn’t want to understand swarm him.

He wanted to be enough.

AN: So strong and so broken at the same time…And some ideas are trying to invade his mind…Well, hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday!
Chapter 74: Enough: Part 2

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

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Chapter 74: Enough: Part 2

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Merlin damn it. . . He wanted to be enough. . .

He tried to use his rational mind to deny those words. He’d never felt the need to be anything to anyone. At least, not since Lily. Right now, Dumbledore and the Dark Lord were using him, but he didn’t feel he had to do it for them. Lily. Lily was whom he still lived for, yet had never been enough for.

But in a short time, that had changed. A little brown-haired witch had taken a spot in his life as well.

No, she hadn’t taken it. He’d given it to her bit by bit. She unselfishly came into his life.

And that wasn’t a good thing. He didn’t need attachments to this life. He didn’t want to feel this way.

He growled, the noise echoing through the area. He smashed his fist against his office door, throwing it open.

A yelp reached his ears and he scanned the room to find the source that dared to enter without the decency of getting an appointment.

She was there, leaning against a table. Her eyes were red and the skin underneath them slightly swollen. Her cheeks were flushed and she had a handkerchief in her right hand. He stiffened his legs to remain in his spot and stifled the desire to cross the distance and embrace her. That kind of
behaviour, no matter how this relationship had developed into a friendship, would be unacceptable.

He turned to the door, shut it, and warded it. He cast a silencing charm for safety before turning back to her. Her eyes never stopped staring at him. He pushed back a desire to scold her for the tears, a reflex from his cold, evil professor side. She’d been through enough without him saying anything to her.

She moved her arms around herself, as if trying to hug her own body, and looked away from him. She focused down at the floor, and he waited for her to speak.

He took a few steps closer, moving over to his desk to sit on the corner of it.

“I’m sorry to come down here again without asking but—” She hiccupped and took in a huge gulp of air.

“Stop apologizing,” he said. “I told you, I’m here for you. As an equal.” A tinge of guilt hit him for being angry she was there. But how was she? His wards should’ve gone off the moment she set foot in… He ran his ward through his mind and realized he’d made it so she could enter if she needed.

He cursed to himself, and focused on her.

“I’m so pathetically weak.”

“You aren’t weak, and stop being stupid. Just because that red-haired dullard isn’t here doesn’t mean you have to take up his role.”

She looked at him and gave a brief chuckle. “I wonder if I’m really not that much of a dullard.”

He almost laughed that she referred to Weasley as that as well. “You are not. It takes a special amount of skill to be that stupid. Both of them would be dead by now if not for your intelligence. You know that.”

“Harry is better than me with potions, so I should start doubting my intelligence. Maybe he should be in your class instead of me.”

“So Slughorn says,” he replied, causing her to look up. “The man couldn’t even react in time to get a bezoar down Weasley’s throat. I wouldn’t trust his opinion.”

“But…”

“Developing the skill that Slughorn is praising is impossible for that boy in such a short amount of time. I was Potter’s teacher, so I know his skill level. I know you might not want to hear it, but it’s clear he is cheating somehow.” He made no effort to hide the distaste in his voice. He knew she didn’t approve of his view of Potter, but understood why he held it.

She nodded and he looked away from her. He hated seeing her so vulnerable. A warm caress crossed one of his folded arms and he had to contain a breath when he felt it. So different from the woman he once loved, so enthralling that it made him want to run away.

The insane desire to show her an equal gesture overwhelmed his anger, making it fade away to a forgotten corner of his soul. He would’ve done so if it didn’t make him muse on other things. Things he could never have no matter what he did. Not just because of his vow to Lily, but because his fate was under the control of two wizards. One would cause him to be an outcast and eventually
die, or the other would just kill him when he was no longer needed. Those two possibilities were always lingering over him.

This witch was more powerful than she thought. In more than just magic. She was making him forget important matters. Matters he’d had to keep at the forefront of his mind for so long that he thought they were sewn into his very being.

Turns out, she had the power to tear out those stitches and lay his insides bare.

And he couldn’t allow that.

He took a deep breath and exhaled. “Things will become normal again. You have my word,” he said, proud at how steady his voice came out.

He looked at her and his stomach twisted at the hope and trust her eyes showed to him. Those feelings and that promise were the only things he could ever give her.

He could vow to give her a life, but that was a promise he could never guarantee. He could only vow to try, so he did that.

It would have to be enough.

AN: What can I say…? Someone expected this? Her break, the place of comfort she seeks…
His support, his decisions. Let me know what you think and see you on Saturday!
Chapter 75: Patronum!

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 75: Patronum!

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March, 1997

The door slammed open, causing the group of excited students to jump. He expected that exact effect due to years of experience. It was such a typical reaction and was one he desired.

He had no need to strain his voice because his presence was enough to silence the classroom. His eyes trailed around the class first, memorizing each student and where they stood. When satisfied that he knew who was there and who was not, he walked up to his desk.

The closer the holiday’s came, the more the students shirked their obligations. He was surprised to see Potter and his gang of pests in the room. Potter was ignoring Granger, but the couple of Brown and Weasley glared at her as if she weren’t fit to be in the class. They were the very two he’d throw out of the class if he could. Fortunately, he could take out small amounts of revenge on them.

Then he saw her. She had a small smile on her face the moment his black gaze found hers. The moment her lips quirked, something inside him stirred and his body warmed.

The witch had a power that he had to force himself away from and get back to the reality of the classroom waiting for his instructions.

“Patronuses,” he said, making his voice sterner than usual. “There’s a personal one for every soul in this room, but few wizards are capable of casting a corporeal one.” He paced slowly between the student’s desks. “All of you will try to cast it today, and Potter, you will be the first.”
Everyone looked at Potter, shooting him pitiful looks, and he had to hold back a grin. The boy lazily stood and muttered under his breath.

He shouldn’t complain. This was more torture for him than Potter. He could’ve casted his own Patronus as an example, but that would be dangerous for him if the Death Eaters or Dark Lord found out about it.

He knew Potter could conjure a corporeal Patronus. He’d seen it three years ago when that werewolf almost killed them.

“To the front, Potter, and show them how to do it.”

The boy walked to the front, much more obedient than what he was used to. Maybe he felt proud of something he could do.

The boy raised his wand. “Expecto Patronum!”

In an instant, he saw the silvery mist morph into a disgusting animal form. It brought back horrible memories, but he was able to throw them to the side. That stag had been a sign that she hadn’t been compatible with him. Her doe spoke for her when she didn’t.

He raised his wand and forced the spell to dissipate.

“Now, non-verbal, Potter.”

*See if you are as mighty as they say, but seeing how you treat your close ones, I doubt it. Just like his mother.* He almost cringed as the last part of the thought came to him.

Satisfaction accompanied his smug smile when nothing happened. Not even a faint silver mist.

“Useless as always,” he said, gaining a laugh from his Slytherins.

Seeing how the boy trembled amused him. “To your seat. Miss Granger, show them, as you are the only one who managed to do well enough with nonverbal spells.” He sniffed. “Such an irony.”

Her eyes became hostile for a moment and he felt guilty even if it was just an act. But she would understand. He would never mean any harm or mockery towards her. Not anymore.

As she walked up to him, her back facing the class, she looked at him and let a small grin flash for a second. She turned so the class could see her profile. Her eyes focused, losing all the hostility. She knew. She knew he hadn’t meant it.

“First verbally, Miss Granger.” He made his voice slightly softer when he spoke to her.

She nodded.

“Expecto Patronum.” The silver mist came forth and slowly morphed in front of his eyes as it took the shape of a small animal. It surrounded her, jumping with happiness, nuzzling her hair with care and then, it swam away on the air, floating up and down playfully.

An otter. He couldn’t think of a more suitable Patronus for her.

The otter swirled around and then stopped in front of him. It made a strange noise, as if it were squealing, and quickly began its floating again. It made a circle around him once before disappearing.
All his students’ eyes were on him, likely waiting for him to berate her for the inappropriate behaviour of her Patronus.

But he wouldn’t. It was fascinating.

“Good, Miss Granger. As you can see, the Patronuses reflect part of our soul as much as things we love. It’s often said that a Patronus can change depending on the events of life. Things like, as they say, true and everlasting love.” His last words came with a dry, disgusted tone.

Lily had been his love, but he had never been hers.

And it didn’t hurt as much as it used to.

His class began to murmur with excitement as they looked at Granger with something akin to admiration. He noticed that most of the Gryffindors were doing so instead of being stone-faced like before.

“Try a non-verbal now, Miss Granger.”
She bit her lip, nodded, and moved her wand.

A silver stream of light drifted from her wand like the beginnings of smoke from a new fire. She put all of her focus into the spell. She was so close, but she’d failed at casting a corporal one. The mist was there, but it wasn’t enough if a group of dementor’s attacked her.

“Enough, Miss Granger.” She lowered her wand directly after he ordered. He looked at the class. “Now each one of you will do the same. All of you form a line except for Granger and Potter.”

The students rose from their seats, all of them muttering as they started forming lines. Granger moved close enough that he could smell her scent, but far enough that it didn’t look improper to the rest of the class.

The students were all reacting differently. Some excited, but the majority of them were clearly nervous. Their wands were shaking slightly at the prospect of what they were about to do.

It irked him that the calmest ones were the Gryffindors.

After a disappointing hour of casting spells from his house and irritating corporeal Patronuses from the Gryffindors, he dismissed the class, sending them off with an essay on Patronuses. That earned a groan from the students that only served to anger him further. He was going to add on lines, but for once, didn’t feel like bothering with it. It was their own necks they risked, not his.

They were complaining about learning more about something that could save their lives one day. He wanted to slap every single one of them. He had to remind himself that they were young people being sucked into a war. Few were conscious of how much danger they were involved in. They didn’t carry the worry along with the fear of what was going to happen in a few months. At that age, one didn’t think much about mortality.

But she would. And that’s what he needed to depend on. She had to be good so she would survive. So Potter would do what he had to do. She needed to push her friends, particularly Potter, to be better. And that meant he needed to step in… again.

AN: And decisions are going to be made… Heh. Hope you liked it and let me know what you
think! See you later!

PS: It seems I made a mistake regarding the “Floo” name. I used the normal word which is Flue, and it never crossed my mind that J.K. Rowling used another term. I was used to the Spanish one which is Flu... and now, I’m curious to know if in your language you have a different name for it too…?
Chapter 76: Confrontation

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 76: Confrontation

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He watched as Potter moved toward the door with his group of friends. He wanted to wait to confront the boy, but knew the sooner he did so, the better. He had to get Granger in a better condition.

“Potter, I want to talk with you. Stay behind.”

The boy and his friends halted their movements. He was about to tell them to get out, but Potter looked at them and signaled for them to leave. When his friends left, Potter approached him with his nose high in the air. Just like the way his father showed his haughtiness through the entire school.

That Potter arrogance would be stifled eventually just like his father’s had been. First, through losing people he cared about. Then, through his own death. Potter was just as much of a pawn as he was and was set to receive nearly the same fate.

The hair on the back of his neck prickled when he felt eyes on him. He glanced around the room. He spotted Granger standing near one of the columns. It made sense since he hadn’t seen her leave the room. She wasn’t hiding, but she wasn’t in the lighter parts of the area either. She moved back a bit more into the shadow when he saw her. She probably wanted to stay and talk with him afterward, but he would have to refuse her presence here today. He motioned with his head toward the door. An indication for her to go.

She had nearly free roam of his office and quarters now since he’d set his wards so she could
pass through. She would be able to see him later if she wanted.

She gave a soft smile, nodded, clutched her bag tighter to her body, and stuck to the shadows as she skulked out of the classroom in a way befitting an experienced spy. Crouched with low steps and keeping an eye on the person she was trying to stay out of sight of. Years of being in danger was catching up with her and he both admired the skill and pitied she had to have it. He made a mental note to teach her a few more techniques other than magical ones.

He turned his gaze upon the boy in front of him. His hands were formed into fists at his side, and his shaking was so slight that one wouldn’t see it unless they were looking for it. Good. He wanted Potter to be nervous. He purposely waited a bit longer before he spoke.

“When are you going to stop letting that red haired imbecile poison your mind?”

From the way Potter’s face shifted, he could tell his words got to him. It’d been a suspicion of hid that Potter wanted to forgive her, but Weasley was pushing him to keep away from Granger. It made no sense that Weasley was angrier than Potter was over the situation. The only thing he could think of was that Weasley was ashamed of his actions at the time of Sirius’s death.

“What do you mean by that?” he said, his voice angry.

He narrowed his eyes. “I didn’t think I could despise you more than I do this year. How many more stupid things are you going to do before you gain some sense?”

“I didn’t do anything!”

“You say you’re not doing anything to your friend?”

The room seemed to grow a few degrees colder. Potter stiffened and paled. “I…”

“You left her alone while she suffered. The classes were treating her like a pariah. Treating her like she was a murderer.”

“She killed Sirius…” His voice was so weak, as if he knew his reactions and the reactions of everyone else was overblown.

“Is the mighty boy who lived just another prat who doesn’t have common sense? Are you like your father and make people bend to your will or is it that you’re just letting your friend run amok on your behalf?” His voice grew lower with each word he spat.

“I . . . I needed time to think.” His brows furrowed. “And I don’t see how this concerns you, Professor. You weren’t there.”

“No, but I know what happened.” He lowered his voice and bent down slightly. “And not that I have to explain to you, but it concerns me because I do not like the environments it creates in my classroom and in this school.” That was the best lie he could come up with. “Stop being such a disgrace to your house. You own that girl your life, you know that, yet you still treat her no better than the dirt on the cuffs of your trousers.”

“Stop it! Hermione is my friend. One of my best friends!”

“Best friend?” he spat out. “You’re doing a fantastic job proving it by letting others humiliate and bully her for a year. I don’t know if that was you or your other so-called friend that kept pushing it, but you can stop it.” He slapped Potter’s hand down and decided to hit him again, this time verbally using a shared guilt he knew was brewing within him. “What happened was an accident that
was caused by your reckless behaviour. Though she’s not without blame, you instigated it all. Talk about what happened and fix this. Today.” Snape walked around the desk and folded his arms. “Now, get out. “

Potter clinched his jaws, and walked to the door.

“And Potter.”

Potter turned. He expected a look of hatred and got it. “Yes, sir?” he growled out.

“Miss Granger wasn’t the one in hiding when you needed her. Throw that around in your thick skull for a little while.”

His facial expression changed to thoughtfulness and he gave an almost indistinguishable nod of the head before leaving.

AN: So…despite being a Slytherin and hating Harry’s guts, he knows they will need Hermione and she needs to stop suffering… A lot of people didn’t like the idea of Hermione forgiving them. But…time will tell what happens with all…Hope you enjoyed and let me know what you think. See you on May, 5th.
April, 1997

A gust of wind blew, whipping back his hair, and causing dogwood blossoms to rain down from their trees, coating the area in pink and white flowers. He didn’t normally like spring weather, but this exact time of year, he thought was quite lovely. Almost magical. When the flowers fell, their mixed colors reminded him of some spells and potions.

He took a deep breath. It was the quietest Easter he could remember. Some students chose to remain, much more than during holidays like Christmas, but this year they were quieter and could be easily manipulated in leaving him alone.

Not that any would really seek him out.

“Professor!” His steps halted when he heard the voice.

No one would except Granger. And he was fine with her interruption.

He heard her quick steps approaching. He pushed down a smile, but he couldn’t halt the way his heart beat faster. The temptation to look back at her hit him, but before he could give in, Granger’s flushed face was in front of him. Her eyes sparkled in the spring sun, and she looked at him with an affection that never failed to throw happiness into him.
But there was something different about her. She was more thrilled than usual.

“Good morning, Miss Granger. What can I do for you that warrants a matutinal run?” He couldn’t help joke with her.

Her hands came to her hips in response and she chuffed, blowing some of her messy curls away from her face.

“One has to run to catch you. You walk too fast.”

“And why do you want to see me this early?”

They began walking.

“I wanted to thank you for whatever you did.”

“Clarify, please.”

“Harry and Ron are talking to me. Harry even apologized.”

“And Weasley did not?”

She sighed and rolled her eyes. “I’d have a better chance of tutoring him into perfect marks than getting an apology from him.” She squeezed his arm and then let go. Thankfully, they were out of sight of people. He found himself wishing he could walk with her without worrying about such things. Her words brought that line of thinking to a halt. “If it weren’t for you I don’t think I’d ever have them back.”

It was a beautiful feeling to make her happy. To be needed.

“You were suffering. Though I don’t think they’re good enough for you, you needed them back in your life.”

She nodded. “I did, yes. But … Well, it will take time for me to learn to trust them again.”

“Oh?”

“I mean, how do I know they won’t treat me like that again if something else happens?”

He couldn’t answer that. He didn’t know much about forgiveness and trust. “There’s no need for your thanks. I am your friend, as you constantly like to remind me.” She squeezed his arm again, and he pushed down the urge to hug her. “It’s what friends do, is it not?”

She nodded. “Yes, it is. But still, thank you so much Severus.” Her voice was so soft and gentle that he had to stop. He found himself struggling to breathe. His eyes found hers and he just stared at her.

“You’re shivering.”

It would be so easy to let his walls crumble at her words, with her touches, and the looks she gave him. She looked at him as if he were the most important person in the world to her. He wanted to believe that. He wanted to accept what he knew that Amortentia was telling her.

But it wasn’t possible. He had to keep telling himself that before he gave in to his burgeoning feelings.
“I…I don’t want to make you uncomfortable,” she said, her voice full of worry.

“I’m not used to…this.” He motioned to her hand on his wrist. “I’m not used to affection at all. From anyone. You know that.”

She looked down at her hand, but instead of removing it, she tightened her grip for a second. “I hope you can learn to be.” She smiled and looked back up at him. “I’m happy that you don’t reject me.”

He stared at her, and she met his gaze unflinchingly. “I don’t desire to do so,” he said. He’d almost said he wanted her closer, and for some inexplicable reason, she would probably have been thrilled upon hearing that. Touches like this would have to do.

“I’m glad.” Then, to his shock, she entwined her arm with his, drawing him closer to her with a soft pull. He went willingly. Right now they were alone, their walking taking them to an even more isolated area of Hogwarts. The places in the castle that could see the field would only see two small movements that could easily be mistaken for animals.

He let the worry drift away on the wind and enjoyed the most fulfilling experience of his life.

“You should be. I would’ve reduced anyone else to tears,” he said.

She laughed. “Is that before or after you hex them into Merlin knows what?”

He grinned. “Depends on my mood.”

“I won’t press my luck,” she said. “I promise to respect you no matter what.”

A strong gust of wind hit again, causing the tall grasses to send small specks of themselves through the air. Her hair flew backward, and a scent hit his nose. Her smell… She smelled like…

A loud splash ripped him from his thoughts and he looked across the field. The giant squid had emerged from the lake and was pointing one of his tentacles at the willow tree. He hadn’t realized they’d gotten so close.

“I usually take a lot of care in avoiding this place,” she said. “But with you I’m not as intimidated by my memories here.”

He felt the same way about this area and tried to avoid it as much as possible. But now, it felt just like any other place in Hogwarts. Another of his torments had faded to just a small ache.

“I agree, Miss Granger. It’s easier to overcome my distaste for this place with you at my side.”

“We can create new feelings and new memories.” Her head tilted and his lips curved at her suggestion.

“We are doing that already.”

“That we are.” Her agreement came with a small laugh before her body moved so she was standing in front of him. She frowned. “I wanted to ask you something. Something that worried me.”

“What doesn’t worry your mind?” His voice softened with the affection he held for her. She pouted, and he let himself laugh. “What it is?”

“Well, I… Harry told me something…”
Merlin. Every time she mentioned Potter, he got a foreboding feeling in him. That boy always managed to complicate things. Well, better to just get it over with. “I assume something despicable about me? How I’m a Death Eater with an evil plot to conquer the world with the Dark Lord?”

“No! Not that. I wouldn’t believe that even if he told me. I didn’t before, so I’m not going to do it now that I know you. I would be like those foolish idiots you don’t like.”

“Then what is it that worries you?”

She took a deep breath as if she were trying to compose her words and summon her courage. “He heard you talking with Malfoy after Slughorn’s party.”

Even though he was prepared for something like that, his nerves flared and he cursed every part of that boy. Not only for putting his nose into anything dangerous but putting worry in Granger. Worry over something that was too soon to share with her.

“What else did the little prat tell you?”

“He said that you’re aiding him in something, and that you made an unbreakable vow.”

He closed his eyes to avoid looking at her hurt ones.

“What are they forcing you to do?” He heard the pleading in her whisper, and the worry in every syllable she spoke.

Swallowing, he looked back at her, fearing what he had to face.

When he saw how the light of her eyes disappeared, he knew that he wasn’t prepared. He couldn’t do that to her. He couldn’t make her fall into another miserable state with his mission, with his death.

But he couldn’t let her stay in a world of ignorance either. He sighed. “I can’t tell you that.” He wanted to, but it would be best if he didn’t.

“Why not? If something is going to cause your death it’s important to share it with me!” Her voice rose with each word. “I care about you, Severus. If I can keep you from dying then I’ll help you do whatever the vow asks of you.”

That thought made him ill. He couldn’t let her get that deeply involved in the situation. He was a fool for allowing her this close.

He saw tears filling her eyes. Perhaps he could bring some ease to her mind, even if he couldn’t share what the vow was.

“I was forced to do it,” he said. “I would’ve been exposed as a spy if I hadn’t taken the vow. That’s all I can tell you.”

Her eyes turned fierce. With her messed up hair and bared teeth, she looked like a vicious predator about to attack. He took a step forward, closing the distance between them. Her hand grabbed his cloak and robe and she pulled him closer.

He let her. She was angry and he’d be her punching bag if needed. Both verbally and physically.
“Why won’t you tell me what’s going on?” She tried to be tough, but he felt her trembling. Her voice was giving out every few words, and he knew she was about to break down. “I’m here to help you! I’m your friend. Your ally. I need to save you.”

It would be a beautiful dream if he survived, if she could save him, but it wasn’t meant to be. He’d been at a tentative peace with that fact for almost as long as she’d been alive. His destiny had never been to find happiness or live a long life. That possibility erased when he took the Dark Mark.

Her hands intertwined in the fabric of his robe. She moved her head to rest on his chest, the closest they’d ever been. He raised his hand and placed it on top of her head. After taking a few breaths, he said, “You need to accept that I will die before the battle is over.”

Her arms wrapped around his waist and hugged him. “I can help you,” she said, her voice muffled.

“There’s never been a plan in which I survive. You’re the one that is supposed to live.”

She looked up at him, tears now streaming down her face and her arms still tight around him. The wind had picked up, whipping their robes, dogwood blossoms, and other flowers around them like a blossom cyclone. “The entire time? You never ever once held hope of surviving?”

He reached up and wiped away a tear from her face. “I thought you would figure that out eventually. I should’ve never let it get this close. I apologise,” he said.

He placed both hands on her shoulders and moved her away from him, mourning that he hurt her. He hadn’t expected her feelings to grow the way they had. He hadn’t expected to get so fond of her either. He turned his back to her and walked away, her sobs wordlessly begging him to return to her. To find a way to live.

Even though he heard them, he knew they would fall on fate’s deaf ears.

AN: And that’s how Hermione reacts to Severus handling the situation…And…Should I run away? I hope you liked it and let me know what you think! See you next Saturday.
Chapter 78: Brown-Haired Weakness

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 78: Brown-Haired Weakness

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April, 1997

Darkness surrounded him, but cold didn’t accompany it as it normally did. He glanced around, and his eyes found the only light they could find. He watched as the fire in the hearth consumed the wood, the familiar scene a momentary comfort in a situation of wickedness.

He tried not to let his mind focus on Hogwarts or the scene he had to leave. Those events had repeated in his head every day since he’d left. Granger breaking down in front of him last week had been a part of his thoughts almost every second he wasn’t distracted. He’d wanted to contact her, but he hadn’t been able.

When they were standing in that field, the dark mark had burned his arm, and he’d had to get away from her. Considering what he’d said as parting words, he knew she’d likely taken his leaving the wrong way. It also wouldn’t help the situation if she went down to the dungeons to have a session and he wasn’t there.

His knee ached as he knelt against the hard floor. He bowed his head when he saw black robes come into his line of sight. His thoughts faded and he focused on his current persona. The Dark Lord halted his steps in front of him and his muscles tensed in response, alerting him to focus his mind and cover it with impenetrable layers. The room seemed to drop a few degrees.

At this moment, he was not a professor or a friend.

Right now, he was a Death Eater at his lord’s feet.
Deepening his frown, he forced all his thoughts of her from his brain. His only focus had to be the Dark Lord. He swallowed and concentrated on his skills until he was back in control.

“Look at me, Severus.”

He looked up, his mask in place with his eyes showing a perfect devotion to the man staring at him.

“I assume that pathetic attempt to try to kill Dumbledore with a drink wasn’t your idea.” The threat in the Dark Lord’s voice sent chills through him.

“No, my lord. The boy is still doing it all on his own. A ridiculous failure of trusting Slughorn to pass expensive liquor to Dumbledore. If I might add, my lord, it was a pity he didn’t kill more with it.” He added that with Weasley in mind so some true hatred could come through.

“Pity indeed,” he said, his voice lightening as much as his voice could. “But do not forget our objective is the old wizard.”

“I would never, my lord. He will die,” he assured and bowed his head once more.

Once again, his words were easy to speak and sound truthful. Because it was true. If not by his own hands, the curse would take Dumbledore out.

“I have faith in you, Severus. I’ve always had.” Though he was no longer loyal to the Dark Lord, the hissing voice full of confidence warmed him.

But he wouldn’t turn back to him. Ever. The pull was still strong, it probably always would be, but not strong enough. Now he had more reason to stay on the side of light. Lily wasn’t his only reason now.

She was still a part of it, but another person had taken control of his reasons. He had to do it for his favorite Gryffindor know-it-all. He never thought that anyone would mean more than Lily, but she did. She’d given him more than he could ever dream of having. More than he deserved.

“I am your humble servant.” His words came out softly, and he lowered his body closer to the floor, his muscles and joints protesting his movements.

“It’s time for you to return to Hogwarts. I hope the deed will be done the next time I see you.” That was both an order and a threat neatly disguised as only desire. He’d long been familiar with the way the Dark Lord worded things. So many had died because they didn’t catch it and hadn’t worked hard enough.

“It will be done.”

“I expect nothing less.” The Dark Lord left, leaving no room for questions.

He waited for the footsteps to fade before standing and leaving the room as well, heading toward the exit of the Malfoy Manor. The closer he got to the door, the more his body wanted to run. He forced himself to remain at a steady pace.

He somewhat admired how Narcissa stayed so calm in this house with her son’s potential demise hanging over her. It was easier if it was your own life at risk, but in her case, her entire family was threatened with death. Then again, like him, she had no choice. As long as there was some chance of surviving, she would take it.
When he exited the doors and left through the gates in front of Malfoy Manor, he apparated immediately, not looking back to see if anyone sought him out.

-/-/-

He exhaled loudly and let his body slouch when he appeared in his rooms. He closed his eyes and took several deep breaths as if each one could rid him of the disgust he felt when in the Dark Lord’s presence. He allowed his warm memories to come back to him.

He could’ve been killed so easily today. If the Dark Lord had slipped into his mind suddenly and saw how he was thinking about Granger.

He needed to hone his skills. Thinking they were perfected was arrogant and would cause his death sooner than later if he didn’t strengthen them. He should be ashamed.

Cursing at his growing weakness, he removed the bronze mask from his face, feeling his air intake becoming easier. He removed his Death Eater robes and moved to drape them over the couch. He froze mid-movement.

Why in the name of Merlin…? After their exchange, how could she be here? Since she’d fallen asleep, it was safe to assume she’d been there a significant amount of time.

He threw his robe and mask on a chair instead, not taking his eyes off the sleeping witch. He moved over to the fireplace, keeping a distance from the couch. He looked to the table in front of the couch and saw a few quills and books upon it. She’d been studying here as well. For how long? The entire week? He found himself not minding so much, but was still confused as to why. She had her Gryffindor friends now, so she had little reason to come here.

His eyes moved back to her and watched as she slept. He would’ve already woken up if he felt eyes on him. He relaxed here, but he never felt fully secure. Her features were relaxed, soft, and she slept soundly.

She reminded him of sleeping beauty and he wanted to kiss her awake.

His stomach lurched at what he’d just thought. Did he really just think about…? He made a fist. This was unacceptable just like many other things in their relationship.

Those things still happened, and he couldn’t bring himself to regret them, but a kiss absolutely would not. He was attracted to her, that was something he had to deal with, but he didn’t have to show it. Not that far. It would only lead to a greater pain for her. Not only because of his death, but because he’d soon become the most hated man to ever live in the wizarding world.

He went towards his bedroom and closed the door. He took a deep breath and pressed his forehead against cold wood. His hair cascaded down to caress his cheeks, a mockery of what could’ve been her brown curls against his skin.

If she hadn’t been sleeping, he would have punched the door. He took a moment to compose himself before walking over to the bed. He fell on the mattress as if he were dead weight and closed his eyes.

But he knew no sleep would come.

With a small wave of his hand, a silver mist appeared. He didn’t bother looking at it as he sent it on his way to make sure Minerva knew her precious Gryffindor was safe.
AN: So...realizations? Reaching some tension there...? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday
Chapter 70: Dueling with Truth

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

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Chapter 70: Dueling with Truth

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As predicted, he hadn’t been able to sleep. He flipped over on his back and rubbed his eyes, cringing when he lifted his arm. He was sore from being in the same position for hours. He’d been so deep in thought about the situation with Granger that he’d given no mind to the way he “rested”.

He would have to accept that he felt strong sentiments for the witch. He hadn’t thought of her as anything more than a student before, he wasn’t a warped pervert, then he developed a friendship with her as she aged, and now . . . this. This attraction to her wasn’t illegal or immoral, but he thought himself incapable of feeling this way. The feelings he felt towards Granger was nothing like he’d felt for Lily. Not even close to it.

This was insanity and he couldn’t stop it. He’d just locked himself in his bedroom until she woke up and left. If he were lucky, she would just leave and not care that he was back.

But he knew that wouldn’t happen. She would make things difficult. He knew that deep down he didn’t want that to happen either.

He tensed at the soft knock on his door. He didn’t move and waited to hear something more. Even slowing his breathing so he could hear better.

The image of the young witch hesitating with worry at his door yanked at his heart, but he refused to allow himself to give in. The witch had made herself a place in his heart with her kindness and acceptance, and he needed time to deal with that. To be satisfied with only that. He wasn’t going to be a fool and let his treacherous heart hurt her.
He heard steps fading away from his door. Slow, quiet, hesitating.

A small piece of his heart cracked with each footfall, but he was still glad she hadn’t entered.

He sat up and waited a few minutes to make sure she wasn’t waiting outside.

It wasn’t fear of her that kept him from seeing her. He was scared of the feelings she created in him. He hadn’t been truly terrified since the night he’d betrayed the most powerful dark wizard to save a woman he’d thought he. . .

Thought? No, he had loved her. Just not in the way he…

He banished that from his mind and forced himself from the bed. Those kinds of sentiments weren’t proper for him. He still didn’t know love. He never would. . .

Love wasn’t wanting to smile at Granger’s babbling was it? It wasn’t enjoying her intelligent questions, or looking forward to sharing his silent moments with her.

It wasn’t that if he had to face down the Dark Lord to protect her, he’d do it without hesitating.

But the need for that wouldn’t happen. He would make sure no one ever knew that he felt more for the witch than he should.

But it was purely platonic.

Yeah, and someday you might believe your own folderol.

He cursed and took a step. His legs trembled a bit under his weight and tingled due to the hours-long position they’d remained in. No more of this. He had to go back to his normal life and goals.

After changing his clothes, he opened his bedroom door and listened to see if he heard anything. He walked crept into his rooms, and his shoulders dropped in relaxation when it was empty. The only thing that was left of her was her smell.

His eyes avoided the place she’d been sleeping as he walked over to his robes. A metallic shine caught his eye. His mask. He walked over to it. Beside it was a piece of parchment, one of the gold fangs on the mask barely touching it.

He picked up the parchment.

I hope you are well, Severus. I was worried about you. I’m here for you if you need to talk. Please remember that.

H.G.

He crumbled the parchment under his fingers when a smile almost came to his lips.

“Severus, Can I come in?” He jerked around and drew his wand, pointing it towards the fireplace.

The instinct faded when he reminded himself that it was only connected to Hogwarts. He let
it drop and shoved the note in his pocket.

“Yes.”

Dark robes appeared between the flames, and a hand grabbed the side of the fireplace. Soon, Minerva stood in his quarters. With a few elegant taps of her wand, she cleaned the soot off her clothing.

He waited for the woman to speak the reason for her visit, even though he already knew it. He had sent a message to her after all.

“I see Miss Granger left?” The woman looked around his quarters. He noticed her tense when she saw the Death Eater attire.

“I assume she left before I woke. I found her on the couch asleep when I came back. I wasn’t in good enough condition to make her go.” He left out that his bad condition was entirely mental.

McGonagall’s lips wrinkled. She studied him as closely as one would a potion, but he didn’t look away or changed his posture. He was used to being canvassed by far more intimidating people than her.

“I know you are aiding her with her problem. It’s obvious to all the professors that you’ve done wonders with her. But why was she here, Severus?”

The distrust in her tone made his lips twitch, but he didn’t allow any other movement. “I’m as uncertain as you, Minerva. I assume Granger saw I wasn’t here for our lessons, so she worried. Typical of your house.” He relaxed his stiff posture. “And before you question more, she has free access to this room since I have offered her my books to aid her with her issues.”

Minerva looked at the shelf. Thankfully, he stocked many books that could help with such issues, but even with evidence, the witch would probably never trust him. But at least she respected him. Of course, that would soon end because of Albus. Albus would make sure he’d be completely alone. But he had Granger. If he decided to tell her, he was confident she wouldn’t run away.

“I’m sorry for the interrogation. I’m just worried about her.”

He hadn’t expected an apology and almost let his shock show. “It’s to be expected,” he said. “You have nothing to worry about. She’s doing well. I’m helping her with her magic so she’ll survive and help Potter. We both know she’ll go along with that reckless boy to fight the Dark Lord.”

Minerva nodded. “I had confidence in her, but the more I saw her before you stepped in, the more I doubted.”

“There’s no guarantee that she’ll survive, but now she has a chance. If I hadn’t stepped in her chances would be none. The headmaster and the rest of you were delusional to think she’d just get over it.”

“We were, yes.” She heaved a huge sigh. “I think we were listening to Albus too much.” She turned to look at him. “He’s different now. He’s putting more weight on those young students. My faith in him is wavering more day by day.”

He exhaled and nodded. Though he agreed on pressuring the students to toughen was a good idea, he wouldn’t say so. It was no time to baby anyone. “I understand.”
“There’s something wrong with him, but he’s keeping people away.” Minerva gave him a kind smile. “I’m... I’m glad that you have someone around if you get hurt.”

“I don’t need aid. I’m a Potion’s master. I can brew what I need.”

“Unless you’re in a condition that you can’t brew or administer it,” she said. “It’s okay to accept help.”

“As I said,” he replied.

“Don’t be that prideful,” she said.

“Prideful? As a Gryffindor, aren’t you the pot calling the cauldron black?”

She gave a small smile. “You do have Gryffindor tendencies yourself, Severus.”

He huffed. “I will always be a Slytherin.”

She inclined her head. “Yes, but that doesn’t mean you fully fit it,” she said before walking over to the fireplace. “You proved it that night.”

She left his quarters before he could reply.

AN: More musings and...Mmmmm...some hints and new support around?...Well! Hope you like it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday <3
Chapter 80: Variegating Scene

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 80: Variegating Scene

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May, 1997

“Lift your wand higher, Granger,” he yelled when the witch cast the spell incorrectly, causing it to disappear too soon. He narrowed his eyes. “Did you even glance at the spells I told you to practice? Not even first years make a rudimental mistake like that.”

She shivered and he regretted the tone in which he spoke his words. He knew he was being a bit too harsh, but he couldn’t help it. She was better than this. He didn’t need her being incompetent after the disastrous week he’d had. Every student he came across had acted like a cretin. How was he supposed to help them all when they were so careless? He’d probably already beaten the record for assigning the most punishments in a week’s span.

But if he were true to himself, he knew it wasn’t only the incompetency of the students. This witch had him so unhinged. He just couldn’t control his thoughts when he saw her. She was everywhere, making him unable to forget what happened between them. Every time he saw her, even when it was a brief glimpse out of the corner of his eyes, he had to push down the desire to grab her and hug her. Had to push down the joy that she’d welcome such an action and reciprocate.

He went to default Severus whenever he was unnerved by something, and default Severus was a grumpy, cruel git. The only difference between then and now was that he would now acknowledge when he crossed the line. She didn’t deserve the treatment he was giving her.

“I’m trying. I’d get it if you were less demanding and showed me how to do it first!” Her voice came out with a tone that matched his. Her eyes were narrowed and her hair looked more
tousled than usual.

She was beautiful.

He cursed in his mind at the compliment, took a deep breath to reign in his temper, and walked up to her. “Fine,” he snapped, but it had less causticity to it. He took her wrist in his hand, firm but not nearly hard enough to hurt. He moved behind her. “Right here, is where it needs to be.” It wasn’t until he lifted her arm to the appropriate height, having to move closer to do so, that he noticed the mistake he’d made.

His chest was against her back. Warmth radiated off her like a burgeoning fire, her breath was ragged, and her smell hit him as if it were attacking with a spell. His heart hammered against his chest and he took a small step rearward to make sure she couldn’t feel it against her back.

His grip on her wrist relaxed but he couldn’t make himself let go.

“S-should I cast it?” her voice was soft and he heard the breathlessness in it. She was affected just as much as he was.

“Yes,” he said, proud that his voice came out steady because in a split second he accepted that he was lost. He would be until he died. He accepted the ache to give up everything for her. To break the promise he’d made to himself seventeen years ago.

He wouldn’t, but the temptation had never been stronger. He had to make up for what he’d done, but now this woman so near to him had infiltrated that promise. It was now more about protecting her than anyone else.

A caress reached his free hand. He took a deep breath, filling himself with a scent that caused all his focus to settle onto her. Her fingers interwined with his, and she moved his arm up so it wrapped around her waist. She held his hand against her other side, pressing it against her body.

He saw a glistening figure from the corner of his eye and looked up. The silver mist swirled and formed in the air, sparking slightly at first, but then separating in different strands. They tied and wove themselves together until the intricate form of an otter appeared before them.

She’d done it... Using him. Having him close to her gave her happiness.

They would be doomed if either made a false step now.

“V…Very good.”

She let go of his hands and turned in his embrace. He never dropped his arm, so it was still wrapping around her, under her robe. He was too stunned to do anything. Too amazed that he too could make someone happy. Truly happy.

She looked up at him.

“How do I communicate with him?” She wasn’t unnerved by their position in the slightest.

He glanced at the patronus and stiffened. Its silver eyes carried a strange hint of acceptance along with the playful nature he had seen before.

“You just talk and say the name of the one you wish to hear the message.”

“Hm,” she said. She didn’t turn to talk to the patronus.
“Try to send someone a message,” he said.

She met his eyes. “There’s no one away from me important enough that I want to talk to right now.” His heart sped up.

He swallowed when he saw she was focusing her sight on his lips. She moved a bit closer. She tiptoed up and he found himself coerced but some unknown force to lean forward and…

“Murder! There’s been a murder in the bathrooms!”

AN: Ops…What happened here? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think! I will see you in a couple of hours with another chapter.
PS: This will have a companion draw...
PS2: Sending not so random huggles to my beta :P
Chapter 81: Discovering Golden Cords

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 81: Discovering Golden Cords

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A shrill followed the words that echoed down the corridor. He broke apart from her and removed his wand from his robe. His body tensed the way it did before a battle, on guard, and ready for a fight.

“Go to my office and stay there until I come to get you,” he said and left the room before she could argue with him. He’d hoped she would do what he requested but her light steps behind him told him that she hadn’t. “Granger, do what I say!” he yelled but hadn’t stopped moving.

With the pounding of his steps, now splashing against water, he couldn’t tell if she had listened and didn’t have time to care. He followed the stream until he reached the boy’s bathroom. Smoke drifted out of it, not enough to completely cover the area, but enough that it needed to be dealt with.

He heard a choked cry and held out his arm, knowing she was behind him without turning. If anyone attacked from behind, he trusted her enough to take care of it. “At least stay there, you reckless witch,” he whispered barely loud enough for her to hear.

“Severus, you…your wrist…It’s…”

He looked at his wrist and saw golden cords. The implication of it made him swallow and he entered the light smoke, dispelling it as he walked, and crossed into the bathroom. He couldn’t worry if it was an attack set up for him or even someone else. He was a dead man if he didn’t find out what
was happening. With every tinge of gold he saw, the vow was demanding his life.

Potter stood there, wand in hand, staring at something. He directed his gaze in the same direction, and his stomach lurched. His arm tensed and his hold on his wand tightened.

Draco was lying in a pool of blood, the water mixing with it and drifting toward the doorway. Various cuts crossed his chest, ripping the robe and shirt he wore.

It was his curse. How dare that brat use his curse!

His eyes locked with the stunned boy. If he hadn’t had Lily’s eyes, he would’ve already been in thousands of pieces.

Like father, like son. Stealing his secrets, his achievements, and using them against him. But this time it wasn’t only to humiliate him or use it for his gain. It was to kill. He’d almost killed two people, one of which was his friend. It was almost as if he were trying to make their plans fail. To make everything in vain.

Even his mother’s death.

“Idiot boy! What have you done!”

“I… I didn’t know that would happen. The book was—”

He took a step. “I want that book back, Potter. You better have it in my office today, or I will make sure you die in such a gruesome manner that even the Dark Lord will tremble when he sees your body.”

The boy didn’t move, but he had to. He moved over to Draco.

“Just do as you’re told for once, Harry,” a feminine voice said from the hallway. Granger’s voice snapped Potter out of his stupor and he rushed out of the room. He found himself thankful she’d followed him after all.

Snape knelt beside Draco. “Try to be still,” he said. He moved his wand to Draco’s chest. He froze. If he let this spell kill his godson and himself, Potter would fall. The boy did not have what it took to defeat the Dark Lord.

But others would suffer as well. She would suffer. The lull of death, of escape from under the Dark Lord’s finger was tempting, but he couldn’t take this way out. For her sake, he had to save his godson and himself for now.

When the boy released a cry of pain, he looked into scared eyes. Too young. His godson was far too young to suffer under a weight like this. He didn’t have to look at the eyes long. They closed and his head went limp as unconsciousness took over.

“Vulnera Sanentur,” he whispered. He kept chanting it, and watched as it began to stop the bleeding and close the wounds. He would still need to go to the infirmary, but he wouldn’t die.

Yet.

When the numerous cuts on the Draco’s chest were only scars, he pocketed his wand and transfigured a stretcher for him. He levitated him onto it then levitated the stretcher. He walked out of the bathroom, the smoke long dissipated.
Why was there no one else in the hallway? After all the screaming, he expected more professors and students in the area. His only reasoning could be that Albus prevented it. Did he know what was going on? Even if he were to ask, he probably wouldn’t get a straight answer, so the question would forever be unanswered.

He looked at the wall to the right and saw Granger standing there with her back against it. She pushed off the wall and walked up to him.

“I will go to the infirmary,” he said softly. “I suggest you avoid me today.”

She furrowed her brows but nodded. He took a step, but she blocked his path. What was this witch thinking? Didn’t she hear what he—She grabbed his wrist before he could yank his arm away from her reach and looked at it, not taking more than ten second to do so before she dropped it and backed away.

He focused ahead and made his way to the infirmary.

AN: Important chapters indeed…and we know how Hermione is as much as Severus…Now they need to deal with the new step in the story and their feelings…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. I will see you on 9th of June!
Chapter 82: Another of Many: Pt 1

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 82: Another of Many: Pt 1

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“Poppy!” he yelled as he crossed the doors of the infirmary. Poppy jumped from her seat and turned. When she saw what was in his arms, she rushed toward him.

“What happened?”

He gently placed Draco on a bed. The mediwitch raised her wand and began to check his vitals. He wished he could actually tell her everything that was going on. She’d understand. She’d be one of the few that would. But of course, he couldn’t say anything.

“I managed to stop the curse that was afflicting him. He’ll need a lot of blood, as you can already tell.” His thoughts were so disheveled he wasn’t sure what he said after he said it.

“From the look on your face, you do too. Are you hurt?”

“No, I need to go.” He turned.

“Severus…”

He heard the concern in her voice, but he couldn’t stay and reassure her. Not only was doing that out of character for him, but he didn’t want her to see how furious he was.

“Potter was the one that did this,” he said, his voice softer. “Tell Albus for me?”

“Of course.”
Without casting another look at her or Draco, he left as quickly as he could. He rushed through the corridors, his heart beating so hard it felt as if it would crack his ribs. His legs ached and he went over potion ingredients in his head, trying to organize his thoughts. It was a struggle to keep from kicking or hitting random things he passed.

When he was in his own territory, alone, he’d be able to release his rage. Until then, he had to be the cold and detached Professor Severus Snape.

Relief washed over his body when his office door came into sight. He slammed it open and closed it back with just as much force. The bottles on his shelves rattled. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He took a few steps, slammed his hand against his desk, and then swept everything off the top. Papers drifted in the air before landing on various items and the floor, the inkbottle crashed to the floor, and the quill Hermione gave him set down beside the ink, barely missing the spilt liquid.

“Foolish, reckless idiot!” he yelled. Potter had his book, his spells, and it felt as if the brat were using him. He grabbed the hourglass that managed to survive his rage and smashed it against the dungeon’s wall.

The crystal broke and sand flew outward, bringing a light haze to that area of the office. The hourglass fell to the floor.

That was what he wanted to do to Potter. Crush him until he was nothing but a heap of—”

“Severus…”

Upon hearing her voice, he forced himself to calm as best he could. He grabbed the edge of the chair so he wouldn’t throw anything else. “Stubborn witch. Why don’t you ever do as I request?” His voice sounded more miserable than he intended. He wanted anger.

“I won’t leave you alone.” The determination and stubbornness came through her words.

“You don’t understand, and you never will.” He turned around, intending to make her leave.

She needed to go. She was still Potter’s friend, and always would be. Allowing her to get this close was a terrible idea. He should’ve kept it strictly business if they had any relationship at all. The bile rose to his mouth, giving him an acidic taste on his tongue, both because of his anger and at the thought she wouldn’t be there much longer.

“I understand that you almost died in front of me. I’d understand the rest if you’d tell me,” she replied keeping the calm he hadn’t yet fully regained. “You’ve always refused to let me in completely. Trust me.”

He wouldn’t deny that. He’d refused to tell her the entire plan not because of a lack of trust but because he had been unprepared to lose her.

“Your friend could’ve ruined everything! He almost killed me with my own spell.

With a quick movement, he placed his wand on his desk so he wouldn’t use it when he got even angrier. He stalked away from his desk just until he was out of reach.

“He didn’t know it was your spell for sure, and you are still alive, thank Merlin.” She said the last two words in a whisper.

He nearly laughed at her attempt to reason with him.
“If I hadn’t managed to get there in time, our plan would have been compromised as well. I wouldn’t be able to protect that stupid boy anymore or fulfill my promise. I would’ve died before the right time.”

Hurt flashed on her face. He almost said something comforting to her, but decided against it. The more she heard about his impending demise, the better she’d be able to deal with it. It was her problem if she didn’t accept that he was a dead man.

“Even if that happened, I’m not going to let you waste your life and give up so easily. Dumbledore is still here. He could fit that role too.”

A sarcastic laugh was what he offered her in response. He still longed to carry the hope she had. To have her with him and live a life outside of the darkness.

Things were developing quickly now. Malfoy was hurt, the headmaster was extremely close to death, and he would soon become the murderer of the greatest wizard that ever lived.

This was the end. Her words brought forth the decision to finally reveal all. He’d been waiting to lose the only true friend he’d ever had, and was partially glad for it. If she learned to hate him, she wouldn’t mourn him.

“Your precious Dumbledore is going to die! He won’t be able to do anything,” he said before he bothered figuring out a more suitable way to say it.

She looked confused at first, but then took a deep breath and opened her mouth to speak. “Don’t start making me the target of your anger, Severus Snape.” She stalked forward a bit and placed her hand on her hips. “Stop trying to run me away and expand on what you just said rather than being so laconic. I’m going to stick around no matter what, so tell me everything.”

He took a deep breath. Though his heart was still pounding against his chest, the poison of his anger left him bit by bit. His voice lowered. “I’m sure you’ve noticed not all is right with both the Headmaster and me.”

She nodded, her brown curls bouncing as if also agreeing with him of their own accord. “Yes, I noticed.”

He walked back over to his desk and picked up the wand. He studied her, remaining quiet. Her posture was upright, her chin was raised, and bravery practically wafted off her.

He waved his wand and the pensieve floated from the cabinet. When it was at his side, he put the tip of his wand at his temple. His eyes remained closed until he extracted the memory. He let the silver cord fall into the magical liquid.

“If you think you’re ready, then see what happened for yourself, Granger. You are well aware on how to use that,” he said. He tensed when she walked forward and grabbed the edges of the pensieve. “And I hope you forgive me for involving you in this.”

She frowned but didn’t hesitate to let herself fall into his memories.

The only choice that he had now was to wait for her decision.

AN: And the revelation begins…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you
next Saturday!
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He waited with baited breath as she focused on the pensieve. She was finally learning about what Dumbledore was forcing him to become. All within a short time, she would find out how her friend was going to die even after all the trouble they’d gone through and all the future trouble they would undergo.

He took a few steps back and leaned against the table, pondering what her reaction would be. He was prepared for anger and tears and yelling.

Granger shifted and then lifted her head. She looked straight ahead, her eyes wide. He could see a slight shake in her body. Her hands were still gripping the pensieve.

He gave her a few minutes to process what she’d seen, then instead of waiting for her to talk or react, he spoke, “Now you know what is expected of me, and what you need to say to Potter if I fail.” He made sure his voice was as steady as it could be, but he almost faltered in the last few words.

“I…”

“Leave now, Miss Granger. I trust your curiosity about my situation is fully sated.”

She let her hands drop away from the pensieve and looked at him. The shock faded and her face formed another expression. Not hate, not shock, but sheer determination plastered itself on her
“Don’t think for a second I’m going to leave you alone when you have to go through something like that. What he asked of you is completely… it’s ridu… It’s not fair!”

“As you have learned, life is never fair, Miss Granger.”

“I… I’ll help you.” Her voice grew angrier the more she spoke. He was tempted to step closer to her, but knew it wasn’t wise. The temptation to take the offer she gave was strong, but he would not do it. He couldn’t make her an accomplice any more than what he already had.

“No. The way things are now is for the best.”

“That’s a lie and you know it.” The witch took the steps he hadn’t allowed himself to take, removing the distance between them. “I want to stay with you. I care about you. Don’t be stupid and admit that you’ve known how I’ve felt since the Amortentia!”

He hadn’t wanted to feel pleased to have his suspicion confirmed, but he was. He was amazed that she could feel that strongly for him despite knowing what kind of man he was. There was a time where he was a better person, before the Dark Lord, but no one loved him back then.

And because of the way this brilliant witch felt, he realized even more that he couldn’t let it grow into anything further. Not even if his desires screamed at him to reciprocate the feelings.

The fact that he wouldn’t do so confirmed that he cared just as much. He didn’t want her to end up even more miserable. He could think of nothing worse than knowing of her misery before his death.

“Were you only using me?” Her uneasy voice, softer and nearer, made him look at her.

“I’m not a manipulator,” he snapped, almost feeling insulted that she would ask something like that, but not blaming her for questioning it.

“We both know you are a master with words. Maybe you are like the headmaster.”

He growled. “Do not ever compare me with him. I don’t want to throw you into the middle of a war knowing nothing and only using riddles as a guide. I did not spend all this time training you to do something so stupid.” He moved to face her, his eyes narrowed. “That fool and most of your other precious professors dismissed your depression as something you’d get over. Then when they saw you weren’t, you want to know what they did?”

“Ye…Yes.”

“They said you all had to solve it on your own. They ignored it. I was worried about you and pulled you out of your misery. Taught you dueling and spells so you’d have a fighting chance. Would I waste my bloody time if I wanted to manipulate you?”

“No, no of course not,” she said in a soft whisper. Her body slouched. “I’m sorry.”

“Never compare me with Dumbledore again. I told you I trusted you. I do admit that I didn’t want to be alone, but I didn’t want you to be alone either. I know what that’s like all too well.”

The words he spoke came before he could pause to think them through.

Her brown eyes met his, and with slow movements, her hands moved to rest on his chest,
caressing his clothes and tempting him to wrap his arms around her. He wanted to let go of all his rational thoughts and just relax. He wanted to let this young witch do what she wanted and damn Potter and Albus to hell.

But that meant risking her life, because if he did that, there was a good chance the Dark Lord would win. She was a muggleborn and if the Dark Lord won, she would be tortured and killed. He could carry the burden of anyone else, but this young witch grew so precious in his heart that he wouldn’t be able to live with her life on his conscience.

“Severus…” Her whisper sent a shiver through him.

“It’s Professor Snape.”

“Don’t do that…” He hated how much her tone of voice affected him. He didn’t want to reject her support and warmth, but he knew he had to.

He took a step away. The hands resting on his chest dropped to her sides.

“You’ve mastered Occlumency and have learned as much as you can of the Dark Arts. You have your friends back, and your work with me is done.” He almost took back his words when he saw her lips tremble.

“No!” She replied stubbornly. “I’m not going to let you do this! You’re deliberately pushing me away.”

She was admirable, but that didn’t take away his ability to be cruel.

“Go away. I made myself clear, Miss Granger. Don’t come back.” His voice turned into a growl.

He closed his eyes when he heard a muffled cry. But he wasn’t sure if it was of anger or caused by her heart breaking. It was better that it happened now rather than later.

She was a wonderful woman with a remarkable intelligence. She would be fine.

His office door opened and then slammed shut, his bottles rattling as much as they had when he’d slammed the door earlier.

He took a deep breath and opened his eyes. Taking his wand, he prepared to clean the room. When he looked at the floor, he paused as he spotted one of the books he’d knocked off his desk. It was his old advanced potions book. The pages were much more frayed than when he owned it, but the yellow tint was familiar. He knew within it that he’d see his old scribbling.

His body tensed and he felt a pain in his chest along with some tightness.

He realized that he’d made a terrible mistake.

Another of many.

AN: What can I say about this chapter? Too much information, too much intensity… And Severus couldn’t handle it…? For the doubts, yes, Hermione gave his book back. So hope you
liked it and let me know what you think. See you on 30th!
Chapter 84: No Turning Back

Chapter Summary

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When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 84: No Turning Back

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June, 1997

During the meal, he kept his eyes and overall focus away from the Gryffindor table. He knew what he told her was for the best, but it was a struggle not to apologise to her every time he saw her. To try to get their friendship back to the way it was. To fix a mistake that he could fix. Lily wouldn’t forgive him even if she were alive, Hermione would.

But every time he almost made a move to do so, his common sense kicked in and stopped him. It seemed as if she were avoiding him as much as he was avoiding her, so the few seconds of hesitation on his part was enough time for her to leave his presence.

He studied the food on his plate, his stomach turning at the thought of eating another bite. He dropped his fork on the plate. He bid his professors goodbye and stood. He glanced at Dumbledore’s empty seat.

The wizard hadn’t been present at Hogwarts in the past few weeks. The only message he’d received was an owl a day ago, requesting his presence at the last day of term. Three days from now.

It would be happening soon. He could feel it.

Dumbledore was probably either going to confirm their plan or request something else.
He walked out of the great hall and walked down the corridors, when he got to a particularly shaded spot, he paused. He’d been followed. He straightened, knowing who was at his back. And it was not Hermione. She had a sharp fruity and floral scent that followed her everywhere, one he still couldn’t fully figure out. This person had no scent, just rough footsteps that failed at stealth. He looked over his shoulder.

“Draco.”

“I warn you,” the boy dared to say with an arrogance that far outrivaled Potters. It made him sick. “I will earn his favor back and you would lose all you’ve taken from my father.” Draco walked closer, as if he could match his height and imposing presence.

But he was a dark wall, built stone by stone from dealing with far more menacing things than a blond haired Malfoy.

“This isn’t a game, don’t be an idiot,” he said, his voice a quite threat. He had to admit that it hurt to see such repulsion in his eyes.

“That’s right, it isn’t. I didn’t need you there. He wouldn’t have killed me.” He recognized something off in Draco’s voice. This was… this was an act. He was scared.

“I only wished to protect you, Draco. If I didn’t want to do that, I wouldn’t have taken that vow.”

Draco let his body relax and he dropped his head. “There’s no way out now, is there?” he said softly.

“No, there isn’t.” He had to make the boy believe he was still going to be the one to kill Dumbledore. He had to have no other option than to confront the old wizard.

They didn’t have time to come up with another plan anymore.

He watched as Draco turned and walked slowly down the hallway, the weight of his foolishness bearing down on his shoulders.

That made him even more determined that he wouldn’t let the boy stain his soul anymore than it already was. There was good still there. He could still be redeemed.

“Professor?”

A painful jolt shot through him upon hearing her voice. Why’d she always show up at moments like this?

“Go away, Granger,” he said. That seemed to be his most repeated statement as of late.

“But—”

“Don’t try to spy on Malfoy again and stay safe. The day is coming very soon.”

“I wasn’t—”

When he felt a slight touch on his back, he forced himself forward and fought every urge to look back at her.
AN: Small chapter but with things moving to the point of no return. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 85: Never Alone

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 85: Never Alone

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

June, 1997

Stairs went on and on in an interminable climb. He felt as if each step he took was piling dread upon him. He knew what was waiting for him at the astronomy tower. It was often used for students trying to do promiscuous things at night, but this time, it was for a quiet meeting.

The pressure in his chest grew and dread filled him with every step he took.

Whatever Draco was planning, the headmaster was counting on happening soon. The old wizard wasn’t a fool, and even if he were weak, he wouldn’t ignore a threat directly under his nose.

The telescope came into view, making him swallow in response with a subtle movement. With a couple more stairs, he saw the headmaster. He never let his mask drop as he approached the elder wizard.

He was looking out at the view, making no move to turn to him. When he got a meter behind Dumbledore, he waited to be acknowledged.

An uneasy feeling lurked from his body, knowing, making him sense that this was going to be the last time they could have a formal conversation. As a mentor and a pupil.

Their relationship become increasingly strained year by year as each lie was uncovered.
Every action Dumbledore took showed him that he was never and never would be trusted completely. That was probably why the headmaster always asked more from him than anyone else. He didn’t care to sacrifice him if necessary. Him or Potter…

“Good afternoon, Severus.” The weakness in the headmaster’s voice, and his slow movement to turn to look at him, confirmed his health status. “I assume you know why you are here?”

“I could merely imagine.” His reply was dry.

“I’m going on an important mission with Potter tonight, and I don’t know what kind of state I’ll come back in,” Dumbledore answered with his trademark infuriating calmness.

He wasn’t surprised.

“I see. And I assume you can’t tell me what you’re going to do.” His voice deliberately showed a pinch of discomfort. “As always.”

“No, Severus, but I’m counting on you to protect the castle and the students. I’ve made sure Hogwarts will recognize you in case I don’t come back. It will secure your position here.”

Part of him hoped the headmaster did not return. That would free him from his task of killing him. It was a terrible thought, a selfish thought, but he couldn’t help it.

“It might not be a wise time to leave. You know Draco has finished whatever he is trying to do to murder you. I have a feeling that your departure will trigger it.”

“In that case, my life is in your hands.

He snarled. The wizard’s eyes widened ever so slightly. “Have you never reconsidered what you’ve asked of me? You could be making a mistake. What if I told you right here, right now, that I don’t want to do this.”

He’d tried to view it from the point of view of having mercy, but now he feared giving into the darkness after Dumbledore’s death. He’d pushed away the only anchor to light that he had. What if he gave in and became evil again?

He was still only human with a mind that could be broken with stress and depression. He would be alone again, carrying the secrets of the headmaster and letting himself be a lightning rod to hate. All to make sure the Dark Lord perished under the hands of Potter.

And what if he failed? What if Potter failed?

He’d long become comfortable knowing he would die and had accepted that Potter would as well, but it made him sick to his stomach that she might.

She would help Potter, and she wouldn’t give up finding a way to help him either. Her connection to him brought even more danger to her.

He sighed. He’d done all he could when it came to Potter. If he died before the right time, at least she would make sure his message would pass to the boy.

That calmed him somewhat. It hadn’t been part of Dumbledore’s plan and the old wizard still didn’t know fully what was going on with them.
Dumbledore looked at him with hardened eyes. “What you’ve asked is irrelevant. I will not bargain with you, Severus. You agreed to it and I trust you to keep your word,” he said. “I won’t discuss it anymore.” His voice was the coldest he’d ever heard it.

He pushed back the thought of killing him right there. It was way in the back of his mind, but it still flared. It was a remnant of the darkness in him that he feared would take over his mind.

With a harsh movement, he turned away and stormed towards the stairs.

His steps halted along with his heart when he discovered some intruders.

How much had they heard? How much had Potter realized. And Hermione…Why was she there? Was she going to put herself at risk again for the sake of her foolish friend?

That was a dumb question to ask himself. Of course, she would. She risked herself for a man like him, why wouldn’t she for her friend?

No matter what, worry would always fill him where it concerned her.

He raised his chin and descended the stairs with more haste than he’d climbed them.

-/-/-

He entered his office, his body so tense with dread and anger that he didn’t have the energy to bother slamming his door or throwing anything. He’d been through that already. There was no benefit in destroying anything anyway.

He looked down at his desk and saw the quill Hermione had given him. Taunting him about the mistake he’d made with her. He reached out to take it when he felt a warm pressure against his back and around him. His already tense body went rigid. He hadn’t heard anyone come in. A familiar scent came to his nose, and he closed his eyes, indulging himself for just a moment. She shouldn’t be here, and shouldn’t be doing what she was. But Merlin, he didn’t know just how much he wanted this, how much he needed contact, until this witch had given it to him. He opened his mouth but she spoke before he got a chance.

“I’m not going to leave,” she whispered, her voice caressing him down to his soul. “I don’t care if you shout, or even threaten to hex me. I’m not leaving you alone.”

He allowed his body to relax somewhat. He bowed his head, his focus never leaving the quill on the desk. Her embrace tightened.

 Didn’t she understand that this was unfair to her? He was unable to give her what her heart desired and for him it was a taste of what he couldn’t have.

But just for this moment, he’d forget the future. He’d let vulnerability take him.

“I don’t wish to fight you today.” He said the sentence slowly, proud of how even his tone was. He reached up and placed a hand over hers, caressing her skin with his thumb. He released a little laugh. It was foreign to even his ears. “Do you realize what you’ve done?”

“No, what?” she said, sounding slightly panicked.

“Hermione, you’ve accomplished much and now you can add that you’ve defeated the bat of the dungeons today.”
She squeezed him. “I’m glad to hear that, you stubborn man.” He felt her forehead press against his back. “I want to be here for you no matter what you have to do. I know it’s hard, I accept that it is, but that doesn’t mean we can’t treasure the present. We have to do what is necessary in the future, but right now let’s just…be here.”

“I still don’t like it, but I have no choice.” He meant that regarding both Dumbledore and his growing feelings for her.

“And that means you’re worthy of salvation,” she said. “Because you are a human with morals and you know this order is ridiculous. I know it is.”

“Yes.”

“I won’t think less of you, because your actions might save everyone.” She took a deep breath. “I’ll make sure others know what you are doing for us. I will do everything I can to make sure you live through everything. I vow that to myself and to you.”

A question weighed down his tongue. “You would rather I live than our dear headmaster?”

The sentence came out sardonically.

“I heard what he said to you and saw the way he acted,” she said. “He’s not the man I thought he was. I don’t want to see anyone die, but he is dying already and can’t be saved. You can, Severus.”

Hermione Granger would never lose her stubbornness, but he didn’t want her to.

“Foolish woman,” he whispered, letting a bit of affection come through in the words.

“You are stuck with me,” she said. “I’m supporting you from afar. Besides, I can reach you with my Patronus now.” He felt her grip loosen, but she didn’t pull way.

“I wanted to tell you something else,” she said and entwined her fingers with his hand. “Harry and Ron and I won’t be at Hogwarts next year. We’re doing a task that Dumbledore set for us. One he didn’t tell you about.”

He forced himself to relax even though he really wanted to tense up again. She was yet another pawn in Dumbledore’s plans.

“It’s better that way. You’re a muggleborn. When the Dark Lord gets involved with this place there will be changes. Even if I’m appointed as headmaster, I will have to follow his orders and do things that—”

“You don’t have to say anything else, I understand,” she said, her voice muffled by the fabric of his clothes. “But I will be with you. Please don’t think you don’t or can’t have my support. You are worth everything to me.”

“I…” He found himself unable to continue. He really was hopeless. He’d submitted to her presence and kindness.

“I know the great secret Dumbledore didn’t want to share with you. That’s another reason I’m here. The secret has to do with Horcruxes. Harry told us about everything. We have to destroy them all.”

Horcruxes? Parts of the Dark Lord’s soul? That explained why Potter had a part of him inside
him, and why the boy had to die if they wanted the Dark Lord to fall.

He squeezed her hand, beyond grateful for her revelation. For her trust. “Hermione,” he said and turned around, giving in to the need to see her. “Thank you.”

AN: And then….he falls. But, this time, she is there, showing her caring fangs. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 86: Lull Before the Chaos

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 86: Lull Before the Chaos

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He was focused down at his papers, the light growing darker the longer he worked. Looking up and out the window, he saw that darkness had taken over the sky much faster than he estimated it would. The headmaster was still not back. He’d tried to be oblivious to the situation by putting all his focus into grading the exams. He wanted to distract himself from his upcoming task and keep from thinking about a certain witch. And it worked for short periods. He was surprised at the results so far. While the majority of them were poor, very few were failing grades.

He flipped to another exam and groaned. Hermione’s exam was in front of him. Taunting him into thinking about her. His eyes closed. He could almost recall the mysterious fragrance surrounding her. With a little more time, he’d be able to—

“Severus!” The door slammed open and swung back shut just has hard, increasing his heart rate in an instant and making him shoot to his feet. “Death Eater’s in the castle! We need your help. We are under attack! There are some order members....”

His ears went deaf. His heart had stopped as his brain questioned how Malfoy had done it without anyone noticing until they were inside.

And Albus was gone. He knew it was likely for this very reason. The old man knew Malfoy would take advantage of the opportunity.

The time had come.
He looked at Flitwick. He couldn’t have the man around when this happened.

He was tempted to not do his task, but when Granger’s face flashed in his mind, he realized he had to. He had to do it for the future, so she’d have a peaceful existence.

He lifted his wand and pointed it at the small professor as the bile rose in his throat. He hated this. No one should suffer with Dumbledore’s plots, but if he did it like this, it would be more believable. Transforming him into a traitor in front of everyone.

At least he had done a good job as a spy. No one knew his true motive or alliance. He could feel proud of that.

“Severus, what are you—?”

The professor fell, with eyes of betrayal focused on him. A look he’d long grown used to seeing, but never ceased to haunt him.

He moved from his desk and walked to the door, his heart hammering with each step. He felt a disturbance in the castle now. The place was calling for its master and screaming in agony at the intrusion.

Why hadn’t he sensed a disturbance in the natural wards of the castle? He felt a tiny hint of pride that Draco had managed what he had.

The door opened before he could reach the handle.

He almost gasped when he saw it was Granger and the Weasley girl.

His witch had the best, and worst, timing.

“What are you doing here?” His question was only for his witch despite the other presence eyeing him in silence.

“You know why.”

“Flitwick is inside,” he said. “He . . . fainted.”

Her gaze never left his, and he saw understanding in it. “Fainted...I—I see.”

“You two should tend to him and stay here.” His throat felt dry as he spoke.

Maybe he could keep her safe this way.

“Yes.” From the corner of his eyes, he could see the Weasley witch frowning. She looked from him to Hermione with a confused but stern expression. “I have no options now.”

“I kn—I know.” She looked down at the ground, took a deep breath, and looked back up at him. “I know.”

He closed his eyes and bowed his head, his hair brushing the side of his face with the action. He wanted to have more time with her, but accepted it wasn’t possible anymore. The time had been too short. He’d had only a taste of true joy and happiness. He was about to speak to her, to say goodbye, when something pressed against his lips. It was accompanied by a gasp that was not Hermione’s. A hand entangled in his hair and his eyes shot open.
She was… Hermione was kissing him. Her grip was strong, determined, and he found himself unable to keep his hands from resting on her hips. He pulled her closer to him.

For a moment, he allowed himself to forget what he had to do and fell into the sensations of the present. It was only a light kiss, but held more passion in it than any other kiss he’d experienced.

He wanted it to last forever, but that wasn’t to be. He pulled away from the kiss and saw a glistening on her cheeks. Her eyes were closed.

Each teardrop seemed to cut into him.

His fingers pressed softly on her hips, and he pushed her away.

He wanted to push her further away and pull her closer at the same time. He dropped his guard so easily with her at a time when it was detrimental to do so.

What had transpired here would be a gift from her that he would cherish until he died.

He even had forgotten that the Weasley was girl staring at them with wide eyes and an open mouth.

It was careless of his witch to do this when that girl was there, but he couldn’t be angry with her.

A frustrated growl, transformed his face into a snarl, making the Weasley girl flinch. Hermione opened her eyes, looking at him with an expression that made his insides tremble.

He would probably never know what it truly was. He didn’t have time to find out. The plan needed to be implemented.

“I must go.” His voice was filled with determination but his gaze couldn’t break from her until she nodded.

“Stay safe.”

He nodded. He’d do his best. He wanted to stay and fight with them, protect her, and damn Dumbledore’s plan to hell.

His heart pleaded with him to stay, but he forced himself to walk past her.

Then he stopped.

As if propelled by an unknown force, he turned around in the same way he did when he was about to scold a student, but this time it was for an oh so different reason.

She was facing him, watching with concern and something else that he wasn’t willing to ponder. He leaned down and kissed her on the forehead. It wasn’t a lingering kiss, nor was it romantic, but it was full of purpose, and enough for the intelligent little witch to know for sure that he didn’t reject or regret her actions.

Then, with renewed energy, he started to run, his cloak billowing after him.

AN: So… heh… at the end it was her the one who had to do it. Hope you liked it and let me
know what you think! And yes... something is twisted for future thingys. See you on 28th
Chapter 87: Avada Kedavra

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 87: Avada Kedavra

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The castle was as chaotic as he figured it would be. It was standard Death Eater damage. Paintings were on the floor and ripped, the windows were broken, and glass coated the floors in the corridors, crunching under his feet as he moved. The smell of smoke drifted in the air. The Death Eater’s loved damaged almost as much as they loved taking lives. Even if the damage wasn’t necessary, they did it.

A spell crashed against the wall ahead of him. He rushed through the smoke heading toward him and made a left. The fighting was nearby, and he was tempted to stealthily help, but finding Draco was his first priority. If he found a way to help in the process, he would. He could just chalk it up to playing spy. It’s not as if the Dark Lord cared if he killed a few Death Eaters considering he would destroy Dumbledore. If anything, it would please the Dark Lord that the weak were culled from his numbers.

His wand came into his hand with a mere thought, the magic effortlessly responding to his will. Flashes of light lit up the area and screams and spell names came to his ears above the rumble of falling pillars and occasional explosions. He kept to any shadows he could, trying to avoid every fool student that tried to fight a Death Eater.

When he was spotted, both sides let him move around the chaos without a single spell in his direction. He would occasionally shoot a spell, but it would be in a way where both sides thought he was fighting the other.
He was impressed that the order had reacted so quickly and was now aiding in the defense. It would do little good. The Death Eaters would not leave until the headmaster was dead.

A red haired boy took a step back, colliding with his side, and disrupting his path. He jerked around to look at the fool. From the corner of his eyes, he saw a green ray was coming towards them. One that he knew too well. Without a moment to hesitate, he grabbed the sides of the student and pushed him, and himself, out of the killing curse’s path.

Both fell to the stone floor. After a few seconds, he stood up and glared at the Death Eater, wordlessly persuading him to find another victim. The masked man, fortunately for him, flew to another, this time finding an order member to fight with.

“Foolish boy. Duel with someone you can beat!” His voice was filled with hate as his eyes bore into Weasley’s weak form.

“I wanted to help, and I’m doing more than you!” the Weasley boy dared to answer.

“I should’ve let you die,” he growled. He would have if not for Hermione. For some inexplicable reason, she still cared for the brat.

He sighed. “Don’t make me regret saving your skin, Weasley.” He walked closer to him, grabbed him by the collar, and pulled him to his feet. He pushed him against a wall. “Tell me where Malfoy is.”

“I don’t know.”

“Where are the majority of the Death Eaters concentrating?”

“You want me to tell you so you can help them? No way!”

His nostrils flared and his lips became a thin line.

“Sir! I saw them going to the astronomy tower. We tried but we can’t get in. There’s some kind of shield.”

He turned and saw the blonde Ravenclaw girl. It was good to know that he still carried some authority despite all the impediments he was finding right now.

“Thank you, Miss Lovegood.” His words were sincere. He rushed away from them, not looking back.

His steps halted in front of the door to the tower, his knee protesting at the sudden movement. Longbottom and Finnigan were guarding it.

*Of all the people.* . . . At least if they were attacked they have the dumb luck to blow up a group of Death Eaters by accident.

He crossed between them, extending his arm towards the closed door.

His left arm burned when his fingers touched the surface. He kept it there until the door started to melt around his skin. Then he crossed inside and into darkness.

He searched around him, looking in every corner, and studying every shadow, but made no movements to walk. After a few seconds, he heard voices arguing.

He crept up the steps, careful not to put too much of his weight on each one so they wouldn’t
creek. He peered into the area, and saw Dumbledore stumbling back toward the front of a window.

He was ghost white, his hands shook, his eyes were half-open, and his legs looked as if they were about to give out on him. Five Death Eaters were around him. Draco was pointing his wand at the old man. He looked almost as terrible as Dumbledore did.

He had to do this. He had to bring Dumbledore peace and to spare that boy the tag of murderer.

He cringed when he heard Bellatrix’s shriek of disgusting amusement as it echoed throughout the area. It was a sound he despised more than any other.

He took a few more deep breaths, and then stepped out, revealing his position to everyone present. He steeled his expression, looking more disinterested than particularly excited or moved by the situation. The perfect spy.

He wanted to vomit when the headmaster locked his blue gaze onto him. He didn’t want to cover his hands with more blood. He didn’t want to be seen as a traitor. As an enemy.

The pleading in Dumbledore’s eyes made his soul cry.

There were no more choices. No more strings to manipulate. No other destiny.

“Please, Severus…” He’d never heard the Headmaster’s voice in such a state of weakness. The Death Eaters would hear it as a plea to spare him. Only he and the Headmaster knew the truth amongst them.

He was Dumbledore’s only salvation. But by going through with this, he would be a murderer. Again. He laughed inwardly. Could one become a murderer a second time? Wasn’t one always a murderer no matter how much blood spilled, no matter how many Avada Kedavra’s cast? Yes. He was always a murderer and always would be. This shouldn’t be so hard.

Shouldn’t. But it was. It was one of the most difficult things he’d ever done.

He took a breath as he summoned every desire he ever had to kill. He thought about every bad thing the old wizard had done. All his lies and manipulations through the years. He tried to fill himself with hatred for the old man, but something replaced it instead. The ultimate thing that propelled him into action wasn’t hatred. It was the gift of compassion.

It was a gift he wished someone had given him when he was a scared, lonely, and angry young man. He wished he’d received it before Hermione came into his life with her chaos and her frustratingly lovable stubbornness.

Even though his arm felt as heavy as lead as he raised it, his hand was imbued with a steadiness that only came with years of experience. It and the necessity currently bearing down on him overrode any bitter hesitation.

“Avada Kedavra.”

In his mind, he could hear Dumbledore, with his soft kind voice say in a thankful lilt, “Thank you.”
AN: Many of you asked me if I was going to make him kill Dumbledore or Twist it, I really never thought on doing it because I think it’s an important event and this story is trying to be cannon Snape with tiny touches regarding to Hermione. So… I had to be evil and torture him with this difficult task. Hope you liked it and his thoughts. Let me know what you think and see you the 11th of August. I have another row of docs appointments and probably test so I will only post two chapters that month.

PS: There is a draw on my Deviant art of the last chapter if anyone is curious, be free to check ;P
Chapter 88: The Darkening

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 88: The Darkening

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It almost appeared as if Dumbledore fell in slow motion. His clothing fluttered out, his white hair covered his face, and his blue eyes were still open as he stumbled back and fell out of the window.

His gut twisted with every movement and his body remained tense as the man went out of sight.

He waited. One heartbeat. Two. Three. And then barely managed to take a trembling breath.

Now everything was set in motion. His destiny forged with no chance of changing it. With his lips parted and his eyes still locked on the window, he knew he had to move. He had to start saving lives by killing others. He would be seen as evil to the world and additionally labeled as a traitor to his colleagues.

At least Hermione knew the truth.

It hadn’t hurt to kill the man as much as he thought it would. He didn’t want to do it, he’d tried every way to avoid it, but the feeling of it being a mercy killing, and something the headmaster desired, made it less strenuous on his soul.

He took another deep breath and decided to act. He walked over to Malfoy and gripped his shoulder. “Let’s go,” he said. His destination was clear. He needed to leave Hogwarts and save not only his still shocked godson, but also the students downstairs.
The mission was done. He could make them leave without casting suspicion on himself.

They descended the stairs, Draco following but still in a sort of shock at what just happened. This boy may have been raised in a toxic environment, may have been arrogant and spoiled, but he was not evil. Evil wasn’t born, it was made, and he was the walking evidence of that.

The rest of the Death Eaters were behind him, following quickly without a word.

Without stopping or slowing down, he went through the door at the bottom of the tower. They rushed through the castle, spells flying around them and bodies crumbling to the ground or hitting against the walls. He paid just enough attention to avoid the danger.

“It’s done!” he yelled, telling the Death Eaters around him it was time to leave. When their attacks stopped because of his words, a twisted feeling surged inside him. And when the small force of intruders ran after him, it grew. He felt a sick pride that those radical purebloods followed his orders. The power was satisfying no matter where his loyalties truly lie. He supposed that dark part would always be within him.

He pushed down the guilt that bubbled in him for feeling that way and replaced it with focus. The sooner he got the Death Eaters out of the castle, the sooner the students would be safer. He occasionally glanced around, looking for Hermione, but saw no sign of her.

As they walked through the corridors, several Death eaters set about breaking anything they could as they moved. He heard Bellatrix’s laugh echoing with every crash and explosion.

Not even the fresh air he relished in at times was enough to relax him. He narrowed his eyes when he saw the small cottage on the field explode and the remaining wood and splinters being consumed by flames. Bellatrix danced around once, laughing as if this was the best thing that ever happened to her.

The desire to kill that woman festered in him, but he had to push it down. She was the Dark Lord’s favorite puppet, so killing her without permission would be an early death for him. There were times, including now, where he wish the Dark Lord would order her death. He’d thought about asking for it when the Dark Lord granted him a reward. But he never had. It would’ve been too suspicious.

“Coward! Traitor! Come and fight me. Stop running!”

Everyone stopped. He gritted his teeth and turned toward the voice, while all the Death Eaters with him went silent.

Why now? The idiot boy should’ve known better than to follow them. He’d just left his friends in the castle behind to pick up the pieces. Careless. So Careless.

His disgust turned to rage when the boy lifted his wand at him. An image of Potter’s father flashed in his mind.

Bellatrix screamed and sent the boy to the wet grass. As pleasant as it was for him to see that boy eat dirt, Potter had to survive for now.

“Don’t kill him!” he ordered and turned to Bellatrix. He knew she would listen to him now. He’d done what others feared to do, what no one had tried to do for centuries.

He’d killed the most powerful wizard in the world. One that even the Dark Lord feared.
“Potter’s life belongs to the Dark Lord. I don’t have to remind you what will happen if you take his life. Everyone leave. I will be behind you.”

She turned and the others followed silently.

“Crucio!”

His body turned by instinct at hearing the spell. Potter was on his feet and walking forward. He should’ve known better than to speak an attack to an enemy that had just killed a powerful wizard.

He easily countered the spell, sending it to the side. It collided with a tree, scratching the bark due to the weak casting. Though Potter did feel hate toward him, it wasn’t enough to severely damage him.

Potter sent another spell, forcing him to repeat the action.

“You’re too stupid to cast with your mouth closed,” he snapped, trying to teach him something before he had to leave. His last lesson as his teacher.

He turned to leave Hogwarts’ grounds when Potter lowered his wand.

“Sectusempra!”

The scream made him jerk around to face him once more. He shielded the spell and his eyes focused and narrowed onto Potter.

*That despicable…*

The past was coming back to haunt him. The boy was as much as a rat as his father. To attack him while his back was turned proved he had no honor.

He lifted his wand, and with a silent spell, sent him backwards, disarming him in the process.

His feet dug down into the damp soil with each step he took towards the boy, smashing flowers, bugs, and any other creature unfortunate enough to encounter the sole of his boot. The blackness of his soul matched the sky above him and it took every piece of restraint he had not to place his foot on Potter’s head and press it into the ground until his skull cracked.

He stared down into green eyes. Eyes so much like Lily's eyes.

And felt… nothing.

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AN: We continue and despite all his good intentions, he has to deal with his darkness… Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on 25th.
Chapter 89: Echoed Whispers

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 89: Echoed Whispers

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Power. He felt power. Not because he was dominating Potter like this, but because his gaze no longer had as strong an effect as it used to.

He kept his face void of any expression even though there was a rage inside him. It would be so easy to kill the brat. His better judgment and the fate of the world prevented him from doing it.

But barely.

He kicked Potter’s wand out of reach. “If you’re going to use my own spells against me, at least do them effectively.” He let his voice calm into a tone that would freeze the blood of most wizards.

Potter’s eyes widened and he paled. It must have been devastating and disgusting to know that what he’d learned from the book came from the mind of a man he despised. From his hard work. From his notes. He’d hated that the boy had gotten his personal notes, but the look on his face trumped his dislike with that fact.

“N—no…”

“Yes, Potter,” he said and let a menacing grin come to his lips. “The half-blood prince is me.”

“I…” Potter cut his words when the tip of his wand moved closer to Potter’s head. One spell and he could make the boy suffer to the point he’d wish for death.
“Stupefy!”

His wand moved up by instinct, preparing his counterattack, but the spell never hit him. It struck Potter and he fell unconscious.

He looked in the direction of the attack and saw Granger running towards him. She was dirty and her hair was more tousled than its usual organized mess.

He lowered his arm and waited. She stopped a step away from him.

He was confused. Why would she...?"

“You were angry. I had to do it,” she said.

“He’s your friend, Granger.” He heard the shock in his voice.

She glanced at Potter then back to him. “You’re both safer this way.” She took his hand. He knew he should’ve pulled away from her, but he didn’t have the will to do so. “You need to go, but... I want to go with you.”

He opened his mouth but the words wouldn’t come out. Instead, he made an odd noise in response. How could she want to come with him when he’d just murdered a man?

“Please, take me with you.”

Her request was mad.

“You know that’s not possible.” He should’ve been stern and said no, but he just couldn’t bring himself to do that. Not with her.

“Severus, you’ll be alone.” She sounded on the verge of tears, and studying her eyes, he saw her voice indeed matched her gaze.

Alone.

He was always alone until she came into his life. Then something clicked in him and he made peace with the fact that he wanted to accept and take her with him. But wanting to do something and actually having the common sense not to do it were what made a desire fine to have. It wouldn’t be fine for either of them, if he agreed to it.

“Potter needs you with him. Think straight, Her—Granger.”

She pulled her hand away and nodded. He missed the warmth for only a second. She took a step closer, her hands went into his hair, and she pressed her lips against his for the second time that night.

And for the second time, shock, warmth, and the desire to hold her forever overtook him.

His arms surrounded her in his black cloak, as if he were a bat wrapping her in dark wings, and he responded to the kiss with more fervor than what occurred earlier.

When they pulled away, she was trembling outwardly just as much as he was inwardly. Her cheeks were flushed and her lips were red.

“Stay safe,” she said. “Contact me if you can do it without putting yourself in danger.”
He let himself smirk. “I’m already in danger.”

She pouted for a second and then let a little chuckle leave her. “You know what I mean.”

“Yes,” he said. “I know.”

Her face turned back to a concerned expression. “Severus, I mean it. I…I couldn’t bear it if you…”

“I will contact you if I can, I promise.”

They stared at each other, neither wanting to walk away. Seconds later, some screams in the distance made it necessary. “Goodbye, Mis—” He frowned. Then took a deep breath. “Hermione. Goodbye, Hermione.”

She smiled while holding back tears. “Goodbye, Severus.”

He forced himself to turn and let a façade of darkness and evil cover his expression. Then he apparated away, leaving the place he’d called home for so long. But he’d still have his good memories of this place.

And the whisper of his name on her lips would echo in his mind forever.

**AN: Hermione breaking the darkness…but she is too having moment of weakness…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on 8th**
Chapter 90: The Dark Lord’s Gift

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 90: The Dark Lord’s Gift

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Screams of victory tortured his ears as he walked on the stone path leading to the Malfoy manor entrance. Every Death Eater raised their wands, sending a spurt of magic to the sky as he passed them.

It made him sick. He wanted to find a quiet place and let his mind wander. He wanted to remember the warmth he’d felt just half an hour ago, but his current environment reminded him that he was a murderer.

He should be mourning the loss of Dumbledore, not being praised for it.

This was his life now. With taking Dumbledore’s life, he brought darkness to the world. It would spread with almost no resistance. Almost. He knew many that would fight until their last breath. That would make sure the Dark Lord would have the hardest time possible succeeding in his goals.

That brought him hope.

When he got to the end of the path, he stepped up on the first of several marble stairs. The cries of victory went silent when the Dark Lord, who was standing on the top stair, raised his hand.

He bowed. Now, despite all his emotions running wild, the guilt, the affection, the pride, and the regret, he had to continue Dumbledore’s plan.
“Severus. You made this day one of the most joyful of my life.” He felt a cold hand on his
shoulder. He wanted to fight the Dark Lord there, try anything to destroy him. “Raise, my friend. All
of your comrades know what you did for me, and you will be awarded for it.”

He did as ordered, letting his thoughts fall under his mental shields. The Dark Lord guided him
to his side. He looked at the small inner circle. All of them were bowing.

Despite what he’d done, a sick satisfaction rushed through him. These people had always hated
him, and now they knelt. He’d once wanted it to happen, so he’d have a sense of power and
belonging. He wanted to see these people’s pride destroyed. Sadly, he knew they were doing it out of requirement and because of fear. They didn’t respect him at all. They would’ve already tried to kill him if it weren’t for the Dark Lord. Any of them would stab him in the back if they got a chance.

But they all knew. If anyone were going to take his life, it would be the Dark Lord.

“I only wish to serve,” he responded with humility as he closed his eyes. The Death Eaters
released another victory cry.

“Still, it will make me happy to give you one of my skills, Severus.”

He knew he could not reject it, so he said, “If it is your desire, I will accept it, my lord.” The
fact that the Dark Lord would give something so substantial was proof he trusted him. He was selfish
and had never shared a substantial portion of his power or knowledge with anyone.

“Come. Let’s go inside while your brothers revel in our victory.” The Dark Lord turned and
walked inside the manor. He waited a few seconds and watched as the Death Eaters disappeared one
by one. He hoped they wouldn’t cause too many casualties on muggles and muggleborns.

At least, Granger was still safe at Hogwarts. For now at least.

He followed the Dark Lord until he stopped in a small study at the far end of the manor. To his
shock, he put up a few wards. This had to be a substantial gift if the Dark Lord was being so
cautious.

But what would be the consequences such a gift would have on his body. What if he could not
handle it?

“Severus.” The smile the Dark Lord had sent chills through him, but his face, remained stoic.
“From the first time I saw you as a young man, I knew you would do great things. I knew you would
be an excellent hand to aid on my quest. One in which I could trust. You and Bellatrix are my most
faithful servants, but you went beyond my expectations. You did what no one else could. And for
that I want to gift you something in addition to the leadership of Hogwarts.”

The Dark Lord pointed his wand at his own chest.

Severus remained quiet and watched the wizard’s every move, being sure not to react to what
he was doing.

When the wand touched the Dark Lord’s skin, a black substance appeared. It twisted around
the wooden material, stopping a centimeter from his long nails.

“Can I ask what you’re offering, my lord? I’ve never seen this technique used.” His voice
displayed inquisitiveness more than worry.
“Ever curious aren’t you, Severus. You will see. Do not worry. I won’t let one of my best men fall ill for long.” The reassurance was enough to calm him. As evil as this man could be, he needed him alive. So he could be sure, that whatever the Dark Lord was gifting wouldn’t kill him right now.

“I am honored,” he said and kneeled. The Dark Lord pointed the wand towards him. The substance shot off the wand and slammed into him. He stiffened and steadied himself so he wouldn’t fall backward.

For the first few seconds, his body grew hot, as if flames surrounded him. Then, the skin all over his body felt like it was being pierced but several thousand small needles. He clinched his teeth and kept his lips shut, acting as if it didn’t hurt. It reminded him of the feeling of taking the Dark Mark, but much more bearable.

The pain eased to a steady ache that was no worse than a light muscle cramp. He slowly let himself relax, so the Dark Lord wouldn’t notice how much pain he’d experienced. He looked down at his hand and noticed it was bleeding. He stood and began rubbing the blood away.

“The sensation will fade,” the Dark Lord said. “When it does, the skill will meld with your powers, letting you use the ability to cross the skies at your desire as I do. You should be able to do it easily considering your intelligence.”

His eyes widened. Truthfully, that was a power of the Dark Lord’s that he always envied, so to have it now was exciting.

The gift was of no consequence to the Dark Lord, for it didn’t threaten his position and power.

He was grateful that was all the gift was. It was easily hidden and would not raise envy in the other Death Eaters. He already had enough to worry about.

The Death Eater’s joy wouldn’t last forever. Soon it would be back to the plotting, the backstabbing, and them doing anything to get his position. He had to be ready for that.

And ready for any attacks coming from the Order.

He had solidified his position and his life was more at risk than ever. Right now, he was the most hated wizard in the world for both killing Dumbledore and being favoured by the Dark Lord.

But he was ready for this. Because of her, he was ready.

He was alone physically, but out there, he knew she was supporting him. And that support gave him courage and a will to continue.

Until the day he died. He would never be truly alone.

AN: Strong man but... still a man. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 91: Burial of Bitterness

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 91: Burial of Bitterness

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June 1997

The cries sounding through the area made him just as sick as the ones made by the Death Eaters the night of Dumbledore’s death, but for a different reason. He cringed as he heard the arrows whooshing through the area and the Mermen singing along with the phoenix in the sky. Heartbreaking sobs pierced through all of that, letting the world know of the mourning taking place.

He wanted to be amongst them, but for obvious reasons, he could not. He might’ve cried, but that ability had been beaten out of him as a child. Very little would ever elicit that kind of response in him. And he hadn’t forgotten the way Dumbledore had treated him. He missed the man, but the grudge against him would always be there.

So he stood and watched from a safe position in the darkness, able to witness all the events with almost perfect clarity. His face showed nothing, but his heart was filled with remorse and his mind replayed the image of Albus Dumbledore falling by his hand.

He watched as they closed the white porcelain tomb and more people cried. He took a step back, further into the darkness, despite being under a disillusionment charm. Though he was concealed with a spell, he wouldn’t risk any chance that the dozens upon dozens of wizards present would see him.

For now, the ministry wanted him. That would change as soon as the Dark Lord gained control.
That would take less than a few months. Death eaters were now openly doing whatever the Dark Lord said to do and very little could stop them.

The first thing they’d done was take over Azkaban and the dementors. They’d freed everyone that was captured, including his old friend Lucius Malfoy. If he could be called that after all the time that had passed.

He just had to stay out of sight until the Dark Lord forced the governors of the school to install him as headmaster. Which he knew would not be difficult, considering the castle welcomed him. That would be something that the smarter wizards would find odd, but would probably dismiss.

He closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath. He felt the castle’s protection of him. It strummed through him like a steady hum. He could sense what was happening within it. He noticed that no matter how the sun changed its position, it seemed as if he were always covered in shadows.

It recognized him just as Dumbledore said it would. It sensed in him that he wanted to aid the students. That he wasn’t corrupted. He never knew how strong of a connection the headmasters’ had with the castle, but now he did.

Soon he’d be able to set foot here without the charm, and he couldn’t help but wonder what would happen. He knew the staff and teachers would make trouble for him and whoever else the Dark Lord placed there, but to what extent both intrigued and worried him.

It wouldn’t be his comfortable home anymore, but a field of defiance and hatred to navigate amongst.

_Not much different from your school days, only with more Potter-like people._

He scanned the area ahead. It was still filled with people who’d come to pay their respects and say goodbye to one of the most loved wizards. One of their heroes and one of their last hopes. Now all the pressure fell onto Potter.

In reality, Granger was the most important player in all of this. Without her, Potter would not succeed. He wouldn’t tell her that since she would stress and possibly mess up under that pressure.

His eyes sought her in the crowd. She was easy to find. Her untamed brown curls were a stark contrast to all the straight hair and pointed hats. She wasn’t looking at Dumbledore’s tomb or the speakers. Her gaze was focused on the phoenix flying around the area. There weren’t any tears in her eyes. In fact, the expression on her face was one of deep thought. He’d seen it enough during the times they spent together.

His stomach lurched when he saw an arm slowly move around her shoulders. One that belonged to the brainless red haired Weasley he had saved. She looked at him for a few seconds, said something, and then stood and walked away.

Many other attendees stood, and after leaving the land of Hogwarts, apparated away from the area.

Soon he’d be able to say goodbye to the headmaster before heading back to the Malfoy’s Manor where he was hiding. The Dark Lord had insisted on inviting him there since Spinner’s End was now nothing more than ash. He let the Dark Lord assume it was retaliation for Dumbledore’s death.

Little by little, the mass started to fade until only a few people were left. Hagrid and Minerva were two that he could distinguish. Those people who actually treated him decently now despised
him down to his very soul.

He closed his eyes. It was a price he had to live and perish with.

“Is it you? I see your silhouette,” Hermione said.

His eyes shot open. How it was possible? No one should be able to see him. But maybe… maybe the castle let her. She stood in front of him, giving a sad smile.

Should he pretend not to be there? He looked around and saw the area was void of people. Not even her friends had stayed.

He wanted and needed to talk to her. The last encounter they had ended on extremely affectionate actions that he couldn’t bring himself to regret.

It was dangerous, but he couldn’t make himself stay silent as she took another step towards him.

“Yes, I’m here,” he said.

Her expression was full of a warmth that he didn’t deserve. He’d missed it.

“You’re taking a huge risk,” she said. “I thought you were a Slytherin not a reckless Gryffindor like me.”

He had to bite his tongue to keep from laughing. Despite the humour, he could still hear the concern, sadness, and tiredness in her tone. Hermione leaned her back against the castle wall, almost touching his disillusioned body.

He spoke softly. “I had to come. I needed to say goodbye and pay my respects to him.”

She nodded.

“I understand…”

Her words seemed sincere but there was more that she wasn’t saying. Something that tensed his muscles in apprehension. “But?” he prompted.

“It’s unfair. Everyone hates you even though you were as much a victim as anyone.” Her words came with a hint of rage.

“They must hate me for this plan to work. It will help Potter destroy the Dark Lord. You can’t tell anyone what truly happened. Besides, they wouldn’t believe it without proof.”

Granger lowered her head. “I know that but… I hate it. I hate it so much.”

“I’m sorry.” His lips parted his voice full with remorse. For dragging her into this, for making her suffer, for letting her fall in love with him. He’d never expected such an unlikely thing to happen.

“You have nothing to be sorry for, but we should talk about what happened. You know my feelings but…”

“Now is not the proper time to do so…” He finished with a soft velvet voice when her words never came back. “We both have important roles. Too important for this right now.” Her head rose, and she looked to the place in where he was hidden. “But… I will find you.”
He knew it was reckless of course, but he would need her aid to check on Potter. But not only that. He needed to make sure she was okay.

A small smile returned to her face, confirming he’d made the right choice, even if it would only create more wounds in the end.

“I’m holding you to your word, so you’d better stay alive,” she replied with a stern tone.

That would be the hardest thing to do, but he’d try.

“Run along, Granger and be sure not to get yourself killed either.”

Her life was more important than his was.

He was a pawn while she was a queen.

She nodded and he pushed away from the castle wall. He scanned the area and saw no one was there but them.

“Do you want me to stay?” she asked with a quiet voice. There was no intrusiveness in her tone.

The dimensions of her support amazed him.

But he had to do this alone.

“No,” he replied and took a deep breath, “but I appreciate the offer.”

He heard the rustle of robes. And then, a tentative hand pressing against his back. Only for a moment. It was enough to let him know that she accepted his decision. Then the warmth left, along with the owner that exuded it.

When her footsteps faded, he exhaled and walked towards the marble tomb covered in flowers and draped with bands of heroism. Each step he took felt more strangling than the other.

He stopped in front of the tomb and touched it. Everything he’d wanted to say disappeared. All the bitterness festering inside him vanished and was replaced with resolve. He let a small smirk come to his face. As for the first time in a long time, he felt a sense of purpose and was at a true peace inside his soul.

“I’ll protect them, Albus.”

AN: New promises in the middle of chaos…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 92: Significant Seat

July, 1997

A few weeks of uncontrolled madness followed the fall of the hope and security that Albus Dumbledore provided. The attacks on muggles, muggleborns, and blood traitors had started.

The Death Eaters assigned to those tasks made sure to paint the street with blood and the sky with a green death mark. They screamed for their actions to be known so they could infuse fear in the population.

No one was safe unless they were a radical pureblood that adored the Dark Lord.

All the talks and gloating about how many people they killed made him increasingly nauseated. He felt useless waiting there. He was anxious to do something. Anything. Even if people hated him now. He needed to know if Granger was okay.

Granger was with Potter and that made her even more at risk. Every time the door to the manor opened, he feared hearing she’d been killed, and was terrified she might be brought here for all to torture.

He needed contact with the outside world to gain some balance. He needed to know about victories from the other side instead of only theirs. None of them would report anything negative to the Dark Lord right now. It was much too risky. All he knew was that they were starting to control...
the ministry; he didn’t know who died during that process.

“Severus.” The hissing at his back made him turn and kneel. The Dark Lord smiled and waved his hand. “There is no need for that, my friend. Raise and come with me. Your brothers will be here soon with news and I want you there.”

“Of course, my lord.” He did as his master ordered. Silence surrounded them until they reached a large and long oak table with numerous empty chairs. They used this meeting room now.

The Dark Lord touched the table with his nails until he reached the main seat. He slowly sat down. From the corner of his eye he saw a slow movement creep towards him as Nagini twisted and twined around the chair, finally resting his head on the Dark Lord’s shoulder. The man scratched under her jaw with the same delicateness as one would a cat.

The Dark Lord looked at him. “Come to my right side. You have earned it.”

His eyes widened at the offer. That was the most respect the Dark Lord had ever shown him. If he offered him that seat, it would be in front of the inner circle’s eyes. Clearly making it known he should be respected by all of them. That if he were crossed, it would mean death for whoever did it. It meant he was the second in the command.

Severus bowed and took the seat in silence. Only the serpent hissed at him in response, opening her jaws with a threatening movement. He remained emotionless, looking bored at the serpent.

The Dark Lord laughed. “Nagini is just approving you.” The Dark Lord’s reassurance sounded strange.

“I am honored.”

His simple response was enough to satisfy the Dark Lord. Many footsteps and various cheers sounded through the house. They got closer and closer until the people finally entered the room.

The cheerfulness ended when their eyes went to him and where he was seated. They all knew the significance.

“Sit down,” the Dark Lord said. “I am sure all of you have wonderful news for us.”

He ignored the hate that the others cast at him. This had been arranged by the Dark Lord himself and no one would dare to complain in his presence.

When all of them were seated, a small hiss from the serpent caused them all to turn their eyes upon the Dark Lord.

“Malfoy, did you achieve what I asked of you,” the Dark Lord asked. Then his voice turned to disgust. “Or did you fail me again?”

The blonde man trembled. “Y-yes my lord, I managed to persuade the governors of the school and they finally accepted him.”

Severus was surprised his voice came out as steady as it did. He could see a slight sheen of sweat on his old friend’s face. Lucius had not talked to him since his return, so he wasn’t sure where he stood.

“Excellent,” the Dark Lord said with a grim smile. “Now, Severus, you can finally return to Hogwarts and take control as headmaster. I assume that McNair did his work too?” His head turned
to the named man.

“Yes. We are starting to control the press, and the orders the ministry had against Snape have been reversed. He’s free to walk around now.

Free, but not safe. He would never be safe again.

But he could finally leave this place. It wouldn’t be home anymore. No one would accept him except the damned pictures of former headmasters, but it was better than living here.

“Very good,” he said. “But we still need to reinforce our place in the ministry. Replace the people who are not allied with our cause. But first, we will continue to infiltrate. We will not make a mistake by rushing it.” His voice was both praise and a threat. “You will take the position of headmaster, Severus. Starting tonight, I want you there. You are to start imparting our ideology onto the classes and tame those rebellious teachers. We shall see later if they will need to be replaced.”

“Yes, my lord.” There wasn’t a direct order as to how he was to do that or how often, so he had that loophole to work with. He knew the staff would rebel against him, either subtly, downright refuse, or some may even quit. He knew a few who would not dare leave their students behind. Minerva being one of them.

And he probably had a few Slytherin students that would be watching his move and reporting to their parents. In turn, the parents would try to use that against him.

“Now,” the Dark Lord said, “Dolohov, you said you had a matter of importance to discuss?”

Dolohov. He was the one that had injured Granger. He looked to the man. His chin was raised and his posture was straight. As if he were nobler than anyone in this room was. Arrogance practically wafted off him.

“We have been keeping tabs on those three pests,” Dolohov said. “Nothing abnormal is going on, but the mudblood is being especially careless it seems.”

“How so?” the Dark Lord asked.

“She goes out into her muggle world freely as if it’s safe.” When the man laughed, the hairs on Severus’s neck stood.

He was talking about…

“She’s Potter’s friend.” Dolohov added, stating the obvious, his grin widening. “She was there at the ministry during our fight. I need to repay her for something.”

His heart drummed against his ribcage. He couldn’t blame her because she was a target and it was normal they were keeping tabs on those three. Still, she shouldn’t be so reckless. It wasn’t like her, but maybe being in the muggle world gave her no choice. That world was different. There was no visible war, and of course, she had muggle parents that wouldn’t believe the madness that their daughter was caught up in.

“Severus, do you have any suggestions on what we could do with the mudblood. You do have experience dealing with them,” he said.

Severus’s blood grew cold. Fast. Think of something.

“If she’s killed, it will give Potter more fuel against you,” Severus said. “And possible
strengthen the cause even more. She’d become a martyr.”

“Hm…” The Dark Lord said. “Her parents would be sufficient. Their deaths would take her down enough. Dolohov, you are to find her parents and kill them, but do not harm the girl.”

Dolohov gritted his teeth, glared at him, and then bowed his head in acquiescence.

Before anyone could blink, the Dark Lord had his wand out. “Crucio,” Dolohov fell from his chair, screaming and writhing in pain. The Dark Lord raised his chin and his wand went back into his robes. “From now on, don’t presume your personal grudges have any importance to me.”

He sat back down and everyone waited until Dolohov sat back in his chair. “Since that’s out of the way, I will see you all next week. It is expected you all will have satisfactory reports,” he said, the threat clear in his voice. Everyone stood. “Severus, stay a moment.”

As everyone left, he waited with a raging heart. He needed to get this information back to Hermione as soon as possible or her parents would pay the consequence.

“Severus, I know your task will take time, so I won’t be offended if you don’t regularly attend our meetings. Still, I want to keep you informed, so I might visit Hogwarts in the future.”

“I would be honored, my lord.” Not knowing when the Dark Lord would make an appearance would make his role even more difficult. He would have to manipulate information even more intricately than he had in the past.

But for now, he had a priority. As soon as he left, he would try to contact Hermione and tell her to make sure her parents were safe. It was the least he could do for the witch.

But sadly, trying was all he could do.

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AN: Evil plans causing panic. Oh well, hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 93: Headmaster Snape

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 93: Headmaster Snape

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Hogwarts’ gates opened for him as soon as his feet hit the grass on the edge of Hogwarts’ territory. He hadn't expected to find Hogsmeade already infested and controlled by Death Eaters. But what startled him most was what he felt as he walked to the castle. Multiple shadows whipped across the sky, making the cooling fall even colder. The Dark Lord hadn’t mentioned Dementors would be around. Hogwarts had just turned into Azkaban for children and teens as far as he was concerned.

The Death Eaters were in full control of Hogwarts’ now and he hoped the half-blooms and muggleborns had enough sense to stay at their homes. He’d seen it announced in the newspapers that Hogwarts was now only accepting students who had a “full magical lineage”. Code for purebloods. That was how the purge would begin. Within a few months, if no one stopped him, Britain would be under the Dark Lord’s control.

But he still held out a little hope. Potter still had time to find the Horcruxes.

As he approached the doors to the castle, he saw a group waiting. A group of people he’d known for years, but who truly never knew him. Not the real him behind the spy, behind the murderer.

He halted when he was in front of them and placed his hands behind his back as he studied each. He was used to receiving expressions like theirs, so their looks of anger and even betrayal didn’t sting him as much as he thought they might. One person didn’t appear to carry any hatred. Just a stern expression graced Pomfrey’s features. And there was something off about Minerva as well,
but he couldn’t place what it was.

“Snape.” His eyes didn’t move from the other teachers as a couple walked to his side, coming from behind him. “Our master sent us to fill the vacant teaching positions. He desires us to help you maintain discipline in the students.”

His lips twitched slightly before turning his head to the man who spoke. Apparently, his job wasn’t going to be easy if he was going to have other Death Eaters around too.

“And you are?” he asked with a bored voice.

“Amycus and Alecto Carrow, sir. We will teach Muggle studies and Defense Against the Dark Arts under the desires of the Dark Lord,” the woman explained. The rest of the staff made noises under their breath to indicate they were not pleased with the two new professors. They’d better get used to it because he would not be surprised if there would be more coming.

He noticed Professor Burbage wasn’t there with them. He refrained from saying anything about it. It meant she’d been dispossessed.

“Very well,” he said and removed his hands from behind his back. “I expect you to put the interest of the students above all else when you are within these walls.”

His eyes turned back to his former colleagues. They all looked at him disbelievingly. “Their education is most important. We want strong wizards and witches that know how the new world will be.”

“Should we teach them to become traitorous rats like you?”

He looked at McGonagall and cursed her Gryffindor personality. He raised his hand to keep the male Carrow from casting a spell. He didn’t want a confrontation, but he wouldn’t stop Minerva from ripping Carrow a new arsehole if he did start something.

“You teach them the knowledge they need for their lives,” he said, making direct eye contact with Minerva, something he never ever did before. He made the statement sound simple, but it was anything but. So they could survive.

He looked back at the man who now had his wand lowered. “Indulge her. She’s a bit hot headed, but it’s to be expected from a Gryffindor. You shall get used to her and learn that it’s quite amusing to see them react. Lions bite, but they only kill if they are hungry.” It was too easy to mock a Gryffindor and he’d admit he enjoyed it. “She won’t be hungry for much longer.” He turned back to the older witch. “Isn’t that right, Professor McGonagall?”

The woman huffed in response and crossed her arms. He hoped she knew to keep her rebellion hidden. He couldn’t guarantee her a permanent position at Hogwarts and he needed her there.

“That is all,” he said.

When he took a step, the doors to the castle opened wide for him. He passed in between the line of teachers. If they were surprised by its acceptance, they hid it well. He could feel their gazes burning at his back as he walked further into the castle. He continued to act as if their behaviour wasn’t important, which, right now, it wasn’t.

He just hoped he could secretly push his former colleagues to aid the students in a way the Carrows would not discover. He was going to have to impose rules and make subtle loopholes in some of them. He knew punishments would increase and they’d be more propaganda about blood
purity. If he could stress to the professors that the students must behave, then perhaps there wouldn’t be as many punishments. He expected rebellion, but with the assistance from the professors, it could go smoothly and he could feign that it was nothing when the Dark Lord inquired about it. If he bothered coming here anyway.

The Griffin statue looked at him, and after a small green glow of its eyes, it moved, recognizing him when his boot stepped on one of the stairs.

He let the castle lift him to his new post and his last role that fate had destined for him. The stairs stopped moving and the wooden door in front of him opened on its own.

He took a deep breath. His apprehension grew when he took a step inside and all the portraits said, “Welcome, Headmaster Snape.”

The title made him sick. Perhaps it wouldn’t have had he not murdered to get it. He ignored them, especially the new portrait that he’d seen out of the corner of his eye.

He had to focus on his most immediate task. Hermione needed his help.

He walked over to the headmaster’s desk and grabbed one of the feathered quills. He immediately missed the one Hermione had given him. He would retrieve it from his old rooms along with his belongings. That is, if they weren’t destroyed due to his act of treachery.

He took a piece of paper off a small pile and began writing.

Danger. Get parents to a safe place. Don’t go out. Stay with your friends all times.

Concise and simple. He wanted to write more but he didn’t have time to waste. He didn’t know when they’d attack. He couldn’t do much right now, but at least he could do this.

“What are you doing, Severus?”

It was active already. He refused to turn to the painting. He retrieved an old potions book from his jacket pocket. It was now a much smaller than its normal size so it was easily stored. It’d been his mother’s book, then his, and now it was hers. A simple spell would make it the right size again. He slipped the letter into its pages, making sure it was visible on the edge.

Delivering it would be the biggest obstacle. It was unfortunate that a Patronus couldn’t send physical objects. An owl would be out of the question.

He needed something direct. Something faster.

“What are you doing, Severus?”

“I do not want to hear from you right now,” he said. He lifted the top of the quill to his lips. “What was the name of the elf? The one that is friends with Potter.”

“It was an elf named Dobby, Headmaster Snape.” His eyes turned to the voice and saw the portrait of Phineas Nigellus bowing to him. Of course, it would be a fellow Slytherin assisting him.

“Thank you,” he said. “Dobby!”

A crack sounded and a house-elf was bowing in front of him. He wore multiple pairs of socks and a hat on his head with his ears coming out in holes on each side.

“How I can serve, the he…headmaster” The elf hesitated for a moment as he raised.
The elf had gone against his old masters, the Malfoy family if he recalled correctly. Even if the elf was now working for Hogwarts, he should still do something to gain his loyalty.

And aiding people related to Potter would be enough to gain that kind of sentiment, but he needed to be discreet.

“Do you know Hermione Granger?”

The elf’s ears perked and he looked out of the corner of his eyes. Recognition indeed.

“I might, sir. She is Potter’s friend and she gave me this hat. She is a good person... I-I won’t be involved in hurting her, sir!” The elf took a step back.

“Deliver this to her and use the utmost discretion,” he said and handed him the book with the note in it. “You can see it and judge for yourself if I want to hurt her or not.” His voice didn’t lose its stern tone despite the anxiety rising in him.

If the elf didn’t accept, he’d have to find another way to get it to her.

After looking at him and then the object for a moment, the elf took the items. With cautious movements, he saw the creature looking inside, and of course, unfolding the note to read it.

The elf’s ears moved again.

“Will you help me?” he asked finally after a small silence. The green eyes studied him.

The elf nodded and a wave of relief eliminated the pressure that was building inside his chest.

“But, sir, I don’t understand after...” The elf gave Dumbledore’s portrait a furtive look. “If this is a trick...”

The elf couldn’t do anything even if it was, but Severus still saw fit to reassure him as best he could. “My desire is to help her regardless of the events that happened a month ago. Ask her if you have doubts.”

The elf nodded and disappeared with a crack, taking the book and note with him.

Now he would have to wait and have faith that the elf wouldn’t toss the items away like garbage.

“What are you doing, Severus?” the headmaster said yet again.

He growled and finally turned to look at the portrait. He didn’t hate the man anymore, but the pain was still fresh.

“Saving her parents lives. They’ve been made a target thanks to this plan. I have no way of contacting and aiding them directly.”

“You agreed to my plan, Severus. You owe me and this is the only way.”

The damn man even managed to sound condescending and manipulative in portrait form. He crossed his arms and leaned back against the desk. “I don’t recall going against your plans.”

Dumbledore sighed. “We need to continue. Bellatrix broke in here and got the Gryffindor sword. You will need to retrieve it.”
“I assume she’s put it in her Gringotts vault,” Snape said.

“Yes, the other portraits have confirmed it.”

“Why?” he asked. A risk like that could destroy Dumbledore’s plan. Wasn’t he supposed to stay here and protect the students as best he could?

“Harry will need it for his quest.”

“The quest that you refuse to tell me about,” he snapped even though Granger had already told him about it.

“You don’t need to know,” he said.

“Not even if I’m risking the plan to get the sword back?” he asked. He didn’t mention risking his life because that clearly didn’t matter. “Have you forgotten what Gringotts is like? There are caves, labyrinths, traps, hexes and even a few dragons.”

He turned his back to the portrait. It was always the same.

“Severus…”

“I’ll go,” he snapped.

The sudden crack of apparition startled him. “Sir! Miss Hermione sends her thanks and said don’t forget to do what you said you would.” The elf didn’t lose his grin. “She said I could trust you too, sir, and that she will go to the Burrow as soon as she does what you said. Dobby will aid the headmaster whenever the headmaster needs it.”

He nodded, finding that oddly comforting, and then set his mind on his next task.

Gringotts.

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**AN:** Not a so very warm welcome I fear…He might need a hug? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 94: Vaulted

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 94: Vaulted

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The goblins didn’t even glance at him as he entered Gringotts. The wizards and witches there were another matter. He felt every eye on him and every ounce of hatred they carried for him. Everyone was frozen, as if he’d done it by spell rather than them doing it on their own. He intimidated the humans present. Admittedly, he’d never get over the thrill of having power over people like this.

He ignored everyone and walked up to a counter. He waited for the goblin to stop scribbling.

“I need to go to my vault,” he spoke when the creature’s eyes fixed on him.

“Of course, Professor Snape, but you must prove that you are who you say you are.” The goblin sneered with a small hint of malice, which he assumed it was their typical way of behaving and not because they had cared for Dumbledore.

He showed his wand and the key to his vault. The goblin inspected both items. He’d barely visited Gringotts in the past and never mentioned the Prince family. He had nothing from his heritage there. He’d saved a significant amount here since the only things he bought were food, an occasional book, and potion ingredients. He was proud that he’d earned everything he had in that vault from his own effort.

The goblin nodded and motioned for him to follow.
He let the goblin guide him to his vault. The trip took less time than he expected. There were so many caves and corridors that he found himself slightly impressed at the goblin’s knowledge of the area. It was even more difficult to navigate since the only light in the area was a few candles spaced apart at random distances.

When they stepped off the cart that brought them there, he pointed his wand and stunned the goblin.

The goblin fell to the floor and he crouched next to it. He retrieved a tiny vial from his pocket, uncorked it, and poured a bit down the goblin’s throat. Only a drop was needed for his purposes. He raised the goblin to his feet and forced him into consciousness, but not before adding a confundus spell to accompany the veritaserum. He didn’t want the goblin to recognize him.

“I need to know where Bellatrix Lestrange’s vault is and any dangers within or on the way towards it.”

“Go down until the waterfall ends. Then go to the right until you find a blue dragon. The only obstacle is the beast. There is an enchantment to abolish any kind of treachery spells.”

“How do I open the vault?”

The goblin rummaged through his robes until he pulled out a copper master key. Severus took it and put it in his pocket.

“I appreciate your help,” Severus said. With another wave of his wand, he made the Goblin unconscious again. “Obliviate.”

He took a deep breath, walked to the edge of the floor and tried to distinguish where the waterfall ended. There was only darkness.

He smirked. He’d counted on using the gift the Dark Lord gave him. To use that to steal something that would help in his fall was amusing and pleasant.

He grabbed his cloak. With a fast movement, he twisted it and his body changed. He felt it. Like the way one disfigured when one apparated, but he still felt himself. It wasn’t as quick to get from one place to another. With apparating one disappeared, right now he was a black mass.

He felt the air whip around him, his body stabilizing. He moved down with a fast pace, feeling the air in his ears and against his face, yet at the same time that description was inaccurate. He was just there amongst the wind. As one with it almost.

When he got to the bottom, the waterfall hitting the rocks blocked any sound of wind. He skimmed across the dark stone floor, scratching and scuffing at it as he headed to his destination.

The torches looked like streaks of light as she shifted and sped through the corridors.

As the waterfall faded, he heard a creaking cart.

He turned a corner and stopped. The dragon was there, sleeping. His blue scales glittering like diamonds even though there was very little light in the area.

He moved towards the animal and passed it first before rematerializing. He started with his feet and then moved upward until he was back to himself.

He crept past the dragon and then walked to the door. The coat of arms on the door revealed
the owner. He took the key the goblin gave him and moved to open the vault.

A high-pitched sound ripped through the air before he could insert the key. He froze. The dragon’s eyes shot open and it got up from its lying position. Severus opened the door and entered the vault before the dragon looked in his direction.

He searched the vault as quickly as possible, cursing mentally at every galleon and useless trinket that met his eyes. He spotted a cup with the Hufflepuff symbol. But that wasn’t what he was seeking. He just needed the sword.

He turned and looked to the right. Behind an old barrel, the hilt barely peeking up from the top, was the sword. Rushing closer, he almost shouted in victory as the ruby and gold hilt came into better view. He ignored the screams and carts approaching in favor of carefully avoiding the other items around him.

He grasped it. Another roar reached his ears but a smirk came to his lips as he felt the metal under his hand. He exchanged it for the fake one he was hiding under his coat.

Shifting to face the door, he pondered how to get out of there. He could use the gift and risk finding an exit that way. Perhaps the dome was fragile enough to break without causing himself too much injury.

He was about to leave the vault when a huge stream of flames came toward him. By reflex, he slammed the vault shut to avoid the fire. He listened at the door as he heard the Goblins talking to the dragon, trying to calm him with words and tones that were anything but tranquilizing.

Impatience grew in him as he waited for the goblin’s to leave and search another vault. He could disillusion himself so the dragon and goblins didn’t see him, but the dragon could smell quite well. It would be easier to face a dragon alone than to fight both it and bunch of angry goblins.

He heard a click. A normal click yet the meaning of this click made it feel like the cave around him was about to crash down. A magical aura surrounded the door and flashed in the room like several bolts of lightning.

He was trapped.

The goblins were smarter than he thought. He heard some laughs and footsteps leading away from the area. Their confidence was enough to tell him that he would never leave that place alive.

He damned Albus and his idiotic plans. He damned his foolishness. He damned the day he had put himself on this twisted path. He pulled at the handle, but the door wouldn’t move. There was a ward on it, and his own magic felt dormant, unreachable to his will. It was part of the vault’s protections.

He let his back touch the door and slid down to rest on the stone floor, the sword between his hands.

A small smile crossed his lips and he rested his forehead on the pommel of the sword.

He didn’t know what would happen without the sword. Albus claimed it was important.

Potter needed it and he’d failed. And along with him, he’d failed Lily and the rest of the world. Most importantly, he couldn’t keep his promise to Hermione. “I’m sorry,” he whispered to her as if she could hear it.
He closed his eyes and wished to have the chance to help them more. To see her one last time before his end. The tight grip on the sword matched his frustration. Then, it faded as soon as it came and his body relaxed. He’d done all he could. He’d done his best. At least he could say that.

And he would take solace in the fact that he wouldn’t die as a coward.

AN: He is having a great night of doom…Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. I admit I wasn’t sure about this chapter and the next but well, you will see! I tried to link things ^^ See you next Saturday.
Chapter 95: The Beast Bites Back

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 95: The Beast Bites Back

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“Severus, you’ve done a wonderful job, my boy. I never doubted you.”

The voice caused him to yank his head upward, jerking his neck in the process. A pain shot from the back of his head down to the middle of his back. His eyes widened as he studied his surroundings. What… This was impossible. How…?

Was he hallucinating? He thought for sure that it was his time to die. He’d accepted it.

His hand dropped and felt the skin separate and burn at his palm. He looked down at his hand and saw it’d fallen on the blade of the Gryffindor sword.

The dead couldn’t feel pain. He studied each of the portraits for a few seconds before resting his eyes back onto his bleeding palm.

“I was trapped,” he whispered more to himself than the portrait that addressed him. “I was in Gringotts just a moment ago and I couldn’t apparate. I should be dead.”

No one spoke. Deep down, he knew what happened though it was a struggle to accept it. Surely, the sword wouldn't have done it. He wasn't a Gryffindor and never desired to be. And wasn't it just a simple sword? Yes, it did have magical properties but to be able to do that kind of service, and for a Slytherin no less, was mind-blowing.

“It seems that the sword helped you.” Albus said, voicing what he did not want to
acknowledge. It made sense. Gryffindors were loyal and most of the time forgiving and honorable. It wasn't unbelievable to think one of their items, regardless of it being inanimate, would be the same.

He rose from the floor and looked down at his bleeding palm. It was deep but nothing that would need stitches.

“T’m a Slytherin,” he said.

“But you are the Headmaster now, Severus. It could aid you as much as any Gryffindor. Regardless, you have no time to dwell on a matter like that right now. You need to continue moving. I assumed you put the fake sword in Bellatrix's vault?”

His angry eyes turned to bright blue ones that still held a sickening twinkle despite being in a portrait. Despite the urgency of the situation.

“I did.” He replied dryly and he formed a fist with his bleeding hand. The pain, invaded his nerves in an instant. Comforting. He could see sometimes why people harmed themselves, even if he didn't condone such a thing. It was to feel. But this pain. This pain distracted him. Helped him control the urge to rip down the portrait and run it through with the sword in his grasp.

He needed time to think about the latest events, but knew that he didn’t possess such a luxury.

“Hide the sword under my portrait, and then you must go find Mundungus Fletcher. We have a week before the protection of Harry’s family wears off.” As the obedient pawn he was, he walked towards the portrait. “You have to give the real date of Harry’s departure to Voldemort. If you don’t it will raise suspicions since he knows you're well informed. You need to try to confuse Mundungus.”

“I’ll endeavor to do so with upmost skill,” he said and rolled his eyes.

Albus sighed. “He may make you a participant in the pursuit.”

“I have little doubt of that,” Severus replied.

“Act convincing. You have to maintain the Dark Lord’s trust as much as possible. If you don’t, Hogwarts will fall solely into the Carrows’ hands. Perhaps even worse may happen.”

He grabbed the portrait by its edge and swung it open, smirking as it slammed into the stone wall. He put the sword in the hole behind it, and closed the portrait again with a wide and hard swing.

“That was completely unnecessary, Severus.”

“Many things are, Dumbledore. That doesn’t mean that I don’t do them anyway. There is no need to lecture me on how to act.”

“Sometimes you act like a petulant child.”

“A…a child?” Severus felt rage hit him. “If one were in my situation, they would understand why. They would act the same way, like a bloody child as you put it. You don’t let me know important matters that could help me, yet insist on telling me how to do my work. Either let me in on what you know or let me handle things myself. I refuse to be collared like one of Hagrid's beasts.”

Albus was taken aback and the other portraits watched with wide eyes. “My boy…”
“Severus, or Snape if you prefer. I have not a boy. I have proven that time and time again by following your contradicting and potentially deadly orders. I have come to grips with my death, but have never been aware of what I’m supposed to fulfill. You have always kept me in the dark and frankly, I’m bloody sick of it. I’m considered a murderer thanks to your plans, and I have no assistance. You tell me to help Potter, the students, and then have me handle things that could destroy those goals. I don’t think you know what you’re fucking doing yourself.”

The portrait opened its mouth but said nothing. Severus turned his back to it. He summoned his wand and cleaned the cut. He’d never let loose like that and found that it felt better than he ever could’ve imagined.

“Severus, you are important.”

He snorted and tested his hand to see if he’d fully closed the wound. As he looked at his palm, he remembered the warmth of her hand. It eased the rage in him. She was the one person that was usually reasonable. Who understood him and why he felt the way he did. And she was out there in danger. He had to do his part regardless of how unreasonable Dumbledore was being.

He turned and looked at Dumbledore once again. “I’ll be going now to see Mundungus.” He directed his gaze to the other portraits. “Keep a close eye on the Carrows.

Then he left the office.

There was never any rest for a spy.

AN: Well…the resolution of his escape is what I wasn’t sure but I tried to be faithful to this part of the story. As I recall, this was implied in the books and despite I’m not a fan of “Divine Interventions” it was fair to leave it and explain it. I think it shows the sword’s power and that Severus is not only a slimy Slytherin that all people think he is. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 96: Hope in a Slimy Man

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 96: Hope in a Slimy Man

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Finding that slimy man wasn’t complex if one knew where to look. Mundungus was a disreputable monger of stolen items so he would be anywhere in Nockturn Alley, or a dirty cheap tavern. He was a man of habit and that made the job easier for him.

He'd been in the fourth tavern that Severus approached.

He spotted Mundungus at the bar, firewhiskey in front of him. Severus pulled his hood over his head, hesitant to use his Death Eater’s robes but knowing it was the best option. It would further show his “loyalty” to the Dark Lord. He waited until Mundungus took a drink before entering.

As expected, no one looked at him; no one dared to, as he entered the tavern.

He snuck his wand out and cast a quick confusion spell when he got to his side. Mundungus’s eyes opened a bit wider and his face lost all its color.

He sat in front of the man and cast a spell that would mix their conversation in with the pub’s cacophony.

When the man’s eyes met his, he opened his mouth to speak, but nothing came. Severus spoke first.

“Tell the Order of the Phoenix to use distractions during Potter’s movements. Use Polyjuice potion. You need to have more than one Potter since he will be a target.”
“Yes.”

“You will forget I’ve told you this. This will be your idea.” He snorted and muttered to himself. “As unbelievable as that is.”

“Yes,” Mundungus said.

“It needs to be done as soon as possible. Before Potter’s birthday because that’s when the Dark Lord Will attack. Do you understand what I am saying?”

“I do,” he said as if he held no emotions within his body.

“When is the boy being retrieved? The true date.”

“The 27th of July,” Mundungus said. “To leave the day of his birthday is false information that was leaked to the ministry.”

Severus smirked and for a moment took pride in his work. He looked into the man’s eyes and scanned through his thoughts. When he saw the meeting he sought in Mundungus’ mind, he tensed. This was going to be more complex than he thought, but the plan was definitely enough to distract the Dark Lord and let the boy escape.

He knew Granger would be right there with Potter and almost hesitated in his resolution to give everything to the Dark Lord. But he agreed with Dumbledore. It was necessary. He had to keep stability in his role as a spy and this was an excellent way to do it. She would understand more than anyone would. He had to respect her enough to do what was right and what was necessary. She knew the risks. She knew the cost and the possibilities that lay before her. Before them.

If he had to go during the raid, he’d find some way to protect her if possible. After all, friendly fire existed and the Dark Lord didn't care who died for his cause and who did the killing. His survival, his pride, his success was all that mattered. Every Death Eater knew that.

He rose from his seat and left the tavern. He stopped at the door, leaving it open just long enough to remove both spells he’d cast on Mundungus. Liquid fire shot through his mark and he took a deep breath before setting out into the night and towards a meeting with the Dark Lord.

Now he had to hope Mundungus would do his part. Had to hope that Dumbledore was right.

It was unfortunate that hope was one of the most difficult feelings for him to have.

AN: He is not having a nice day…and more worries to think about? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
Chapter 97: The Death of Begging Eyes

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 97: The Death of Begging Eyes

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His body materialized in front of Malfoy manor. He could’ve flown inside, through an open window, but thought that much too showy. As disgusting as the Dark Lord was, the dark art he shared with him was useful. Disturbing, yes, but that became less so every time he used it. And it was harmless. The dark mark was far more dangerous.

The gates opened in front of him, the magic recognizing his presence as he approached. Everything was extremely quiet, as if the rude habitants had left. He knew that wasn’t the case. He climbed each step, his body the perfect figure of control and stoicism. He walked through the halls without hesitation, but then stopped when he got a few meters from the meeting room.

He could feel impending death reeking from the room. It had an aura all on its own when it was around the Dark Lord. Thick. Heavy. Cold. When this happened, it meant they’d brought someone to torture.

He forced himself forward to the door.

“Severus, my friend,” the Dark Lord said, the S taking on a typical hiss as he spoke. “Come, sit at my side. I am overjoyed you managed to come.”

Severus bowed deeply and moved to the Dark Lord’s side, taking a seat at his right. Nagini moved over to him, hissing, and rested its head briefly at his neck before moving back over to the Dark Lord. It was as if the snake was hugging him as a welcome.

“Do you bring me news?”
“I do, my lord. The Order of Phoenix will be moving Potter next Saturday from Privet Drive. It will be at nightfall.” He did not falter in his sentence and left no doubt of his confidence in his information. It was enough that the other Death Eaters began speaking amongst themselves.

“My lord, I have information from an auror,” Yaxel said. “Dawlish said they won’t move Potter until the night before the boy’s birthday.

Severus smiled with mockery. “Of course, you’d think so since you put no effort into looking deeper. My source says they will release false information to protect him. And we know that an auror is very susceptible to confounding charms.”

“Continue, Severus.” The Dark Lord looked back at him, ignoring Yaxel’s interruption.

“Potter will not use any regulated transport. They don’t trust the ministry enough for that. It’s likely they’ll be out in the open since it’s not expected they would do so.”

“Perfect,” the Dark Lord said. “I can finally take care of the boy in person, and you, Severus shall be at my side. I trust you in this. We’ve committed many mistakes and some of them I must shoulder.”

He didn’t let his surprise over the admission show on his face, nor did he say anything to acknowledge the Dark Lord had made mistakes. No Death Eater would dare agree with that even though it was true.

“Malfoy, I will need your wand,” the Dark Lord said with a smile on his face. Malfoy lowered his head and nodded.

He almost felt pity for Malfoy.

Almost.

A cry interrupted the silent exchange. Everyone looked toward the source of the sound. A body was floating in the middle of the table. Blood was pooled atop the oak table and a small drip would occasionally create a ripple. He looked at the woman’s ripped neck, her bloody face, and her nearly severed hand.

She was staring at him. “Sev…Severus…” She coughed. “Pl…He…Help me. Friends…We are…friends. Please…”

Everyone around him laughed at her plea. His heart ached at seeing her here. He met her eyes, but let nothing but coldness show through his expression. Through the fear in her gaze, he saw kindness, a pleading that stabbed into his chest. She really didn’t think that he was evil. She wouldn’t have been stupid enough to beg if she had.

But… Friend. He hadn’t thought on it much, but it amazed him that she still called him that after knowing he killed Dumbledore.

Seeing her at the end of her life, hearing her beg for his help, was pure torture.

The survival of too many still depended on him, yet he scrambled for something he could do for her. He was paying attention to the Dark Lord’s cruel teasing of her, as an idea came to him. He silent cast a spell and entered her mind.

“I’m sorry,” he said.
“Kill me. Please, Severus.”

Snape pushed back the thoughts of Dumbledore, and risked granting her request. He heard the Dark Lord speaking as he dug into the various layers of her mind and ripped, yanked, and jerked them apart. Though it wouldn’t fully kill her, he knew she was gone to this world, beyond feeling, as a green light from the Dark Lord hit her body. It fell limp.

At his side, he heard the Dark Lord hissing. He was having a conversation with the serpent in Parsel. Nagini hissed in return and without looking at her owner again, slinked down the table with a vile elegance filled with evil, torturous intentions.

Her mouth opened, her fangs extended, and her mouth clamped over Burbage’s head. Severus was barely able to keep a cringe at bay. He thought of several terrible ways to die, but death by snake was by far the worst.

“I will see all of you except Malfoy on Privet Drive in two nights.”

“Yes, my Lord,” everyone said and stood.

The Dark Lord gave a nod before he left the room. Severus looked at the serpent. Burbage’s head had disappeared already. He watched as the serpent dislocated its jaw and got one of her shoulders into its mouth.

He resisted shuddering before leaving the room and the people who remained within it. Not even Bellatrix had dared to say anything against him; he would not press his luck. Bellatrix had said nothing about the vault, which meant that the Goblin’s hadn’t felt the need to inform her of his entrance. Maybe they assumed it wasn’t really him, after all he wouldn’t be there when, or if, they checked. Or perhaps she didn’t believe him since the sword was still there. It was hard to tell anything about those creatures and the woman wasn’t exactly the paradigm of logical thinking.

All the Death Eaters looked distressed and in a hurry to leave. He flew away when his boots touched the stone path in front of the manor.

When he was inside his room, he ripped off his Death Eater robes and tossed them as far as he could. He stood there, taking deep breaths, trying to relish the cool castle environment. Moments later, he let his body fall back onto the mattress behind him.

He clinched his eyes shut and forced the events, Burbage’s begging and death, behind a mental wall. That guilt would live with him forever. He’d liked her, so her plea would live with him, echo in his mind, until the day he died. It would be right there along with many other things.

The worst still had to come before he’d finally rest.

And he wasn’t speaking of sleep...

AN: This was a bit dark and finally his “nightmare of day ends” but just for now…They year just begun.  Hope you let me know what you think and see you next Saturday.
Chapter 98: Sky Fight

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 98: Sky Fight

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27 July, 1997

The sun sank in the distance, transforming the sky into an ocean of deep reds and oranges. Soon after, the darkness came. They were on their way to the muggle street where Potter lived. As he looked around him, he was startled but didn’t show it. He hadn’t expected this many Death Eaters on this mission. He hoped the decoy was enough but he knew not everyone would come out unharmed. That was an impossibility when the Death Eater’s attacked. He hoped for more casualties on his side than theirs.

He took a deep breath and strangled the ebony wand between his fingers.

He kept his focus on the house; worry for Potter, and especially for Granger, blinked in and out of his thoughts. It wasn’t going to be easy trying to protect them, but of course, he’d expected that to be the case. The door opened and the Dark Lord and his fellow Death Eaters stilled. The people around him waited with eagerness but were patient enough to let the prey reveal themselves before attacking.

The grip on his broom tightened more and more as each of them appeared. Moody and Potter, Kingsley and Potter, Lupin and Potter, and so on. By the time everyone was out of the house, he counted seven copies of Potter. The only thing he could think of that would be worse than seven Potter copies would be seven Ronald Weasley copies.

He studied each clone. One of them had to be Hermione.
The Dark Lord indicated for them to divide their forces. The Death Eater closest to him shifted with impatience and excitement, looking forward to the fight.

The Potters and their escorts divided into pairs. Some were on brooms, others on motorbikes, and one on a thestral. His eyes focused onto a Potter that shivered. He pushed down a smirk as he watched “him” climb onto the thestral.

It was Hermione. She was the only one that despised heights and the reaction was typical for her. He knew the others knew she hated heights, so it puzzled him why they didn’t give her a ground option. While the ground travel was slower, her skills and less nervous nature would more than make up for the disadvantage.

The Order moved. His muscles tensed.

They struck and chaos erupted. Brooms moved in front of him, screams sounded, spells flew through the air, and he began flying after his “targets”.

He flew through the clouds, dodging a few haphazardly cast spells. After he shot through a rough patch of fog and came into a nearly cloudless area, he saw he was following Lupin and one of the Potters. He slowed down his flying so he wouldn’t get too close and be within attack range.

Dumbledore had told him to participate and to be convincing. While he was chasing them with a murderous intent—he always had the desire to kill the mutt—it didn’t mean that he couldn’t let them escape. He could use this situation to his advantage and “accidentally” dispose of some of the Dark Lord’s forces.

A spell hit the side of his hood, knocking the mask off his face. He managed to catch it, put it back on, and then glared at the Death Eater accompanying him. He was trying to hit Lupin, but he half wondered if the hit on him was intentional. Just as he intended to take out a few Death Eaters himself.

This one would be his first.

Severus let himself fall back behind the Death Eater next to him, pretending to target someone else. When they got to a small batch of clouds, he shot a spell at the Death Eater while trying to avoid the spells Lupin was shooting at him.

As his spell slammed into the Death Eater next to him, he saw shock flash on Lupin’s face and cursed the disgusting wolf and his mistake of attacking within his sight. He cast a spell at Lupin to make sure the man didn’t get the idea he was on their side. He was sure though that the mutt would figure out what was going on eventually. Even if he didn’t want to believe that he wasn’t the evil git that people thought he was.

That he thought he was.

“Sectusempra!” Severus shouted.

He meant to cast it only in Lupin’s direction, not meaning for it to hit him, but Lupin swerved his broom at the last minute due to an errant spell flying in his direction. A howl of pain came from the Potter with him. A spell slammed into his shoulder seconds later, and his broom fell uncontrollably towards the street.

The wind’s power slammed his robes against his body as he barreled towards the earth at high speed. He cast a levitation spell on himself, altering the falling speed, but it wasn’t enough. He leapt off the broom.
His body transformed into a dark mass and he flew through the sky as easily as the clouds.

A wing beast shot across in front of him, nearly hitting him with its wings. He leaped back again as a body sailed past him and slammed into the ground; he glanced down at it as he whipped across the sky. From the wound, he could tell the Death Eater was dead before he hit the ground.

It was one of his spells that killed him. He let a little smirk cross his lips. He knew just who had done it. He didn’t like the idea of her taking another life, but it was necessary. He was proud that she was now defending herself despite the pain it would cause.

Another dark mass passed him, and his heart dropped. Only one other being in the sky that day had that skill.

His mouth went dry and his heart sped up. He could hear it in his ears, the beat rivaling the wind whipping past him in volume.

No...

Not her...

He took after the Dark Lord. His master was more skilled in this art, faster and more agile than he was, but he couldn’t let him have her. He had already lost Lily by his hands. If he had to step between them, die for Hermione, he would. He could find relief in the presumption that the order already had Potter safe and only the decoys were left.

He finally caught up with his master and saw the winged beast he was chasing. It was hit and the animal descended a few meters. He urged his magic to go faster, to stop the hand that almost grabbed her transformed body. Kingsley was unmoving and she was alone in front of the Dark Lord.

He needed to stop him. Even if he blew his cover. A few meters more, and he could be between them. It was a stupid act, it risked everything, but he didn’t care.

Then, the Dark Lord disappeared. The fog was no longer in front of him and the thestral’s flying became less erratic. She still had another Death Eater chasing her, she was still in danger, but at least it wasn’t the Dark Lord. It was something she could handle.

The thestral landed and limped for cover between the buildings. The shadows wouldn’t be enough to hide from the Death Eater for long, but she could find a way to attack him before he knew what happened. When another Death Eater landed next to the one that had chased her, he knew he had to help. Yet, those two, if he recalled correctly, weren’t exactly the brightest lanterns in the castle.

He landed on the ground and let his body transform back into its human form. He stayed across the street, in shadows, keeping his distance and remaining silent as he watched the two Death Eaters get closer to the corner where the thestral took shelter. A flash erupted and one of the men screamed. He fell forward, his face hitting the pavement with a sickening crunch.

Before the other Death Eater attacked, he waved his wand, sending the killing curse to him. The man fell to his knees, and then keeled over to the side, his limbs twisted and his body stilled by death.

He kept his wand only half raised in case other Death Eater’s lurked. He walked past the dead men and into the shadows where she was hiding.

He stopped when he came to a corner of shadows. She stood there, eyes narrowed and her
wand pointed at him. The polyjuice was leaving her system. Her curls were forming and her body molded itself into her true appearance. He was glad that he hadn’t been mistaken.

She was panting, sweat coated her forehead, and her shirt stuck to her like a second skin. Kingsley’s body was still on the winged beast.

Her wand fell to her side. “It’s you,” she whispered. “I was worried that I might hurt you during the fight, but I remembered your mask. I memorized every detail of it when I saw it in your room.

He removed his mask and found himself grateful that each Death Eater had individual designs. He took a step towards her. He could’ve reached out and touched her, but he made no move to do so.

“You are safe now,” he said even though both knew it was a lie. No one would be safe until this war was over.

“I saw him. He almost caught me. He was the one that hit Kingsley.”

“Dead?”

“No.”

The thestral moved towards them, carrying the unconscious man. He wanted to comfort her, but this wasn’t the time.

“I will have to go as soon as the Dark Lord calls for us, but I can help you right now. I assume you have an illegal portkey to catch and escape?”

Granger nodded as the thestral touched her hair, moving it with a nuzzle. The witch raised her hand and petted the beast.

“I will escort you.”

A ragged cry echoed throughout the area, startling her. He looked up at the clouded sky and smirked.

“What was that?” she asked.

“The Dark Lord is furious right now,” he replied and laughed a bit at the end of his sentence despite the dour situation. He looked back at her. “Come on, we don’t have much time before I have to leave or before the Dark Lord loses his temper destroys the street.”

He disillusioned all of them. He looked around the corner to see if there were any Death Eaters nearby. When satisfied that there were none in their proximity, he guided her through the darkness and further away from the battlefield. Since his fellow Death Eaters saw him falling, he could feign being unconscious as an excuse for not being spotted during what remained of the battle.

She grabbed his arm. It was a nice sensation that opposed the burn of the dark mark on the opposite arm.

A sigh came from his lips when the explosions in the distance faded. The Dark Lord and Death Eater’s presence disappeared. The mark’s burn grew more painful, the pain shooting through his entire arm rather than just the mark area. He shivered and stopped walking.
“Severus, are you okay?” Her grip on the thestral’s reigns tightened.

“He is calling,” he said with a rough voice. He swallowed the saliva that built up in his mouth.

Her hand caressed up his arm until it reached his shoulder. He felt lips brush his cheek, and he slouched ever so slightly in relaxation. Slight enough that she wouldn’t notice despite having a hand on him. “Then go. Don’t put yourself at risk now.” He heard the worry in her voice. Worry for him rather than herself.

“Be safe, Hermione,” he said. “As much as you can.”

“You too.”

He took a step back and her hand fell away. But then, unexpectedly, she moved forward and pressed her lips to his for a few seconds before pulling away. She smiled and he couldn’t help but return it. He removed the cloaking spell from around them, placed his mask back onto his face, and apparated.

-/-/

The Dark Lord’s feet were at his sight level when he opened his eyes. The environment around them was in rubble. Some of the Death Eaters were on the floor, others were twitching, and some were on their knees just as he was.

The Dark Lord paced past him twice, then a scream of rage echoed throughout the area, sending chills through every part of his body and pooling dread into his stomach.

It was going to be a long night, and he didn’t know how anyone’s condition would be by the time it was over.

AN: I post today because I’m not going to be able tomorrow. A small encounter in the middle of chaos… Hope you liked it and let me know what you think.
Chapter 99: Hourglass

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 99: Hourglass

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August, 1997

His hands rested against the desk as he only half listened to Dumbledore’s words. He’d already gotten confirmation about most of the topics he was speaking of. That what the entire magical world feared was happening. He didn’t have the energy to say anything to the portrait, so he just focused on the sand falling in the hourglass.

He didn’t need Dumbledore telling him how the agents of the dark were nearly done infiltrating the ministry. The portraits placed in the ministry had retrieved information and shared it with him. He knew exactly how many Death Eaters held key positions in the government. He didn’t need to know that some workers, even aurors, were cowering to the threats and supporting the Dark Lord’s ideals. Pius Thicknesse was gaining power, getting votes and support from the controlled media and from other workers. He would be the next minister after the plot to kill Scrimgeour was achieved. He knew the day and hour it was set to happen.

After that, a more dedicated hunt for Potter would begin. The Carrows had told him that much. They were low ranked Death Eaters and were only told most of the information so they could relay it to him, but they were reliable in what they knew.

Thicknesse and numerous others were now under the imperius curse as well, so once he was placed in power the Dark Lord had the perfect puppet to bring his ideals to a growing prejudiced wizarding society.
Scrimgeour was a stubborn and determined man, but that wouldn’t be enough to sustain his position. Though he still had many people supporting him, and many supported Potter, people were dying at high rates. They were being threatened and attacked on sight. Death Eaters were destroying their homes and shops if they didn’t support the Dark Lord. Or at least pretend to. This went only for those with a strong magical lineage of course.

The populace was scared and fear was a perfect way to gain control of the masses.

The ministry would be attacked today and with that, Potter and Granger would lose the safety they currently held. The burrow was only a temporary safe place now.

When the last drop of the sand in the hourglass fell, the attack would occur.

The Dark Lord had ordered him to stay at Hogwarts, so he couldn’t do anything in person to keep them safe. The Dark Lord had been furious with all of the Death Eaters, and ordered him to stay and notify him if the boy dared to get too close to Hogwarts. He hadn’t mentioned of course that Granger had told him they did not intend to return to the castle.

He could still help from a distance using the portraits and his potions skills, but right now, his top priority was to contact her. He needed the attack to happen to be able to do that. He needed the Burrow’s security to fall.

He took a deep breath, and the last drop of sand fell to the bottom of the hourglass.

Hiding from the view of the portraits and ignoring their frantic expressions, he went to his rooms.

He shut the door to his bedroom, thankful there were no prying eyes in here. Potter and Weasley would be with her, so it could possibly alter their trust in her if they discovered her communicating with him.

He’d thought on everything and decided it was worth the risk. She would think it was.

He lifted his wand, took a few deep breaths, and set about his task.

A silver stream flew from the tip of his wand and he furrowed his brows as the light struggled to take the form of his Doe. While the animal was recognizable, it was malformed. The head was too large, her tail was unreasonably long and wide, and the neck and legs were shorter than they should’ve been. At various places in the form, the mist spread outward, the right front leg struggling to remain corporeal. The head lowered itself, as if showing submission.

Seeing his failed patronus, he wondered if his soul was at the point of breaking completely. He had killed Dumbledore; he had destroyed Burbage’s consciousness, and ended the life of numerous others. It was tragic that the form was fading, but at least it was good enough to help the witch that had become a small light in his soul.

The mist raised the strange head, and looked at him. His eyes widened as calmness rushed through his body. There was no misery, no pain, and no bitterness. Now he felt it was nothing more than a useful tool for his missions.

“Go to Hermione,” he said. “If she is alone, tell her to go to Grimmauld Place by herself. If she is not alone, do not give her this message and wait until you can.”

The patronus shivered. Its other front leg lost its form and spread out as if it were smoke. It looked almost defeated at the message he’d ordered it to give. Then, it turned away from him and
slowly misted into the air, leaving him confused as to why it was acting that way.

AN: For those who were wondering about the Patronus… this chapter would be curious heh. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next saturday.
Chapter 100: Giving Away the Past

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 100: Giving Away the Past

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He was glad Phineas informed him about how Hermione, Potter, and Weasley managed to get to Grimmauld place unnoticed. He grew tenser with each step to the house, and gripped his wand tightly as he traveled, ready to confront anyone that would possibly attack him. Though he leaked where the house was located, the Death Easters still hadn’t been able to see it. The fidelius charm Dumbledore cast was still active, as if it too were passed to him along with the protection of Hogwarts.

Of course, the whole order knew about the location. Since they feared an ambush, because of his betrayal, they had abandoned the idea of using it. The Death Eaters knew about it but didn’t bother to look around anymore. At least, for now.

He had to talk to her before they concluded that it could be a place for them to hide Potter. He knew it wouldn’t be long now. If he didn’t speak to her now, he would truly have to leave her completely alone in the war zone. Though he had confidence in her, he knew she’d appreciate his efforts, and that he’d have a bit more peace knowing he was doing all he could for her.

The door appeared when he got closer and despite being under a cloaking spell, he checked his surroundings again before entering the place. He walked lightly. When he was in the middle of the entrance, he stopped, sensing some kind of spell guarding the house. Something that wasn’t here before.

He raised his wand. A white shadow started to materialize in front of him. He dispelled it but
not before seeing the similarities to the deceased headmaster.

He entered the house, his stealth making it sound as if there was nothing more than the usual settling of an old house. He smirked when he heard snoring from the living room. He peered into the room.

They were there. She was there.

He felt sweat accumulate on his palms, and wiped them in the sleeves of his robe, before turning and climbing the stairs, even more wary not to make the slightest noise. He didn’t want to wake the portraits or the people sleeping in the living room.

He entered what he knew to be Sirius’ room. A light layer of dust covered the furniture, evidence that no one had moved his belongings since he’d died.

Waving his wand, he muttered the spell and soon the silver mist formed in front of him. The doe was still malformed, and refused to look at him. The patronus walked around the room on its own. It stopped at the edge of one of the nightstands and nudged a book there, making it fall onto the bed. It opened to a page.

His throat felt like it was constricting as he studied the item lying upon the book’s page. Not, with pain but with anger. It was almost as if his own patronus was trying to mock him along with fate.

“Go wake Hermione and guide her here,” he said, unable to pull his eyes away from the picture moving in front of him.

He refused to even glare at his patronus’ defiance. It was as if it was trying to remind him where he should focus his attention. He stared at the picture of Lily laughing with Potter and Black at her side.

He reached out and touched the image. He picked it up and studied it. Nothing but a slight burn of anger festered in him anymore. He still owed them more than he’d ever realistically be able to pay, but it didn’t guide his entire life anymore. He would do his best to protect Potter, he would die to do it, but he had other people to care for now too. Occasionally, he’d get a few touches of guilt, but they were becoming less and less the more he lived.

And it was all because of another, a better and kinder hearted, Gryffindor witch.

Because of her, he could accept that he wasn’t fully evil. That he didn’t deserve death and a suffering filled life. Because of that witch, he could say that he owned a debt to them. Not just Lily, but the elder Potter as well. He studied the picture a bit longer, his eyes narrowing at Potter. “Arrogant bastard, I guess I’m doing this for you too.”

“Severus, you came,” her sleepy voice sounded at his back.

His chest felt light upon hearing her voice, to know that in this moment she was safe. He almost grinned at how she looked. Her eyes were sleepy, her hair was even messier than it usually was, and she had a small smile on her face. Her posture went rigid as she glanced at the photo in his hands.

She crossed the room and sat at the edge of the bed, next to the book that contained the image.

He sat down next to her and both watched as his patronus disappeared. He rested the photo on his lap.
“It’s probably the last time I can see you,” he said.

“Should I give you a photo too?” she asked. She wasn’t angry, but he could hear a trace of hurt in her tone. The photo he held was hurting her, but surely, she knew that she held a huge part of his life now as well. It was she that he’d come to help. She was his current focus.

“I’m glad you’re all right,” he said, deciding not to address her previous sentence.

“I got your message. I was surprised because I didn’t think you would do something that risky,” she whispered. He could feel her eyes on him, but refused to meet her gaze. He wouldn’t argue. It had been careless, and it was his irrational feelings for her, feelings she forged in him, that made him do it. That also made him risk coming here.

“This will be the last time I will be able to aid you and Potter so directly. We need to discuss a way we can pass information to each other.” Lifting his eyes from the image, he saw her nodding.

“I assume you have an idea already?” she asked, a hint of a smile coming to the corner of her lips.

“Yes, and I got you something.” He reached into his pocket and handed her a miniature trunk.

He grabbed her hand and placed the object on her palm. “There are potions inside that can help you. There are some food and blankets in there as well. It’s not much, but it’s the best I could do considering my chained hands.”

She reached up, covered his hand, and squeezed it. He met her gaze. “You’ve done so much for me, that I could never repay you. You saved my parents. They would be dead by now if not for you. This will be so much more helpful than what anyone in the order has done.”

“You were able to put your parents in a safe place?”

“Yes, but…” She bit her lip, looked down, and he felt her hands tremble in his. He removed his hand and placed it on her shoulder, causing her to look up at him.

“What happened?” he asked.

She took a deep breath and he saw the beginnings of tears in her eyes. “I had to erase their memories,” she said. “They refused to go otherwise.”

She closed her eyes and a single tear managed to escape. He was unable to swallow but took a deep breath instead. Another victim of the war. Another cruel thing to force this young witch to do. He had to admit that some of his anger was directed towards her parents too. For not taking her warning seriously. They knew how brilliant, how honest their daughter was. If she said there was danger, then they should’ve had the intelligence to heed her warning. Then again, they would’ve probably insisted she go as well.

“That can be reversed, Hermione,” he said and reached up to wipe away the tear on her cheek. “There should be traces of their old selves left. Those can be used to bring them back.” He would have to write out some kind of guide to help her do so.

She let the small trunk fall between them as she leaned forward and rested her forehead on his right shoulder. He heard a few choked back sobs, but didn’t feel any wetness on his shoulder. He turned his head towards her mass of curls, and a sharp floral and fruity smell hit him. A scent he would always treasure and remember. An olfactive symbol of a friendship that developed into something deeper.
Both of her arms moved around him, hugging him, and he wanted to stay that way forever. Forget the dangers and just be with this amazing woman.

“What are we?” Her soft voice, warm and fearful reached to him along with her question. The same one she had asked long ago.

“I don’t know,” he said.

He knew what he wanted them to be, but he couldn’t say what they were. He couldn’t promise her a future with him.

With each beat of his heart, he felt like a piece of it was falling away.

“I want you to live, Severus. You deserve to live.” Her voice was muffled and she squeezed him tighter. “But for that to happen, you need to let her go. I don’t want her to kill you.”

He stiffened. Though he still felt he owned Lily his life in some small part, it wasn’t dying for Lily that made him think that he wouldn’t survive. There were too many things stacked against him. He’d already told her he would do his best to live, and he intended to hold to that.

“I still have to hang on to my memory of her,” he said and he slowly pulled her away from him. She looked up at him, the pain displaying on her face speaking more than words ever would. “I made a promise. The Dark Lord has to fall, even if it takes my life to be a part of his destruction.”

“I…I understand.”

“And I can’t tell you what we are, because I can’t promise you anything. It would be unfair to you. No matter what, my last offering in life, will be because of what I did to her.”

She nodded.

“And what I did to Potter.” Her eyes widened and he gave her a small smile. “It’s not just Lily I owe. You made me realize that. You helped me get rid of so much hatred and you’ve saved a part of my soul. You own my soul.”

She reached up and cupped his cheeks in her hands.

“I understand your point, Severus. I get your motivation, but I want you to know that someone is waiting for you to survive. I don’t think Harry’s parents would want your death either. I accept you have to do this, but you should try to live for our future too. Not just the worlds. You’re still part of the world and can be again. I want an opportunity with you.”

Her words clung to his heart and sent warmth and hope through him. “I hate you,” he whispered and then smiled at her. “You’ve made me happy and brought me more peace than I ever thought I could have. I don’t deserve it, but you pushed it on me anyway.”

She sniffed and he wiped away a tear on her cheek. “Deal with it,” she said and smiled.

/-/-

In the end, the minutes forced them to part. They pulled away from each other. She stuck the trunk in her pocket, and got to her feet.

He glanced down at the picture in his hand, and then handed it to her. He met her gaze with his darker one, and said, “Give this to Potter. He’s the one who will probably want this most. I don’t
She smiled brightly, the significance of his words not lost on her. She took it from him and put it in her pocket.

“You didn’t tell me how to communicate,” she said.

“The portrait of Phineas. Grab him and act as if you are using it to spy on me. He was ordered to be a channel of information. He might complain, but he will tell your whereabouts to me.”

She nodded at his words and took a step towards him. “I’ll be sure to get it.”

“I won’t be able to help much, but I might be able to distract the other Death Eaters if I know where you are.”

“All right, Severus, but don’t put yourself in anymore danger for the sake of doing that. We’ll manage.”

He felt her arms encircle his waist and squeeze. She looked up at him and he bent down to kiss her forehead.

AN: Another favourite chapter of mine. Hope you enjoyed it a lot. They still have some hard times coming but…They are close. See you next Saturday and let me know what you think.
Chapter 101: Small Confrontation

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 101: Small Confrontation

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

September, 1997

Murmurs died when the first student entered the Great Hall and placed his eyes on his figure, but he didn’t care. He was glad that the fear of him managed to maintain order in the school for most of the students. The concern wasn’t for himself but for the children. If they acted out, the punishments would be beyond unreasonable. He didn’t want to send any to the Carrows if he could help it, but some had to go. It would be suspicious if all the detentions were assigned to the other teachers.

Some of the students shook as they stood in line. Most of them behaved like in his classes. As usual, the Gryffindors looked at him with defiance. Especially the ones he knew were loyal to Potter and in his club. But right now, even they were behaving. He wanted some rebellion, but they needed to be more careful. Perhaps that was exactly what they were doing now.

An excited chatter began to rise in the dining room, mainly amongst the newer students. This group would probably be the ones in the most danger, so he had to have faith the older students would help them out. Despite not being muggleborns, their naïveté made them vulnerable.

Hogwarts had somewhat been a refuge for him, the same couldn’t be said for the students now.

And he hated that fact.
Many of these kids would be indoctrinated with hate. The Carrows would find any excuse they could to teach their Dark Arts. They would teach the exact way the Dark Lord ordered, and he wouldn’t be able to interfere. These children would feel the curses in their bodies instead of seeing it on animals. The master saw fit that this was proper on his Death Eaters and thought it reasonable on children as well. It would both get them to submit to his reign and to find out how tough the children were.

When the doors opened and Minerva guided in the first years, he took a deep breath. Even the hat had been forced to keep its thoughts to itself and praise the schooling and pride in magic.

He intertwined his fingers and watched the sorting ceremony. For once, Slytherin was the favored house, though by no one but the Dark Lord at the moment. Even he felt a sinking feeling when he saw a child sorted into it. They were more drawn to the darkness, but at least there was some light in the dungeons. Not all of them would follow the Dark Lord, and he hoped the ones that had been fooled for a while would wise up to the sheer evil they were involved in. His Slytherin were cunning and intelligent. He had to have faith in many of them.

The rest of the houses were more resistant because of the rivalry through the years. The hatred for Slytherin grew when he was appointed the new headmaster. The three houses would be safer than Slytherin in some ways, but in more danger when it came to others.

When the last child was sorted, he untangled his fingers and stood. He scanned the students. The atmosphere was tense and suffocating, but he’d been through much harder situations before.

“Welcome to Hogwarts,” he said and put his arms behind his back. “We have some new professors with us this year, Alecto and Amycus Carrow. They will be teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts and Muggles Studies. Also, they will be in charge, along with Filch, of detentions for those of you who choose to go against Hogwarts' rules. We are here to teach you, and if you are not careful of your actions, you will learn the cost of not being such.” As he expected, the Gryffindors looked like they wanted to spit on him. “Despite these new rules, which you all will receive a copy of, good behaviour will be rewarded. If you have more questions, ask your teachers or Mister Filch. That’s all.”

Without bowing or waiting for an applause that would never come, he sat back down. The tension broke when the plates filled. At least the house elves knew how to calm with their exquisite cooking.

He lowered his eyes at his food and he had a hard time not expressing his shock at the amount of food on his plate. In the past month, he’d noticed that the food quality and quantity on his plate had improved and increased. He could guess why. Dobby probably had spread the truth about him to the other house elves. He would have to tell them that this was too much food. It was far more than he needed to function.

Yet it was probably the best amount for him to eat. He did need to gain a bit of weight, but the truth was that he’d lost his appetite. He hadn’t heard anything from Hermione since their foolish chaotic actions at the ministry. He could only guess that they’d been searching for a Horcrux. There was no news from the Dark Lord either.

He was stuck in the middle, hearing nothing, and left to walk on a finer line that even he wasn’t used to.

He stabbed one of the roasted potatoes with his fork and focused on it. He could feel occasional glances at him, but he ignored it. Everyone knew he was the murderer of Albus Dumbledore. No matter how much the press tried to hide it. He was forced to accept the burden of a
lie, and this was the most difficult lie he’d ever dealt with. He killed Dumbledore, but he no longer considered it murder.

But that wouldn’t stop everyone else from seeing it that way. Even if the truth got out, they’d be hard pressed to believe that Severus Snape could do something for the light. Even his colleagues, some of whom knew him as a student, didn’t even question whether he was the murderer. They took Potter’s word without even seeking him out. Though, considering the circumstances he couldn’t blame them for not doing the latter part. And he had escaped with the Death Eaters after all.

He expected a few confrontations behind closed doors but none came about. Perhaps they feared he would kill them, or that he would send them straight to the dark lord. He would treat them as he always did, and he hoped they would give him a reasonably wide berth.

After eating a bite of each food on his plate, he pushed it away and sat his fork down. He took a sip of his drink and rose from his seat.

The chatting at the table died and all eyes fell onto him. He pushed out his chair and without a glance in his colleagues’ direction, left the table and then the great hall.

-/-/-

He climbed the stairs to his office before the castle decided to lift him from the lower floor. When he got to the proper floor, he opened his office door and went inside. All he wanted to do was find a way to relax for the rest of the evening. He needed to distract himself and drinking wasn’t an option. He feared an addiction to alcohol almost as much as he feared the Dark Lord. He walked over and removed a book from his shelf. He didn’t notice that his office door hadn’t closed.

“What are you playing at, you bastard?” The door slammed shut after the question was spoken.

He froze. He’d forgotten about her. He’d forgotten that she’d been around when Hermione had kissed him. Why hadn’t he figured she’d approach him eventually? She was a reckless, disrespectful Gryffindor after all.

He closed the book.

“Miss Weasley, why are you already being an irresponsible fool?” He placed the book on his desk before turning to look at the witch.

“My friend is more important than any danger that might come to me. You played with her. I saw you kissing her. You used her, and then you turned around and murdered Dumbledore.”

He withheld the urge to correct her. He let a bored expression cover his face while being grateful that some of the portraits, especially Dumbledore’s, weren’t here right now.

“Aren’t you such a hypocrite? You come here insulting me for my actions when you were one of the first to ignore your friend when she needed you most.” His eyes bore into hers and he took a few steps forward. “And if I recall, your friend was the one who threw herself at me. So think about your own actions before judging mine. I don’t want to have to call the Carrows on the first night.”

“You fooled her,” Weasley insisted with a growl.

“How sickening.” He turned away from her. It was far from the truth and he was glad that Hermione knew it.
“It’s obvious she was fooled. She always defended you when people called you a greasy git even though everyone knew it was true.”

“I suggest you shut your mouth, Miss Weasley. You are testing my patience,” he said and took a seat. He wouldn’t give her the satisfaction of getting him angry.

“She trusted you and you betrayed her.”

He scowled at her. “You should leave, Miss Weasley. And some advice. If I were you, I would refrain from saying such things aloud. You might endanger your supposed friend with such statements. She is a muggleborn witch and in more danger than you are . . . at the moment.”

Ginny narrowed her eyes at him but he saw a flash of suspicion. He hoped she was smarter than her brother was.

“Thi—this isn’t over,” she said, but the words came out strangled rather than caustic. He knew he’d gotten to her. The witch turned away and disappeared from his office.

AN: And we start another Hogwarts year with a bit of troubles for Severus. Hope you enjoyed it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday or Wednesday… I might start posting double per week but will depend on my time <3
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 102: Intruders

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October, 1997

The slightly calm and subtle rebellion that he’d hoped for never came. He’d hoped they would rebel in small ways, ways that wouldn’t get so many caught and punished, but that hope had been in vain.

As expected, they decided to be idiots and make things obvious. To create targets within their ranks. The blasted Gryffindors were always the instigators of it. The other houses, except Slytherin, followed them. To the Ravenclaws credit, a good portion of them stayed out of it, choosing to focus on their studies.

Small mercies.

The Hufflepuffs loved Dumbledore enough to fight against his murderer and were submissive enough to go along with the Gryffindors’ pushy behavior.

He’d had only two weeks after the start of the new school year before the small groups started their tricks, making things increasingly difficult for the Carrows. Though no one had directly done anything to or in front of him yet. He was partially amused at the trouble the Carrows were going through but frustrated that he could not stop the punishments of the students caught in their mischievousness.

With a growl, he slammed the door of the latest scorched classroom as he walked out.
Idiots. All of them.

This recent chaos stank of Potter’s gang, and he was half-tempted to torture them himself. This stupidity put other students in danger, but as usual, they thought of only themselves and not the harm they could cause innocent people who just came there for an education. As bad and indoctrinating as the current education was.

The Carrows chose to punish first years that had done nothing if they got a chance. To try to serve as an example to the rebellious students. That doing things against the Dark Lord resulted in punishment. Though they did punish those directly responsible when they were caught, the Carrows always made sure to randomly choose some first years to torture as well. The older students clearly thought nothing of the future damage this would cause many children.

He hadn’t slept solidly in a long time. Most of his thoughts were focused on finding a way to keep the innocent students safe without risking his position. If he came across an incident with someone he thought was innocent, he would take the role of the punisher. He’d make the excuse of being bored when the Carrows’ questioned his decision. But he couldn’t help anyone. He’d contemplated about talking with one of the staff members about taking on more detentions. He’d even thought about taking a few of the more “trusted” professors and telling them more than he should about his position and opinion.

But he wouldn’t. It was still too dangerous. He had to be there in Hogwarts. Had to do what he could himself. He had to shoulder it all.

But he was about to fall under the weight. He didn’t know how much longer he’d be able to go on.

His steps halted and he narrowed his eyes at the Gargoyle to his office. It was open.

He removed his wand from his sleeve and held it up as he climbed the stairs, using his years of stealth skills to prevent the invaders from sensing him.

His boots reached the end with a feather touch and he listened to the voices inside the room. Heard objects being moved.

“The sword should be here somewhere,” a voice said.

The sword? How in the world did they know it was in his office?

With his wand raised he slammed the door open and the intruders jumped at the sound, one of them dropping an item to the floor.

He looked down at the floor and saw the black scarf Hermione knitted for him.

“So now the Gryffindor house becomes intruders. Just when I think you can’t go any lower, you prove me wrong.” He didn’t need to feign or use a façade to express his disgust. He looked around the room at the intruders. Even the blasted Longbottom had dared to cross him. The muscles of his hand, tensed and he forced them into a fist.

“Miss Weasley, get out of my desk and don’t touch anything else in this room.” He growled as he lowered his wand and walked towards them.

They all froze in their spots and would befit the icy environment that would be outside Hogwarts in the soon-arriving winter.
The evil part that still brewed in him wanted to break them into tiny pieces. Make them writhe in pain with the various curses he knew.

They were lucky to be Hermione’s friends. If they weren’t he couldn’t guarantee that he wouldn’t torture them within a centimeter of their lives. Normally, he would want to relish in their fear, but right now, all he wanted was some time alone.

“Detention with Hagrid tonight at eight.” Hagrid was the man he trusted not to be too hard on the children. The worst punishment people got with him was shoveling beast feces. He probably didn’t punish the children at all now. He was the safest bet.

“Ha…Hagrid?” Longbottom said, surprise in his voice.

He didn’t as much as glance at the students as he walked between them and over to his desk. “Get out of here and make sure not to encounter anyone on your way to Hagrid’s.”

They all blinked at him before scurrying out like rabbits running from a fox.

When sure they were gone, he bent down and picked up the scarf.

His fingers caressed the material until he found the small silver snake embroidered on it. The memories, the pleasant feelings he got when he’d received it, warmed his heart.

He missed her more with each passing day. Staying here without her presence was harder than he’d imagined it would be. It would’ve been an absurd thought before, but now it seemed oh so reasonable.

He folded the scarf once and draped it over the back of his chair.

He walked over to the window and looked out. A small smile came to his lips as the last leaves crossed the sky in this long and terrible month of October.

AN: The rebels attack and Severus has to deal with it the best way he can. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Saturday.
November, 1997

There’d been a lull in the larger incidences in the past few days, for which he was thankful. There were still small coups in classes that he wasn’t there to solve and resulted in punishment with the Carrows, but overall the coup had become subtler. The older students finally saw that the innocent students were being thrown into something they were both too young and too inexperienced to be involved in. In reality, all the students were such, but it would be naive to think they’d stay out of things. It would be detrimental to the cause if they did as well.

Potter’s group stopped trying to get inside his office. He’d seen them twice since he’d caught them. They would patrol his domains with such poor subtlety that a deaf serpent would be able to hear them. In the times he’d caught them, they’d frozen much like they had in the office, but instead of bothering to send them to detention he just told them to go back to their dorms.

After that, he hadn’t seen them again.

He stared out over the Great Hall, seeing occasional hateful glances thrown at him, but nothing much more than that. It was still tense, growing more so as the days passed, but that was mainly due to the Carrows targeting anyone they could for any infraction they committed. He knew the Carrows were making up the majority of violations, and looking for anything they could use as a reason to punish someone.
The students tended to act out more if he were present, so it would be better, for their sake and his own health, to avoid the Great Hall in the future. He could feign work if anyone asked. Not that they would of course.

He stood and crossed the Great Hall, intending to go to his office. The hall grew silent as he walked and he felt eyes on his back until he turned the corner. They all looked at him like he was a sideshow monster. He was good enough to see and mock but not to speak with. It’d always been like that but now it was more pronounced.

She’d been the only one brave enough to approach the monster. To walk with him a while. She still walked with him in spirit but that didn’t ease the fact that he missed her. Probably much more than he should.

When he reached his office, he looked at each of the portraits, finding that Albus was missing from his again. It was as if all the planets had aligned to let him check on her. To ease at least one worry that was eating at him.

He stopped in front of Phineas. The old Slytherin headmaster was looking at him with a mix of concern and rigid eyes. Yet, there was something else there that he couldn’t pinpoint.

“Phineas, tell me about them.” The portrait, after an accusatory glance, nodded.

“Certainly, Headmaster. They are safe and unnoticed despite some of the Dark Lord’s werewolves sniffing around them. Potter has been having nightmares so the witch’s worry is compounded by that. She mentioned something about teaching him occlumency but the foolish boy rejected her ideas.” He paused and raised his head. “I must say, despite being a mudblood, she is extremely intelligent.”

“Don’t call her that!” he snapped, almost grabbing the portrait to tear it down. “She deserves respect, Phineas.”

He would not allow another being to insult the only witch, the only person, who was on his side now. Who knew the truth about everything he had to do.

The portrait, just smiled knowingly. Severus narrowed his eyes and snorted. That bastard knew just what he was doing. He wanted to get a reaction.

“How Slytherin of you,” he said.

“Of course.”

“Give me a report.”

“They are having problems with the food and the brainless red-haired one abandoned them a few weeks ago.”

“Why didn’t you notify me of that?” He knew he couldn’t have done anything, but it would’ve been nice to know about the incident. “That blasted Weasley. How is she taking it?”

“She clearly felt betrayed, but she’s not letting it deter her. Right now, she’s focusing on helping Potter. She isn’t missing the idiot.” He smirked. “The Weasley boy isn’t the man on her mind. But you, headmaster, she asks about you as often as she can. I told her about the attempted thievery in your office since they asked about the sword. Your witch didn’t look happy about it, but she remained quiet.”
His witch. Did his portrait really call her his witch? Was he that obvious? He crossed his arms and discarded the thought. There were more important matters to worry about, and a portrait knowing his feelings for her wasn’t critical.

“When you can, tell her that the Dark Lord won’t intrude in Potter’s mind, but it’s probably his influence. He is becoming more careless and desperate. Right now, I’m in a privileged place. Tell her not to worry and to focus on finding and destroying those Horcruxes.”

“I will do it, Headmaster. I’m sure she’ll be glad to hear a direct message from you.”

“And about that slimy coward. Tell her I will hex him if he takes a step near this castle.

Phineas chuckled, making the portrait vibrate and then, bowed before disappearing.

The news didn’t calm him as much as he’d hoped, but at least he knew she was still safe and hidden. She’d taken charge and that was yet another ease to his mind. She was the brains out of those three. She was cautious and he had trained her to fight and survive. She was a fighter and now willing to show her claws when necessary.

A chirp distracted him from his thoughts. He looked toward the window and saw a mass of fire in the shape of a bird fly inside. It moved over to the perch in the office and landed. The little owl that used to come to the dining hall entered right after him, choosing his office chair to perch on. He walked over to his chair and stroked the little owl on the head before turning his gaze to the phoenix.

“Fawkes?”

The phoenix extended his wings and released another chirp. His claws gripped the perch tightly, a hint he took as the creature saying, “I’m not moving”.

And he didn’t understand why. He wasn’t loyal to Dumbledore anymore; he followed his task and ideals. Dumbledore was dead and the bird was free of a master.

He studied the bird for a few seconds and took a small step back when it lowered its head, as if bowing.

Why would the bird choose him as a master?

The bird raised its head and met his gaze. He would have to accept the decision of the creature whether he thought it best or not.

He smirked.

Who would have thought this kind of aid would come to a Slytherin?

He glared at Dumbledore’s empty portrait.

AN: Despite all, he is having more company than he thought. Still he misses our Hermione and worries about her. Let me know what you think and I hope you liked it. See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 104: Plans That Go to Hell

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 104: Plans That Go to Hell

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December, 1997

No more news came from Phineas’ portrait in the next weeks. All he knew was that their whereabouts or the situation hadn’t changed for the two adventurers he needed to protect. He learned that the red haired coward was back at his mother’s house. Did the boy not have enough sense to realize he was still a target? Granted the Death Eaters were mainly after Potter, but they wouldn’t hesitate to kill Weasley to get at Potter if they found out where he was. They might even torture the boy for information regarding what Potter was doing.

He supposed that no reply or words were better than bad ones, but he still wished for any comment from her that confirmed she was still out of Death Eater clutches.

He’d forgotten what it was like not to have anyone to talk to at all. What it felt like to shoulder everything. He’d done it for most of his adult life, but then this witch had transformed him from a cold man to one that needed warmth. That now acknowledged he could pity people rather than push it back and pretend he didn’t care.

The situation at Hogwarts was calm one minute and the next it was as if a bomb went off. Today yet another group of students were sent to the infirmary with violent shivers after the cruciatus curse was cast upon them in the Carrows class. Admittedly, he didn’t disagree with someone experiencing the curse through teaching. The experience meant that one knew how it felt would be less hesitant to cast it. It built up a sense of empathy.
For some people that is.

In the end, though it was suspicious of him doing so, he’d gone to the infirmary in the middle of the night to check on the students. Pomfrey had been in her office and he’d made sure she didn’t see him as he checked each student from a distance.

Fortunately, Pomfrey had plenty of experience treating this curse since he’d often come in with the aftereffects of it still wracking his body.

He leaned back in his chair, but he wasn’t focusing much on his surroundings or the words coming out of the teacher’s mouth. This was all useless. Anything they tried to do, any new rule, any new curriculum, he would have to squash before they even tried it. All because the Dark Lord would never agree unless it benefited his ultimate goal.

He was sure the professors knew that too, because they ignored his presence and treated him as if he were under Potter’s invisibility cloak. They would listen much like the way he did, some would pretend to be concerned about matters, but in the end, their only concern was to make as much trouble and chaos as possible without getting caught.

But extremely slight chaos. Nothing that the Carrows would notice but things he’d noticed and overlooked. They’d listened to his words telling them to just teach. Still, he knew they were withholding as many punishments as they could. Even Minerva with her Gryffindor temper was cunning enough to behave properly and choose her battles.

He snapped out of his thoughts when the chairs moved and the staff started to leave. He took a deep breath and waited for the last footsteps to fade before releasing the air.

“For a traitor that murdered his mentor you look like you actually feel concern sometimes.”

He looked up and saw Minerva standing there. Her arms were folded over her chest and her wand was in her hand, he assumed as a precaution. Her eyes stared at him the way they had during his school days. During all the times he got blamed for merely defending himself from Potter. Truthfully, he did deserve some of his detentions, he had struck first at times, but every single time, even when he did nothing wrong, Potter got off with a slap on the wrist and he got detention.

He scolded himself for letting his mask fall for even a second even though the Carrows hadn’t been present.

He ignored her and rose from his seat, wanting to seek the miserable solace of his office.

“Is your soul really so rotten,” she asked, “or did you actually have a reason?” The woman took a step closer to him. “Tell me why you killed Albus. The real reason.”

And the woman’s harsh words reduced into a slow plea. Her voice softened. He knew it was taking all her pride to ask him that question. To even speak to him without a caustic tone. He almost wanted to tell her that she was just a pawn to Albus too, but he refrained.

“I suggest you stop asking things so boldly, Professor McGonagall, and leave. If your colleagues see you, they won’t take lightly to you talking to me.”

“You don’t eat, Severus,” she whispered. “You hide and you try to help my students get out of punishments. The others haven’t noticed, but I’ve watched you since you were a child. None of this makes a bit of sense. I had hoped all of this had an explanation, a motive for things happening this way. I know deep down you aren’t a monster. You’ve made mistakes like any other human, and I think something is happening that no one besides you knows. Things are not what they seem are
they?” The woman’s grip on her wand weakened and she let her arms drop to her side, her stance no longer one of hostility.

Perhaps letting her wonder and trying to have another ally behind Dumbledore’s back could help. Still, all he could do was let her figure it out on her own. He was being watched too closely. He knew Minerva was the kind of woman to intrude in his office if possible and irritate Albus for hours to tell her the truth. It would be will against will, and he wasn’t unconfident that Minerva would win.

“You seem so much shrewder since I’ve become headmaster, Minerva. Downright intrusive in my life. Trying to see beyond the obvious because you wish to do it.” He chuckled sardonically. “Next thing you know you’ll be entering my office and taking the painting of the old bastard. Not that him gone wouldn’t be a relief off my chest even now. Maybe he’ll talk to you if he doesn’t have lemon drops shoved in his troublesome mouth.”

He made sure his tone was caustic, but low. It would appear he was berating her all the while low enough that no one could make out exactly what he was saying. His words were like insults to Dumbledore while giving her what she needed to know.

She gave a slow nod and he stalked past her and left the room.

He relaxed when he got to the door of his office, but the tenseness returned when Phineas’ portrait shouted at him. He slammed the door and warded it before rushing over to the painting.

If that kind of reaction was coming from him, it meant something terrible happened.

“The witch, sir! She was desperate and at the end asked me to contact you.”

He had to ignore Albus eyes studying them too.

“Explain,” he said, remaining calm even though panic threatened to burst forth.

“She knew it was dangerous to contact you, but she asked me to tell you to come to her.”

*Come to her?* Hermione would never ask that of him unless…

“The Potter boy has been bitten by the serpent. She’s tried to stabilize him but she’s failing.” If Phineas weren’t a portrait, he would’ve sworn the old headmaster was sweating.

His stomach sank. If Nagini had bitten Potter, he was sure to die soon if not given antivenin. She chose the right reason to contact him. She’d had no other options. Potter could not die.

“Where is she?” he asked as he started to walk towards his personal quarters. Phineas image followed him but disappeared for a moment.

He rummaged through his vials, retrieved one, and his lips pursed. It wasn’t enough to cure Potter, but it was enough to stabilize him until he could brew more. Placing the vial carefully in his pocket, he gathered the ingredients he would need for the brewing along with a portable brewing kit.

“She is at the place you showed her, sir,” Phineas said.

He nodded and put all the things he needed into a box. He shrank the box and put it in his other pocket.

“Did she tell you what she’s used so far on Potter?” he asked as he entered his office once more. He stopped in front of Fawkes.
“No.” Phineas said. “Your witch couldn’t talk more. The boy’s fever rose quickly and he was in pain. She had to keep him quiet.”

“Very well. Tell her to shove more bezoars to the boy’s throat. No more than three in six hours or she will kill him before I arrive.” He turned his attention solely to the phoenix again. “I need your tears.”

The phoenix bent down. He uncorked a vial and held it up to the bird. A couple of tears would’ve been enough, but the bird gave him much more than that. It would speed up the healing process. It was a pity that the healing properties in the tears weren’t enough on their own for the venom.

Severus corked the vial and put it with the vial he’d gotten from his room. He grabbed his wand.

“What have you done, Severus?” Albus asked, freezing him in his movements for a moment before anger propelled him to act.

He looked at the painting. He was doing many things that Albus had not told him to do. This was a major disregard of his plans. Albus couldn’t have planned for every eventuality, and he was too stubborn to realize that not everything could go his way.

“I’m doing what’s best,” he snapped. “I’m sending your plan to hell.”

AN: One of my fave chapters here and another row of them are coming. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 105: Respite in the Bedlam

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 105: Respite in the Bedlam

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

He almost laughed aloud when he landed in the darkness outside. Albus’ face had been stunned with his words. He didn’t intend of ruining Albus’ plan completely of course, but things could be altered and he fully intended on doing what was best in his situation.

He looked around the snowy area and took a second to take in a deep breath of the fresh air. Then, he searched the area using what little moonlight was currently shining down on the environment. Everything was just as it should be. There were no people around, and only the sound of the unfrozen river broke up the quiet night. He took a step and sensed magic. Wards of his own creation. Spells he’d taught her.

He felt a pull and his eyes registered a new realm opening to him.

He felt a pressure at his side, making him smile.

“What did I do before you went to kill Dumbledore?” she said, her voice like a song to his ears.

“You stupidly threw yourself into my arms in front of your friend and kissed me.” Though his words sounded unpleased, he spoke them in dulcet tones.

She moved away from him and he took the opportunity to study her face. A sad smile was in control of her lips and fresh tears were spilling down her cheeks. She took his hand, intertwined their fingers, and guided him to the tent.

He went inside and his attention immediately went to Potter. He was whimpering and clinching
his fist. Every few seconds he would kick his feet or shift his body as if doing so would relieve some of the pain.

“I…I’m sorry for putting you in much more danger, but Harry is getting worse and I…”

“You did the right thing,” he said and removed the vial of antivenin from his pocket. “When was he bitten, and did you use bezoars?”

He let go of her hand and walked over to Potter. He crouched at the boy’s side and placed a hand on his forehead. As expected, the fever was high, but not at its maximum.

Yet.

“Two days ago, and I used four bezoars. Two each day. I attempted to identify the venom but…I know I’m not skilled enough.”

He nodded. “I am the only one who knows how to treat it, and Arthur Weasley is the evidence of that. Lift Potter’s head.”

The young witch did as he asked and with small drops, he poured the contents of the vial down his throat, forcing him to swallow several times with a tap of his wand on the boy’s throat.

Emptying the vial into the boy was the first step, but now, the real battle started.

Hermione rested Potter’s head back onto the pillow. He straightened and looked around the tent. He needed a safe place to work so he wouldn’t burn the tent down.

It was then that he noticed her belongings around Phineas portrait. The bag he’d gifted her sat behind the portrait and a small mountain of bandages sat in front of it. It looked as if it were an altar of some kind.

Severus motioned to the fire. “I need to brew here. Potter will need at least two more doses to remove the venom. I will do a full batch in case you encounter the serpent again.”

She revived the fire with her wand. “Will it be enough?”

He nodded.

As he set up his things, Hermione sat on a cot. He filled the cauldron with water and levitated it so it sat above the fire. It will have to heat to a boil before he got started, so he took the moment to look at her. There were dark circles under her eyes and she’d lost a significant amount of weight. Despite being on the verge of extreme exhaustion, she pushed onward.

“You should rest, Hermione.”

“You might need help with Harry,” she replied with a weak voice.

“I don’t need help with the idiotic boy. Now sleep. I won’t let anything happen to you two. I’ll be here when you wake up.”

She looked up at him, leaned forward, and brushed his lips with hers. It was tempting to pull her closer, but a kiss like that wasn’t fitting for their current situation.

When he broke the contact, she was smiling. Their relationship was both a weakness and strength for them.
“Now sleep, witch.”

He distanced himself from her and walked towards the now boiling cauldron. He hoped focusing on brewing the potion would be enough to calm his dizzying heart. He sat down on the ground. He used the box that that portable kit came in as a makeshift table and began chopping the white mushroom that he’d brought with him. He felt eyes on his back and looked over his shoulder.

She was resting on her side, but she wasn’t making any effort to sleep.

“Sleep, Granger.” His hand chopped the mushroom in half, a red liquid staining the box he was using as a table.

“I never saw that ingredient.” Her tired voice vanished and he groaned. “Come on. You can’t expect me to sleep when you are making a batch of antivenin that only you know how to make. Brewing relaxes me so it sort of counts as rest.”

There was no way he could deny her with those hopeful eyes of hers. The blasted witch was just like him when it came to a thirst for knowledge.

“Please let me help,” she said.

He let a little chuckle escape him and he motioned to the place beside him. “Get over here, Granger.”

Her face lit up and she scrambled off the bed and flopped down at his side. He bit the inside of his cheek to keep from laughing at the ecstatic look on her face as she took in all the ingredients. He lifted the box onto his lap so she’d get a better view of it.

“It’s called *Hydnellum Peckii*, or *bleeding tooth fungus* using the foul language of youngsters. I use it as an anticoagulant for the blood,” he said.

“You must admit, the foul language term does suit it.”

“Indeed.” He continued chopping it until it was the proper size. “Add the *Aristolochia Serpentaria* roots.”

“But being an anticoagulant… It won’t be dangerous?”

“Yes if there is a fresh open wound. That’s why you will need blood-replenishing potions too. In Potter’s case, he has no large wounds so there’s no need. If Nagini had ripped through a larger area, like his femur or neck, he’d need it.” He watched as she added the roots. “Stir it twice, clockwise.”

She did as he said. He picked up the vial that held Fawke’s tears and placed it next to the rest of the ingredients. Her eyes watched every movement he made with a sight that only the very gifted possessed.

“Now add the *Echinacea,*” he said. “That works as an antibiotic. Stir twice again.”

Grabbing the chopped fungus in between his hands, he counted the stirring and just when the boiling water stopped moving, he dropped the fungus into the cauldron. He counted time as he uncorked the vial of tears. The water took on an intense red colour.

“And that is?” she asked, motioning to the bottle in his hands.
“Phoenix tears.” His eyes never left the potion. When he dropped the liquid into the boiling mix, the red morphed into a dark green.

A whimpering made him look away at the same time Hermione did. Potter’s body jerked, then stilled. When he looked at her, she looked terrified for her friend.

“He will make it,” he said. “We still have a couple of hours since I gave him that dose of antivenin. There shouldn’t be any severe damage after he wakes. You’re going to have to find a place where he can rest for a while. His muscles will be extremely weak for a time, but he should make a full recovery.”

“How long will this take?”

“About an hour. It will be ready in time to help Potter.”

She nodded and bit her lip. “I know you said I should rest, but I’m not going to be able to sleep.” She took his hand. “Will you sit and talk with me?”

“Of course,” he said. To have this time, however brief, meant the world to him. It was a respite in the bedlam.

They stood up and she guided him to sit at the edge of her bed. He expected her to sit down, so he was surprised when she turned away and retrieved something out of his line of sight. A moment later, she turned. She was holding a teapot and two teacups.

“It will be good for us. It’s my favourite and you look like you need to have something nice.”

“Are you criticizing my appearance, Granger?”

“I know I don’t look much better,” she said and focused on making the tea. As it brewed, the smell that permeated the tent was familiar.

“I assume they are not being kind to you at school.”

“You assume right, but I expected such behavior after what happened.”

She made a little growling noise in her throat. “You’d think they would at least have the sense to…” She growled again.

“I think Minerva might have caught something, but I’m not clear on what. I’ve offered some hints but nothing outright. It could aid me if she figures something out.”

“She’ll probably end up helping you somehow,” Granger said. “Whether she knows everything or not.”

He took the cup she offered and she sat down next to him. A sharp floral combined with fruit scent came to his nose from the cup. It was like her scent.

His brows furrowed. He looked at the tea for a few seconds before taking a small sip. “What tea is this?”

“It’s Darjeeling.” She leaned her head on his shoulder.

“Darjeeling,” he muttered and caressed the edge of his cup. That was a complex tea. Easy to over boil. It was just like her to do it perfectly. “You need to eat a bit more,” he said. “I know you tend to avoid eating in dire situations but you need your strength.”
“We’re both walking disasters right now, so you aren’t allowed to tell me how to take care of myself if you don’t do it too. You haven’t been eating either; it’s easy to see that.”

“Impertinent witch.” She smiled and took a sip of her tea.

They stayed silent and drank their tea for a few minutes before she exhaled, the air trembling as it left her body.

“We found a Horcrux. It’s horrible.” She spoke so low he almost had to ask her to repeat herself. “It drains your positive emotions and talks to you. It’s a constant reminder of your insecurities and weaknesses.”

“Where is it?”

“I have it in my bag, but I don’t want you to touch it.” She clinched his hand. “We need the sword of Gryffindor to break it. Harry said that Dumbledore told him it has the power.”

His eyes moved away from her and he tensed. “Yet another bit of information the old man decided not to tell me,” he snapped. Now he knew why the sword was so important. Why he almost died retrieving it. The ring that cursed him had been a Horcrux too. That explained the sword’s presence next to the broken ring.

“Dumbledore was a bloody idiot,” he said. Her hand rose to his chest and he looked down at her. He bent over and kissed her forehead. A gesture that he realized he’d only done to her. After finishing his tea, he set the cup down on the floor next to him, away from his feet so he wouldn’t break it. “The sword is in my possession now. When Potter is better, I will make sure he gets it, but I suggest you move your location first. You’ve been staying here too long.”

“I’ll make sure to do that as soon as possible,” she said. She reached up and touched his face. She grinned.

He raised an eyebrow and tilted away slightly. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

She tilted her head and her smile grew. “You’re growing a beard.”

He snorted. “I’m not, it’s just I’ve had little time to shave.”

“It wouldn’t look that bad. It might even look great. Especially if you cut your hair.”

“Are you trying to give me a makeover?” he joked.

“No, I adore you and your looks. It’s just that new things can be fun.” He was about to open his mouth when she cut him off. “I know, I know, it would be improper and out of character for you.” Her thumb ran along his jaw. “It would make people wonder, right?”

He nodded. It never occurred to him to cut his hair or grow facial hair; he didn’t care about what he looked like. His poor appearance wasn’t intentional.

She slowly let her hand fall away. “Maybe someday you can grow one.”

He knew what she was implying. He wished he had the sort of time to think about something as trivial as facial hair.

”Maybe,” he said.

“You…” She sighed. “Please, be careful.”
“You tell me that every time,” he said.

“I’ll keep telling you that until we’re no longer in danger.”

He turned his body slightly, their knees touching, and after leaving her cup on the floor, he encircled her waist.

She pushed him back so he rested against the bed. He was about to protest when she cuddled up next to him. She put her head on his chest and her arm over his stomach. “Let’s just relax for a little while, please? Together?”

He rested his chin atop her head, relishing her scent. He knew they shouldn’t be this close, that it would be even more difficult to pull away after this, but he couldn’t bring himself to push her away or sit up. “Very well,” he said and let some of the tension leave his body.

He needed this.

“Severus?”

“Yes?”

“I love you.”

“I know,” he whispered. He’d known for a long time, but it had been hard to acknowledge.

When he felt her body relax, he buried his face in her hair and took a deep breath as he dozed in the half asleep but easily awoken way that he’d honed through the years.

He’d take solace in this small pleasure.

-/-/-

He slouched with tiredness as soon as he appeared in his office. Despite his fatigue, there was a sense of relief in him. Potter would be fine, and now they were supplied enough to cope if the serpent attacked them again. Two vials had gone to Potter and they had four left. When he administered the last dose to the boy, he’d almost gained consciousness. That was a sign it was time for him to leave. He was about to go into his room to get cleaned up when Albus spoke.

“Are you going to explain what you’re doing, Severus?”

He was surprised to find there was no rage in him, just frustration. He would not let him make him feel as if he’d done something wrong.

“I told you,” he said.

“If she knows everything, she will be a danger to my plan.”

“It’s our plan now, Albus. You aren’t here in anything but a painting. You aren’t living this so you only get a little say. I’m sticking to your main plain, so shut up and let me work.”

“Severus, listen to me. I understand that—”

He whirled around to face the painting. “You understand nothing,” he said, amazed at his own calm. “Do not treat me as if I’m stupid. She knows Occlumency and she is extremely good at it. What I did, what I taught her, will help her survive and help Potter survive until he has no other options. So don’t you dare to say that she’s a danger to the plan. She is more than capable of acting
properly when she needs to.”

Albus sighed and shook his head. “Severus, you were capable on your own.”

He turned back to his desk and rested his hand on the back of his chair.

“For a while yes, but not for the entire plan. Tell me, Albus, if she hadn’t known she could contact me, what then? What would’ve happened to Potter? What fate would the wizarding world have if he died back in that tent? Think about your plan in regards to that before you answer me.”

He let a small smirk appear on his lips when Dumbledore never replied.

AN: Well this chapter has a lot of things so I will only say it’s one of my favourites. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. This chapter will have a companion draw so take a look. See you next Wednesday.
Chapter 106: Unexpecto Patronum

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 106: Unexpecto Patronum

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

December, 1997

The snow crunched under his boot, the sound pleasing to his ears. The landscape itself was barren of people, but the castle was crowded even during this Christmas season. All the students had stayed, whether by their own will or the will of their parents he wasn’t sure. It was strange that people thought Hogwarts to be a safe place despite it being under his control.

Though, most of the students were from pure families, so it made a bit of sense that they would see Hogwarts as being a good place to spend the holidays.

He walked away from the castle and took a deep breath, thrilled to have the outside to himself and whatever animals lurked in the snow-covered landscape. No one would dare to venture out into the cold when mugs of hot chocolate and warm fireplaces comforted them inside.

But this environment also brought a small pang to his heart. It made him miss her.

His steps halted as he saw the place where the witch had dared to get closer to him the first time. A year had passed since she’d watched him gather the yellow slipper.

A curve formed on his lips as he remember the blasted cat coming to him first, and she afterwards, bringing him a warmth he would never imagine he’d become attached to. That he’d miss.
He thought of her every day and didn’t try to stop it since it mainly happened when he was alone. With all the hate surrounding him, it was too easy to get lost in his memories of her. The witch loved him, and he wasn’t going to forget that. It was his reason to continue with his mission and give her a relatively safe future. She’d given him something he could’ve only dreamed of for years. Made him feel like he actually deserved to be cared for. She made him desire to have another chance when he’d once looked forward to his death.

It’d been a couple of weeks since he’d last seen her. He assumed Potter was healed since Phineas told him that they’d changed locations a few days ago.

“You shouldn’t be here, Severus,” a stern voice said. He turned and looked toward the castle. Pomfrey was trudging through the snow at a fast pace, a stern expression woven onto her features.

“When last I checked, I was the headmaster of the school and could leave when I pleased,” he replied with no hostility.

“I don’t care. Not even if you are trying to play as a traitorous Death Eater,” she said, her voice low. “You can’t fool all of us. You need a check up, now.”

She hit his chest with one of her bony fingers. She…She knew? It did make sense. Pomfrey had known him since he was a child. She knew his actions better than any of the other staff. Knew his personality. And she’d been the only one who’d hesitated in looking at him with disgust when he came back. The only time she’d let such an expression cross her face was when the rest of the staff looked at her. Even then, it wasn’t disgust as much as it was cold neutrality.

He wished he could tell her, but he couldn’t. He didn’t want to endanger one of the few people that truly cared for him. Instead, he met her gaze and let a quick smirk cross his lips.

“Come on, Severus.” The nurse’s voice came softer to his ears. “I know you. At least let me give you some vitamins and supplements. Merlin knows you need them.”

“Very well.”

The mediwitch started to walk away and he followed her.

/-/-/-/-/

“Headmaster!” Phineas’ portrait said as soon as he closed his office door. “I finally got the location from the mudblood girl!”

His eyes narrowed on the portrait and it coughed. He would have to accept that prejudices and habits were hard to change. And due to Phineas being only a portrait, he wouldn’t likely change at all. “Where are they?” he asked.

“They’re in the forest of Dean.”

His eyes moved to Albus Portrait, a silent understanding passing between them despite their last conversation.

“I should get to it then,” Severus said. Albus’s portrait opened like a door, revealing the Gryffindor sword.

He grabbed the sword and moved the portrait back so Albus was visible once more.

“Remember that it has to be taken due to a need and under the circumstance of bravery. And
you need to make sure he doesn’t know you gave it to him.”

“I remember.”

“Be careful, Severus. Despite Miss Granger being your ally, Harry isn’t. If it gets back to Voldemort, if Harry sees you, it could put you and them in danger.”

He’d expected some lecture about his choice in including Hermione, so he was surprised that he didn’t receive it.

“I have a plan, Albus. Trust me on this.”

And with his eyes staring at the blue ones, his magic transformed his body.

He reappeared in a thick forest covered with snow. He recognized the area immediately and knew there was a river nearby. Finding their location wouldn’t be difficult since he knew how Hermione’s protections were. He knew her magic and once he found her trail, it wouldn’t be hard to track.

He waved his wand and muttered a revelation spell. Magic vibrated to the east of his location.

Close, they were very close.

He walked towards the tingle of magic, the sensation growing stronger until he felt warmth caress his skin.

This was the place. He looked in the distance and found the lake he sought. The perfect place. He walked to the lake. He cracked some of the ice with a spell, levitated the sword out to the hole, and let it drop into the water. He waved his wand again and the top appeared as if it’d never been broken.

Satisfied, he turned back and followed his own steps until he felt the warming sensation again.

He lifted his wand and pointed it in front of him. When the tip of the ebony touched the invisible barrier, it waved and molded to let him in. Hermione’s magic recognized him and put very little resistance to his intrusion.

Resting his body against a tree, he looked down at the tent and fire in the distance. Hermione wasn’t present outside. Potter was sitting in front of the fire, trying to revive it by poking it with a stick. Though he looked paler than usual, the fact he was able to sit up was a relief and a sign he’d recovered for the most part.

He would’ve liked to have waited a bit longer, but the time right now was optimal. He had to set the plan into motion. If Potter didn’t choose the right course of action, he’d die. It was risky, but it was the best way to get the sword to him.

He focused on his memories and waved his wand. A silver fog shifted and twisted in the night air, much brighter than it normally was.

His wand almost slipped from his hands when the ethereal fog morphed into its form and looked at him.

His chest constricted at what had taken shape.

He knew the meaning of it. He knew the implications of it.
The eyes looking back at him made his mind scream in denial, but at the same time, deep down inside his soul, he knew it was right this happened. He accepted it, and he felt elated.

But his rational mind overpowered everything. His guilt screamed at him that this was wrong.

That now wasn’t the right time. This… this couldn’t…

Not now.

This couldn’t happen now. . .

AN: … … … Another favourite chapter of mine? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 107: Dual Evidence

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The otter in front of him apparently didn’t think the same as he. And it was obvious he was the one wrong about it. It was too pretty, too clear to be a mistake.

It moved gently through the air as if joyous he’d summoned it. Then it stopped in front of him and waited.

He couldn’t accept this. His heart couldn’t be that dedicated to Hermione could it? He cared deeply for her, but this deeply?

He lifted his wand and pointed at the patronus.

“It...It needs to be Lily,” he said, his voice coming out as a choking plea. It should’ve been her since she was the start of his life of darkness and danger.

Yet Hermione had brought light and hope, and made him sometimes think that he could really survive all of this.

The silver otter tilted its head, but didn’t falter in its form. It was even stubborn like her. His patronus should’ve understood the critical situation, the necessity that it had to be a doe.

But it didn’t. He knew it didn’t.

He took a deep breath and tried to put only Lily in his thoughts, and ponder the feelings he
Once. It was hard to make memories triumph over what he had in the present. They weren’t happy memories anymore. He went further back in his life, thinking about her before they encountered Potter. Slowly, the otter drifted into a shape of a doe, but not as bright. He saw many faults in the form, but it was good enough that Potter wouldn’t notice the defects. He knew it would probably be the last time he’d see the doe.

And that fact didn’t hurt nearly as much as he thought it should have.

“Guide him to the lake. Your boy needs help.” His voice carried the worry that his memories weren’t strong enough now. That the doe might vanish before it completed its task. The doe looked at him, and then bowed its head before moving over to Potter.

The boy got up and raised the wand in his hand towards the patronus. He had Hermione’s wand.

Had the boy lost his?

The situation seemed to be worse than he’d thought. They had one wand between two wizards and Weasley had deserted them.

The patronus moved its head in the direction it wanted Potter to go, ignoring the boy’s threat, and began to walk. Potter lowered the wand and started to follow it.

For once, he was thankful the boy was reckless and too trusting. Then again, this was light magic and Potter had enough sense and intelligence to realize that. No Death Eater could use a spell like this due to their lack of soul.

He quietly followed Potter, staying in the darkest shadows of the forest and ready to disappear if Potter managed to realize he was being watched. He stopped in a line of trees where he had a full view of the lake. When the patronus reached the middle of the lake, it morphed into a ball of dim light.

Potter tentatively walked around the ice and when he was closer to the remains of his now fading patronus, the boy looked down and gasped. He let a smirk cross his lips. He dismissed his patronus and watched the scene unfold before him.

He frowned when he heard a noise and looked in the distance behind him. He heard the water splash, an indication Potter was now in the water and swimming toward the sword. He waited with baited breath, his anxiety growing the more Potter stayed under the water.

He couldn’t go in after him, but if he didn’t the world would have no hope. He couldn’t risk a connection between the Dark Lord and Potter and an image of himself aiding the boy.

He heard voices in the distance and cursed the Weasley boy for being so loud. He heard Granger’s name, and realized that he did have another option to help Potter.

He cast his patronus again, the otter easily forming instead of the doe. He would ponder this happening once he got back to Hogwarts. At least the boy would mistake his patronus for Granger’s. He sent the silver creature to find the boy and guide him to Potter as he pleaded in silence for him to be in time.

He heard footsteps coming towards him and moved further back into the woods, making sure that the darkness covered him. The patronus stopped at the middle of the lake, raising its upper legs once held for her.
to look back at Weasley.

“Harry!”

Weasley dove into the water without hesitation, the splash breaking the night’s silence.

And he waited as his otter illuminated the surface and the path for the two wizards.

His body was frozen but the cold air wasn’t the cause.

A rough cough broke the silence and he closed his eyes. It irked him that he had to give Weasley credit for taking away much of the anxiety he held in this situation.

“Come on, Harry! Breathe mate!”

When Potter coughed and Weasley helped him sit up, he dismissed the patronus.

The boy was alive and safe for now. The plan was done. They had the sword and could finish destroying the Horcruxes. Hermione could breathe for a little longer with one less worry to carry around.

“Ron?”

As soon as he heard Potter’s voice, he disappeared. It was dangerous to stay any longer.

As he made his way back to the castle, his brain was clouded with thoughts of what happened to his patronus. When he got back, he would confirm or disprove his fears.

-/-/-

It seemed like it took mere seconds to make his way into the warm office. He removed his cloak and tossed it onto a chair.

“Accio,” he muttered and opened his hand. A vial full of pink liquid flew to him.

“Severus, did the plan go well? Are you hurt?” Ignoring Dumbledore’s voice, he raised his other hand. His fingers trembled when they touched the cork of the vial.

He pulled out the cork, and didn’t give his nerves time to flare. He inhaled the vial’s contents, and the smell hit him so strongly that it made him dizzy. He recognized the scents immediately. Old books, ink, and the smell of Darjeeling, fruity and floral but sharp. His knees shook and he forced himself back against the wall. He cursed and hurled the bottle into the far wall.

This proved it without a doubt. The patronus change wasn’t a mistake. There was no way he could even pretend to deny it now.

He cleaned up the remains of the potion with a wand movement and recovered the strength in his legs. He pushed away from the wall and sighed.

He loved Hermione Granger. Now that he looked back, he could pinpoint all the times he denied it. He wanted to hate that he’d fallen in love with her, but he couldn’t.

He cursed his fate as he lowered his head, wishing that he would survive so he could see what would come of it.

“Despite what you think about my actions and about me, I am truly glad you have someone to
Severus looked up and around at the portrait. He saw a kind smile on Albus’s face and it was like a knife to the gut after everything the old man said. He stared at the painting for a few seconds, turned his back to it, and entered his bedroom.

AN: There it is, the truth and another of my favourite chapters. I admit I played a bit with the Patronuses. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you next Wednesday if nothing happens.
Chapter 108: A Slytherin’s Encouragement

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 108: A Slytherin’s Encouragement

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

December, 1997

Loyalty toward Potter infected people like a poison. It was a positive thing for the boy but it was a nightmare for him. It made directing the school even more difficult and hurt more students in the end.

Hagrid had been a particularly gigantic pain in the arse. He’d been singing, well, more like shouting, heroic songs about how Potter managed to escape and incapacitate a group of Death Eaters that surrounded them at the Lovegood house. It didn’t matter that it’d been night. The drunken voice had been heard from the small house outside Hogwarts, filling every part of the Great Hall where the students were eating. They’d started to sing with him, chorusing his stupidity.

He would’ve preferred to allow it to continue, to block out his world with a silencing spell, but that would’ve been too lenient. He’d had to put on his evil servant act.

He’d gone to Hagrid’s cottage with the Carrows and confronted him. He’d tried being civil but was rewarded with an angry, drunken, half-giant barreling out the door, calling him a hypocrite, traitor, and murderer. He’d tried to warn him subtly that he was being stupid, but the moment those words came from his mouth Hagrid pushed him back, his ribs cracking at the pressure. The Carrows had bombarded Hagrid with hexes. Ineffective ones thanks to the giant’s blood.

Hagrid easily knocked the Carrows off their feet and then ran into the dark forest. He was
pleased to let the man go. He knew that forest better than anyone did and would be able to escape. Nevertheless, he’d told the Carrows to notify the Dark Lord’s circle. Maybe a few Death Eaters would be killed if they dared to venture inside. It would thin out their numbers a bit and make things slightly easier during the final battle.

He’d ordered the students that had emerged to go back to their dorms and was now making his way to his office. Pomfrey had stepped forward to help him but he’d shot a glare at her, warning her not to dare try it. If she helped him, it would possibly turn the staff and students against her.

He pushed open his office door and entered. He sank down in his desk chair, and summoned a vial with a potion for mending bones. He popped open the cork and downed the contents without hesitation. He dropped the vial immediately and gripped the desk as his bones began mending themselves. He focused on the events at hand instead of the pain.

Why were they at Lovegood’s place? Why did they change their hiding strategy? He glanced at Phineas’ portrait to see he was missing. He knew Phineas was likely in the portrait in Hermione’s bag.

He’d have to wait for information. He leaned back further in the chair and stared at the books on the top shelves, reading each of the titles and mentally organizing them in alphabetical order. Instead, Albus had organized them by color. So impractical.

His memory harked back to a time when Hermione had mentioned the organization of his books in his rooms. He gripped the chair arms as yet another rib moved and merged together, making it feel as if someone lit that area on fire.

He reached out for the scarf sitting on his desk and focused on it and his memories.

It was an hour before a voice sounded through his office. “Headmaster.”

His head snapped up and he carefully moved his chair around to look at the now occupied portrait of Phineas. His ribs were still healing, but the pain was now dulled.

“Tell me why in Merlin’s name they exposed themselves.” His demand was accompanied with a tightening of grip on the scarf she had gifted him.

“She is unharmed. She said she couldn’t say where she was. She just whispered that they were fine. A rude way to hide if you want my opinion.”

“Don’t be insolent.” He gripped his right side as he shifted in his chair. “I don’t need more of that today.” He only knew one reason they would move. It would have something to do with a Horcrux.

His eyes turned to the Portrait that held Albus. That man would know why. As if he had sensed his internal conclusion, the blue eyes turned to meet his.

“I’m not going to tell you, Severus. If she didn’t, I won’t either.”

“Can’t say I was expecting you to. Though, you could be a little more helpful, Albus. I could help them better.”

“That piece of information only concerns Harry. This is his task to resolve.”

“With Granger’s help! He is a brainless boy, so it involves the witch too. You are playing with three lives, Albus. Is it not enough that Potter’s fate is to die?” The force of his voice sent a shiver...
along his chest, making him regret his building anger. He needed to calm down.

“You are worried about her,” Dumbledore stated.

He rolled his eyes at the obvious words. “How incredible of you to notice.” Wasn’t it understandable that he was worried about the witch he loved?

“You have to focus, Severus. This is why you should have kept your work to yourself.”

“If I recall correctly, you were previously in a joyful state that I had support.”

“And I still am, but you need to complete your mission. The world depends on it.”

“Of course. The world that wants to see my head on a pike. Thank you by the way.” The hand gripping the scarf was trembling. “Be a good portrait and go away if you have nothing useful to share.”

Albus’s eyes hardened at the order and, after a disapproving look, disappeared.

He closed his eyes and relaxed in the chair. His relationship with Albus was breaking more with each passing day and he didn’t particularly care. Not after discovering that the man had fooled him for years, pushing him on with a false hope and giving him a supposedly noble mission to help Lily’s kid from the shadows.

All for nothing. He was leading Potter to death. In a way, he was betraying Lily again.

“Headmaster, now that the old Gryffindor is gone, I wanted to discuss something with you,” Phineas’ voice filled the room. “I didn’t want to say anything until he left.”

He looked at the portrait. At least this comrade had his interests at the top of the list.

“Go ahead.”

“The Potter boy had been asking the witch nosy questions. Delicate ones, I might add.”

"Such as?"

“He asked why you helped him.”

Severus straightened and leaned forward slightly. “What? How...” The boy couldn’t have seen him at the forest. He was cautious and perfectly covered.

“Apparently, the boy saw you being affectionate with the witch. When you went to help her with the venom, he claimed to have seen you during his fevered state.”

His throat became dry. The boy shouldn’t have had the capability to discern what happened if he was unconscious. But again, perhaps the venom was weaker on him. Perhaps it was because Potter was a Horcrux.

Then everything seemed to fit together as he analyzed the situations presenting themselves. His eyes widened.

The boy getting in the serpent’s mind. And in the Dark Lord’s…. The serpent was the Dark Lord’s pet and he protected it at all cost.

The serpent was another Horcrux.
He had no evidence of it other than loose connections, but it made sense. He was sure his witch had already thought of it too. Right now, he needed to focus on the possible ramifications of Potter knowing his attachment to Hermione. Or about his aid. That could put everything in jeopardy.

But then again, Potter had been feverish and people hallucinated during fevers.

“How did she respond?”

“That he was seeing things because he was sick. But then he insisted that wasn’t the case.”

“And?”

“She was honest, she said she couldn’t tell him what was going on but begged him to trust her choices and that things would be revealed when the right time came.” The portrait grinned. “You can relax, she said nothing about what you two talked and the plan you have. Potter just nodded and went silent after that.” He laughed. “It was a hard blow to the boy I think, seeing a Gryffindor being snatched away by a Slytherin.”

Severus let a small chuckle escape him, something that hadn’t happened in a long time. Relief washed through him when no pain accompanied it.

Hermione had answered brilliantly. She’d given him a little leeway with the boy. She didn’t confirm facts but she didn’t deny them either. He traced the silver embellishment on the scarf in his hands. Because of that affection they showed, they would have to deal with Potter sooner than either of them wanted to. Or rather, she’d have to deal with it.

But despite all of this, he wasn’t sorry they loved each other. It gave him the little push he needed to continue each day.

“You shouldn’t care about that boy knowing. The only one who needs to know that you love Granger is her.” Phineas voice distracted his thoughts, forcing him to look at the portrait again. “You need to tell her.”

“It’s too dangerous for her to know. If it were known she’s involved with me right now, she would be a target if information leaked. Both sides would distrust her.”

Phineas raised his eyebrow. Sometimes that portrait felt more alive than most people he interacted with. “That makes no sense,” he said. “Her knowing you love her doesn’t mean everyone else does. Potter knows that she’s involved with you even though he doesn’t know how much. He’s still with her isn’t he? Merlin, when it comes to matters like this you sure can be stupid.”

Severus’ eyes widened at that. It was the first time anyone called him stupid. “I…”

“As much as it pains me to admit, you could do worse than that one. There is not much of a difference between purebloods and muggle females after all. Both are a pain in the ass.”

He was amazed. A fellow Slytherin was encouraging him to confess to a Gryffindor. Apparently, the pureblood radical thoughts weren’t as strong in the old Slytherin as he thought they were.

“You like her,” he stated.

Phineas huffed. “Obviously not as much as you do. Now, young headmaster, stop hiding and running. As you often say, you have a limited time before you will meet me again, maybe you’ll even be hung next to me. I suggest you get the only comfort you can have right now. I think it will help
you focus more rather than distract you. And if she dies before you, do you want her to not know that you feel the same as she does?"

Severus hated the thought of her dying first, but it was a real possibility.

He focused back on the scarf, caressing the silver serpent. “I’ll…I’ll think on it.”

AN: Hope you like it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday if nothing bad happens.
February, 1998

“Headmaster! Headmaster!”

Severus shot up from his seat, the chair behind him crashing to the floor. A Slytherin rarely spoke with such panicked tones, so the lilts sent the speed of his heart increasing to a point it felt as if it would burst from his chest.

“They got them! And your witch, sir!” Phineas spoke just as he opened his mouth to inquire about his panic. His stomach tightened, and he felt the bile rise in his throat. “Who?” he managed to say.

“Bellatrix…”

“Did that manic woman hurt her?” he asked almost immediately after that name was uttered. His voice echoed throughout his office, unsettling the birds roosting at his window. The little owl on his desk fluffed up and Fawkes turned his head to study his new master.

“I don’t know, sir. I can only hear what’s going on since I’m in that bag of hers. But…”
The fact that he didn’t want to continue was enough for him to imagine what was going on. “Your witch is being tortured.” Though he expected it, the words were enough to make him grab hold of his desk.

How did Hermione get into the hands of Bellatrix? He couldn’t wrap his mind around it. He knew his witch would always be in danger, but for some reason his brain would never grasp just how much. It never latched on to the possibility that she’d be captured. Tortured. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to push out the visions that his traitorous thoughts apparated inside his mind.

But he couldn’t. The woman torturing her was psychotic. She enjoyed being brutal to everyone, but her hatred of muggleborns and muggles would make it much worse. Bellatrix would prolong the torture as long as she could. Relish in every whimper, every scream, and every plea. She wouldn’t give up until she got a plea. And his stubborn Gryffindor would never give her one.

Hermione was going to die. She had no chance of survival under Bellatrix’s torture. That woman destroyed two aurors. Made them completely incapable of functioning. If he didn’t act, he’d lose her just like he’d lost everything else in his life. He could prevent it if he—

He slammed his hands on the desk. No, he couldn’t help her. She’d be angry with him if he gave up all he’d done so far to help her. She knew the risks in this mission. She knew what he was and knew the risks in lov--She knew the risk in loving him.

That witch. She loved him knowing she could die. Knowing he could die. She said she loved him regardless of the dangers around them. Why didn't he say the same to her? Why did he have to be a coward and not tell her? Now he may not even get the chance because that glorious woman would die for a cause the same way he told her he would.

But she never put her life on hold out of fear. She loved and loved deeply. She loved him deeply.

“Headmaster!” Phineas shouted, bringing him out of his realization. “Do something!”

He had to help her. And if she survived this, he would tell her how he felt the first chance he could. If he got that chance.

He grabbed his wand and focused on the area where Bellatrix was assigned. She had Draco under her tutelage so she was at their manor.

He swallowed, knowing that it was going to be difficult to leave. Lucius, Draco, Bellatrix, and possibly the snatchers would be here. There were too many opponents for him, and Hermione would be incapacitated if Bellatrix had gotten far in the torture.

“Don’t, Severus. You can’t help them. Not openly.” Albus’s harsh interruption earned a growl from him. He hated that the old wizard was right.

She would be fine if Bellatrix used Legilimency. But if she used cruciatus, which was likely, no one would be able to endure that for long.

“You can’t expect me to let the Death Eaters kill them?” Severus said to him.

“You have to believe in their abilities.”

“Abilities are well and good but in this case they have no way of—“

“I never said not to help them. I said not to help them . . . openly.”
Albus gave him a smile and his eyes twinkled. His grip on his wand relaxed. From the corner of his eyes, he noticed Albus’s softened expression but refused to behave as if he’d noticed it.

His mind scrambled for a plan that would keep his position secure while helping her. He needed someone that could get out of there quickly with them.

A portkey wasn’t available and he couldn't apparate because he would be seen. A thought crossed his mind like a ray of light crossing the darkness. He knew someone that knew that house as well as he did, maybe even better. A creature with the ability to break any ward with their magic.

“Dobby.”

In response to his authority, a cracking noise broke the silence. The elf had his fingers in intertwined and cautiously approached him. He hadn’t called the elf since he’d sent the note to Hermione. That was an easy task in comparison with what he was going to ask of the creature this time.

“The headmaster needs something?” The insecurity was present in his voice.

“Potter and his friends are in danger. They are at your old house. Death Eaters like your old master are torturing Granger. I can’t help them, so I need you to do it.” He took a deep breath as he saw the elf’s mouth open in shock. “I won’t lie to you. If you decide to go, you might not come back alive. So I ask you, are you up to it? You’ll help save Potter and his friends and it will assist in vanquishing the Dark Lord”

Dobby nodded and his respect for that elf increased tenfold. He would never treat a house elf poorly ever again. Would not show them the slightest disrespect.

“I will save them, sir.”

The elf raised his hand and before he could say something, snapped his fingers and disappeared.

Despite sending the rescue, his body was still stiff. His heart felt as if it would fail at any moment. He wouldn’t be satisfied until she was away from that psychotic woman.

His breathing trembled and he looked down at his desk.

“Please…Please don’t be too late.”

AN: Time to suffer again. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday if nothing else happens and wish you happy holidays.
Chapter 110: Torture of Loud Silences

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 110: Torture of Loud Silences

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He didn’t know exactly how long he stared at the hourglass or how many times he flipped it to watch the sand fall, but he knew it was hours.

The elf still hadn’t revealed his presence at the castle and Phineas was missing. He assumed that the image left to try to get any information to ease his growing anxiety.

He had found himself unable to move. His eyes switching between the hourglass and Phineas’ portrait.

It was hard not to immediately assume the worst. His mind always went to the worst-case scenarios when it came to dire situations. He took several deep breaths and tried to think of what could be positives.

Hermione probably wasn’t alone. She had Potter and even the brainlessly Weasley with her. Even that boy would do something, or at least try, to save her. He knew that the young wizard held deep affections toward her despite his cowardice acts before.

She wouldn’t die before him.

But she could. It was very possible and he knew that. Merlin, she could die. Might already be dead.

No, if she were dead someone would’ve come to tell him already. Phineas would be here if she
were.

He should’ve listened to Phineas. Should’ve told her that he loved her. Even if it was just a few moments of happiness in this bleak war, he should’ve found a way to tell her.

If she died without knowing, he’d never forgive himself. Fortunately, if she had died, he wouldn’t be long to the world either.

A burn shot through his arm, jerking him from his thoughts. He lifted his sleeve and looked at the mark, another low pulse of pain coming through it once again.

This was the first time the Dark Lord called him since he was at Hogwarts. His master had specifically told him that he wouldn’t, but the ember colour highlighting his skin was a proof of his change of plans.

Something happened.

He lowered his arm.

Hermione couldn’t… She couldn’t be dead.

But there was a possibility that he would find her lifeless body staring at him with empty eyes. If that happened, he wasn’t sure he could bear it. If Potter and she were gone now, there would be no point in continuing.

The burning sensation increased, making him hiss. He forced the negative thoughts to the back of his mind. He wouldn’t know until he arrived in front of the Dark Lord. If his thoughts turned into reality, he’d give the Dark Lord a reason to kill him.

He apparated to where his master was calling and found himself near Malfoy Manor.

With every step he took forward, he thought about taking two steps back, but he propelled himself onward. His chin was raised as he entered the house and crossed the hall to where he knew the inner circle would be. No one turned their head to acknowledge him.

A small tinge of peace came over him as he took in the surroundings. There were some fresh stains in front of the fireplace. Blood from the looks of them. So many people had been tortured in that room that he could pinpoint at least a dozen other places where old stains had made their mark.

It was difficult to keep a straight face when he saw the shrunken version of the bag he bought for her in a dark corner. Her wand was next to it. He focused on the Dark Lord and moved closer to the front. Lucius and Bellatrix were kneeling in the middle of the circle. The Dark Lord had hold of their heads, his nails digging into the skin there. From the fury displayed by the Dark Lord, it was likely that they’d escaped. Though he didn’t know in what state. The blood in front of the fireplace wasn’t a critical amount, but it was enough to be worrisome.

He owed Dobby more than he could ever repay.

“Now we are all here,” the Dark Lord said. “It is time to teach you what happens when you fail me.” His voice was dark enough to send shivers through everyone in the room.

Bellatrix was the Dark Lord’s favorite, and her being punished showed no one could fail him. No one could take liberties that weren’t granted by the Dark Lord. He’d known that, but Bellatrix clearly hadn’t and some of the inner circle clearly hadn’t thought about it.
The sense of security was false around a manic man with radical ideals. Everyone but the Dark Lord was expendable.

“M-my, Lord. The boy had unexpected help. If it wasn’t for that—”

“Save your excuses, Lucius. You didn’t even know if it was him.” The Dark Lord raised his wand and pointed at him. “At least Bellatrix had the courage to try and get some information from the disgusting mudblood and killed the elf.”

Merlin, Hermione had been tortured by Bellatrix, but had gotten away. Thanks to the elf that he would never be able to repay now.

“Although, she too will pay as she was incompetent with her torture.” He let his gaze fall onto Bellatrix. “Clearly you haven’t been taught well enough to know that torture is subtle and one does not use too much to the point the prisoner is unconscious!”

Bellatrix had tortured her until she lost consciousness. He’d seen Bellatrix torture and knew the intense pain his witch must have gone through.

Tightening his jaw, he looked at the woman’s back. He desired to be the one to do the torture right now. He’d give into every ounce of darkness if it meant making that woman suffer.

“My Lord.”

The screams began as soon as the Dark Lord spoke the spell. His eyes never left the suffering witch. Her body twitched and arched until tears spilled from her eyes and down her cheeks. He struck again, her screams going even louder until her voice gave out. He enjoyed every single cry from that woman. Loved every single twitch of pain. Every blood vessel that popped in her body, leaving small red streaks through her pale face.

He paid no attention to Lucius going through the same thing. All he wanted was that bitch to suffer. She deserved this. This would show her what she’d done to his witch.

Setting aside his own repulsion by his thoughts of vengeance, he noticed the Dark Lord had stopped and was looking at him. He said nothing. His master smiled and it unnerved him.

“Remove this filth from my presence.” The Dark Lord ordered to the others. “Lucius, don’t fail me again or your family will be the ones to pay next time. I won’t be as merciful to them.”

Some Death Eaters left. The brave ones, Draco and Narcissa, helped the harmed couple to rise from the floor. With small steps and shaking legs, they guided them towards the inner rooms of the Manor.

The room emptied until the only ones left were the Dark Lord and him. He didn't let his eyes fall like those cowards. He was braver than they were and the Dark Lord knew it. He would be suspicious if he were suddenly as submissive. The man praised the behaviour he always had towards him.

“Severus.” He took a step towards the fireplace to look at the blood spilled there. “I saw that you agreed with my way of teaching lessons to my followers.”

“Of course, my lord, I am a man of discipline.”

“You can’t fail me either, Severus.” The Dark Lord turned and a desperate look appeared on his face. One he had never seen before. Was it because he discovered what Potter was doing? How
Hermione and he were destroying his shattered soul?

He should fear it. If this monster became a normal man again, and Potter was unable to kill him, he would do it if it took every ounce of power within his body to do so.

A long time ago, he had just wanted to avenge Lily and make things up to her by saving her son. Now, his task and desires went further. He couldn't save Potter, but he wanted to protect his witch.

“I will not, my lord. Failure has never occurred to me.” He said and bowed to him.

“I want to go to Hogwarts today. I have something to take care of there.”

He bowed lower. Why did he want to go there? To increase student’s fear? To check how his implantation of ideals were working? He would only find disgust waiting there, or perhaps the students would fear him enough to feigned respect at the very least.

“We can go now if you desire, my lord. It’s almost bedtime, so the students won’t bother you. They still behave like stupid muggles and throw fits. However, we’re making good progress with their behavior so far. I assume the Carrows informed you.” He raised and looked at the Dark Lord.

“They did and I know of the problems you are having. It’s the first year, so I expected such. Soon they will behave. I am pleased with your work, my friend. Don’t doubt that.” He took a step. "Let’s go," he said and left the room.

Severus didn’t follow immediately. He silently summoned the bag and Hermione's wand to his hand. When the two possessions were hidden in his robe pockets, he followed the Dark Lord.

Outside, the full moon greeted them. When he was at the Dark Lord’s side, he offered his arm. It would help him pass the wards and enchantments that only the headmaster could pass. When he felt the light touch on the fabric of his robe, he used his magic.

Both pair of feet found themselves on the lands of Hogwarts.

When the Dark Lord retired his hand from his arm, a need to wash struck him.

“Thank you, Severus. You can go now. I will go as soon as I have my things done.”

Understanding the hidden order, he bowed and walked away. It was the only thing he could do.

When he got to his office, he opened the bag and saw Phineas’ portrait looking at him. All of her belongings were here, including the potions that could help her heal.

Now he had no one to ease his thoughts. He didn’t know the state she was in or where she was. He’d never cared about another person that much. Not even Lily because what he felt for her wasn’t nearly as strong as what he felt for Hermione.

Right now, he could only wait while fearful thoughts drilled into his mind.

AN: Here we are, with the consequences and Severus darkness emerging. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday, I hope, and Merry Christmas.
Chapter 111: Fading Under a Watchful Eye

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 111: Fading Under a Watchful Eye

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Three months had come and gone, and with the passing of time came very little information. All he had was an enraged Dark Lord that was, fortunately, at a great distance from Hogwarts. Despite being under the monster’s control, it was still a refuge. Even the Carrows had avoided his rage.

He took the Dark Lord’s anger as a sign that the three were still alive. That his witch was alive.

His only source of anything was the newspapers. Although pureblood radicals manipulated most of the content, they always put any sightings of Potter on the front page. After all, his head was the most valued one of the wizarding world. Paper after paper, day after day, the information recycled.

His worry had built up so much that it filtered off into his dreams. Images of her torture plagued him to the point he refused to sleep. He just couldn’t face what his mind offered now.

He’d had nightmares before, several of them, but this time they were invading his mind to the point he was unable to control them with his occlumency.

Now he had no choice but to avoid the staff and refuse Pomfrey's visits. He was sure that if he
looked in the mirror he’d scare himself with his aspect. It would be a waste of time to allow the mediwitch to waste her time and potions on him. In the near future, she would need as many potions as she could get so there was no use in using them on a man sentenced to die.

The window vibrated and he turned. He smiled slightly at his small owl. He waved his wand, the window opened and the little thing flew to him and landed on his shoulder. Another owl flew in shortly after and dropped a newspaper on his desk. He scattered some coins on the table, it rummaged around for the proper one and then left his office.

He handed his little owl a biscuit. It went over and perched on the fireplace mantle. He sighed, sat down at his desk, and opened the paper the other owl had left.

He stared at the paper for a full minute. Then, he shook his head and the paper as if it would change what was on the page. He looked at it again.

"Well...Shit."

The image of a dragon shooting upward and destroying the ceiling in Gringotts with a silent roar, greeted him, but that wasn’t what made him nearly rip the paper in half. He could distinguish the silhouette of Hermione, Potter and the brainless idiot settled on the creature’s back.

When did this happen? It was highly amusing and insane at the same time. Seeing that she was well, and riding a damned dragon out of Gringotts of all things, alleviated his worry about her recovery at least. Now he had to be confident that there was a reason for the idiocy she was taking part in.

He glanced at the date. First of May. This happened today.

He read the article. Through the various insults and redundant words, he determined that they were trying to steal something from Bellatrix’s vault. He thought about what he’d seen in there and what would compel them to break in.

He let himself chuckle at the absurdity yet again. Riding a damned dragon in the middle of London. Only they were capable of such an extremely lack of subtlety. Well, it was one way of getting out of there. He’d been stuck there once before and if given the options between riding a dragon out or staying stuck, he would’ve chosen the dragon as well.

He turned the page and saw another picture. This time dozens of goblin corpses littered the ground. He knew by their injures that they were killed by the Dark Lord.

He glanced down at his covered mark. It was strange that the man hadn’t called them for another round of punishing. Maybe, just maybe, he had avoided that treatment today thanks to his position.

“Albus. Do you know something that can explain this?” He showed the first page to him as he rose up from his chair.

The dead man looked at the page, but before he could speak, a chorus of screams echoed through the castle.

He rushed out of his office, following the source of the noise. After Potter’s show to the world, it would create problems and make people act without thinking things through. The cries echoed again, this time with more intensity, as he descended the stairs.

He ran toward the great hall. He stopped when he heard screams again and looked down the
hall. A group of students was running as if being chased by wolves. It wasn’t far from the truth except the Carrows were the wolves. They were trying to curse and grab any student they could.

He hoped they all got away, but knew it wasn’t likely. Even though he wanted to step in, he couldn’t get involved.

He went into the great hall, throwing the doors open as if angry. In reality, he was tired and annoyed. It didn’t surprise him when all eyes landed on him. Some of them widening, probably at his appearance. After all, he hadn’t stepped in here since almost the beginning of the school year.

He walked inside and stopped in the middle of the room. He waited to see if the present occupants were going to lift their wands to attack him.

No one did.

“I do not desire to cause harm to students, but I can’t prevent it if you continue with your lack of discipline. You are professors, so act like it. Control your students and teach them some humility and respect.”

He didn’t want to see them anymore. A few seconds was enough. He turned on his heel and stalked out of the room as best he could considering his current health.

They were being impetuous instead of formulating a plan. They encouraged challenging behaviour that only caused suffering and a lack of progress. He knew they thought they were doing the right thing. They thought this was the best way to fight the evil headmaster and the Dark Lord that shackled them.

When he got to the bottom of the stairway that led to his office, a wave of dizziness forced him to stop walking. Bile traveled up into his throat. He closed his eyes to avoid the spinning surroundings, but he could still feel movement within the blackness. Was he going to faint here? If he did, it would cause trouble in numerous ways that he didn’t want to deal with. Trouble on both sides. He forced his mouth shut, fighting the need to expel the contents of his stomach.

Someone grabbed his arm, distracting him from his illness, and steadied him.

“Come on, Severus.”

Unable to complain or try to shake the contact away, he let the woman guide him since the spinning made it difficult for him to take a step on his own.

It was just his luck that she was the one to find him. Though, it could be worse. Any other staff member, other than Pomfrey, might take the chance to kill him.

His mind instantly lost that thought and he focused on making himself move. Before he knew it, he was in his office, resting on the couch. He only knew his location because of the sound of the steps and the potion’s smell that now permeated the furniture in his rooms.

He opened his eyes and forced them to stay that way despite the room’s spinning.

“Pomfrey was right, you aren’t taking care of yourself,” McGonagall’s voice said. He huffed. “Don’t huff at me like a petulant teenager. You know, I’m not the only one who is concerned. Though I’m far from pleased with the suspicions I have.”

Suspicion. What kind of suspicion? He knew she was suspicious of his reasons for killing Dumbledore, but they’d already covered that. She wasn’t the type to mention that again. The only
other suspicion she could have would be in regards to... She couldn't be referring to Hermione, could she? It's true he had shown worry towards his witch when he had revealed his decision to help her to all the teachers. But he had covered himself. Merlin, he didn’t even loved her at that time. He just cared for her as a student and ally.

Had Hermione somehow given it away? She was rather close to Minerva. Perhaps a hint or two made it through her mask. He instantly squashed that thought. Unless it came out very slight, there was no way she’d be that careless. She was almost as good as being covert as he was. Unless she was with him. No, it wasn’t Hermione. Minerva always had a gift of reading into things, discovering things from clues no one else saw.

They just had the unlucky position of being under her watchful eye.

Or, perhaps... Perhaps it wasn’t unlucky at all.

AN: A little time jump after the silence, one that had his price on Severus wellbeing. What would Minerva suspect? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. I don’t know if I will be able to post on Wednesday but I will try.
The sun had reached the middle of the sky before he was able to move with no sense of dizziness. When he was able to sit on the soft transfigured object under the scrutinizing eyes of his deputy. Minerva had insisted on staying with him and even forced him to drink and eat a bit.

He’d relented just to get her to stop nagging and hoped that the woman would leave before she started asking questions and studying him with those inquisitive catch-all eyes of hers.

He took his last drink of pumpkin juice and set down the cup. He enjoyed the silence for a few seconds before the peace was interrupted.

“Now that you seem to feel and look better, I want to tell you something.”

When he looked back at her, he saw a small hint of distress in her eyes.

"Haven't you already told me enough? Careful, Minerva, my evil might rub off on you." He sat up in small increments.

“Oh, please, drop your facade, Severus. This is already hard enough for me.” Minerva crossed her arms and he suddenly felt like a student being scolded. “The teachers are going to attack you.”

He didn’t let the surprise he felt show on his face. Why in the world this woman was telling him that?
“I expected someone to challenge me, but I didn’t think they’d stop that low.”

Minerva smirked. “Do you honestly think anyone on staff thinks they could beat you in a duel, Severus? That’s why they all want to attack you at once.”

"Have they lost their minds? It would only serve to irritate the Dark Lord. The consequences of it will be disastrous.”

“I tried to convince them the idea was stupid. When I did they implied I might be supportive of the death eaters.”

"Now, I'm sure the world has gone mad. Has someone drugged them?"

"When people are under extreme stress, common sense isn't the first thing they rely on. After they showed their unwillingness to listen to reason, my only choice was to warn you.” She sighed. “I feel like a traitor, but I know deep down that I can trust you, Severus.”

He laughed bitterly before he realized it. “I welcome you to the unfair world of traitors. Sometimes we’re given no choices in it, and sometimes we’re only given one because of other people,” he said and glared at the painting of Albus. She followed his gaze, and then turned back to him, her eyes narrowed. He stood shakily and walked towards the headmaster’s desk. “I… thank you for the warning, Minerva.”

Feeling her eyes piercing his back, he focused his on the window. His thoughts travelled to that threat he’ d have to deal with. Now he’d have to be careful every time a professor approached him.

He might even let them take him out if the stress didn’t do it before they got a chance. He was so tired. Tired of the constant vigilance and the burden he carried. He wanted to let his soul rest.

“I am sorry I can’t tell you the details. I don't think they trust me much now, so I don't know when it will be.”

Minerva’s voice made him realize that she was still there, but he didn’t turn. Instead, he focused on the dark cloud in the distance. His eyes widened as he noticed that it moved much faster than it should have. The tease of burn on his arm, confirmed his fear and he turned to her.

“You need to go, now.”

“Don’t be proud, Severus you are still—”

“If he sees you here, he'll kill you!”

Minerva looked over his shoulder and the colour drained from her face.

He praised the woman as she rushed out of his office. He looked back at the window and watched as the shadow of the Dark Lord came closer. Why was he coming here? He opened the window and stepped back.

The dark wings crossed the domains and filtered inside his office by the open window. As he had expected, the dark fog materialized until his master turned into flesh.

With no wait for his words, he bowed.

“My lord, to what I do owe the pleasure of your visit?”

“I believe Potter is coming here. If he does, you will be the one offering him to me.”
They were coming to Hogwarts. They wouldn’t be that stupid.

“Might I ask, my lord, why would they do such a reckless thing?”

“Do as I say, and make sure the Death Eaters at Hogsmeade are alerted.”

Severus bowed even lower. “It will be done, my lord.”

“I have some tasks to accomplish. I will put Bellatrix in charge of the Death Eaters. If Potter appears we will obliterate this place, purge it from the foundations. The bad blood that supports him must be eradicated.”

He realized that the Dark Lord had lost his mind. Was he going to kill every young wizard or witch just to kill Potter?

“And what of the students that support you, should I get them to safety, my lord?” He tried to negotiate, probably risking his life sooner rather than later. His master’s desperation showed him that if Potter was a fool to come to Hogwarts today. It was the beginning of a warzone and probably the last battle.

Part of him couldn’t believe it. Why here?

“No. If they side with us we will know and it will be a way to eradicate the liars.” The cold voice of his master froze his limbs along with his heart. “Keep Hogwarts under your control and don’t fail me.”

He refused to look at the Dark Lord as the man retreated, as his body dissolved and left through window.

Feeling unable to breath, despite he parted his lips, he tried to digest the information. To understand that this would probably be his last day alive if those three decided to step within the grounds.

AN: Time to start the final battle? Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. Hope you had a good New Year beginning! See you on Saturday.
Chapter 113: Phineas Was Right

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 113: Phineas Was Right

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The shrill alarm sounded in the distance waking every soul that wasn’t awake already. That wasn’t waiting for this day to come.

There was a possibility that it was a false alarm, but he knew it was unlikely.

This was it.

The final battle.

He didn’t think he’d feel dread upon this day’s arrival. He’d been expecting it since Lily’s death, since his beginnings as a spy. He’d always said this day would be welcomed since it would be a day he would be free and his soul redeemed as much as it could be.

There were no feelings of freedom or peace in him at all, so he had to be pragmatic. He would focus on winning his battles and completing his tasks. The boy would die at the proper moment, hopefully killing the Dark Lord as well. This would be a betrayal to Lily again.

At least he wouldn’t likely be alive to see it.

A small clicking noise made him turn from the window. He raised his wand and pointed it at the door. With the news of Potter near Hogwarts, anyone could coup now. He was alone on the side that thought of him as an enemy.
The door of his office opened and a disillusioned body moved inside and towards him without any caution.

“Don’t move,” he said and noticed the shadow halt, making it more invisible to his eyes.

He approached the shadow, keeping his wand pointed at it. Despite their idiot actions lately, none of the professors was stupid enough to try to attack him like this.

He stopped walking.

“Remove your spell.”

His eyebrows arched when he heard a small giggle in response. And then, he distinguished a cautious movement from the shadow.

He lowered his arm as she appeared in front of him.

“Hermione…” He found himself whispering. His voice became muffled when the witch threw herself at him, embracing him and resting her face under his neck. Was this real?

After all those months without knowing how she was she… she was here. Wasn’t she? “It’s really you?”

“Yes, it’s me. You showed me your memories last year.” Her voice resonated against his chest.

He couldn’t think of anything else but wrapping his arms around her, burying his face at the top of her head, and holding her. He didn’t think he’d ever have the chance to see her, much less embrace her, again.

“You crazy witch with your dragon riding and your…” He kissed the top of her head. “It almost killed me not knowing about you. After Malfoy’s house and seeing that blood I….”

“I’m here. I’m sorry for worrying you. I lost my bag and now…” She shivered and raised her head to look at him. “I’m okay. I’ve fully recovered. I know coming here put everyone in danger but I needed to see you.” She gave him a soft smile.

Raising his hands from her back, with tentative movements he placed his thumbs on her chin. His black irises met her brown ones. He felt her warm breath reach his skin.

This was fate allowing him to say the words he’d avoided for so long. She deserved the truth.

“Hermione, I love you.” With the words, his heart and body felt so much lighter. He felt as if he’d already accomplished his life goals even though he had not.

Her eyes widened. “Y—you…You love me? You really do?”

He let a small smirk appear on his lips. “I really do, my witch. I wasn’t going to tell you considering what might happen but I—”

She tiptoed and brushed his lips with hers. “Hearing it from you means so much to me. But, Severus, I want your words to do something else. Let them give you hope and a will to live. Fight, Severus. Don’t let a horrid past dictate your fate. You have a future with someone who loves you.”

Hesitation crossed his mind. Could he?

“I can’t promise, Hermione.” His normally deep timbre sounded sharper and each word had a
slight tremble at the end, as if he couldn’t push the words out steadily.

He was a lost man, in a world full of hate towards him. He had made mistakes, yet she had forgiven them. And she was the only thing that mattered.

“I’m not asking for a promise of survival when fate has such a hand in it, I’m asking for a promise you’ll try.”

He kissed her and she pushed herself closer. When they pulled away, he whispered with his deep voice, “I will try, I swear to you.” She nuzzled her nose against him, the sweet affection filling his entire being.

“Thank you,” she said.

He doubted there was a man living that was more joyful than he was right now. Phineas had been right.

It felt like a dream but it was far from it.

Placing his hands on her shoulders and ignoring all the eyes of the portraits on them, he started to bring distance between their bodies, and with it, regaining his control. He focused on doing what he had to. He had to protect them and take down the Dark Lord. He needed to warn them.

“The Dark Lord was alerted with your arrival and will be here soon. This will be the last battle. I assume Potter is with you?”

She nodded and he let his hands fall from her shoulders. “He is searching around the castle and Ron is with some other students. We know he is coming. We are here to find another Horcrux. We need to break the other but we lost the sword.”

“It’s not in your bag?” he asked as he went to his desk to pick it up along with her wand.

“No, Griphook took it in exchange for helping us infiltrate Gringotts. We had to get this.” She showed him Hufflepuff’s cup. “It was in Bellatrix’s vault. That’s why we had no choice but to ride the dragon out. Oh, and before you blame Harry, the dragon was my idea.”

He cursed that he hadn’t taken it when he could. He had recognized it when he was trapped in the vault. Taking it would’ve helped them avoid a lot of problems.

When he was at her side, he handed her belongings to her and took the cup so he could inspect it.

“This is why you think the other Horcrux is at Hogwarts? That the Dark Lord used the houses’ heirlooms?” Turning the cup in between his fingers, he could appreciate it was the same he had seen.

“Yes, it’s something from Ravenclaw. Harry senses these things. I assume it’s because he is one.”

“We can assume that, yes. I believe that Nagini is the other one.”

“We suspected that too.” His eyes turned back to her and he offered the cup back. She placed it inside her bag. “I want to go to the Chamber of Secrets. If we don’t have the sword, I will need a basilisk fang to break this. It worked with Riddle’s diary.”

He had missed her incessant analytic and demanding rambling. “I will go with you. Despite the basilisk’s death, I’m not letting you go down there alone. The castle will be attacked anytime and
while I’m not called, I can aid you.” Summoning his wand, he took a step forward, walking towards his office door.

She wouldn’t deny him this. Not when he was able to fight at her side this time. “You don’t have to turn back to him now.” she said and walked up next to him.

“I can’t stay on your side either, Hermione. They won’t understand. They won’t believe what I have to say, and they would think I deceived you. As I recall, your Weasley friend already thinks so.” He saw her tilting her head at his last statement, making his smile wider. “Besides, I still can save lives from the shadows.”

Extending his arm, he tapped her head with his wand, casting a disillusionment spell. When he was satisfied at the results, he opened his office door, hoping that they could reach their destination before the castle became a warzone.

AN: Well they are finally together. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think and despite this is the final battle that doesn’t mean is the end of the story. See you on Wednesday if I can post!
Chapter 114: Not So Friendly Fire

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 114: Not So Friendly Fire

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Students ran through the corridors screaming, items were exploding, he could smell smoke in the air and a light haze was drifting through the area indicating a fire somewhere on the premises. It was clear that Potter’s presence had been discovered during the moment he’d spent with Hermione. The mobilization of Potter’s group had begun, and this time he would make no effort to prevent it. He hoped the Carrows had already been disposed of, but if he ran into them and was sure they were alone, he’d kill them both himself. The Dark Lord had ordered him to let the underage students stay. He would not be following that order.

Right now, he would help Hermione first. Destroying the Horcrux was the most important task for them now. They made it to a quiet hall and he let himself relax for a few seconds. His steps halted when he heard other ones. He braced against the wall, pushing Hermione with him.

A group of students dashed by. He waited until the last one disappeared. “We’d better hurry if we don’t want to be noticed. This hall will probably fill up soon and things won’t go smoothly,” he whispered.

Hermione snorted. “Look who I’ve been friends with since my first year. I’m used to things not going smoothly.”

He almost chuckled at her words. She tensed as more students rushed past them, the fear displayed clearly on their face as they passed.
He lowered the arm he had in front of Hermione and took a small step out from the hiding spot. His instinct flared just in time to block an attack coming from down the hall. Flitwick and Sprout were running towards him.

They froze as he prepared his wand to fight them off.

The two narrowed their eyes at him. “Don’t think for a second we’re going to let you harm anymore students, traitor,” the hate in Flitwick’s voice stunned him despite him knowing already that they all despised him. He shifted himself further away from the wall and felt her at his left side, barely brushing against his arm. He wanted to tell her to run, but that might bring attacks onto her if they knew someone was there. They would automatically assume it was an enemy, and understandably so.

If she were pointing her wand at them, he was oblivious to the fact. In a normal situation, he would scoff at the thought of her attacking a teacher.

But this was not a normal situation.

“Do you see me following them? Do you see my wand pointing at them?” He hoped they would see logic, follow some common sense. He lifted his left arm away from his side slightly and pushed her back. She took the hint and he felt her warmth leave him. Good. Now he could defend himself and fight back.

Flitwick waved his wand and he darted to the side, narrowly avoiding the attack. Sprout attacked, then Flitwick again, both of their attacks hitting a statue and exploding it into dust and rubble.

He cast a spell at the wall in front of them, hoping to impede their path to him. Sprout sent a spell, he countered it.

He was confident that she’d gotten out of the way, but having no idea where she was gave a risk of friendly fire, from both sides.

Though he wasn’t trying to hurt those two, they were deliberately trying to kill them. He may have to resort to injuring them at the very least if they kept this up. If he couldn’t get away first.

Sprout sent another spell that resembled a plant with fangs. It hurled forward trying to bite him; he burned the plant. Before the ashes faded, an iron grasp clenched around him. As the armor’s grip tightened, he was able to take less deep breaths. Every time he tried to suck in air, only a bit entered his body.

“Isolating in Dumbledore’s office didn’t do you any good, Snape.” He heard the mock from the man. War changed people and hate poisoned minds.

He played his role too well.

He fought to stay conscious as the armor squeezed tighter. He gritted his teeth and struggled to think of a spell to get him out of his situation.

Another iron hand came smashing into the floor in front of Flitwick. The short man’s lack of focus caused the hand holding him to let go, he darted away from it and started to run, every muscle in his body protesting the action.

“Go where you need to,” he shouted to Hermione. He rounded the corner, leaving the two teachers and her in the corridor. He needed to get out of that area before more chaos occurred. He
knew that distraction with the other armor was due to Hermione.

At least she was unharmed.

He rushed into a classroom as he heard more rapid footfalls at his back. He didn’t bother looking back as he grabbed his cloak and morphed into his dark form, his body melting into a mass with wings. He rushed through the window, piercing through it, shattering the entire thing, and sending glass outward into the air and down the ground outside.

“Come back here you coward!” Sprout’s voice echoed and accompanied him as he tried to regain some distance.

Coward. Perhaps he was long ago, but now he would never accept being called that. Now, he only laughed. He wasn’t the one teaming up to take down one wizard when they used to preach about fair fights.

He rushed outward and around, letting them think that he was leaving the castle grounds. He knew that they would likely create a protection barrier to make sure no one would be allowed inside without them knowing it. It was a wise thing to do considering how large the Dark Lord’s army was in comparison with the adults that roamed the castle.

While they did that, he would be getting back to Hermione.

He rounded the building trying to find a new entrance far enough away that he wouldn’t be spotted or heard. The castle itself sensed the danger developing in the distance. He glanced out where he knew the army waited and saw so many torches that it nearly rivaled the night sky.

This was going to be a massacre if a miracle didn’t happen.

After another silent turn, he saw the bathroom. Joining his wings to the rest of the fog, he dove toward the window, shattering it when he went through.

A yelp greeted him at the same time he transformed back. He let his cloak fall to his sides and smirked at her. “Glad to know I can make such a stunning entrance.”

“Are you okay? I couldn’t help you—Wait a minute! How can you fly? How’d you do that? When did you learn?” Her words came in a rapid succession and he chuckled.

“I am fine, and that skill came from the Dark Lord.” Her brows furrowed and he said, “Don’t worry, it’s harmless. You aren’t hurt either, right?” He scanned her for injuries.

“I’m fine. I managed to take cover before Flitwick started casting those spells.”

He nodded. “Where is the entrance located exactly? I know you didn’t accompany Potter, but I am sure he told you all the details. Much more than Dumbledore told the professors.”

Granger walked over to the circle of sinks in the middle of the bathroom. She rounded them, studying them as if she was looking for something.

“I’m trying to locate a serpent around here. It’s the entrance to open the pipe that leads to the chamber.” She explained without looking at him. He moved to look in the opposite direction she was looking. “Ah! Here it is. Now, we need to open it with Parseltongue.”

He walked over to stand next to her and looked at the serpent. At least it was going to be useful watching his master speaking with that damned serpent. He had learned quite a bit by listening for
long hours.

“Hess-”

“Hessshgasssgah.”

How in the seven circles of hell did she…? Well, he shouldn’t have been astonished by her knowing this. She was always prepared for every possible obstacle in her life.

The sound of marble moving accompanied the expansion of the center of the sinks. The one where the serpent was carved turned to the side, revealing an opening engulfed by darkness.

He lifted his wand and a light appeared at the top of it. He took a step forward and looked down.

“I’ll go first,” he said. If he thought the distance was too far down, he’d be able to use the flying spell to keep himself from injury. He’d test the distance to keep her from getting hurt.

He leapt into the darkness.

AN: So I’m twisting things again. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. And yep, Hermione spoke parsel. She is smart enough to learn a word or two. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 115: Into the Chamber

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 115: Into the Chamber

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He landed on a pile of bones, the pieces crunching and cracking under his weight. He straightened, removed his wand, and enlarged the light at the tip of it.

The occasional drip of water pierced the silence every few seconds. A familiar smell of rot came to him. He moved his wand and saw a basilisk skin. Such a precious thing for a potion master to have and Dumbledore just let it rot down here.

“Typical,” he muttered.

“Come down, Hermione. The fall is safe.” He moved away a bit so she could land without knocking him over. He bit back a laugh when he heard a high squeal as if she were having fun. He turned just as she landed, her curls bouncing with the force of the landing. She stumbled slightly as the bones moved under her, and he grabbed her to steady her.

She pulled away. “Thank you.”

He nodded, offered his hand to her, and she immediately took it. He raised his wand with the opposite hand.

“Where are we heading?” he asked.

“We need to follow the main pipe to find the chamber. Harry said he killed the basilisk there.”
“If we didn’t have that information we could always follow the smell.”

She made a face. “It smells half as bad as Ron’s laundry.” He raised an eyebrow and she said, “I lost a chess game with him once and had to do his laundry. Even with a charm it—”

“I was shocked at the ‘half as bad’ fact.”

She giggled. “Oh.”

They continued walking, following the narrow path and navigating puddles of different types of sludge and liquids. Despite the dank environment and the surprising lack of conversation, he enjoyed the time spent with her, hand in hand, just walking.

Soon, the path widened, and a massive circular door came into view. It was adorned with four serpents, their dimensions about the size of an actual basilisk.

“We need to use Parseltongue again to open it,” Hermione said as she walked ahead and guided him to the door.

“Will you do the honors, or will you interrupt me again, my know-it-all?” His mocking was easily recognizable as a tease and an indication he was proud of her knowledge.

She tilted her head with a smile.

“I didn’t know you had the same idea as me.”

“I, in fact, didn’t. I just learnt some words from the Dark Lord when he spoke to Nagini.”

She spoke the words, the hissing continuing as the serpent locks opened, retracing from the edge.

The door creaked open, and the stench grew in potency. Hermione gagged once before casting an anti-odor charm.

“So, it’s worse than Weasley’s clothing now?”

She stared into the room and shook her head. “I had to cast a charm over his clothes too.” She took a deep breath. “Well, let’s get this over with.”

They stepped inside the darkness and saw the basilisk’s body. It was covered with water from its tail up to half its body. Some water sat under the rest of the snake but it wasn’t a significant amount. He was thankful that the head remained dry since the venom would’ve been compromised otherwise. If that had been the case Hermione’s idea would fail.

They walked towards the basilisk’s body and crouched down, the grasp on each other’s hands finally breaking.

He studied the way to obtain one of the fangs without an injury. He was certain that Hermione was doing the same. She poised her wand at ready.

“Be careful if you are going to attempt a dissecting spell.” Her eyes met his, a silent ‘why’ in them. “Do it slowly so you won’t break the poison canal or it will spill on us. A centimeter lower from the gum should be fine.”

“Thank Merlin you’re here. I didn’t’ know that.” She took a breath and held it for a few seconds like she always did before starting a difficult potion, and set about her task.
She pointed her wand to the place he’d indicated. A few seconds later, a small crack appeared around the fang. Then it cracked more and more until it broke off from the mouth.

He moved the fang with magic, levitating it towards them with all his focus.

He let it float at his side as Hermione got out Hufflepuff’s cup. She sat the object on the floor.

She looked at him. “I’ll have to do this, right?”

He nodded. “I would do it, but it’s risky. The Dark Lord might possibly know it was me if I did it.”

“I assume that’s why you didn’t stay when you gave the sword to Harry.” She smiled.

“It’s a good thing you didn’t stay. From what Harry and Ron told me, they attack you when you break them. I even felt his presence when they did. Honestly, even just touching the cup disturbs me.” She carefully picked up the fang. “Please stay with me,” she said.

He held her other hand with a firm grip. “Of course.”

She raised the fang, the poison on the peak shining under the torch’s lights. It was as if the fang was still alive and attached to the poison glands in the creature. As if it knew it needed to prepare to kill.

She slammed the fang down onto the cup, and a hiss sounded out into the room. The metal melted slowly at first but the further the fang sank in the more hissing occurred and the faster it melted.

A screeching noise sounded and the environment around them seemed to rumble as if waves of water were rushing forward. He stepped up and brought her into his arms. They took a step back from the cup and saw the howling and rumbling was coming from it.

Black fog drifted up from the cup and twisted around in the air as if trying to form something. He pointed his wand at it. His throat constricted slightly and acids came up into it. Similar to the way the dark mark made him feel physically when the Dark Lord was angry. The acids began raising more in his throat and his head ached. Water came to his eyes, burning as bad as the acids in his throat.

Had the Dark Lord noticed? Was he now paying for his treason now? Could he kill him from there?

“We need to go!” Her desperation came with a hard pull from her hand.

His eyes left the cup and noticed the water in front of them forming into a cyclone around the dark mass. Small sparks of lightning darted around the water as if protecting the mass in the middle of it.

He forgot about his discomfort as adrenaline hit him and he ran with Hermione. There was no more water due to it being sucked up by the cyclone, so it was much easier to run on the dry ground.

He could feel the danger, the energy, rushing behind them. He stopped, pulled her closer, and used his ability to transform them both into a dark mass with wings. He flew them out the door. As soon as they rematerialized, he tried to slam the door with his magic.

The water and the doors own “will” kept it from closing as fast as he’d like it to. Sparks claimed any metal in the room.
“Get back!” he yelled.

Realizing that it would reach him if he didn’t let the spell go and run, he growled in frustration.

“Protego!”

A shield met the spark threatening him, dissolving it into the air. He exhaled.

They maintained their spells until the door slammed shut. The sparks and the howls disappeared, signaling the end of the danger.

Damn the Dark Lord.

If she’d gone here alone, there’d been no way she’d survived it. His muscle’s shook as he lowered his wand. Seconds later, he felt her collide with his back, her arms wrapping around him.

“Careless…” he said in a soft manner.

“Look who’s talking.” He chuckled. She wasn’t wrong.

The comfort left as soon as her hands disappeared from his body, forcing him to turn and meet her silent tension.

“Let’s get out of here. Only Nagini is left and I can catch the serpent when I go to the Dark Lord.”

“You really have to go?”

He smiled gently and nodded. He didn’t have to speak why. He didn’t want to but they still had a mission to fulfill.

“Okay, but we walk. No more flying or whatever that is trick is…”

His smile turned into a smirk. “You mean my know-it-all doesn’t want to learn how to do it.”

“No, thank you. I’ll live with not knowing how.”

Walking was better anyway. Walking meant spending more time with her before he finally met his fate.

When they left the bathroom, they weren’t surprised to see that the fight had increased in severity. He felt the cracks in the castle barriers, and knew many Death Eaters had broken through and was the cause of a significant portion of the damages and screams of pain shooting out into the air.

They both leaped to the right and raised their wands as a huge clock slammed onto the floor. Not from anyone in the hall, this hall still managed to be void of people, but due to the castle vibrations from elsewhere. He glanced down at the broken hands.

It was one a.m. unless the clock had moved due to the fall. Considering how these particular clocks were made, that wasn’t likely.

If the clock’s reading was true, then more time had passed than what he thought and that would make his disappearance much harder to explain. He had the added worry of wondering if the Dark Lord had sensed him with the death of the Horcrux, especially since he used his magic near it.
He was in a difficult position. Soon, he would reveal his true side, and probably have both sides striving for his head. One due to his betrayal, the other because they hated him for killing Dumbledore.

Before he did that, he wanted to try and kill the serpent. Since he was a death eater and a favorite of the Dark Lord he could get closer to the thing easier than anyone. It was his last task before he could reveal to Potter how Dumbledore played with both of them. That the man he looked up to thought of him as nothing more than a tool as well.

Hermione’s sudden whimper halted his steps. He turned to her.

“Are you hur—“

“It’s him. He’s…he’s in my head,” she managed to speak.

The Dark Lord was using legilimency and he knew firsthand what a terrible interference that was. He didn’t take note of it since he occluded as a natural shield.

“Use occlumency, you can keep him out like I do.” He raised their joined hands and lowered his head to kiss the top of hers. She gripped his hand tighter and raised her other to grip the sleeves on his other arm.

When she relaxed, he felt pride that she’d managed to occlude him so quickly.

She took a couple of deep breaths. “He’s silent for now. Merlin, he makes Bellatrix seem like a kitten.”

Bellatrix. That name summoned rage within him. If he encountered her during this battle, he’d murder her. Her death in the chaos would be a good cover for him.

He wanted to ask his witch what happened, what that woman had done to her, but it wasn’t the place or time to do it.

“You are strong too. More intelligent than them. Don’t forget that.”

Their joined hands fell and her smile brightened in the middle of the darkness, warming his heart again and reminding him of the promise he made. To try his best to survive.

Their peace amongst the chaos moment ended when a cry echoed through the castle, followed by a huge explosion. Sharing recognition between them, they rushed towards the direction of the source.

They came to a hole in the wall, the smoke settling down enough to peer through it. They entered into a half-destroyed classroom that was connected to the Great Hall. He moved into the shadows even though the majority of the people in front of him were unconscious.

Potter and some Weasleys were nearest the hole, while other students lined the great hall, some unconscious and others barely managing to stand. His heart dropped as he looked at the Weasley twin beside Potter, he didn’t know which one it was. He held death’s pallor on his skin. His eyes were open and staring into nothingness.

He’d always held a slight fondness for the twins, so he was extremely sorry to see one of them gone.

“Hermione, I’m going. I can’t stay in the open,” he whispered, not daring to get closer to Potter. She squeezed his hand and released him.
“Be careful, and don’t forget your promise.” He could tell from the way she spoke that she was on the edge of tears. “I can’t lose you.”

He inclined his head.

“Sn-ape.”

Both of them looked at Potter. He wouldn’t say anything to the boy since Potter was hurt and they could again chalk it up to him imagining things or a random spell.

“Remember we have to kill the serpent. I will try to do it too,” he whispered. “Stay alive.”

She moved her teary eyes away from him, walked over to Potter and crouched down to help him.

Summoning his courage and will, he stepped back out of the room.

He rushed down the hallway trying to find an open window to fly out of. He knew the Dark Lord wouldn’t be on the front line since that was for his servants, and he would never degrade himself with such tasks.

Reaching one of the broken windows, he put his boot on the edge and his hands on each side of the frame. He looked down at the massacre happening outside. Giants, werewolves, vampires, and Death Eaters were attacking without mercy. Bodies were falling on both sides, but he had no time to count who was winning.

He jumped, the cold night air slamming against his skin like needles before he turned into his black ethereal form. Then he flew toward his freedom.

One way or another, the shackles would fall that night.

AN: Writing both of them on the chamber was fun but this chapter has bitter parts… I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 116: Death Knoll

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 116: Death Knoll

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He easily sailed over the battle below him, taking in the massacre. Everything was so chaotic he couldn’t tell which side was winning. His wings stopped flapping when he saw a man he recognized in the distance fighting a Death Eater.

Dolohov.

With a violent movement, he landed near the fighting men. Lupin was on his knees and his wand was about to fall from his hands. His head was bleeding and his clothing torn. But he was doing this as revenge for Hermione, not to save the mutt.

Lupin looked at him wide-eyed as he cast an incantation that paralyzed Dolohov. The Death Eater never saw him.

Lupin attacked, Dolohov fell to the ground, and satisfaction struck him. He would be hurting no one else.

After recovering for a few seconds, Lupin rushed back into battle. He continued to stick to the shadows, in search of the serpent. He could easily avoid the battles, but the spells shooting through the air, the ones that missed their targets, were dangerous.

When he reached the Death Eater forces, they let him through without protest. Since they didn’t strike at him, it meant the Dark Lord didn’t know about his betrayal and how he aided in destroying
a piece of his soul.

“Severus!”

His steps halted when he heard his name. When the blond man stopped in front of him, the first thing he noticed was the panic on his face. This man was the one who loved his pureblood superiority, but he was acting as if he’d never fought or tortured anyone in his life.

“Lucius. What do you want?”

“The Da—dark Lord wants to talk to you. He’s waiting at the shrieking shack. H-he...B-be careful, Severus.”

The warning sent hope for Draco and his old friend through him. “I appreciate your concern, Lucius.” He placed a hand on Lucius’ shoulder. “Get out of here. Take your family and protect them.” The man shivered and lowered his head.

He was proud that he’d done such a good job in even fooling the people he’d once considered close friends.

“He—he’ll kill us,” Lucius’ voice was only a whisper, but he was able to hear it amongst the sounds of battle.

He licked his lips, trying to ease the dryness he felt on them. He remembered the kind things Lucius had done for him. It was likely he would die that day regardless of what he said to his old friend, and Lucius didn’t seem as if he wanted to tell the Dark Lord anything anyway.

“He’ll die today, Lucius. So get your loved ones away from here.” He rushed away from the man and toward the Dark Lord’s location.

He would try to kill the serpent at the first opportunity, and then tell Potter what he needed to know. He wished he’d had time to find something. A spell or potion that could’ve changed the path of death that the boy walked since his birth.

A path he walked because of him.

He was the only one to blame.

Without noticing the distance he had crossed, he found himself going through the tunnel that lead to the old house. The one in which he almost died because of the wolf he’d saved a few moments ago. Or was it hours? The time passing in the middle of a battle was hard to track.

He opened the door, the metal protesting as it swung to the side. The Dark Lord was standing in the middle of the room. The serpent floated over his head, making it a tempting target, but he wasn’t stupid. He needed to wait for the proper moment to kill it.

“I was thinking you’d fallen on the battlefield, Severus.” He entered further into the room and then bowed.

“It would be difficult, my lord. Their resistance is failing.”

“They’re not failing due to any help of yours,” he spat, but that wasn’t what made Severus’s muscles tense. Behind him, he’d heard a creek of wood. He prayed that it’d been his imagination and it wasn’t those three coming here. When he heard more creeks, he almost cringed. He knew in his gut that it was them. He couldn’t move to look to see if he were right.
If they were here, he needed the Dark Lord to leave. Then when he left, he would kill the serpent and do his best to escape.

“My lord, I can find the boy for you if you wish. I got here without trouble. I can navigate through the shadows better than anyone and throw him at your feet. If I don’t the rest may kill him before you can.”

The Dark Lord’s red eyes became murderous. It was the first time he ever directed that gaze toward him.

With that, he knew he’d failed his promise to her.

There was no chance of him leaving this place alive.

“There’s a tragic problem, Sssseverus.” The hisses sounded so much like Nagini that he thought it was the serpent for a second.

Fear conquered every sense in his body as he heard those words. Had the man discovered him?

Vulnerable.

Expendable.

From the corner of his eye, he saw a new wand in the Dark Lord’s hand. One he knew all too well. His stomach lurched.

“The wand won’t answer me like it should, Severus. Do you know why?” His voice sounded as if he were teaching something to an idiot.

He opened his mouth but couldn’t form a response. He honestly didn’t know why. The wand had been Dumbledore’s, and he’d been the one to kill him. His black eyes looked at the wand, and his mind pondered why the Dark Lord was asking what he was. He recalled something but… No… It couldn’t be.

“You are the most intelligent man I know, Severus. You know what I am referring to. You’ve been such a loyal servant. Unfortunately, you’re the one who killed Dumbledore.”

His body tensed as the meaning behind the words hit him. His suspicions were right.

He heard a tiny whimper at his back, making his heart stop.

No.

She couldn’t be here.

He tried to control his breathing but it increased. He couldn’t do this to her. It was bad enough that he couldn’t keep his promise, but now she was going to witness his death. He needed to escape. Fighting back would be useless against him.

But it would be something. Something to buy him time.

Wouldn’t it?

Merlin, he didn’t want to die.

He wanted to have a life out of the darkness.
He wanted to live with her, make love to her, and grow old with her.

The wand pointed towards him and he took a step back.

“Please, my lord. I can still… get the boy…” He could still be useful. He could still have a way out. If he made the Dark Lord see. He felt like a scared child again, but the regret of not being able to keep his promise to his witch was at the forefront of his mind.

*I’m sorry, Hermione. I have no chances left.*

“This pains me more than you think, my dear friend.” There was no sincerity in the voice.

The Dark Lord moved his wand. A quick breeze hit him and teeth sank into his neck and shoulder, digging into his flesh as if trying to burrow inside.

His legs gave out. He stumbled back against the wall and slid to the floor. Burning shot through the area at first, as if acid was being injected, but then numbness took over. His robe began sticking to him.

He heard someone speak, but the ringing in his ears and his lack of attention made it so he didn’t know what was said.

The serpent let go of him and slithered over to the Dark Lord. Through a half-lidded gaze, he saw the two disappear.

He jerked and his body grew hot, sweat erupting from every pore.

He lifted his hand up to the injury and pressed against it. When he pulled away, his palm and fingers were covered in blood.

He heard a high gasp at his back and remembered he wasn’t totally alone. He opened his mouth to speak but a sickening gurgle came out instead.

At one time, as a spy, he thought he had to and wanted to die for Lily. Now, he wanted to live for Hermione as a man who knew how to love.

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AN: It’s curious that this story began when I wrote this and from here it developed the rest. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on saturday. On a side note, I’m not sure if one of these days I will get a week of rest due personal problems but I will tell you.
Chapter 117: Power of Promises

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 117: Power of Promises

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He heard footsteps approaching him as he struggled to stay conscious. Green eyes came to his line of sight. Eyes that reminded him of his obligation and of the fact he hadn’t told the boy what he needed to know. A frustrated tear left his eyes. He failed Lily, he failed the boy, and he failed the witch he loved.

Brown eyes broke his focus and another gurgling noise came from his throat. She was at his side and he felt her cold hands moving his away from his neck. He didn’t want her to see the life leave him. He wanted her to have the memory of his embrace, not the memory of his death.

“G-get...them,” he barely managed to say.

Potter’s confused look frustrated him.

“The tear, Harry. Get a vial from my bag and go to a pensieve. It’s his memories.” Hermione’s voice made him close his eyes, tempting him to smile. He felt her pressing harder at his neck and wanted to tell her it was futile, but her smell over the mold of the shack reminded him that he’d made a promise.

So he fought to stay alive a bit longer. As much as he could despite the pain shooting through him every few seconds, despite the shallow breaths he had to take to be able to get in any air at all.

He heard a bottle uncork and something cool pressed against the skin of his cheek. Then a
couple of bodies moved. Since Hermione was still applying pressure onto his injury, he guessed Weasley was with them as well.

“You aren’t coming, Hermione?” He distinguished Weasley’s voice, but he only saw the shaking brown curls in front of him. “He is a traitor! It’s not safe for you to stay with him alone.”

Safe? What in the bloody hell was he going to do in this state? Stain her to death?

“Come on, Ron,” Potter said. “Hermione knows what she’s doing, and I trust her.”

The steps started then faded. His breaths grew more shallow and a dark haze overtook his vision, he was about to close his eyes when he heard her call his name. He forced his eyes open, probably for the last time and saw tears coming down her cheeks.

“I-I’m...Sorry,” he managed to say in between gulps of air.

“Don’t talk,” she whispered. “I’m not letting you go. Don’t argue with me and help me know what to use on you to save you.”

He heard panic in her tone, but also heard that strong stubbornness that he’d grown to adore about her.

His mind fogged again as another shiver dominated his limbs. The pressure lifted from his neck for a moment, making him wince. The taste of blood covered his tongue.

She held a vial in front of him. “Severus, I need to know what to use,” she repeated. At least, he thought she repeated it.

She held up a vial. “Do I need this?”

His eyes looked at the woman who held the potion that he’d created in the tent with her. “Yes,” he gasped out. It would free him of the venom’s effects first. But the antivenin wouldn’t save him alone.

She placed a bezoar into his mouth first. He tried to swallow but couldn’t. He bit down on it as hard as he could and let the juice drop into his mouth and trail down his throat.

She was still half-sobbing when she opened the antivenin cork and poured it into the bite before pressing her hand even tighter against the injury.

He hissed.

Then he found the vial on his lips, the thick liquid threatening to choke him as she shoved the bottle further inside and poured it in. She threw the vial to the floor and began rubbing the front of his throat as if it would help him swallow.

“Swallow, damn you. Try! You promised.”

_Merlin, help me. . ._

With the bezoar’s effects helping slightly, he managed to swallow a bit at a time. He felt the antivenin calming the burning sensation as it went down his throat.

His limbs began to tingle, feeling like tiny needles as his circulation began once again, but his mind still was a blur and it was still difficult to take in air.
“You are losing a lot of blood. I’m not going to be able to move you. B-but I need. I need to close your throat. I think the antivenin is helping. You don’t shake as much and the blood flow is lessening...”

“B-bl-od,” he managed to say as soon as she retired her hand from him.

She grabbed another vial, a red one, and a sense of relief filled him. She poured its contents down his throat. He swallowed the blood-replenishing potion easier than he had the previous one. He closed his eyes and let himself fall into darkness.

A slap on his cheek forced him to open his eyes. It was easier this time, but was still the most difficult thing he’d done thus far when it came to his physical tasks. He’d rather face the crucio than go through this.

“Keep him awake, make him drink a full blood replenishing potion every five minutes,” a disembodied voice said. A silver bird was sitting next to Hermione. “You will need to do it on your own. It’s too risky to move him and I can’t get there,” she said.

Pomfrey. It was Pomfrey’s voice.

“You will need to work fast. The best way is to cauterize the arteries. It will scar severely, but it’s the only option. Remember, no matter how painful, you must keep him awake. My patronus will stay and I will guide you through it. Do not doubt yourself, Miss Granger. You are capable.”

A wand blocked his vision of the silver bird. Why wasn’t he dead yet?

“This is going to hurt,” she said as she raised a shaking wand to his shoulder. After everything they’d been through together, after all the times she stood by him, he would trust her fully with this task.

He wanted to tell her not to worry. That the pain she caused him would keep him alive. He heard a sizzle first then felt extreme burning, like he’d touched a cast iron cauldron after preheating it. After having the poison coursing through him, this was a midnight stroll, but he still wanted to scream and shove her away. Instead, he stiffened as much as possible and let her work.

Hermione shoved another vial to his lips and poured it into his mouth. This time he was able to swallow it with another slight massage at the front of his neck.

Another part of his neck flared in pain and heat. The scent of more flesh burning came to his nostrils, but he tried to focus more on the occasional whiff of her scent that came whenever she moved.

He went through several more rounds of potions and cauterization before he almost fell into unconsciousness yet again. He felt a gentle slap against his face once more.

“Now, disinfect it and use some dittany to reconstruct the skin. Make sure the petrification spell is still working. He is half-conscious. Be careful, Miss Granger.”

“O-okay.”

The fear in his witch’s voice forced his eyes to look at her as she rummaged around the vials again. Moments later, fresh drops eased the burn and pain in his neck. His body relaxed.

Maybe he could rest now.
“Renervate!”

His eyes flew open. The first image he saw was Hermione’s wand pointed at him. Then he noted that his mind felt clearer too. He wouldn’t be able to do any arithmancy, but it was clear enough to know where he was and what was happening.

“His skin is regenerating. The antivenin worked and the bleeding looks like it’s stopped.” Her voice now yielded hope within its lilts.

And her hope sent him hope.

“You did wonderful stabilizing him, Miss Granger. Let him rest for ten minutes, then give him more replenishing potion and check the wound to make sure it doesn’t open. If it doesn’t, you come to me. Apparition should be safe, but come straight into my office; people won’t accept his presence right now.

“All right. I-I thank you Madam Pomfrey. If you hadn’t helped me he might’ve…”

The silver bird jumped on her shoulder and pecked her gently. “He will be alright.” The bird’s mouth opened again. “Maybe you can unpetrify him too, but wait until you apparate with him.”

Their voices became clearer to him the more they spoke, but his exhaustion grew. The fire overtaking his body had disappeared, replacing it with cold and numbness. He could barely feel her fingers caressing his chin.

“You’re alive,” she whispered. She removed a handkerchief from her pocket and poured some water from a small bottle onto it. She began wiping off his lips and chin. “You’re going to live, Severus.”

Other than hearing her say she loved him, those were the most beautiful words he’d ever heard even though he knew he wasn’t out of danger yet.

“Finite incantatem.”

The weight of his body disappeared. He stayed there, resting but not closing his eyes.

“Severus,” she said. He parted his lips to try to answer but she covered them with her finger. “We need to get out of here. We’re still at the shack and Pomfrey is waiting for us.” He looked at her shoulder and noticed the silver bird was gone. “I need you to find the strength to apparate us to her office. You’re the only one that can trespass the enchantment even now. When we reach her, you can rest. I know it’s risky but we have to do this.”

He was able to give a nod. She wrapped her arms around him as he closed his eyes.

Both of them disappeared.

—

An: Hope you liked it. I wanted Hermione to be the one who saved Severus because he saved her too. As a curious note that I wasn’t able to add and explain, I had the idea that the healers could use their patronus in real time and do an equivalent of the surgeries that some doctors do and guide others from the distance. So let me know what you think and if all goes well see you on Wednesday.
Chapter 118: Outcome

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoebastel

Chapter 118: Outcome

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

Tired. Thirsty. Weak.

Those words crossed his mind as the first flash of morning light attacked his closed eyes, making him protest with a growl. A sharp pain came from his neck at the action. He lifted a hand to it, but before it reached its destination, soft fingers curled over his wrist, making him stop.

Only one person was brave enough to do that kind of gesture.

He forced his eyes open and saw her. The sunlight was shining down on her as if she were being blessed by some holy being. She had a few small bruises on the edges of her face along with a few injuries covered by plasters, but looked unharmed otherwise.

She smiled at him. “It’s all over,” she said.

Over?

It was…

Those words were hard to grasp. He looked around him as best he could. There was a curtain covering most of the area where he was, but he could see some of the damages the battle caused. He heard people speaking in the distance and could smell the scents of various potions being used.

He looked back at her. She’d saved him.
“Hermi—” His voice gave out and he cringed at his throat’s rawness.

Her hand move to rest on his chest, and he lowered his arm to the bed. “Voldemort is dead, Severus. You’re free. You have to recover, so try not to talk. It’s been four hours since the battle’s end.”

“Hm,” he said, the noise not hurting as much as speaking.

She chuckled, leaned over, and kissed him on his forehead.

“I know you have questions, but I’m not sure how to answer them. Not even I understand what just happened. I helped in the fight but…You need to know that Harry—”

The office door opened, interrupting their conversation. He didn’t let his shock show as the almost a spitting image of James Potter, walked to his bed.

Wasn’t he supposed to be…? Yes, he should be dead.

The younger Potter stopped to stand beside Hermione and looked at him. “Um…I’m glad you’re alive, Professor Snape.”

He’d be lying if he said he expected that. “Hm.”

“And…” Potter shifted a bit on his feet. “I’m sorry for everything, and thank you for everything you did. I saw the memories you left and told people you were always on our side. Everyone knows what you did.”

“And he didn’t know you were alive when he told either,” Hermione said.

“Right.”

He almost let himself chuckle at that. It didn’t matter. “Severus.” Hermione’s hand on his arm made him flinch by instinct. It was on the mark. She lifted his sleeve and he saw only a scar where his Dark Mark used to reside.

“Ho…How?” he said and looked at Potter.

“Well, Voldemort did kill me, sir, but it was only the part of him that was inside me. I came back, and I stopped him.” The boy removed something from his sleeve. Dumbledore’s wand. “This wand was mine and the killing curse rebounded to him.” He held out the wand to Snape. “I want you to have this, sir. I want you to hide it because I know I can trust you.” His eyes moved quickly to Hermione then back to him. “Both of you.”

He raised his hand and took the wand in his grasp.

“I’m glad Hermione could save you,” he said. “Both of you deserve to be happy together.”

He couldn’t hide his shock. “Po…” he tried to say but Potter cut him off.

“Some of your memories showed the two of you.”

He mentally cursed his carelessness, but then again, he’d been dying. He wasn’t able to focus easily as the venom slowly took the life away from him.

He looked at her and she blushed. “Harry it’s a—”
“A secret. Yeah, I won’t say a word. It’s none of my business anyway,” he said.

The three all looked at the door as they heard someone walk through it.

“Mister Potter, the ministry is looking for you to present your proof,” Pomfrey said and then smiled kindly at Severus. “But the world probably already has word about what Severus did.”

“But will they believe it?” Hermione asked, the worry in her voice clear.

“He’s the savior, so most will,” Pomfrey said. “Of course, there will be people who doubt, but it will be few.”

“After I give them the proof they’ll have no choice but to believe.”

Severus almost wanted to tell him to forget about the proof. He’d done terrible things, so he deserved to be punished for some of them even though he did them because he was spying and had no choice.

When Hermione took his hand and squeezed, he instantly changed his mind. He had to stay with her. She was proof that his soul had never been truly dark and was just lost among the grey.

“Besides, even Dumbledore is talking about what he had you do. And you have McGonagall, Lupin and me. But we do need to get you away from here.” She turned to Hermione. “Do you have a place where the two of you can stay? People will start barging in here, trying to push Severus when he needs to recover.” Her eyes came back to him. “How about Spinner’s end? It’s in a muggle environment. It could do well.”

He almost wanted to laugh at that. Even if he hadn’t burnt it down it would be a terrible place. There were still Death Eaters lurking about, and they knew where it was. It was also still registered as his home, so if people wanted to find him there it wouldn’t be difficult.

“I know a place,” Hermione said.

“Then you two should go as soon as possible. I will send you his treatments via owl every week. Severus, you are forbidden to speak for a week, and I don’t want you leaving the bed unless necessary.”

He nodded, not feeling like arguing. He was too tired. Too curious about what the future held. Too amazed that he actually had a future with a witch that he loved.

AN: And we start the final arc of this story. I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. If everything goes well, see you on Saturday.
Chapter 119: Everything

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 119: Everything

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May, 1998

Everything ached. His eyelids even seemed to protest every blink. But he could breathe and move and he was alive. The quiet house where Hermione and he resided was an excellent place for him to recover in peace.

He looked out the window as he waited for Hermione to return from her task of getting supplies. This house didn’t seem like it belonged to people who had a daughter. She’d done an overall good job in erasing her existence here.

But it was a peaceful place and a routine had quickly been established. His routine consisted mostly of sleeping. In his waking hours she’d read to him, talk to him, and he’d taken his treatments.

He’d eaten very little, but that wasn’t unusual for him even when he was healthy-ish. She’d apologized for the canned soup, but he couldn’t mention he was used to eating such things as a child, and they’d improved from that time till now.

Today, he might get a chance to speak with her and at least tell her he appreciated the things she was doing to help him recover. Each time he’d tried to speak, or stand on his own, she’d scolded him and set about taking care of him with the treatments Pomfrey gave her.

She’d taken care of him with a tenderness that she’d never expressed, frequently giving him
light kisses on the cheek, lips, and forehead after doing something she thought might hurt him. He’d also shared some affection when he could.

Now that neither of them had such danger hanging over their heads, they were free to express their affections to each other without much worry.

The nightmares hadn’t stopped but each time she’d been there to soothe them away. She’d whispered it was over and they’d survived and each time it took a full minute for him to realize that truly was the case.

He heard footsteps and looked up at the door to the master bedroom just as she entered. She was holding a tray with a bowl of soup on it. He furrowed his brows for a second. He hadn’t seen her come into the house.

“Good Morning,” she said.

He lifted his hand and placed it on his bandaged neck. She sat down next to the bed and sat the bowl on the nightstand. She reached up and covered his hand with hers.

Dark circles stained under her eyes and her hair was more frizzled than usual. She was gaining a bit of the weight she lost during the entire Horcrux search but it was coming slowly.

He knew he wasn’t the only one suffering from nightmares. He’d heard her screaming sometimes in the dark of night. It was difficult just lying there waiting for them to fade and not being able to go to her and wake her like she woke him.

Both of them still had a lot of healing to do. Physically and mentally.

He took a deep breath and met her gaze. Her brown eyes held worry and affection. Then, she leaned forward and pressed a slight kiss to the corner of his lips.

“Morning,” he said. Though his voice was raspy, it still held the deepness it’d always had.

Her small smile widened into a much larger one. “I’m so happy to hear you talk,” she said. “It’s a good sign you can speak. Pomfrey said that will be the last step of your healing even though you’ll be weak for a while yet.”

She sat the tray of soup onto his lap. He picked up the spoon and began eating.

“That’s ty-typical of the ve…venom,” he said. He figured the more he talked the more his voice would get back to its normality.

“The Prophet came today with Pomfrey’s potions. You were awarded a First Class Order of Merlin. Welcome to the club, Severus.”

His hand lost its grip on the spoon and it fell back into the soup bowl. His eyes widened and he looked at his witch. She didn’t notice since she was busying herself with unfolding the newspaper. She turned it towards him to show him. On the first page was an old picture of him, standing, with his arms crossed. He scanned the titular and contents of the article.

Much about his life as a spy, that Potter knew, was revealed in the article, but Potter had kept his promise about not revealing his relationship with Hermione.

He grabbed his spoon and took a big sip of the soup. He didn’t like people knowing so much about him, but the result was satisfying. He wouldn’t be going to Azkaban or punished for what he’d
And an Order of Merlin was recognition of his power and actions. A younger him would feel pride at that. Someone had finally acknowledged him in a positive way.

It now felt empty and pointless. He was shocked of course, but it didn’t mean much. Their acknowledgement didn’t matter. The only person that mattered was this witch beside him.

“They wondered where you were, but no one knows we’re here,” she said.

She scooted to rest her body at his side. He put the spoon on the tray after eating as much soup as he could.

“What do you wish to do now?” he asked. He spoke slowly, deliberately drawing out his words to get a grasp for the speaking again.

She rested her head on his shoulder. “You know what I want,” she said. “But, what about you? Are you free of her? Have you put your past to rest?”

He let himself smile and looked at her. She shouldn’t be worried over Lily anymore. His affections for Lily had been nothing when compared to his love for her. He had to pay his debt, but now that he had, this fluffy haired witch was all he wanted. She was a woman he was more than willing to die the most painful death for if he had to.

He handed her the tray so she could put it on the table beside her, then took his wand from its place under his pillow.

“Severus?”

He smiled at her first and then focused on the actions of his wand. He let every happy memory he had with her fill him, and then waved the wand.

The silver mist swirled into the air, mixing slightly with the smoke from a candle burning nearby.

She gasped as she watched the mist take form. He looked at her from the corner of his eye as she lifted a hand to her mouth.

The otter flew around the room, playing as if it were in an invisible lake. It came toward them and stopped, its nose twitching.

“Does this answer your question?” he let his wand fall to his side and allowed the otter to do as it wished. It jumped towards Hermione’s legs as if it recognized her as the other part of his soul. “Also, Amortentia smells like you.”

She looked at him and smiled. “What are we?”

That question again. She’d asked it a few times through their relationship, but this time he could answer it.

“We’re everything.”

AN: I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. There are still a lot of chapters for this to end, and even after that, it’s possible I will make some companion pieces. Don’t worry
there are still a lot of chapters until the 144 and I hope you continue enjoying each one of it. See you on Wednesday!
May, 1998

Blue eyes stared at him before they fell out of sight. The image repeated itself so many times he would’ve lost count had he been counting. Each time he wanted to reach out and grab the body before it fell, but he couldn’t move.

Then, the white hair and blue eyes transformed to brown. The life faded from them, letting him see his failure. Showing his payment for his lack of reaction. He screamed, but no sound came from his lips. He grabbed his throat as his air was sucked from his body. He moved his shaking hands away from his throat and they went from healthy to necrotic in seconds.

A serpent’s mouth appeared in front of him, slowly opening to show its fangs. Then it struck.

His body launched up from the bed, his back protesting the action more than the rest of his body. His eyes couldn’t register anything around him due to the darkness in the room and lack of moon outside.

His breathing came out in heavy gasps, and his shirt and hair stuck to his sweat soaked skin.

A touch on his cheek made him flinch away. He reached under his pillow to grip his wand, but didn’t move when her voice cut through the dark. “Severus, it’s Hermione. You had a nightmare.
Everything is fine.”

He closed his eyes and took several deep breaths, focusing on the words she just said and the sound of her voice as she spoke them.

She was alive. Thank Merlin she was alive.

He let himself rest back on the mattress again, dropped his wand, and put his forearm over his eyes.

“Tha…Thank you.”

Feeling her fingertips on his cheek made him tense at first, but then he let himself relax and enjoy the sensation. “Do you want to talk about them?” she asked.

He moved his arm and turned his head in her direction. He could barely make her out due to the dim nightlight in the hallway.

Should he share this burden too?

“Tell me,” she said, making up his mind for him.

“I was watching Dumbledore die, then he changed to you. I saw you dying by my hand. Then the serpent showed up and…”

She moved the hair out of his face. “It’s over now,” she said. “I know that won’t help very much, but I hope these things will fade and be replaced with beautiful dreams soon.”

Hermione lowered her body and pressed her forehead against his. He raised his hand and buried his fingers in her curls.

“You have a fever,” she said, something he already knew. “I’ll bring you a potion.”

He would’ve preferred that she just stay at his side, but before he could say anything, she got up and left the room. It wouldn’t take long.

It was weird being taken care of like this. He’d done the bare minimum in caring for himself, especially as the war drew closer to the end. His logic was that he’d be dead soon anyway, so there was no use. He healed to the point he could function. Nothing beyond that. And frivolities or vanities had no place in his life. There was no use in fitted clothing or taking care of his hair or any appearance-oriented things of that sort.

But now, he could enjoy doing other things that he didn’t need to do. He could change a lot about himself since he had a future to do it in. He could change his outlook on life as well.

He wouldn’t do a complete 180 of course, but a few changes here and there, especially now that he had his witch, could be beneficial.

He felt as if he owed it to his past self, and especially to the people that hadn’t survived. Good people had died. He’d cringed at all the victims listed in The Prophet. He knew a lot of those people, taught a majority of them. He’d thought on why he’d survived when they did not. Survivor’s guilt was something he’d never imagine that he’d have to live with. Perhaps that and the nightmares were the price he had to pay for his survival.

He would do his best to live happily for those who could not.
He heard her footsteps and this time a light from her wand pierced the dark room. He sat up when she handed him a potion. He drank it and set the bottle on the table. He felt the bed dip and she rested back against the headboard.

“I’ll stay until you fall back to sleep,” she said.

A sharp cry reached his ears. His eyes fluttered open trying to distinguish it as he attempted to shove off his drowsiness. He removed the sheets from his body, still not fully sure if he was really doing it or if this was one of his dreams. He bit his tongue gently, feeling a tiny prick.

He was awake.

His mouth tasted of familiar potions and he cringed. He opened his mouth and breathed in some air, hoping to cleanse his palate of the leftover taste.

He looked at his side and saw Hermione wasn’t there anymore.

A whimper came from outside the room making him remember what had awoken him in the first place. He growled at how slow his mind was processing things. It was to be expected but it still annoyed him.

He sat up, moved his legs over the side of the bed, and carefully pushed himself up. He grabbed onto the nightstand so he wouldn’t fall as he checked to see if his legs could support his weight. This was the first time he’d walked without assistance since he’d been bitten. For safety, he kept hold of things in his path as he walked to the bedroom door. He could hear her clearer from there. He grasped the wall as he walked to the room she was staying in, his muscles and bones protesting every step. He was pleased that he could make the progress he was, so he was more than willing to deal with the aches.

He got to the half-opened door, and pushed it so he could enter. Her fragrance hit him as he stepped in. He could make out her body on the bed. She was thrashing, yelling, and whimpering. Each action breaking his heart. He wanted to protect her from these nightmares, but knew he could not.

With his lips twisted at the terrors that tormented her, he walked over, grabbed her shoulder, and shook her.

“Wake up.” An order without poison made her open her eyes in an instant.

Her hand moved to his bicep and her muscles relaxed.

“Sorry.”

Sorry? She had nothing to be sorry for. Not a single thing.

He took her into his arms. She rested her forehead against his chest.

“Come with me?” She nodded.

Ignoring the protest of his aching muscles, he helped her to her feet and guided her to the room he was staying in since it had the bigger bed.

She lay down on the bed and he moved around to the other side. She moved to rest on her
right side and he on his left. They stared at each other.

“I woke you up, and you need to rest,” she said.

He wasn’t sure why she said the statement until he thought about the last word she said.

“As do you, insufferable witch. You don’t need to apologize for that. Why can’t you sleep?”

His question choked another one. He wanted to know what happened to her during those months they were separated. Her body moved closer to him, letting him feel the warmth that radiated from her.

“I thought it would be obvious. Everything is coming back to haunt me in my dreams. Voldemort, Bellatrix, losing you, all the losses of the others. I was rid of the nightmares for a while, but after a few days of being here, they came back. I’m sure they’re nothing compared to yours.”

“I don’t want you to ignore your nightmares anymore. They’re just as important. Your wellbeing is the most important to me, Hermione.”

“Being with you helps. It reassures me that you survived too.” Her warm breath caressed his skin.

“Then no more separate bedrooms at night. You aren’t going to hurt me.”

Her laughter vibrated against his chest. Her hand released his shirt and travelled to his side so she could embrace him. He closed his eyes and rested his face against the top of her head.

“Don’t blame me if you have an extra scratch or bruise in the morning.”

His lips curved upward at her acceptance. “Noted.” Maybe this way it would be easier to chase away both of their nightmares. Or it might even quell them.

There were still things he knew she needed to get off her chest. A weight she carried on her own. He wanted to help her rid herself of the burden as much as possible.

The light from the window grew brighter, and he could now make out the shapes of the objects in the room.

“What happened with Bellatrix?” He hoped by pushing her to talk about it, would help her like it had in the past.

Her grasp tightened on him but she didn’t pull away. “She— she tried to use legilimency on me. When she found that she couldn’t break into my mind, she became furious. She wanted to enjoy torturing me. I knew that whether I told her or not she would’ve just killed me later.” She swallowed and moved her arm off him. She avoided looking at him. She sat up and rolled up the sleeve of her shirt. Through the growing morning light, he saw what was on her arm. It was a permanent insult to her as an attempt to undermine her value. He clinched his teeth as he read the word he despised. Mudblood was carved in her skin.

His thumb caressed it and she shivered. He didn’t care about her blood. He didn’t care if she was as marked as he was with the scars of war. His dark mark was only a scar now and these words will be only a bump on her skin with time.

“It’s…” Her hesitation made him caress her skin again.
“Only a word written by a psychotic bitch. It’s part of your past, Hermione.” He reassured, as
the light outside became a flaring blaze. “It will fade much like my mark, both physically and in the
mind, but I’m glad she was tortured by the Dark Lord. I enjoyed every part of it.” The darkness in
his voice didn’t make her look away. “I am still and will always be a dark man in some aspects,
Hermione.”

“I know, and I love you no matter what. I am less vengeful but I would fight for you too. I
want to keep you safe.”

“You already have,” he said. He didn’t need any more proof than the fact his heart was
beating to know that. She did what very few would do. She saved the man that everyone hated.

He tried to show a grateful smile, but his attempt was interrupted as he felt her lips covering
his.

AN: As you can see they still have some problems they need to deal with. Hope you liked it
and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 121: Untying Ties and Lacing New

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 121: Untying Ties and Lacing New

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July, 1998

He was convinced that Australia could be a prime example for the biblical hell. For once in his life, he regretted that he favored black clothing. The sun blazed down on him, making his clothing a wearable sauna. How all these people could be happy living here bewildered him.

Hermione offered him a bottle of water and he took it gratefully. He opened it and drank a quarter of the contents with one large swallow. He was tempted to pour the rest on his head, but it would probably only boil off his hair.

He’d spent the rest of his recovery helping her track down where her parents were in Australia. He lifted the bottle to his lips again and took another drink, his hands shaking as he did so. The venom left residual effects to his nerves, but it was minor enough that he’d be able to ease it with his potions once he started brewing again.

Right now, it was about her. The witch next to him was tense as she took a seat on the heated bench. He took another sip from the bottle.

“They will be here soon,” she said. She was playing with her nails and shifting every few seconds.

He’d promised to help her find a way to restore her parent’s memories when he’d seen her
looking at their pictures. The pain in them wasn’t something he wanted to see ever again. At least this time he could fix it.

Or at least he hoped. Memory charms were complicated if they were done right. Considering she was the one who did it, he was sure that the charm would be perfect and difficult to reverse.

He looked at the watch on his wrist and then to the path that crossed the park. The Granger’s were people of routine, making them easy to track. He was glad that the Death Eaters hadn’t bothered. They were too lazy to search other muggle countries.

“They will.” His hand covered hers to stop her nervous movements.

They waited under the infernal sun listening to the sounds of people enjoying the day.

She rose from her seat and he followed her actions. He looked in the direction she was staring and saw a couple walking down the cobblestone path. Their hands were intertwined and they laughed and conversed like lovers on their first date. She took a step but then paused in her actions. He was about to question why when he noticed her mother’s state.

A prominent curve on the woman stomach was visible when she sat down. Evidently, his witch hadn’t expected that. He would estimate that her mother was six months along in her pregnancy, which meant that she conceived after Hermione cast the charm.

“Severus,” she said. “Let’s go back home.”

“Hermione?” The confusion poured in his voice. His mask wasn’t difficult to drop around her now. He thought she’d be thrilled to have a sibling.

“I… I don’t belong in their world anymore. I haven’t for a long time.” She looked up at him and smiled. “They’re happy here and have a new life. I have a new life too. I think that’s how things are supposed to be.”

He reached out and moved an arm around her waist. “Are you sure. Don’t you want to talk to them at all?”

“What would I say?” she said and sighed. “It will only hurt more. Those two people aren’t my parents anymore. They’re going to have a baby too. I can’t bring their memories back and have them go through all of that. I can’t do that to the baby.” He saw she was on the edge of tears, but they didn’t fall from her eyes.

His witch, this Hermione Granger, was a strong woman.

He nodded. “Let’s go then.”

They pulled apart and then took each other’s hand. They walked away from the couple, and away from the park.

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AN: Deciding this was a bit difficult but here we are. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday.
When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 122: Answering the Future

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August, 1998

The August sun came through the window, blinding his lazy eyes and forcing him to hide his face in her curls, snuggling. He let a grin come across his lips as he heard a familiar giggle, but didn’t open his eyes. He was still tired and it was too early to rise.

Since sharing a bed with her, his nightmares had lessened and his sleep had deepened. The same was happening with her. She cuddled in her sleep as well, something he welcomed. This was their life, and it felt like a dream. There was more waking only to wonder if it would be their last day alive. There was no more hiding.

They struggled to get out of bed each day. Not because they were tired but due to just being happy to rest in each other’s arms and kiss each other’s lips. It was definitely strange at first, but now he was growing more used to it with each morning that greeted them.

This peace was more beautiful than he ever dared to imagine. He rubbed his eyes as the warmth left his side.

“We have to get supplies,” she said with a sleepy voice. “Ugh.”

That made him smirk. How many days had they been living in this bubble. Other than the trip to Australia and the daily owl that delivered the Prophet, they hadn’t encountered many people.
He rose from the bed and yawned as he watched Hermione wrap a warm fuzzy robe around her.

Today they would have to venture out, something he actually enjoyed rather than dreaded. Though, right now he wanted to do nothing more than to drag her back to bed and sleep until noon.

“Shopping at a muggle supermarket isn’t the way I thought I’d end up courting you,” he joked. He hadn’t even pondered courting her at all until his recovery. Hadn’t thought he’d be given the chance.

“Court me?” she laughed. “I’m already in love with you.” He stood, put on his own robe, and went into the kitchen for some breakfast.

That was true, but neither of them had spoken about where they wanted to go from here. They were already living together, but eventually they would need work. They were the types that needed to research and find new things to challenge them.

“That doesn’t mean I should stop doing it,” he said and opened the cupboard to remove two mugs. He placed them on the table and saw Hermione pour them some coffee.

“Then by all means, do it forever,” she said as she fed Crookshanks. He almost dropped the scones he’d removed from the other cabinet.

Before he could reply, a flapping sound made him twist his body in haste. After that, he heard a small peck.

They looked toward the window and he saw the little owl on the sill. Fawkes was beside him, his fire gone and his appearance that of a red and gold bird.

He opened the window. The little owl flew over to him and perched on his shoulder. Fawkes perched himself on the back of a chair.

“Fawkes, what brings you here?” he said as he fed the little owl a piece of scone. The phoenix spread its wings and jumped to the side, leaving a large envelope. It flew over to Hermione, offering her another letter.

He knew that whatever was inside the letter, it marked the end of his peaceful bubble. Part of him was excited, but the other, worried. Lots of people had suffered under his hands. He sat down and Hermione took a seat next to him. The phoenix returned to rest at the back of a chair. It was clear Fawkes still considered him as his owner. He wasn’t sure he deserved that. The little owl pecked at him and he gave it another piece of bread.

Hearing the rustle of paper, his eyes turned to look at her, waiting for her explanation if she desired to share. But if it came from Fawkes, he already knew who sent it and what it likely contained.

He hadn’t opened his letter yet. He wasn’t sure if he wanted to deal with what it said.

The truth was that he hadn’t thought of what he’d left behind. He didn’t want such a large responsibility ever again.

He took a deep breath and ripped the wax seal from Hogwarts. He unfolded the parchment. He knew that elegant scribble.

McGonagall.
“It’s Hogwarts’ list of books,” Hermione said of her letter. “I didn’t think that… We didn’t go back but…” Her eyes moved quickly around the sentences. “All students are going to repeat the last year.”

Severus frowned and finally looked at his correspondence, seeking answers. He knew that he hadn’t refused or resigned from his position officially. When he left, the castle still responded to him.

His letter was much more than a list of books and materials.

“What is it?” Hermione’s voice came with her body getting closer to him. He cleared his throat and handed her the letter.

“Minerva wants me to come back. She is holding my position as headmaster if I still want it,” he said.

“What do you want?”

“I don’t know. I don’t think it would be a good thing for me to take back that post.” He took the parchment in her hand and looked back down at it. “The first year students won’t forget easily, Hermione. They are too young to understand all the complexities and the reasons I did things.”

“I’m not sure, Severus. There could be ones that will.” She smiled. “Though, now you can do whatever you want to. You’re your own master.”

He let himself laugh. “That’s so odd to hear.” He looked at her. “And what are you going to do now, Miss Granger.”

“I will go and finish my studies. I can decide on my future career. That’s something you can think about too. You’re so brilliant, Severus. You can do anything.”

Though it didn’t seem like it, there was a part of him that enjoyed being at Hogwarts. A part that enjoyed teaching despite the idiocy that went on in the classrooms. There was always something rewarding about seeing students wanting to learn. Striving to become better. It was amazing to see a weak student go from that to someone that was confident in what they were doing and did well at it.

“I will refuse this post, but I’ll ask about my former teaching position. With that I can do research into a few things I’m curious about.”

“It would be their loss if they don’t accept you in that. You’re a remarkable teacher. You challenge people.” Her praise made him tilt his head.

“I am a Master Potioneer after all and failed potions are chaos.”

She chuckled and turned back to look at her parchment.

“Professor McGonagall offered me the position of Head Girl too. If I accept it I will have to go sooner.” Her voice was too calm to match the excitement in her.

“You’d probably be good at it. You know how to break the rules and what to look for.” She elbowed him gently. “I assume your two friends will be back too, creating problems and getting attention.”

The bright side was that he didn’t have to protect Potter from his tendency to throw himself into a mortal peril. He rolled his eyes and took a sip of his coffee.
“You know, I might take it. If you get the post, it will be easier to be with you too.”

When did his witch become that mischievous? With surprised eyes, he looked at her but he only found her smile going wider. She was truly contemplating it.

“Well, we need to reply then.” But was it wise for both to accept when they were in a relationship? He had to voice the other option, which was completely absurd to his mind considering everything that happened. “You know, we could always wait if you’d find that better.”

“That’s a stupid thing I won’t do, Severus.” The harshness of her voice made him smirk. “Unless…you want to…”

He snorted. “No, I do not.”

She gave a firm nod. “Then let’s answer her.” She rose from her seat and retrieved some parchment, ink, and a quill so they could answer their future.

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AN: I hope you liked this relaxing time that opens their doors to the future. Let me know what you think and see you next Saturday.
PS: On the last chapter lot of people was confused with Severus reaction towards Australia’s temperature. So I’m going to explain. In Australia at that time is winter but their temperature is rounding the 15-20º Celsius, which for a person that is used to extreme cold weather and wears black with many layers of cotton, that tends to feel a bit infernal.
August, 1998

A drop of water fell from his chin and into the sink filled with water. His black eyes focused on his reflection. Usually, he avoided mirrors, and this was the first time he’d paid this close attention to his appearance.

He had to admit that he was surprised at what he saw staring back at him. He no longer wore a scowl on his face. A face he thought to be full of wrinkles was void of all but one or two small lines. He’d gained a bit of weight through his time here. He was still pale, but he could see a hint of color in his cheeks.

He reached up, rubbed his chin, the beard thick against his hand. His hair was longer as well and looked odd with the beard. Not being around potions had caused his hair to fluff out slightly. Despite rumors that he didn’t wash his hair, he did frequently. The potion fumes flattened long hair if one didn’t pull it back. He could never be arsed to bother doing anything about it.

He picked up the razor but stopped when he saw her in the mirror looking at him. She was smirking and studying him with her head tilted ever so slightly. She bit her lip.

“Spit it out,” he said. “I know you have something to say.”

Hermione chuckled. She walked over to him and grabbed the wrist of the hand holding the
razor. “Hogwarts has no rules against beards,” she said. “I know I told you that your beard was a mess but you are extremely attractive with it.”

He withheld a grin at the fact she was blushing. “Are you asking me to keep this thing?” He was amazed that she would suggest it. He didn’t hate having a beard either. Perhaps this change would help everyone let go of the past Severus. Including him.

“Very well,” he said. “I’ll trim it up and leave it.”

She let go of his wrist and rubbed her hand against his face, tracing around the edges. He assumed it was where she thought he should trim it.

He leaned down and kissed her lips, causing a soft groan to leave her. He pulled away.

“God, Severus...you…” Her choking voice made his laugh hard to stop. The implications of her flushed state always warmed his heart. She was truly a gift.

“I’ll soon be back to being the evil bat of the Dungeons.”

“Yes, but you’re my evil bat of the Dungeons.” She crossed her arms and he started to trim up his beard. She went for the door. “Hermione.”

She turned to him. “Yes?”

“I need your help with something else.” He moved his hand to his hair and her eyes widened.

“Really? Are you sure?”

“Yes, I think I should. No more hiding.”

She nodded.

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“I’m done packing my things,” she said as he walked into the room. It felt weird to wear different clothes. He didn’t divert from his usual black, and he never would, but now his sleeves and pants fit him properly instead of hanging a bit too long. Hermione had helped him fix his beard, which somehow transformed into a rather nice thick goatee. Then she’d assisted him in cutting his hair. Now it was shorter and trimmed up properly. It was no longer lifeless and flat, surprising him with more of a curl texture. The neck on his shirt and coat were higher to cover the scar since he could no longer hide it with his hair.

He was still the same man, but this was a step into the future. Something different and new like all the other experiences he’d had since his relationship with Hermione. This was the easiest step when compared to everything else he’d done through the years.

She studied him. “People aren’t going to recognize you until you speak,” Hermione said with a laugh.

“You prefer this?” he said and moved his hand as if displaying himself.

She shrugged. “I prefer you any way you want to be,” she said. “Though, I do want to jump you right now.”

“Easy there, Miss Granger. That’s not proper for a student.”
She bowed and laughed. “So sorry, Professor Snape.”

Hermione closed her trunk and shrank it. She put it in her pocket and walked over to him. She gave him a deep kiss. There wouldn’t be many of those during their time in Hogwarts.

“Anything you need to bring from anywhere?”

“No, Minerva kept my things safe at Hogwarts. She said she had them put back in the dungeons in my old quarters.”

“Okay, then. So, now we go?”

This term was going to be trying, but he was ready for it. He had a witch he loved and a future without constant death hanging over him. If he could live through all of that, he could conquer this.

He knew the two of them would have challenges in the future. Ones they’d have to face together.

It was a good thing they both liked challenges.

She picked up Crookshanks and he leaped onto his shoulder. He chuckled and offered her his arm.

“We go,” he said.

And without another look around the room, they disappeared.

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It took a few seconds to get himself accustomed to his surroundings after the apparition. When his focus returned, he saw Minerva standing at Hogwarts’ gates. They’d apparated further away than they intended, so they had to walk a distance to the gate. When Hermione got there, Minerva enveloped her into a hug.

When Minerva let go of Hermione he found himself ambushed by her embrace as well. His stiffened, not used to affection from any person other than Hermione.

The old woman pulled away. “Oh, Severus, I’m so glad to see that you’ve recov…” She froze, both of her hands still on his shoulders. She leaned in ever so slightly. “You are Severus, aren’t you?”

“Unless Miss Granger cloned me, then yes,” he said dryly. For some reason he hadn’t thought about the fact that a change in looks would result in a bit more attention than what he’d want.

Minerva removed her hand from his shoulders and turned to Hermione. “I’m so glad you were there for him,” she said. “Pomfrey didn’t tell me where you were when I asked, but I assumed the two of you were together since you disappeared at the same time. I’d hate to think what would’ve happened if you hadn’t been there with him.”

“If it weren’t for her, I’d be dead,” he stated as if she didn’t know that already. “I owe her my life.”

Minerva smiled at him. “Severus, I have everything in the dungeons like you asked.”

He nodded and watched as she addressed Hermione. “If you’ll come with me, I’ll give your
badge to you and tell you of your duties. As you know, head boys and girls have one for themselves connected to their common house room.”

“Yes,” she said.

Severus decided it was time to go into the castle and leave the two to talk. He walked past them but Minerva calling his name made him stop. He turned.

“Severus, I want to apologise before anything else happens this year. I should’ve known you wouldn’t—”

“You did,” he said. “Deep down, you knew I was on your side; otherwise, you wouldn’t have warned me about the other professors. In the times you truly hated me, it was meant for you to do so. You owe me nothing.” He turned and walked toward the castle.

He didn’t know what awaited him in there. Hadn’t much thought about it until Minerva apologized. Would the other teachers still see him as a traitor or would they act like nothing happened? He would prefer the latter, but wouldn’t count on that happening. The consequences of the war, of his actions, had never bothered him because he hadn’t expected to survive. All he knew was that if they apologized he wouldn’t think much of it. It meant he was good at his job, but he would admit only to himself that it hurt that they’d think he could turn so easily.

His boots touched the stone floor and he crossed the open doors. He didn’t stop walking as he walked through the corridors. He paid no attention to any of the teachers in the hall. He’d heard a few gasped but he didn’t know if it was out of happiness or disgust.

He didn’t much care. He only wanted to find his place again in a world where he didn’t have to juggle two different lives. Finding normalcy as much as he could was his main goal for now.

He was just about to turn to head for the dungeons when a smaller person stepped in front of him a few meters away. The desire to walk past him was strong, but he stopped a meter away. Their eyes met and he let his indifference take over his form, a natural shield he hadn’t had to use when around Hermione. The charm’s professor opened his mouth to speak, but then closed it.

“Yes? Is there something you want?”

Flitwick took a deep breath, opened his mouth once again only to have nothing come out, and then took another deep breath. “I misjudged you deeply, and I’m terribly sorry for it. I hope someday you’ll forgive me for what I’ve done to you. You…you did your work much too perfect.”

Severus nodded. Without saying a word, he walked past the shorter man. They would all end up going to Hogsmeade for drinks eventually, and he would go more often than he had in the past. Minerva wouldn’t be able to resist suggesting such a get-together.

He could forgive those he knew were sincere. For everyone else, they could take their false apologies and shove them.

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The dungeons were the same as always. They offered him quiet, comfortable solace. His old office was organized just as he’d left it despite not using it for a year. His vials, desk, pensieve, even his chair with a pillow where Hermione had taken her lessons were restored to their old status. He chalked it up to the house elves.
He walked over to his quarters and opened the door. Everything was the same except two new additions. There was a perch on each side of the fireplace. A little owl sat on one of them, while Fawkes sat upon the lower one, the one closest to the fire.

The only thing missing was his witch. Her voice, her smell, her overall presence was needed, but he knew she wouldn't stay away from here for very long.

And for the first time in his life, he felt welcomed and safe.

He felt like he was finally home.

AN: And we are back to Hogwarts with new things to deal with. For the people who were wondering about Crookshanks, he was hiding with Hermione’s neighbors until Severus injuries healed. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 124: A Lesser “Dark Hero”

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 124: A Lesser “Dark Hero”

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

September, 1998

He was surprised at his reaction to seeing the man at the table. He was chatting amicably and laughing with the teachers next to him. Before, he would have a hard time resisting the urge to murder him. Everything the man did in the past would’ve bombarded his mind, creating bitterness and hatred. Now that urge to murder . . . wasn’t there.

He felt nothing toward Lupin, and his indifference was yet another testament of how much he’d grown since his relationship with Hermione. He’d also realized how bloody exhausting it was hanging onto hate. He wouldn’t become Lupin’s best friend, but they could be civil. Someday.

And the man was more of a sit back and watch type than the type that bullied. He didn’t recall Lupin saying or doing much of anything to him. Some say that not doing anything to stop something was the same as being guilty. He might have agreed a short time ago, but now he wasn’t so sure.

He forced his eyes to go back to his breakfast. He’d eaten quite a bit and found himself still hungry. He took a bite of sausage, and drowned out the chattering from the students. He paid a bit attention to the teachers’ conversations but only snippets.

“What’s with the new look, Severus?” Lupin asked. “I almost didn’t recognize you.”

The main table went silent and Severus looked up at the werewolf. When he’d once been
annoyed at being called by his first name by the man, it was now yet another thing he didn’t care about. He finished chewing his food, swallowed, and studied him for a few seconds. “I considered going into modeling before I got a letter from Minerva.”

He heard a chuckle from Minerva and Pomfrey and then Lupin smiled and laughed. Soon the other teachers joined in. After a minute or two, they went back to talking.

He glanced at the Gryffindor table and saw Hermione looking at him. She smiled brightly and then turned away when Miss Weasley tapped her on the shoulder.

He redirected his attentions back to his meal. It’d been a while since he’d seen her other than mealtime and the occasional brief encounters in the library. Both had been busy.

He missed her.

Today would be the first day she’d be in one of his classes. After their relationship became official as a romantic one, it would be odd to teach her. Though, it shouldn’t have been considering she was always asking him questions about things she’d read about.

He was looking forward to seeing her but he was also looking forward to teaching again. He still loathed most of the students since they rarely ever put moderate effort into their assignments, but he didn’t hate teaching.

Even he thought he disliked it, but with the past few classes he taught, he realized that while some students annoyed him, the brilliant ones amazed him. Even the less intelligent ones weren’t as disrespectful as they had been in the past. The students in Ravenclaw were excelling, proving themselves as being the most intelligent house overall, even though the other houses obviously had students that were very intelligent.

The first years still trembled at his sight and in his classes. Watching them shake when they had to ask a question or when he opened his mouth to say something disturbed him now. While he would still be strict, he didn’t want the students to be afraid to ask questions. Before now he had to be mean, to keep up a front of evil.

Not all people believed his true history, probably some of their parents had told tales of him as well, but he would prove them wrong with time. They would learn to behave from sternness, not from cruelty. And he refused to be as stern outside the classroom as much as inside.

So far, no student had approached him outside of class except Potter, and those encounters had irked him. Not because of whom he was but because of the way the boy acted. He would approach but then act as if he was going to say something of meaning. Every time the boy lost his Gryffindor courage and just asked how he was. As if a day or two could change so much in the monotonous life of teaching.

He heard a bunch of girls giggling and looked up to see a bunch of them with their attention on Potter and Weasley.

“Looks like those boys have quite the fanclub now,” a teacher remarked. He wasn’t paying attention to which female professor said it.

Miss Weasley looked like she was going to attack the girls. Hermione rolled her eyes and then looked bored. He almost laughed aloud at that.

Then he saw it. He saw Weasley grin at Hermione. Oh, he’d noticed how that boy looked at her, and though he wanted to smash the idiot’s head against the wall for it, he knew she could handle
him herself. She’d told him that any feelings for Weasley were purely platonic. He figured if the boy didn’t get that in his head on his own, she’d make sure that he did.

He put down his fork, full from his meal, and stood. He excused himself from the table. Hermione glanced at him and rolled her eyes as he passed. He smirked and made his way out of the Great Hall.

When he got back to his classroom, he began organizing his papers on his desk and going over the lesson on one of the sheets and in his head. The venom was still affecting him in some ways and it would be a while yet before his mind could fully clear and be used to its optimal intelligence.

He started to reread his lesson plan but only got halfway before a voice distracted him.

“Severus?”

He looked up and saw her standing at the door. He looked beyond her and saw she was alone. It would be another fifteen minutes before class started.

She walked toward him until she got closer than what was proper for their surroundings, and then took his hand. It was an improper gesture, but it was something she could quickly let go of if a student suddenly came.

“I saw Lupin is teaching here now. Are you okay?” Merlin, he wanted to take her in his arms, and never let go. He hadn’t shown any hostility since he didn’t have any toward the werewolf, but she’d managed to be concerned enough to ask him about it. To think that maybe he was hiding it under the guise of civility.

“I’m fine with it. We aren’t friends, but we aren’t going to go around hexing each other either.”

“You sure?” she asked, the concern still present in her tone.

“I am,” he replied. “That’s in the past, and I’m not without guilt. If I expect people to let go of what I’ve done, I have to do the same for them, right?”

Her smile was bright enough to light up the entire room. “Right.”

“And you? Are you okay?”

She looked surprised at that and nodded. “Yes, why do you ask?”

“Weasley.”

She snorted. “He’ll be no trouble.” She walked over and put her things at the place she chose to sit for the class.

“You don’t notice the way he looks at you?”

She looked up from taking out her books. “The way he looks at me? He annoys me with his teasing and gloating about the girls around him, but I’ve never noticed anything about the way he looks at me.”

Sometimes he forgot that his witch was so young and inexperienced in many things related to the opposite sex. “Since my astute little witch doesn’t notice useless things it doesn’t surprise me.”

She giggled. “Severus you…” Her eyes widened. “No… you aren’t saying that he…he…”
“Fancies you? Yes, that’s what I’m saying.” She paled and looked as if she was about to gag. “Don’t tell me you really haven’t—“

“I… I suspected it but hearing someone else confirm it is…” She shivered and he laughed.

She pouted. “You’re awfu-“

The sound of a throat clearing cut her words and both turned to the door. Potter stood there looking awkward and nervous at the same time.

“Sit down, Potter,” he said and went back to reading the second half of his lesson plan.

Hermione sat down and got out the rest of her books and other things she’d need for the class. A few seconds later, the two Weasleys entered. Then the rest of the class appeared.

After reading over the lesson one more time, he looked up. Potter immediately avoided his gaze.

He wasn’t sure what to think about the boy right now.

Potter had given him Dumbledore’s wand, trusted him enough with its safety. He knew that the boy had suspected he wasn’t what he was pretending to be. That he wasn’t a traitor. He also knew the boy hadn’t thought that until he saw him and Hermione together. Though the boy still didn’t truly know the full status of his relationship with Hermione, he was smart enough to know they were more than friends.

He hadn’t said a word about it. He thought Potter would violently object to anything he suspected. Run into it head-on without getting the truth. But no, that boy sitting there was far different from the one before the Dark Lord’s death. They were all different now.

As the rest of the students entered the classroom, he moved to face his board. He picked up the chalk and distracted himself by writing the ingredients instead of using magic to make them appear. Doing it this way helped him process the information in his mind.

A sharp pain shot down his arm from his neck to his hand, making his writing stop and regret fill him.

No.

Not now.

His lips pursed as the pain grew, as the sweat started to appear on the back of his neck. He needed to concentrate on breathing. The tension in his jaw, started to hurt his teeth.

Then, a warm sensation spread around his body, from the peak of his fingers to his neck, calming his tense muscles and their shaking.

Taking a long breath, he realized that someone had used two spells on him. He knew the person who cast it without turning around. She’d used it more than once on him when he was recovering and would be the only one to recognize when pain struck him.

He let his arm drop, and without a word, the words on the board started to complete with his magic. Trying not to look weak, he turned around, placed his palm on the desk, and supported his body until he took his seat with sly movements.
When he looked at the classroom, the first thing he noticed was her eyes on him.

The spell lifted from him and he was impressed with her ability to hide her wand movements under the desk. Though, he wasn’t surprised by it. She’d stolen from him in her second year and he’d trained her in her sixth.

“I’m not going to bother explaining the rules for you seventh years. Start. You have an hour and a half.”

Some students went about gathering the ingredients needed as others started the fire under their cauldrons first. He kept his eyes focused on most of the class, but especially on the ones that would likely make an error first. He glanced at Longbottom and saw some people helping him. He let it slide. The boy would never be very good with potions, but at least being shown would help him learn something.

He occasionally felt her gaze on him, likely checking on his physical state, but he didn’t look at her. He didn’t want to meet her eyes and display any sort of softness toward her. It would be too difficult to keep his cold-ish demeanor when staring at the woman he loved.

He searched out over the students and groaned inwardly when several of the cauldrons began to emit blackish smoke, a sign the potion as going wrong. Most of these students had Slughorn before. That man was a good potioneer but he was too lenient and coddling as a teacher. As a result, students didn’t get the proper education they needed, especially not what they needed for his classes. Well, by the time the year was over he’d have them straightened out. It would be difficult to make sure the seventh years were ready for their tests, but he also had to prepare those that missed a year of school due to the Dark Lord. It was a challenge.

And he found himself excited.

He walked over to each wrong potion and the students cringed each time. He sternly told them to clean up their workstations and start again, docking a few points from their potential grade, but not giving them zeros. He got looks of wonder each time he directed them to restart.

Soon, with his stern guidance to the weaker students, all the boiling mixtures became simmers. He walked back over to his desk to sit down. The class was near the end. After checking his hourglass to be sure, he took a last look to the front row. Hermione was adding the last touches of her potion.

“You have five minutes to bottle your potions and present them to me.”

The movements became frantic, but the noise was not overwhelming. Then, students started to queue in front of his desk to leave the potion labeled with their name.

Hermione was the last one in the line. The last one to wait for the students to grab their bags and leave. But students didn’t rush out now.

He took his time to inspect her potion, watching from the corner of his eye at how Potter dragged the male Weasley, and how Miss Weasley looked at her friend before following them out the door.

When the door closed behind them, he placed the vial on the desk and faced his witch. “Yes, Miss Granger? Is there something you wanted?” he said, clearly teasing her by using such formalities.

“I…I miss you,” she said and took his hand in hers. “We need to spend some time together.”
He nodded. “That we do.”

“When do you have time?”

A smile appeared on his lips. There it was. The choice. The space and respect for his privacy but the desire to spend time together. “For you, I’ll clear Saturday afternoon.”

She leaned over and kissed him on the temple. “I’ll see you then.”

“I am grateful to have you,” he said and sighed. “But despite wanting to just forget the world right now with you, I have a couple of transgressors to punish.”

“Already, Severus?” Hermione took a step back, making him miss her warmth and smell. “I thought with the way you taught the class you were getting a bit gentler. People have certainly been talking about your new attitude.”

“I still enjoy putting students in their place. It creates better adults. Anyway, it’s expected if I’m a dark hero now, right.”

She gave a little cringe. “Ah, so you know about the title the students gave you.”

“Unfortunately, yes.” Though he’d never admit it to anyone, he was amused by it. “Perhaps I should let my robe billow like a cape from now on.”

“Merlin, I think you’d blow their minds if you did that.”

“Then I’ll refrain, their minds are the last thing they need to lose.”

She laughed and picked up her bag. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Till tomorrow,” he said and watched as she left the classroom.

AN: And little things are starting to appear too. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.

Regarding the last chapter, Severus cut his hair but he still has it a bit long, just not the messy shoulder length.
Chapter 125: Very Slytherin

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

September, 1998.

He’d expected that his lighter teaching might have an effect on the student essays and he’d been right in a way. Just not in the way he expected it. Though he was still as strict as he’d always been when grading them, and the students’ grammar was still atrocious, the content was better. Many of the papers showed not only an understanding of the material but their own thoughts and conclusions regarding the subject matter.

He set his last essay aside. He looked at his clock and saw lunch had ended a little over an hour ago. He’d deliberately had lunch in front of his fireplace, so he could have the afternoon free to spend with Hermione. A knock sounded on the door, and he waved his hand to unlock it. The handle slowly moved and the door inched open, her eyes peeking in before she came into the room. The way she entered was downright charming.

He relaxed when she smiled and walked toward him. He stood and she immediately hugged. She raised her head up to look at him, and then moved upward to kiss him firmly on the lips. He returned the kiss with equal fervor.

When they pulled away, she was smiling and her lips were reddish. She reached up and rubbed her hand along his bearded face.
“That was quite a hello,” he said.

“I thought it was a proper hello,” she said proudly. “Though if you didn’t like it, I…”

“Sit down, my witch, I’ll order us some tea.”

She removed a book from her bag before setting it down, and then walked over to the couch. Soon, Severus had a house elf fetching them some tea. He moved over to sit down next to her and she snuggled closer before kicking off her shoes and moving her feet up on the couch to curl under her.

After both got their tea, she opened the book and focused on the text.

“A medical text?” he asked as he skimmed some of the sentences.

“Yes, I learned that healing spell from this,” she said. “Madam Pomfrey gave it to me before we left for my pare…My home.”

Severus stared at her as she went quiet and continued to read. He knew the loss of her parents was still fresh in her mind, it would always be there, but he hoped he could fill some of the loneliness in her. She rested her head back against him and smiled at him through her long lashes and the curls that had covered her face.

“I’m okay,” she said. “Don’t worry. I’m happy they’re alive and healthy. I have a lovely life with you in it now. Other than some small annoyances, I’m truly happy, Severus.”

She closed the book. He took it and put it on the table next to him. She moved closer and put one arm across his stomach.

“As am I,” he said and sighed. “Speaking of annoyances, though this one isn’t so small, what of Weasley.”

She buried her entire face against his chest and groaned. “I can handle him, but he is definitely one of those small annoyances.”

“His advancements became more forthright?” He felt anger and jealousy flare but it calmed quickly.

“No, not at all,” she said, her voice muffled. She sat upright. “The problem is that he’s hurting other girls.”

“Huh?”

“Well, he does small actions towards me that is out of character for him. Stuff like trying to carry my schoolbooks and giving me little gifts like a flower he picked.”

“You don’t like flowers?” he teased.

“It’s sweet, but it’s completely not him. They’re things straight out of a 1950’s TV show.”

Severus decided not to mention that he’d never seen any TV shows in his life. His father was much too wasteful and they were too poor to ever have any TV. Now, he found it useless drivel, though he did have an appreciation for Shakespeare and muggle stage productions.

“I see how that can be annoying to you,” he said. “And I’ll make a mental annotation to only pick potion ingredients for you if I ever go traipsing in the flower fields.”
She laughed. “Merlin, I got a visual of that. We should go to Holland and walk in the tulis—”

“Tell me what you mean by hurting other girls. If he’s hurting students then…”

“Not physically,” she said. “I don’t think Ron would ever hurt anyone unless defending himself. From what Harry told me he’s been flirting with girls trying to get my attention. He never asks them out, and he says it’s made a few girls cry. I hate that.” She set her teacup down on the table in front of the couch.

“Getting involved in student’s dating life is not part of my job description,” he said and sipped the last of his tea before placing the saucer and teacup on the table next to him.

“Except in my case.” She snuggled closer. “You are highly involved in my dating life.”

“I would hope so.” He kissed the top of her head. “Anything else bothering you?”

“No, life has been calm and pleasant. The only downside is the lack of time we have together.”

“I dare to agree with you.”

“Dare?”

He exhaled heavily. “I sometimes fear acknowledging I’m happy. I expect that something will snatch everything away, and I’ll wake up and find myself still a spy. When I wake up and find that not to be the case, I’m thrilled.”

She nodded. “I dream you’ve died sometimes and it sends terror through me. I always want to run down here to check on you when it happens.”

His arms wrapped around her smaller body. “You’re always welcome here, Hermione. Just don’t get caught.”

“I’m head girl. It’s not suspicious if I’m seen in the halls.”

“But that is an abuse of power, Miss Granger.”

She turned around to face him, her chest pressed against his. “And this isn’t?” Her lips brushed against his as she whispered her words.

“You’re acting very Slytherin,” he said with a grin. She bit her bottom lip and looked to the side, a blush coming to her cheeks. “What are you thinking, my witch.”

She looked at him, head tilted as if contemplating something. “Fuck it.” She straddled his lap, grabbed his face, on each side, and kissed him.

When she pulled away, he pushed her on her back. “Yes, very Slytherin,” he whispered and then let his lips and body cover hers.

AN: Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. I’m trying to see which scenes I could do from Hermione’s Point of View, so if you have some one special that you liked it too much, let me know, please and I will try to write something. Probably I will end writing some short of this story too. We will see. Depend on my time and my other projects! See you next
Wednesday.
Chapter 126: Settled Past

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 126: Settled Past

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

October 1998

He only half listened to his fellow teachers as they conversed about the month’s progress reports. He recognized the names of a few stand out students and some who caused the most trouble. There were two students in particular, Miss Dutchess, and Miss Bastel, that fit both categories. They’d been a pain in the arse to Flitwick and Slughorn, and a small source of amusement for him. He hadn’t paid them great attention during his time as headmaster. Now, he was always listening when they were brought up, and he tended to turn a blind eye when they were doing something semi-harmless just so he could see what would come of it.

The Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff had given quite a few Death Eaters a bad case of “unappeasable defecation,” as the Ravenclaw worded it, and the medical teams still hadn’t sorted out how to cure them. The two students refused to tell them how. He was curious. If… No, when he had them for detention again, he’d bribe them into answering. Maybe with some potions or with the prospect of getting out of detention early.

They should’ve been in Slytherin with all the mischief they caused. Yet, they never hurt anyone that didn’t deserve it and even one incident created a breakthrough in some medical magic.

He looked over at Minerva. Whenever someone would mention something about the duo, she
would let a small smirk flash on her lips. However, through most of the meeting, she looked bored. He attended very few of these when he was headmaster, instead delegating them to Minerva. He wondered if she were as bored then as she appeared to be now.

There were no words to express how thankful he was to give up that job. He felt eyes on him and looked over at Lupin. For the entire meeting, the werewolf had been casting periodic glances at him and smirking a bit.

Hermione had offered some insight on Lupin and a suggestion regarding him. He’d willfully listened as she told him to drop his armor and let Lupin get closer. Her words made it seem like a simple task, and in a way, he supposed it was. He’d let go of his love for Lily, he no longer hated the elder Potter or Sirius, and the younger Potter annoyed him but there was no hate for that boy either.

And Lupin never really took part in the bullying, though he never stopped the Marauders when he could have. The bitterness was still there, but after everything that happened, he shouldn’t hold things in the past against Lupin. He was no saint and it would be hypocritical of him to do so.

And he hesitantly admitted it would be nice to have a few conversations with him since he was one of the few people from his school year still around that he knew. The rest were Death Eaters that were either dead or being punished. Either in Azkaban or in the hospital with flaming diarrhea bestowed upon them. Perhaps they’d even be friends someday. Though the thought of that happening was odd.

He ignored Lupin’s staring and forced himself to focus on the meeting. Soon, it was over and the teachers rose from their seats. Some chose to leave immediately, other professors lingered near the door to talk a bit before leaving. He stood, intending to go back to his dungeon where Hermione was residing, likely reading more of the medical texts she’d been immersed in lately. She spent most of her Saturday afternoons with him in his quarters.

“Severus, may I speak with you?” Lupin asked.

Severus looked at him and then around the room to see it was empty. He sat back down and Lupin followed suit, taking the chair next to him. “I want to thank you. I wouldn’t be here for my wife and child if it weren’t for you.”

“Pardon?”

“My fight with Dolohov. I know you’re the one that froze him so I could kill him,” he said.

“Ah, yes, that was me. That bastard deserved to die slowly, but I had no time to torture him myself.”

“I also want to apologize. I obviously can’t apologize for James and the others, but I can for not doing anything to stop what was happening. I never had anything against you, and I always questioned why Potter and Sirius were being so cruel. Then Lily abandoned you, and I—I was puzzled.”

Severus was surprised at hearing that, but he could clarify a few things. “Potter was jealous of my relationship with Lily. As for Sirius, I don’t know his reasons. I just know he followed Potter like a pup.”

“Yes, I suppose we all did.”

“But,” Severus said, “Why are you puzzled about Lily’s actions?”
Lupin leaned back and gave a short chuckle. “I liked Lily, don’t get me wrong, but I found her actions towards you abhorrent. I know Sirius did a little too. She was praised for being a kind, smart, and forgiving woman, yet she couldn’t forgive a longtime friend for words spoken under stress.”

Severus didn’t think he had the capability to be shocked by anything anymore, but this revelation floored him. “I’d thought of that,” Severus admitted.

“It made me walk on eggshells around her. I’d never use such a word normally, but what if I said something offensive in a bad situation. Would she turn James against me for it? Would apologies work?”

“No, they wouldn’t.”

Lupin’s eyes widened. “You tried to apologize?”

“Yes, of course.”

“She never mentioned anything about that.”

“If I were in her shoes, I probably wouldn’t have forgiven me either. I didn’t forgive myself for a long time after. Regardless of that, I reported the prophecy and that was the cause of her and Potter’s death. I take full responsibility for it.”

“But you paid for that mistake,” Lupin said.

“But did I pay enough?” he asked before he thought better of it.

Lupin sighed. “You saved her son and the world. If not for you, things wouldn’t have gone positively. I don’t think anyone could ask more. You made more sacrifices than any of us.” The werewolf smirked. “And you deserve to be happy with another witch.”

Severus raised an eyebrow. “Mutt, just what are you implying?”

“As much as I wish I could turn off my sense of smell, I can’t. Hermione’s smell is all over you.”

“She’s been making sure I’m well,” he said.

“Apparently, very much so.” Severus coughed and stood. He knew what the werewolf was implying and refused to admit that he was right. “If you’re done, I’ll be going.”

He walked to the door and Lupin followed. “Your secret is safe with me.”

“I have nothing to hide,” he said, clearly bluffing.

The two walked down the hallway, side by side and Severus wondered what their younger selves would say if they could see this.

“Severus, I’m not asking for friendship,” Lupin said, “though I wouldn’t be opposed to it. But can we at least be civil?”

“I’m not angry at you, I don’t hate you. I don’t think I ever truly hated you. I wouldn’t have provided you with potions if I did.”

“Dumbledore made you do it.”
“I could’ve made them impuissant,” he said. “And saying he made me brew them is wrong. I never fought making them for you, groused yes, but nothing close to an outright fight or refusal.”

“And I thank you for them,” he said. “I don’t have to tell you how vital they are.”

Severus started walking again. “If you need anymore, come to my classroom during my free period, I have a supply stocked up.”

“I will, thank you, Severus.”

“Have a nice evening, Remus,” he said and walked down the hall.

He didn’t see the surprised look on the werewolf’s face at being called by name.

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**AN:** Writing this was interesting. I always thought these two could understand each other with time. I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Hermione’s laugh filled his quarters with joy, but he found the source of her amusement a bit annoying. He’d told her about what Lupin said about smelling her on him, and it resulted into a giggling fit. “I can’t believe he said that to you. Lupin smelled you!”

“Yes, being smelled by a werewolf isn’t exactly part of my teaching goals,” he said as he lifted the coffee mug to his lips. “He’ll probably use it as fuel to annoy me when we speak.”

Her laughing died down and she smiled. “So the two of you fixed things then?”

He looked at her. “There wasn’t really anything to fix as much as there was just to talk about. I took your advice, listened to him, and spoke with him. Turned out we shared a commonality when it came to Lily.”

Hermione frowned. He reached out and moved some hair behind her ear. “He likes her about as well as you do. “

“She’s Harry’s mother, and I’m thankful she gave birth to my friend, but her actions didn’t fit the reputation she had. Even Harry said so.”

“And that’s what Lupin said. I think you differ in the fact we all still like her.”

“I don’t have any requirement to like her,” Hermione said. “I love you. That doesn’t mean I have to like anyone in your past and especially not someone that hurt you.”
He was about to bring up Sirius but thankfully thought better of it. “I never said it did, my witch.”

She snorted and grabbed her book. “Stupid traitor,” she muttered.

“Didn’t you tell me not to hang onto hate?”

“I don’t hate her, I dislike her. Let me brood a bit.”

He chuckled and watched as she put her knees up and rested her book on them.

“Another medical text? Shouldn’t you be studying for your tests?” he said, but knowing her she’d already gone over all the material twice over and she’d do it again before the tests.

“I did, but I need to go over it in the classes too. To make sure I have the right ideas.”

“We’ll start covering test material next week in potions,” he said. He set down his mug and picked up his own book. “If Slughorn had been more thorough, I wouldn’t have to cover it so specifically.”

She smirked. “There’s the new Severus shining through?”

“No,” he said, causing her to look up. “I took my teaching seriously even then. I would’ve done it regardless.”

“Of course, but you would be much more cantankerous about it.”

He laughed. “Yes, that is true. Perhaps I should divert back to that for the time being.”

“I love you regardless of how you choose to teach, Professor Snape.” She went back to reading. “Anyway, I’m so happy that you two talked things over.”

He directed his gaze to the fire. It was odd that he could make her happy by doing something that seemed so small. He’d missed doing something for her on her birthday. The school week had been hectic, so neither of them could see each other beyond classes. He had to admit that he’d only read about loving relationships as side issues in the few literature books he’d read. In those the men and women all performed grand gestures to show their love. He supposed his helping with Harry when he was poisoned somewhat counted. Maybe his spying and helping to take down the Dark Lord was one. He didn’t know, but he realized that even though he felt he owed her a grand gesture, she loved the simple things.

“Severus?”

He snapped out of his thoughts and looked at her. “Yes?”

“You looked like you’d drifted off somewhere. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine.” He leaned back in his chair. “I never apologized for missing your birthday.”

She shook her head, her curls bouncing as she did so. “You didn’t miss it, Severus. You sent me that lovely note.”

He nodded. It wasn’t enough. Maybe he could… “I’ll be chaperoning the Hogsmeade visit next month. Would you like to do something once we get there?”

Her eyes lit up and she smiled. “Like a date?”
“Yes, like a date. We could go to one of the shops the students never visit. I know of a bookshop that should suffice. We’ll get some cake to have a belated celebration.”

“That would be wonderful.” She got up from her chair and moved to hug him tightly.

He felt like a fool for calling it a date. Date was right but it seemed an odd word to use at his age. Then again, he was only thirty-eight, so he was hardly an old geezer.

“I can’t wait.”

He smiled and returned her hug. He would willingly feel like a fool if it meant making her this happy.

Grand gestures clearly weren’t needed with his witch.

AN: Hope you liked this moment they had together. As you can see, Hermione is starting to invade his rooms in the little time that passed… She misses him. Let me know what you think and see you on Wednesday.
November, 1998

If the coolness in the autumn air was any indication, this winter was going to be one of the coldest Hogwarts had ever seen. Though the sun shined brightly, the heat was weak, typical for this time of year. But he would not complain. He would relish in this fall, and in the upcoming winter. He was alive to see another winter, and he couldn’t have been happier. This would be one where he wouldn’t have to keep his guard completely up when walking through the undisturbed white environment.

“It’s bloody frigid!” a student said. He looked out at the students in line. Some were bundled up as if winter had already set down on them. Others acted as if the chill were a tiny inconvenience. He glanced at Hermione walking nearby. She was bundled up similarly to the way she’d been during their encounters in the snow. She shivered so often that he wanted to wrap her up in his cloak and get her inside as soon as possible.

She probably would’ve come over herself had they not been with the students. And there were much more students than he expected. The students adored Lupin so if Minerva or someone else had come along instead of himself, he wouldn’t have been surprised at the number. Usually, when he was in charge of the trips, it dissuaded most of the students from coming.

This morning the students had shown up early. Almost all of them said good morning to him, and some even inquired about assignments. Some even asked questions about things they didn’t
understand from other classes. And he’d answered them the best he could. In things he thought they should research, he suggested texts where they could find the answers. And he actually found himself enjoying it. The fear wasn’t needed as much as he’d long thought.

But had he really thought that, or was he just being a big bully? Was it a little bit of both?”

A bump to his side caused him to jolt both physically and out of his thoughts. He looked to his side and saw her looking confused with her hands on his forearm. He looked past her and saw Potter quickly look away, a small smirk on his lips.

“Miss Granger, perhaps you should focus some of your studies on learning how to walk properly and the importance of personal space.”

She jerked away. “I’m sorry, sir.” She glared over her shoulder at Potter for a moment before turning back to him. “It seems the crowds like to hurry me along. It won’t happen again.

“Apology accepted, but be wary in the future.”

She bowed. “Yes, sir.”

He raised an eyebrow, impressed at her act. She’d let her hands linger a bit longer than she should have before she backed away.

When they arrived at the wooden sign that indicated the entrance to the village, he turned. Before he could speak, Lupin said, “Meet here in five hours, I will be patrolling the main path of Hogsmeade so if you need anything report to me.”

Snape didn’t let the shock show on his face. Surely, Hermione hadn’t… No, she wouldn’t do that. He glanced at her and she appeared just as surprised as he was.

“You’re dismissed,” Severus said. The students dispersed and even Hermione scattered away with her three friends. It was just as they planned. They’ll meet in a bit when she could get away. Meanwhile, he’d enjoy the day.

Lupin grinned. “I won’t ask and I won’t get in the way. Have fun, Severus, but not too much fun,” he said and walked past him. Severus glanced at a small pebble and used a wordless spell to launch it at the back of Lupin’s head. The werewolf stopped and looked at him, wide-eyed. Severus held up his hand and feigned ignorance and boredom. Lupin chuckled and continued on his way.

An hour had passed since the students left to have their day’s adventure. A majority of the students had invaded the Weasleys’ joke shop. He prepared himself to see several pranks in the coming days, and several students in detention as a result. Others went to have butter beer or some tea in one of the many shops. The favored one was considered romantic to the students. All the decorations were purple and white. In the window weird, sparkly purple cookies sat in the glass cases, ready to be purchased. It was nauseating. In the muggle world, red and pink tended to be the colors most associated with romance, but wizards favored purple. A few students went into the bookshops, and knowing who the students were, it didn’t surprise him.

Honestly, none of it surprised him. He knew most of the students, and their choices were as expected. Especially what he was seeing right now. He took a few steps off the road and walked up a tiny hill. He watched as Miss Dutchess from Ravenclaw was lifting Miss Bastel from Hufflepuff toward a tree branch. He looked above the branch and saw a special moss that grew on the trees this time of year. Even if she got up there, she’d be a few centimeters short of reaching it.
“Don’t drop me!” she said as she reached for the branch again.

“The only way I’ll drop you is if you fart on me, Riri. Don’t think I didn’t notice you digging into that second helping of beans this morning.”

Bastel laughed. “Maybe it will help propel me up th—.”

“Just what do the two of you think you’re doing?” They both jerked around. Miss Dutchess lost her hold and the Hufflepuff fell onto a pile of leaves. She quickly got to her feet as Miss Dutchess straightened.

“You dropped me, Moon,” Bastel whispered, “and I didn’t fart.”

“Professor Snape is a better excuse than a fart.”

“I asked you a question,” he said, trying not to show his amusement.

“Um…” Miss Dutchess said. “Herb collecting.”

“I’m making a—a book!” the Hufflepuff said. “Of rare herbs and…”

Snape stalked over to the two short students. “This is not rare.”

“Oh…” Miss Bastel said.

He withheld a smirk at what the two were doing. He knew of only a few things they’d have the capabilities to brew with this. He removed his wand, cast a spell, and a generous portion of the moss came to his hands. He handed it to Miss Dutchess.

He couldn’t punish them for doing something that wasn’t against the rules. The old Severus would’ve found a way, but the new one saw how unreasonable it would be even though he had a few ideas of what they were going to do with it. Had he closer friends at their age, he probably would be doing the same thing with them.

“Next time go out of sight, another teacher might not be so merciful.”

“Ye…Yes sir.”

“Now, go have some other kind of fun.”

“Yes, sir,” they both said and started to leave his presence.

“Wait, a moment,” he said, his voice stern. They both turned around slowly.

“If you want extra credit in my class, write ten inches on what you do with that moss and show me a result. And do keep it on a small scale. A quarter of the students and staff don’t need a contact buzz this time.”

They both perked up. “Yes, Professor Snape,” they said with smiles on their faces. They rushed off.

He darted around when he heard a loud laugh. Hermione was standing there with a huge smile. “You know what you let loose? You’re becoming a softy, Professor.”

He raised his chin in the air slightly. “I haven’t, but as you know, I appreciate intellectual pursuits.” He walked over to her, but didn’t get too close. He didn’t know who was watching.
“Where to?” she asked.

He surveyed the area to see there were enough people around that it wouldn’t be too obvious that they were sharing the afternoon together. It wasn’t unusual for the two of them to be in the same spot. Especially not when everyone knew what a bookworm Hermione was.

“Bookstore,” he said and they set off to the place he had in mind. They didn’t quite walk side by side, but they weren’t walking an uncomfortable distance away from each other either.

He led her to one of the isolated bookstores he enjoyed. From the way her brows furrowed he could tell she hadn’t been there before. The slight frown on her lips turned into a smile when she glanced at one of the shelves. She pressed her forehead against his arm for a second, then entwined her hands with his. The bookstore was darker and void of people, so he wasn’t at all nervous about someone seeing them. Someday he hoped they could walk out, side by side, without rumors flying.

It would happen someday when she wasn’t his student. For now, it was slightly thrilling to sneak around.

They walked through the stacks, stopping periodically when she saw something of interest. He already knew about the majority of books there.

“Merlin, look at this one!” Her whispered voice ripped through his thoughts as she stared at an extremely old edition of Hogwarts: A History.

He couldn’t contain a snort and was reward with a weak slap on his arm. “Don’t mock me when you’ve read it too, Severus.”

He lowered his head in a respectful bow but his lips were still hard to uncurl.

“That’s not my reason. I’m amused at the fact you get excited over this specific book when you have dozens of more interesting and unique ones.”

She laughed and they continued. Her fingers caressed each book as she followed along the shelves. He picked up a book that he’d never seen before in the shop, and opened it. When he heard her gasp, he looked up.

“Something interesting?” he asked, ignoring the bell that indicated another customer entered. He heard the owner talking to the person seconds later.

She answered with an affirmative hum and turned the cover to let him see.


“It’s a rare one. Only professionals are allowed to buy it.” He stated with a silent understanding. She couldn’t afford it, especially not now. Even if she could, no one would sell it to a student.

She put the book back on the shelf. “I know, but at least I found it.”

He didn’t know how to console her over a book, so he decided to take her mind off it. He put up the book in his hands and started showing her some of the more interesting parts of the shop. He talked about the other items the shop sold that was unique to this bookstore.

After they made their rounds, her hand never leaving his during the entire time, they stopped at the bookshelf they first started with. “Do you still want to have that cake?” she asked and looked up
at him. “I don’t want to go back right now.” A faint blush spread across her cheeks.

“Then let’s go get that cake,” he said.

She smiled at him. “And after that I have a green Pygmy Puff I want to introduce you to,” she said.

“A what?”

She laughed. His question got lost on the autumn wind as they continued their walk, but her laughter remained echoing in his mind.

AN: I have lots of things to explain about this chapter, so, First, this is dedicated to my beta and my bestie, without her, I would have never known this ship and either would have written this. Second, those two appears to show the development that Severus has with students and his sense of humor. Third, the same goes with Harry and Lupin. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 129: Corridor Confrontation

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 129: Corridor Confrontation

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

November 1998

He waved his wand to re-clean all the empty tables in his classroom. Despite his students doing so as well, he saw some missed stains. He would have to stress to students that a deeper and more thorough cleanse was necessary from now on and he’d be docking points if it weren’t done.

His hand halted in its movements when he reached the last table.

“Come on, Hermione, you have to go see the Quidditch training I’m doing. Your question to Snape isn’t that important,” he said.

He could hear it clearly from where he was standing, and he’d know the whiny lilt anywhere. He remained where he was. He hadn’t known Hermione was coming down today, but figured the reason for it was the red-haired fly that was pestering her.

Didn’t the boy know his friend at all?

“For me it is, Ronald. And you should address him as Professor Snape. He deserves respect.” Hermione’s harsh response, made him curve his lip.

“You can’t be serious.” Weasley huffed. “All his tolerance and helpfulness this past year is just an act. He’s just waiting to strike.”
“What in the bloody hell does he have to strike at?” she snapped, and then sighed. “Just go away, Ron.”

“You know, you’ve changed, Hermione. I think that boyfriend of yours is brainwashing you.”

He lowered his hand but the grip on his wand didn’t relax.

She had just matured and become a woman. Weasley was just an idiot that refused to mature himself. “I am different, and I’m proud of that. I have different priorities now.”

“You liked to spend time with us before. Merlin, now you even spend more time with the bat here.”

“Who I spend time with is none of your business. Harry has no issue what I’m doing. Neither does Ginny. And Professor Snape helped me when I needed it. He showed me how to cope. It was more than you tried to do. You vilified and shunned me.”

“You don’t owe him anything,” Weasley said, ignoring her dig at him.

“Oh? And I suppose I owe you?”

“Yes, because I love you.”

Silence. His rage stopped for a moment at the moronic statement. Even though the boy had an excellent example of what love was in the form of his parents, he had a poor understanding of it overall. And Hermione didn’t owe anyone.

“I told you I don’t see you that way.”

“But everyone expects us to be together. It’s Ginny and Harry, and me and you.”

“This isn’t a novel, Ronald. I don’t owe anyone love. That has to be earned.”

“And I haven’t earned it?”

“I only think of you as a friend. Just because you love me doesn’t mean I owe you. And it most certainly doesn’t mean I have to mold my life to fit everyone’s expectations.”

He heard a footstep. He wasn’t sure who did it and in what direction it was going.

“You could fall in love with me if you spent some time with your real friends. With me.” He heard the Weasley boy sigh. “I bet you still hold a grudge because of the Siriu—’

“Don’t you dare go any further with that!” Hermione snapped.

He felt sick to his stomach to know the boy almost tried to use that incident to sway her. He wanted to kill that insolent boy.

“Okay, okay, I’m sorry. You’re right,” he said, but the tone displayed that he didn’t really feel regret.

“Ron, go ask out Lavender. You two match well.”

“I don’t believe you. Come on, that boyfriend of yours is not even here, and Lavender was never serious for me. She was a substitute of your place and you know it.”
He had heard enough. How had she endured this kind of treatment? How’d she accept him as a friend? This was pure selfishness. Not only was he annoying Hermione, but he also was hurting other students. He knew that made Hermione feel terrible as well.

The need to do something took over him and his legs moved, taking him out of his classroom.

Hermione’s rage-filled eyes were the first thing he saw. Her fists were clenched, and her jaw was full of tension. The Weasley boy’s back was facing him. When Hermione noticed he was there, a relief flooded her eyes.

His boots halted at Weasley’s back. The boy went rigid.

“Care to explain why you’re here disturbing me with a stupid unrequited love quarrel, Weasley?” His voice had taken on the most dangerous tone he’d had in months. “Miss Granger has explained that she has no interest in you, boy.”

“I’m not a boy.”

“If you aren’t a boy, then act like a man and accept rejection. Now, leave.”

Hermione took a step back as Weasley turned around. “This is none of your business, Snape. Just because we saved your ass doesn’t mean you’re close enough to meddle in our affairs.”

How dare he? This boy had nothing to do with his freedom or his new life. He owed Granger and Potter, not that miserable twit. This being was just basking in hero worship he didn’t deserve.

“If anyone saved anyone else’s ass, Ron, it was Professor Snape. You ran away when we needed you. Professor Snape has shown his bravery almost his entire life. You couldn’t show yours for more than a fraction of it. If not for him, it’s likely many of us wouldn’t be alive right now.”

“You are defending him again?” Weasley snapped.

“As much as you know I love talking about my time spying,” he said with clear disdain for that part of his life, “I can intrude all I desire, Weasley. It is my business when you are in my corridor, insulting me, and harassing a student with your insufficient comprehension.” He sniffed. “Though, I shouldn’t be surprised considering you’ve never had enough brain cells to understand anything but quidditch.” The boy’s cheeks flushed as red as his hair. “I also have word that you are bothering other female students. You are to report to detention every day for the rest of the year with Filch. Maybe if you clean enough scum you’ll learn how to differentiate yourself from it. Now, get out of here.”

Weasley made his exit, but instead of fear, he saw rage flash across his face. It didn’t worry him. There was no way Weasley would be able to strike him down, nor have the guts to do so. When he was sure the boy was gone, his facial features softened. “Are you okay?”

Hermione bit her lip and nodded. She wasn’t. He sighed, looked around him, and gently placed his hand on her shoulder. “Come with me.”

They went inside the room, crossed his office, and entered his quarters. The moment they sat down on his couch, she rested her temple against his upper arm.

“I should have intervened before. I apologize.”

“Ron is a thick idiot. It’s not your fault. He’ll give up eventually.”
“If he continues following and pressuring you, it’s stalking. Next time, hex him.” He shouldn’t have told her to do that, but he was sure no one would blame her when they discovered why she did it.

She chuckled. His hand travelled to her waist and pulled her closer to him.

He had to do something about his. He was sure that wasn’t the first time Weasley had nagged his witch. Her body was tense, and the dark circles under her eyes showed her stress. He knew her state wasn’t a result of studying too much. A plan formed in his mind, but it was interrupted when Hermione nuzzled his neck.

“Can I stay with you today?”

“Of course, whatever you need.”

He felt half of her body move to rest against him. He put his arm around her and pulled her closer. They both stayed there, relishing in the silence.

AN: The red fly attacks. I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. If all goes well see you on Wednesday.
Chapter 130: Return to Lady Slipper

December 1998

Snowflakes fell upon him and he took a deep breath of the cool air. Winter was by far his favorite time of year and the perfect weather accompaniment to Christmas. It also brought happy memories for him now.

And as usual, that happiness was because of her. It began two years ago when he was hunting a lady slipper. When a furry orange cat guided its mistress to him. They started to speak as friends that day.

He was grateful that the landscape had remained almost the same after the Dark Lord’s attacks. Snow covered the land and trees, making the area sparkle like tiny diamonds. In the distance, the lake was frozen over, the squid no doubt sleeping inside it. He took in another deep breath, ignoring his frozen nose and the pain spreading down his throat because of the winter air.

She would be here soon. He watched as the sun slowly drifted out of sight behind the mountains and the moon took its place.

His movements stopped when he reached the exact place where he’d been hunting that lady slipper. Today, he hoped another wonderful memory would be added to this spot.

He glanced out in the distance and saw no one was disturbing the snow. Much to his
amusement, the only people he’d seen that morning was Miss Bastel and Miss Dutchess walking towards the greenhouses. He hadn’t bothered to stop them since he figured it was part of whatever they were doing with the moss. Curiosity was overtaking him the more he saw them.

He felt something rubbing at his legs and looked down to see Crookshanks. The cat suddenly stopped rubbing and sprang away into the distance, the bell on his collar ringing out into the quiet evening. He looked in the direction and saw Hermione practically bouncing through the snow, enjoying the winter as much as he was.

“Severus.” Her voice crossed the distance between them and his insides moved, strangling his stomach. He growled internally as his untamed nerves produced that nuisance on his own body.

His internal battle was interrupted by a collision against his robes. The white miniature flakes, spreading with the impact towards his uncovered skin.

What in the seven circles of hell?

He looked in the direction where the snow came from and saw Hermione suppressing a laugh. She had her lips covered with her gloved hands, but her eyes held surprise in them. Her familiar was looking at them with an intelligent amusement.

She rushed over to him and began cleaning the snow off him. “I’m sorry. I thought you had your defenses up like that day.”

He laughed, and spreading his arms, he grabbed the sides of his cloak and embraced her, covering her body with it as she came closer. Feeling her forehead resting on his shoulder, he rested his chin on the top of her head, taking in her scent.

“You lower my defenses when you are at my side, witch.”

“You know, I’ve wanted this for a while.” Her murmur made him look from her wild curls, sending a silent question. “It looks like I’m in between your wings.”

“My bat wings, you mean?” A slim ironic tone came from his lips, without malice.

“Yes. Your warm bat wings.”

She was the only person that could make being called a bat into a good thing.

Taking a deep breath, he pressed a kiss against the top of her head. Then he took a few steps back, ignoring her look of disapproval.

“You will have the wings back, do not fret, my know-it-all.” His voice contained a mix of laughter and nerves. “There is a reason why I called you here. I have something for you.”

He shuffled around in his pockets, trying to find the item he sought. It felt like a lifetime before his fingers gripped the item. His palms were sweaty and his heart ran like a stampede of horses. He removed the item and opened his palm so she could see it. He tapped the small square with his wand and it enlarged. She gasped. He grinned at her shocked expression.

“Oh, Severus, you...you didn’t.”

Her trembling fingers reached out and touched the leather and the words with one fingertip. Her shock and adoration was clear.
“It’s clear that I did.”

“But it’s expensive and...”

“After all these years of teaching, do you think I’m a poor man? I haven’t spent much of anything, since my home is Hogwarts. This book won’t set me back in the slightest.”

Her body crashed against him and she kissed him. He returned her kiss with equal passion and love.

He forgot the cold. He forgot the snow and the darkness starting to surround them.

He felt feline claws scratching at his robes and pulled away. He looked down at the cat. “You’re lucky I like you, feline.”

The wind whipped past them, and Hermione shivered. Though he wanted to keep her in his embrace, there was something he had to do. He stepped away and offered the book back to her. She stepped forward again to get close to him but he turned her around so that her back pressed against his front. He moved so his cloak was still around her. He wrapped his arms around her as she studied the book.

“I still can’t believe it’s the real one.”

Her awe made him chuckle.

She was still caressing the cover while he tried to snatch the supposed bravery that lived inside him.

One breath.

Another.

Then he was ready.

“Open it.”

Just those two simple words made him tremble. She looked over her shoulder at him, and he feigned indifference. Just like he did before she became Hermione to him.

She opened to the first page and he waited, holding his breath. Her eyes focused on a small green envelope there.

“Severus?”

He gestured for her to continue her task.

Every time his shoulder’s tensed, he would force them to lower and relax. He put all his focus on breathing and making sure his body showed no signs of nervousness. The hairs on his arms and the back of his neck raised and it wasn’t because of the cold. She carefully removed the envelope and tucked the book under her arm. She removed the seal from the envelope then tipped it over.

The object fell onto her gloved palm. With the way it glittered in the moonlight, it looked as if a patronus was constantly surrounding it, but it was the stunning silver. The amber stone set off the constant silver color beautifully.

He swallowed, letting her study it, letting her find the meaning behind it.
She turned. Her eyes locked on his and her lips parted. She blinked rapidly, chasing away a tear he didn’t acknowledge.

“Is this…?” She choked with her own whisper.

“Yes, it’s my mother’s family ring.”

“But…I…It’s… Are…” She swallowed and blinked twice. “Are you…”

He would’ve laughed at her stuttering if this wasn’t such a serious thing for him to do. He’d had to summon up a lot of courage to do this, and he didn’t want to mess it up. He took a deep breath.

“I am,” he said.

They both looked down at the ring resting on her palm. Freeing one of her hands, he took the ring between his fingers and hoped he wouldn’t mess up his words. “Not immediately, but I want to give it to you as a promise that we’ll have a future together. That we’ll get married one day. It’s a promise that I’ll always protect and respect you. That I do love you Hermione, more than I’ve ever loved anyone.”

He could feel her trembling and wondered if he took the step too quickly for her. His question was answered when she flung herself at him, hugging him tightly around the neck.

“I accept.”

If pure joy had a sound, it would be her acceptance of his proposal. This amazing woman wanted him just as much as he wanted her. And for the rest of their lives.

An absurd need to jump in the air hit him. He wanted to swing her around and fall into the snow like he’d seen in those romantic muggle paintings.

She pulled away from him, tears in her eyes, and offered him her hand. He removed her glove, and placed the ring on the proper finger.

It would stay there for the rest of their lives and would forever show that no matter what troubles they faced, they would walk the path of life together.

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AN: Another favourite chapter of mine. I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
PS: This chapter has two companion draws that you can see in the same place as always.
December 1998

A violent flame burst from the fireplace. He turned toward it as he set the teapot on the table. Hermione’s hands paused before she could place the cups on the table. Lupin’s grin showed through the flame. He felt her eyes peeking around him and knew she was wondering whether she should leave.

Lupin knew about them, so there was no reason to do so. He heard her mutter something and then she just continued what she was doing before.

“I’m sorry for my interruption,” Lupin said. "We’d like the pay the two of you a visit. We wanted to give you some of our Christmas spirit,” he said to Hermione and then looked at Severus. “I figure you don’t do Christmas, so I wanted to make sure you had a good one this year too.”

Severus had to admit he was slightly touched at being in the wolf’s thoughts. It was unnecessary, but it was still kind of…nice.

“I assure you, he does take part in Christmas, but I would be fine if he decided he didn’t want to,” Hermione said.

“Merlin, you’re starting to talk like him now too.”
With that, Severus made a mental note that he should block his flue soon to prevent unwelcome messages and guests in the future.

Hermione wasn’t stunned by the words. Instead she stood. “It’s up to…”

“Come and have some tea,” Severus said, knowing she’d enjoy their company.

“Right, we’ll be there soon.”

The flame disappeared and Hermione turned to him. “I need to go pick up my notes. Will it be okay if you stay with them for a bit?”

“It’s fine, I guess it’s safe to assume that he reported your supposed scent to his wife”

“Yes, Professor Lupin noticed my ring a few days ago too. Then Tonks sent me a congratulations letter.”

It was odd that they had such support, but it was welcomed for her sake. Her friends meant a lot to her. And he wanted people to know that he treated her well.

He motioned to the ring. “You don’t get intimidated by wearing it? By people knowing you're with someone?” His voice became softer and his eyes rested on her hands.

Her lips pressed against his chin. “I want them to know that my heart belongs to you. I know it’s not a proper time, but...” She extended her hand and rested it on his, showing the ring. “This ring is reassuring. It makes everything seem less like a dream and more tangible.”

He lifted her hand and kissed the ring on it. “Go and get your notes, I promise I won’t murder them.”

Hermione nodded. Tonks and Lupin arrived just as she was leaving. She excused herself quickly and left the room.

Severus looked at them. “I need to leave for a moment, help yourself to the tea if you don’t mind,” he said, trying to remember how to be polite. It was odd that he didn't hate them being there. That he didn't despise having company at all. Mainly it was because it made Hermione happy, but he could get used to it... occasionally.

He moved into his bedroom and crouched in front of a trunk.

He was annoyed that they had chosen this precise moment to appear. But again, this was Christmas. A holiday to enjoy with friends and family. The first one he’d enjoyed was two years ago, when Hermione’s scarf arrived as a surprise present.

All of his Christmases before her had been bitter events. His mother had tried to decorate a couple times but his father, drunk as always, immediately put a stop to it. Tobias Snape thought it was a waste of time and money. Of course, he always found the money for a bottle of whiskey. The ornaments and tree was his mothers, so it cost him nothing but a little control. But control was the second thing that the bastard thrived on. Everything had to be exactly the way he wanted it, when he wanted it. The only reason he let Severus even attend Hogwarts was to get rid of him.

He opened the trunk and saw some of the tree’s branches. This thing hadn’t been used since his mother was a child herself. It would’ve stayed forgotten if Hermione hadn’t ended up in his life.

She loved Christmas, and this year she’d lost her family as well. Now they had to depend on
each other, and he would do anything to make her happy. He refused to be like his father.

He grabbed the tree with both hands and pulled it out from the depths of his charmed trunk. He pulled more and the tree didn’t completely emerge from the trunk until his back hit the wall. It was larger than he’d thought. He’d only seen his mother take it out once.

Maybe if he shrank it…

A knock on the doorway made him peer through the branches.

“Do you need help?” Remus said and entered without receiving an answer. It was obvious he did. He helped Severus readjust the tree so he could get away from the wall.

“This is a big one. It will probably take up a lot of space in the sitting room.”

“Perhaps I should shrink it,” Severus said.

Lupin shook his head. “It’s not a good idea to shrink them. They tend to lose the branches with magic.”

Severus pondered it a moment. Hermione would love this big tree. “I’ll be right back.”

He went into the living room and shrank a few of the tables in front of his bookshelves. He entered his bedroom once more and said, “Grab a stem.”

“Sure thing,” Lupin said.

They carried the large tree out of the room. Soon it became lighter when he saw Tonks was helping as well. They carried it over to the place Severus had cleared and set it upright.

“Thank you,” Severus said.

“No problem. Though I do need to correct what I said to Hermione,” he said. “I never saw you celebrating, so I guess I was wrong.”

“No, you were right in that I didn’t,” Severus said. “I’ve never used this thing.”

“So, it’s a surprise for Hermione?” Tonks said.

Severus nodded. He removed a few small boxes from his pocket, sat them on the ground, and returned them to their normal sizes. They were filled with many green and silver decorations. He figured she’d want to throw some red and gold on there too. “We’ll decorate it together,” he said.

“We’ll try not to stay too long,” Tonks said. “By the way, congratulations. Both of you deserve all the happiness possible.”

Tonks was significantly younger than Lupin, so to hear this from a woman in a similar situation to Hermione was helpful. In the eyes of society, they would face the same stereotypes. She’d be good for Hermione to talk to, and Lupin was yet again relatable in some way to himself.

“Tea?” he offered as he walked over to the pot and cups.

They all sat down. Then he heard the door open. He distracted himself and avoided looking at her by serving the tea.

He heard her steps halt and a gasp leave her. He raised his eyes. Her eyes were wide as she
took in the tree. Then, she looked at him questioningly. He nodded, indicating that he was responsible for that Christmas monstrosity.

“For later,” he said, “right now, tea.”

But before taking a seat, she threw her arms around him, not caring that there were guests present. He hugged her back, also finding himself not caring about the other couple in the room.

When they pulled away, they both took a seat. Hermione took over serving the tea in his stead.

He didn’t talk much, he never had, so he only answered when asked a question. The auror was talking about taking care of her teething baby and how there was no sign of lycanthropy in the child.

He had just taken a pastry when Lupin said, “Severus, do you mind if I ask you something?”

He took a bite of his pastry and finished chewing before responding. “What is it?”

“I heard you did a dueling club with Lockhart,” he said.

Snape grimaced. “If you call what he did dueling, then yes.”

Tonks laughed. “He was an arrogant faker.”

Lupin chuckled as well. “Well, we’re both much more competent on the subject of defense than he was. I wondered if you’d be interested in starting one with me. We’d be able to do some real good with it.”

It was an interesting prospect to be sure. There would always be a need to be able to defend oneself. It would be no different from the way muggles learned martial arts.

“I think it’s a great idea, Severus,” Hermione said. “You taught me and not only did it save my life, but our dueling taught me to focus in other ways. It could improve student grades as well.”

“They need all the help they can get,” Severus said and looked at Lupin. “Yes, I’ll start one with you.” It would be odd teaming up with his former enemy. But former was the key word. This was a new world, and he would forge new relationships. The past did not dictate the present or his future anymore.

The teacups soon disappeared along with the food. The Lupins gave Hermione her present, which she placed under the tree. He was surprised when Lupin handed him a green envelope. Hermione took it and placed the gift beside hers. He bowed in response to the gift, and decided he and Hermione would go get something for them and their family as well.

When Lupin and Tonks disappeared via the fireplace, Hermione took his hand, and guided him to sit on the floor next to her. Her hands rummaged around the colored ornaments and around the sparkling tinsels.

She pulled out a long piece of green tinsel then turned to him. She put tinsel around his neck and pulled softly to guide him closer to her. His lips curved before she kissed him.

"Thank you," she said when they pulled away.

"You're welcome, and Merry Christmas, my witch."
AN: Little scenes and little developments. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday if all goes well.
Chapter 132: Interactions and Respects

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 132: Interactions and Respects

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. Harry Potter is owned by JK Rowling.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

January, 1999

The sounds of herbs being cut and potions brewing did little to distract him from the scroll he held in his hand. As expected, Miss Dutchess and Miss Bastel had used the moss, what wasn’t expected was their use for it. He glanced at the small cask on his desk that they’d snuck to him. Wine. They’d turned all the small juice casks into wine with a few drops of their mixture.

And the scroll he held was how they did it down to the last detail. They’d done the assignment he asked for, but this was an added bonus.

Minerva had been the one to send them to detention, but he’d seen her chuckle, shrink one of the casks, and take it for herself. So, unlike his normal punishment of cleaning cauldrons, he had them making potions for the infirmary.

He looked up only when there was a knock at his door. He placed his paper down on his desk as the door opened. Bastel and Dutchess didn’t glance up from their brewing.

Potter entered the room, followed by Hermione. “What can I do for the two of you?” he asked, formally since the other two students were present.

They both walked up to his desk. “Professor, sir, I’m sorry to interrupt but I…I…” Potter looked at Hermione who nodded, silently encouraging him to continue.
“Yes?” he prompted, trying not to sound annoyed.

“I wanted to talk to you, and considering today is a quiet day, I thought that it might be a good one.” He stared at Potter for a full minute, letting the boy sweat under his dark stare. He heard a slight snort from Hermione.

“Very well, Potter. Let’s go to my office. Miss Granger, watch over these two,” he said.

“Yes, sir,” she said and moved over to the table where Bastel and Dutchess were working. She started a conversation with them. “Just what did you two do?” she said as he and Potter entered his private office.

He closed the door and turned to the boy. He had his suspicions about the topic Potter wanted to discuss, and had been preparing for such a discussion for a while. He’d be lying if he said he was confident in what he was going to say.

“So, what is it you wanted to discuss?” he asked.

“First, I’m glad that Hermione has you. That you’re protecting her back,” Potter said. “I’m glad you’re there for her in everything.”

His lip’s tension faded and he unfolded his hands behind his back. Did she tell Potter about their engagement? Well, no, she wouldn’t have to tell him. He’d see the ring and put two and two together. “I don’t believe I’ve ever said I cared about your approval, but since you are her best friend, she does care. I care for her well being, so I’m happy to hear what you’ve said.”

Potter nodded. “I don’t know if Hermione has told you, but Ron is being a problem. He doesn’t know it’s you. He’s been saying weird things about finding out who she’s with and interfering. I’ve tried to talk him out of it, but he’s dead set on it. I thought you’d want to know just in case.”

He stared into the green eyes that were so like the ones that haunted him for years. Now, they were just a typical color that reminded him of his past as a protector. “Anything else?” he asked.

“Yes, sir. This wasn’t what I wanted to talk about, sir. I wanted to ask about my… my mother.”

And that was what he’d been expecting to hear. “Sit down,” he said. “I’ll answer what I can.”

Potter took a seat and he sat across from him. “What do you want to know about her?”

“I… I guess I just want to know how she was. Her personality. Am I anything like her? I saw parts in your memory, and it’s the only thing I have that is accurate beyond a doubt.”

“Why not ask Lupin?” Snape said.

“I did ask him a few questions, but I felt like he was hiding things from me,” he said and looked at him with an almost pleading expression. “I need and want to know about her.”

“Even if I have some negative things to say as well?”

Harry nodded. “No one is entirely good or evil. We’re all grey.”

Severus thought that to be one of the wisest things he’d ever heard the boy speak.

“I do not wish to taint your vision of her, Potter.” To him, she wasn’t a true friend. She’d failed him just as much as he’d failed her. But things happened for a reason and perhaps the deterioration of his relationship with Lily was the reason the world had survived. There was no way of knowing
“I’m prepared for that if it’s the truth.”

“Very well, then. I’ll show you memories I have with her and tell you some of the things she’s told me. But you need to come up with some things to ask for, or some questions regarding her.”

“Why did she not forgive you?” Potter asked.

Severus exhaled. “I honestly don’t know.”

“But you have suspicions as to why, don’t you?”

“I do.”

The young man frowned. “I don’t respect that she did that,” Potter said. “I don’t want to be like her that way.”

Severus let himself grin. “You’ve already proven that you aren’t. Don’t worry about that.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“If you come back with questions during these times, I’ll answer them. Not too much at once though.”

Harry stood. “Yes, sir.”

“Go to your tower, Potter. I will send Granger later.”

“Of course, sir. I do not need to tell you to treat her right because I know you will. Better than I did.” He heard the regret in the boy’s words, regret Lily didn’t even as much as hint at when she was trying to get him to not go to the Death Eaters. Her words had been out of her own self-preservation and that of her lover. Potters had been sincere. Yes, he was very different from his mother.

They entered the classroom and Potter smiled at Hermione before leaving.

A sigh of relief came out of his lungs with his departure. He looked at Hermione then past her at the two girls who were finishing their cleaning.

“Both of you, out. Tomorrow you may forego detention. Just don’t tell Minerva,” he said. The two students gathered their things and left the room. He closed his door and warded it.

He relaxed his shoulders. Seconds later, he felt a hand on his back, rubbing it. “They told me what they did. I have to admit that I laughed at the wine thing.”

Severus rested his hand on the small cask on the desk. “It’s not bad at all. It would save a fortune for winemakers.”

“You tried it?” she asked, shocked at the thought.

“There’s nothing harmful in it. In fact, this is one of the more isolated experiments they’ve done. Only earned them a week in detention rather than the six months they got before.”

Hermione’s eyes widened. “What did they do to earn half a year?”

“Well, they were gardening after class hours.”
Her brows furrowed. “That doesn’t sound bad enough to warrant such a severe punishment.”

“It was the gardening of a specific herb. One of illegality amongst muggles. Then they decided to burn large batches of it in the incense burner in the staff room.”

“Oh,” Hermione said, holding back a giggle.

“At the time I was staying in my office, so I didn’t get to enjoy the outcome.”

“Were . . . were they sent to the Carrows?”

“Yes, but not for long. You heard about their spell against some of the Death Eaters during the final battle.”

“Yes, the defecation one.”

“They cast a small version onto the Carrows. So Minerva took over for a week.”

“That’s a relief.”

“With this current detention, they hold the school record.”

“And you’re being nice to them,” she said. “I do hope we have daughters like them.”

“That’s going a little too far,” he said and then chuckled. “Anyway, enough about them. How are you, my witch?”

“Fine now that I got Harry down here. He’s been a bit antsy since school started back. He’s wanted to talk to you so finally I got fed up and forced him down here. Did he talk about Lily with you?”

“He did, we came to an agreement that when he had questions I would answer them.”

“That’s wonderful.”

He took a deep breath. “You were right about Potter, and I’m sorry for doubting you. He’s nowhere near as arrogant as his father.”

“And he is more loyal than his mother,” Hermione said.

“Yes, it appears so.”

“I don’t expect you to like him instantly, I’m just happy that you won’t be looking at each other badly anymore. Take your time, Severus. If you aren’t comfortable with something, either tell me or be honest with Harry. He admires you and will respect that. I won’t’ be a wife that tries to force you into things that make you feel poorly or upset.”

He was pleased at what he heard, but stunned at the same time. She wasn’t his wife yet but referring to herself in that way was like hearing a beautiful foreign language for the first time. It was thrilling to the point that he, Severus Snape, felt like jumping.

It was a weird joy.

And he welcomed even more of it in the future.
AN: For those who were wondering about Harry and those two, here they are. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 133: The Cruel Betrayal

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AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

January, 1999

He’d given the lesson so many times through the years, with alterations as more advancements were made, that he could’ve probably done it while sleeping. Some of the improvements came from his own modifications, some came from others, and one, recently, came from the detention record holders, Miss Dutchess and Miss Bastel. He almost chuckled. It was a cure for constipation.

With the few practicing Potioneers in Britain and the lack of sharing amongst the different wizarding nations, he felt like he’d done most of the discoveries in the past decades when it came to this area.

During his time as a Death Eater, he’d been exposed to many new curses, and learned to be imaginative when it came to the cures. He wasn’t sure what kind of curses were in places like the United States or Japan, so someday he wanted to take a trip to the other countries and look in on their advancements. He knew Hermione would be more than willing to accompany him even if her interest didn’t lie much in the realm of brewing. She was extremely gifted in many things, but her ability to be creative and follow hunches, skills needed in brewing, were lacking. She also possessed an unease with potions that was not a good characteristic to have if one spent a lot of time around a cauldron. Maybe it was a consequence of her mistake with the polyjuice potion. He would lend her his knowledge if she wished to try, but he doubted she’d consider being a potions master.

A day to choose her future was coming along with her graduation, which was only five
months away. She could be whatever she wished of course, but he wanted her to be happy with her choice.

It was her life.

He was about to go into the topic of mandrake properties when the door to his office slammed open. All the students turned to look at the door, to see the perpetrator that would meet their teacher’s ire.

Only he remained stoic as he saw a blond young man, not a current student, standing there, but he was confused as to why he was standing in that particular doorway.

It was then that he paid attention to Draco’s state. He was breathing hard; his face was red and his forehead sweaty.

“Severus you have to—” His voice died when he looked around and saw the students. Not wanting to lose face with his students, but at the same time inwardly panicked at his godson’s state, he said, “Mister Malfoy. Have you lost your sense of courtesy during your—”

“Drop the cold front and shut up!” Malfoy interrupted, earning gasps from the students. His scowl deepened before more panic emerged when he said, “She was attacked!”

He almost didn’t register those last words, or maybe he thought he had heard them incorrectly.

“Class dismissed,” Snape said as he walked past the student tables and walked over to Draco, not waiting for the students to leave the classroom.

Though his insides were twisting and he wanted to run, he walked with wide strides instead.

They entered his office. “I was at Hogsmeade to get some things and found her there,” Draco said, answering his mental inquiries. “There were other people on the street, but they seemed to be nosy gossips rather than trying to help her. I thought it was better I bring her here instead of St. Mungos. You… you know better how to deal with this.” That brought a small sense of relief to him. If she were in extremely critical condition Draco would have sense to take her to St. Mungos.

“Was she attacked by some Death Eaters on the loose?” Severus asked even though he knew that wasn’t the case. After the Dark Lord’s fall, many committed suicide. Others were in prison or were killed by the Aurors during one last attack.

He heard a growl from Draco. “No,” he said. “She was betrayed.”

They got to the door to his quarters and opened it. He rushed inside, saw her, and his heart sank. She was sitting on the sofa, her knees pushed up to her chest and her face hidden by her curly wet hair. Her body jerked every few seconds. He ran over to her and crouched on the floor. He placed a hand on her knees.

He examined her for any blood, and when she jerked again and whimpered, he knew what she was attacked with. Rage travelled through him and he had to hold down the urge to destroy the room in anger. It wouldn’t do Hermione any good if he showed his fury. It was about her right now.

“Hermione,” he whispered, not caring that Draco was in the room. “I’m here.” He swallowed and coughed, trying to clear his dry throat. “It was cruciatus?”

She nodded, freezing his blood at the confirmation. Who would have casted an unforgivable at day? Though the Death Eaters were wiped out, there
could be people that still hated muggleborns.

“Draco, go and grab a purple vial from my trunk.” He didn’t need to look at the boy to know he would do as he asked. He could have gotten it himself, or summon it to his side, but he was unable to leave her. She needed a comfort and distraction from the cruel spasms jolting through her body. He knew the mental damage was there as well. It would remind her of the time Bellartix had tortured her.

“Love, look at me.” But she didn’t. She trembled instead. He took one of her hands from her tight grip around her knees, and started to massage it. He started with her fingers, and then went to her wrist, then further up her arm. He could feel the spasms under his grip as well.

Draco ran over to him.

“It’s a nerve calming draught, right?” Malfoy said and he nodded.

“Hermione, Draco is going to give you a potion. It will help you with the pain.” His explanation made her raise her head. He continued to massage her muscles.

She wasn’t crying, but her jaws were clinched, her face covered in sweat, and her eyes were bloodshot. He saw a bit of anger on her face as well.

He knew the effects of Bellatrix’s torture was still in her body, and now whoever did this had set her recovery two steps back.

He would kill whoever did this to her.

Malfoy uncorked the vial and put it against her lips. She opened them slightly and imbibed the potion, sip after sip at first. Then, she had two gulps before the vial was empty.

Her muscles relaxed and she straightened her legs, she still jolted as she lowered herself so her head rested against a pillow on the sofa. Then, her hand sought his.

Malfoy left the empty vial on the table and waited in silence.

“Sorry,” she whispered and looked at Draco. Her voice made him stop every thought. Why the hell was she apologizing?

“Granger, I am the one who should be apologizing. I should have acted sooner.” Draco’s response made him turn his eyes from her. “I suppose I was in shock. I… I didn’t expect he’d do something so low.”

Being the only one who didn’t know the details irritated him. She must’ve sensed it because she squeezed his hand.

“I’ll leave now. If you need me to tell what happened instead, contact me,” Draco said.

“Thank you so much, Draco.”

Severus was surprised at the use of his first name, but considering he rescued her, he supposed it was fitting.

“No, need to!” Draco bowed deeply. A teasing smile was on his face when he rose from his position. “After all, I can’t let people hurt my future godmother.”

He heard what sounded like a giggle from Hermione, but it turned into a whimper.
This was weird, but at the same time, comforting. She and his godson had been enemies, but now he could see Draco was slowly losing the prejudices that had been ingrained in him. It was evident just from his actions today.

“Leave before I have no godson to share.” His threat was empty but it was enough to make Draco leave with a smug smile. He owed Draco so much right now.

“At lea... At least you don’t have to te-tell him now.”

She moved her legs and patted the seat beside her. He got up from the floor, sat beside her, and she curled into his embrace. He felt her heartbeat slamming against her chest and her breathing quicken for a few seconds before it settled down.

“I went to Hogsmeade to get you a birthday present but things didn’t go according to my plan. Now it’s ruined. I wanted to get you something nice.”

“Don’t be a fool and dwell on something like that.” He started massaging her arm. Despite the muscles not being tense anymore, it would continue to help. “You should rest. Exposure to cruciatus is already terrible, but you weren’t healed completely from the last time.”

“Warmth helps.” She avoided his face and focused on his hand, following his movements. “And talking takes my mind off it.”

“Draco said you were betrayed.”

She nodded. “It was Ron.”

His movements halted.

Had he heard correctly? Even though he despised him, he didn’t think the brainless idiot would do something like that. Especially not since he knew how she’d suffered under such a curse. The boy was a witness it when it happened for Merlin’s sake.

Was he under the imperius curse? Perhaps it was someone else using polyjuice.

“Do you want to see?” she asked and managed to pull herself in a straight position. “It won’t be pleasant.”

She shouldn’t be the one warning him. She was the one who was in pain. She was the one that could be hurt. He lifted her chin so her eyes met his.

“If your pain increases, push me out. I don’t care if you have to hurt me to do it.”

She nodded.

Then, he cast the spell to see her memory.

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AN: Draco makes his appearance but... Well, I really thought a lot with this thing but it ended like that... Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday if all goes well.
The snow fell around her, layering her warm Hogwarts cloak with white sparkles that didn’t melt as quickly as they would if the weather had been warmer. Every time she took a breath, a pleasant puff of smoke emerged from her mouth and collided with the open air.

He followed her, avoiding the crowds even if he couldn’t feel himself bumping into them and vice versa. She was walking, looking around at the different shops, when she slammed into another person. A redhead one that wore a Gryffindor scarf like hers around his neck. Ronald Weasley. He’d also slid on the ground, landing on his back.

“Ouch, Hermione, look out,” he said. Severus thought something odd about the boy, something different.

She giggled, got to her feet before he did, and extended her gloved hand. “Sorry, I didn’t see you. I was searching for the potions shop. They seemed to have moved it. Is Harry and Ginny with you?”

Weasley got to his feet. “I left them at the three broomsticks,” he said and moved a bit closer to her. She cringed. “I know where it is. Would you like me to show you?” Hermione hesitated and decided it would be better to find it on her own. It was very unlikely that Ron would pay attention to where they moved a shop like that. And something felt off. He could feel the nervousness and warning signs going off in her brain. “No, thank you, Ron. You should go back to Harry and Ginny. I’m sure I can find it, so there’s no need for you to waste your day. I just need to buy a cauldron.”
she said and walked past him. “See you later.”

Since he knew what happened he wanted to control this memory, change it. But that wouldn’t change the past. And besides, it was impossible.

He followed and studied the boy further. There was no trace of a curse, no visible spell. Most imperius spells could be seen in some small way.

He followed them, dreading to see what would happen next, but needing to know as well. They stopped when Weasley grabbed her arm. They were in a less crowded alley, and fear struck him.

The only thing he could see was Weasley’s flushed cheeks, and Hermione wrinkling her nose every time he exhaled. He felt terror start to bubble up inside her.

“Is…is the cauldron for your boyfriend?”

She pulled her arm away and studied her “friend,” giving herself time to think of a way to respond. She sighed.

“Ronald, I’m engaged.”

The boy staggered back. “En—engaged…”

She nodded. “The gift is for my fiancée.”

“Ah…but…um… there aren’t many people that like potions. Maybe you should get him something to do with quidditch or something less nerdy. A cauldron doesn’t sound wise.”

“I know it’s the right thing to get,” she said. “Now, I have to go.”

“Bloody hell,” he whispered and grabbed her arm again. Severus wanted to discern his hand.

“Is it…No, there’s no way that would be possible…”

“What isn’t possible? That I’m in love with someone else? Why can’t you grasp that I only care for you as a friend?”

“Who is he?” Ron asked, his voice sounding half panicked and half disgusted. His grip tightened and pain flashed across Hermione’s face.

“Let go, Ron. You’re drunk and you’re hurting me!”

So what he suspected was true. That meant the alcohol had impaired the boy’s already poor judgment.

“Who is he!” his voice raised and Hermione’s panic and fury rose with it.

“None of your business,” she snapped. Her harsh, fast refusal only fueled Weasley’s impatience and ire.

“How do you have time to see anyone enough to get engaged? You never send owls, and spend most of your time in the library. The only person you spend time with other than Harry is Sna…” Realization crossed the boys face. His eyes narrowed. “You can’t be serious!” He grabbed her other arm and shook her. “Snape! It’s Snape?”

Hermione tried to get away but it only served to make the boy’s grip tightened. He wanted to rush forward and strangle Weasley, but he couldn’t. Merlin, damn it, he couldn’t. Her terror caused
his anger to increase.

“’m better than that old bat! How could you, Hermione? With him? Are you stupid?”

She slammed her foot down onto his as hard as she could, making him yelp and let her go.

“Don’t call me stupid! You are the only one here that can live up to that word!” He wished she would have ran instead of staying in her spot. Her bravery was a downfall in this situation.

“I’m leaving.”

Weasley yanked out his wand and pointed it at her. “How could you?” he said. “How could you fall for that git?”

She didn’t show any fear at his actions yet. He knew she thought he would never actually hurt her physically. She’d said as much. Even he didn’t think Weasley would do it.

“Ron, what are you doing?”

Weasley didn’t answer her. He just stared at her with empty eyes, rarely blinking. The only action he had was to stumble somewhat.

“I can’t let you…” Ron said.

“Put down the wand, this isn’t funny. You don’t point wands at—”

“Shut up!” he said. She went silent. “After all we…” Severus knew that tone of voice well; he’d heard it in his father's voice. There was greed there, but unlike his father, he also heard a tone indicating betrayal and an intense pain.

He heard the spell being cast. Then she was on the ground screaming, shaking, and sending a new vision to his brain that he would not long forget. His love being tortured.

And he was paralyzed. Unable to help. Like the other time she was tortured. Once again, he’d failed to protect her.

People appeared around them when they heard scream, but none made a move to help. It was disgusting. He wanted revenge against that boy for what he’d done. He desired nothing more than giving into the darkness and going after the boy, casting the same curse onto him until he was driven mad.

Weasley should have thought things through before laying his hands on her.

He didn’t consider himself evil now, but he could be a cruel man where Hermione was concerned.

Then it was Ron howling in pain. The red head hit his knees into the snow, grabbing his arm as if someone had cut it off. Draco rushed into the scene, and kicked Weasley in the face. Blood erupted from his nose, turning the snow red.

“You fucking bastard!” Draco said. He ran over to Hermione. “I’m going to take you to Severus, okay?” Hermione found the strength to nod through her sobs. Draco glared at Potter and Miss Weasley as they arrived on the scene, shocked.

“Gather up your scum, Potter,” Draco said as he lifted Hermione into his arms.
The memory blurred as he was gently being pushed from her mind.

AN: This chapter was hard... and I was worst before. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 135: Tears from Treachery

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 135: Tears from Treachery

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His vision returned to seeing his living room. Hermione was still sitting in front of him, but her head was lowered and she was breathing hard.

“It was too much for you,” he said. “We should’ve waited to do that.”

She lifted her head and shook it. “It’s fine.” He reached up and caressed her cheek with his fingers before cupping her face, leaning in and giving her a light kiss on her lips. He pulled her into his embrace and leaned back on the couch, taking her with him. When he started running his fingers through her hair, he felt her hiccup against him. Her fingers twisted in his cloak.

Then the tears came.

“I…I thought he was my friend. Ho—How could he?”

He wrapped his arms around her tighter as she sobbed against him. He knew no words he could say would comfort her. She would have to learn with time and come to terms with the fact that he was never a true friend.

And he fucking hated it. He hated that she had to go through this. Of all the people in the world that he knew, she deserved this least. Not only was she in physical pain, but her friend’s betrayal added to that pain.

He didn’t care if he were drunk, or jealous. There was no reason to harm her just because she’d
chosen another wizard. For a moment, he wondered if the boy would be angry if it she were with someone else. There was a time that he didn’t know who her lover was and he still appeared displeased.

Yes, Weasley would’ve done this no matter whom she’d been with. It puzzled him that he could be so unlike his parents.

With every sob she made, the desire to murder grew stronger, but through his life, he’d learned that there were fates far worse than death. He had the power here in this school to make the remainder of Weasley’s stay completely miserable. If Minerva decided to let him stay.

Hermione moved and he relaxed his embrace somewhat. Her sobs had quieted but he could feel the tremors still periodically shooting through her body. She lifted her eyes to look at him. He reached up and wiped the tears on her right cheek.

She had needed to cry out the betrayal she’d suffered, but he knew she would likely never be over it. One never got over such a thing, but it does get to the point where it doesn’t affect your life and you can look back and see that it wasn’t much lost. The memory is there forever, the pain is not.

She moved up his body and gave him a quick peck on the lips before wrapping her arms around his neck and hugging him. He returned the hug without hesitation.

“I…I should’ve been more careful.”

“Never blame yourself for an attack like this,” he said. “You trusted him because he was your friend before.”

“I knew he was acting weird, I should’ve gone somewhere else. In a shop he wouldn’t have followed me into or something. Or told someone.”

“Not even I suspected he’d be so disgusting to attack you like that,” he said. “And you know how low my opinion of him is. He should’ve left you alone immediately, and he should not have touched you when he knew you didn’t want him to.”

She nodded. “I— I still can’t believe he would… He was always an idiot but this! But he was drunk and his brother’s death hit him ha…”

“That is no excuse,” he said. “He attacked with an unforgivable curse. And worse, he attacked a woman he claimed to love.”

“You’re right,” she said and pulled away slightly so he could see her face once more. She smiled slimly. “I’m so glad Malfoy was there. I can’t believe he helped me, but how did he know to bring me here?”

“I spoke with him a few weeks ago, before I proposed to you,” he said. “I told him that I’d chosen you as my witch. It’s a tradition for godparents to announce if they have a serious relationship so the person can decide if he or she wants to continue having them as a godparent.”

“And it went well?”

“As you can see, it did.” He kissed her forehead.

She rested her head under his chin and let a long sigh escape her. They remained in that same position, in a quiet silence under the eyes of a phoenix and a little owl that had taken up residence with him.
AN: Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday.
Chapter 136: Surceasing Vengeance

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 136: Surceasing Vengeance

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The time passed slowly, but she was sleeping better than he’d expected. Her muscle spasms had decreased, but he worried about the lingering harm for her in the future. That went for mentally as well as physically. He knew that Weasley’s betrayal would make it hard for her to trust future.

She shivered and he pulled her tighter against him. He made sure the blanket was snug around her. The shivers stopped. For now. She had to go through another regimen of potions and that would result in more spasms, and pain because some of her nerves had to regenerate. Fortunately, it wouldn’t be as bad as the curse itself.

Her body moved against his. Her hair brushed against his neck, tickling the skin there. Then more spasms came.

He looked at the clock, and his frown deepened when he saw the time.

It’d been four hours so the effects of the potion had faded. She was still shaking, so he decided to take her to Pomfrey so she could be checked officially. She’d said she didn’t want to go, but it was for her own good. Her nerves could possibly be irreparable if they waited too long to be checked.

He moved out of her embrace, and then carefully picked her up. He paused when he got her into a comfortable position and waited for her to wake. When she snuggled against his chest, he knew she was in deep sleep and he made his way to the infirmary via the castle’s silent corridors.
He was grateful that the students were in their common rooms for the end of the day. The fact it was still winter also kept the students near the fireplaces rather than roaming the halls.

When he got to the infirmary, the double doors opened at his presence.

The place looked to be empty and it smelled of a light disinfectant potion that Pomfrey sometimes used when she couldn’t use a cleaning spell.

Then he heard Pomfrey’s voice somewhere in the room trying to calm a patient there. He took the liberty of choosing a bed for Hermione, the one he thought would be the warmest, and rested her on it. He sat on chair beside it and took her hand. He waited for the mediwitch to finish with her current patient.

“Severus, how is she?” Pomfrey asked as she approached. He let go of her hand and looked at the older woman. She was smiling at him just as she always had. Like a caring mother. “She is still suffering from aftershocks from the Cruciatus?”

He looked at her with inquisitive eyes. “How did you know that?” he asked. They hadn’t told anyone in the infirmary about it.

“Mister Potter and Miss Weasley dropped off the aggressor and explained it to me. I was attending him when I felt you come in.” His eyes moved to the bed where the curtains were drawn. It would be so easy to go back there and make Weasley wish he weren’t in the same world with her, much less the same room.

He could crucio that boy until he went mad. Or use legilimency and make the boy fall into an endless nightmare until his brain was nothing more than sludge in his skull. He knew a wordless spell that could crack his neck before anyone knew it.

With knowing so many ways to kill him, it took all his willpower not to act.

“Severus, I know what you’re thinking and don’t.”

“Why shouldn’t I?” he growled much louder than he should have when next to his witch. “That boy deserves—”

“He’ll pay for what he’s done,” she said. “Right now, Miss Granger needs you, and you woke her.

He looked to his right and saw a stuporous Hermione. Every few seconds she would grimace slightly.

“I’m… I’m okay,” she said.

Yes, she was. But what if the Weasley bastard tried something like that again? He closed his eyes, refusing to allow her to fully tame his rage.

“Hey.” Her whisper tempted him to look back at her. “Severus, it’s over. Forget him.”

“What are they going to do with him,” Severus said.

“They’re leaving it up to Minerva,” Pomfrey replied.

It was no secret that Granger was Minerva’s Gryffindor pride, so Weasley would be well disciplined, but it would never be enough in his eyes. Minerva couldn’t do anything near what the
boy deserved done to him.

He felt a tug at his arm and he turned. Black eyes met brown ones. He would not do anything. Hermione had to be his first priority.

He turned his attention back to Pomfrey. “I brought her here so you could check her for intensive damage. If there is any I need to alter my potions for her if possible.”

Pomfrey moved to the other side of the bed. She removed her wand from her pocket and cast a diagnostic spell on Hermione. Multiple nerves in her body lit up like lights on a Christmas tree.

He didn’t hide his grimace. Watching her internal damage was a dangerous fuel to his emotions, but he kept repeating that he had to help his witch. Her recovery had to be on the forefront of his mind, not revenge.

But Merlin, the dark was tempting him. Luring him to torture and murder every second. Drawing him into darkness.

He looked at his light resting in the bed, and the darkness went from black to dim grey.

He waited for the mediwitch to finish and speak. He’d recognize Pomfrey’s waving and incantations. Hermione had used them on him many times before.

The color of her nerves began to fade into a pale blue.

“You gave her a calming draught, right?” Pomfrey questioned.

“I did so as soon as she came in,” he said.

“It should have been enough if her nerves weren’t already affected. They weren’t healed from the last time she was attacked. See those yellow dots?” She pointed to them with her wand. “Those are still trying to repair themselves. The fibers’ spreading is the new damage caused by the curse.”

He’d been correct in his suspicion that she wasn’t fully healed of Bellatrix's Cruciatus.

“It appears I am slow to heal,” Hermione said.

“You haven’t been resting as much as you should, and you stopped taking your medication before you should have,” Pomfrey said, her voice full of admonishment.

“I… I forgot and…”

“I’ll brew it for her and make sure she takes every vial,” he said.

“Good, she should take two each day for the next two months and she’ll be fine.” Pomfrey smiled. “And she needs proper sleep. No more unnecessary studying.”

“I haven’t been studying unnecessarily.”

Severus looked at her. “And those medical texts.”

Hermione shrunk down in her bed and laughed nervously, earning a chuckle from Pomfrey.

“Dear, you’re brilliant. There’s no need,” she said.

“I wouldn’t be brilliant if I didn’t study,” Hermione replied.
Pomfrey laughed. “You sound just like someone else I know.” She shot a look at him.

He straightened in his chair. “I’ll get to brewing as soon as I leave.” He looked at his witch and said, “And you will be sure to tell me if something’s wrong with you. I don’t care if I’m bleeding on the floor. Understand?”

She pouted for a second, but then smiled at him. “I’ll tell you, but I refuse to agree to the last part.”

“Hermione…”

“Severus,” she repeated.

“Young love,” he heard at his side, forcing his focus back onto the mediwitch. Her face turned serious. “You’re both free to go, but… Severus, I have a request of you.”

“I owe you, Madam Pomfrey. What is it that you need?”

“It’s a lot to ask of you.”

“Ask it,” he said. He would do almost anything for the old woman.

“I need you to have a look at Weasley.”

Except that. “No.” That vermin was the reason for Hermione’s suffering. “And do not try to throw your medical morality onto me. He deserves every bit of pain inflicted on him and you know it.”

“Severus…” Hermione said. “We know he deserves it, but you should do it. You should try to help him if you can.”

“What?” he turned to look at her with wide eyes. “Why would you even ask such a thing after what he did to you?”

“I can still show mercy even if I despise him,” Hermione said. Her hand found his. His traitor muscles relaxed under it. “I don’t want you to carry hate in your heart.” That simple sentence calmed the rage. “You’ve suffered enough, and need to cling onto positive emotions now. Let go of all the vengeance. You’ve shown the students that you’re an amazing person; they respect you and enjoy your classes. You’ve shown the staff. You’ve forgiven James Potter, Lily, Sirius, and Lupin. Let go of this vengeance and hatred too.”

She was right, he’d carried hate and bitterness his entire life, and as soon as he thought he let it go, he let Weasley infuse it into him once more.

Damn witch. How easy she planted peace in him. The least he could do was to try. But only because she wanted it.

“All right,” he said. “I’ll do what I can.”

He felt her eyes on his back as he walked over to where Weasley was. Pomfrey was at his side as well. He pulled back the curtain.

Weasley leaped back to the headboard of his bed and yelped. “What the hell are you doing here? Are you my punishment?”

Severus could still smell alcohol on his breath. He looked at the boy’s right arm and saw it was
as twisted as the trunk of the whomping willow. He looked past him, towards Hermione and his face fell. Severus stepped into his line of sight so he wouldn’t get to look at her.

Weasley’s eyes narrowed. “Get out of here!”

He wanted to do just that, but he’d agreed to help him already. He removed his wand and the boy paled.

“Calm down, Mister Weasley,” Pomfrey said. “Severus is going to see if he can remove the curse.”

“I don’t want him to help me! He might put another curse in me.”

And he’d deserve it too. But no, he was doing this for Hermione.

Ignoring the boy, he muttered and performed the detecting curses spell. In an instant, he noticed the red worms around the boy’s arm bone. Even if he could remove the curse, they would never heal back the way they were supposed to. How unlucky for him.

He’d never seen this before but assumed Draco had learned it from Bellatrix or the Dark Lord.

He searched for a way to heal him, but could think of nothing that would help unless he researched for years. He was not about to do such a thing. He could ask Draco, but it was doubtful that even he knew. A cure was never needed with curses so vindictive. They were made to be permanent. He dropped his arm, satisfied he did his best. Hermione had asked that of him, and he’d not let his hate get in the way. This was Weasley’s penance for what he’d done, and it was rather satisfying. The red-haired boy loved Quidditch and he would not be playing with an arm in that condition.

“There is nothing I can do,” he said flatly.

“You’re lying! You just don’t want to help me,” Weasley spat.

“Such a hypocrite. You said you didn’t want my help, yet you are angered that I can’t help you.”

“I don’t need your help, you liar. I will go to a specialist.”

“Stop calling him a liar or I might curse your other arm,” Hermione said as she stumbled to Severus’s side.

Ron’s face softened. “Hermione I…”

“Miss Granger,” she said. “You lost any right you have to call me by my first name.”

“But I’m…I’m so—”

“Don’t even try that,” she snapped. She laced her fingers with his and he let himself relax a bit. “Stay away from me, Weasley. Stay away from us. If you hurt anyone I care about, especially Severus, I will fight you, and it won’t turn out well for you,” she said.

Weasley’s mouth dropped open for a moment before he huffed and looked away from her. “Fine. I don’t want you near me anyway if you stay with this bat.”

“Never seeing you again sounds like a blessing,” she said and pulled him away from Weasley’s presence. He followed gladly, all the while amused at her protectiveness of him. Her cold calmness
as she warned Weasley impressed him.

“Severus, Miss Granger,” Pomfrey said. They stopped at the infirmary exit and turned to look at her.

“Before you go, take this chocolate. It will help her nerves tonight and…” She smiled widely. “Congratulations to both of you.”

AN: I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday!
Chapter 137: Dueling Club

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 137: Dueling Club

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

February, 1999

Unlike the year he did this with Lockhart, the students were much more serious. The male students were excited instead of annoyed, and the female students acting less like fangirls. But it did make him uneasy somewhat that, when he came in, he’d heard some female students say he was “hot”. He certainly didn’t feel hot in the castle. No one could in the drafty place unless they were in front of a fire, and he didn’t like heat anyway.

When he saw some younger girls glance at him and then giggle, he almost rolled his eyes. They were acting somewhat like they did when Lockha—Merlin, that was impossible.

He looked around the room and his eyes settled on Hermione. She was sitting next to Potter and his girlfriend, Miss Weasley.

She was glaring at the girls.

For the first time in a while, he was annoyed with her, and for the thousandth time, he was annoyed at Potter. Those two were the ones that saved the world. Potter had defeated the Dark Lord. They shouldn’t be sitting on their arses.

Lupin stopped at his side. “Do they really think we’d allow them to just sit and watch?” Lupin said, and motioned to Hermione and Potter. Severus almost chuckled at that. “They didn’t sign the
duel club papers you know.”

No, he didn’t know. He thought for sure Hermione would join just to learn something new. He hadn’t had time to go into as much depth as he would in this club.

“Then, we can use them as examples,” Severus said. Though he said it like it was some sort of punishment, he knew Hermione would adore it.

Lupin clapped his hands together and the chattering stopped.

“All right. We officially declare the dueling club started. We will do demonstrations showing new spells and moves each week, but we will do structured duels.”

“Since this is a duel club and not a brawl, it will be one verses one,” Severus said.

An exciting murmur rose amongst the students.

“There is a box on the table near the door. Queue in front of it and then take a paper with a number from the box,” Lupin said. “Go over to the chart on the wall and write your name beside the corresponding number. Whoever you get will be your month’s dueling partner.”

“I hadn’t expected this much participation,” he said.

“I did,” Lupin replied and looked at him. “They respect you. Some have a case of hero-worship for good reason.”

Severus huffed. “Annoying.”

“Some of the girls have crushes on you,” he said.

Severus looked at him with disgust. “Nonsense.”

Lupin chuckled. “If you say so. But I’ve heard some creative nicknames for you.”

“Stop acting like a teenage girl with gossip and make sure no one cheats on their pairings.”

Lupin chuckled again and looked out at the students, making sure they didn’t use magic or muggle means to fix the dueling partners.

“What does hot mean?”

“Huh?” Lupin said not looking at him.

“If someone says you’re hot. What the bloody hell does it mean?”

“I heard someone say that about me too. I have no idea. Perhaps we’re sweating more than we realize.”

Before Severus could reply, the partners were set. The students made their way back over to the platform where they were standing.

“Now, Mister Potter and Miss Granger, please accompany us up here.”

“What?” Hermione and Potter both said.

“Sir, we just came to…” Potter said.
“Get up here, Mister Potter,” Lupin snapped, not angry of course, but stern. With Sirius gone, Lupin had taken on a god-fatherly role and Potter listened.

Hermione followed without protest, almost skipping up onto the platform. Just as he’d expected, she was excited.

“Miss Granger and Mister Potter will help us show the new moves each week, so treat them as if they’re teaching assistants. Is that understood?”

The students all agreed.

“Granger,” he acknowledged her presence, bowing his head slightly.

“Professor Snape,” she said. He liked that she was taking this seriously, but then again, he expected she would.

Lupin raised his hands again, claiming the classes’ attention.

“All right, make four groups surrounding the two scaffolds. We will perform the same spells and counter spells so you can imprint them into your memory,” Lupin explained. “Miss Granger and Professor Snape will demonstrate first.

Potter and Lupin stepped off the platform and Hermione walked to the edge opposite Severus.

The students surrounded the platform and watched with attention. He bowed in respect to Hermione and she returned it.

He wouldn’t be as harsh on her like he was with Lockhart. At the time, he’d fully intended to make that man look like a fool. He wouldn’t treat her as if she were incapable. If he didn’t put effort into things, she’d know it and likely get angry. He wanted to see what she was capable of and be an example of what someone once poor at dueling could now do.

Seeing her body twisting and curling into an attack position, made it difficult to keep his face serious. It was similar to his. Elegant, precise, deadly. He was proud that she’d kept everything she’d learned from him. Hopefully, she’d expanded on it as well.

Her features turned deadly and she stomped her boot forward, sending the first wave of magic against him. The show began and the silence took over as he started to reflect and dissolve the magic, manipulating it to his advantage to fuel his shields. Her frown deepened and she started a frenzied repeat of the stunning spell, dancing on both of her feet as she performed the evasive movements he taught her.

The scaffold cracked under his feet at the force of the magic he had to control. His body itched to answer the duel but he tamed it for defense and because he didn’t want to hurt her. He’d forgotten the amazing rush that happened when fighting. It was even better when he didn’t have to kill to enjoy it.

He was blocking every spell that she shot at him, letting her shoot more and more to practice her attacks.

A red spell exploded between them in the air and they both ceased their attacks. She lowered her wand and the room suddenly felt heavy.

Everyone was looking at them with bewilderment.
He looked at Hermione’s face, hoping to find an answer, but she wasn’t looking at him. He turned to look in the direction she focused on and saw Weasley standing at the back of the crowd.

“What the—” Harry started to say, but Weasley interrupted.

“See! It’s true what I said. He’s going easy on her because she is a bloody traitor that’s been fucking him for years.”

The voice echoed through the area, making the statement even stronger than it already was.

It was then when he recognized the tension and the quiet astonished faces. Hermione was paralyzed in her place, looking at her ex-friend as he called her a slut in front of the entire class.

The brainless boy had gone too far.

He took a step forward. His eyes fixed on that fool as if he could make him explode in tiny pieces just using his sight.

“See they don’t deny it. I have seen it. It’s true she even did this to me because she is with that git. They’re even engaged!”

“Ron, stop being stupid!” Potter said.

Hermione took small steps towards Severus, her eyes never leaving Weasley’s face.

Weasley looked at Harry with complete shock. “You…you knew about them? Harry! You can’t be okay with this. Hermione has sold herself to that—“

Ron flew backward and slammed into a wall. He groaned and struggled to sit up.

Severus kept his eyes on the brat. “If anyone else feels the need to insult, or imply Miss Granger is anything but honorable, then raise a wand to me now.” His voice came out low, threatening a terrible pain if anyone dared to face him.

No one spoke.

He felt a tug on his robe and looked to his side. Hermione was looking at him. Her lips were formed into a small smile, but her eyes held worry.

Ron struggled to his feet and took a step. To their shock, the students blocked his way.

She lowered her voice to a whisper that he could barely hear. “Severus, I think we should…”

The students in the room started to speak as they heard footsteps approaching. Both looked up and saw the headmistress walking towards them, the crowd separating to allow her through easily.

They shouldn’t fear because they weren’t doing anything wrong. There was no rule against a professor dating a student, if said student was legal. On top of that, they’d been extremely discrete and they both were adults.

They were free.

“Severus, Miss Granger. Please, come with me.” McGonagall’s voice left no room to argue. She immediately turned and started to walk back through the path the students had created for her.

Hermione’s grip on his robe trembled.
He reached out his hand to help her down the scaffold, and then they walked toward the door. They felt eyes on their back, but there were no harsh words toward them. There’d been no dirty looks. He noticed the students had moved to block Ron from view as they passed.

It was a sign that the students supported them. At least, that class did. But they didn’t know for sure Ron was telling the truth. Once they did, he was unsure how they would act.

His stomach twisted uncomfortably and he pulled her closer to him as they headed to the headmistresses office.

AN: I liked writing this chapter and I hoped you liked it. Let me know what you think and see you on Wednesday.
The path that led to McGonagall’s office was filled with a strangling pressure. The rage had faded from his system but the nerves for Hermione hadn’t. She was still surprised. Affected by Weasley’s intervention and defamation of her.

He could see it in her eyes. Read it in her body language. As they walked, she stayed close to him, seeking his protection by instinct. She was a strong witch, and he’d never doubt that, but they were here to support each other.

The gargoyle came into view when they turned the corner.

“I know I’m an adult and they can’t do much to us because of our relationship, but . . . But what Ron said. Now everyone will think…”

“Your true friends know the truth. They are the important ones, but from what I saw in that class, you have other students supporting you.”

“Supporting us, Severus,” she said then her brows furrowed. ”What are we going to tell Minerva? The truth?”

Should they consider Minerva a friend as well? She didn’t seem to be hostile toward them when she told them to come to her office. “It looks like we have no choice.”

“I’m sorry, I know you don’t like attention and this will bring a lot of it.”
He was more worried about her than himself. He’d reassured her about the students in the dueling club, but he was unsure of what the entire school would think. She didn’t have long until she graduated, so she wouldn’t have to put up with the whispers for long at least. If there were any. And anyone that thought she didn’t earn her grades in his class based on merit would be a fool. Very few would listen to such nonsense.

“We will deal with it.” It was true that he hated people butting into his life. He was a private man, but he refused to back down and hide from them. He wouldn’t let her take on the world alone. She was his equal and he would make that clear to every person that dared to ask or talk negatively about her. “Let’s face Minerva first.”

“You don’t think she’ll expel me do you?”

He chuckled lightly at her and she pouted. “It’s not a laughing matter.”

“I apologise, but of all the things to worry about, that is so typically you.” He leaned down and kissed her on the nose. He straightened and they faced the stairs. “She won’t. She actually can’t. You are an adult and have control of your own activities now.”

“But you work for her. What if she fires you?”

“She doesn’t have any grounds since we didn’t go against any rules”. He shrugged. “But if that happens I’ll just open a shop and do some research for a company.” When he saw the worry on her face, he gave her a comforting smile. “Don’t worry, my witch. Whatever happens, we shall deal with it,” he repeated for what seemed like the hundredth time since their journey there.

“How can you be that relaxed? You could lose everything.” The stairs moved underneath them, taking them to their destination.

He was far from relaxed, but after facing down the Dark Lord and staring death in the face, Minerva was a kitten. “Lose everything? My everything is right here beside me with her headstrong presence.” It was ironic that someone who had brought such calm in his life was so worried.

She blushed and looked down at her feet. “Don’t mock me now, Severus.”

“I’m not mocking you. You know how Minerva is. Do you think she would do something so extreme over such trivialities? We’re consenting adults.”

The door was already open when they reached the top of the stairs. They took a step and saw a shadow hit the floor in front of them. Minerva was standing in the doorway, glaring at the two of them with her hands on her hips.

“Really, Miss Granger, I heard the entire conversation. Do you have no faith in me and my judgment?” she asked.

“Well…I…” She looked down at her feet and blushed.

“Come inside you two,” Minerva said and entered her office. They followed the older woman inside and she shut the door. She walked over to the desk and sat down in the chair behind it.

“Now, since Weasley has decided to be a git, we have to figure out how to handle this issue that has developed. Word will undoubtedly get out and you’ll be facing a lot of public backlash soon.” She ran a hand through her hair.

“First of all, I want to hear it straight from your mouths,” she said. “Are you in a relationship?”
“Yes,” Severus said.

Hermione nodded.

The old woman let a long breath out. “I wish you would’ve just come here and told me. If you had, we could have avoided the mess. The media will have a field day with this. I could’ve done something to protect the two of you.”

“Wait, so you aren’t mad?” Hermione asked.

“Of course not. I knew that there was something growing between you two. It was obvious with how protective Severus is towards you. I just couldn’t bring myself to ask.”

“But—“

“And you are terrible at hiding your affections for him, dear.” Her tone softened with each word.

“Oh…”

“And I’m so glad you two really fell for one another,” Minerva said, causing her to look up and Severus to raise his eyebrow. “You both took care of each other during critical times in your lives, both as friends and then as you are now I presume.”

“Prof…Severus and I never started a romantic relationship until I was legal and the Dark Lord was dead,” Hermione said.

While they had kissed before he was dead, she was telling the truth if one didn’t get too technical.

“Well, yes, I figured that,” Minerva said. “Severus is as straight laced as you are. Just know that I have nothing against it. You two are perfect for one another.”

Severus noted that she sounded like an old mother giving her blessing for a marriage. He almost laughed aloud. In a way, she really was that.

“What is your plan now?” Minerva asked him. “I assume you will make an honest woman of her, won’t you?”

"Actually...” Hermione looked at him and he nodded, knowing what she was going to do. Hermione lifted her hand, the one that was wearing the ring. “We will someday.” He heard a gasp and looked back at Minerva. Her hand was on her chest, her eyes were wide, but fortunately, she didn’t seem to need medical assistance.

“That’s wonderful news.” The woman removed a lone tear from her cheek and he straightened his back, knowing what was coming. “I’m so proud of you these days, Severus. I know we’ve had a strained past, but I want you to know that I am someone you can call a friend.”

“I thank you for that, Minerva.” His response was polite and brief, but it was enough to earn another smile from the Headmistress.

“Now, for the problem we have on hand.” Minerva’s voice forced the tension back. “You probably would’ve been judged no matter when your relationship became public.”

“Likely,” Severus said.

“It would be better if you told your story first rather than having others tell lies regarding it,” she
said. “I suggest you speak to the press first. Let someone get an exclusive with you once we know the news has spread.”

“You can’t be serious. I am not in their debt enough to have to explain my life to those vultures.”

“You have to be responsible. It’s not only your life that could be scandalized.”

She was right. It wasn’t just him anymore. Thinking about someone else’s needs was still an odd concept. He couldn’t let Hermione be hurt by this.

“It’s okay,” she said. “I understand his point. It’s—”

“No,” he interrupted softly. “We will do it if it’s necessary.” He saw Hermione opening her lips to protest but he shook his head. “I prefer to handle a couple of annoying hours and an invasion of privacy if it means clearing your name.”

"There's nothing to clear. We did nothing wrong."

"We both know that, but the rumors could hurt us in the long run if we don't say anything,” he said even though he hated defending the idea of talking to the press.

“Are you sure?” she said, her face filled with concern.

“I am.” The lack of hesitation and confidence in his voice earned a smile from her. He looked at Minerva. “Do you have anyone in mind?”

AN: And their relationship is revealed… well more or less. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.
Chapter 139: Howler

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 139: Howler

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February, 1999

In the history of Hogwarts never had there been so many owls arriving at breakfast. He raised an eyebrow at how his plate was covered with letters. His little pet owl was beside his tray staring as if upset that it couldn’t get any of the food due to their invasion.

He looked over at Hermione and saw her plate was in the same state of chaos. The students at her table were helping her clear them. When it began, the owls sometimes dropped the letters in the wrong places, and the students were taking them up to him. Later, as the students saw him tossing the letters, they began to do so as well. As a result, several piles were littering spaces beside the tables. Minerva would occasionally vanish them when a pile got too big.

He looked down at the Prophet and almost released a growl. The front page was covered with a picture he didn’t even know had been taken. He and Hermione were walking side by side, a glance being exchanged. There was nothing incriminating about it and it looked like nothing more than two friends going for a stroll.

He didn’t even remember this situation, but he knew that it wasn’t from this year due to his gaunt appearance, lack of facial hair, and longer hair. Perhaps it had been when he had taken her under his wing as an ally. He noticed the look in her eyes as she stared at him. It was clear that she had cared for him sooner than he’d thought she had.
He folded his newspaper and looked at his colleagues. Other than some admonishments toward those sending the letters, there was nothing negative said. They supported him, also throwing away the letters that landed on their plates if they didn’t belong to them.

It was odd to have so much support from the entire school when the rumors in the media were terribly degrading and false. He reasoned that after everything that happened, the students were used to the defamation done against people using the media.

Something else hit his plate and he looked down. *What the hell?* An older teen magazine was there, his picture at the corner with a headline under it: Hot Older Men: Teacher Edition.

“Sir, I think that’s my friend Riri’s mail,” a voice said.

He saw Miss Dutchess standing before him. He picked up the magazine and handed it to her. “Obviously.”

She bowed. Thank you, sir.”

When she started to walk away, he stopped her. She turned, looking confused. “Tell me, what does “hot” mean in that context?”

“Oh, it means sexually attractive,” she said, unfazed by the question.

He knew he’d lost some of the color in his face. The students had said he was hot, and now this magazine. Was the world going mad?

“Thank you, Miss Dutchess.”

“You’re welcome, sir,” she said and headed to Miss Bastel, who was waiting nervously at the Great Hall’s exit. Her face lit up when Miss Dutchess handed her the magazine. A look of panic came over her when Miss Dutchess whispered something. She dragged the mortified looking Hufflepuff out of the hall.

“So, Severus...” His head moved at hearing his name. “Is it really true what the newspaper says?” Flitwick said.

“That I had a torrid and lascivious affair with Miss Granger before she was of age? Surely, you don’t think I’m that disgusting. Nothing even close to that happened.” His hand crushed some of the letters in his grasp. He threw them behind him, scaring away some owls. “We didn’t get formally involved until the Dark Lord’s fall.”

“And informally?” Madam Pince added. He tried not to lose his temper. It was only right that they know since they were helping him with the letters.

“We know Miss Granger had a bad year and you helped her. Did something happen then?”

“Nothing close to what you’re thinking happened. Nothing in this disgusting trash is true.” He put his finger on the newspaper title. “There was no affair. We were friends. We started to …” He couldn’t figure out exactly how to word it.

“Fall in love?” Pomfrey decided to come to his rescue.

“Yes, but that happened after this picture and she was also of age then.

It was correct after all. “I saw it in the latter years of Hogwarts when you were together.
Personally, I think you two are adorable. I don’t think any two people could fit each other more.”

“You knew?” Pince looked at the mediwitch.

“Of course! I know Severus better than any of you do, and I’m more observant.

“You aren’t the only one, Poppy.” Minerva added and joined the talk about his life. “At least, I saw he cared. I might even add that our friend here is alive and sane because of her.”

He heard a collective mutter of affirmation and he muttered to himself. The women at the table laughed like a threesome of old blabbermouths.

“Please refrain from commenting anymore about it,” he said when the laughter died. “It’s our life and we didn’t do anything improper.”

“We all believe that, Severus,” Minerva said. “But as I told you and Miss Granger the other day, there will be people who do not believe it.”

“I am aware of that.” His eyes travelled to Hermione. She was trying to organize the letters she was receiving. She should’ve ignored all of them. “We will have to check her mail for safety. The last time she received hate mail she could have ended up in Saint Mungo.”

“I already put precautions, but if you want to do a closer inspection, you both are more than welcome to do so,” McGonagall offered and took a long gulp of her juice. “I’m sure she would love to learn the spells if she doesn’t know them already.”

“I will talk about it wi—”

A scream tore through the chattering in the Great Hall. They all turned toward the voice. It was at the Gryffindor table, in front of Hermione. It was so loud that many near her had to cover their ears. He was tempted until he heard the familiar voice.

“How could you? Ron has waited for you and you repay him by doing this! How dare you give him false hopes about you two!”

False hopes? He had seen their interactions and she never gave him any hope towards anything but friendship. It was clear that Weasley had lied about the situation to his mother. He looked at Ginny who was glaring death at the howler. He took a deep breath and rose from his seat when he saw Hermione trembling.

“That’s Molly Weasley?” Pomfrey said, clearly shocked.

Molly Weasley had been almost like a second mother to her, and now she was sending this. He knew it was somewhat like she was losing a mother over again.

“I thought I could consider you like a daughter. I thought you were a good person but you had to crush my son. I knew that there was something wrong with you when that article was posted in that magazine about you and Harry. You’re nothing but a—”

He stepped down from the main table. When he got within a safe range, he pointed his wand at the howler and it burned in midair, the ashes falling to the table.

Everyone looked at Severus.

Hermione blinked and turned to look at him. She wordlessly stood and gathered her things,
knowing it would be better that they leave. His little owl flew over to him and landed on his shoulder.

They exited the Great Hall, students smiling kindly at them as they passed. When they got deeper into the castle, he slowed his pace to let Hermione catch up more. Then they slowly journeyed to the dungeons.

He didn’t say anything as they walked. He was angry and surprised that Molly would send that to Hermione, so he figured his hunch about Weasley not telling the truth was accurate. Molly still shouldn’t have sent such a thing. He knew without a doubt in his mind that Arthur hadn’t known anything about the howler.

Weasley had been expelled from Hogwarts, so he would not be getting a diploma. That itself would close a lot of doors for him. Minerva had also told him that she and Hooch used connections they had in Quidditch to make sure he was blacklisted as far as the United States. That would be worse than death for Ronald Weasley.

Regardless of the boy being punished, he still had a hard time controlling his temper and desires for vengeance. Many of Hermione’s friends wanted a stab at Weasley, and all were having a hard time restraining themselves. It had even gotten to the point that Potter of all people came to talk with him so he wouldn’t try to kill Ron either. Potter was worried he’d see him at a family function and hex him. He was dating Ginny Weasley, so unless the family disowned the red-haired menace, there would be contact.

They finally made it to his office and entered. He closed and warded the door. When he turned around, she wrapped her arms around his waist and hugged him tight.

That howler was yet another betrayal. She placed her forehead against his chest. He leaned back against the door, and lifted a hand to her head, stroking her mass of curls. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

“I’m sorry people are being brainless fools.”

She shook her head. “It’s not your fault. It’s our life and our choices. No one has a right to get involved. And I don’t care what Molly has to say about it. It’s just I…I didn’t expect that.

“You thought she would understand, but you forget that she is the kind of a mother that protects and believes her children first. I supposed a mother should be that way in some circumstances, but her rash judgment is inexcusable. She had no right to send that.

She lifted her head to look at him. Their eyes met and he saw nothing but determination and intelligence in her brown gaze.

“Minerva says she’s still in the process of arranging someone for us to tell our story. After that, we might even be able to go back to some semblance of normalcy.

“As normal as we were before anyway.” she said with a chuckle. “Face it, Severus, we’re oddballs when compared to almost everyone else.”

He nodded. “That we are, my witch.” He sighed. “But until then, we’ll have to be extremely cautious with all our mail.”

“I was already doing charms to check them.”

“When we look at our mail, we’ll use a silencing charm strong enough to affect a whole room.”
After relaxing her features, he saw her nodding, accepting his words along with his help. “I will tell Minerva to transfer your mail to my quarters, and I’ll teach you some different spells. More effective ones. And I suggest burning all the letters we don’t recognize that are informal. That way we don’t skip any important ones.”

“That’s okay?”

“It was her suggestion that we go through the mail together,” he said.

“Okay. After all we’ve been through, this should be easy.” The strength in her voice reassured him. Things would be fine. He was done letting people affect him and the ones he loved.

It was time to fight back.

AN: I fear we are close to the end but I hope you continue enjoying the story. Tell me what you think if you have time and see you on Wednesday.
March, 1999

As the month passed and the new one started, the letters began to trickle down to about a dozen or two a day. Nothing they couldn’t handle. It would be worth going through those since some could be of importance. Their behavior in public never changed since they weren’t the type of people to display affections in front of others. People still looked closely at them, waiting for them to do something, anything, to confirm the rumors, but it wasn’t anything close to being a malicious curiosity. She’d even said some girls had said they were so jealous of her and she’d begun to laugh at it. They kept to their normal routines despite their relationship. She attended her classes, she studied, and she did her projects with her usual fervor.

He was still called a dark hero, hot, some called him a, “sexy” bat of the dungeons. He’d learned to take some of those titles with some humor as well. Hermione would often tease him about them.

When the day was over, and she crossed his office door and their roles faded. They were themselves. They were lovers and equals.

He muttered under his breath as he tossed a letter into the fireplace. She was leaning against him reading a letter. It’d become a nightly routine, one that would likely change in a few months, but for now he would live in the present. It was far more than he’d ever imagined having. It was perfection.

He threw yet another envelope into the fire. The magical blue flame instantly consumed the
parchment. Despite the amount they were burning, they still had a pile to look at. His mail was a mix of curses, congratulatory messages, and death threats. Her mail contained a few death threats as well, but a majority of her messages said she was wasting her life. These messages were from complete strangers that felt they could stick their noses where they had no business sticking them. She even got a few calling her a heartbreaker for not returning the feelings of Ronald Weasley.

“Oh, my,” she said and started laughing. He raised an eyebrow.

“What is it?” he asked.

“To one Severus Snape,

We at Throb magazine would like to request your presence for a pictorial shoot and article for our Sexiest 30 Wizards over 30 Issue. Our readership has shown an increased interest in you.”

“What the hell is Throb magazine?” he asked.

When her laughing ceased, she said, “It’s a woman’s magazine that has sexy wizards in it. They cover their . . . wands . . . with random magical items. Other than that it’s--”

“And you read such things?” he asked. He knew she did not but also knew it would be a good way to get her to not read the rest of the letter.

She tossed the letter in the fire and moved on to another.

He grinned and grabbed the next letter from the pile beside him. He was about to throw it away without opening it, but paused when he saw who it was from. He hadn’t expected an owl from that family. He picked up his wand and tapped it onto the letter, searching for any trace of magic or hurtful wards. When his spell didn’t react, he put down the wand.

“I got a letter from Arthur Weasley.”

She stiffened and put down her book. She turned slightly in his arms.

“A… anything bad?”

“Nothing showed with the first magic check.”

Her eyes fixed on the envelope and her lips parted. “Open it?”

He broke the wax seal and extended the letter, his arms going on either side of Hermione. She leaned back against his chest. Despite the envelope being addressed to him, the letter was addressed to both of them. He figured Arthur probably thought approaching him was easier than trying to reach Hermione. It was smart.

He cleared his throat and read the letter aloud.

“Greetings, Severus and Hermione,

I assume that you expect no good words from me after what Molly sent. I am writing this letter to apologize on her behalf. She is prideful, but she has mentioned her terrible regret for her actions. This is especially true after finding out what Ron did to Hermione. Our son hadn’t told us any truth about what occurred and we had to find out elsewhere. Ron will be punished for what he did.

Harry and Ginny informed us of everything that had transpired, including the state of your relationship. I plead that you forgive us. If you need anything, do not hesitate to contact me.
He put the letter down and waited for a response from Hermione.

“I wasn’t expecting that.” He smiled softly as he saw she was trying to control her tears. “I adore the Weasley’s, but I didn’t think they’d ever try to contact me again.”

“The Weasley’s are . . . reasonable people. I figured they’d eventually see reason.” He liked Arthur a bit, it was hard not to. It was the same for the twins, who in his opinion should’ve been Slytherin. He made a mental note to visit Fred’s grave.

Hermione nodded and wiped away her tears.

“Yes, but the Weasley’s are also the kind of people that protect their children and defend them to the death no matter what. I figured Molly would be in denial enough that she wouldn’t allow her name to be on the letter. She had the wrong idea about Ron and me.” She sighed. “I should’ve made it clearer that I didn’t like him more than a friend, but it never crossed my mind.”

“You can’t be in their heads, Hermione. Not unless you are constantly using Legilimency.” He leaned over her and kissed her. “You’re not at fault here so don’t blame yourself.” His voice was harsh in a concerned way, but not angry.

“I know. Thank you for reminding me of that fact when I need you to.”

“It’s a pleasure to jolt your Gryffindor brain.”

She laughed, relaxing the tension from her body. She turned back around and leaned against his chest. His arms moved around her, pulling her closer to him.

And it was then that he realized that things were going to be fine.

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AN: Only 3 chapters left and the Epilogue. Seeing the ending is soon it’s breaking my heart. Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday.

PS: I might have to change the updating hours.
Chapter 141: Only Time Will Tell

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 141: Only Time Will Tell

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A knock on the door pulled him from his thoughts. He motioned to the door with his hand, and it opened. He knew it wasn’t a student because they wouldn’t dare come there during his private time. He frowned when Lupin came in, but the worst part was that he wasn’t alone. He grimaced when Potter and Miss Weasley entered. Tonks was the final one that entered and she closed the door behind her.

For some reason they’d developed a fixation with coming here. At least all of them were respectful when they did so.

“Hehello,” Harry said, his voice was slightly hesitant even though their relationship since the Dark Lord’s death had turned much more cordial.

“At this rate my living quarters is going to become the Gryffindor common room,” he said.

He stood. As soon as he was on both of his feet, he offered his hand to Hermione. Hermione took his hand and stood.

“Don’t worry, Severus, I won’t let them decorate your quarters like a gold and red Christmas ballroom,” Tonks said. She looked around. “But some nice yellow and black. . .”

Severus pursed his lips. “At least it contains black.”

All of them took a seat on his sofa and he made his way to the pair of green chairs. He sat down in the left one. Hermione sat to his right.
He summoned for some tea and when they all were served, Hermione said, “What are all of you doing here? You know Severus and I are dealing with the mail at these hours.”

“That has something to do with why we’re here. This is more discreet and it’s an easier time to catch Snape,” Lupin answered, earning a glare from him.

“You all know when my free time is, so just admit you find the dungeons cozy,” he said flatly, earning a laugh. He leaned back in his chair. “What do you need?”

“Well…” Potter said. “Um…”

“We’ve been through this, Potter. Stop being so hesitant with me,” he said.

Miss Weasley spoke, “We wanted to . . . Um…”

A smug smile spread across his lips. “Well? Keazle got your tongue?” He rested his hands on his lap and laced his fingers together. “You and Potter certainly match. You even have the same speech patterns. “

Hermione hit his arm playfully, and Ginny giggled and blushed.

“Actually we didn’t know if we should come but we wanted to…” Potter began but didn’t finish. The young man took a deep breath and looked at the Lupins. He assumed that the boy was trying to seek silent support and courage.

“Come on, Harry. It’s me you’re talking to,” Hermione prompted.

Potter nodded. “I know. It’s just hard. I have never been good at talking about things like this.” He took another breath. “Well, we wanted to talk to both of you and…”

“Merlin, Harry. Hermione, Sir, we just wanted to say that the four of us have nothing against you being together and if you need any help at all with anyone, to tell us and we’ll help,” Ginny said.

So they’d come to state what was already obvious. It was already evident since the young man was always trying to converse with him, and showed him genuine respect. Lupin was on the cusp of being a friend to him, as was Tonks. He didn’t have any dislike toward Ginny Weasley. Not even when she’d confronted him in the headmaster’s office.

From the corner of his eye, he saw Hermione smiling. “But you’ve already shown that,” she said before he did.

“We know you’re going through a lot of stress right now, so we really wanted to make it clear to both of you,” Tonks said. “And Hermione, I’m in your situation with an older man, if he starts being stubborn about something because you’re younger, come talk to me.”

Severus rolled his eyes. The age gap between them hadn’t been an issue between them. The only people that tended to bring it up were people that didn’t really matter.

“I assure you that issue is not a problem.” Hermione said.

“Well, I knew without a doubt that wasn’t a problem,” Ginny stated, surprising him and probably Hermione too. She opened her mouth, but Ginny cut her off. “I saw you two kissing, and he answered your questions. I figured something far more was going on.”

Hermione’s cheeks turned crimson and he tried to maintain a blank face. He wouldn’t forget
that moment for the rest of his life. How her fingers caressed his hair, how her body crashed over him as her lips claimed his. All in the middle of a battle. A desperate attempt to show her feelings to him. To make him realize that he loved her too since he was blind to the facts. No, not blind. He’d refused to accept it.

“I-I’d forgotten you were there…” Hermione said.

“Of course, you did,” Ginny said. “You were occupied with more important things.”

Laughter erupted in the room. Her eyes flew to him and she granted him a shy smile. She was remembering too. How they took small steps until they got to where they were now.

He took a teacup and put it to his lips, hiding his smile behind the porcelain.

Maybe one day he could consider these people as family like Hermione did. In the past, the thought would be absurd. Yet, if he looked back on his life, the absurd, the unexpected, and the unlikely tended to happen.

Only time would tell.

AN: Hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday afternoon.
Chapter 142: Telling Their Story

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 142: Telling Their Story

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April, 1999

He’d been in the headmaster’s office through the years more times than he could count, but the chairs had never felt so uncomfortable. Despite the ill feelings, he didn’t let his features deviate from his normal stern look. Hermione could read him almost as well as a book, so she’d see his nervousness if he weren’t careful. She was sitting upright and her hands gripped the chair arms so tight her knuckles were white. If she saw him nervous, her tenseness would increase.

If someone had just kept their mouth shut and minded their own business, this could’ve been avoided. Ron Weasley caused all of this. He put effort into making as much trouble as he could for them because she rejected him.

Wesley’s expulsion had been reversed since it was just his first offense, so Minerva had no choice but to accept the decision. That created anger from not only the staff but also most of the students. Casting an unforgivable against a fellow student should’ve come with a harsher penalty.

Fortunately, Weasley avoided Hermione and her friends as if they had a contagious disease. Most of the students avoided him as well. Miss Dutchess and Miss Bastel “accidentally” caused him to temporarily lose his hair. He didn’t see (the entire) event occur, so he couldn’t just dish out punishments to them.
But he could issue bonus points.

At first, Weasley tried to stay around Potter, stupidly thinking he would take his side, but Potter was smarter than that. The young man had told him in no uncertain terms to sod off. The only one he’d seen talking to Ron had been his sister, and those moments had been brief and he could feel the hostility wafting off her. Talking to him was a family requirement for her. Nothing more.

The owls still brought many letters, still in the dozens and many of them still hate mail. Since they were interrupting everyone else’s meals, he and Hermione had taken to having most meals in his quarters. As a result, the owls delivered their letters to a special place Minerva set up for them. They picked them up every evening and went through them.

The tiny owl that had befriended him before Dumbledore’s death had become a familiar and now stayed with him most of the time. It’d become common for it to sit on the blackboard in his classroom and watch the students as they worked. One time it even caught a student cheating. He glanced at the corner where it was sitting near Fawkes.

He took a deep breath and focused back on the scene he found himself in.

If this idea of McGonagall’s didn’t work out, he wasn’t sure what they could do. Hermione and he agreed that breaking up and saying it never happened wasn’t an option. Both said they’d leave before that happened. They were both extremely smart, so they’d manage to make a good living. Though he didn’t like this method, he found himself grateful for her help.

If the journalist were honest, and if they told the story themselves, the truth would be out there. He knew some wouldn’t believe them, but it might calm the current events brewing involving them. Hermione needed the calm even more than he did. She had important tests and decisions to make.

He looked down when he felt a hand on his. She smiled at him. “It will be fine.”

That was just like his witch, always trying to comfort him rather than worrying about herself.

“Yes, it will be,” he said. And he found himself truly believing his words. If he had her, he had all he needed. “If it doesn’t, we can always escape to the United States. They have quite a unique world.”

“Let’s keep that on the table,” she said and laughed.

The office door opened and McGonagall entered with another woman.

The woman was significantly taller than McGonagall and appeared to be about as old. She wore silver round rimmed glasses and had long gold hair. When her eyes fell on their joined hands, she smiled, laugh lines appearing at the corner of her eyes.

“Good evening, Professor Snape, Miss Granger,” the woman said. Other than Hermione, he’d never seen a woman smile so brightly before. Her entire persona screamed kindness, but he wouldn’t let his guard down.

“Please have a seat, Madam Hatchgon,” McGonagall said and pointed to one of the two free chairs in front of them. She walked around and sat on a chair next to her desk instead of behind it. It made the situation less tense if she didn’t display her authority. He knew that was her intention. “Shall we begin? I am sure we have a lot to discuss.”

“Certainly.” She took a seat across from them, her smile never leaving her face. She reached
into her purse and pulled out a notebook and quill. She opened the notebook and scribbled in it for a few seconds.

He tensed and thought about what she was currently writing and what she would write overall about them. Journalists had a way of twisting things to make it much worse than it was. He assumed they were all taught to do that.

Minerva had assured them that this journalist didn’t spread rumors or defame the way Rita Skeeter did in her work for the Prophet. How he hated that woman. He received some strange fan mail because of the outrageous book she wrote about him. Hero or Villain she had called it. He wished the wizard world had slander laws like the human world. If they had then he would’ve sued her to the point she’d be begging for paper scraps on the street for her next gossip fix.

He had suffered, yes, she got that part right, but the rest was fiction. He hadn’t given information about Lily directly; he just passed the prophecy to the Dark Lord. He caused her death, but it hadn’t been because he was jealous or as vengeance from unrequited love. The way she wrote it sounded as if he killed her directly. Fortunately, most people knew that the Dark Lord killed Lily.

He didn’t continue being a spy for the glory of ruling under the Dark Lord, and he wasn’t playing both sides. She even wrote that he was still a spy. Whom the hell would he be a spy for? The next thing he knew she’d be saying the Dark Lord wasn’t dead, and they’d be some idiot that believed it.

The whole book, as Hermione had called it, was pure garbage.

The Headmistress started serving the tea. “You two don’t be nervous.” The soft order made Hermione relax and she laced a finger with one of his. He remained stoic. His eyes fixed on the journalist. “Madam Hatchgon is a complete professional, unlike another journalist we both know.”

“Please, Minerva, don’t call that woman a journalist. She’s a loud mouth hag who only feels important by putting down others. I would say she did other things to get her position, but no one is that desperate.”

He almost laughed, and he heard Hermione make a small sound. This woman just earned a bit of his trust. A very slight bit, but it was there.

Madam Hatchgon took her quill with a firm grip, and her eyes fixed on them. “If you want the truth out, you will have to be clear on your statements and be sincere. I will not change any of the content or leave out anything you’ve told me. If you are convincing, if you convince me, I’m sure the majority of the readers will understand. Our readers are nothing like the Prophet’s customer base.”

“Very well,” he said.

“So, shall we start?”

He looked at Hermione.

A silent exchange of words and worry passing through their gazes. Then, a smile came to her lips. Both of them turned to face the journalist together.

AN: I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Saturday with the last chapter before the epilogue. I know that Ron deserved more punishment, but the world isn’t
fair.
Chapter 143: The Lost is Found

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he’d ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Chapter 143: The Lost is Found

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IT’S NO SCANDAL!

Hermione Granger and Severus Snape Together!

Their romance is one forged in the midst of war as partners to aid Potter on his quest to vanquish you-know-who. Denial, respect, silent love.

Their true story revealed by the two lovers themselves!

//\-

He read the title for the sixth time that day. The article was published a few weeks ago, only days after their interview, and he’d finally managed to get a copy. Apparently, it was the second best selling paper in history, with Potter’s tales being the first.

He wished it hadn’t been necessary to print, but at least it broke a record of some kind. It also gave him a look back on a rather good part of his life. Until the interview, he hadn’t thought too much about how their relationship had developed. The article laid it out and chronologically in crisp
But their story wasn’t just there for them, it was laid bare for the world to see. For the world to hate and throw their arrogant judgments upon them. They’d expected a response, and they were right in doing so. The day the paper was distributed they were inundated with hundreds of messages via owl. He didn’t read many but a surprising amount weren’t negative at all. The ones that were would’ve hurt deeply had they actually given a damn.

When they’d gone out directly after the article was released, some people looked at them as if they were a sideshow in a muggle circus. They got a lot of shocked expressions as well. But most people didn’t seem to react or even pay attention. He had to admit that the smiles and friendly greetings from some people had been lovely and had overshadowed the negativity. The people who had treated him decently before treated him the same now, and that was something he was immensely thankful for.

Then, the more they went out, the less people paid them any attention, and the owls, both negative and positive, faded for the most part.

Gossip still flared up sometimes, but it always faded quickly when someone else did something more scandalous. If Hermione knew about it, she wasn’t saying anything to him.

What they said about him didn’t bother him, he was used to such treatment, it was the names they called her. Their hypocrisy angered him as well. Some of the people speaking them had done far worse things that she’d ever done.

He hoped she wasn’t privy to it. He was tempted not to talk at all about it, but she would want to know what was being said and she trusted him to tell her. Lately, she’d been absorbed in studying for her N.E.W.T.S, so he would put it off until after the tests.

She claimed that he distracted her, so she kept away from him a great deal. He chuckled at the thought. She’d tried to come in the afternoons and study there while he was busy brewing. She reasoned if both were busy they could just enjoy each other’s presence, but it didn’t work that way. Her natural curiosity took over and she became more interested in what he was brewing than her studies. He only saw her in the evenings when she spent the night with him in his quarters.

He smirked and looked down at the paper. After she finished at Hogwarts, they’d take another step forward in their relationship, but he was unsure what they were going to do. Hermione still had her childhood home, but her parents were no longer around to help her. He had no place to go because Spinner’s End was just a pile of ash now.

He felt pity for her, but none for himself. He’d kept his few treasured belongings there at Hogwarts, so nothing was lost. The burning of Spinner’s End, was the end of his tumultuous childhood. But Hermione had loving parents. Parents she’d decided would remain unaware of her existence. She was convinced that it was the best course of action, and he agreed with her decision.

The door opened, and he looked toward it. Hermione came storming inside the room, her hair disheveled and her body tense, as if she were about to hex someone. Her breathing was ragged and a frown marked her lips. Her hands waved like a madwoman and her curls bounced with each action.

He laughed and she stopped. He set the paper on his desk and stood. She placed her hand on her hips. “Did you hear anything I said?”

He walked over to her. “Not a word. I was focused on how attractive you were,” he said.
“Bat,” she muttered, but it was affectionate. He pulled her into a hug and she snuggled her head against his chest.

“What’s wrong with my witch?” Was it the brainless Weasley boy again? The students, Potter, and the Weasley girl made sure that he never approached Hermione.

“It’s just… I’m feeling pressured.” She tensed. “Stupid people.”

“Yes, they’re in mass in the hallway as of late.” Though he did like most of the students, he would still not deny that many of them were idiots.

She gave a little chuckle and raised her head, only having to pull away slightly to do so. “Graduation is coming. You know that.”

“Yes, as a professor I’m required to keep up with such dates.”

She gave a small grin at him and reached up to run her fingers through his hair. “I’ve gotten more offers for work than I ever imagined.”

“Well, Hermione, being the brightest witch of the whole school has its perks.”

She huffed in irritation. “Every single person is trying to tell me I should do this or that, and not giving me a chance to talk. They think I should work in the ministry mainly. They’re implying if I don’t take such a job that you’re stopping me.”

She pulled away and paced the room.

He hadn’t thought of that. Was he keeping her down? He most definitely hadn’t intended to do so if that were the case.

When she passed by he put a hand on her shoulder, stopping her movements.

He guided her over to sit down. “What do you want to do, Hermione? Forget about what everyone else wants. I know we never talked in detail about what the future holds for us, but I want you to know that you can do whatever you desire.”

She took his hand off her shoulder and intertwined her fingers with his.

“I want to be with you. I want to be your wife someday. We can find a house somewhere, whether wizarding world or muggle. My future with you is solid, I don’t care what people think about that.” She sighed. “I have so many doubts.”

“Such as?”

“Do they want me because of my skills or because I helped save the world. I don’t want to be something for them to flaunt and overlooked for my intelligence.”

Severus nodded. He’d thought of that happening. He’d gotten offered a few jobs after everything had come to light as well, offers from people that wouldn’t give him a second look when he first got out of Hogwarts.

“You have no real way of knowing, so just pick what you want.”

“When I finally snapped and told everyone, they belittled me. Not outright but with trying to convince me otherwise. They keep saying it’s not important enough.”
“You’ve made up your mind?”

She nodded. “I have, yes. I know now without a doubt it’s what I want to do.”

“Then what is it?”

She looked up at him and bit her lip for a second. “I want to be a mediwitch.”

He blinked. He hadn’t expected her to say that. A mediwitch. She certainly had the skill. She had a steady hand, a gentle touch, and a caring nature. She could relate to the smart students, the arrogant ones (her friendship with Potter was a testament to that), and the bullied ones. A mediwitch was always learning, and the job was always changing. It was perfect.

“Severus, do you think that’s a lowly job?”

He shook his head. “No, job is a low one and especially not one of healing. Being a healer is far more respectful than being a politician or doing anything ministry related. I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for your skills.” He bent and kissed her forehead. “And one of the best people I’ve ever known is a mediwitch.”

“I’m just so tired of people rambling about how it’s unbefitting me. I just want a modest life with you. I don’t want to be pampered and I don’t want a position just because I assisted in saving the world.”

“You can’t prevent people from thinking poorly. Other’s always think they know what’s better because it’s what they view in their scenarios, not because it may actually be better for the people around them. Enjoy your life. You’re the only one that can live it.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and hugged him.

“I want you to know, my witch, that no matter what you decide, I’ll love you until my last breath.”

“I love you too.” She pulled away but left her arms wrapped around his neck. “Thank you for always being here.”

“Forever.”

The smile she gave mesmerized him. It always did. “Let’s go see Madam Pomfrey. I’m sure she’ll be thrilled to accept you as her apprentice.”

Surprise crossed her expression when he pulled her to her feet.

As they made their way to the infirmary, he realized this was a new path for both of them. And they would walk it together. It was a path full of support, and headed towards a future that would be filled with hardship after hardship.

But they had what it took to conquer any obstacle in their life together. Because they complemented each other beautifully. Because both of them had lost friends and family, was betrayed by people they thought were friends, and had darkened their souls along the way.

And they’d both changed as a result.

She’d been a girl that only pretended to be confident. A girl that was hurt and insecure deep down. Now, she was a lioness. She transformed into a woman with untapped courage, strength, and
intelligence that never ceased to amaze him.

When he was young and naive he’d wanted power because he was poor and had felt unloved. But seeking out power had a terrible price that he’d never be able to pay. He’d transformed, she’d transformed him, into a man who knew how to love. Who knew it was okay to show weakness.

And throughout it all, they fought, suffered, laughed, and cried.

But most importantly, they survived.

A large part of the reason was because they found each other, and in turn, found themselves.

What once was lost now was found.

AN: And this is the end of years of work. I know I could have continued endlessly but this was the perfect moment to wrap it. Still, I’m starting to write some shorts of some scenes of this story. I hope you liked it and let me know what you think. See you on Wednesday with the epilogue.
Epilogue: Greasy Bat

Chapter Summary

Severus Snape lives his life in shadows with the goal of redemption and the specter of his demise at the forefront of his life. People he trusted always used him and gave up on him. He never thought someone would ever believe that he could be loved and redeemed. And he never thought he'd ever discover a desire to live and come to a realization that perhaps not all is lost. SS/HG

When All is Lost, One is Found

Author: Rinoaebastel

Epilogue: Greasy Bat

Disclaimer: I don’t own Harry Potter and gain no profit from this fanfiction other than writing practice. JK Rowling owns Harry Potter.

AN: This story may contain scenes taken from the Harry Potter movies and books, but it’s not exact dialogue, just rewording of dialogue or omission. It is not marked.

September, 2004

A brief gust of wind blew against the groups of old and new students as they headed toward Hogwarts. The wilderness remained the same in the past five years. The forest still teemed with dangerous creatures, with yellow eyes gazing at the humans and sounds disturbing the peace ever so often.

Hundreds of square lights popped in the distance, as if their owner, Hogwarts itself, were a giant stone lighthouse attempting to extinguish the dark evening.

The castle loomed in the air. As they grew closer, the new students strained their necks trying to figure out just where the towers ended as they stretched into the night sky.

They wanted to stop, but they didn’t dare. If they’d had, the students behind them would’ve pushed them. Hagrid told the new students to stop as the older students passed them, following the routine they’d grown used to.

Then Hagrid herded the new students through the gates. They began ascending a flight of stairs, some doing so easily while others breathing hard and even sweating from the exertion. In the distance, they could see the door that led to the great hall. Beyond it, a faint sound of murmurings reached their ears. Then whispers.

The whispers turned into a giant howl, making the first years jump.
A small wizard, whom they assumed was a professor, approached them.

“Let’s get you ready for the sorting,” the professor spoke. He had his hat in his hand and waved it to get their attention. “Form a line and follow me.”

After a murmur of curious and fearful voices, the children did as they were told.

The professor approached the doors and they opened as if the sound of the small pit pats were their key.

The higher classes were already at their tables and all heads turned to the first years.

All the first years stopped. The ones that couldn’t see peaked around shoulders and above heads to see what was going on and why the line had stopped. For most, it wasn’t their fellow students that intimidated them, but the Great Table where some of the most renowned people in the wizarding world sat. Some of the faces were friendly; others showed no emotions, but there were no harsh expressions among any of them.

The small professor leading them walked forward and placed the old hat in his hands on a chair in front of the High Table. The students moved to the front.

The hall grew silent when the hat began to sing, marking that the sorting had begun. It was unbelievable that six years ago, this castle was destroyed by a battle against a dark wizard.

When the last student was sorted, an old woman with green robes rose from the middle seat. One decorated with phoenix wings on each side; a legacy from her predecessor. She cleared her throat and everyone turned to her.

“Good evening.” McGonagall’s voice crossed the Great Hall without effort, reaching every pair of ears and claiming their full attention. “Welcome to Hogwarts. To the old students and the new ones. As you can see this year we have some staff changes.” Her smile reached her eyes as she joined her hands and turned to her side.

“Hey, that one with curls. Isn’t she…?” A young student whispered softly. An older student put a finger on his lips to hush him.

“Don’t interrupt now.”

McGonagall continued. “I would like you to introduce our new Herbotology professor, Miss Dutchess and our new teacher in Transfiguration, Miss Bastel…”

Clapping interrupted the headmistress, inviting another student to try to gather information. “I heard those two were troublemakers. My cousin went to school with them. They hold detention records.”

“How’d they get to be professors?” another whispered.

“I heard Professor Snape recommended them.”

“What? Why would he do that? More importantly, how did they get him to do that?”

“They ended up developing some new medicines,” another said. “We’ll be able to learn a lot from them.”

“All you care about is learning, you big nerd,” yet another student said, but with affection.
The clapping ended and the whispering faded.

“Also, as you can see our dear Madam Pomfrey has retired. But I am grateful to announce that her apprentice will be succeeding her. Now, I want you also to greet our new mediwitch, Hermione Snape.”

The students were not surprised that apprentice Hermione Granger had become Mediwitch Hermione Snape. Everyone knew their story.

Professor Snape appeared unaffected, while Hermione smiled, bowing gracefully with her flushing cheeks. She took her seat and she turned her attentions to the potion’s professor, exchanging some words.

“Now that the introductions have been made, please, enjoy the feast.” Minerva extended her arms and, in an instant, food covered the table and the golden plates.

When the headmistress sat down, it was a sign it was okay to begin eating. Chatter reigned in the Great Hall as the students helped themselves to the food.

The children stuffed their stomachs until somnolence set upon them. It was then that Minerva rose again and dismissed them. Each group followed their prefects to their proper houses.

After the students left the great hall, it was time for the professors to leave. When Hermione and Severus went into the entrance hall the potions master took her hand. They walked along the corridors, heading towards where it all started for them.

She had been his student. Then time passed and she became his ally and his friend and support. With more time and after extreme danger, she turned into his lover, and finally, his wife.

When they got into their living quarters, Hermione smiled. “That went better than I expected. You seemed to have gained some very nice Slytherins.”

“Hm.” He pulled her closer.

“Just hm? You don’t have a sardonic response?” She smirked. “You know, if you aren’t careful, people are going to think you’ve gotten soft.”

He laughed and kissed her instead of replying. Her hands entangled in his hair and she returned the action.

And the Dungeon’s door closed, concealing a Slytherin’s happy ending. A happy ending he never thought he’d have.

Not bad for a greasy bat.

End.

AN: And here we are, in the end of this story. Part of me feels sad for it but for the other it cheers me to try a new thing about these two. Right now I’m witting shorts of this verse, other new story, and an original novel, so I hope we can see each other soon!

Many thank yous for the support you have given to this story. IT had made me immensely
happy, it had helped me to continue on, to see that something I had made it could help and made others smile. Thank you for staying here to each reader who had enjoyed, laughed and cried, to any person who had left a review.

Special thanks to miss Dutchess, since without her this story won’t exist in English and neither in Spanish. So lots of kisses to my sweety lovely beta.

Again, many thank yous for accompanying me from the beginning until the end with this and I hope you have a wonderful day <3.

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