The floo chime woke Severus up at 3 a.m. He would have been a nightmare about it if it weren't the Hospital Wing's unique tone. One dressing gown later, he was face to face with Poppy's head.

"I have Mr. Potter in the infirmary. I hope you have emergency lesson plans, Severus, because we need to do a suicide watch."

Harry- suicide? If it weren't for his occlumency, Severus' jaw would have dropped open. He knew the boy was struggling last year, but he had been under care of a mind healer for so long now, and living with Black. After several seconds of speechlessness, Severus came back to the present. "I will make the arrangements and then walk down. I presume you still have other calls to place?"

"Yes. I'll see you soon." And without a goodbye, the floo was dark.

Severus' emergency lesson plans consisted of a lengthy essay, and a quiz to be administered in the library if he was pulled away for more than three days. He placed the documents on his office desk with a note for whoever would cover the classes, and made his way briskly to the infirmary.
Poppy was waiting when he arrived, her other calls already made. "St. Mungo's is on alert in case they are needed, though I don't think they will be. He jumped from the astronomy tower and was caught by the wards. No other injuries and he hadn't taken any potions. I gave him Dreamless Sleep. I haven't spoken with him, but from Lily's state it wasn't accidental. Black insisted on coming immediately when I told him, he'll be on his way."

Severus restrained his knee-jerk reaction to Black. The man had apologized, and behaved entirely decently since. With the patient asleep and no misused potions, his presence in the hospital wing didn't do much. Still, as the child's Head of House it was good that he would be here when Black arrived.

"Where is my son?" the man shouted, near hysterical, as soon as he burst through the infirmary door.

"Sleeping, in the secured room. You may see him, of course, but he won't wake. He's had Dreamless Sleep."

"I need to see him. I need to know he's- if not okay, at least alive."

Severus nodded, glad that Black realized the child wasn't out of the woods yet, and gestured for him to follow. Severus' magical signature was keyed to the ward on the door, allowing him to escort Black inside. He watched from a respectful distance as the man clung to Harry's hand, clearly trying not to weep. After several minutes, he stood up. "What did he do? Poppy couldn't tell me over floo."

"He tried to jump from he astronomy tower. If it weren't for the wards, this wouldn't have only been an attempt. You'll be able to see him when he wakes and has spoken with Madame Pomfrey about what happened. It is your decision if you want to go home until that time or remain here."

"I'll stay. Does Poppy's floo go to the Ministry? I won't be going to work today. A charm showed the time was approaching four, and Severus repressed a grimace.

"It does. She's already made the necessary calls, so you may use it. The infirmary is empty, so choose a bed if you think you can sleep. I'll be in my quarters until I'm needed again."

"Thank you, Snape."

Severus walked back to his quarters. He could have taken the floo now that the urgent business was complete, but he wanted the time to clear his mind. Despite his best efforts, sleep did not find him again that night.

After breakfast and a pepper up potion, Severus went immediately to the infirmary with a supply of books only to find that Harry hadn't woken up yet. A full dose of dreamless sleep would keep him out until at least ten, Severus reminded himself. Black was waiting, and didn't look like he'd rested at all. Unusually sympathetic, given the situation, he gave the man one of his pepper ups. Black took longer than he should have to identify it before swallowing it with a grateful look. Likely because receiving help from Severus was so unexpected.

"What's that stick thing you have?"

Severus was almost startled by casual conversation from Black, but supposed it was within the realm of possibility now. "It is a felt-tip pen; a muggle writing utensil. Quills are too sharp to give to Harry while he is on suicide watch, but he should be able to write out what he is thinking and feeling when he doesn't feel like he can say it."
"Oh. You know a lot about this, then?"

Severus stiffened. "I am generally called to be a part of any suicide watch Poppy needs to do."

"How long will it take?"

"Before he can leave? It's too early to say. Every person is different."

"Not as long as I was hospitalized?"

"No. It typically takes five to ten days before we release a student from the hospital wing. He will still need additional support after he leaves, but nothing this intensive."

"Good."

At 10:30, the chime activated that told them Harry had woken. Black stood up before remembering that Poppy had to speak to the child first. She was blessedly quick with her questions and explanations, and the anxious man was sent inside. Twenty minutes later, he emerged looking subdued. Poppy had already told him that Harry wasn't speaking, so Severus didn't ask and left it to her to explain to Black that Harry's behavior was to be expected.

Severus placed the stack of books, save the one he'd brought for himself, on Harry's bedside table. "These are for you. The boredom is arguably the worst part of suicide watch." Merlin only knows, Severus hadn't had anyone to visit him or bring him books when he'd been in this position and he'd nearly found another way to end things just to have something to do.

Not expecting the child to speak to "I've been informed that you plan to talk with your established Mind Healer. That is a prudent choice, as he is accustomed to your previous experiences with mental health and therapy. However, you may still speak to me informally if you wish, as you occasionally did last summer."

Severus opened his own book and began to read, surprised when the boy whispered a word of thanks. Hopefully he would move on to talking more quickly. The two read until lunch, which Severus stayed to eat with Harry before leaving. He struggled to focus on his book, his thoughts repeatedly drawn to both Harry and himself. When Severus left the hospital wing for the afternoon, he immediately placed a floo call to his own mind healer and scheduled an appointment.

The minute Severus entered his office, he had three frantic third years pounding on his door. "Enter," he called.

"Sir, we can't find Harry anywhere. His bed was empty this morning, and he hasn't been at meals or in classes. We checked the infirmary but it was empty, and we couldn't find you -"

"Breathe, Miss Greengrass." The girl seemed to have to physically restrain herself from her rambling, while Severus decided how much to tell. Harry might not thank him for telling his friends about his suicide attempt, but he would need the support when he was ready to see them and they would give it better if they'd had time to adjust to the knowledge. "I have spent the morning with Mr. Potter in the infirmary, in a private room. What I am about to tell you is..."
privileged information, and if anyone asks any of you about Mr. Potter's whereabouts I expect you to simply say he is ill." Severus waited for a verbal agreement from each of his students before continuing. "Mr. Potter is on suicide watch after making an attempt last night. Physically he is unharmed, but he will spend at least a few days in the infirmary. He isn't ready for visitors yet, but when he is I will take you all to see him immediately."

Zabini looked like they were about to cry, while Greengrass looked shocked and Nott's face showed only grim acceptance.

"When Mr. Potter feels able to see you, you will all need to be supportive of him. It's possible that you'll feel angry about what he did while you come to terms with it, but you shouldn't express that anger to him. Even when he leaves the infirmary, he will need more support than he has recently." Severus glanced at the clock while his students nodded their acceptance. It was almost time for his appointment. "Go now, you're already late to your next class. Here is a pass."

"Yes, sir," the teens chorused. As soon as they were out the door, Severus took another handful of floo powder and stepped through to St. Mungo's.

Healer Richards smiled at Severus when he entered the room. He returned a nod. "What brings you to see me today, Severus? It's been awhile."

"Indeed it has. We have a suicide watch at the school right now, and it's brought up old memories and emotions."

"I see. This isn't the first suicide watch you've had, though, and you don't typically schedule an emergency appointment for them. What makes this one different?"

Severus sighed. His healer's perceptiveness was a good thing, given his long habit of withholding information, but it was also irritating. "This is one of my students who I find myself especially-fond-of. And one who I see an uncomfortable amount of myself in. He is also a half-blood who was abused by a muggle relative because of his magic. During his first year, he was removed from that home and that summer, he stayed with me. I learned many disturbing details about his home life, and bonded with him somewhat. Now, suicide attempts are another place we have common ground."

"Do you worry he'll continue to live up to the mistakes you've made?"

"To a degree, yes. I know he will never become a Death Eater, but that is not the only way to become a bitter and unhappy person."

"Indeed."

"I attempted to take my own life more than once. What if this student tries again, and we can't save him a second time?"

"Then it would be tragic, and you would grieve him knowing you did the best you could. But this student has one advantage that you didn't."

Severus narrowed his eyes. He was fairly certain he'd been general enough to keep Harry's identity safe. Richards' Oath of Silence may not stand up against gossip about the Boy-Who-Lived. "What is that?"

"He has you, who has been where he is now and survived it, and who is fond enough of him to put real effort into helping him through this."
Severus relaxed slightly. "That is true."

"Now, how are you coping? Have you had any self-destructive urges?" And suddenly he was not relaxed. Tightly, he nodded once. "Any chance you think you'll act on them?"

"I did schedule an emergency appointment, did I not?"

"That's true. What are you going to do to keep yourself safe?"

"I am not teaching while I'm working suicide watch, so I'll spend some of my free time with Poppy since she knows about my history. I'll remind myself that I have atoned for my mistakes. I'll go see Minerva if the urges get stronger while Poppy is busy."

"All good steps. Do you still journal?"

"On occasion."

"I'd suggest doing that more often while you work through these feelings again." Severus nodded his agreement, and they moved on.

After his appointment, Severus took the floo directly to the hospital wing. Poppy was still sitting with Harry, but it was nearly dinner time and he knew Lupin would be taking over when Harry ate. When the two did trade places, she was a bit startled to see him waiting. "Is everything alright, Severus?"

"Yes, Poppy." He grimaced. Poppy was there for his worst moments, even beyond his own experiences with suicide watch, but admitting weakness never got easier for him. "I find myself in need of support."

She smiled kindly. "Of course, Severus. How bad is it, one to five?"

"A three."

"Shall we eat here? I can get tea sent with dinner."

"That would be perfect. Thank you, Poppy."

"Of course, Severus. Any time, you know that."

Severus once again went directly to the infirmary following an early breakfast the next day. When he arrived, Poppy told him she wanted him to speak with Harry.

"He's been more forthcoming with you than with anyone but his Mind Healer. You have an amicable relationship, and you are familiar enough with the protocols to decide if he can be taken off line of sight."

Severus agreed, and brought the breakfast tray into the room where Harry still slept. A few minutes later, the boy stirred and opened his eyes. "Good morning, Mr. Potter. How are you feeling?"

"Okay, I guess." Severus knew it was a bit early for Harry to really judge his own mental state, but the answer aligned well with what he'd heard from Poppy and Lupin.
"Are you having any thoughts like the ones that led you to the astronomy tower?"

"No, sir."

Severus almost sighed aloud. "I'm glad to hear it. We've decided it's safe to take you off line of sight protocol, which means now you'll be checked on every twenty minutes or so. It also means you may have privacy to use the restroom or shower." He paused, remembering his conversation with Healer Richards about supporting Harry. "I am going to spend an hour with you in the mornings in case you want to talk, and Healer Shabani will continue to see you after lunch. If you wish, you may also have other visitors."

"Not yet," Harry replied. Severus nodded, unsurprised. Social interaction took a lot of energy, and Harry was still barely speaking. His friends would likely overwhelm him right now. Severus stayed for an hour, as promised. Harry didn't talk, but didn't seem uncomfortable with his presence either. When he left Harry's room, he took tea again with Poppy.

In the afternoon, Severus was once again waylaid by Harry's friends.

"Is he ready for visitors, Professor?" Blaise asked this time. "How is he doing?"

"Mr. Potter's condition is marginally improved, but he isn't ready to see you all yet." Seeing how the teens deflated Severus found himself adding, "It is likely that he wants to but doesn't feel ready for conversation, especially conversation about his condition. Seeing you all in the hospital wing will make things feel more real for him." That seemed to appease Harry's friends, and they left after extracting another promise from Severus to take them to Harry as soon as he was ready. Once alone, Severus took the journal from his desk drawer. It was the same design as the one he'd given Harry, but he found he had to dust it off as it hadn't been touched in so long.

Severus attended dinner in the Great Hall. Afterwards he met with Minerva, ostensibly to discuss her availability to oversee some of the library quizzes his students would take. If he allowed her to draw out the conversation considerably more than he typically would, then that was his business.

Day three of Harry's suicide watch passed much the same. A quiet hour with the child in the morning followed by tea with Poppy, reassuring Harry's worried friends, and allowing himself to be drawn into conversations with his more tolerable coworkers.

When Severus sat down in Harry's room on day four, he was heartened by the fact that the boy spoke to him. He'd begun to wonder if he was wasting his time.

"Does everyone know what I did? Have there been rumors?"

"Only your friends have been told, as they have been anxiously asking me about your health. I do not pay close attention to the rumor mills of teenagers, but your friends have been instructed to tell anyone who asks that you are simply ill and I haven't heard evidence that anything else has spread." Severus noted Harry's obvious relief, and sympathized. He'd never been on suicide watch while he had classes to attend, but could imagine the added stress it may cause.

"Will I always need the antidepressant potion and all of these strategies to be okay, or will this go away?"

"You'll need the antidepressant potion until your mood improves. As for the strategies, we'll assess your progress and adjust as necessary."

Severus smiled. "I'm glad to see you taking an active role in your recovery."
Severus decided that he would take the chance while Harry was speaking to him to share that he wasn't alone in his struggles. "For some people, the need lessens over time. For many, it doesn't. I myself have been on an antidepressant potion since I was fifteen. As for the coping strategies, you get used to them and they become second nature. If you find in a few weeks that they are still so necessary that it's disrupting your life, Healer Shabani may increase your dose of the potion."
Severus then saw the child clearly debating something with himself, and remembered that when Harry had lived with him there had been a rule about appropriate questions. "You may ask anything you want while I am here with you, if you think knowing the answer will help you."

"Even if it's personal?"

"Even then."

"Okay. On my first day here, when you mentioned boredom you sounded like you were talking from experience. Were you?"

Snape sighed heavily. He had been prepared to answer this question. That didn't make it easy. "Indeed. I've been in your position twice. The first time was when I was in fifth year, and the second was when I was nineteen."

"So, even after you had the potion?"

"Yes. Antidepressant potions are a treatment, not a cure."

"So how do you keep from wanting to do it again?"

Severus worried at that. "Are you thinking about doing it again?"

"Not- not exactly. But I'm worried about when I leave here. Here it's easy not to think about it."

"Because you are being so closely monitored that it would be impossible even if you wanted to, and because you have nothing to worry about but your health."

"Exactly."

This was when he could really do something for Harry, as long as he didn't bollocks it up. "It is more difficult when you leave." Understatement. "After my first attempt, I looked for people to lean on. I found them in the wrong place and it ultimately led to my second attempt, but the concept is sound." Bigger understatement. "The second time, I threw myself into protecting and helping others to absolve the guilt that led me to the point of suicide."

Harry nodded. "I expect I'll be going back to weekly appointments with Agim. I didn't tell anyone what I was thinking because I didn't think they could help. I guess that was stupid."

But such a familiar thought. "Perhaps a bit, but it is easy to feel that way. Depression tends to make us feel isolated, like no one could understand or care enough to try."

"Yeah. But that isn't true."

Severus almost smiled. "Remember that when you leave here, Mr. Potter, and you'll do well."

Severus wrote in his journal that afternoon, after once again reassuring Harry's friends. He wrote about the conversation that he'd had with Harry that morning, and how he wished someone had been able to give him a realistic picture of living with depression when he'd attempted suicide the
first time. Given that he'd joined the Death Eaters because of the friends he sought out afterwards, knowing these things likely wouldn't have prevented his second attempt but they could have reduced his own frustration with his healing process.

When Severus saw Harry sitting up fully with bright eyes on the fifth day, he actually did smile. "You look better today, Mr. Potter."

"I feel better, sir."

"Have you had any thoughts of suicide? Sometimes they don't stop immediately when you begin treatment."

Harry shook his head. "No, sir. I really think the test will be when I leave, though."

"Indeed."

"Sir? I think I want to see my friends today."

"They will be glad to hear that. I've had to reassure them of your continued existence yet again. I will bring them this afternoon, after your appointment with Healer Shabani."

"Thank you, sir. If Severus didn't know better, he'd think that he was being thanked for more than the opportunity for visitors."

"You are welcome, Mr. Potter."

Severus told Zabini, Greengrass, and Nott to come to his office at the end of lunch. It was a bit early, but he wanted to remind them again how best to support Harry before taking them to the hospital wing. "Show him kindness, not anger, and do not treat him as if he were fragile. A few days ago he was, but today he is almost his normal self. Keep to light topics. He may also appreciate a list of his assignments more than you would think. The hospital wing is a very dull place."

"Yes, sir," the three teens responded. Once the list was compiled, Severus sent an excuse note to their professor and led them to the hospital wing. They picked up Harry's books from the dorm on the way. It was tempting to listen at the door and make sure they followed instructions, but he refrained.

When it was time to send the visitors away, Severus was heartened to hear Harry laugh for the first time since he'd been hospitalized. "Five more minutes won't hurt, Poppy." He answered her conspiratorial smile with a look that dared her to comment. So he was a bit soft-hearted since Harry's attempt. Sue him.

The rest of Harry's suicide watch passed much easier. Severus no longer found himself constantly in need of company to fend off his own thoughts. He and Harry discussed potions while he sat with the boy, and Harry continued to do better. The better Harry was doing, the more Severus was able to relax. Now that they had seen him, Harry's friends no longer cornered him in his office for daily updates. Harry was let out of the hospital wing the morning of the seventh day with a reminder from Severus that he would always be available to talk.
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