

Life Will Never be the Same Part One

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Life Will Never be the Same Part One

by [NightRaven789](#)

Summary

Severus Snape gets the discovery of a lifetime when the wards fall during the summer, investigating, he finds the boy who lived trapped within a cage in the basement of the house that was supposed to love and care for him. Secrets come undone well caring for the boy.

The Discovery of a Life Time

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter one-The Discovery of a Life Time

Severus would never forget the things he witnessed during his time as a Death Eater; he would never forget those horrors. All those innocent people he harmed because of his uncontrollable anger and inability to see the error in his ways, but this... this had to rival the worst things he ever encountered during his time as a Death Eater.

He failed Lily; the only person he ever loved... and he failed her. He still remembered that night, how the house shook with thunder as he made his way up the stairs, stepping over James body to find Lily. He remembered falling to his knees and taking Lily's body in his arms, looking at her widened eyes, once filled with life; now empty.

He made a promise to her that night; he promised to look after her son, Harry Potter, to do everything in his power to make sure that he was safe. But as he looked at Harry now, he knew Lily would be so disappointed in him.

He couldn't prevent the tear that slid down his cheek as he looked at the boy, his heart pounding in his chest with grief. The boy was laid out on one of the beds in the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts, appearing as nothing but a pile of skin and bones. Severus took in a shaky breath as flashes of the past few hours reentered his mind.

It had been the middle of summer, with Severus working in his personal lab on his latest potion, when suddenly the alarms went off, the alarms that told him that the wards that kept Harry safe had fallen.

Safe... the wards haven't done anything to keep Harry safe.

He hadn't even bothered to turn off the flame under his cauldron as he ran out of his chambers and down the halls of Hogwarts to the gates, where he was finally was able to apparate.

Everything became a blur after that. He remembered going down the stairs to the basement of the terribly house, the smell hitting like a ton of bricks, forcing him to bring his arm up to cover his mouth and nose as he gagged.

Lighting the tip of his wand, Severus had thrown the door open and beheld the disgusting scene. Harry Potter, the boy-who-lived, the chosen one, was trapped within a small cage, sitting and covered in his own urine and feces. At that moment Severus turned around and vomited. He couldn't remember what happened after that, not even how he got back to Hogwarts and up to the hospital wing.

Severus didn't even realize that he was standing over the boy, tears running down his face, not until Poppy came in from her office.

“S...Severus?” Poppy asked, shocked at what she saw in front of her.

“Please... you need to help him, please,” Severus said quietly, so unlike his own voice as he looked up at the Matron.

Poppy’s mouth dropped as she made her way over to the still figure on the bed, “Severus... I’m a school nurse, you need to take him to St. Mungo’s,” Poppy said, tears running down her face as she saw the famous lightning bolt scar that was hidden beneath all the dirt and grime.

“You know I can’t do that, he’d be in danger... they’d lock him up” Severus said as he brought his hand up and cleared away his tears.

“Severus... I...”

“Damn it woman!” Severus yelled, losing his temper, “Didn't you work at the emergency ward at St. Mungos for seven years before you came here? Do your job!

And with that Poppy pulled herself together and took out her wand, casting a medical scan on the boy to get a list of his injuries. And what a list it was, the scan went on for nearly ten minutes before it finally stopped, the sheet of paper that was conjured falling on the bed.

Poppy took in a deep breath before she picked up the sheet and read off the injurers, each one getting worse as she went on.

The Power of the Broken

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter two - The Power of the Broken

Severus stood at his guest bedroom door staring at Harry, who was sleeping in a modified hospital bed that was brought down just a few days ago.

Poppy decided Severus quarters would be best for Harry, as there would be no source of bright light to hurt his sensitive eyes. But with his quarters also came with the bitter cold so Harry was dressed in layers since he had no body fat to keep himself warm.

Severus closed his eyes and let out a long breath as he thought about the last few days.

Harry was put into a medically induced coma so his body had the time to heal and so he wouldn't feel any pain as they worked. Poppy was unsure about giving Harry any unneeded potions because of the boy's small size. Harry was supposed to be seven years of age but he looked like a five-year-old and weighed even less.

A feeding tube had been placed in and Harry was now on a twenty-four hour feed until he gained some weight, although Poppy had to place it on a slow feed as to not upset the boy's stomach. In Severus opinion it wasn't doing anything for Harry's stomach, and within a few days Harry had every side effect that came with a feeding tube.

Casts covered both his legs as both of his tibias and fibulas were broken, he could still hear the sickening sound of the bones snapping as Poppy was forced to break them and set them probably if Harry ever had a chance of walking again.

It has been a few hours since Poppy gave Harry the potion to wake him from his coma. Severus had been standing here at the door since then, waiting for a sign that Harry was waking up.

Arm restraints were placed on Harry, to prevent him from attempting to pull the feeding tube out, rip off the bandages, or harm himself in any other way. An IV port was even placed in his neck to keep Harry from pulling it out of his hand if he struggled.

Severus didn't know what he should expect to see when Harry woke up. Once Harry was on the mend Poppy told him that Harry had autism not to mention the extreme emotional trauma the boy had been through, Poppy said that it was possible for the boy's state to improve but the likelihood of it wasn't good.

For the past few days Severus has been reading up on autism, and he believed he would have a good handle on the more severe aspects, but he still wasn't sure about the whole thing. He tried several times to get a hold of Albus, but with it being summer it was impossible, he wasn't even sure if he wanted to see the man at the moment.

Every year Minerva ask Albus how Harry was doing and every year Albus said he was healthy and was doing just fine. Clearly, Albus had never checked up on the boy.

Flashes of Minerva crying and falling over Harry's body, wrapping her arms around him as she cried came back to his mind. He knew how much Minerva had cared for the Potters, how much she cared for Harry. Everyone cared for them and everyone had been heartbroken when it was discovered that they were killed. With this new development, it felt like all that hope they had for Harry was being taken away from them again.

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The first thing Harry became aware of when waking up was his pain, or more accurately the lack of pain, followed quickly by how warm he was. He tried to listen to his surroundings but he couldn't hear anything, not even the sound of the leaky pipe that always kept him company.

He slowly opened his eyes surprise to find himself someplace completely new, and that confused him since he never left the basement. Sometimes he was let out of his cage if he was making too much noise but he was never allowed upstairs.

Harry let out a small whimper as he tried to lift up his hands to try to find out what was sticking to his face only to find that he couldn't. He tried to move his legs, but even that was a challenge.

Suddenly a dark man appeared by his side reaching out one of his hands.

Harry let out a loud scream as the hand came towards him, his breathing becoming fast and unsteady.

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Severus couldn't help but to flinch back as Harry screamed, something inside him felt frozen as he brain felt like it was ready to explode. Bringing his hands up to his ears as he winced in pain as he heard many things made of glass shattering, scattering glass all over the floor throughout his quarters.

He slowly made his way over to the table and filled one of the surviving syringes up with a calming potion before swiftly making his way back to Harry and inserting the syringe into the IV port. The explosion of raw magical power got to him before he could press the potion into the tubes, and he let out a scream as he fell to his knees, passing out on the spot.

Deaf and Confused

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter three-Deaf and Confused

Severus sat on the couch with Poppy sitting on the coffee table in front of him, wincing a little as Poppy shined the light into his eyes, flicking it back a froth to check his pupil reaction.

“Do you know how long you were out for?” Poppy asks as she pulled one of his eyelids up.

“What!?” Severus yelled. The only thing he could hear was the ringing in his ears and by the look of the cloth that Poppy had he was bleeding from his ears as while.

“We talk later,” Poppy said, more to herself than to Severus, as she moved the light to Severus' ears and looked inside once more, double checking that everything was alright.

“Your hearing will come back in a few hours,” Poppy said, once again to herself.

“There's one thing I don't understand,” Severus continued yelling as Poppy moved to the other side and tilted his head, checking his other ear.

“Is there any chance you can tell me when you can hear?” Poppy asked sarcastically as she rolled her eyes before sitting back on the coffee table.

“If Harry's this powerful, then why didn't he show his powers sooner? Get out of that god forsaken place. He could have easily killed those... monsters, he could have killed me tonight.” Severus pondered loudly.

“Let's be thankful he didn't, and not just because of you. Killing changes people, you out of all of us should know that... I don't know why Harry's magic didn't go out of control before like it did with you, maybe there's something more going on or maybe being in a new place with someone different set him off.” Poppy said, sighing as she saw how confused Severus looked as she spoke.

“And clearly you still can't hear a word I am saying to you right now so.... I'm going to make us a cup of tea.” Poppy added as she stood up, laying her hand out flat to show Severus that she wanted him to stay put while she headed off to the kitchen.

Silent hours passed at a snail's pace, all the while Severus and Poppy waited for the Potion Master's deafness to fade. The tea that Poppy brought helped ease the tension that he felt. Slowly, hearing returned, just enough to actually communicate, but Severus understood that it would take several days for it to return to normal.

“I'm also going to put Harry on a low dose of the calming potion, not enough to keep him asleep but enough to hopefully keep his magic under control so this won't happen again,” Poppy explained, just loud enough for Severus to hear and understand what she was saying. “I also sent Minerva out to pick up a few things for Harry, A wheelchair for starters, at least until we can get Harry up and walking again.”

Severus just gave a small nod in both understanding and thanks.

“I will be going off then, I'm working on a few potions for Harry, I know I'm not as skilled as you are but with looking after Harry you won't have time. “ Poppy said before Severus had a chance to argue with her about the potion making. “I'm still good at it, just takes me a bit longer to make them is all. Just call if you need anything,” Poppy said as she showed herself out.

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Severus sat on the couch with an ice pack on his head as he stared up at the ceiling; Harry hasn't been up for more than ten seconds and he was already feeling exhausted. His ears no longer rang which he was thankful for but his head wouldn't stop pounding no matter how many potions he took to help ease the pain.

He let out a low moan as the alarms he set up on Harry went off, telling him that Harry was awake again. “Alright.....alright,” Severus moaned to himself as he got up and went to the bedroom, finding Harry awake and looking around, confused.

The Fight of a Life Time

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter four- The Fight of a Life Time

The only reason Severus even removed the elbow restraints were because of how Harry was fighting to get out of them. It was so bad that Severus feared that the boy was going to break his arms if he kept trying, bending them at odd and extreme angles that were downright frightening. The moment he did, loosening the leather restraints and sliding them off Harry's arms, the boy attacked.

Severus did his best to remind himself that Harry wasn't just autistic, but he was also somewhat animal-like. Spending his years in a cage and only knowing pain would have caused him to tap into instinct just to survive. And right now his instincts were telling him to fight with everything he had.

Severus calmed himself with that thought, even as Harry reached up and grabbed his hair, hard. Using that as leverage, the boy pulled himself up and sank his teeth into Severus' shoulder, causing the Potions Master to wince in pain.

Severus pulled Harry up into his arms, unhooking the tubing to the feeding tube so he could move Harry freely without fear as he sat down onto the bed and pulled Harry fully into his lap, using every ounce of willpower to not react to the literal pain in his neck.

Harry let out a scream, finally releasing his jaw from Severus' shoulder as he brought his hand up in an attempt to pull out both the tubing and the IV, twisting his body sharply so he wasn't facing Severus anymore.

"No..." Severus said gently, as he pulled Harry's arms down, earning himself another shrill scream as the boy turned back around with a jerk and letting out what could almost be called a growl as he tried to lunge at Severus.

"Alright," Severus said, quickly running out of breath from fighting the squirming boy, and he hefted Harry bodily and flipped the boy around so that Harry's back was pressing against Severus' chest. Severus followed that by folding his arms over the boy's chest and pinning Harry in place. In all honesty, Severus was surprised that Harry had this much energy with the calming potion he was on but at least he could be glad that it was keeping Harry's magic at bay.

Harry screams only intensified when he was restrained, doing his best to kick, but only being able to lift them up a few inches because of the casts.

Severus tried to recall what he had read about autism in the last couple of days, but now when he really needed it he couldn't recall any of the information. He didn't want to force another potion down Harry, nor he didn't want to try and cast a spell to stun the child, but he couldn't stay here and hold the screaming boy in his arms for however long it took for him to calm down. For the first time in a long time he was at a loss.

Harry bucked his back as he started to bang his head against Severus' chest in a renewed effort to get free of the man that held him tightly in place.

"Come on Harry, we can do this" Severus said, exercising extreme patience as he placed one of his hands on Harry's head and gently pulled it against his chest, running his thumb over the few inches of hair that Harry had. Most of it had been cut to get rid of the matted sections, as well as the heavy lice infestation. There were also a few bald spots that Poppy said could be from a number of things, but Severus had a suspicion that Harry was the cause of them.

Harry only screamed as his head was held down, closing his eyes tightly as he continued to kick his legs around fustily.

"Shh... You're alright; you're safe," Severus calmly shushed as he held Harry tightly and started to rock back and forth a little to give Harry the motion, and hope that it would assist in calming him down a little.

For Severus, seconds turned into minutes and minutes turned into hours as Harry continued to fight him, but the screams soon turned into cries and the cries turned into hiccups and whimpers as Harry very slowly started to calm down.

For Harry, there were something familiar about the man that held him, the black clothing and that smell: herbs that almost stung the inside of his nose with each breath that he took. There was also a hint of mint, it was small but Harry could smell it and in a way it was almost relaxing.

"There we go," Severus said, smiling slowly and feeling like he was finally getting some headway with Harry as he loosened his hands and started to rub the boy's back.

Harry kept his hands where there were once Severus let go of his hold and started to rub his hand up and down his back, this was when Harry took the time to look around the room he was in. It was blurry but Harry did his best to make out the things that were in the room.

The table that was next to the bed held colorful bottles of different sizes. The room was an off-white color and a small dresser was in the corner of the room. The blinds on the window kept the sun out, and the lights were turned down low to keep them from hurting Harry sensitive eyes.

"We good?" Severus ask as he tried to set Harry back down, earning himself a small moan from the boy, and he felt small hands gripping his robes. "Alright... Alright..." Severus said as he pulled Harry back up, not wanting another meltdown at the moment.

"...Let's go to the living room then." Severus said as he stood up with Harry in his arms.

Harry let out a small groan as the man stood up and started to walk out of the room, quickly closing his eyes, feeling dizzy by the fast pace the man set while walking. Harry slowly reached up and stuck a few fingers in his mouth as he started to chew on them a little when he felt the man suddenly stop.

"Severus?" Minerva said, surprised as she stood in the middle of his living room, setting out large bags loaded down with the supplies she got for Harry.

The Confusing Child

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Five - The Confusing Child

Minerva was just placing her bags down when Severus came into the room carrying Harry. "Severus," Minerva said, surprised to see the child in his arms, "I'm sorry. I knocked, but no one answered so I just let myself in, I was going to leave once..." "Its fine Minerva" Severus interpreted, cutting her off "Thank you for picking everything up, I haven't been able to do much for the past couple of days," Severus replied as he sat down in one of the chairs, keeping Harry in his lap. "You going to sit?" Severus inquired as he looked up at Minerva.

"Sorry," Minerva said being taken back as she took a seat across Severus. "How is he?" Minerva asks as she gestured towards Harry.

"As well as can be expected, I just got him to calm down" Severus explained as he kept rubbing Harry's back. "What did you end up getting?" Severus asked after a few moments of silence.

Minerva couldn't help but jump as Severus talked after nearly a minute of awkward silence she had to endure. "The items on the list that Poppy gave me, along with a few things I thought Harry would like," she explained as she reached into one of the bags and pulled out a tiny wheelchair, setting it on the floor before taking out her wand and setting the wheelchair back to its normal size.

"It's a pretty standard chair." Minerva explained, listing off the specifics and technical attributes of the chair, but Severus focused more on what he saw. The high back wheelchair was heavily cushioned with foam padding, with straps that would cross over Harry's chest to keep him secure.

Severus nodded, even though he understood very little of what Minerva just told him about the wheelchair, feeling a bit overwhelmed by the whole thing.

"I also got him some sensory chewing items, it's not good for him to be doing that," Minerva said as she watched Harry chew on his fingers. "I got him some stuff called a Super Chew Noodle, Chewelry Bracelet, Tuffy Chews, and Sentiochews." Minerva explained as she pulled the items out of the bag and set them on the coffee table.

"Thanks," Severus responded still understanding very little what was being said.

"Did you get a hold of Albus?" Minerva asks as she watched Severus lean forward earning himself a small moan from Harry as he picked up one of the sensory chews and took the tag off before spinning Harry around on his lap.

“No, I don't know where he is and I don't really care either,” Severus remarked as he pulled Harry hand out of his mouth. The boy gave a small whine, turning away from Severus as he tried to pull his hand away.

“Come on now, none of that,” Severus said in a calm voice, so unlike his own, he pulled Harry back to face him as he placed what Minerva called Sentiochews in Harry's hand.

Harry let out a small moan, not understanding what was happening as he tried to drop what the mysterious man just placed in his hand, only for the man to close his hand back around it and bring it up to his mouth.

Harry groaned as he turned his head away, not knowing what he was supposed to do with it, and why the man was so insistent on him having it.

“Alright, let's try something else then,” Severus said, casting a charm that would make the Sentiochews sweet, making it so it would taste like honey and hopefully it would get Harry back into food when the time comes.

Harry let out a growl as his hand was forced back up to his mouth and the object was pushed through his lips finding it surprising that it tasted sweet, making his mouth water with greed as he started chewing on the object.

“Yeah, I know what you mean. I don't want to see Albus at the moment either,” Minerva said, impressed at how well Severus was handling Harry. “What is he up for anyhow? I thought he was supposed to be on a twenty-four-hour feed?” Minerva asked as she started to pull everything else out of the bags and set them out on the coffee table.

“Yes, but he's fine for the moment. It's not good for him to be in bed all day anyway,” Severus stated with a small sigh as he leaned back. Harry seemed to relax as he lay back down on Severus' chest and chewed on the object contentedly.

“I should get going, I was thinking we could take Harry out on the grounds for a walk tomorrow, get him some fresh air,” Minerva offered as she stood up, Severus following suit with Harry in his arms.

“Sounds good, we'll see you sometime in the afternoon then,” Severus answered as he showed Minerva out. Once the door was close, he let out a long sigh, grateful that Minerva hadn't smelled the ammonia currently rolling off his robes from a certain child.

“Let's get you cleaned up and perhaps call Poppy,” Severus said patiently to the oblivious Harry as he made their way to the bathroom and started to run a bath for the boy.

The Past Never Goes Away

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Six - The Past Never Goes Away

Severus was shocked at how much of a fight Harry put him through during the bath.

The Potions Master had wanted to wait until he gained more of Harry's trust before Severus introduced the concept of bathing. He could have just used cleaning spells, but they could only do so much and he didn't want to risk Harry getting an infection. However, the moment Harry's skin touched the water he let out a wild screech and started to fight like his life depended on it.

Within ten minutes Harry screams and fighting stopped, only to be replaced with heart reaching crying. Severus decided that he much preferred to have the fighting and screaming; he could defend himself against a wild Harry, but he didn't know how to comfort the tearful child nearly as proficiently. The boy's reactions had made the whole experience go much slower than he would have liked.

It was an hour before Severus got Harry out of the tub; not the most ideal time but with all the fighting everything took much longer than needed. Also, with Harry pushing him away or turning away from him every time he tried to scoop the boy up and out, by the end he was just as soaking wet as the boy.

Severus wrapped Harry in a big fluffy towel and took him to his room. Laying him down on the bed, Severus watched as Harry quickly closed his eyes and fall off to sleep, clearly exhausted from the whole ordeal.

Severus went and changed into some dried clothes before he fire-called Poppy. That had been a mistake, as he spent another hour fighting with her about Harry. In the end they decided... more specifically Poppy decided... that it would be best to place Harry in nappies for the time being. Severus had fought tooth and nail against it, but in the end Poppy won.

Severus got Harry dressed once he finished speaking with Poppy and got him hooked back up to the feeding tube. With that finished, he went back out to the living room and began unpacking everything that Minerva brought.

He now sat on the couch looking at everything. Spill-proof cups, picture communication booklets along with a visual pictures communication keyring, weighted blanket along with some other sensory toys. Not to mention the stuff that Minerva thought Harry would like which were mostly children toys well below Harry age group.

Severus put everything away, making sure to be quiet so he didn't wake Harry. He placed the wheelchair in the bedroom before he sat back down in the living room and closed his eyes for a few seconds, trying to shut is brain off for just a moment before he would have to go back to reality.

He couldn't help but think about Lily. He knew he will never be able to make it up to her, and he wished nothing more but to take his past back; to say that he was sorry for everything that he has done.

He knew he wasn't a good man; he wasn't sure what he was, but it wasn't good and he couldn't blame Lily for leaving him so long ago. He had been deeply into the Dark Arts, and to her it was just one step away from fighting for the dark side, and she had been right.

The Waking Dream

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Seven - The Waking Dream

Harry woke up with a start, remembering the dream he had been having.

He had been back in his cage, but not the cage he known for so long. This cage had been different. It was warm and welcoming here, so unlike the one he had known for so long. A woman with long red hair and sparkling green eyes was speaking to him, although he didn't know what she was saying. All he knew was that he wanted to be held by her; taken out of his cage.

Suddenly there was a loud noise and bright green light, the woman with red hair fell to the ground. Harry felt his head fill with pain as a scary man leaned over his cage. He remembered crying for the woman to get up and save him but she didn't move.

Time passed. Harry was still in his cage, but now he was cold and wet and didn't know why. The door slowly opened and the dark man, the mysterious man he was living with came into the room. The man fell to his knees as he picked the woman up and held her in his arms. Time continued to pass as Harry watched the mysterious man slowly get up and leave, not even giving Harry a glance as the man closed the door behind him like Harry wasn't even there.

Harry looked around the room with tears forming in his eyes. He saw the mysterious man over at the table with all the colorful bottles, and that's when the tears spilled over. Why hadn't the man taken him away from that cage before; he just left him there cold, scared, and alone.

Severus turned around to see that Harry was awake and silently crying.

"Hey..." Severus spoke gently as he set the potions down and walked over to Harry. "What's got you so upset this morning?" Severus inquired as he pulled the blankets down and set Harry up on the pillows a bit since he slid down during the night.

Harry's cries became verbal as he was pulled up onto the pillows, not because of the mysterious man, but because all of the long forgotten memories that all came back to Harry like a flood.

"Alright, let's get you your potions, then we'll see what we can do," Severus said, not sure what had gotten Harry so upset this morning. Was he still upset over the bath from last night? Severus quickly got Harry's potions ready and gently put them through the IV. "Poppy came over last night when you were sleeping, and said we can start you on some food," Severus said with a small smile as he lifted Harry up and placed him in his new wheelchair.

Harry let out a small whimper as he was placed down in this new chair, lifting his hands and rubbing at his eyes.

“You cold?” Severus asked, not knowing how to make Harry feel better, how can you make someone feel better when you don't even know what got them upset in the first place.

Severus placed an oversized sweatshirt over Harry and pulled his arms through before pulling the tubing out and through the neck of the shirt.

Harry just let out a moan as he pushed Severus away twisting himself in his chair, trying to lift his leg over the soft foam that sat between his legs.

“I see that we are in a bad mood this morning,” Severus said, “let's see if some food can help change your mood,” He did up the straps even though he doubted Harry could get out of the chair even if he wanted to. “You want a blanket?” Severus questioned as he pulled one of the blankets off the bed and placed it over Harry's leg.

Harry just let out a small whimper, more tears falling down his cheeks as Severus pushed Harry over to the kitchen table. “How about you try one of these toys that Minerva got for you while I work on breakfast?” Severus asked, hooking up Harry's table to the chair.

Harry let out a moan as he pushed the table back at Severus.

“No.” Severus said calmly, pushing the table back and locking it into place before opening up a container. “This is...Play Dough,” Severus said, turning the container around to read it. He figured that Minerva must have gotten it in the muggle world.

Severus placed some of the brightly colored Play Dough in front of Harry before placing the boy's hands on the Play Dough and giving Harry's hands a small squeeze.

Harry let out a small moan, but squeezed the Play Dough himself as he watched the dough ooze out between his fingers.

“Is that fun?” Severus asked as he started to get Harry's breakfast ready, keeping one eye on Harry the whole time.

Severus couldn't help but be a bit disgusted at the short list of things that Harry was currently allowed to eat. Watered-down, lukewarm oatmeal with just the tiniest bit of brown sugar for taste; however, he was pretty sure Harry would think this was the best thing he could ever eat. Somehow, that thought made the situation all the more depressing for the Potions Master.

“Alright, ready to eat?” Severus inquired, cleaning up the Play Dough that Harry managed to spread all over the table, sticking it into the corners which Severus couldn't get out.

“Alright, I'll worry about that later,” Severus stated with a small sigh as he set the bowl of oatmeal down before sitting himself in front of Harry.

Harry gave a small frown as the Play Dough was taken away but that was quickly forgotten as his eyes landed on the food.

“Looks good?” Severus questioned, scooping up some of the oatmeal on a spoon and holding it out for Harry to take. Harry, unfortunately, only gave him a look as if thinking that Severus was going to poison him and turned his head to the side.

“Why am I not surprised you aren't going to make this easy” Severus responded sarcastically. “Harry... Harry” Severus called to get the boy’s attention, bringing the spoon to his own mouth and swallowed the oatmeal once Harry looked at him. Severus did his best to keep the grimace off his face as he felt the watery mush run down his throat. He must have done a good enough job because the next spoonful Harry gladly took.

Harry was surprised at how good the food tasted. All he remembered ever got was moldy bread and dirty water, but this was warm and sweet and it made his taste buds cry out for more.

For the next half hour Severus spoon fed Harry his meal with Harry gladly accepting it.

Learning to be a Child

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Eight - Learning to be a Child

So far Harry had two meltdowns this morning.

The first began when Severus showed the boy that breakfast was over, but he couldn't blame the child for that one. It had to have been years since Harry had any real food. If Severus had been in the same position he would probably acted identically.

The second just happened a moments ago. Harry's face was still wet from the freshly fallen tears. The boy apparently decided that breakfast wasn't over and started to stick the Play Dough he was supposed to be playing with into his mouth. Severus had been forced to stick his fingers down the child's throat to pull the Play Dough out. Thankfully, he didn't get himself bitten in the process, but it did trigger another massive meltdown, escalating further as Severus started to pack up the Play Dough.

"If it goes in your mouth, it gets packed away," Severus said sternly as he set the Play Dough down on the coffee table where Harry couldn't get at it.

Harry just screamed as he banged his hands on his table, trying to push it off the chair as he banged his head on the headrest behind his head.

"That's what happens when you put stuff in your mouth, you don't get to play with it," Severus said as he took Harry's hands so the child wouldn't hurt himself during his meltdown.

"How about something else?" Severus suggested, hoping to distract the child. Severus pulled out a small white stuff owl that Minerva got, giving it a small squeeze as the owl turned a light blue.

Harry let out a small whimper as his eyes landed on the owl the mysterious man was holding, before reaching out one of his hands and taking the toy, running his fingers over the soft feathers.

"Give it a squeeze," Severus said as he placed his hand over Harry's and squeezed the toy once more, turning the owl bright green.

For the first time since Harry arrived, Severus saw a small smile. It was more like a smirk, and reminded Severus of his young Slytherins, but it was still something.

"You try," Severus said as he pulled his hands away, urging Harry into squeezing the toy himself, which turned a bright purple this time.

“Is that fun,” Severus asked as he sat back in his chair and continue to work on the communication booklets he had started before the Play Dough incident. He was currently placing pictures of himself, Poppy, and Minerva into the book with their names, as well as some extra photos Severus thought they would need in the future while working with Harry.

Time passed quickly, with Harry squeezing the owl and turning it through all the colors that it held. Severus started to think that the toy would never run out of colors, as Harry must have squeezed that damn thing a hundred times without any of the colors repeating.

“Alright, that's enough,” Severus stated, getting tired of watching the owl flash through colors out of the corner of his eye. “How about we try some coloring?” Severus asked as he pulled out a muggle child’s coloring book, the magical ones would have been too stimulating with the moving pictures that talked to you as you color them.

Severus hadn’t realized how hard it was going to be in order to get Harry to hold a crayon to be able to color. After about an hour Harry finally wrapped his hand around the crayon with just a small tip of the crayon poking out at the bottom of Harry's fist.

Harry ran his hand across the page with Severus help, leaving a blue streak across the page, then let out a small moan as he dropped the crayon, clearly not liking how much effort it took.

“No... come on, you can do it,” Severus said encouragingly, placing a red crayon in Harry's hand. Harry cried out as he held the crayon and ran it across the page just like he down with the blue crayon.

Severus knew that the cries were over the frustration that Harry felt, but it was still hard to watch. Harry had to be the only child who cried well coloring in a picture book.

“Just a few more minutes, and then we can try the Play Dough again,” Severus said. He knew that Harry hands must be hurting, but it had to be done if Harry was to have full use of his hands in the future.

“Minerva is coming over in an hour, we’re going out for a walk around the castle,” Severus said, figuring if he talked to Harry it would make it easier for the change that was about to come. Even if Harry couldn't understand anything he was saying, he still had his voice to listen to for comfort.

It wasn't long until the five minutes were up, but Severus was sure it felt a lot longer for Harry. “Alright, more Play Dough until Minerva gets here,” Severus said as he cleaned up the coloring book and crayons before handing Harry back the Play Dough. He still kept a close eye on him as he continued to work on Harry’s communication books.

A Whole New World

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Nine - A Whole New World

Minerva watched as Severus got Harry ready to go out, removing the tray-table from the wheelchair so Harry had more room to move around. Severus also placed a pair of sunglasses on Harry so the sun wouldn't hurt his eyes as badly, placing a sticking charm on them so Harry wouldn't be able to pull them off.

“Ready to go?” Severus asked, placing a bag with some of Harry things over the handles of the wheelchair before exiting with Minerva right beside him. He cast a quick levitation charm on the wheelchair so he was able to navigate the stairs without difficulty, which Harry either didn't notice or care about.

Harry looked around in wonder as he saw all the moving pictures on the walls. Some of the paintings even waved to him as he passed.

Severus was glad that none of the ghosts made themselves known, and even more so that Peeves was behaving himself for the time being; the last thing Harry needed was some poltergeist flying around and screaming his head off, throwing things around or pulling pranks. Peeves' pranks weren't always so bad, until the Weasley twins came to Hogwarts and showed Peeves that more was always better.

“So how have things been?” Minerva asked, pulling Severus out of his thoughts as they made their way outside. Harry let out a small whine when they exited into the bright sunshine, but soon settled down as he caught sight of the castle and the school grounds, and spent much of the time looking around in amazement.

“Things have been going as expected,” Severus stated, “Harry did have two meltdowns this morning but we got through it, hopefully this walk will tire him out and he will rest until dinner. I did start Harry on some solid food this morning and so far he been doing well with it.”

“That's good...” Minerva replied, “But what about you? When was the last time you rested or gotten a full night rest?” she asked, seeing that Severus wasn't looking as lively as he did, not as if he looked too lively to begin with.

“...I haven't,” Severus admitted with a small sigh. “I have been too busy with everything to... sleep.” Severus said realizing how ridiculous it sounded.

“Severus, you need to sleep, otherwise you won't be able to help Harry. You need to take care of yourself so you can take care of Harry appropriately. I'm willing to take some time with Harry, and I'm sure Poppy would say much the same.” Minerva offered.

“Thanks, but I can handle this,” Severus said solemnly. “I have to.”

“You don't need to do everything alone...” Minerva persisted, “I know you feel like you have to because of Lily, but you don't. She wouldn't want you working yourself to death. We are all here for you and Harry. Anyways if you don't rest and eat properly I can just tell Poppy and you will have hell to pay.” Minerva threatened with a small shrug of the shoulders.

“Alright... Alright, no need to drag Poppy into this.” Severus said, holding up his hands. “I will make sure I get some sleep tonight... and some dinner,” he added after the pointed look Minerva gave him.

Minerva couldn't help but smirk as they made their way down the path, Harry looking around and taking in as much as he could. “It looks like Hagrid is back. Want to take Harry down?” Minerva asks seeing that Hagrid was down at his hut.

“Or we can make our way to the Quidditch field,” Severus countered, not wanting to spend his afternoon with the half-giant.

“Don't be like that” Minerva said with a sigh “Hagrid cares about Harry deeply... and I may have told him that we would be stopping by.” Minerva stated.

“And you telling me now because I don't really have a choice in the matter,” Severus retorted. He'd been friends with Minerva for years and he should have known she'd do something like this. “Then we should head down,” Severus replied grumpily as he started down the path to the half-giant's hut.

“I want you to be nice,” Minerva added

Severus pursed his lips, not liking the fact that Minerva was treating him like a child, but he decided it was best to not say anything that might prompt an argument with her. They soon made their way down to the hut and knocked on the door.

Minerva hoped that Hagrid wouldn't overreact too much when he saw Harry. She had given every detail in her letter, in the hope that the large man wouldn't fall down crying at the sight of Harry. She still couldn't help but cross her fingers as Hagrid opened the door.

The Visit Part One

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Ten - The Visit Part One

Minerva was worried about Hagrid's reaction towards Harry when she should have been worried about Harry's reaction towards Hagrid. The moment that door opened and Hagrid appeared, Harry violently flinched back as he cried out, pulling on the straps that held him in place.

Minerva should have known that this would be a problem, most first years were shocked to see how big Hagrid was, but it should have been no surprise that Harry reaction was over the top.

Harry was terrified, he only has seen one other man the size of Hagrid before, well maybe not the same size, but close to it. The big man always came down to the dark place to hurt him, to cause him pain. Why did the mysterious man bring him here, didn't he know that the big man was going to hurt him.

Hagrid was visibly hurt by Harry reaction, but did his best to keep it to himself. "Not gonna hurt yeh Harry" Hagrid said gently as he stepped aside to let the three inside.

Severus gave a small nod as he walked to one of the oversized couches and sat down, bringing Harry closer as he tried to calm him.

Hagrid's and Minerva's conversation could be easily heard at the doorway, with Hagrid blaming himself for Harry reaction and Minerva telling him that he wasn't his fault. Severus resisted rolling his eyes; the half giant always took things far too personally.

"How 'bout a cup o' tea?" Hagrid asked, even as he walked over to his kitchen before Minerva or Severus could give an answer.

The only reason Hagrid was making tea was in the effort to control his emotions; he loved Harry deeply since the day he carried him out of the ruins of Lily and James' house. Seeing him like this, afraid of him, hurt him deeply.

Severus was surprised when the massive dog that Hagrid named Fang came wandering up to Harry, not seeming to mind the screaming that Harry was doing. The animal laid his head on top of the boy's lap and let out a small whine.

Harry immediately brought his hand up, intending to smack the dog on top of the head before Severus caught the hand in mid air.

"No. Gentle" Severus said warmly as he placed Harry hand on the dog and moved Harry's hand so he was patting the dog.

Harry sucked in a deep shaky breath as he looked down at the dog, never seeing such a creature before, or any animal for that matter. It looked very strange to Harry and felt very weird as the dog started to lick Harry's hand. But Harry slowly started to calm down as he continued to pat the dog with Severus taking his hand off.

“Good job” Severus phrased as he cleaned away the tears on the boy’s face.

“Tha’s Fang,” Hagrid chimed in as he brought over the tea and sat down, letting out a long groan as he did. “Made some cookies fer Harry,” Hagrid said to Severus.

“No,” Severus quickly said as he shook his head “Harry is on a special diet at the moment, perhaps next time when his stomach is doing sufficiently better,” Severus said, leaving out the part that Harry could go without what Hagrid considered food for the rest of his life. Getting Harry to eat a rock hard cookie was not one of his plans.

Hagrid gave a small nod; seeming hurt that Harry couldn't have one of his baked goods. “Fang seems to like yeh Harry. He’s one o’ the many pets I have.” Hagrid said, trying his best to get Harry attention but failing.

“How have things been, Hagrid?” Minerva asked as Fang left Harry, the boy immediately rubbing his licked hand on his shirt.

“Been good, rescued a baby Hippogriff a few days ago, Perhaps Harry would like to see,” Hagrid said as Fang returned with a large stick, dropping it into Harry's lap.

Harry let out a small moan, pushing the stick off only for Fang to pick it back up and placed it on his lap. The second time, Harry picked up the stick he handed it over to Severus.

“Thank you,” Severus said sarcastically as he took the stick from Harry, letting out a long sigh as he felt how wet it was.

“Perhaps yeh can play fetch with Fang later, but I got something ta show yeh.” Hagrid said as he stood up and looked over at Severus.

Severus got the message, dropping the stick and stood up going behind the wheelchair, ready to follow Hagrid with Minerva.

They made their way over to Hagrid’s massive bed, where a baby Hippogriff lay in the midst of a nest of blankets, one of its wings bandaged. Severus was surprised that they hadn’t seen or heard the creature as they entered and spoke with Hagrid earlier.

The Hippogriff looked up as the four of them approached, Harry’s eyes going wide. Harry decided that this was the strangest thing he’d ever seen.

The Visit Part Two

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Eleven - The Visit Part Two

The group of three made their way over to Hagrid's massive bed, where a baby Hippogriff lay in the midst of a nest of blankets with one of its wings bandaged. Severus was surprised that they hadn't seen or heard the creature when they first entered and spoke with Hagrid earlier.

The Hippogriff looked up as the four of them approached, and Harry's eyes went wide. He decided that this was the strangest thing he'd ever seen.

Harry flinched back as the hippogriff stood on the nest of blankets, stretching out its one good wing before settling back down, turning its head back as it started to preen.

"His name is Buckbeak," Hagrid said, "I found 'im a few days ago, hurt an' abandoned in the forest. 'spect one day yeh might be able ter ride 'im." Hagrid added with a wide smile.

"Like hell," Severus thought to himself. Harry wasn't going to get on that Hippogriff, or a broom, or anything that could fly for that matter. Harry was safest on the ground and that was where he would stay.

Harry let out a small groan as Fang placed a drool covered ball into his lap. Harry kicked his legs out a bit to get the ball to roll off onto the ground, but Fang just picked it up again.

"Looks like he really wants yeh ter play fetch with 'im," Hagrid chuckled.

"Why don't we go outside for a bit," Minerva suggested.

Severus couldn't help but roll his eyes. Harry didn't have the muscle strength to hold a crayon, let alone throw a ball without someone helping him. Severus had a strong suspicion that it would end up being him. He grit his teeth as he agreed with a small nod.

Once outside, Hagrid handed Harry the ball, and Harry returned a confused look to the half-giant as the boy ran his fingers over the deep teeth marks embedded into the sphere.

Severus knelt down so he was at Harry's eye level "You throw it," Severus explained, taking Harry's hand and raising it up, making sure that Harry was gripping the ball.

"Alright let go...let go," Severus said as he brought his arm down with Harry's. Harry let go of the ball at the last second, and the ball went rolling down the hill, and the boar hound went chasing after it.

"That was really good," Minerva said, clapping her hands.

They were only able to keep it up a few more times before Harry had a meltdown. It started suddenly, with Harry banging his body against the chair. Severus held his hand behind Harry's head so the child wouldn't injure himself as he thrashed.

Minerva simply stood there with a downcast look on her face, disheartened that there wasn't anything she could do to help. Hagrid on the other hand, was shocked, unable to believe what he was seeing, and not understanding why it happened. Fang's distressed wined could be heard over Harry's screaming.

Within a few minutes, Harry calmed down, however tears were still rolling down his face as Severus turned his attention back to Hagrid. "I think we should go back to the castle," Severus said as he rose, making sure Harry wasn't going to start harming himself.

"It was nice seeing you, we'll come again soon," Minerva said before she quickly followed Severus and Harry back to the castle.

It was clear that Harry had had enough of their little adventure, as Harry kept rocking back and forth in his chair as they made their way back up to the castle, pushing against the straps that held him in place.

Harry let out a cry as he pulled at his hoodie and sunglasses, before reaching for the IV attached to his neck, too fast for Minerva or even Severus to stop him. He pulled it out, tearing the vein open as he did. Harry let out a scream as blood squirted out of his neck.

"No," Severus yelled as he quickly jumped in front of Harry, placing his hand over Harry's now opened wound. Harry let out a small moan as Severus increased the pressure of his hand, blood still seeping through his fingers.

"Oh my God," Minerva cried.

"It's alright," Severus said calmly, more for his own benefit than for Minerva's or Harry's. Severus carefully brought his other hand around and started to undo the straps, scooping Harry into his arms as soon as the boy was free of the chair.

Harry let out a low growl and started to squirm in Severus' hold "Alright...Minerva? Can you replace my hand with yours, tightly as you can" Severus instructed. She obeyed quickly, and they made the switch.

Minerva tightly pressed her hand against Harry's neck as Severus maneuvered his arms over Harry's legs and arms so he couldn't move.

Harry let out fresh screams as he was restrained, growing in pitch as Severus and Minerva made their way to the hospital. Poppy met them in the corridor, attracted by the sound of a child in pain, and shouted in shock and horror as she saw the three of them.

The Guilt

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Twelve - The Guilt

“Poppy,” Severus wheezed, struggling to keep his hold on Harry as he walked into the hospital wing, “we need blood-clotting potions, along with a calming potion.” Severus made his way to one of the beds, while Minerva still held her hand on Harry's neck.

“I can't give you a calming potion,” Poppy called from her office, amid the clinking of glass vials, “Harry is already on the maximum dosage for his weight—it would be dangerous.” The Matron appeared, filling a syringe with the blood-clotting potion, doubtful that Harry would be able to take the potion orally.

“What happened?” Poppy inquired as she quickly made her way over to the others.

“Harry pulled out his IV; we couldn't stop it,” Minerva explained, shouting to be heard over Harry's screams.

“Where's the IV?” Poppy asked, as she carefully removed Harry's arm from Severus' grasp and injected the syringe. Harry clearly felt it over his other pain, as his shrilly screamed anew.

“Why?” Severus questioned waspishly, forced to hold Harry down once more as the boy started to thrash in rage. He was amazed at how much strength Harry had when he wanted to.

“I need to see if he broke the needle,” Poppy explained, paying no attention to Severus' tone in light of the situation.

“I can go and get it; it's still outside with the wheelchair.” Minerva said, unsure if she should take her hand off Harry's neck just yet.

“Yes, go and get the IV,” Severus said, replacing Minerva hand with his and freeing her to depart. Minerva nodded, and quickly left.

“What happened?” Poppy asked, gathering up the used supplies and summoning over a chair with her wand.

“Harry was having a...bad moment,” Severus said, unsure what to call Harry's meltdowns. “He was grabbing things randomly and got a hold of the IV... I wasn't fast enough to stop him,” Severus explained.

“I wouldn't expect you to. You can remove your hand now, the bleeding should have stopped by now,” Poppy said, dipping a cloth into some rubbing alcohol.

“I was a Death Eater,” Severus complained, frustrated at himself, “and a spy for years. My reflexes are on point, I should have been able to see this coming and stop it!” Severus sighed

as he removed his hand from Harry's neck, seeing that no more blood was flowing out of the wound.

"You can't blame yourself," Poppy chided, "this isn't your fault. You haven't been active in anything but teaching for years; your reflexes have to be somewhat rusty."

The hospital matron smiled as she turned her attention to Harry, who had finally started to calm down once the pain stopped, "Alright Harry dear, let's get you cleaned up," she said, wiping down Harry neck to clean it of blood. Unsurprisingly, Harry started screaming again.

"I know it stings dear, just a bit more," Poppy said gently, dodging Harry's arm as he reflexively swung at her. Severus caught the offending limb and held it fast.

"All done, see?" Poppy said as she set down the cloth and checked Harry's neck wound. "And this doesn't look too bad either," she added with a small smile.

She handed Severus a clean cloth. "It's for Harry's face," the Matron explained, having received a confused look from Severus. Severus nodded, using the cloth to wipe Harry's tears and snot which had liberally flowed down his face the entire duration of his meltdown and the emergency. Harry moaned as he tried to push Severus' hand away.

Minerva returned, both the IV tube and wheelchair with her. "The needle is intact," Minerva stated as she arrived at Harry's bed, showing them the whole needle, unbroken.

"Alright," Poppy said, relieved, "I'll just bandage it up so Harry doesn't pick at it, and you'll be good to go."

Severus nodded. Harry twisted himself out of Severus' hold, but soon settled down once his arms were free.

"Feeling better?" Severus asked as he returned to cleaning Harry face, "I bet you're tired after all of that?" Severus said.

"We get you all cleaned up, then you can go back to your room and have a rest," Poppy said as she started to bandage the wound, glad that Harry was staying calm. "I was actually going to stop by tomorrow and take out the IV and feeding tube, as Harry is eating. Given what has happened I guess Harry wanted it out sooner," Poppy said, attempting some humor.

"You're going to take the tubing out as well then?" Minerva guessed.

"If you'd like," Poppy said as she turned to Severus "Harry is not going to like it, and like I said I can't give him anymore calming potion."

"Why not a sleeping potion?" Minerva suggested.

"Sleeping potions have many of the same ingredients as calming potions, and would cause the same problem of overdose," Severus explained as Poppy finished bandaging Harry's neck.

“But we might as well, and get it all over with,” the man added, positioning Harry onto his lap, with the boy’s back to Severus’ chest, restraining the boy with an arm around his chest and another around his legs. Harry let out a moan of protest at being restrained once more, but he was mercifully too tired to fight back.

“It be over soon Harry, just bear with me,” Poppy said as she removed the tape holding the tube in place. Once it was off, she slowly started guiding the tube out, wincing along with everyone else as Harry screamed once more, slamming his head back into Severus’ chest.

“Almost done,” Poppy said as she stood up to have the right angle to pulled the tube gently out. The tube was almost out when Harry started to choke.

“Poppy!” Severus yelled.

“It's normal, just his gag reflex,” Poppy said as she quickly removed the rest of the tubing out, setting it on the nearby side table. “All done.”

“Doesn't feel too good does it?” Severus asked as he brought the cleaning cloth up and rubbed snot from Harry's nose.

“Yes, Harry isn't the first or the last patient to complain about that procedure.” Poppy admitted, “You should get him back to your rooms, get him to rest for a little while.” She instructed.

“Should be easy.” Minerva added as they all noticed Harry's eyes already closing in exhaustion.

“Sounds good,” Severus said, standing and gathering Harry in his arms. “When will the casts be able to come off?” Severus asked before they left.

“In a few days,” Poppy replied, vanishing all the used items and starting to remake the bed that Harry had used.

“Alright, thank you Poppy,” Severus said. “Minerva do you mind bringing the chair, I don't want him to wake up if I try to set him up in it.” He requested.

Minerva nodded, following the pair of them as Severus carried Harry out of the hospital wing and back down to Severus’ rooms.

When the Storm Hits

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Thank you to everyone for the nice comments, it really means a lot to me :)

Chapter Thirteen - When the Storm Hits

Severus was currently holding Harry, even as the boy's screams swelled with each clap of thunder ringing through the castle as the summer storm surged outside. It had been seven hours since Severus and Minerva returned Harry back to his bedroom in Severus' chambers, and Harry had spent a few hours sleeping before dinner. The meal for the boy was the same, watered down oatmeal with a touch of brown sugar and sliced strawberries for flavor. Severus had payed extra attention to cut the strawberries into tiny chunks, to prevent the possibility of Harry choking if he tried to swallow them whole rather than chew. After dinner came another meltdown, but Severus had expected it this time, and was prepared.

After Harry calmed down once more, it was bath time, which came with yet another meltdown and Severus getting far wetter then Harry. Severus got Harry changed into a fresh pair of pajamas and was putting the boy down for bed when the storm started outside. Despite the magical protections that prevented the castle from being struck, nevertheless the storm shook the room slightly with each resounding boom, and Harry involuntarily jerked in response every time.

Severus was doing his best to keep Harry calm, but nothing he did seemed to work; Harry was only getting more worked up as the storm intensified.

Harry was in a panic. The loud noises and bright lights brought the dark man... the dark man with the bright green light. Harry knew that the dark man was going to take the mysterious man away and Harry would be put back in the cold, dark room.

Harry let out a scream, bringing his arm to his mouth and biting down as another round of thunder came upon the castle.

"No," Severus said calmly, pulling Harry's arm free. "We don't bite ourselves," Severus said as he placed two fingers on the boy's neck, feeling the boy's pulse racing.

"Alright, if you aren't going to calm down..." Severus said, sighing as he made his way to the kitchen and started some water boiling. Placing hot cocoa mix into Harry's special cup along with a few drops of calming potion, Severus then poured the water over the combination with equal portions of cold milk to make certain the hot chocolate wouldn't be too hot for Harry.

It had been a while since Harry's last dose of potion, so Severus was sure it wouldn't do him any harm to have a bit more.

“Alright,” Severus said as he gathered Harry into his arms and snapped the lid onto the cup. Lifting the cup to Harry's mouth however only resulted with Harry turning away and moaning loudly.

Severus let out a long breath, wishing that they'd replaced the IV that Harry pulled early, or at least kept the feeding tube in place.

“Come on Harry, just a small sip,” Severus encouraged, trying again to get the boy to drink and being pushed away again. Harry was working himself up again into a full blown meltdown.

“Come on Harry, I don't want to use the other way,” Severus said, vividly remembering Harry's reaction to injections.

Severus took in a deep breath as he tried to figure out what to do. “How about a story?” Severus asked, the idea popping into his mind. He carried Harry and the cup over to his bookshelf, disappointed to find that all he had there were potion books.

“Well, I do have one book,” Severus remembered as they went to his bedroom and pulled out an worn copy of The Tales of Beedle the Bard. Quickly he retreated back to the living room and sat down on the couch, balancing Harry, the cup, and the book in his lap

“But first,” Severus said, “you need to drink.” Swiftly, he forced the cup into Harry's mouth and tilted the boy's head slightly, massaging Harry's throat gently with his other hand to get the boy to swallow the liquid.

After a few sips, he pulled the cup back and lifted Harry head upright again, patting the boy's back as he coughed up the liquid that didn't get swallowed.

“I know, I'm sorry,” Severus said as he cleaned off Harry's face with a wet cloth that he had been using since the storm hit. “You feel better soon,” Severus added as he started to rub Harry's back.

Once the calming potion started to take effect, Severus opened the book, showing old tic-tac-toe games drawn along the inside cover, along with many completed games of hangman.

“This was your mother's book,” he said gently to Harry, “she gave it to me during our school year.”

Severus traced his fingers over the remnants of the many games they used to play. “Let's see if we can find a story to read.” Severus said as he flipped through the pages.

"High on a hill in an enchanted garden, enclosed by tall walls and protected by strong magic, flowed the Fountain of Fair Fortune..." Severus started to read, casually picking up one of Harry's chewing toys from the table and handed it to Harry. The boy had started chewing on his sleeve as he listened.

"Chew on this," Severus instructed as he placed the chewer in Harry's mouth, thankfully with the boy accepting it.

He continued to read for the next several hours, going through several stories and showing Harry the hand drawn illustrations in the book. During this time Harry started to drink his cocoa on his own, which pleased Severus to no end to see.

It was around four in the morning when he was able to get Harry to fall asleep, knowing it would be a tough day when Harry woke up next.

Harry Has a Secret

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Fourteen - Harry Has a Secret

“Time to get up,” Severus said as he entered Harry's room, flicking his wand to open up the curtains.

Harry let out a low moan as he covered his eyes with his arms, turning away from the sunlight.

“Yes, I know you’re cranky but you still need to get up,” Severus stated, pulling the blankets down.

“Nah” Harry yelled out.

Severus froze. This was the first time Harry had spoken outside of when he was having a meltdown, and Severus wasn't sure what to do. He felt like he should award Harry for communicating, but on the other hand, if he did Harry could try to use it to get what he wanted in the future.

After a long pause, he finally spoke, “Alright. A couple more hours, but then you need to get up.” Savers said. He tucked Harry back into bed and closed the curtains before leaving the room. He chose the option to have Harry actually communicate, and awarded the spoken word instead of ignoring it. In another two hours he was back however, and opened the curtains once more.

“Nah” Harry yelled as the sun folded the room. Severus sighed internally, fearing exactly this happening if he granted the desire the first time.

“Harry, I gave you two extra hours; you need to get up and have something to eat.” Severus said as he got Harry ready for the day, all the while with Harry saying “no” to everything Severus said. Despite the slight annoyance that the refusal sparked, Severus was glad to take the verbal rebelliousness over a typical meltdown.

Severus got Harry out to the kitchens and hooked the table on to the wheelchair.

“Nah” Harry cried as he pushed the table off before Severus had a chance to lock it in place.

“Mr. Cranky,” Severus warned as he glared at Harry. “I know you are tired but you need to eat. You can take a nap later on if you are still tired.”

Severus picked the table up and locked it into place, before retrieving Harry’s breakfast and setting it on the table. He scooped some of the warm oatmeal onto a spoon and holding it up for Harry to take.

The boy let out a moan as he turned his head “ Nahhh,” Harry whined as he pushed at the table once more.

“Harry,” Severus said sternly “if you don't eat then I will need to call Poppy, and you know what Poppy will do? She's going to put that tube back down your nose if you do not eat.” He felt a bit guilty to use Poppy as a threat, but it had the intended effect as Harry opened his mouth and started to eat.

Severus smiled at the thought that there some part of Harry that did understand what was going on around him and at least some of the words were said.

“That's a good boy,” Severus said gently, “how about I talk to Poppy and see if we can get you some real food for dinner?”

Just then, door to Severus’ chambers opened and Albus Dumbledore entered briskly. Harry turned his head to see what was going on only to scream as he saw the Headmaster. His breathing became uneven as he started to panic, with tears rolling down his face.

Severus quickly got up and made his way over, quickly pushing Albus out of the door and closing it behind himself. “You do not budge into my chambers” Severus spat at the garishly dressed old man.

“What is the meaning of this? Albus demanded in a harsh whisper.

“You... You told me you checked on him, if you checked on him he wouldn't be like this. Those monsters locked him in a cage and tortured him.” Severus sniped back, his own anger swelling.

“Severus let me explain.” Albus said, backing down from his previous anger, but Severus was only getting warmed up.

“NO!” Severus snapped loudly, overriding the Headmaster, “no explanation can sweep this away! Go and talk to Poppy if you must know what this is about, she will explain everything...I can't even look at you right now!” Severus said as he took in a deep breath. Reentering his chambers, Severus sighed in defeat as he saw Harry banging his head against the wheelchair and biting his arm hard enough to draw blood.

“Harry!” Severus said quickly, running over to Harry removing his arm from his mouth. He snatched the nearby tea towel from the table and pressing it aghast the bloody bite marks. “I shouldn't have left you alone,” Severus chided himself as he unhooked the table and picked Harry up so he couldn't harm himself anymore.

Harry screamed again, Severus feeling the boy's heart beating rapidly and Harry's lungs on fire as the boy clung tightly to Severus' robes.

“I got you, I got you. Everything is alright” Severus soothed, rubbing Harry's back as he sat down on the couch, but something struck him as he did so, and the notion refused to sit right with him. Both Minerva and Poppy had walked in and out of his chambers with no announcement before and Harry had never reacted like this to them.

“Shh you're alright” Severus said once more, holding Harry tightly. He knew it was dangerous, especially with how delicate Harry mind was but something was eating at Severus, and he needed to know what.

“Please don't fight me, Harry.” Severus pleaded as he looked into the child's eyes, seeing Lily’s staring back at him.

“Legilimens,” Severus said as he dove into Harry's mind.

Severus felt cold, almost like the presence of a dementor as the images went by in a flash, almost like Harry couldn't decide on any one thought, but a few images held long enough for Severus to see.

He saw Albus walking down the basement stairs, pulling Harry out of the cage by his hair and feeding him some unknown potion.

Then the image flashed to Harry’s walrus of an uncle shoving moldy bread through the cage along with a dirty glass of water.

The image changed again to Harry chewing on the cage’s bars like a wild dog.

The image changed to the worst of all: that of Albus casting the Cruciatus Curse on Harry, before Severus removed himself from Harry's mind, feeling sick to his stomach.

Severus took in a few deep breaths as he thought about the images he saw, finding it hard to believe that Albus would hurt an innocent child.

“We have to go,” Severus said quickly, rising with Harry in his arms and made his way to his room, setting Harry on the bed as he started to pack.

Running Away

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Fifteen - Running Away

Severus packed Harry's things as quickly as he could; not wanting to take any risks that Albus would come back.

Lifting Harry into his arms, along with the bag of shrunken items, Severus went for his room. Inside, he snatched up his personal emergency bag, something he had packed many years ago. Being under cover he had understood that he may need to leave at a moment's notice. Severus had never thought it would be a threat from Albus that caused him to have need of it however.

Out in the kitchen, he shrunk Harry's wheelchair, along with the various bags. He placed these in his pockets, and placed one of Harry's sensory chews into the child's mouth to keep him silent, clipping the item to the boy's shirt to prevent it from falling too far out of reach. He was halfway to the Floo before he stopped. Albus probably had the networked tracked.

"Plan B, then," Severus said to himself. He quickly slipped from his chambers, skirting through every secret passage he could, just in case he was followed. He remembered many of them, having discovered and made use of the same during his days at Hogwarts, avoiding James Potter and his gang.

It wasn't long before he made his way to his destination: Minerva chambers. He didn't bother to knock as he barged in.

"Severus... My goodness, what happened!?" Minerva said, seeing the blood on Harry's arm from the recent meltdown.

"Never mind that." Severus said in a rush, "Don't say anything, just listen. We need to leave now, pack your things and get Poppy to meet me outside the castle. Do not speak to the Headmaster..."

"Albus is back? What's going on?" Minerva demanded.

"Just do as I say," Severus said, overriding her, "I will explain later just don't talk to Albus no matter what."

"But..."

"Minerva, just do as I say for once in your life," Severus snapped.

"What about Hagrid?" Minerva asked stubbornly as she crossed her arms.

Severus let out a long sigh. "Alright, get Poppy. I'll get Hagrid. Just meet us outside the gates of Hogwarts." Severus said, quickly left the chambers and taking the secrets passages back

down to the Entrance Hall. Once he was outside he bee-lined for the small hut of the half-giant, kicking the door with his foot as he repositioned Harry in his arms.

Hagrid opened the door with a big smile on his face., “ Stopped by for a visit did yer?”

“Don’t talk, just listen and don't ask questions.” Severus said, pushing past Hagrid as he made his way inside. “I know it's difficult but just listen,” he repeated as Hagrid opened his mouth to question him. “Pack up whatever you need, we’re leaving Hogwarts along with Minerva and Poppy,” Severus explained.

“What? Why?” Hagrid asked confused.

Severus repositioned Harry once more, the boy moaning in protest. “Just do what I say and I will explain later but we have to hurry, NOW” Severus said, raising his voice.

“What about Buckbeak? And Fang?” Hagrid asked.

“Forget about the creatures.” Severus snapped.

“I'm not leaving them behind.” Hagrid argued.

Severus bounced a little, trying to calm Harry down, even as the boy was starting to get worked up. “Fine,” he relented, “just meet us outside the gates of Hogwarts, and fast.” Severus demanded as he quickly left.

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Minerva made her way down to the hospital wing after she finished packing, still confused about exactly what was happening. As she entered the hospital wing however, she saw Albus talking to Poppy, and Severus words rang through her head.

“Albus it’s nice to see you back, Poppy I need to talk to you about a first-year who coming this year with some medical needs, I just visited his family,” Minerva said with a smile.

“Oh... Alright, if you’ll excuse us Headmaster,” Poppy replied, knowing that Minerva was lying for some unknown reason.

“It’s nice to see you to Minerva,” Albus said, turning to walk out of the hospital wing. “Oh, Minerva?” Albus added as he reached the door, “Please come to see me in my office after you are done.” The man said with a twinkle in his eyes before departing the hospital wing.

“What's going on?” Poppy questioned once Albus left.

“I don’t know,” Minerva admitted, “just that Severus came to my chambers and said that we all need to go; that it's not safe... Just packed up what you need for Harry.” Minerva explained.

Poppy paused for a long moment, before she gave a small nod and started to pack all manner of emergency potions and salves. Being Severus’ healer during the war she knew to trust the man without question, so she wasn't going to start now.

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Once all four of them were at the gate, with Hagrid holding the baby hippogriff and his pet boarhound at his side, Severus gave the next series of instructions. "Alright We going to apparate to Hogsmeade," Severus said as he did just that.

Minerva looked confused, but placed her hand on Hagrid shoulder as she apparated the half-giant and his pets along with Poppy.

Once in the center of the town Severus quickly pulled Harry's hood up, covering his face so he couldn't be recognized by anyone. Harry let out a small cry of annoyance as the hood was roughly pulled over his head.

"We need a place to stay, somewhere that Albus doesn't know about." Severus quickly said as passerby's stared at them as they walked past.

"Why?" Minerva ask

"I'll explain later." Severus said sharply, making Harry cry out again, "Anyway I don't care where just as long as Albus doesn't know where it is." Severus continued as he rubbed Harry's back a little, trying to get the child to calm down.

"I have a safe house I used during the war, Albus doesn't know about it." Minerva finally offered.

"Are you sure he doesn't know about it?" Severus questioned receiving a firm nod from Minerva.

"Take us then," Severus said as all four of them gathered close to apparate.

Being Abandoned

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Sixteen - Being Abandoned

"I don't believe it," Hagrid shouted indignantly, hair flying about his face as he angrily shook his head. The three adults sat in the living room of Minerva's safe-house, while Harry was soundly asleep in another room, but even then Severus shushed the half-giant. Putting Harry back to bed if he was awoken by the bellowing would be next to impossible.

"That doesn't change what I saw," Severus stated, looking down at the ground.

"What you saw had to be wrong, Albus would never do such a thing, especially to Harry." Hagrid shouted once more, already forgetting Severus' warning about waking Harry.

"Would you be quiet, you going to wake Harry, and I won't be able to get him back to sleep if you do." Severus whispered harshly. "The only way I could see the memory being false is if Harry deliberately showed me a false memory. I don't think Harry has enough cognitive awareness for that, do you?"

"Maybe it was Polyjuice potion?" Minerva said, also trying to find an alternative reason for what Severus saw.

"The only people who knew where Harry was hidden were Hagrid, you, Albus, and myself. If it's not Albus it's one of us," Severus shot back, still very irritated from arguing with the half-giant.

"Maybe someone else found out where Harry was," Poppy chimed in.

"That isn't possible," Minerva added sadly, "Albus said there were protections on that house that would keep others from finding or harming Harry while he lived there with his family." She explained, hissing the final word.

"It had to be either Albus, or one of us, there are no other options," Severus stated with finality.

"You're wrong," Hagrid said angrily as he stood and stomped outside, slamming the door behind him, and waking Harry in the process.

"Damn" Severus cursed as he heard Harry cry, before making his way into the room the boy had been using to rest.

"In any case, I have to go back to the school, the students need me, and I have a hospital wing to run," Poppy said, following Severus into the room beside Minerva.

"Are you insane?" Severus barked back over Harry's crying, "It's not safe to be at Hogwarts. Not until we know what's going on." He said, gathering Harry into his arms, rubbing the

child's back as he walked around the room to calm him.

"It's not safe for you or Harry perhaps, but Albus won't dare harm us... he knows that he can't manage the school or keep up appearances without us there doing our jobs." Minerva responded.

"You want to go back too?" Severus asked, disbelieving."

Deep down Severus knew that they had to go back, they have to protect everyone else, all the children that would be returning in just a few week's time. He knew these two wouldn't abandon the school, they had a duty to protect those within it. He did as well, but Harry was his priority, and he wouldn't permit this child to be near Dumbledore ever again, even if he had to sacrifice everything else to achieve it.

"If it is Albus, then we need to protect the other students." Poppy said, "we can't do that if we are all here hiding. I know you need to protect Harry first, but you can't forget about the other people that need our help. You stay here with Harry and we will go back. I will come by when I can to check on Harry."

"...I can't," Severus admitted, "I can't look after Harry on my own."

"What do you think you been doing all this time?" Minerva asks "You been looking after Harry, not me, not Poppy, you. Look what you're doing right now, you're comforting him. You know this is the right decision, Severus."

Severus let out a long breath as he rubbed Harry's back. Returning to the living room, Severus went for his emergency bag and pulled out two small pill-shaped items. Handing them to both Minerva and Poppy, he explained, "I made these a few years ago, it's an counter to Veritaserum, just place it under your tongue and you're immune."

"Thank you," Minerva said, glad that Severus had seen reason, and gratefully took the pill from him.

"When you get back to Hogwarts, erase this meeting from Hagrid's memory. He can't keep a secret if his life depending on it. I do not trust those loose lips with mine." Severus added bitterly. Minerva and Poppy exchanged sorrowful glances, but understood the truth of what he had said, and nodded.

"I also want to take Harry off the calming potions," Severus stated, sitting down on the couch, keeping Harry on his lap and allowing Harry to lay his head on Severus' shoulder.

"Severus, if Harry has a bout of accidental magic..." Poppy warned.

"If Albus finds were we are, then im counting on it," Severus said with a dangerous smirk. "I'm not strong enough to stop Albus if he comes for Harry, but Harry certainly is. I'm taking the chance to protect him and taking I want him off the potions so he can use his magic if he needs to." Severus explained as he looked up at the two.

"If you're sure, we'll do it," Poppy said.

“Don't send any owls to us either, play it safe,” Severus added as the two professors exited to return to the castle with their gamekeeper, leaving Severus alone with Harry.

Nightmare Bonding

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Seventeen- Nightmare Bonding

Severus started awake, roused by Harry's screams. The boy had been suffering for the past week and a half, ever since Severus had taken Harry off his calming potion. It seemed that the boy's nightmares had been far worse than Severus had ever suspected.

Severus sighed and arose, heading to Harry's room, watching the wallpaper magically peeled itself from the walls as Harry's intense accidental magic reacted to his terror.

Severus wasn't sure whether Harry knew that he wasn't a threat or not, because, despite all the damage done to the room every time one of these nightmares happened, the wallpaper peelings, shards of broken glass, and splintered floorboards flying about the room, Severus was never injured.

He did; however, have to place makeshift elbow restraints on Harry before the boy tried to sleep, so the child shove either hand into his mouth and viciously shred the skin. Additionally, he had put netting around the bed so Harry wouldn't fall while he was thrashing side to side in his sleep.

"Come on Harry, every night we do this," Severus said wearily, lifting Harry into his arms and holding him tightly. He had figured out a in the first few nights that Harry liked gentle pressure around his joints, and that it wa a surefire way to sooth the child.

Harry suddenly woke in reaction, kicking hard as his nightmare transformed into a meltdown from.

"Shh," Severus hushed, "it's just me Harry; you're alright. It was just another dream," Severus replied softly as he held Harry tightly.

"Ur... ur," Harry softly murmured, settling down and burying his face in Severus' neck.

"No one is hurting you, Harry, you're alright," Severus replied, figuring that Harry was trying to say 'hurt.' After the first handful of times the boy had said the same thing after a nightmare.

"You want some hot coco?" Severus asked, trying to always allow Harry to have a warm cup after a nightmare. The soothing liquid seemed to calm him down enough to go back to sleep.

"Ya..." Harry muttered after a moment, starting to chew on Severus' shirt collar.

Severus smiled. For the past week and a half Harry has become more vocal with him, and Severus couldn't be happier with the progress.

“Don’t do that,” Severus said, pulling Harry from his shirt, removing the restraints and offering Harry one of the chews from the side table.

Harry gladly took it and placed it in his mouth, chewing contently while Severus carried him to the kitchen and proceeded to make the hot coco. If he had to say so himself, Severus thought he was getting good at operating around the small house one-handedly, balancing the boy on his other hip.

Once Severus was done placing the coco in Harry's cup he sat down in the living room, settling Harry on his lap. “It's hot,” Severus warned, even though it was more lukewarm at best, as he gave Harry the cup.

Harry opened his mouth, the chewer falling out as it was eagerly replaced with the cup. Harry drank the coco happily as Severus took out some photos he'd found from Minerva's things a few days ago. He had pictures of himself, Minerva, Poppy, Albus, and Harry aunt and uncle. How the Transfiguration Mistress had gotten a hold of nonwizarding pictures of the two muggles he did not know, nor did he want to know, but it was helpful to him all the same.

Laying out the pictures on the coffee table, Severus directed Harry's attention to them. “Harry, can you tell me who hurt you in your dream?” Severus questioned, checking whether he would get the answer he has gotten every time over the last few nights.

“Ur,” Harry mumbled, pointing to Albus' picture.

“Can you tell me how he hurt you?” Severus asked, only to Harry to just look at him, confused.

“Yeah... to complicated,” Severus admitted to himself as he held Harry, running his fingers through the child's hair that has grown quite long and wild over the past week and a half, another piece accidental magic that Harry was doing nightly.

“You think Poppy and Minerva might come today?” Severus asked as he pointed to the two photos of them.

“Nah” Harry replied quietly around his cup.

“No?” Severus asked, chuckling a bit in delight at being able to actually speak to the boy “You may be right.” Severus said with a frown as he wondered what could be happening back at Hogwarts.

He knew that school was going to start in the next week, and at best they were both extremely busy getting the final details of the next term ready.

“You ready to go back to bed?” Severus asked, standing once Harry had stopped drinking the coco and was playing with the cup. It never took long for Harry to drink, as he chugged anything Severus gave him. Severus hadn't the heart to stop the child, when he was thrilled to be so trusted, but he still kept a close eye on Harry when he had something to eat or drink in case the boy started choking from consuming too fast.

Severus started to take Harry back to his room, and was about to lay the boy back down when Harry's grip tightened around his arm "UR...UR!" Harry cried out.

"Harry, no one is going to hurt you, it was just a nightmare," Severus reassured the child.

"UR!" Harry cried out again, still holding tightly to Severus' arm.

"Alright... Alright" Severus surrendered, lifting Harry once more "How about you sleep with me tonight?" Severus asked, turning toward his own room. Harry did not protest as Severus placed the boy down on the side closest to the wall, getting in himself afterward with long breath.

"Alright," Severus said as he pulled the blanket up and tucked Harry in, noticing that Harry had managed to hang onto one of his chewy all the way back to bed with him "You alright now? No one is going to hurt you, not as long as I'm here." Severus said as he closed his eyes. Soon he was back off to sleep himself.

A Sacrifice

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Eighteen - A Sacrifice

“Morning Poppy, Pancakes?” Severus asked, not even looking up as Poppy entered the safe house.

“Let me guess, you have sensory charms set around the house?” Poppy questioned, setting her bags on the table. There were extras than a normal witch’s handbag, and Severus assumed that they were filled with supplies for himself and Harry.

“Extending approximately a hundred miles out or so,” Severus affirmed. “I have both you and Minerva keyed to the charm so that I know it's you. Pancakes?” Severus offered again.

“Well, you made the front page,” Poppy announced, handing Severus the morning edition of The Daily Prophet. “And no, I already had breakfast, but thank you.”

“Severus Snape, potion Master of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry... Kidnapped the Boy-Who-Lived,” Severus read, his voice raising as his anger grew. He threw the paper down on the kitchen table. “I kidnapped Harry?”

“You didn't get to the good part yet,” Poppy replied, smiling grimly as she took the paper and sat at the table.

“This isn't a joke.”

“I know... Harry isn't up yet?” Poppy asked.

“Harry has been having nightmares since I took him off his potions, so I usually let him sleep in for a little while,” Severus said.

“Besides the nightmares then, how is he doing?” Poppy clarified.

“His communication is improving drastically, along with his appetite, although I still have to watch and make sure he doesn't choke by eating too fast,” Severus explained.

Poppy nodded in understanding, “I brought you both some more food, Minerva and myself figured you two would be running out soon.”

“Yes, thank you. I was getting a little worried.” Severus answered as a banging started up from the direction of the bedrooms.

“What’s that?” Poppy asked, looking around.

“Harry,” Severus said, “he bangs his arms on the walls to let me know he's up... watch the pancakes, would you?” Severus quickly walked down the hallway and into Harry’s room.

“Morning Harry, guess who's here?” Severus said, walking over to Harry and drawing the blankets back.

“Naw,” Harry yelled out, pulling the blankets back up as far as he could.

“Yes, I know you're grumpy in the morning but don't you want to see Poppy?” Severus countered.

“Naw,” Harry yelled again, but the small smile at the boy’s lips showed Severus that Harry just wanted to play.

“Poppy is going to be upset that she didn't get to see you, you don't want to make Poppy sad do you?” Severus asked.

“Naw,” Harry mumbled, finding and placing a chewy in his mouth, one of the ones that he brought to bed last night.

“Then let's get you dressed for the day,” Severus announced, lifting Harry into his arms. After getting the boy into some fresh clothes, Severus carried him out to the kitchen and placed him in his wheelchair.

“Morning Harry, What is this?” Poppy stated, reaching over and running her fingers through his hair. Harry smiled and reached up, pulling his hoodie over his face as he turned away from Poppy.

“I see someone is being shy this morning,” Poppy said, smiling as she leaned back in her seat. “I came to take those casts off, they should have been off a week ago but I couldn't get away.”

“How is everything going at Hogwarts? With Albus?” Severus inquired, setting a plate on Harry's tray with cut up some pancake along with a small bowl of yogurt.

Harry let out a small moan as he banged his hand on the table lightly.

“No, I don't understand that, use your words,” Severus said, handing Harry his communication booklet.

Harry eyed Poppy for a second, before banging on the table once more.

“I don't understand that Harry, show me what you want,” Severus said calmly as he got himself a plate. “Are you sure I can’t get you anything Poppy?” Severus added.

Poppy shook her head. “I’m fine, really and everything been going well at Hogwarts, Albus is asking a lot of questions but that’s it, I also have a feeling that he's the one that put the kidnapping...”

“Of course he's the one that did it,” Severus said, cutting Poppy off. “I... I just don't know how to fight him, fight someone as powerful as Albus.

Harry let out a small moan, pulling Severus and Poppy from their conversations as he pulled a picture of juice off the paper from the book.

“You want juice? Thank you for using your words, I can get you juice,” Severus stated as he grabbed one of Harry's cups.

“What if you go back into Harry's mind?” Poppy suggested.

“No, I shouldn't have done it in the first place; with Harry's mind... It's too dangerous for both Harry and me.” Severus answered, handing Harry his drink.

“But if it could give us answers, what if you did when he was sleeping?”

“Then I would be stuck in one of his nightmares, and nightmares aren't always truth.”

“Severus this seems to be the only option. Minerva and I could be there to make sure you stay grounded and that Harry remains clam. We know it's dangerous but it's the only thing we have at the moment, Minerva and I can both be here tomorrow.”

Severus let out a long breath as he thought about what Poppy said, watching Harry as he dipped pieces of his pancakes in his yogurt.

“Alright, I'll do it,” Severus said at last.

Waking Nightmare

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Nineteen - Waking Nightmare

Severus got up and prepared Harry for a typical day. The only difference now was that he had to place leg braces over Harry legs, which Poppy had provided when she removed the casts. Harry's legs were very still weak and needed the extra support that the brace provided, but it was clear that Harry disliked them.

Even as Severus tried to get them in place and bind the straps, Harry kept crying out in frustration and pulling his legs back. by the time Severus got the leg braces on, Harry was well within a full meltdown.

Severus flipped his head back quickly to throw his sweaty bangs out of his face, "Alright, that counts as my work out for today." He joked, completely out of breath. Harry froze in the middle of his fit, starting to choke on his saliva.

"No, you don't," Severus responded, quickly lifting Harry into his arms and patting him on the back. "If Poppy comes and sees you choking then I'll never hear the end of it."

Once he was sure that the airway was clear, Severus made his way to the kitchen and filled one of Harry's cups with pumpkin juice. Harry tried to refuse, but Severus pressed the cup up against Harry's lips and forced him to drink.

"I don't understand why you're acting like this; you handled the cast just fine," Severus stated calmly, finally pulling the cup back so Harry could take a breath of air. "Poppy even got you red and gold braces, because she thinks you're a Gryffindor."

"He will be," Poppy said, walking into the safe house, "you didn't hear me come up to the house?" Poppy questioned.

"I did," Severus affirmed, "but I was busy with Harry. He was having a hard time with the braces," Severus explained, pulling Harry's hand away from the boy's mouth. "Hand me one of...Harry...things." Severus said, too busy stopping Harry from hurting himself to think of the word he wanted.

Poppy understood, and retrieved one of Harry's Sensory Chews from the table.

"We don't hurt ourselves because we're mad or upset," Severus said, placing the chew in Harry's mouth.

"Where's Minerva, I thought both of you were coming today," Severus asked, turning to Poppy as he sat down on the couch with Harry.

“She is,” Poppy assured him, “she's just running a bit late this morning. Have you tried standing Harry up yet?” Poppy asked.

“No, I was busy with a meltdown Harry was having this morning.” Severus snapped.

“Harry, had another nightmare last night?” Poppy asks, noticing Severus' low temper, not with it being high in the first place.

“Every night...” Severus muttered, watching as Harry started to calm down. “Are you ready for breakfast?” Severus asked, running his hand through the child's hair before carrying Harry to his chair and strapping him in.

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“Alright, just make sure Harry remains calm, and that I'm not gone too long, time moves far slower in memories. Make sure I'm back within five hours,” Severus explained, and both Poppy and Minerva nodded.

“Harry will be good,” Poppy said. Harry had a bunch of actives laid out on his tray to keep him busy.

“We make sure you get out in time,” Minerva stated putting her hand on Severus' shoulder for a moment.

“Don't fight me, Harry,” Severus said, placing his hands on Harry's temples, “Legilimens.”

Severus quickly found himself back in Harry's mind. It was just as cold and dark as the last time, but something was different, less intense. It no longer felt like a dementor was sucking out his soul just by being there.

Severus looked around, and found a door. Severus slowly approached it, finding that he was stepping into puddles of water. The closer to the door, the larger the puddles became. “Just open the door,” Severus said, assuring himself as he pushed forward, drawing near the door, his hand almost touching the handle.

Taking a deep breath, Severus turned the handle and walked through the door. He found himself back in the dreaded basement, complete with Harry back in the cage. Severus held his breath as he heard footsteps come down the stairs, not looking up, afraid of what he would see.

“Let's try this again shall we?” Albus' voice came from the far end of the room, followed by a small whimper from Harry. As Albus made his way closer to the cage and opened it, Severus winced to see the man he once respected dragging the boy out by his hair.

Albus threw Harry on the floor and took out his wand. Within seconds Harry's legs were broken causing the boy to cry out in pain.

“Can't have you kicking me again, can we?” Albus stated, lifting Harry by the hair again, and forced the same potion Severus had seen before, dropping Harry to the ground only when the vial was drained.

“Let's try this again,” Albus said to himself, taking a syringe from his robes. Before Harry could even recover from being dropped on the floor, Albus had snatched him up again and stuck the needle deep into the boy's arm, pulling back on the plunger and drawing a small amount of blood.

Albus dropped Harry once again, rolled up his own sleeve and slowly injected himself with Harry's blood, doubling over in pain seconds later. A few minutes later, Albus was able to stand up straight again. He drew his wand and leveled the Cruciatus Curse on Harry in anger for a long moment.

Severus had to turn away, unable to witness Harry writhing on the ground and screaming in pain. Finally, the curse was lifted and Severus turned back.

“I'm going to get your power one way or another.” Albus hissed. He grabbed Harry by the hair once more and shoved him back into the cage, locking it with his wand before disappearing back upstairs.

Severus stayed in the memory for a few more moments as he watched Harry folding in on himself, his body shaking from the after-effects of Cruciatus.

Soon the memory shifted completely, carrying Severus along with it, “Lily...” Severus breathed, now standing in Harry's nursery, watching as Lily tried to rock Harry to sleep.

“It's imposable for Harry to remembers this,” Severus remarked as a flash of lightning went off out the nursery window. In a rush, Severus realized what night this was. “No...” Severus said, trying to deny what he was seeing, even as a loud bang exploded outside.

“Change, please change...” Severus begged, not wanting to witness the women that he loved die, but his prayers went unheard as the door to the nursery was blown off its hinges. In a flash of green light, Lily fell to the floor.

"No," Severus cried, as the memory finally shifted.

“I don't care, the freak is getting out of control,” a new voice demanded “either take him or I'll just kill him and you can deal with the freak's body.”

“I will give him something to keep his magic at bay, I don't want him using it just as much as you do.” Albus' voice responded. Severus could only guess that the other voice was Harry's uncle.

“I also want more money, three hundred more for keeping the freak.” The walrus of a man demanded.

“Deal, I'll see you next week, with the money,” Albus replied. Severus shut his eyes, troubled deeply by the level of evil that the old man had sunk to.

...

“Severus you need to come out, Severus can you hear me? You need to get out of Harry's mind now, your time is up.” Severus could hear Poppy call. He forced himself out of Harry's memories and back into the waking world, taking in a few deep breaths as his body jolted back to reality.

Severus looked up to see Harry looking up at the ceiling and silently crying. “You’re alright Harry, everything is fine,” Severus said as he unlocked the table and lifted Harry into his arms.

Harry let out a small whimper as he was picked up.

“Come back to me Harry, it's all over.” Severus said soothingly.

“What did you see” Minerva asked.

“Albus...” Severus said, closing his eyes at the painful things he had seen. “Albus wants Harry's magic; as far as I can tell he’s been trying to steal it for years, paying Harry's uncle to keep him locked up like a prisoner until he succeeds. He also was feeding Harry a potion to keep his magic bound, which explained why Harry didn't use his magic until now.”

“And you sure it was Albus?” Poppy asked.

“I didn't see any evidence that a person was using Polyjuice potion.” Severus affirmed.

“So what now?” Minerva asked, looking worried.

“I don’t know... I really don't know.” Severus said as he looked down at Harry.

Discovery

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Twenty – Discovery

Severus woke in a cold sweat, the same as for the past three months. It had started since he entered Harry's mind and witnessed Lilly's death; he just couldn't get a full night sleep when every night he was plagued with nightmares, some seeing Lily's death on repeat, and others with Lily blaming him for what happen to Harry.

Severus turned his head, seeing that Harry was sleeping peacefully next to him. Harry had fought him every step of the way about returning to sleep in his own bed. Ever since he's witnessed the darkest memories that the boy held, Harry has been very clingy.

Severus carefully slid out of bed, careful not to wake Harry, and slowly made his way to the kitchen, avoiding the spots on the floor that creaked.

Pouring himself a glass of water, Severus sat down at the table and pondered his latest series of nightmares, staring into the water as it sloshed around in the glass.

Severus tried his best not to think about what he'd witnessed in Harry's memories, chiefly because he didn't know what to do regarding the information. How could he prove to the world that Albus Dumbledore was not the man he said he was? Severus prided himself on knowing people; it was what made him an excellent spy, but somehow Albus' true nature slipped past him along with everyone else. Briefly Severus even wondered if the Dark Lord had known the true depths of the old man's darkness.

Severus was pulled from his thoughts by the sound of Harry screaming. He realized with a jolt that he'd been sitting at the kitchen table for hours. Severus let out a small groan, rose and made his way back to the bedroom, spotting that the sun was already rising.

"Harry... this needs to stop," Severus said quietly as he picked the child up. Severus was running on four hours of sleep a night and it was starting to take its toll on him.

"No one is going to hurt you, you need to detach yourself from me," Severus remarked, taking Harry to the boy's room and laying him down on the bed, started their morning routine.

He changed Harry into some fresh clothes and strapping the legs braces, which Harry had long ago stopped fighting him over, before taking Harry out to the kitchen and setting him in his chair. Severus placed some crayons and a coloring book in front of Harry, "work on your book when I make some breakfast."

Harry just gave a small nod, absently picking up the blue crayon and starting to color the grass on the random page the book had opened to.

Severus let out a small smile as he leaned forward, “are you going to talk to me this morning?” he asked, noticing that Harry hasn't said anything since he woke up.

“M-m-morn...ing... Sev,” Harry whispered, not looking up as he spoke.

Severus couldn't help but smile at the nickname that Harry gave him, mostly because Harry couldn't say the whole word. Minerva was Min and Poppy was just Poppy.

“Good morning Harry, how do you feel about pancakes and pumpkin juice this morning?” Severus asked.

“Ya...” Harry whispered as he continues to color.

“Alright, pancakes it is then,” Severus said as he started on breakfast.

...

Poppy and Minerva walked in, hearing screaming coming from the living room. Entering the living room, they saw Severus holding Harry up as he tried to get the child to walk.

“Morning,” Severus said, keeping his attention on Harry.

“I-ic-ce... c-cre-eem,” Harry cried out, coughing afterward, as tears and snot dripped down his face.

“You get ice cream after you walk, you know the rules. I just want a few steps Harry, you can do it.” Severus said, trying to push one of Harry's legs forwards with his own.

Harry let out a scream, but pushed one of his feet forward by himself.

“Good job Harry,” Severus encouraged “Just a few more and then you can have some ice cream.

Harry cried his way through the physical therapy, but soon he had made his way across to the other side of the room with Severus' help.

“You want the couch or your chair?” Severus asked.

“C-Cou... ch,” Harry stuttered as he continued to cry.

“Alright,” Severus said, picking Harry up and placing him on the couch, wiping Harry's face with a cloth to clear up the snot, sweat and tears.

“You did very well; I'll go get your ice cream, is it alright if Minerva and Poppy stay with you?” Severus asked.

Harry looked over to the two ladies before he gave a small nod. “Ya...” Harry whispered as he calmed down.

“Alright,” Severus said, quickly leaving the room to get the ice cream.

“How are you doing Harry?” Poppy asked once Severus left the room.

Harry gave a small smile as he looked down into his lap. “Good... Poppy,” Harry said as he pulled his hood over his head.

“Don't play shy with us,” Minerva said, causing Harry to giggle slightly. “How do you like the snow, Harry?”

“Cold...” Harry mumbled.

“And yet you are having ice cream,” Minerva said with a smile.

“Ya...” Harry said, not seeing the irony in it, turning with a large smile as Severus walked back in with a tray of ice cream and three cups of tea, offering the beverage to Minerva and Poppy before making his way to Harry.

“What the rule about ice cream?” Severus asked before giving Harry his bowl.

“Spoon...” Harry whispered.

“That's right, we use our spoon,” Severus said, giving Harry his bowl and allowing Harry to grab the spoon from his hand.

“He’s still whispering?” Minerva asks as soon as Severus sat down.

“Whisper or yelling,” Severus said with a small sigh, “he's still not sleeping in his bed and doesn't want to be alone,” Severus added as he sipped his tea.

“He will get there, just give him time,” Minerva said with a small smile.

“How Hogwarts?” Severus asked, turning the subject away from himself and Harry to Hogwarts.

“Well, it's December, so everyone is nuts about Christmas, already had some injuries due to ice.” Poppy explained.

“Albus hasn't shown himself lately. He kept himself locked away up in his office,” Minerva added in.

“That can't be good,” Severus mumble to himself, “And I still don't know what I'm going to do yet, Harry and I can’t hide away forever.”

“The wizarding world has been in chaos since the paper came out, saying that you kidnapped Harry,” Poppy said with a frown.

“I expected so, the Boy-Who-Lived is missing... Just imagine what would happen when people find out what really happened to him.” Severus said, looking up as alarms went off throughout the house.

Severus, Minerva, and Poppy all leapt to their feet, tea forgotten, and terse looks on their faces. Harry screamed due to the noise, dropping his ice cream on the floor and covering his ears with his hands. Everything seemed to move in slow motion for Severus as he quickly gathered Harry in his arms and turned to flee, even as Albus blew the door off its hinges, his eyes locking on Harry.

Show Down, Part One

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Twenty-One - Show Down, Part One

Severus tightly closed his eyes, expecting an exploding of Harry's magic, but after a few seconds of heavy breathing and no sounds he opened his eyes. Severus felt his stomach drop, realizing that his plan to defeat Albus using Harry's overpowered magic failed; he didn't expect Harry to be frozen in fear at the sight of the man, for his magic to seize just like the boy's muscles.

"No!" Severus yelled as he saw Albus quickly draw his wand, throwing a stream of red stunners towards Poppy, hitting her in the chest and sending her flying into the wall. The impact her body made left an indent in the wall from the force of the spells. It happened so fast that neither Severus nor Minerva had time to even blink, let alone act to block the spells.

Severus took in a deep breath, looking at Poppy lying motionless on the ground, believing that this was the end. He wasn't afraid of dying, but he was afraid of leaving Harry alone, unprotected; he was afraid of failing his promise to Lily. That Halloween night he promised to protect Harry, and he already failed her once. And he was about to fail her again, he was about to fail Harry again.

He was quickly torn back to reality as Minerva tore her wand from her sleeve and threw a jet of emerald green light at Albus. The old man merely flicked his wand to block the attack, only to quickly bring it forward again as he cast a spell in return at Minerva. The Transfiguration Mistress barely got a shield in place to block the incoming attack, causing sparks to fly everywhere.

"Severus... take Harry and run!" Minerva yelled just as Severus swapped Harry to his other arm and was about to take out his wand that he kept up his sleeve.

Severus couldn't help but be momentarily frozen by Minerva words; he was brought back to when he entered Harry's memoirs. That Halloween night; seeing James as he told Lilly to take Harry and run.

Severus would always say aloud that James Potter was a bully; an arrogant and lazy person that barely got by in life but there was one thing certain in the face of Severus' bluster. James was a brave man, too brave for his own good, but he was brave and he had been willing to give his life for the people that he loved.

"Severus..." Minerva screamed again before she too was hit by one of Albus' many spells, collapsing next to Poppy.

Severus quickly took out his wand and cast a shielding charm on the two before he held Harry tightly and apparated with enough force to cause the house to collapse. There was a reason why it was impolite to apparate indoors, the pressure of the apparition could cause a

small implosion to occur, damaging the exiting point, but Severus was hoping such a thing would slow Albus down just enough to could get a head start, just enough time to come up with a plan for escape.

Severus appeared just outside the gates of Hogwarts, avoiding Harry's vomit as they landed hard on the ground, another potential side effect of apparating. Harry cried out as his stomach churned, and Severus knew that the sudden journey was going to be awful for him. Severus held Harry tightly, feeling the cold, winter wind bite at their skin. Severus started to walk, realizing he was standing in two feet of snow.

"Alright, It's alright Harry," Severus said, but he wasn't sure if he was trying to reassure Harry or himself. Slowly, he made his way toward where the Whomping Willow was planted. He immobilized the branches with a quick wave of his wand, ducking into the mouth of the secret passage.

"Shh... it's alright Harry," Severus said, trying to quite Harry down. Severus took off his outer robes and wrapped it around the boy to keep in warm. He added a spell to silence and sound Harry might make, as a last ditch effort to keep him hidden. Hopefully Harry's powerful accidental magic wouldn't act up and unweave the spell.

"I know Harry," Severus whispered, holding Harry in his arms, spotting Hagrid outside, dragging a giant tree behind him. It must have been one of the many Christmas trees that would be set around the castle this time of year. He also saw the Weasley twins, along with a few other students outside playing in the snow.

Suddenly, the peaceful moment was destroyed as the Whomping Willow exploded. Severus threw himself over protect him from the showering wood chips.

As the dust settled, Severus quickly scooped Harry into his arms, momentarily registering that the boy's own arm was broken, and made his way out of the rubble just in time to see Albus approaching them. The students outside screamed and fled from the explosion of the tree.

"Professor?" Severus heard Hagrid ask Albus, just before as crimson jet of light washed over him, his body spontaneously overwhelmed with unbearable pain as he dropped Harry and fell to the ground, convulsing.

Severus did know how long he was on the ground screaming, but when the pain finally started to subside, he rolled to the side and looked to see Albus and Hagrid dueling. Severus couldn't help but smile at the thought that Hagrid of all people finally saw the truth, even if it cost so much to achieve it. He quickly got up once again, feeling his body scream in protest as he did so, wand in hand and curses on his lips.

Show Down, Part Two

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Twenty-Two - Show Down, Part Two

Severus knew that Albus would sacrifice the loyalty of Hagrid and eliminate him, even though the half giant couldn't hope to handle the Headmaster if things got serious. He quickly picked up Harry and made their way towards the castle. He placed Harry down behind one of the walls of the gatehouse before the wooden bridge that led into the inner courtyards of the castle.

Hogwarts was going under lockdown, its doors and windows slamming shut, and metal bars appearing across them. Clearly, even the castle believed that Albus had become a clear and present danger to the students. Severus drew his wand, and attempted to rise and join in with Hagrid fighting off Albus, but something had snagged his pants.

He looked down to see Harry's fingers tightly wrapped around him, desperation in his eyes at the thought of Severus leaving him.

"Harry you have to let me go," Severus said, straining to keep the panic out of his voice. "You have to be brave for me Harry. I won't let him hurt you but you have to let me go... come on Harry, please." Severus pleaded as he slowly removed Harry's fingers.

"Just close your eyes," Severus told, stepping away and turning toward the fight, seeing that Hagrid just got hit by an overcharged stunner and was now on the ground.

"Severus," Dumbledore spoke calmly, turning toward Severus with his wand held high.

Severus held his wand out, his hand shaking; he has never been this scared before in his life. Severus had always been willing to die, he knew that there was always a chance of death and he accepted it, but now he had someone who needed him.

"You could have been something great, should you have remained by my side," Albus stated, slowly stepping closer to Severus.

"...Just tell me why, just why." Severus demanded, concentrating for the inevitable.

"There is no good or evil, there is only power," Albus replied.

Severus paused for a moment, remembering the Dark Lord saying vastly familiar words.

"You insisted that James and Lily go into hiding... you cast the fidelius charm over their house. It wasn't black that betrayed them to Voldemort... it was you!" Severus realized with a shock.

"Tom was only supposed to grab the boy from the house, but that useless fool couldn't do anything right." Albus hissed.

It all clicked for Severus. Voldemort had just been another pawn used by Albus. All of them had been the same, moved about on the chessboard without even realizing it. Severus couldn't help but think of all the innocent people who he himself must have hurt under the command of Albus. He thought he got out of the Dark Lord's circle but in truth, he'd never left.

"You won't get away with this, not now." Severus said, steeling his resolve.

"You were always so stupid," Albus said bluntly, the old grandfather façade dropped and replaced with something far more sinister and ugly. "I will change everyone's memories, you will die and everyone will believe that you killed Harry when in truth I will have him. Tell me Severus, did you think you could love Harry?" Albus asked with a small chuckle.

"I do," Severus replied defiantly, only to be subjected to the Cruciatus Curse so fast he didn't even have a chance to block it.

Severus fell to his knees, feeling like his veins were busting from the inside, his blood turning to lava as he fought to keep his mind intact.

After only a few minutes, but felt like several hours of torture, the pain finally stopped, and Severus breathed heavily, spread eagle on the ground. He tried his best to regain control of his body as Albus walked over to him, and winced as the old man stepped hard on his hand.

Albus stomped hard, and Severus couldn't prevent the loud cry torn from his throat as his fingers broke. To add greater insult to injury, Albus casually crushed the wand underfoot as well, breaking it cleanly in two.

"You're weak Severus." Albus scoffed, kneeling so he was face to face the Severus "You only think you love him; can you love the spawn of James Potter? Can you love the child that wears your enemy's face? Join me, even now I can forgive all that you've had done in betrayal, and I can give you anything you want." Albus stated with a small smile.

"...You can't give me what I want; you already took it from me. You are just an evil old bastard." Severus remarked, paying for his comment instantly as the Cruciatus Curse was placed on him once more.

"Tell me, Severus, how much more do you think your body can take?" Albus taunted, not removing the curse. "You're already damaged. You have been faithful to me once before, which is why I'm giving you another chance. Join me and you can have all the power that you dream of."

"...Power isn't everything; there are more important things..." Severus gasped between breaths

"Let me guess, love. Albus remarked as he rolled his eyes. "There is only power. Sooner or later I will have Harry's strength. I will live forever and be the greatest wizard who has ever lived. No one will remember you, no one will remember Harry, but they will remember me, they will all cherish and bow before me." Albus explained.

“...Some will figure it out; someone will learn what you really are.” Severus said, getting another round of the curse, his voice giving out.

“I just want you to know that I will take good care of Harry,” Albus stated with a smile as he pointed his wand at Severus. “Avada Keda....”

...

Harry covered his ears as he heard Severus' screams, tears running down his face. Harry slowly made his way to the edge of the wall and looked out, seeing Severus seizing on the ground and the bad man standing over him.

Harry looked around seeing that he was the only one besides Severus and the bad man. He needed Minerva or Poppy to stop the bad man from hurting Severus, from hurting his protector.

Harry let out a low moan as he heard the screams start afresh. He tossed Severus robes off, holding his broken arm to his chest. Slowly, Harry made his way out of the pool of cloth on his hand and knees, trying to get his feet under him.

Harry let out a cry as he felt the pain that came with standing, his legs feeling like they were about to give out any moment. He didn't have Severus holding him up, making sure that he didn't fall.

Harry grabbed onto the wall with his good arm and pulled himself up. Harry bit down hard on his lip as he waited for his legs to stop shaking.

Harry let out a cry as he took his first step only to fall flat on his face, lifting his head to see blood on the ground, lifting his hand up to feel that something wet was coming out of his nose.

Harry took in a deep breath as he pulled himself up once more, seeing the bad man step on Severus' hand. He needed to save Severus, Harry knew it as he pulled himself up once more, biting hard on his lip and slowly taking another step forward. He took another, and another as he slowly made his way forward, feeling like his legs were about to break, feeling intense pain with every step he took.

And then Harry heard it, those words that took away his mom and dad, those words that changed everything.

"No!" Harry screamed, breaking though the charm that Severus placed on him. He couldn't have Severus disappear like his mom and dad.

...

Albus paused in his incantation, looking up as he and Severus heard Harry scream. Severus felt a rush of wind as a force like he never felt washed over them both. The old man above Severus stood frozen, looking on in horror at the young boy, before turning toward his hands as the wand fell from his fingers. Albus' skin was cracking and peeling off his body. Even as

the pieces floated away they turned to ash, continuing as muscle and bone all vanished into the air, within moments there was nothing left of the former Headmaster except his wand, left forgotten on the ground.

Severus slowly looked up, the last thing he saw being Harry as the boy slowly made his way towards him, before the pain overcame him and he sank into black unconsciousness.

The End to a Beginning

Thank you to the beta of this chapter, Faykan

Chapter Twenty Three - The End to a Beginning

Harry collapsed to the ground as Albus vanished into the wind, crying with the pain in his legs. Slowly, he pushed himself up on one hand, keeping his bad arm pressed against his chest, and slowly dragged himself toward Severus, his legs being pulled behind him.

"....Sev?" Harry cried out as he reached Severus, shaking him with his one good arm. "Sev... wake up.... use... word... wake up... Sev." Harry cried seeing that Severus wasn't moving.

Tears rolled down Harry's face as he lay down next to Severus, believing that his protector was gone just like his mom and dad, and soon he too would disappear just like them. Harry wrapped his hand around the fabric of Severus shirt, closing his eyes and passing out from exhaustion.

...

Severus felt like he was floating. Slowly opening his eyes, he was force to close them from the bright light blossomed before him. Severus took in a few deep breaths before he opened his eyes again, looking around him, noticing that he was at Hogwarts, sitting on the ground near the Whomping Willow, but everything was a gleaming white, nothing out of place or dirty in sight.

"You are such a brave man Severus." A voice said.

Severus couldn't help but freeze. he had longed to hear that voice for so many years. Slowly, he turned, seeing the woman that he had loved since he was a child. "Lily..." he said softly. His voice choked as he quickly rose and embraced her, running his fingers through her hair.

Lily smiled, taking Severus hand in hers, running her thumb over the top of his hand. "I'm so proud of you Severus," Lily said softly.

"Am I dead?" Severus asked.

"No," Lilly responded with a small laugh. "You are merely near to the afterlife, close enough that I could reach out and meet you, for a brief time before you wake."

"I'm so sorry," Severus said, bowing his head in shame, "all those years ago... I'm sorry for everything. I couldn't stop Albus, I had no idea that he and the Dark Lord were allies. I fail to protect you and Harry."

"Severus," Lily said, shushing him. She gently wiped the tears that had manifested on Severus' face with her thumb. "None of this isn't your fault... You were an angry young man,

and lost your way for a little while, but you found your way back eventually." Lily spoke taking Severus' arm and rolling up his sleeve to reveal his Dark Mark.

"Don't," Severus said, trying to pull his arm away.

"Don't worry." Lily said softly, running her hand over the Dark Mark, causing it to disappear right before Severus' eyes. "Tough times lay ahead Severus."

"What do you mean? Albus is gone... isn't he?" Severus asked.

"Let me tell you something you already know. The world isn't all sunshine and rainbows, it's a very mean, nasty place and it doesn't care how tough you are. It will beat you to your knees and keep you there permanently, but only if you let it...if you let it, Severus."

Severus stayed silent for a moment as he thought about what Lily had repeated. It was strange to hear his own words as a young man throw back at him so late in his life. Stranger still was that they were indeed truthful, even after a lifetime of experience.

"You are a good man Severus, and Harry needs you in his life, to show him the way, to mold him into the man he was meant to be," Lily said, smiling at Severus as she cupped his cheek, "It's time to go back."

"I can't... I need you, just a bit longer," Severus said, wanting so desperately to stay here with the women that he loved.

"I know," Lily said gently, "but Harry needs you much more than you need to dwell in the past... and remember, I'm always watching over both of you." Lily said, before slowly faded away along with the realm of light.

"Lily... Lily!" Severus cried out, slowly fading away as well, until he felt pain shoot through his body, wincing as his eyes snapped open.

"Severus? Severus, are you awake?" Poppy's voice came floating over to him from across the Hospital Wing. The matron quickly made her way over to him as he groaned in reply.

"Easy now, you're still healing, you be sore for a while yet," Poppy assured, gently restraining Severus from trying to rise from his bed.

"Harry, where's Harry!" Severus said suddenly, looking around the hospital wing for the child, struggling against Poppy.

"Harry is fine." Poppy said calmly "He got a bit of frostbite but I healed that, along with his broken arm. He's with Hagrid at the moment... and don't worry, its Christmas holidays, so there are no other children in the castle." Poppy responded, turning her back for a second to get some potions for Severus to drink.

"Christmas holidays?" Severus asked, confused. "I've been asleep for that long?" Casually, remembering what he had seen while unconscious, Severus reached over and pulled the sleeve up. He blinked in shock at seeing that in fact the Dark Mark was gone, with only clean skin left behind.

"You suffered a lot of nerve damage. I had to keep you asleep while they healed. If I had not done so it would have been significantly more painful." Poppy explained, turning back and handing Severus a potion.

"How is Harry?" Severus inquired, finally being permitted to sit up, with the help of Poppy.

Poppy smiled, "He been having some problems adapting, but I suspect that everything will work out fine, now that you are awake. He's been worried about you," Poppy answered.

"Now, take the potion," Poppy said as she started to clean up around the bed.

Severus gave a small nod, and downed the potion quickly, coughing a little at the taste.

"What happened?" Severus questioned as he set the vial aside.

"Minerva and I woke up around nightfall, digging ourselves out of the rubble, Minerva is not happy with the damage by the way." Poppy commented. "We made our way to the school, suspecting that was where you would have taken Harry. When we arrived, Hagrid was still unconscious, as with you. Harry was sleeping next to you. The school was still on lockdown, probably the work of Harry. Didn't want anyone coming out, at least that what Minerva and I think." Poppy explained.

"And Albus? I remember that Harry..."

"Gone, but he did leave this behind." Poppy stated, opening the bedside table and taking out Albus' wand. "I didn't know what you wanted to do with it...What are you doing?" Poppy asked, horrified as Severus got out of bed.

"What do you think I'm doing? I'm going to see Harry," Severus responded, grabbing the bedpost to support himself as he rose to his feet.

"Severus, you are still in a partially numbed state, you don't know how much pain your body is in." Poppy said, helping Severus to stand so he didn't fall.

"I can walk, and I need to see Harry, where is my cloak?"

"You going to go no matter what I say," Poppy said, accepting his stubbornness with a roll of her eyes. She grabbed Severus cloak. "I'm going with you." She insisted.

"I wouldn't expect anything less," Severus said, taking Albus wand and his cloak from Poppy, barely looking at it before sliding it up his sleeve. He'd think about what to do with it later.

...

Severus slowly made his way down to Hagrid's hut with the help of Poppy. Severus smiled when he saw Harry sitting in his chair, bundled up and helping Hagrid with his animals outside, Minerva nearby monitoring him, just in case.

Severus watched as Minerva spotted him, and tapped Harry on the shoulder to speak to him. Harry turned his head and let out a scream of delight, pushing on the straps of his chair as if he was trying to stand.

Severus made the rest of the way as quickly as he dared, unbuckling Harry from the chair and lifting him up into his arms, hugging him.

"Sev! Sev!" Harry yelled happily as Severus picked him up.

"I'm here, I'm here... How is my Harry?" Severus asked, looking Harry over, and noticing some red blotches on the child's face, the remnants of frostbite.

"Sev..." Was all Harry said, contentedly laying his head down on Severus' shoulder.

"What do we do now?" Minerva chimed in after allowing them their moment of reunion.

Severus thought hard about that notion. Black was an innocent man locked away in Azkaban, and while Severus personally did not care for the man, he couldn't leave Black to rot in Azkaban with good conscious.

There was also the school, and Harry's recovery, and no doubt the whole Wizarding World would be thrown into chaos because of Albus' disappearance. The next few months were going to be hard.

"We keep going, and we keep fighting." Severus said, thinking about Lily's words to him.
"We move on."

(Im sad to say that this is the end of the story but don't worry I'm thinking about doing a part two to this story and maybe even some small short stories of scenes that where left out. It will also give you a chance to tell me senses that you would have liked to see but never got to. Please leave a comment down below telling me if this is something you would like to do.)

Part Two

You guys wanted this so here is it part two of Life Will Never be the Same.

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