

Summary: I wasn't supposed to survive but I did and I opened my eyes to the last person on earth I wanted to see. And when I did he asked me if I wouldn't survive for my son. And I never expected what came afterwards.

Disclaimer for the story: I do not own the rights to Harry Potter.

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"Unexpected"

By PadyandMoony

Chapter1- Lily's secret

The man watched the other start stirring. After the battle had ended, Harry had gone back to retrieve the body to find that a desperate attempt he had made at healing the man had managed to keep him alive. He had been rushed to Poppy who had effectively cured him with the aid of Arthur Weasley, who remembered how his bite from the same snake had been treated.

Black eyes opened and scanned the room incredulously. They locked with brown and then closed again.
"I didn't want to survive Lupin!" he sighed.

Remus Lupin, who had been sitting, watching Severus Snape's healing sleep from a metal chair, slumped forward, his mouth resting on his fist that was propped up by his elbow. He slowly raised his head up to rest his chin on his fist, "Not even for your son?" he asked calmly.

Severus' head snapped up suddenly and he glared with cold eyes at Remus, "What are you going on about?"

"I never thought I'd tell you. You didn't deserve to know. No matter how many times I told people that if Albus trusted you then we should too, I still didn't. And last year, after you killed him, I thought I had been proven right."

"How moving," Snape sneered.

"But then Harry showed me the memories you gave him. We won, by the way. Harry sacrificed himself and Voldemort was killed."

Snape closed his eyes. No matter how much he had wanted to hate the brat, how often he said the brat was an arrogant fool like his father, he had convinced himself that he had only protected him for Lily, but he never wanted the boy to die.

"You paid for your mistakes," Remus continued. "More than you know."

"What do you mean by that?" Severus snapped.

"Do you remember when, a little over a year after graduation there was a night that Lily went looking for you?" Remus asked.

"Yes," he said massaging his temples. He remembered that night, all right. Lily had been scared. There had been a Death Eater attack and the Order had promptly acted. She was there fighting, had fought him and when his mask fell, she failed to curse him. She just stared and before someone else appeared,

she let him escape. She knocked at his door at Spinner's End later that night. She yelled, she punched him, she cried that he couldn't have betrayed her that way. She said she loved him and that she had wanted him, but how could she be with someone who hated who she was? He said he didn't, and could never hate her. They kissed, the kiss became more aggressive and the world went hazy. Before he realized what had just happened, she was dressing herself with the clothes that had been torn off her and tossed on the floor in their frenzy. She said that it had been a mistake, that they could never be together, and left. A month later she was getting married to Potter.

"Lily had a big dilemma, you know? She loved two men; James always knew that. He also knew that if you hadn't been a Death Eater he probably would have lost her to you. But you were, and he took what he could get, second place. She told him what had happened and begged forgiveness, and he granted it. And when your son was born he magically adopted him and loved him as if he were his own. The only people who knew the truth about Harry were me and Sirius, and I had intended to take it with me to the grave as Sirius did. Until now."

Snape looked at him incredulously. Potter his son? Impossible! He was James Potter's spitting image! Then again a magical adoption would add Potter's traits to the brat. "Why tell me this now? I can't do anything now!" he snapped.

"Yes you can. Not for the boy you can't, but for the young man, the man that still needs a father."

"He is dead Lupin," Severus said bitterly.

Remus smiled, "Why ever would you think that?"

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They were setting the table the Muggle way. After the final battle had ended, Remus and Tonks invited Harry to come live with them, something Remus thought was way overdue. Harry may be eighteen and a war hero, but he was far from an adult. In some ways, Harry was still a child who needed some stability. When the battle had ended and the wounded were being tended to, he had found Harry alone, sitting on the floor in one of the corridors.

"Harry," Remus said softly. "Aren't you going to the Burrow?"

Harry had smiled sadly and shook his head, "They are grieving. It's time for family. For family to stay together. Hermione already left to look for her parents."

"What about you?" Remus asked, sitting down next to him.

"I don't have a family Remus." He said sadly and shook his head, "You and Tonks should go be with Teddy. You shouldn't have come. What if something had happened to you? I wouldn't be able to forgive myself."

"That was our choice Harry. It wouldn't have been your fault," he said squeezing the teen's shoulder; but he saw Harry didn't believe it. Harry needed someone who would take care of him; someone who was there for *him* after all was said and done. Someone to whom he could go and let his strong face fall,

one who could shelter him and be his *family*. Remus thought bitterly that while he had been so immersed in his own misfortune in the past, he forgot to be that person for Harry and he decided to make it up to him. Remus knew it would be temporary, or at least he hoped so.

The doorbell rang and the three adults immediately went for their wands. Tonks stayed behind to shelter the playpen while Remus and Harry walked to the door, wands trained on it.

"Who is there?" Remus asked.

"Severus Tobias Snape," they heard.

"And?" Remus prompted his lips twitching. From the corner of his eyes he saw Harry's eyes widen and look disbelieving at Tonks.

"And what? Open the damn door Lupin. You are the one who demanded me to come. I am sure even your limited brain can manage the impossible task of an *Alohamora*."

"Yep, that's definitely Professor Snape," Harry said biting his lips.

Remus opened the door and cheerfully greeted the sour-looking former Potions Master. "Good evening Severus, do come in."

Severus Snape, in all his dark glory, stalked in the small house holding a glass bottle. His eyes scanned the small dining room, taking notice of the table set for four and the pink haired Auror holding a sleeping infant. He nodded to her and she smiled back at him. He stared at the infant and wondered if maybe his life would have been different if he had known... His eyes strayed to the other occupant of the room, who was far from being an infant. Was there any chance? Did he want any chance?

"Potter," he drawled.

"Professor," Harry said nervously, eyeing Remus and Tonks. "Hum, Professor, I'm sorry I left you. I thought you were dead and there was the battle. The clock was ticking."

"You did what you had to do. Your healing charm worked well enough and I was told you were the one to come back for me. Thank you."

Harry's eyes widened. He probably wasn't expecting to be thanked, or didn't think Severus even knew how to.

"You are just in time Severus," Remus said pleasantly taking the bottle from him. "Why don't you two sit at the table and Dora and I will fetch dinner. No Harry, we'll manage. Keep Severus company."

They both sat at opposite sides of the small square table in the center of the dining room and Severus looked at Harry, really looked at him for the first time. Lily's eyes of course, always those eyes. Potter's stubborn hair and bad eyesight. Lily's nose. Potter's round face. He was about to declare Harry had not one feature of his, when Harry tucked a lock of hair behind his ears and Severus' eyes went from the ears to the hands. They were both his; his long fingers and his round ears. Potter's traits were so outstanding next to his that he always missed them.

"Professor," Harry said again.

"What?" Severus said shaking his wonderings away.

"I asked what you will do now. Are you going back to teach or be Headmaster?"

"I hate the brats," he said honestly and, for the first time when talking to Harry, with no sneer. "I always hated teaching. I only taught because it was Albus' way of keeping me under his thumb."

Harry nodded in understanding.

"What will you do then?"

"I have enough money to live comfortably. When my maternal grandparents died I inherited the Prince estate. Being the only heir, I inherited everything they denied my mother in life," he muttered the last part under his breath. "I will indulge in my research and brewing for a while. Then I'll see where I go from there."

"Oh," Harry said. "So you are living off the castle grounds?"

"No," Severus shook his head. "My house in Spinner's End was known to all my colleagues and it's not safe to go back when they haven't all been arrested. And the Manor hasn't been lived in since my Grandparent's death almost twenty years ago, so there is no telling what condition it is in. Minerva offered me room at Hogwarts while I make the Manor ready for living," he finished with a grim face as if living near the students was torture in and of itself.

"Grimmauld Place is safe," Harry said. "And Kreacher cleaned it up nicely. Remus also helped me dismantle Moody's spell, so there's no need to see Dumbledore's image anymore. The Death Eater that followed us there from Ministry didn't manage to get in, so it's still just Order members who can."

"That is good for you. I daresay there must be some people less than thrilled with you," he said dryly.

What was the boy onto, telling him he had what Severus didn't?

"I live there mostly alone, although I do spend some nights here. Remus and Tonks wanted me to move in but I don't want to impose, so I am still living there. I mean there are loads of rooms and I am sure we won't see much of each other. You wouldn't even notice we were in the same house. And there is a lab in the basement, I really don't know why, but there is. Oh, and your old Potion's book is there. I retrieved it before we left Hogwarts last year. Thought it could give me an insight on you. Didn't help much though. I didn't know it was yours," Harry rushed to explain worried, about Severus' reaction.

"Relax Potter. I can't give you detention anymore."

"Yeah, I am no longer a student," Harry smiled.

"Yes you are. You still have to go back to finish your seventh year."

"Well-"

"You will take your NEWTs!" Severus said sternly. Where had that come from? Since when did he worry if the brat took his NEWTs or not?

"Okay," Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived-Twice to defeat the Dark Lord, squeaked in fear.

"You are offering me a place in your home while I restore mine then?" Severus asked, wanting to make sure he understood correctly. Harry nodded. "Why?"

"Don't know," Harry shrugged. "I have the space and I don't think it's fair for you to have to still be at a place you don't like after all you sacrificed."

"I was being selfish Potter. I only did it for Lily and for revenge on the man who killed her."

"And I did it to protect the people I love," Harry shrugged again. "Granted, I didn't approve of his views or methods but if I hadn't been a part of this world, if the people I loved hadn't been targeted I probably wouldn't have entered this war. You don't see me running to get in the middle of Muggle wars, do you?"

All the choices we make are for some selfish reason."

"You sacrificed yourself. How is that selfish?"

Harry smiled, "I sacrificed myself in the hopes that Voldemort would die and the people I loved would be able to live free. I had a reason to do it, Professor. And it was the same one you had. In the end Professor Dumbledore was right, love won."

"I am not a nice person."

"Wouldn't dare accuse you of being one," Harry bit back a smile.

"And we have never had a civil relationship."

"People can change."

"I am too old to change."

"Aren't you thirty-eight, like Remus? That isn't old in Wizard terms...or Muggle either come to think of it."

"You understood what I meant!"

"I'm not asking you to change Professor. I am just offering you a room in my house, temporarily and promising that you will rarely see me."

"And you are returning to Hogwarts next fall and taking your NEWTs," Severus said firmly.

"I will take my NEWTs. Whether I do it by returning to Hogwarts or studying on my own will be decided later. I still have four months before classes start again."

"Haven't killed each other yet?" Tonks asked as she floated the food to the table, followed by Remus who was bringing the bottle of wine that Severus had brought.

"Professor Snape will be living in Grimmauld Place for a while," Harry said happily. Remus' face brightened as he sat.

"That's wonderful! I dare say, you two will find you have a lot in common." For this comment, Remus received two incredulous looks and a glare.

Chapter 2- Housemates

"Kreacher cleared a lot of stuff out, as I said," Harry babbled on as he led Severus up to one of the rooms. "I thought you could stay in this room. It's nice. Kreacher says it used to be one of the guest rooms. I am mostly getting all the rooms fixed up and making changes with them. I have a few guest rooms already done, for when one of my friends decides to visit. I am staying in Sirius' now." Of course, the mutt had been the closest thing to a father the boy had had. *An unstable fugitive and a Death Eater, how wonderful*, Severus thought, as Harry continued, "But I'll probably move out of it, get one to make my own. I can't change Sirius'. And of course there's Regulus'. I don't want to change it because of Kreacher. If one day he decides to use it for himself he can but I am allowing him to do what he wants with it. And of course there is Kreacher's room." Severus raised an eyebrow, "I didn't want him sleeping under the boiler; it reminds me of my cupboard."

"Your cupboard?" Severus asked sharply and noted that Harry flushed as he noticed his slip.

"It's nothing sir. Well, here you are," and he opened a door to a very nice and spacious room with a huge king sized four-poster bed, light green wallpaper, and another door against the far wall.

"I thought you'd be comfortable here," Harry said. "Most of the house is decorated in Slytherin motif. That door leads to your private bathroom. I can show you the Potions lab later when you are situated."

"I remember it from when this was Headquarters. Thank you Harry."

Harry's eyes went wide and he just stared at Severus.

"Is there a problem?"

"You called me Harry sir," he answered nervously.

"If we are going to live together I can hardly call you Potter all the time. You also shouldn't have to call me Professor. I am not your teacher any more. You may call me Severus," he drawled.

"Okay," Harry said quickly and bolted out of the room. Severus shook his head. Who was he kidding?

How on earth could he act as the boy's father?

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"Are you leaving?" Severus asked dryly as he came down the stairs. Harry arched one eyebrow and Severus couldn't help but notice it was something he also often did, or at least according to Albus he did.

"I left some things at the Dursley's last year and I want to bring them here," Harry explained.

Later, Severus wouldn't know how to explain why he did it, but he said, "I'll go with you. It's not safe yet to go alone."

"I am just going to Apparate to the Dursley's. They haven't gone home yet, I checked with Hestia yesterday. The house will be empty."

"Still, there could be someone lurking around," Severus said dryly. "Come on, stop dawdling," he said as he stalked outside and Harry followed.

They both apparated to number four, Privet Drive. Severus noted all the similar houses and the similar gardens. Number four stood out with its un-kept lawn and its dirty windows. Severus smirked at the thought of the fit Petunia would have when she saw her precious home looking like this. It wasn't anything horrible, nothing a good cleaning wouldn't fix, but if he remembered her well, and he did, she wouldn't stand it.

He followed Harry as he said a soft *Alohamora* and entered the house. Even though Harry had rolled his eyes at his paranoia, the boy was alert and holding his wand firmly. They checked all the rooms downstairs and found no one. Severus' eyes lingered towards the small cupboard under the stairs and he made sure to check that no one was there. He saw a little scribble in crayon and a child's handwriting claiming it as "Harry's Room" and his grip tightened on his wand.

"Professor," Harry called from the stairs and Severus turned with a blank mask as if he had not made the connection with Harry's slip the previous day and the cupboard, and Harry motioned for them to head upstairs.

Again they checked all of the rooms and finally Harry went to the smallest room, which had a plaque on the door claiming it as "Dudley's second bedroom". Second! When his son had a cupboard! Severus noted all the locks on the door and the little cat flap and was quite sure they were not there when this had been Dudley's second room.

He entered the room and saw Harry pull a trunk from the closet.

"I couldn't take everything," Harry explained. "So I left all the unnecessary things behind in my trunk. I thought Uncle Vernon, would burn them but I'm glad he didn't. I know they are not very useful, but they were mine. They have good memories attached to them."

Severus nodded and fumed internally once more. In this house that did not seem lacking in money, all his son's possessions could be stored in one average sized trunk. He wasn't stupid. He remembered what he saw during Occlumency lessons, had known the boy had been abused, but he had forced himself to believe they were isolated incidents. That there was an explanation for them and Potter had actually been pampered all his life.

"If you have everything, we shouldn't linger," he said neutrally and Harry nodded. He shrunk the trunk and put it inside a pouch that was strung on a necklace that he constantly wore. Severus recognized the type of pouch, and with a pang knew it was a remnant of the war. This almost eighteen-year-old boy was used to having to carry his most precious possessions with him all the time because there was no telling if he would be able to go back home at a moment's notice. He hoped he could break Harry of the habit.

They walked side by side down the stairs and heard the door lock click. They were instantly alert and pointing their wands. When the door opened completely, Severus had his wand trained at a bony face he hadn't seen in over twenty years, but he would recognize anywhere.

"Tuney," he drawled.

"You!" she said icily. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to accompany Potter. He had forgotten some belongings here," he drawled, not lowering his wand.

"Harry!" came a cry from behind her and a blond boy rushed in the room. "How are you? The woman that came to tell us we could come home said you defeated Lord Valdemar."

Harry bit back a laugh and Severus cringed. Not only had this boy said the name like it was nothing, he butchered the most feared Dark Lord's name with no concern whatsoever.

Behind Petunia, Severus was greeted by another familiar, very purple, face. Petunia had started dating Vernon Dursley at sixteen, when Lily and he were fifteen. It was the last summer Severus and Lily spent together, and since they couldn't hang out at Spinner's End because of his father, they spent a lot of time at the Evans'. Vernon had always sneered and looked superiorly at him. Severus had just sneered back, and you couldn't compete with Severus Snape's sneer. It was hate at first sight.

"Well, it was a joint effort," Harry answered his cousin embarrassedly. "A lot of good people fought him and his followers. Some died," he said, and Severus could see pain in his green eyes. Lily's eyes.

"Professor Snape here was responsible for a huge part of our victory."

"I highly doubt that," Petunia sneered and Severus was about to respond when Harry cut in angrily.

"Yes he did! He risked his life deceiving a mad man in order to help us at crucial times. He managed to keep the children at the school as safe as he could without losing his position. He managed to hand me an important tool to ensure Voldemort could be defeated, even though if he had been discovered he would have faced a very painful death. And he almost did anyway. Lord Voldemort ordered his snake to kill Professor Snape because he thought that he would then be able to master a powerful wand. So the snake bit him, and it was a miracle he survived. I was sure he hadn't because I had tried a healing charm and I'm rubbish at those, and I thought he had stopped breathing but when I came back he was still alive. But even when he thought he was dying, he still managed to give me some of his memories to make sure I knew how to defeat Voldemort and understood why he'd done some things. And you know what I found out Aunt Petunia?" he asked in his enraged rant. Severus could see he was shaking and his face was red.

Petunia shook her head, "I found out that you wanted to be like my mom. Like me. You wanted to be a "freak" like us. You wrote to the Headmaster because you wanted to attend Hogwarts and I finally understood why you always hated me. It wasn't because you wanted to be normal. No! It was because you wanted to be special and weren't. So you took it out on both my mom and me! You treated me like a slave for as long as I can remember. You let your husband and son hit me whenever they felt like it. You yourself even hit me at times. You starved me and locked me in a cupboard because you were jealous of my magic! I always wondered what I had done that was so awful for you to hate me so much and now I know. It wasn't what / had done. It wasn't what / was. It was what *you* weren't."

And with that Harry stormed out of the house passing, a spluttering Vernon who was shouting, "Now you hear me boy—" and a shocked Petunia. Severus was shocked too. Not because of why Petunia hated them, he'd always known why, but because of what he heard his son say about the treatment he had here. He wanted to torture them at that moment, but he wanted to first know the extent and details of the abuse to make sure the punishment was appropriate. He stalked out, robes billowing behind him and met Harry on the front lawn ready to Apparate. They were about to turn when a soft cry caught their attention.

"Harry!" Dudley came running out. "Harry. I meant what I said last year. I am sorry for what I did. I was just acting the way I thought I had the right to. I mean, mom and dad always encouraged me. I thought it was right. I know that doesn't excuse my behavior but I changed and I'd like to keep in touch."

Harry nodded silently and Severus saw how tense his jaw was. Harry was trying to keep his temper, which was still riled up, in check for his cousin.

"Can I write to you? I know you use owls. Maybe you could send Hedwig—"

"Hedwig died the day I left here," Harry said tightly. "We were attacked and she got hit by a killing curse. I had to blast the cart she was in to knock down a Death Eater."

"I am sorry," Dudley said sincerely. "I know how much you cared about her."

"She was my first gift ever. My only friend in this house," Harry said smiling sadly. "And she wasn't the only one to die that day. A great warrior died too. The man with the magical eye that threatened Uncle Vernon at the end of my fifth year, remember him?"

Dudley nodded.

"He died fighting," Severus said, "Alastor Moody wouldn't have wanted to die any other way."

Harry nodded and when Dudley extended his hand he shook it.

"I'll find a way to reach you Dudley. Don't worry," he then turned on the spot and Apparated away.

Severus nodded to Dudley and followed suit. Once back inside Grimmauld Place he started talking once again.

"The attack on you that day- It had to be done. I hadn't expected anyone to perish. I truly thought you would be better prepared."

"I know Professor. I understand. You had to make sure you were Voldemort's favorite, and that only came by making it look like he was getting what he wanted and that you were the one delivering," Harry said sadly. "I'm going to put my things away," and he walked upstairs past Mrs. Black's portrait and Severus noticed for the first time she had been quiet ever since the two of them arrived.

"Harry," he called. "What happened to Mrs. Black?"

"Kreacher told her everything that happened and how exactly each of her sons died. I think that realizing that even her proper Regulus fought against Voldemort shook her and she decided I am not all that bad as a Black heir. She even thanked me for finishing her son's work and asked me to make sure

everyone knows Sirius wasn't a criminal. I told her they already do. It was in the papers two years ago. She has been quiet ever since."

Severus nodded as Harry ascended the last steps. No one came unchanged from this war. Not even an old portrait.

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Severus walked slowly upstairs, sipping from his glass of water. He had been in this house for a week and he had to hand it to the boy, he was right. He managed to stay out of Severus' hair almost the entire time. The problem was that right now Severus wanted the opposite of that. He wanted a chance to know Harry. To really get to know him, because he knew he didn't. He had always seen James and not Harry. In one of the detentions that Severus had especially drafted to ruin James Potter's perfect image the previous year, Harry had turned to him and said:

"Harry. The name is Harry. Even Voldemort has managed the courtesy of calling me Harry. Granted, it's usually preceded by 'time to die' or 'I am going to kill you now.' But if even my biggest enemy manages to call me by my given name and you don't, I have to wonder, do you even know it or do you think my name really is James?"

Harry had paid dearly for that cheek. Severus gave him an extra detention that week scrubbing cauldrons. But the thing was; he had been completely right. Severus never saw Harry, only James. He had to change that and he didn't know how. Yes, he had gone to the Dursley's with Harry, but other than that, Harry even managed to take his meals at a different time so he wouldn't bother Severus. As he reached his door, Severus heard moaning coming from Harry's room, the mutt's old room. He walked firmly towards it, opened the door worriedly and by the light of his wand he saw Harry thrashing around. He quickly walked towards the bed and deposited his glass and wand on the nightstand. He forcibly shook Harry and the boy woke up with a start.

"Are you all right?" Severus asked.

"Professor?" Harry slurred. "What are you doing here?"

"I heard you moaning in your sleep and thought I'd wake you."

"Oh."

"Are you feeling all right?"

"Yes, just a nightmare," misinterpreting Severus' worried look Harry added, "Don't worry, it's not that kind of nightmare. I haven't had those since Voldemort killed me- I mean the Horcrux in me. Well, he is dead anyway so I wouldn't have them regardless," Harry tried to salvage his babble. Severus could only focus on the "when Voldemort killed me." Because he had, Harry had been hit by the killing curse.

Hagrid witnessed it. Rationally, Severus knew why Harry survived, since he had explained it. But he couldn't help the fear that gripped him when he heard those words out of his son's mouth.

"Professor? Do you need to sit down? Are you sure that snake's bite didn't affect you more than Madam Pomfrey realized?" Harry asked and Severus noticed that they had exchanged positions. Harry had gotten up and had sat Severus on the bed.

"I'm fine," he said distractedly. "I was just thinking. What were your nightmares of?"

Harry shrugged, "Everything that has happened. We were so close to dying so many times this year I lost count. Dobby, Mad-Eye, Fred, Sirius, Cedric, Collin, Hedwig, Dumbledore. It's funny, but Sirius and Cedric are still the ones that haunt me the most. Maybe it's because they were the firsts. I didn't believe that it could happen. Even after Voldemort came back and killed Cedric. After Mr. Weasley got injured, I still thought we'd all get out of that mess unscratched. I wasn't prepared for Sirius dying. I wasn't prepared to lose the others either, but by then I knew it could happen. Even Dumbledore wasn't a surprise. I mean, I always thought like everyone that he was un-killable, but somehow, deep down I knew he wouldn't live to see the end of this war. Not Sirius though. It caught me by surprise."

Severus nodded. He understood. You would have thought that in the past seventeen years he would have enough material for new nightmares, and yet what he continuously saw was Lily's still, dead body and her unseeing eyes. He had Apparated as quickly as he could to Godric's Hollow and had found her body. He had to wait for Hagrid and Sirius to leave before going to find her. Hagrid had put the bodies together in the living room, and Severus knew he came back later for them. She was so still. So cold. He still saw her in his nightmares.

Harry's green eyes were surveying him worriedly again. Lily's green eyes.

"Are you sure you don't need something Professor? I can firecall Madam Pomfrey."

"No, thank you," he said getting up, fetching his wand and glass of water and walking out. At the door he turned. "Actually Harry, I do need something. I have to brew Lupin's potion and it's tiresome. I would appreciate your help."

"My help?" Harry asked bewildered. "But you always said I was a dimwit dunderhead that couldn't brew tea with paper bags."

"I may have exaggerated. I expect you tomorrow at nine in the lab." With that Severus stalked away smiling, proud of himself. He just managed to arrange himself some quality time with his son. *Ha! Take that Lupin! I can do it alone!*

Chapter 3- The twin's gift

Harry James Potter was a mystery, Severus decided. The boy had always hated him, with reason; Severus was honest enough with himself at least to acknowledge that he had started it. Yet, the boy had defended him with fervor to Petunia and her fat stupid husband. He had all the reason to be bitter and hateful, they had abused him. Severus had also been abused, not nearly at the extent of Harry and he didn't even know all the details, but his father had been abusive towards him and his mother. But Severus had always had his mother to love and care for him. That's how his disgust towards Muggles started. His Muggle father was an arrogant ignorant bully that had abused him while his witch mother had always cared for and protected him. He couldn't wait to shed his Muggle heritage when he was younger. To him wizards and witches were obviously superior to Muggles.

The Dark Lord was another example of abuse that had transformed into hatred towards Muggles, and from what Severus had learned, Tom Riddle hadn't been as abused as Harry and Severus. He hadn't been loved; he was poor, but he had been well cared for at the orphanage and wasn't constantly being struck in his own home.

Harry Potter was. He was starved, forced to behave as a house-elf, and struck for no good reason. He hadn't been shown an ounce of love until he was eleven. Yet, he loved, he loved so much he was willing to die for that love. He was light hearted and able to at least sound carefree. Here he was, after facing death and destruction, laughing in the drawing room of the Black Manor and cooing at the little baby he was holding.

"Say 'Harry', can you say it?" Harry cooed.

Next to him Tonks laughed, "He is one month old Harry. He can't talk yet."

"Nonsense. My godson is a genius. You'll see. He'll find the cure for cancer before he turns one. Right Teddy? Yes you are. Say 'Harry'."

Severus had been watching the scene from right behind the threshold and startled when Remus came behind him asking softly:

"Have you told him?"

"Of course not," Severus snapped in a whisper, making sure the other two current occupants of the house would not hear. "Do you think he wants to know he is not James Perfect Potter's son?"

"He *is* James' son. James magically adopted him, making Harry his blood son too. You know that. He is a combination of the three of you. James never had a problem with that. He loved his son. He was ecstatic with his little heir. There was nothing that could spoil his happiness when he was with Harry, not even sharing him with you. The question is, can you share him with James?"

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Grimmauld Place was packed. Severus scowled. Kreacher had cooked a banquet. The Weasleys were all in attendance. Granger, who had recently come back from Australia, was able to come. The Lupins plus Andromeda were here as well. Luna Lovegood, Neville Longbottom and his Grandmother and another mystery, Dean Thomas, were present. Severus never knew they were that close with Dean Thomas. He expected being caught in Malfoy Manor had made them close, or maybe it was the way the boy was holding Lovegood's hand.

They had decided to have a family dinner and God knows why Harry invited him to join.

"You are living here Professor. It's only fair you are included in a huge meal."

Molly Weasley was in her element. She had helped Kreacher cook, which at first hadn't settled well with the elf, but Harry said something to him in private and suddenly he was quite happy with the help. She seemed her usual self, but you could catch glimpses of a pained look whenever she looked at her brood.

When she saw him watching her, she smiled and said:

"Fred loved life and happiness. We would be insulting his memory if we wallowed in grief forever."

He just nodded; he had wallowed in grief for almost seventeen years. Lily probably wouldn't have liked it either. She loved life too. Severus looked at Harry as he chatted and laughed with his friends. During the days he'd been here, he had discovered other things about him in the boy. They didn't stand out so much and since no one was looking for them, they passed unnoticed. Little mannerisms, like the way he looked at you when he thought you'd just said something stupid, and his scowl, that was pure Snape. It was quite disconcerting seeing a Snape scowl on Potter's face, but there it was. The boy had helped him in the lab as he brewed Lupin's Wolfsbane. When he wasn't breathing down the boy's neck and was actually instructing him, he realized Harry actually had potential. In Harry's sixth year Severus had attributed it to Harry cheating with the aid of his Potions book, but to be honest, he never thought to make Harry understand Potions, just copy recipes. There were so few who were actually interested in understanding the concept of why you mixed certain ingredients that he never bothered with the school children. The ones whom were interested would go look for themselves, he reasoned. He never thought that maybe the association of Potions with his most hated teacher might discourage Harry.

And when Severus explained the boy understood, and asked coherent questions. They had started tweaking one of the batches of the potion with some of his ideas. Of course, that could be Lily in him, but maybe, just maybe it was Severus.

After a very satisfying meal, George Weasley approached Harry with a goblet and a look on his face that Severus had learned to dread.

"Here Harry, drink this," he said.

Harry raised that Snape eyebrow and asked, "Do you really think I am that stupid George? You are losing your touch; you used to be more covert than that."

George laughed, "I decided to be upfront this time because I know you'll drink it."

"Why is that?" Harry asked eyeing the goblet.

"It's a gift that Fred and I had decided to give you when the war was over," he said plainly. The table went quiet and Severus groaned inwardly. Great, the boy just used the best emotional blackmail he could have.

"Fred wanted me to drink this?" Harry asked taking the goblet reverently.

George nodded, "It's a gift. It won't hurt you, I promise you. It's something we thought you deserved."

Without a second thought, Harry downed the goblet and several people, including Severus, lunged forward crying, "Harry no!"

At first nothing happened and Severus was about to sigh in relief, when Harry started shrinking. He leaped up and ran to Harry's chair at the same time as Lupin and Molly did. When he got there he was shocked. Looking up with wide eyes from under an enormous shirt, as his trousers and shoes had fallen off, was a toddler that couldn't be much older than a year old.

George Stupid Weasley was smiling like an idiot and crouched down to be eye level with the boy, "Hello Harry, I'm George."

"Hewwo," Harry said in a small voice, fidgeting with his little hands and shooting scared glances at the adults.

"May I pick you up?" George asked Harry, extending his hands. Harry nodded worriedly and kept a watchful eye on George's every movement. When George touched him, he shut his eyes tightly and only opened them when he was secured in George's arms. He looked at George's smiling face and seemed to come to the conclusion that George would not hurt him.

Harry looked around and then turned to George and asked in a whisper, "Wewe awe we?"

"This is your new house Harry. You live here now," George answered.

"Weawwy!" Harry said and a big smile came across his face, "No Aunt P'tuna and Uncwe Ernon?"

"Nope," George smiled. "Just people that are going to love you and be very nice to you."

Harry looked at him disbelieving.

"George Weasley," Molly started in a low but very dangerous tone. "What have you done?"

George turned to his mother and calmly said, "Harry never had a childhood. Fred and I decided that when the war was over, Harry deserved a childhood. So we developed a special de-aging potion. You see, Harry only needed the time between he was fifteen months and eleven years old. We couldn't break a year though, so we had to settle with two years old."

"He is two? But he only looks one!" Andromeda said outraged, and Harry hid his face in George's chest.

"It's okay Harry. No one is angry with you. As I was saying, the potion works like this; he will spend one week as each age between two and eleven. Every seven days he will age another year as the potion

wears off. His memories are locked, meaning he will regain them when he reaches the appropriate age. We calculated it so the potion wears off completely on the week he is supposed to turn eleven. So on that day he will just go back to being seventeen. That is in nine weeks, one week short of his birthday."

"What are you planning to accomplish George?" Arthur asked warily and Severus shared the feeling.

"Simple, you and mom will give Harry a taste of a normal childhood. I can't erase the Dursleys, but we can give him something different than what he originally received. I think he deserves it and there are no better parents than you two."

"Hear, hear," the other Weasley kids intoned and Severus saw that George had managed to get to Molly, and she was inching her hands closer to get Harry.

"I don't think so," Severus cut across her path and stood next to George. No way she was getting his son!

"But Professor, the Potion has to wear off. There is no antidote," George explained.

"Then I will take care of Potter."

The entire room went silent; it would have been easy to hear a pin drop. It seemed people even forgot to breathe.

"Now, Severus, really," Andromeda started. "What experience do you have with children? Besides, you've always hated James, and from what I heard, Harry."

"I've come to understand Potter isn't his father in the days we've lived together," he answered dryly.

"Actually," Remus said and everyone turned to him as if he would save them, "I agree with Severus. He would be a great choice."

Now they were looking at Remus disbelievingly.

"Remus-" Hermione started, but she was cut off by a small delighted voice.

"Mooey!" As they all turned towards Harry they saw the little boy holding his arms out for the werewolf.

"Hey there Harry. You remember me?" Remus said as he lifted Harry from George's arms.

"But he was too young to remember anyone," Hermione said, "If he is two he had to have been with the Dursleys for nine months. He wouldn't remember."

"Witches and Wizards have better memories than Muggles, Granger, because of their magic," Severus drawled. "Small children usually don't retain memories for very long, but magical children sometimes do. You noticed Harry didn't say much of anything until Lupin talked. Which means he probably remembered the voice but couldn't recognize the face well enough."

"I always read for him. You liked it didn't you cub?" Remus asked, kissing Harry's nose and making the boy giggle.

"What do you say about staying with Severus here, Harry?" Remus asked pointing at Severus.

"Awe you daddy?" Harry asked looking at Severus. "He got hair the same color that I got," he finished, grabbing his hair with his small fists.

"Yes he does," Remus said gently prying Harry's hands from his hair. "And he is."

"Remus, you shouldn't confuse him like that," Tonks scolded.

"But he is Dora," Remus said calmly. "James wasn't Harry's biological father, he only magically adopted Harry. Severus is his father. Harry is the son of the three of them."

Outraged cries sounded all over, and Harry was suddenly trembling and hiding in Remus' robes. Remus started whispering to the boy and rubbing his back. Annoyed beyond belief that his private life had been exposed like this, Severus yelled, "SHUT UP!"

Everyone went silent and Severus stalked towards Lupin, "Yes, thank you for telling everyone when I haven't even told Harry yet Lupin."

"You're welcome," Remus smiled and Severus glared.

"Do you want to go with daddy Harry?" Remus asked kindly.

"We pway bubwe daddy?"

"What?" Severus asked.

Remus smiled, "James used to make bubbles for Harry with his wand," he turned to Harry. "No Harry, that is not daddy James, that is daddy Severus. You have two daddies. Daddy James is the one that made bubbles, but he is in heaven with mommy and can't come."

"Daddy and mommy no come?" Harry asked in a small sad voice as his bottom lip trembled.

"They love you very much Harry but they can't come. They would if they could."

"An I tay wif daddy Sevus."

"Yes," Remus said smiling.

"Otay," Harry nodded, putting his arms out for Severus who awkwardly took him with some directions from Molly and Andromeda. Harry instantly rested his head on Severus' shoulder and put a thumb in his mouth grabbing a fistful of Severus' robes with the other hand. Apparently he had decided he had enough for one night and daddy was safe.

"Wait a moment," Hermione said firmly. "You can't just waltz in here and say you are Harry's dad and expect us to just let you leave with him."

"I am not leaving," Severus said bored. "We will stay in Grimmauld Place."

Hermione rolled her eyes, "You know what I meant. Where were you while Harry was growing up? You always treated him horribly. Why should we believe you'll change if you didn't want him before?"

"I didn't know he was mine before," Severus said narrowing his eyes. "Now if you'll excuse me I'll put my son to bed."

Hermione was about to protest but Remus stopped her, allowing Severus to leave. "I just told him the truth when he woke up in the hospital wing Hermione. He truly did not know. And, yes, I agree that taking his frustration and hatred of James on Harry wasn't right, but don't you think they deserve a second chance? Wasn't that why George and Fred devised this crazy plan?"

Hermione glared at Remus, but surprisingly it was Ron who made her see reason, "I think he is right Hermione. Besides, we will keep an eye on Snape. He won't be alone and Kreacher won't let him hurt Harry. Right Kreacher?" He asked the elf who had been inconspicuously taking the dishes to the sink.

"Yes, Mr. Weasley sir. I is taking care of Master Harry."

"And telling us if Harry isn't happy right?"

"Yes, sir."

"See, if we get a whiff of Harry being unhappy, we will whisk him to the Burrow. But if not, let them build a relationship, that otherwise they would never be able to have, not with their history," Remus pleaded. "Give them this fresh start. I know Severus seems like an awful person. He is not my favorite person either, but I did also see him with Lily at school, and know he is capable of caring and loving, as strange as it may seem."

"Fine," Ginny said glaring at Remus. "But if he as much as raises his voice at Harry-"

"I'll bring him to the Burrow myself," Remus promised.

Chapter 4- Fatherhood

Now he was in a pickle. He hadn't thought much past stalking out of the kitchen. What was he supposed to do? He couldn't put Harry in his own room. Children weren't supposed to sleep in big beds right? He almost jumped as he heard a crack. He turned around and glared at Kreacher.

"You is having to put Master Harry to bed sir."

"I know that," he hissed. "But I don't have a crib."

"Yes, you have. Master Harry is making a room ready for his godson. Master Teddy is sleeping there now but Mistress Tonks is saying they are leaving soon, so you can put Master Harry in Master Teddy's crib."

"Huh, interesting." He hadn't realized there was a nursery. He followed the elf into a pale blue room full of toys and a big crib inside. Right behind him Tonks entered and smiled, fetching the baby that was in the crib. Severus looked at her and raised an eyebrow. The baby was so delicate in *her* hands.

"Remus always gives me that look too. But for some reason, when I hold Teddy my clumsiness leaves me. Then it comes back ten fold when I put him down as if in revenge. You can put Harry here. Harry bought this crib because it's supposed to last for years. See how the bars and the mattress goes up and down?" she asked, motioning with her wand and making the mattress move down and the crib resemble more a kid's bed than a crib. "You still have the bars raised, so he won't roll off, but he can get out on his own if he wants to when he is older. Right now it's best to keep them a little higher. Also, the door is spelled so he won't be able to leave the room and if you activate this crystal," she said pointing at a crystal embedded on the crib, "It will let you know when he wakes up."

Severus nodded and put Harry, who had fallen asleep a while ago, in the crib.

"I'll enlarge some of the disposable Muggle diapers Harry got for me and one of Teddy's pajamas I have here. I really like them more. We are still living in the middle ages diaper wise," she said. "But you should get bigger ones for a kid his age. I'll come by tomorrow and help you with it. There is a market not far from here. You also should get other toys and clothes. These here are for younger babies.

There's also a chance he is potty trained, so you may want to opt for pull-ups at night, which is a diaper that the child can take off to use the potty. But I highly doubt Harry is. Not from what I've heard of the Dursleys. They wouldn't have bothered encouraging him or anything. You'll have to wait and see anyway. For now this will do."

She had put her baby down next to Harry again and then lifted Harry on a changing table. Somehow, Harry did not wake up.

"I'll show you how to change him, but I'm guessing Kreacher will be the one doing it most of the times."

"No, I will take care of everything."

She snorted, "Let me know if you still think like that after you really change Harry's first messy diaper."

She carefully took away the huge shirt that Harry had been bundled in and gasped. Severus' eyes narrowed. He was skin and bones. You could see his ribs, and on top of that he had bruises and finger marks on his pale flesh. There were also some nasty diaper rashes.

"I guess the potion takes him to exactly how he was at that age," she said sadly as she cleaned him and put the diaper on Harry. "I'll ask Poppy to stop by tomorrow. Do you have any anti-bruise salve?"

"I don't know if the ones I have here aren't too strong for him. I'll brew some that is more appropriate tonight."

She nodded and finished dressing Harry. As she put him down in the crib she kissed him softly. She took her son and said gently:

"Take good care of him Severus."

Severus nodded and bent over the crib as Kreacher and Tonks left the room. He ran a hand through Harry's dark hair and promised he would make sure George and Fred's gift worked.

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After what Severus had dubbed the diaper disaster and was quite sure could compare to the end of the world, but Kreacher insisted it was normal, Severus had decided that though he would be very participant on Harry's life, he would leave diaper changing to Kreacher. Once Harry was clean and ready to be clothed, Severus asked if he was potty trained; before she left, Molly said that some children that are starting potty training still use diapers at night because they can't wake up on their own yet. So Severus asked, and Harry's answer was that he was a big boy. After another disaster it was proven that big boy or no, Harry was not yet potty trained.

Poppy had stopped by and had clucked and tsked a lot. Her diagnosis was that Harry was malnourished and probably beaten. Severus eyes narrowed as he plotted revenge, and revenge would be sweet. He'd have to wait nine weeks since he didn't want to leave Harry alone, but the more he waited the more creative he could get.

She ordered some nutrient potions, some salve for his rashes and some anti-bruise salve. Thankfully Harry didn't have any serious injury. Harry had been quite scared with Poppy. Apparently he didn't do well with strangers, though how he had accepted George Weasley so easily was a mystery. But Severus had noticed Harry had been painfully shy the previous night. When Remus, Teddy and Tonks arrived, Harry had brightened up at "Mooey" but had eyed Tonks warily. It took some coaxing to get him near her and he only did because he was really curious about the baby in the pram.

"He smaww," Harry had said.

"Yes, he is. But he'll grow," she chuckled.

"Hawwy big boy. Daddy say so," he declared proudly.

The Lupins accompanied Harry and Severus to a Muggle store where they guided Severus to what he had to buy for Harry's needs. Afterwards they shrunk their purchases and headed to Diagon Alley to buy Harry some clothes and toys. The stores in Diagon Alley had started to open up again with the war finally over. The Wand-less whom had roamed it during the Dark Lord's reign had been given new wands by the Ministry and given back their assets. The posters that had been plastered with Harry's face had

been taken down and some with the Death Eaters that were still avoiding capture were up, but not taking much space. You could almost pretend nothing had happened and the Alley was just as it had always been, if not for a few obviously bordered up stores like Floreans Fortescue's Ice-Cream Parlor. They stopped quickly by Madam Malkin's where she took Harry's measurements and their order for a whole wardrobe.

"Please, consider this potion will make him age a year every week until he is back at his true age," Remus said kindly. "So, if you could please estimate his sizes for the ages between two and eleven we would be grateful."

"I can do that. I can put a charm on the clothes so that the first time they are worn they resize themselves to the child's needs. And I'll separate them in bags by age so you know when to use them. I think they'll be ready in three hours. Do you want them owled or will you come fetch them?"

"We will come," Severus said firmly. "How much will it be?"

"Oh, nothing Professor. It's my pleasure. It's the least I could do for young Harry."

"He won't like it when he grows up," Remus said.

"Tell him to donate the clothes in my shop's name after he doesn't need them anymore and we'll be even then."

"Thank you," Severus said. "We count on your discretion."

"Of course," she nodded.

Severus positioned Harry on his hips and the little group wandered towards the toy store. Harry's eyes lit up as they entered and his little mouth hung open. Pushing Harry's chin up gently to close his mouth and putting him on the floor, Severus said:

"Go choose the toys you want Harry."

Not letting go of Severus' hand Harry shook his head nervously.

"Why not?" Severus asked kneeling down.

"Hawwy no toys. Onwy Duddy toys," Harry said sadly.

Severus closed his eyes, breathed deeply to calm himself, and opened them slowly.

"Remember you live with daddy now?" Harry nodded. "Daddy has different rules than the Dursleys. And here Harry gets all the toys he wants, within reason. So feel free to choose."

Harry looked dubious but he slowly walked away. Severus followed him as he heard Remus say:

"Tonks and I will look for toys for older children so we don't have to come again every week."

Harry slowly approached a stuffed dog that was almost his size and greatly resembled the mutt's Animagus form. He slowly reached his hand to touch it, constantly turning back to see Severus' reaction, and Severus nodded encouragingly. He finally touched it shutting his eyes tightly. When no yells and smacks came, he opened his eyes and hugged the toy closely. Severus kneeled once again and asked:

"Do you want it?"

Harry nodded and Severus took it to put it in a flying chest that had followed them from the front door. This behavior repeated itself with every toy Harry chose but after almost two hours they had enough toys to entertain Harry for the time he would be two.

Severus and Harry joined Tonks and Remus and paid for their purchases. This time the shopkeeper did not recognize Harry and just received his money. They once again shrunk their packages and Severus held Harry. They were almost at the door when someone hissed:

"How can someone let him be near a child?"

Severus and Remus turned simultaneously and Tonks' hair turned purple.

"Who are you talking about ma'am?" Tonks asked the elderly woman through gritted teeth.

"I am talking about that Death Eater. He is not worthy of stepping on the same ground as us, much less hold an innocent child."

"Maybe you failed to read the papers, Madam, but Severus was on our side. Harry Potter vouched for him," Remus said firmly.

"The boy was obviously Cofunded. He was You-Know-Who's right hand man."

"A position that granted us victory because of his help," Tonks hissed, and she glanced at Severus who had yet to defend himself.

But Severus wasn't going to. He was holding Harry who was shaking with the animosity flying around, and at the same time was trying to calm him and keep his scar hidden. Wanting to get out of there, Severus said in a low even voice:

"I am at peace with what I did Madam. I did my part for the Light in this war, even if some don't agree. I did it for me and for the memory of the woman I loved, not for you or anyone else, so I pretty much don't care what you think. Now, if you will excuse me, I have the same right to shop for my son as anyone else," and he stalked away.

XXXXXX

"Be righ back," Harry said as he walked by George and went to get another toy.

"He's been saying that every time he goes somewhere," Severus said. "Even if it's in the same room."

Molly smiled, "It's normal Severus. Children copy what they hear, even if they don't know what exactly it's used for. He sees that people say 'I'll be right back' when they leave and he does it too even if he is not really leaving."

"Hewe," Harry handed George a little phone toy Tonks had insisted on buying at the Muggle market.

"What's this?" George asked shaking the toy.

"No, you tawk see?" and Harry put the phone to his ear upside down "Hewwo, yes. It's fow you" Harry said handing the phone back to George.

"Go on George, answer the fellytone," Ron sniggered.

"If you are such an expert why don't you answer it?" George said, eyeing the toy as if it would explode.

Severus rolled his eyes, kneeled down and took the toy from Harry, "Yes, thank you," he said pretending to talk in it and then handed it back to Harry, "They want to talk to you."

"Thank you daddy," Harry said giggling and took the phone back to start chewing on. Everyone stared at Severus with their mouths open.

"What?" he snapped.

"Nothing Severus," Molly said kindly. "You are doing great."

"It also helps that he actually knows how the fellytone works," George smirked.

Xxxx

"Harry James Potter!" Severus said sternly to his three-year-old son. "Who gave you those Canary

Creams?"

Harry looked at his daddy with wide eyes and shook his head.

"I am warning you Harry. I want your accomplice's name so you two can be duly punished!"

Oh, now he was in deep trouble! Daddy's vein was popping. But it had been so fun when Mowniny, Moony, Won, and Bill turned into pretty birdies. But he wasn't supposed to say. So he shuffled his feet and looked down.

"Mawdews don teww on eash othew."

"That is all I needed to know," Severus said turning around and looking with a dangerous maniacal glint towards his prey, "George Weasley, how dare you give my son such items?"

"I did no such thing. Mind you, I am so proud of young Harry, but I did nothing that you are accusing me of."

"Who else would have told him that line?"

"The only Marauder in the room," George said pointing at Remus, who just snorted.

"Lupin, unlike you, was a victim and also unlike you, has actually grown up. Since you haven't yet, I think my usual punishment should do."

"Hey, you can't make me scrub cauldrons!"

"Watch me!"

"Daddy, Geogie didn't do nofing," Harry said tugging his father's robes and looking up pleadingly.

"Save your breath Harry. I know what I'm talking about."

"But Geogie is nice."

"You, young man, are grounded and will stay in your room and have no dessert, and unless you want to join *Geogie* I would stay silent."

Later that night as everyone was leaving, Remus hugged Harry tight and whispered in his ear, "Well done my little Marauder."

"I didn't teww," Harry said proudly.

"No you didn't," Remus smirked as a dirty George huffed towards the Floo.

Xxxxx

The storm was raging outside but it did not wake Severus up. What woke him was the feeling of his covers moving, his mattress shifting and little hands and feet snuggling closer to his body. Severus opened his eyes and through the moonlight he could make Harry's four-year-old tiny form.

"Harry, might I inquire as to what you are doing here?" So much for charms that would keep him in his room.

"You were scared of the storm daddy. And I am here to protect you. Me and Paddy," he said pointing at his blasted stuffed dog that he had named Padfoot.

Severus tried to hide his amusement and said, "How lucky of me to have such a protector to keep me from being scared."

Harry nodded and scuttled closer, shaking as the thunder raged. Severus' arm encircled Harry and he carted his fingers through Harry's hair until he felt him fall asleep. It was a long while before Severus did so as well; he was completely absorbed in the feeling of his son sleeping on his chest.

Xxxxx

Five-year-old Harry burst into the kitchen and hugged Severus' legs in distress. Severus hunched down and scooped the little crying boy in his arms. "What's wrong Harry?" he asked while rubbing Harry's back.

"I don't want you to die daddy!"

Severus looked lost at Remus and Tonks.

"Harry, why would you think I'll die?"

"Cause Dudley said old people die and Hermione just told Ron that you are thirty-eight daddy! Thirty-eight! That's ancient!"

Sure enough the guilty party ran into the kitchen.

"He just ran for no reason!" Hermione panted, closely followed by Ron. Severus glared at them and at Remus and Tonks, who were muffling their laughter.

Severus pulled a chair to him and sat down with Harry in his lap. He tilted Harry's head to look at him, "Harry thirty-eight is not ancient."

"Yes it is, I can't even count that high!" Harry cried rubbing his eyes.

Severus pulled Harry's hands from his face and pulled his wand out. He waved it and conjured seven green rectangle chips and one that was little over half the size of the others, put them in a row, and then conjured one blue rectangle chip that was placed next to the first row. "See here Harry?" he pointed at the blue chip, "This represents five years. That is how old you are." Harry nodded. "These," he pointed at the green chips, "Represents how old I am. See? I've lived little over seven and a half Harrys."

"But that's a lot daddy. I lived a lot. I don't even remember when I wasn't alive," Harry said seriously, and chuckles were heard.

"No you don't, but you see wizards live to be two hundred years old and that is," he conjured a row of brown rectangles, "Forty Harrys. So you see, I still have all these Harrys to live."

Harry looked at the very much larger brown row that was next to the green one and calmed a little.

"What about Moony?"

"Moony is the same age as I am."

"And Tonks?"

"She is five Harrys," and he conjured a bright pink row.

"And Hermione?"

"Ah, she is old," Severus said evenly and Harry's eyes widened.

Hermione huffed, stalked towards them and conjured a purple row, "I am little over three and a half Harrys. I am a lot younger than your daddy."

Harry didn't understand why Hermione was angry, he was just happy no one was going to die and sat contentedly on his daddy's lap.

Xxx

"You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion-making. As there is little foolish wand-waving here many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't 'xpect you will really understand the beauty of the soft simmerin' cauldron with its shimmerin' fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, esnar- esnar- " the little six-year-old boy scrunched up his face trying to remember the big word. He started fidgeting in his little all black robes and ran to the back of the potions lab. Severus crouched down from where he was leaning against the wall and had a whispered conversation with Harry. Harry hurried back to the front, stood straight and proud and eyeing Ron, Dean, Luna, Ginny, Neville and Hermione continued, "ensnaring the senses... I can teach you to bottle fame, brew glory and put a stopper on death- if you aren't a bunch of dunderheads," at the end of his speech Harry smiled, looking back hopefully, and Severus nodded proudly walking next to him.

"At your request I will get you all ready to start your seventh year. Some of you need to be brought up, some need a refreshment course, and some," Severus said eying Neville, "need a miracle."

Xxx

"Who are we going to visit?" seven-year-old Harry asked seriously.

"Well you see Harry, you may have noticed that you grow up fairly fast," Severus answered as he straightened the jacket he was putting on Harry kneeling down to be at Harry's height. They were both wearing perfectly normal Muggle attire.

"That's 'cause I'm getting big. Soon I'll be taller than you," Harry said grinning widely and Severus chuckled, which he quickly covered with a cough. He looked around and released his breath. *Good, no one saw that.*

"Well, you are growing so fast because you are not really seven."

"No?"

"No, you are seventeen. *George*," here Severus put an annoyed emphasis, "Gave you a deaging potion to drink that made you go back to two-years-old and you've been aging a year a week. Do you understand?"

"I'm seventeen?" Harry asked awed. "I'm ancient!"

Severus rolled his eyes; what was with Harry and thinking anyone above the age of ten was ancient?

"Anyway, you know your cousin Dudley?"

"I don't like him," Harry said nervously. "I like you daddy," he finished hugging Severus desperately.

"I like you back, and no, you are not going back to the Dursleys so don't worry," he said calmly rubbing Harry's back. Harry nodded but did not let go. "Well, your cousin isn't a child anymore, and he has changed. He said he was sorry for all the mean things he did and he wanted to be your friend."

"Dudley doesn't like me. He only likes me to be his punching bag," Harry said firmly.

"That is one of the things he said he was sorry for. And you accepted his apologies and promised that he could keep in touch before this happened," Severus said pointing at him. "I remembered this and owled your cousin explaining what happened so he wouldn't think you didn't mean it, and he asked to see you."

Harry was trembling and shaking his head vigorously. Severus held him close and said softly, "I'll be with you all the time. I promise."

"Promise?" Harry asked quietly.

"Yes, and I never break promises."

"Me neither, and I promised Dudley right?" Harry asked biting his lip.

"Right."

"Okay, we can go."

Severus smiled and got up from his kneeling position. He took Harry's hand and they walked out of the house. Picking Harry up, Severus Apparated both of them to an alley in London. As they walked out he saw the café where he was supposed to meet Dudley. Sure enough, the young man was sitting at one of the outside tables. Severus approached and cleared his throat:

"Mr. Dursley."

Dudley looked up and smiled, he got up and extended his hand, "Professor Snape. Thank you for coming," he looked down at Harry who was gripping his father's hand and trying to hide behind him.

"Blimey, Harry. You really are seven."

Harry shrugged.

"Why don't we sit down," Severus said pulling one of the chairs out for Harry to sit. When the boy did not move to take it, Severus sat and pulled Harry onto his lap. Dudley sat back in his chair and said: "Professor Snape told me you don't remember much of what happened."

"He remembers everything up until the age of seven," Severus said.

"Oh, than you must hate me," Dudley smiled nervously looking at Harry who was looking at him nervously and gripping Severus' hand tightly. "I'm sorry for what I did to you Harry. It was mean and hurtful and wrong. I have no other excuse but to say I did not know any better. I would love to put all the blame on my parents, and they do have a lot, they are the ones that told me that what I was doing was right. But it's not all because of them, there are many people whose parents spoil them and they are not bullies like I was. I just hope we can be friends. Or at least not have any hard feelings," he finished extending his hand.

Harry looked at Severus who nodded. Very cautiously he extended his small hand and let Dudley wrap it in his big one. He smiled as Dudley shook it gently and the pain he was expecting never came. Honestly, Severus couldn't have cared less if Dudley had to wait other three weeks to talk to Harry, but he knew this would be good for young Harry to understand that the Dursleys were wrong to treat him the way they did. Usually during the first couple of days of each week, when Harry just regained a new set of memories, he would go back to being scared and thinking he would be punished for everything. This week he woke up to find Harry cooking breakfast. Cooking! With fire! At seven years old! He couldn't believe it! He once again explained that he wasn't at the Dursleys'; that although he was expected to clean after himself and behave, he did not have to cook and clean the house, that was Kreacher's job. And if he misbehaved Severus would not hit him, but send him to his room, deprived of his favorite toy, which was his toy broomstick that he loved zooming around the house, or made to go to sleep earlier and without dessert, but never would he be struck or locked in a cupboard.

Xxxx

"You do not touch the fire understand? You can't anyway, since I charmed it. You ask me to turn it up or down if you need to."

Eight-year-old Harry nodded seriously.

"Now, see this knife?" Severus showed him a red handled knife. "This is the only knife you are allowed to use because I charmed it so you wouldn't cut yourself, see?" he said pressing the knife to his finger, "It won't cut human flesh."

There were two cauldrons on the fires and two benches. One small, right at Harry's height and one that suited Severus'.

"Now, first we cut the rat tails this way, diagonally," Severus said, motioning for Harry to copy with his special knife. "This way it will keep its magical properties better than if you cut it vertically..."

That is how Harry and Severus spent the afternoon as Severus instructed Harry in the fine art of potion making. Harry had been observing the classes he'd been giving the other kids for the past two weeks and had constantly asked him when he'd be allowed to brew. Severus noticed that his previous impression that Harry was indeed adept at Potions and hadn't shown it before due to lack of encouragement and downright disparagement on his part was correct. Even at the tender age of six, Harry had begun asking questions about how ingredients reacted and why they would use one instead of

the other. He hoped that by helping him now maybe Harry would come to love potions like he and Lily had once he went back to his rightful age.

"Well done son," Severus praised as Harry handed him a perfectly brewed Hair-Raising Potion, something that many first years had a lot of trouble brewing and Harry beamed happily.

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When Harry was nine-years-old Remus Blasted Lupin convinced Severus to take Harry to the Burrow so he could fly a real broom. So that is what Severus had been doing. He had been watching with hawks eyes as Harry, Ginny, Ron and George played a game of Quidditch. He was sure he only hadn't keeled over yet from several heart attacks at Harry's stunts by pure stubbornness.

He was being stupid; he had seen the boy doing things like that a million times before and had never cared. He had seen Harry outfly a dragon for crying out loud! Why should this be any different?

Oh God! Severus leaped from his chair as Harry went in a dive and pulled off it inches from the ground.

He sat back with a hand on his heart feeling faint.

"It's different when you know they are yours," Arthur's voice came from behind him. He looked back and watched as the man drew a chair next to him. "I used to watch Quidditch games during family reunions all the time. My little cousins would do stunts just like those, and I would just cheer them on with one of the boys in my arms and wait to see the next stunt, until the day Bill joined them. Oh my, I was a nervous wreck that day. I honestly think I aged ten years in the first hour."

"How did you get used to it?"

"I didn't," Arthur said as he watched calmly as George dived for the Quaffle, "I learned to fake it."

"Fake it?" Severus asked.

"You'll never stop worrying, be it a Quidditch game, an outing with friends or a battle," Arthur said sadly and Severus knew he was thinking of Fred. "But you can't stop them from living and fighting. I couldn't stop Fred," Arthur laughed sadly, "I couldn't stop Ginny and she was underage. The best you can do is let them live and be there when they get hurt. Harry never had someone to be there when he was hurt. I never realized it until now. We thought we were there but we truly weren't. Every time one of our own ended up in the Hospital Wing we rushed to Hogwarts even if it was just a small ant bite, even for only ten minutes just to see if they were okay. How many times had Harry woken up in the Hospital Wing? And how many of those times was there someone there when he woke up? Someone there for him, to take care of him and not to explain the little adventure he had gotten himself into. None. There never was anyone. No matter how many people claimed to love him. Now he really does have someone. Now you both do."

Severus nodded as his eyes traveled back up to Harry who waved excitedly to him. He waved back and realized Arthur was right.

Xxx

"Dad?"

Severus looked up from the potions journal he had been reading at the couch to find ten-year-old Harry fidgeting in front of him, "Yes."

"Can I ask you something?"

"You already did but you *may* ask another question."

"Why did you leave me with the Dursleys?"

Severus sighed; he knew this question would come but hoped that maybe the Potion would wear off and he would be explaining it to adult Harry. He patted the seat next to him and Harry sat down.

"Do you remember when Remus told you that you had two fathers?"

Harry shook his head. It may have been only a few weeks back but Harry had supposedly aged from two to ten, so it made sense he wouldn't remember that conversation.

"You see Harry, your mom, she married James Potter, but she was already pregnant with you. When you were born, James adopted you, making you his son by blood too."

"How?"

"With magic, there is a ritual that involves adding the new parent's genetics to the child. I don't know exactly how it works, but in a nutshell it means that your genetic material that would normally be constituted half by your mother's and half by your father's, is divided in three and not two. Anyway, for many years I believed you were James' son. Your mother never told me you were mine. A couple of months back there was a huge battle where many good people died to defeat a really bad wizard. I almost died but you saved my life."

"I did?"

"Yes," Severus smiled. "You did. When I woke up in the hospital wing at Hogwarts, Remus told me about you. That is when I found out I was really your father."

"And then you told me and we stayed together?"

"No, I didn't know how to tell you. I was your teacher for many years at Hogwarts and I wasn't very nice to you."

"Why not?" Harry asked confused.

"I loved your mother Harry. Very, very much. But she ended up marrying James. I know now it was my mistake. She didn't like a choice I made, a very bad choice I made and that is why she never told me about you. When you came to Hogwarts, all I could see was the symbol of my loss. You see, you look a lot like James. You have his bad hair," he said ruffling Harry's hair. "His bad eyesight. You have his round face. You also have your mother's eyes, my hands, my scowl," he said faking a scowl and Harry giggled. "But I never saw that. All I saw was James Potter. Lily's eyes on James Potter, when it should have been her eyes on my features. And it would have if I hadn't been stupid."

"You're not stupid," Harry scowled crossing his arms.

"I was, believe me, I was. But that's not what I'm trying to explain. I was angry, angry at Lily for leaving me, angry at James for getting the girl, angry at life for taking away from me what I wanted and angry at you for reminding me of that," 'and for living when she didn't,' Severus thought. He had been angry at Harry for that, but now he couldn't bear the thought of Harry not surviving. "And I took it out on you. It was childish and wrong but I did it. When I found out you were my son I didn't know how to react and I was scared you wouldn't want me. That you would hate me; I gave you enough reason to. So I didn't tell you. You invited me to live here because my house wasn't safe and we started a tentative truce. But I still was scared of telling you. And I'm scared that when you turn back to your age you'll hate me again."

"I won't," Harry promised hugging Severus. "I love you dad!"

Severus hugged him fiercely back and said, "I love you son." And was shocked to realize he really meant it.

Chapter 6- Growing up

Severus was pacing his room. It was late. Very late. Normally he would be sound asleep by now but not tonight. Tonight he was too agitated to sleep. He should have put Harry to sleep earlier. He knew that, but instead he wanted to squeeze every last second of his son's childhood for all it was worth. There was no telling what would happen now. Nine weeks ago he didn't know what he wanted. Yes, it was true that he didn't hate the boy, he never truly did. He tried very hard to, but he hadn't managed to truly hate him through all those years. But nine weeks ago he was not all that sure he wanted to be Harry Potter's father.

Now he wanted that; he wanted to never stop hearing Harry call him dad or daddy. He wanted Harry to always love him. But tonight. Some time tonight the potion would wear off and in his sleep Harry would go back to being seventeen. He'd be back to having had his greasy-git Potions Master belittle him for six years of his life. He would remember he hated him. Yes, Harry had been the one to extend the peace hand when he offered Severus shelter, but Severus didn't fool himself. Harry wouldn't want him as a father. And he would be mighty pissed about being lied to.

"Yes, I would," came a voice from the door, Severus turned sharply and stood face to face with his eighteen-year-old son's emerald eyes. He didn't look angry. "How did you manage to be such a successful spy talking to yourself like that?" Harry asked.

"Harry."

"I may have regained my memories but I also kept those of the last nine weeks. I remember when you explained to me that you didn't know you were my father until Remus told you after we defeated the bad wizard," Harry chuckled at his last words. "I don't like being lied to but I understand that you were still a little er...shocked."

"I...Harry..."

"Never thought the day would come when you were speechless dad," Harry smirked.

"I am not speechless, you just have to understand- dad?"

"Yes," Harry said suddenly feeling self-conscious. "I mean if you don't want- I'm sorry."

Severus closed the distance and shook his head.

"Only if you don't," he said hoarsely.

"I want to," Harry said, his eyes bright. "Dad."

Severus pulled him into a hug and Harry returned it fiercely.

"I love you son," Severus said into Harry's hair.

"Love you dad."

After some time they pulled apart smiling contently, and Harry said, "Oh, and dad. Chuck away those plans you made regarding Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia."

Severus pulled his most innocent face and said evenly, "I don't know what you are talking about Harry."

"The ones that are in your top drawer under the latest issue of *Potions Today*."

"Haven't got a clue."

"The ones that detail how you are going to make them suffer for each year I lived there. I found it when I was looking for parchment to color on last week. Forget them."

"What if I only put them under the charm that prevents them from tasting food?"

"No."

"Fine, I'll let that one go and will only hex them to relive every punishment they ever gave you."

"Nope."

"Just the one that makes everything Petunia cleans ten times more dirty than before she cleaned?"

"No."

"What about-"

"Forget all the hexes and curses you had planned."

"So I can-"

"The potions too."

"But-"

"Just forget them dad. I will. I don't need them. I have you," Harry said simply and Severus smiled. He flung his arm around Harry's shoulder and, ushering him downstairs, Severus said:

"Never tell the wolf this but what do you say to some hot chocolate?"

"I say; it sounds perfect. Speaking of the wolf dad I've been thinking, what if we infuse the Wolfsbane with..."

XXXXXX

"And then they went and left me Grandpa. Both of them. They are over there. How is that fair?"

"You'll join Jamie and Sevvie at Hogwarts in two years," Severus told his granddaughter, the apple of his eyes. The little miniature of her grandmother, who was sitting on his lap. "And when you get there, you'll show them off with your brilliance Lily." He smiled at her.

Harry often said Severus spoiled Lily and his other two grandsons rotten and made them everything he had accused Harry of being. Severus said he was just paying Harry back for making Albus Sevvie's middle name and putting someone named James Sirius Snape-Potter in the world. He should have known better.

Harry had added the Snape to his name right before graduating Hogwarts, which he did attend after a glaring and yelling match with his father.

The fireplace turned green and Remus' head appeared in it, "Are you two coming or not? Harry and Ginny are already here and the food won't keep. Teddy is brooding and you know how he is when he is sad, happy, nervous, calm or whatever. Just eats everything in front of him."

"We're coming Uncle Moony," Lily said and she hopped up and pulled Severus with her. They threw Floo powder on the fire and disappeared in a flare of green. As the fire extinguished the room was lit only by the light of the full moon.

The end

A/N- I am no expert on kids so I am talking about observation mostly. My friend has a twenty-one months old baby and he already walks around and talks a lot. The crib is also the one she bought that supposedly works until he is four because as the time passes you can make it turn into a bed and it's huge, crib wise I mean.

For the Fred lovers, sorry I kept him dead but I honestly had at first only intended to make Severus and Remus survive. Severus for obvious reasons and Remus because he was the one that knew the secret and would kind of guide Severus to Harry. At first my idea had been of ending up with a Severus and Remus pairing up but I could not manage to come up with a way of doing that without making their previous relationships (Lily and Tonks) seem meaningless and I did not want that, so I brought Tonks back too.

I know they are a little OOC and Harry is way too accepting but I just liked the way this worked and its fanfiction so I get to do what I want.

This was just a crazy thought that came into my head and ended up being a story. I didn't have much of a plot for a long story but if anyone wants to use ideas from this to make one be my guest, just please let me know so I can read them!! Please!!

Thanks for reading and let me know what you think.

Alternate ending:

Harry deposited the baby in Severus' arms, his second grandson. He was perfect.
"Meet Severus Albus Snape-Potter," Harry said. He had added the Snape to his name when Severus recognized his paternity right before Harry's nineteenth birthday. The name Harry Potter meant too much to the wizarding world to change it so he hyphenated it and made it one last name.

"Severus?" Severus asked.

"Well, yes. I figured I already honored one grandfather, I should honor the other one," Harry said. Severus nodded, swallowing hard and looked at his grandson and smiled. Little James, the rest of the Weasley family, Dudley and his wife and Remus, Tonks and their three children were crowding around Severus and Harry to have a good look at the newborn. Through the window of the waiting room of St. Mungo's you could see the full moon glowing.