

Choices

by broomclosetravenclaw

Severus realizes his mistakes and tries to correct them—is he too late?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The Dark Mark on Severus' forearm burned. He rubbed at it sorely as he cursed silently. He hesitated and then resisted the pull to Apparate, counting the seconds. Seeing Lily happily Christmas shopping earlier that afternoon had been too much for him to bear. While she would be spending her evening, Christmas Eve, surrounded by family and friends in Godric's Hollow, he would be doing the Dark Lord's bidding, catching holiday revelers unawares—and it sickened him. Suffering the pain in his arm long enough, Severus turned to meet his fate.

"Late again," the hissing voice, barely louder than a whisper, greeted his arrival.

Voldemort had a way of making him feel at ease and even accepted with his sweet, soft voice, but Severus had quickly learned what deception and corruption lay beneath his facade. A persona that became more and more evident each time Severus dared to defy his cue to join the Dark Lord's side. Voldemort's words had drawn him in, but his thoughts destroyed Severus, little by little.

Even as he lay on the ground still suffering the aftereffects of the curse, Voldemort's kind words lulled him, "I don't enjoy punishing you, Severus, but you have brought this all on yourself."

And Severus knew that the Dark Lord had never been more right—his choices had brought him to this.

By the time the tremors left his body, he was alone in the snow-strewn field, the tang of blood still in his mouth from where he had bitten his own tongue. Despite being cold and damp, he had come to a decision about his future. He Apparated to Godric's Hollow.

He could see the scene through the front window, one he had always secretly longed for—one *he thought* he had found, until he realized his mistake too late.

Lily and—he couldn't even bring himself to think his name—were gathered around the hearth, laughing and toasting with their friends. Lily's hair glowed copper in the firelight, her eyes sparkled with merriment. Severus had to talk to her—alone.

Severus crept around to the back garden and waited by the kitchen window. When she entered the kitchen, he used the bird call that they had used as kids, wishing on every star he could see that she would remember. He had to sound the call two more times before she slipped out the back door into the dark shadows.

"Severus?"

The sound of his name on her lips gave him the courage he needed. He stepped closer to her.

"Lily."

"What are you doing here?"

"I needed to see you—to talk to you. I've made so many mistakes."

"This isn't a good time." She turned to leave.

Severus gently grabbed her wrist. Impulsively, he kissed her—anything to keep her there talking to him. Briefly, he felt her surrender to the kiss. As he wrapped his arms around her, she pulled away with tear-stained cheeks, rosy from the cold.

"Severus, I can't do this. I'm pregnant."

A/N: A big thank you to peppermint for looking this over for me last minute.

This was written and received an Enchanted Quill for the LJ community Romancing the Wizard's "Winter Holidays Past" 500-word challenge. My prompt was, "tear-stained rosy cheeks."