

Lips of Lilith

by Hellebore

With nothing left to lose, Severus has one last act of revenge to deal his enemies.
The kiss of Lilith.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 1

With nothing left to lose, Severus has one last act of revenge to deal his enemies. The kiss of Lilith.

Disclaimer: Characters belong to J.K.R, I'm just borrowing them for a bit.

A/N: Thanks to HeartofAshes for reading, tweaking and re-reading. You're the best *Hugs*

Ginger roots evenly cut prevent the feeling of nausea caused by additional ingredients used for this salve. This, along with the heart of a dragon no more than forty years old, has been left to stew at high temperature for seven days.

(Note to self. Do not expose the dragon heart to any natural light during the seven day period).

At the precise end of the seventh day the shredded boomslang skin is added; recent testing has proven that it is of the utmost importance that the skin is brown in colour. Then stir fourteen times in an anticlockwise rotation.

(N.B. Wrist movement must be slow or the dragon heart will become unstable).

After which I took the cauldron off the fire and left it to simmer for twelve hours. At this stage the temperature should be at a stable twenty nine degrees; it is the perfect temperature at which a singular drop of aconite is added. Add the diced fluxweed freshly picked on the previous full moon and let it simmer for five days on a low temperature. Finally add the pomegranate juice with an infusion of flobberworm mucus for smooth texture. Stir until thick...

Severus Snape closed the old, well preserved documented journal of *Potions, Salves and Possible Antidotes* with a snap; one corner of his mouth was curled into a grim smile while his glinting eyes were fixed on the empty slot on the bookshelf. He knew the ingredients and the method of this particular salve by heart even though he had never brewed it before, never had need no not need, desire, he had never had great desire to brew such a salve until now. Now it was all he craved, desired; it was what drove him to stay one more day. In his mind's eye he saw himself brew this salve in his usual meticulous fashion, like a sculptor molds his clay, adding each ingredient at the precise moment, setting the heat to the exact temperature. One wrong stir could ruin everything. In his mind's eye a picture was forming.

Chop. Chop. Chop. The long knife came down at even intervals cutting the herb in equal sizes, adding its slight scent to the thousands of different smells in the potions laboratory. The air was filled with them, each and every one of them as different as the ingredients themselves; even the walls smelt of every potion created within them. A steaming cauldron sat in the middle of a long workbench abused by cuts, stains and scorch marks. Beside it stood the next ingredient to be added, behind it, a row of ingredients strategically placed according to their use in that particular potion. Unwavering eyes fixed upon the knife held in a skilled grip by long potion stained fingers. Noise was void during that time. Concentration and dedication to the task at hand reigned supreme. The solitary mood shifted, black eyes turned to a brownish hue, greasy

curtains curved to a bushy mess, thin grim lips plumped to the colour of ripe peaches and thin yellow fingers formed into soft delicate hands unstained.

The void was filled with laughter and easy chatter. Concentration and dedication remained with minute intervals of stolen glances, small smiles and an air of anticipation. In those bygone days time seemed to stop when her chocolate coloured eyes found his; her chatter ceased, her movements halted, her face blushed and lips curled sweetly, silently surrendering to the moment.

Blinking hard, the picture dissolved like the early morning dew. He pushed himself off the high-backed armchair and walked the short distance to the bookshelf. The book in his hands shuddered but gave no resistance as its foreboding master slid it back into its place, caressing its spine with a finger. Visions like this one came to him more often than he wished, but he did not fight them. He did not want to forget. They kept him focused on what he had to do, what he had promised himself to do. They gave him one more reason, the one that mattered most. He would be free then. Free of the past which shackled him to this world. This feeling inside him was not strange, for it had grown within him since childhood. It fed off the fear of an eleven year old hiding in the dark from his abusive father; from the weakness of his cowering mother; from the bullies at his school; from his foolish mistakes as a youth seeking acceptance; from the old man who used him in the name of redemption.

Redemption be damned; this wild animal within him was tired of bowing its head to its masters; it had taken its last beating. Now it was time to sharpen its claws, bare its fangs and unleash its wrath. It was time.

In his makeshift laboratory Severus flicked his wand silently, setting the candles glowing dimly as he moved towards the cauldron hissing violently at the other end of the room. From behind his workbench Severus peered into the cauldron at the stewing dragon heart and ginger roots, the smell of which was almost too repugnant to bear. After seven days the potion was ready for the next phase. Turning from the cauldron, he strode to one of the transfigured shelves lining the walls, each of them laden with various specimens floating in glass jars. One finger swept along several shelves until his sharp eyes settled upon a hexagon shaped bottle, three inches high made of thick, clear glass. Taking the bottle back to the workbench, he uncorked it, tipping its contents onto the workspace. Strips of thick, brown boomslang two and a half inches long lay piled in a small heap ready to be added to the potion. One by one Severus threw in the strips of skin and watched as the boomslang blended itself into the essence of dragon heart and ginger root. With a practiced hand he drew his wand anticlockwise. One... two... three...

"Severus. Severus. Come, dinner is ready." His mother's coarse voice could barely be heard from the shed; immersed as he was in his latest creation, her words melted into nothing. Standing morosely at the furthest end of the unkempt garden, the shed had become his haven. It was the furthest he could get away from his house; his lack of friends left him with too many hours to fill during the long day. His mother, although sad most times, kept him busy with strangebooks written in strange and sometimes hard to pronounce words. When he was younger and his mother's mouth still knew how to crack a tiny smile, tucked in his small cot she would read to him from the books she kept hidden from Father. Stories of great wizards and witches, spells, potions and magical creatures. At the end of each story, before she kissed his small cheeks, she would say, "One day Severus, when you are older, you will join these witches and wizards in their world and do great things."

As he grew older and his mother's face grew sadder, his only refuge were his books, until one summer day she took him to their rundown shed. To him it looked like a pile of wood held together by a few rusty nails and the only window was jammed closed. Inside, his mother knelt on the wooden floor beneath the window; one loose floorboard creaked as she drew it away from the others. Intrigued, Severus moved closer to his mother to see what lay beneath the wooden floor. Her hand reached into the narrow gap and took out a small bundle wrapped in an old dish cloth. Laying it gently on her lap, her calloused hands trembled as she unfolded the cloth. The last piece fell away revealing what looked to him like one of those wands he'd read about in her books. His eyes caught her fingers caressing the wand lovingly, and her face seemed to crumble for a moment as if she were about to cry. The moment passed, in an instant she was standing beside him waving the wand in her hand around them. All of a sudden the interior of the shed as he knew it began to shift and change. Severus stood with his mouth open as the few broken shelves repaired themselves, several glass jars and labeled containers popped out of nowhere into existence and settled themselves on the shelves neatly next to each other. The wobbly table at the end of the room straightened and stretched itself several inches longer to form a spacious workbench; the terracotta flowerpot on top of it grew stouter and darker, slowly transforming into a black cauldron.

Young Severus stood transfixed as with several waves of her hand his mother transformed the disheveled room into a small laboratory. Her voice was heavy and filled with unexplainable emotion. "Severus, this is the last thing I can give you; it is the only thing I have left to give you. This was once my laboratory. Severus, look at me." Kneeling down in front of him, her hands gripping his arms tightly and her voice pleading, "Severus, this is yours now. The books I read to you, the people I told you about, they are real, Severus. Soon you will be able to go to school with them and learn. This, Severus," she said, turning him to face the transformed room, "this will all be yours. In here you can learn how to brew fame, bottle glory or even stopper death if you wish to. You will make something of yourself and live a better life than this."

... Thirteen... fourteen. What would she say if she saw him now? Would she pity or despise him for his mistakes, for what he had become as the rest of the world did? In the bubbling liquid his broken reflection caught his eyes; behold Severus Snape, dark, feared, despised genius Potions master, murderer of the great Albus Dumbledore turned spy. Pathetic, no better than his drunken father had been. He had let her down. He had become what she had hoped he wouldn't. He was what she had feared.

His eyes focused on the contents within the cauldron, and his fractured reflection stared back at him, fuming *Enough of the self-pity, you loathsome bastard; thirty years of it is enough. Focus on the task at hand*, it seemed to say, spitting and hissing. With a brush of his wand hand, the flames beneath the cauldron were lowered to a single flare. Within the next twelve hours the potion would have simmered enough for the next phase, the crux of the salve itself.

Outside night had fallen; the early evening's chill settled on him like a cloak. Above him the sky was cloudless, dotted with millions of glittering stars promising a cold, rainless night. He pulled the creaking shed door closed and warded it against any unlikely intruders. The wind danced and howled around him as he quickly made his way back into the house.

Inside the house was silent; even the usual moaning sounds of the old house settling were absent. Severus loved the quiet. Quiet was good. Quiet had left the building the day *she* first stepped through the door. The quiet felt uncomfortable now, empty and lonely. The miniature wooden clock sitting on the mantelpiece ticked away the seconds, fifteen seconds left to quarter past.

Dong... Dong.

The stationary minute hand stirred, shifting itself onto the third roman digit. Severus's frown traveled on from the minuscule movement to where the tip of the clock's hand seemed to be pointing, the liquor cabinet. Was it time for his nightly dose already? Shrugging, he glided towards the worn, black hardwood cabinet where his recently acquired collection of single malt whiskey stood depleting. The first glass of Ogdens' Old burned away the layer of cold like fire spreading through a dry forest. The scalding taste of the second had not yet settled in his throat when he tipped the decanter for a third time. Lifting the golden liquid to his lips, Severus paused, waiting.

Still too quiet in here, old boy. Downing the last of his drink, Severus wrapped his winter cloak around his shoulders and left the house.