

A Better Childhood

by grugster

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

Chapter 1 – The Potion

Chapter 1 of 14

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Chapter 1 – The Potion

"No, no, no, Albus!" Severus screamed. "I said to you before and I say to you again that I will not let myself be de-aged to a four-year-old boy." He was furious. How could Albus even suggest it? *Wasn't my first childhood bad enough?* They had discussed this several times before, and they all knew that he wanted to choose Azkaban. He had already arranged everything and was waiting for the Ministry officials to take him away when Albus had asked him to come to his office. *I thought he wanted to say goodbye and not that he wanted to convince me again to choose childhood over Azkaban.*

"Severus, calm down. That's the only choice the Ministry gives you besides a life-long sentence in Azkaban. We both know that you have committed murder in your service for the Dark Lord before your time as a spy. I had hoped they would have laid down all the cases against you because of your important role in the war, but they didn't. That just leaves us this choice, because we will not let you go to Azkaban."

We. That reminded Severus of the two other people in the room. He looked at Alastor and noticed that he was hovering near the door. That made him suspicious. "What's going on here?"

"Severus, we have only thirty minutes left before the Ministry officials will come to check if you are de-aged, and I will not wait until the last minute."

"What do you mean you won't wait?" Severus already was backing away from Albus in the direction of the door. But it was not the wooden surface he grabbed while he blindly fumbled behind him. It was Alastor's robe. He turned abruptly to see Alastor blocking the door completely.

"Severus, listen to Albus. You will not leave this office as your adult self," Alastor stated sternly, but nevertheless tried to stay friendly.

He again turned frantically to Albus and saw that he already had a goblet with the de-aging potion in his hands. Panic overcame him, and he looked at the last person in the room for help. "Minerva, you can't let them force me into this. I hated being a child. I would prefer to die than to go through my damn childhood again," he pleaded with her.

Tears were running down her cheeks. "I'm sorry, Severus. I had hoped you would take it freely, but I am not willing to let you go to Azkaban. I know you had an awful childhood, but this time everything will be different. You will live with Albus and I, Severus. And Alastor will become your guardian. I promise, you will have a good childhood this time. Please, Severus, don't fight them," Minerva pleaded while her heart almost broke to see the frightened look on Severus' face. *What must he have gone through to choose rotting in Azkaban over becoming a child again*, she thought sadly.

Don't fight them? What is she speaking about? Severus thought desperately.

But his question was answered when Albus spoke again. "Severus, you will take this potion one way or the other. It's your choice if we have to force you or if you take it freely."

"You cannot force me. That's against the law!" Severus shouted while he desperately looked for an escape route. Albus was coming nearer and nearer. *Soon they will have cornered me. They can't be serious.*

"Nobody except the three of us will know that we had to force you to take it, Severus. And we prefer to live with that guilt than with the constant fear for you in Azkaban." With that he had reached Severus.

On instinct Severus drew his wand. "No, Albus, please!" When he tried to step back, he collided with someone.

And this someone said, "You don't want to hex us, Severus. So, just put this away." With that Alastor grabbed Severus' wand from behind and put it in his cloak.

He was right; he didn't want to hex them, but he also didn't want to become a vulnerable child again. He wished that it could be possible for Albus and Minerva take him in and he could have a better childhood than his first, but who knew what would happen? *Maybe they won't like me as a child or I'll do something so stupid that they will abandon me? How can I be sure that it will really be a better childhood?* He felt paralyzed by Albus' gaze, and when he sensed Alastor encircling him from behind to hold him in place, he didn't resist. *Oh Merlin, what shall I do? I still can knock it out of his hand, but maybe I should let them give me the potion. I'm scared of Azkaban. How long will I survive? Will it be a slow and painful death?* His mind was racing. He was torn between giving in and fighting, but when he felt the goblet being pressed at his lips and Albus' hand on his neck, he decided not to fight. *I have trusted them before, and I hope I can trust them now as well.* Liquid was in his mouth, and he swallowed.

"It's okay, Severus, we will take care of you." Severus could hear Albus' gentle voice faintly through his potion-fogged mind.

The potion burned in his throat, and he realized that the world around him started to swim. The last thing he heard was Minerva's sobs, and then everything went black.

Chapter 2 – A New Life

Chapter 2 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 2 - A New Life

When Severus woke up, he was confused. *Where am I?* he thought. He could only remember that his father had beaten him for not paying attention to what he had said. Then his father had locked him in the big cupboard in the guest room. Severus hated the cupboard because it smelled like moth balls and was so dark. He often feared that his father would never let him out again, or would just forget him. Only his father had the key to the cupboard; his mother wasn't allowed to let him out.

This time Severus had really feared his father had forgotten him. The blood on his face had already dried, and his whole body had ached from the beating. It had been the belt again. He had even taken one blow in his face and a bad kick in his ribs. Sometimes he wished he would just sleep and never wake up again, but that had never happened. His father would normally let him out of the cupboard, slap him around a bit more, and then throw him in his room, always with some nasty words to show Severus how much he detested him. "Good for nothing, you damn bastard!" or "Next time I will skin you alive, you damn brat!" were only two of the things his father had often said to him.

Then his father always locked him in his room for some more time so that he could think about what a useless bastard or annoying burden he was. The room had been better than the cupboard, but Severus hated it nevertheless. It had always been cold because there wasn't a fireplace, and it only had a small window and was therefore very dark.

There also hadn't been much to distract a little child. No toys could be found, only a quill, ink and parchment, because his father had wanted him to learn to write as early as possible. Severus hated it. The words made no sense to him, so he only tried to copy the crazy letters as they appeared in his father's handwriting. He could have done it perfectly, and his father would have found fault.

Severus had started to play with the spiders he found in his room. He had given them names and spoken to them, but one time his father had caught him and had forced him to kill the spiders. Severus had cried because it had felt so bad to kill the only friends he had, and with that he had broken one of the most important rules in the Snape household, "No crying." That had earned him another bad beating.

Severus felt his face and could just feel a soft scar where only minutes before had been an open wound. Nothing hurt any longer. *Maybe I'm really going crazy like father said*, Severus thought fearfully. *At home my wounds never heal that fast.*

So how did I get from the cupboard into this strange room? Maybe father finally gave me to the bad people he told me about, who eat little boys like me. He timidly looked around the room, but it was empty.

Suddenly the fireplace opposite his bed flared green.

Meanwhile in the headmaster's office, Minerva McGonagall was pacing. "Merlin, I knew his childhood was bad, but this is worse, Albus. He must have beaten the poor child straight in the face with his belt. And then all the other wounds." Minerva shook her head in despair. "No wonder, he wanted to go to Azkaban instead of becoming a child again."

"I know, Minerva. I, too, wasn't aware of the amount of abuse Severus experienced, but we have to gain his trust and give him a better childhood. He is four, Minerva. That means we can give him many good years from now on. It won't be easy, but I still think we made the right decision," Albus said, but not really convincingly.

"It's useless to agonize about whether our decision was right," Alastor said while looking from Minerva to Albus and back. "Stop pacing, Minerva, you're making me feel dizzy."

Minerva let herself fall in her chair with a heavy sigh. "I'm scared, and I already miss my friend Severus."

"Minerva, stop this," Poppy said in a no-nonsense tone. "You would have missed him, even if we let him go to Azkaban. You know how quickly he would have lost all his will to live there. Merlin, he hardly had one while living here. We did the right thing. He will have a chance for a long and happy life now. I, for one, don't even acknowledge that it could have been the wrong decision."

"You are right, Poppy," Albus said, now more convinced. He laid a calming hand on his wife's shoulder. "Minerva, all the papers are signed. Severus, the former Death Eater, doesn't exist any longer. Just Severus, the four-year-old boy, is living now, and we will make sure that his life will be much better from now on."

"What do you plan to tell him, Albus?" Alastor asked worriedly. "You cannot tell a four-year-old who he was before he was de-aged."

"I will not lie to him, Alastor. In three weeks the new school year will begin, and we can not prevent the students telling him something about his past. Tomorrow the *Daily Prophet* will make the whole story public. Everyone in the wizarding world will know that Severus, the former Death Eater, spy for the light and Potions master had been de-aged by order of the Ministry. We will try to avoid his being alone with the students as much as possible, but we can not avoid it totally. During school time he will spend class time at the Weasleys so that we can concentrate on our work. Molly will care for Bill and Fleur's twins during the day as well, so Severus will have some playmates of his own age. I won't tell him in detail why he had been de-aged, but he shall know that he has been an adult wizard. He also must know that he doesn't have to fear his parents any longer because they are dead."

"And what about the fact that we forced him to drink the potion?" Alastor asked.

"I will not tell him before he reaches fourteen, or even later. But, yes, I will tell him. If you want, I will take all the blame and say that I did it alone," Albus offered.

"I stand behind my decision. I was there, and I want to be there when you tell him about it," Alastor said soulfully.

"Of course you can be part of that conversation. To be honest I'll be glad to have you at my side."

A buzzing sound made them all jump and look in Poppy's direction.

"What? That can't be," she said, surprised, while she pulled out her vibrating wand. She studied it quickly and then looked with a slightly shocked expression to the others. "He has already woken up. That's odd; he should have been asleep for at least one more hour."

In one fluid motion she jumped up and went over to the fireplace. The others followed her shortly after.

The fireplace flared green, and the three professors and the nurse came out of it.

Poppy's glance fell on Severus' bed; it was empty. "Where is he?" she said, looking around frantically. "Severus, where are you?" When she couldn't see him, she began to panic. "He shouldn't be out of bed! We must find him!"

"Calm down, Poppy," Albus said and put his wand on his palm. He spoke a locating spell, and the wand moved in the direction of one of the corners.

Severus, meanwhile, was pressing himself so far into the little gap between the big cupboard and the wall that it was almost painful. *Please don't let them find me. They are already mad at me for getting out of bed. Now they will beat me and then eat me alive.* Big tears were running down his cheeks, and he couldn't stop himself from starting to sob in fear.

Poppy was already heading into the direction Albus' wand pointed in. The other three followed her.

When she was only a few steps away from the cupboard in which she stored the bed clothes, she could hear soft sobs from the small gap between the cupboard and the wall. *He can't be there,* Poppy thought, shocked. *It's too small.* But when she reached the wall she saw that he *could* be there. "Merlin, I hope he isn't stuck."

"Severus, what are you doing there?" Poppy asked gently, to not frighten the child more than he already was.

Big fearful eyes stared at her, but he didn't say anything.

"Severus, you don't have to be scared. Please come out; you will catch a cold."

Severus looked at his bare feet. He really was cold, and the wall was icy, but he was so scared that the people would eat him like his father had said.

"Severus, please tell me what's wrong. Why don't you want to come out?" Poppy tried again.

The woman seems to be kind, but maybe that is just a trick, he thought suspiciously, but it was so very cold now that it hurt. "Mad at me?" he asked fearfully.

"Why should I be mad at you, Severus? I'm only worried that you will freeze there. Please come out so that we can talk."

"Won't eat me?" Severus whispered so quietly that Poppy had problems hearing it.

"Eat you? Severus, please! Of course we won't eat you. We'll just bring you back to bed and speak with you, okay?"

She is really kind, but she always says we, Severus thought. *So there are more people here? And what if they are the bad people?* He tried to see the others, but the cupboard blocked his view. His teeth were chattering, and his back and the side that touched the wall were cold as ice now. The idea of lying in a warm bed now was really tempting. He scooted a little bit forward and again tried to look around the cupboard to see the others. At that moment another head appeared over the nice woman's. It also was a woman, and she looked the same age as the first one.

"Severus, please, come out of there! We are very worried. You must be freezing down there," Minerva said as calmly and gently as possible.

She also sounds kind, he thought. *But why do they all know my name? Has Father said it to them? Is he here, too?* He started to panic and tried to look around the corner of the cupboard. "Father?"

When Severus was trying to look around the cupboard, Poppy used her chance to grab him. Many years' experience with reluctant patients allowed her to catch Severus in her arms in one fluid motion. He didn't even have much time to realize what happened. "He is not here, child. You don't have to worry."

Chapter 3 – Getting Ready to Leave

Chapter 3 of 14

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Chapter 3 Getting Ready to Leave

When he realized that Poppy had pulled him out of his hiding place, and that he now was in her arms, Severus looked fearfully around. When his gaze fell on the old man with the long beard and the scary looking one with a crazy eye, he started to sob again. He hid his face in the crook of Poppy's neck and hugged her.

"Please, don't let them eat me," he begged. The sobbing started again, and Poppy tried to calm Severus while she carried him to the bed.

"You don't have to worry, Severus. They don't want to eat you. They are all just worried that you are getting ill from being out of bed for that long."

"Mad..." (sob) "at..." (sob) "me?" the lump in Poppy's arm stuttered.

"No, they are not mad at you, Severus. Nobody is mad at you."

That brought some reaction from the child. He carefully lifted his head to look at Poppy. "Father mad?"

"Your father is not here, Severus, and you don't have to see him ever again," Poppy said and received a confused look from the child.

She tried to sit Severus on the bed again and said, "Come on, Sev, just sit down so that I can give you a quick check-up."

But Severus had other plans. He clung to Poppy as if his life depended on it. "No! No! No!" he cried frantically while hugging Poppy almost painfully.

"Severus, you are cold, and I really have to check you." Poppy tried to convince Severus to let go, but with no effect.

Minerva had got the blanket from Severus' bed and laid it over the lad's small frame. *He is so small and fragile. No four year old should look like this*, she thought sadly. She grabbed Severus from behind and gently said, "Come on, Severus, let go of Poppy. I will sit with you while she has a look at you, okay?"

With Poppy's help she managed to place Severus on her lap while she sat down on the edge of the bed.

Severus squirmed when he was pulled out of the grasp of the nice lady, but leaned back into Minerva's chest when he felt her embrace him from behind.

"Shh, Severus, everything is okay. We are all here to help you." Minerva held Severus in place with one hand and tenderly stroked his hair with the other.

Relieved that Minerva seemed to have a calming effect on the child, Poppy pulled out her wand. "I'm a nurse, Severus. Do you know what a nurse is?" she asked in a friendly voice.

Severus shook his head.

"That's a person, who can find out if someone is ill or hurt and who can heal many illnesses and bruises."

"No hurts. All gone," Severus said and pointed first at his face and then at his tummy.

"Yes, I know, Severus. I healed them when you came here, but I want to check if you have hurt yourself when you were out of bed and if you have rested enough to release you from the hospital wing. That's where we are right now."

Will Father get me then? But they said that I won't see him again. Severus was confused. The nice lady had already started to wave her wand in front of him and was muttering. Severus carefully looked around. His gaze fell on the man with the long beard. He once had seen a book in his father's library with a man on its cover, who looked a lot like this man. *Mum said it was Merlin and that he has been dead for a long time.*

He turned his head to look up to Minerva. "Am I dead?"

"Of course not. Why do you think you are dead?" Minerva asked kindly.

"Merlin is dead," Severus stated as if that would explain everything.

"Yes, Merlin is dead, but why should you be dead as well?" Minerva had no idea what the child was speaking about.

Severus shyly eyed Albus again without answering Minerva's question.

"Oh no, my boy," Albus said, chuckling. "I'm not Merlin, and I'm not dead. Neither are you, little one." Albus came closer to the bed and stopped when he was only two steps away from Severus.

Severus had leaned a little closer into Minerva's embrace and eyed the old man sceptically. *He also seems to be nice, but why are they all nice? And why won't I see Father again?*

Again he looked around, and his gaze fell on Alastor. *He looks really scary. Maybe he is the one who will eat me. So if all the others play the nice ones, maybe he will tell me the truth.* "Where is my father, sir?" *It's always good to address scary persons very politely. Maybe he won't eat me alive if I'm nice.*

Alastor was a little taken aback that the child addressed him. He had stayed in the background on purpose not to scare the little tyke with his face and leg. "He is not here, and he won't come here, kid. This is Hogwarts, a school for witches and wizards. Do you know that you are a wizard?"

"Father says I will become a useless Squib, and I will never get a wand, because I'm not worth one," Severus explained and spoke the words as if he repeated them one by another, exactly like his father had said them.

Alastor limped a little closer, but still held a good distance between himself and Severus. "That's not true. You will get a wand when you are eleven and start learning here at Hogwarts, kid."

"I'm not eleven. Will you send me back now?" he asked the nice lady, who had stopped her wand waving.

"No, we won't send you back. You will live here at Hogwarts from now on. Albus and Minerva..." Poppy pointed at the two, "will take you in. I hope you will visit Alastor and me from time to time as well." She smiled at him. "I'm Poppy, and this is Alastor, my husband. You don't have to be scared, he just looks a little frightening, but he is also very kind. He is very good at playing memory. Do you like to play it as well?"

Very funny, Alastor thought while inwardly grinning about the inside joke about his ability to look through the cards with his magical eye. But Severus' next words made him feel another wave of anger at Severus' damn parents. *Remember they are already dead*, he told himself.

"I'm not allowed to play. Only to draw letters and cleaning," Severus said. When he saw the shocked faces of the adults, he leaned a little forward, so that they could hear him well and whispered, "But Mum sometimes played 'I see something that you don't see' with me when father wasn't around. And once we played with buttons. But now she is very ill and can't play any longer."

Poppy sadly patted his head and turned to open the night table. She pulled some clothes out, which they had bought for Severus. When she went back to Severus, she said, "Here, we will play a lot of games with you, Severus. Now, we'll get you dressed, and then we will show you your room."

"My room?" Severus asked, surprised. He was so engrossed in the flow of images he had, imagining how the room could look, that he didn't realize that Minerva had lifted him from her lap and had sat him on the bed alone.

"Please, let me do it," Minerva asked Poppy and took the socks out of her hand.

"Of course, Min," Poppy said, smiling.

Albus sat down on the bed and addressed Severus, "Yes, your room, Severus. We have already bought some nice toys for you."

"For me?" Severus' eyes were shining unbelievably. "Does it have a fireplace?"

"Of course it has, my boy." *A child proof one*, Albus added in his mind.

"And toys?" he asked Albus while Minerva stood him up on the bed. He had to support himself on Minerva's shoulder to regain his balance while she removed his pajamas and pulled up his new trousers.

"Yes, toys. A train, some puzzles, some picture books, and much more," Albus explained to the awed child.

Minerva had sat him down again, and now, he was looking at her. "Toys?" he said with big eyes.

"Yes, toys, Sev. Come on, arms up!" she ordered, and Severus did as he was told.

Minerva pulled the undershirt over the little arms and then the sweat shirt. Again she stood him on the bed and tucked the shirt in the waistband of his briefs and closed the zip and button of the trousers.

Severus had to support himself on Minerva's shoulder again, and this time was leaning with his chest on it because Minerva had to reach the backside of his trousers to tuck the shirt in. That let him look at Alastor again. "Memory?"

Alastor had to chuckle. "I'm sure there is a memory game as well. We will find out when we are there, won't we?"

Minerva had dressed him completely, except for his shoes. "The house shoes are in our quarters, so we will carry you, okay?"

It's crazy that they carry me around. Father and Mum never did that, but it feels nice. So Severus nodded.

"Have you ever travelled through a fireplace, my boy?" Albus asked him.

"No," Severus said while he looked fearfully at the hot flames.

"You don't have to worry. It won't hurt, and we will get very quickly to your new room with all the toys," he said calmly to Severus. "Will you let me carry you?"

Severus looked a little scared again, and it was obvious that his little mind was working hard. *He was very nice the whole time, and when he carries me I can not get burned or he will also be burned.* That made his decision, and he nodded shyly at Albus.

"Thank you very much for trusting me, my boy. Now say goodbye to Poppy and Alastor. They will come by later." He scooped Severus into his arms, turned him so that he could wave at them.

"Bye!" he said softly.

Explanation:

Severus won't be turned back to an adult, and he also won't get his old memories back. He will live a new childhood at Hogwarts. The story will mostly be fluffy with a few drama parts.

The adults will mourn for their adult friend, and they will tell little Sev a lot about his former life so that he can have a connection to the Adult Severus. Some people consider

this as Character Death, and so I thought I should warn you. If you don't like this, just stop reading!

Sunny

Chapter 4 - Severus' New Room

Chapter 4 of 14

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Chapter 4 - Severus' New Room

When they stepped out of the fireplace, Severus looked around. They were standing in a cozy living room, which was painted in dark red and beige tones. *It's beautiful,* Severus thought, awed, *and it is so warm here. At home it was always cold, and our walls are gray.*

At one side of the room stood a wooden coffee table and, around it, two large couches and two armchairs. *Wow, how many people are living here?* Severus was confused. On the other side of the room stood a big dining table with six chairs. "How many people live here?" Severus asked.

Albus followed Severus' gaze and smiled. "Only we three, Severus, but we often have many guests."

Soon after Albus had stepped out of the fireplace with Severus in his arms, Minerva had followed. "I will go and get the house shoes for Severus."

Albus walked over to the couch and sat Severus down. "We will show you your room now, but I'm sorry that you can't start to play, yet. Poppy said you have to eat regularly and need a lot of sleep."

Severus' bottom lip started to tremble when he heard that he wasn't allowed to play. "Not tired. Don't want to sleep."

"You don't have to sleep, Sev," Minerva said when she heard Severus' comment while returning with the house shoes. *We cannot show him all the toys and then refuse to let him to try them out,* she thought.

She sat down bedside Severus and put the slippers on his feet. "We have to make them smaller," she said. After a wave of her wand and another check to see if they fitted properly, Minerva was satisfied. "Albus meant that you have to eat and sleep regularly from now on. He didn't mean that you have to sleep right now."

Severus was looking at her with big eyes. "No play?"

Minerva smiled at him and ruffled his hair. "I'm sure we can try out one or two of your toys before we have our afternoon snack."

That conjured a smile on Severus' face.

He has a breathtaking smile. I wish the adult Severus had smiled like this. Oh, Severus, I miss you so much, thought Minerva. Concentrating on the cute child in front of her, she couldn't resist a sad smile. *I have to let go of the adult Severus to give little Sev the life he needs. He is such a darling child.*

"Toys?" Severus asked when he realized that the nice lady didn't seem to do anything except look dreamily at him.

That brought Minerva out of her thoughts, and she smiled warmly at him. "Of course, Sev. Let's go to your room now." She stood up and held out her hand for Severus to take.

Severus jumped from the couch and took the offered hand. *It's crazy. At home nobody wants me to touch them. Not even Mum.*

Minerva led Severus into the lounge.

Albus, who had followed closely, said, "Look, Severus, this is the main door. It leads directly into the lounge in front of my office. From there a moving spiral staircase leads to the halls of Hogwarts. But don't leave these rooms without us, Severus, okay?"

Severus nodded. *I don't want to leave; I want to see my toys.* That was the only thing Severus could think about. He had seen in books that his mother had shown him that other children had toys. Sometimes a friend of his father's came by with his five-year-old girl, and she also had toys. She was very bored when she was visiting because Severus hadn't any toys, and so she brought some of hers afterwards. Severus didn't like the girl. She had always said bad things to him because he hadn't been as good at playing as she was, but the fun he'd had playing with her toys had made it worth the insults.

"This is Matilda, Severus," Minerva explained while she pointed at a chubby woman in a portrait. "When you go through the hole that is behind her portrait you will get into my office. When I'm not here and you want to speak to me, you just have to ask her to let you through. She knows if I'm in my office and if you can come through. When I have a visitor, she will let me know that you want to speak with me, and I will tell her if she can let you through or if you have to wait for a while until I can come to you."

"If you want to speak with me, Severus," Albus said, "you can tell Phineas, here." He pointed at another portrait. This one was of a scary looking man.

He looks a little like Father, Severus thought fearfully and hid a little behind Minerva.

"You don't have to be scared, Severus," Minerva said and crouched down beside Severus. "Phineas was once a headmaster here. Now he is watching many places for

Albus, and he has a portrait in Albus' office. So you can ask him to see Albus when you need him, okay?"

Severus nodded, still frightened. The fact that Phineas was eying him skeptically didn't help.

"We can speak about all this later. I think this young man is more interested in seeing his new room, right?" Albus said when he saw that Severus was still frightened.

Severus looked hopefully at Albus and was glad when Minerva stood up and started to lead him further into their quarters.

From the lounge they went up a staircase to the second floor of the quarters. Minerva pointed at a door on the left side and said that it was Albus' and her bedroom. Opposite to it was another door to which Minerva led him. "And this is your room, Severus." She opened the room and gently encouraged Severus to enter.

Wow, Severus thought, awed. The room was painted in a warm light orange; it had a big window and was, therefore, very bright and friendly. In the left corner of the room stood a bed with a bedspread, which had little birds and fairies on it. On top of it sat a plushy stork. At the left wall stood a big cupboard and a fireplace. Beside the door were a few small cupboards. But the right side of the room was what Severus liked most. Near the window was standing a small round table with three chairs. On the table were a lot of pens and sheets for drawing. Beside the table was a big carpet on which some toy cars and a little train were standing. At the right wall were several shelves with books and more toys. Severus looked up at the two adults, who were smiling at him. "All for me?"

Minerva and Albus enjoyed seeing the child stare open-mouthed at the room. *Maybe we have over done it a little, but it was definitely worth to see this expression on him.* "All for you, Sev," Minerva said warmly.

They must have confused me with another child. This cannot be for me. Father said I'm not worth toys. There are so many toys that they must belong to many children! But the urge to try the toys out topped the skeptical thoughts, and so Severus let go of Minerva's hand and ran to the train.

Minerva and Albus conjured two chairs to observe the child while playing. Albus took Minerva's hand in his and kissed her. "It was the right decision."

"Yes, it was." She smiled at her husband and then watched her new charge playing.

Chapter 5 - The Toilet Monster

Chapter 5 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 5 - The Toilet Monster

After half an hour, Minerva and Albus decided to end the first play session.

Severus still was playing with the toy cars on the carpet when Minerva knelt beside him. "Sev, you have to take a little break now, but you can play again after our afternoon snack."

Severus was disappointed, but he didn't want the nice people getting mad at him, so he put the toy cars away.

Albus came over, picked him up in his arms and said, " We'll go wash your hands while Minerva organizes the snack from the house-elves, okay?"

Without waiting for an answer from Severus, he started to head to the washroom. It was beside Albus' and Minerva's bedroom. "Do you want to go to the toilet as well?" Albus asked Severus.

Severus shook his head. He didn't like to go to the toilet. His father said that a monster lived in there, and that it bit you when you didn't do your business fast enough. He was never able to do it fast. He always tried to look between his legs to see if the monster was already there. But it never came, and Severus thought that maybe the monster in their toilet was dead. He didn't tell his father about it because he feared that he would buy a new one, which would bite him. *But maybe in this toilet the monster isn't dead. I will only go when I can't keep it back any longer so I will be fast enough, so the monster won't be getting angry.*

"You haven't been to the toilet for a long time, Severus. Are you really sure you don't need to?" Albus eyed him closely.

"Don't need to." Severus shook his head vehemently.

He looks a little scared but maybe he just isn't used to someone being with him in the bathroom! Albus thought. "Do you want me to leave you alone?" he asked.

Alone with the monster? "NO!" Severus almost screamed. He ran over to Albus again and hugged his legs.

Okay, that definitely is strange, Albus thought. He knelt in front of the child and held Severus a little away from him, so that he could see his face. "What's wrong, Severus?"

"No want be alone," Severus said pleadingly.

"It's said, 'I don't want to be alone', Severus. Why don't you want to be alone? I thought you wanted a little privacy to go to the toilet."

Hearing the word 'toilet', Severus scooted a little more away from it, but Albus was still holding him by his arms, and so he couldn't go far.

Albus followed Severus' fearful glance towards the toilet and realized that the boy was trying to back away from it. "What's wrong with the toilet, Severus?"

Severus looked at Albus as if he was crazy. "Don't you know?" *How can he live that long here and not know about the monsters in the toilet?* Severus thought. *Maybe he is always very fast and so he never saw it.*

"Don't I know what, my boy?" Albus asked, still confused.

Severus glanced fearfully at the toilet again and then leant over to Albus to whisper in his ear, "The monster will bite me."

"Severus, there is no monster in the toilet," Albus explained to the scared child. Seeing that this didn't have an effect on the boy, he added, "Come on, we will check it." With that he pulled the slightly reluctant child with him to the toilet and opened the lid. He positioned Severus in front of his legs and felt the boy lean his back on them. It was obvious that Severus wasn't happy to have to face the monster he thought would be in the toilet. "Look, no monster."

This Albus man really has no idea about toilet monsters. "It is sleeping. It will come up when you sit too long on the toilet, if you can't do it quickly enough," Severus explained to the ignorant adult. Severus never dared to look away from the toilet because he was sure at any minute the monster would turn up.

Albus knelt down again and slightly shifted the boy sideways to speak with him.

Severus didn't want to turn his back to the monster and so vehemently resisted Albus' attempts to turn him. He wasn't willing to avert his eyes from the toilet.

"Severus, please look at me." He didn't force Severus to turn his back to the toilet, but he wanted the child to look at him while he spoke to him. He pushed Severus a little further away from the toilet and placed himself between the imagined monster and the boy. Now he had Severus' full attention.

Severus was happy that Albus was now blocking the way of the monster. He bit nervously on his bottom lip.

"Stop that, Severus. Your lips are already bruised enough." It was true, his lips were bruised as if biting his lips was a bad habit of young Severus.

Severus stopped the biting immediately and looked anxiously at Albus, expecting to be beaten for it. But the old man seemed to be satisfied that he stopped and simply started to speak again.

Albus felt Severus tense up after he scolded him for biting his lips. He decided that it would be best just to continue trying to convince Severus that the toilet wasn't scary.

"Severus, there is no monster in the toilet," Albus said gently. He felt Severus relax a little, not because he believed him about the monster, but for not scolding him longer about the lip biting. "I have lived here for a long time, and I can promise you that there is no monster in it. You can take as much time on it as you need, Severus." *Maybe I should have read more of the child care books Poppy gave us,* Albus thought while looking at the scared boy, who seemed not to believe a word he said.

"It's a monster-proof toilet, Severus ..." He felt Severus react now, he seemed to listen much more. *Okay, go on like this, Albus.* "I have checked it for monsters myself. I'm a great wizard, and no monster has a chance against me."

He is very big and old, like Merlin. And Merlin was a great wizard, Severus thought. "No monster?" he asked.

"No monster, Severus. Do you want to try it out together?" he asked while already working on the button of Severus' trousers.

Severus didn't really want to try it out, but he thought, *If there is a monster that only bites children and not adults, it will come out and then Albus will kill it.*

"Is everything all right in there?" Minerva called anxiously from outside the bathroom. She had arranged the afternoon snack some time ago and wondered what was going on to prevent her two men from coming out of the toilet. "May I come in?"

Albus looked at Severus questioningly.

Severus nodded. *The more the better. When the monster comes, it will be very scared to see them all here!* he thought hopefully.

"You may come in, Minerva," Albus said while lowering Severus' trousers and briefs.

When Minerva entered the bathroom, the sight of her husband kneeling in front of Severus, who tried to look, with his trousers pooling at his ankles, over his shoulder into the toilet, made her smile. "So, what's wrong?"

"Severus here was scared that we didn't check our toilet for monsters that bite when you aren't quick enough doing your business," he said, trying to give his wife as much information she needed, in hope that she would play along. "I already told him that I checked it myself and that there isn't one in there, but we thought we would try it out." With that he lifted Severus onto the toilet.

Severus felt his fear return when Albus sat him on the toilet. He immediately spread his legs to be able to look into the toilet so that the monster couldn't sneak up.

Minerva, seeing the problem of this position, went over to Severus before Albus would feel the consequences of sitting in perfect target line. "Severus, you must push your wee-wee down if you want to look into the toilet while peeing."

Severus looked up at Minerva and did what she had said. *She doesn't look angry. No, she is smiling,* Severus thought, relieved. Then he remembered that he had to observe the toilet for the monster and not the nice woman next to him and so lowered his gaze again.

"Don't forget to pee, Severus," Minerva said, amused, and placed a calming hand on the lad's shoulder. She felt Severus use it immediately to steady himself for leaning further down to have a better look

"I'm trying," Severus said, concentrating. He always had problems with this because he feared the monster so much.

"It's okay, Severus, just relax," Albus said while stroking Severus' hair. "There is no monster, and you have as much time as you need." Albus looked worriedly up to Minerva, but then heard the triumphant 'Yes' from Severus and the splashing sound that made him realize their persuasions had been successful.

"Yes," Severus said proudly when his genitalia did what he wanted them to do. He closely watched the inside of the toilet while holding his wee-wee down with one hand and his shirt up and near his body, for a better look, with the other hand. Having Minerva's hand on his shoulder made it much easier to look into the toilet without falling over. When he was finished, he looked up into the smiling face of Albus, who was still kneeling in front of him.

"You see, there is no monster in our toilet," Albus said.

Again a glance in the toilet, to be sure that it hadn't been attracted by hearing him pee, and finally Severus seem to relax a little. *hope there really is no monster. Or was it only hiding because he knew that the adults were around?* His thoughts were interrupted by a groan from Albus.

Albus tried to stand up and felt his bones protest. *I'm too old to kneel in front of a toilet for that long. Next time I have to make sure that I put a cushion charm on the tiled* it was obvious that this wouldn't be the last time that they would have to convince Severus that there is no monster. The little tyke wasn't that easy to convince. Looking down at the child, he could see big brown eyes looking back at him. He patted Severus' head and said, "Well done, my child."

Severus was confused. *Well done, what? Peeing? It took me some time again; so what was so good about it? Maybe they think that it was quick enough* Severus beamed

at that. *They are easy to make happy.*

Albus took Severus under the armpits, shook him a little so that the last drops fell down and then lifted him from the toilet seat.

"Let me do this, Albus," Minerva ordered, while already kneeling down to pull Severus' trousers up. "I think your bones have had enough kneeling for today."

When the trousers were fastened and Albus had flushed the toilet, Minerva gently pushed Severus into the direction of the sink. "Come on, young man, we have to wash your hands." She pulled a small footstool from under the sink. "That's your stool, Severus. When you step on it, you can reach the sink better."

Severus tried out the stool. Yeah, that's great. When he felt the warm water splash on his hands while Minerva helped him to put soap in his hands and then rinse it off again, he thought, *At home I always had to wash my hands at the cold water faucet. This is much nicer. Everything is much nicer here.*

Albus passed him a towel, and Severus quickly dried his hands and arms. Then he gave the towel back to Albus because he didn't know where to put it.

"Oh no, young man," Minerva scolded, taking the towel from Albus. "Your hands aren't dry." Minerva started to rub Severus' arms dry.

Severus was a little scared when Minerva scolded him. He didn't like the rough rubbing of the towel on his arms, but he hoped that the nice woman wouldn't be angry with him any longer when she had rubbed his arms dry.

They are very different, he thought. *They are happy with things father would never be satisfied with. So maybe she will be satisfied by just rubbing my arms painfully* When Minerva stopped, lifted him down from the foot stool and patted his head, he knew he was right again. *She is satisfied with it and isn't angry any longer.*

"A warm cup of cocoa is waiting for you, young man. Good thing that I placed a stasis spell on it as a precaution," Minerva said and led them all out of the bathroom.

Chapter 6 – A Visit from Alastor

Chapter 6 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 6 A Visit from Alastor

When they arrived in the living room, Severus could see three streaming cups, a big plate with cookies and a brown cake on the table.

Minerva lifted Severus onto the chair at the head of the table. She and Albus sat down on the chairs beside him.

Severus looked down because it felt a little odd to sit on the chair. When he shifted to see what was under his bottom, he almost fell from the chair because the cushion he was sitting on slipped sideways. Albus quickly grabbed his upper arm and pushed him back on the chair. "Don't fidget, Severus," Albus scolded and pulled his wand from his robes while still holding Severus in place.

When Severus felt himself slip down the chair, he was scared, but not as scared as he was the moment when Albus grabbed him to prevent him from falling *Oh, no. Now he is mad at me*, Severus thought fearfully. When Albus pointed his wand at him, he flinched and closed his eyes.

Albus paused, shocked, when he saw Severus's reaction. He didn't let go of Severus' arm in fear the boy would run away or fall off the chair in fear. He sighed and said, "Severus, please look at me."

Slowly Severus opened his eyes, first one and then the other. Fearfully, he looked at Albus. "Sowwy."

"You don't have to apologize. I just don't want you to fall off the chair," Albus explained calmly.

Severus looked from Albus' face to his wand.

Albus waved his wand, and Severus again flinched, but he couldn't fall because Albus was still holding him. After placing a Sticking Charm on the cushion on Severus' chair, he put the wand back into his robe.

When Severus saw Albus put his wand away again, he looked questioningly at Albus. *Nothing hurts. What has he done?* "Hex?"

"No, Severus, of course I didn't hex you. I would never do something like that." He let go of Severus' arm and said, "Try to shift!"

Severus looked confusedly at Albus, but did what he asked. It wasn't slippery any longer.

"Now that this is fixed we can finally start eating," Minerva said and pushed the mug closer to Severus.

That smells good, Severus thought as he took the mug and tasted the brown liquid. *Hmmm that's yummy. Much better than the water at home.* After licking his milk moustache away, he smiled at Minerva.

"What do you want to eat, Severus? A cookie or a piece of the chocolate cake?" Minerva asked.

Severus was looking from the cake to the cookies and back to the cake. When he had made his final decision, he pointed at the chocolate cake. "Please."

The cake was even better than the hot chocolate. Severus had never eaten something like this. It tasted so good that he already wanted more, even when he still had over half of his piece on his plate, but he was glad that he had the one he was already eating.

Minerva and Albus were also eating cake and drinking their coffee. They looked delightedly at the happy child, whose face was now covered with chocolate.

"Yummy!" Severus said, rubbing his stomach. His hands were covered in chocolate, and so was his shirt, now. When he realized it, he frantically thought *Maybe they won't see it if I lay my hand on my stomach.* He cautiously looked up to Albus.

"No worries, my boy," Albus said cheerfully and waved his wand to vanish the chocolate stains. "But next time you should use the napkin here, and not your shirt, to clean your hands." He took one of the napkins and cleaned Severus' hands as well as possible.

Seeing that Albus had little success with the napkin, Minerva stood up and lifted Severus out of his chair. "Come on, we are going to wash your hands."

"I have to go to my office, Min," Albus said.

"Yes, go ahead. We'll join you later when we have got some of Sev's toys," Minerva said, giving her husband a kiss.

Back in Severus' room, Minerva pulled one of the plastic boxes from under the shelves and asked Severus to put some toys in it. With the box floating in front of them, they headed for Albus' office. There Severus played peacefully on the carpet beside Albus' desk.

Minerva was looking through a lot of papers on the small table near the fireplace while Albus checked the heap of letters he had on his desk.

Severus was playing with small animal figures, which could move a few inches, but couldn't run away. They were making small noises, and Severus was lying on his stomach to listen to them. From time to time, he whispered something to them and poked them with his tiny fingers, so that they would move. He looked up, startled, when a knock was heard.

"Come in, Alastor," Albus said and Moody limped into the room.

How could he know who it was? Severus thought curiously, but his game with the animals was much more interesting, so he focussed on them again.

"I didn't want to disturb you, but I just checked Sev..." he stopped and looked in the direction of the busied child, "our former Potions master's classroom and store. I sealed the private quarters as we decided, so that he can take them over when the time comes, but I need to know when Charlie will arrive to take over the storeroom. We also will need to ask him where he wants to have his private quarters."

"I spoke to him yesterday, and he said he will come by tomorrow to arrange his quarters and check the potions storeroom."

"Okay, then just call me when he arrives," Alastor said and looked at Severus, who was poking a toy snake figure, which immediately started to hiss at him. That caused the child to giggle. "What are you playing, kid?"

Severus looked up when he realized that Alastor was addressing him. "Animals," he said as if that explained everything. Then Severus remembered what the nice nurse lady had said. "Memory?"

"No, no, kid. Not now. I don't have much time." Seeing the sad face, Alastor looked around and added, "But if you like, we can both look at one of your books here." He pointed at the picture books in the box.

Severus was up in a second, grabbed one of the books, offered it to Alastor, slightly tilted his head and smiled at his new playmate.

Alastor laughed about this behaviour. "Already trying to break the hearts of those around you, kid?"

Severus didn't understand what Alastor was saying, but he smiled happily when Alastor started to lead him to the rocking chair near the fireplace. "Come on, let's settle down."

When Severus was arranged on his lap, Alastor opened the book and started to read. From time to time, he pointed at something that was mentioned in the little story or asked Severus to show him something on the pictures. When he touched the pictures, the book often made a sound. The little duckling Severus liked the most always made a 'quack, quack' noise, and Severus giggled every time he or Alastor touched it.

At first Severus felt awkward sitting on Alastor's lap. At home Mum had sometimes let him sit on her lap, but that was very seldom. His back was leaning against Alastor's chest. The vibration in Alastor's chest, which was caused by his speaking, was very soothing, and Severus had to fight not to fall asleep. The story was very interesting, about a little duckling, and Alastor could read very well. Severus enjoyed it very much. *I didn't know that men like children, too. But Uncle Al is very nice,* Severus thought.

When the book was finished, Severus asked, "More?"

"No, Severus, it is time for cleaning up. Soon we will eat supper," Minerva explained, coming over to the two on the rocking chair. She lifted Severus from Alastor's lap.

"Will you and Poppy join us for supper?" she asked the DADA teacher.

"It will be our pleasure," he said, standing up and ruffling Severus' hair. Then he left the office.

Poppy, Alastor and Albus were sitting at the dinner table when Severus came running into the room. "No running!" they could hear Minerva shout from the lounge.

Hearing Minerva's scolding, he abruptly came to a halt and then slowly walked to the table. He climbed on his chair with a little help from Albus. The cushion still was fixed to the chair, so Severus didn't have to fear slipping off of it.

When Minerva sat down, Severus didn't dare to look up, in fear there would be more scolding from her. He became distracted by Poppy asking him how he was feeling.

"Fine. I have eaten brown cake. It was yummy," he told Poppy, smiling.

"That's good, Severus. You really need to eat to gain some weight. And how did you like your room?"

"It's great. Shall I show you?" Severus asked excitedly and tried to climb from the chair. Albus caught him swiftly and sat him on his bottom again.

"You can show Aunt Poppy and Uncle Alastor your room later, Severus. First you have to eat. You just heard what Aunt Poppy said about eating well?"

Severus quickly grabbed his half eaten cheese sandwich to make Albus happy. "Sev, good. Sev, eating," he said soulfully while first looking at Albus and then Minerva. Only the people here were calling him Sev, but he liked it a lot.

The adults started to talk about adult stuff, and Severus ate his supper like a good boy.

When everyone had finished their supper, Minerva addressed Severus, "You can show Aunt Poppy and Uncle Alastor your room, but then it is time for bathing and going to

bed."

Just hearing the word bath made Severus panic. "Don't need a bath," he said pleadingly to Albus. He knew he wouldn't stand a chance trying to change Minerva's mind, but maybe Albus could convince her that it wasn't necessary.

"You had a long and exciting day, Severus. You really need a bath," Albus said, destroying Severus' hope of his getting around the hated bath.

Seeing that he had no chance to convince them, Severus started to cry *I don't want a bath. I hate cold water. It always hurts so much. And the soap burns my eyes. Minerva will rub me with the towel like before, and it will hurt much more after everything is already hurting from the cold water.* Big tears were running over his cheeks. "No-o bath!" -Sob- "Sev clean," he frantically said, shaking his head violently.

"Severus, that's enough," Minerva said in a strict tone. She placed her napkin on the table and rose from her seat.

That was the final sign. Severus knew that they would force him to bathe now. His mind was racing. He really was scared of the bath. His whole body hurt when he had to bathe in the cold water at home. And even afterwards, his skin burned from the soap. Everything was so nice here, and he hated that now this was all over, and they would make him feel bad like at home. He couldn't think straight and only knew that he didn't want Minerva to bring him into the bathroom. The only possibility he thought he had was to run, and that's what he did. He jumped from his chair and ran to the door, which led to the lounge.

The adults were so shocked by the child's the violent reaction that they weren't able to stop him before he was out of the door.

Severus, meanwhile, was running in panic to the only place he could think about as a hiding place. He ran as fast as his short legs would carry him, opened the door and crawled under his bed. While he squeezed himself under the bed, he hit first his elbow and then his head, which not only caused himself a lot of pain but also made the plush stork fall down from the bed. Severus saw the stork lying on the floor, grabbed it and hugged it closely while hiding as far away from the edge of the bed as possible. *Please don't let them find me, Stork. Please. Please. Please.*

Please, don't forget to review! You can't imagine how important your reviews are for me.

Chapter 7 – Stork

Chapter 7 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 7 ... Stork

"Severus, please come out!" Poppy said, kneeling down in front of Severus' bed. Sobs could be heard from under the bed, so they hadn't needed to look for Severus very long.

Minerva was kneeling beside Poppy, and both women were cricking their necks to see under the bed.

Severus was still hugging his stork plushy tightly. He could see the faces of the two witches at the edge of the bed. He was still very scared and didn't think about coming out. He knew that running away from an adult was the stupidest thing a child could do because it made the adult even more mad. And *that* would mean a harsher punishment than he would have got if he had just remained where they wanted him. *But sometimes my feet just do what they want, and they wanted to run away,* Severus thought. *But they won't believe me when I tell them.*

"Severus, come out, please!" Minerva tried to convince Severus. The only reaction she got from the frightened child was that he vehemently shook his head and clutched his stork tighter to his chest.

"What's wrong, Severus? Why don't you want to come out?" Poppy tried again.

"No bath! Sev clean!" Severus sobbed.

"What's wrong with taking a bath? It's really nice. You even can take some toys with you in the bathtub," Poppy explained.

"Bath not nice," Severus stated soulfully.

Poppy tried hard to see Severus, but it was dark under the bed, and she could only make out his silhouette. She could see that Severus was hugging something but couldn't see his face. Only the sobs she could hear showed her that Severus still was very frightened and in despair. *That looks very much like the stuffed animal Alastor insisted on buying for Severus.*

"Oh, I see you have already made friends with your stuffed animal, Severus."

"Stork is my friend," Severus said and hugged the plushy affectionately. It felt good to have a friend.

Poppy tried another tactic. "Alastor said you will need a good friend, Sev, so he bought him for you. He will be very glad to hear that you like Stork and that he already is your friend. Maybe you could send Stork out here so that he can tell me why you don't want to bathe, Severus."

"Stork also don't want to bathe," Severus said.

"Why doesn't Stork want to bathe?" Poppy was glad that Severus at least was still speaking with them.

"He hates cold water and it burns his eyes. And later it burns more. Stork don't want to burn."

Poppy sighed. "Severus, I promise you that it won't burn, and the water will be nice and warm. You can take some toys with you, and Stork can watch over you while you're bathing."

Severus had calmed down and was listening very carefully to what Aunt Poppy said. *Maybe they really make nice baths here, and there will be toys as well. They haven't lied to me before now.* He fidgeted a little and realized that he felt dizzy and that his head hurt. With one arm he still hugged Stork, and with the other he felt for the spot where he had hit his head while crouching under the bed. When he touched it, he winced and moaned, "Ouchy." He started to sob again, and when he felt his hand get wet, he started to cry even louder.

Minerva started to panic. "Severus, what's wrong?" When Severus didn't react, she addressed Poppy. "Merlin, Poppy, get him out of there."

"Calm down, Minerva," Poppy said gently and laid a calming hand on Minerva's arm. She was concerned, too.

"Severus, what's wrong?" Poppy asked. "Did you hurt yourself? Please let me have a look at it. I made all the other pain go away earlier, do you remember? Let me do it again."

Severus stopped crying but still cowered under the bed. *Yes, she made it all better,* he thought. *I want to feel better now, too.* When Poppy offered him her hand to help him out from under the bed, he took it.

Slowly and very carefully, Poppy pulled Severus out from under the bed. In one fluid motion she had him sitting on the bed and her wand in hand.

"Oh, Merlin!" Minerva took in a harsh breath and looked shocked at the blood on Severus' head.

"Don't worry, Minerva. Head wounds always bleed a lot. It looks worse than it is," Poppy said to soothe not only Minerva's nerves but also the child, who had started to look more frightened at Minerva's shocked expression. "Look at me, Severus. I will heal that in an instant. You don't have to be scared." One wave of her wand, and the wound was cleaned, sealed and already starting to fade. Another wave and all the blood vanished.

"Minerva, could you please call Alastor?" Poppy asked.

"Of course." But before she could stand up and leave the room, Severus started to sob again and threw his tiny arms around the neck of a flabbergasted Poppy.

"No, please, I be good now. Please don't tell him to beat me," Severus pleaded, maintaining a death grip around Poppy's neck.

"Severus, you are choking me." She loosened Severus' arms so that she could breathe more freely. "Of course I won't tell Alastor to beat you. Nobody will beat you. I need something out of the hospital wing, and he knows exactly where these things are."

Seeing that Severus had calmed down and was seated back on the bed by Poppy, Minerva made her way out to find Alastor.

Poppy now was cleaning and healing the wound on Severus' elbow as well.

"Uncle Al mad with me? Taking Stork away?" Severus asked with fearful, wide-open eyes.

"Who is Stork?" Alastor said, entering the room with Minerva and Albus just behind him. "Oh, I see... You like him?"

Severus nodded vehemently to show Uncle Al how much he liked Stork, but that made him feel dizzy again, and he moaned.

"Easy, Severus! Try not to move much until I can give you the potion against concussion," Poppy said, steadying the lad by holding his shoulder. "Please bring me a concussion potion and the blue suitcase from the bathroom, Alastor. You know where it all is," Poppy ordered her husband.

"May I use your fireplace, Albus?"

"Of course, Alastor," Albus said and nodded. While Alastor left the room, he walked over to Severus.

"Severus, you don't need to run away from us. You already know that things here are different from the way they were at your old home. When you are scared of something, you just have to tell us. We would never hurt you on purpose."

"Will Father come now?" Severus asked, worried that they wouldn't want him any longer.

Albus sighed and placed Severus on his lap. "Severus, your father will never come to you again. He is dead." Severus' eyes went wide and his mouth dropped open.

"Albus, I don't think it's the right time " Minerva said, but was interrupted by her husband.

"It will never be the right time, Min. Now is as good as any other time." He turned his attention back to Severus. "We didn't tell you everything in the hospital wing, Severus, and I can't tell you the whole story now because you wouldn't understand it. What I want you to know is that you don't have to be scared that your father will come back and get you. He is dead, so is your mother, Severus. I'm sorry; I know you loved her."

Severus' bottom lip started to tremble and tears were running over his face. *I'm alone. Mommy is dead.*

"We are here for you, Severus. Nobody will hurt you again," Albus said when he saw the sad and frightened expression on Severus' face. "Yesterday you were an adult, Severus. You were a teacher here, but you had to take a potion to make you a child again, and that's why you are here now and not in the place you called home."

Severus didn't understand a word. *An adult? They really must be confusing me with someone else.* He decided that he wouldn't tell them that he was never an adult because he wanted to live here and feared they would send him away when they found out he was the wrong one. *Maybe they are right about Mom. She always said that she won't be there very long and that I have to live on my own then. She told me to try to stay out of father's way and, later, go to school and be very studious. I'm in a school now. So she will be glad,* Severus thought, a little happier than he was before. "Mommy in heaven?" he asked Albus.

"Yes, Severus, and I'm sure she is looking down on you and hopes that you will be happy," Albus said gently while stroking Severus' hair.

Meanwhile, Alastor had come back with the things Poppy had asked him to get.

"Thank you, Alastor," Poppy said and took the vial. "Please give the suitcase to Minerva."

After letting Severus drink the potion, she cast another diagnostic spell on him. "Better?"

Severus nodded and realized that this time, he didn't feel dizzy.

"Very well," Poppy stated and lifted Severus in her arms.

"Minerva, please accompany me and Severus into the bathroom, and you two..." she looked at Alastor and Albus "... should check where Severus hit his head under the bed. There must be a sharp edge or something."

With that she strode out of the room with Severus in her arms.

Chapter 8 – The Bath

Chapter 8 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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I'm not a native speaker of English!

Chapter 8 The Bath

"Minerva, would you please fill the tub with warm water. Only pure water, no additives," Poppy said while lifting Severus onto the closed toilet seat. She removed Severus' house shoes and pulled his shirt and undershirt over his head.

Severus let Poppy undress him and looked at Minerva, who turned the faucets on. The tub slowly filled with water. It was a little awkward to let Poppy undress him because he didn't want to let go of Stork. But Poppy was very skilled and managed to get Severus half naked even with his plush animal still in his hand.

Poppy lifted him from the toilet and opened it.

Severus backed away immediately, but Poppy stopped him by placing her left arm around his back. With her right hand she pulled her wand and produced a Patronus with it.

Severus was amazed when he saw the silver otter dance around him.

"That's Naggy, Severus," Poppy explained. "He will check the toilet for any monsters for you." With that, she let the Patronus disappear in the toilet.

All his fear was gone at once, and Severus leaned over the toilet to see where Naggy had gone. When Naggy broke through the water surface, he jerked back in surprise. When he realized that it just was Naggy, who again danced around him now, he started to giggle. The silver creature made funny sounds as if he was talking to Poppy.

"He said that there wasn't any monster in the toilet, and that you don't have to be scared," Poppy explained to Severus while she vanished her Patronus.

Naggy was deep down there and the monster couldn't hide. So there really is no monster. Here it is so much nicer than at home Severus thought relieved and smiled at Poppy. "Naggy nice."

"Yes, he is, and now you can use the toilet without fearing a monster, right?" Poppy said while lowering Severus pants and briefs. Quickly she lifted him onto the toilet again and removed his pants and underwear completely.

Severus smiled at Minerva. "No monster, Min...wa."

"Yes, Sev, I know," she said and smiled back. She had sat down on the edge of the tub and felt the water to check the temperature.

Poppy tried to get the attention of the distracted child by placing her hands on Severus' legs. "Don't forget to pee, Severus."

Severus concentrated on the requested task and was successful after a few seconds.

"Done?" Poppy asked when Severus smiled proudly at her.

Severus nodded and held his arms out for Poppy to lift him off the toilet.

Now, Severus stood with his back to the bathtub, Stork still hugged to his chest.

"What toys do you want to take with you in the bathtub, Severus?" Minerva asked while pulling a box with some toys near him.

"Stork needs a bath, too," Severus said and pushed the plush animal almost in Poppy's face.

"No, Severus. Stork can't come with you in the tub, but he will sit here on the toilet and watch you," Poppy said and took Stork out of his hand.

Severus looked longingly at the animal, but was distracted by Minerva, who now was pushing the toy box in front of his feet. "Look, Severus, this is an animal almost like Naggy, and he would love to go swim with you. His name is Beaver. And here is a ship. Do you want these two to bathe with you?"

"Yes," Severus answered, overwhelmed by the number of toys in the small box. He was glad that Minerva had chosen two because he couldn't have decided.

Minerva threw the two toys in the tub, and the beaver immediately became animated. He paddled through the water and dove. Occasionally he splashed water with his flat tail. The ship meanwhile was sailing through the water and tooted from time to time.

"You can play with them soon, Severus, but first I have to check something," Poppy said while turning the child to face her. She stroked her fingertips over his face and examined the skin behind Severus' ears and on his neck. His shoulder-length, black hair wasn't as greasy as it was while he had been an adult.

"Arms up, Severus!" she commanded, and Severus obeyed while trying to look over his shoulder at beaver. Poppy smiled at his behaviour. She closely examined his front

and under his arms. "Okay Severus, now you can join beaver in the tub." She lifted Severus over the tub, but when she wanted to lower him into the water, he curled up and pulled his feet to his chest.

Old memories kicked in; he wasn't so sure about having fun with Beaver any longer. He was sure she would throw him into the water, and he tried to avoid it as long as possible. Therefore he curled up and closed his eyes. He was surprised when he felt her lifting him away from the bath tub again. Soon he was standing on his feet in front of the tub.

"Severus, I thought you wanted to play with Beaver?" Poppy asked him. She didn't wait for an answer; she just leaned over the edge of the tub and splashed the water a little with her hand. The beaver immediately swam over to her hand, climbed on it and jumped back into the water.

Severus started to giggle again and tried to reach for the water. But he was too short and couldn't reach the water surface.

Minerva carefully lifted Severus over the water surface, so that he could splash his hand in the water.

Severus was a little scared when Minerva held him over the water, but when he realized that she was just letting him hover over the surface, he tried to touch the water. It was warm and the little beaver was coming over to his hand. Severus pulled his hand away when the beaver tried to climb on it. The beaver fell back into the water, shook himself and swam on his back while looking curiously at Severus.

"He just wants to play, Sev," Minerva said while slowly lowering Severus into the water.

It's warm and the beaver is funny, Severus thought happily.

The beaver dove, came up directly in front of Severus and spat a water fountain out of his little muzzle. That made Severus giggle and splash water at the little creature. The ship floated near the beaver and tooted. Severus was happy. *A bath here is really fun,* he thought, thrilled.

"Try this one here," Poppy ordered Minerva, handing her a bottle of liquid soap. Then she rummaged again in the blue suitcase. "It's without perfume and other additives. He has very sensitive and dry skin. You will need to moisturise him after a bath. I will leave you special shampoo, soap and moisturiser for him."

Minerva started to wash Severus with the soap and a sponge that looked like a duck. The child hardly realized what she did because he was engrossed in his play with the beaver and the ship.

"Stork, look that's Beef...wa." Severus lifted the little beaver out of the water to show him to his new friend. Suddenly the beaver went rigid and didn't move. Severus was shocked and held the beaver close in front of his face. "No, Beef...wa. No dead, please."

Before the little tyke could start crying, Minerva said calmly, "It isn't dead, Severus. It's just a toy. You need to put him in the water, and he will swim again. He only moves when he is in the water or a few inches above it." She gently pushed Severus' arm down, so that the beaver was in contact with the water again.

Severus relaxed when he saw the beaver swim again. He had feared that he was responsible for the death of the little animal.

"Severus, we have to wash your hair now," Minerva said while already stroking his hair back.

"No burning?" Severus asked, scared.

"Severus, look, you just have to press this cloth over your eyes. It is waterproof and won't let any water through it. When you press it tight to your face, nothing will run into your eyes and make them burn," Poppy explained while offering him the cloth.

Severus looked uncertainly at the cloth, but then decided to give it a try. "Kay."

"So, just press it onto your face and lean backwards a bit," Minerva ordered.

It worked. His eyes didn't burn while Minerva washed his hair and rinsed it clean.

"So, one last round with the ship, then you can come out before your skin starts to wrinkle. Stork is already waiting for you," Minerva said and arranged the liquid soap bottle and the shampoo on a small shelf over the tub.

Severus looked over to his friend and pushed the ship so that it floated for another round in the water. The beaver swam happily around the ship and dove under it from time to time.

Minutes later, Severus was covered in a warm towel by Poppy. "You must be careful when you rub him dry, Minerva. It's better if you just pat him dry," Poppy explained while showing Minerva how to do it. "Okay? You can take over," she said when Minerva came near them after emptying the tub.

Severus was happy that Poppy and Minerva didn't rub him like Minerva had done in the afternoon. On his hands it wasn't that bad, but on his body it would feel worse.

"Now moisturise him very carefully. Only the body, for the face I have another cream for him," Poppy instructed and handed Minerva the cream.

First Severus didn't like the cream. It felt sticky on his skin, but soon the cream was sinking into his skin, and it only felt very soft. It also felt very good to have Minerva dry him and moisturise him. *She is a very nice woman.* "Stork also cream?" he asked.

"No, Stork doesn't need cream. He doesn't have sensitive skin," Poppy said to Severus while handing Minerva another tin of cream. "This is for his face."

When Minerva rubbed the cream into his face, Severus tried to pull his head back. It didn't feel good to have it on his face.

"Severus, we know that you don't like the cream on your face, but it has to be applied. Your skin is very dry and you don't want it to start burning again, do you?"

Severus shook his head and held still so that Minerva could rub cream on the rest of his face.

"Look, it's almost completely sunken in," Minerva said and kissed his forehead.

Minutes later Severus was wearing his pajamas and was being carried into his bedroom.

Chapter 9 – The First Night

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 9 The First Night

Poppy and Alastor had said their good-byes, and now only Albus and Minerva were sitting in front of Severus' bed.

Severus was very tired. The day had been so exciting that he just wanted to sleep. The bed was warm, and he dozed while trying to concentrate on the story about a little lion that Minerva was reading aloud. Minerva's soft voice and Albus' slight snoring (he had fallen asleep in the armchair he had transfigured from one of the chairs) made it hard for Severus to listen to the story. His eyes fell shut, and after a few minutes he was fast asleep.

"Sleep well, Sev," Minerva said, leant over the sleeping child and placed a soft kiss on his forehead.

After arranging the bed covers around Severus, she turned to Albus. She chuckled as she placed her hand on his cheek. "Albus, you have to wake up. Sleeping in this position won't do you any good."

"What?" Albus said, still sleep-fogged. His gaze fell on the sleeping boy. "Oh, he is already sleeping. I didn't hear much of the story."

"Severus didn't hear much of it, either. It was a busy day for all of us," Minerva said, leaving the room with Albus in tow.

When Severus awoke, everything was dark, and he couldn't see much. He was scared because the room was big and obviously not his small room. He accidentally touched Stork and hugged him tightly. That made him remember the events of the last day. He relaxed a little because now he knew that this was his new room, but he still was a little scared. *I don't like the dark*, he thought, frightened.

He also remembered now why he had woken up. *I have to pee*. Frantically, he looked around the room. No bucket, he realized in shock. At home he was not allowed to leave his room without permission and especially at night. Therefore he had had a bucket that he could pee in at night, which he had to empty and clean in the morning when Mother let him out of his room.

Severus stood up and immediately clenched his legs together. *I really need to pee*, he thought, almost starting to cry. Again he scanned the room for a bucket, but there wasn't one. With Stork under his arm he went to the door, opened it and slowly peeked out. Everything was quiet. *What shall I do?* Severus thought desperately. With his free hand, he squeezed his wee-wee but it didn't help. He was sobbing, and tears were running down his cheeks. Carefully he walked over to the toilet door. On his way, he fearfully looked around. *Please no monsters*. He still had to clench his legs together. That made it hard to walk. He was almost at the door when he felt the first drops escape him. Whimpering, he stopped in shock.

"What are you doing, Severus?" Albus asked sleepy. He had heard the sobs and was now standing, still with the opened door in his hand, in the hall.

Severus whirled around, shocked, and lost all control of his body. His pyjama pants were getting wet rapidly, and there was already forming a small puddle at his feet. Severus looked anxiously at Albus and then down at the puddle and his wet clothes. The sobs became cries, and Severus darted in the direction of the bathroom door.

"No, Severus!" Albus shouted and ran after the panicking child. "You will slip."

But it was too late. Severus had reached the door and vanished in the bathroom. A loud thud made Albus aware that his fear was justified. The loud scream that followed made the blood freeze in his veins.

Severus lay screaming on the tiles, clutching his head with his tiny arms. Albus picked him up and placed him on his lap after he had sat down on the closed toilet seat. "Shh, Severus!"

"I'll call Poppy," Minerva, who had been woken up by the noises, said hectically and left the room.

Severus was crying in Albus' arms, and Albus tried to push a bunch of toilet paper on the wound on Severus' head. Healing magic never was a passion of Albus', and he didn't want to do something wrong. "Aunt Poppy will be here in a minute, Sev, Calm down." Albus could feel the wetness in his lap, but didn't care. He just wanted to calm Severus. When Poppy arrived, he was not only drenched in his lap, but also on his chest, but that was because of Severus' tears.

On her way to the still crying boy on Albus' lap, Poppy spelled the wetness on the tiles away. She waved her wand and muttered a diagnostic spell the moment she arrived at Severus' side.

Albus lifted his hand from the wound, and another wave of Poppy's wand stopped the bleeding. Poppy sealed the wound and healed it. "All done, Severus," she said while stroking his cheek with the back of her hand.

Severus was still clutching Albus. His sobs and cries were heart breaking.

"The concussion potion is still in his system, so I don't have to give him another one. I will just give him a pain killer spiked with a calming draught. That should make him sleep peacefully until the morning," she said to Albus and Minerva, who had sat down on the edge of the tub. She waved her wand and dried Severus' and Albus' clothes. After that she addressed Severus again, "Come on, Severus, we have to clean you, and you have to calm down so that I can give you a pain killer." She took Severus off Albus' lap and spoke softly to him, "Everything is okay Severus. You just have to calm down, so that I can give you the pain killer for your headache."

Severus was still hugging Poppy's neck very tightly. "Ouchy," he said, still sobbing.

"I know, Sev, but when you drink the potion you will feel better in an instant." She calmly stroked his head and addressed Minerva, "Could you please give me the blue vial and a spoon from my bag, Minerva?"

Severus had calmed down a little and was now looking curiously at Minerva, who was rummaging in Poppy's emergency bag.

"Please fill a spoon with the potion. One should be enough," Poppy ordered Minerva.

When she saw that Severus was curiously looking at Minerva, she said, "You will like it, Severus. It tastes good."

Severus swallowed the potion without complaining and felt relieved when the pain was gone. He smiled happily at Poppy, but then he looked down at his pyjama pants and

remembered what had happened. He looked over to Albus and said, "Sowwy."

Before Albus could say something, Poppy said, "You don't have to be sorry. That happens sometimes. Look you are already dry again."

They are not mad? Severus couldn't believe his luck. He had broken many rules, but they were still not mad with him. He was out of his room, he ran in the hall, he spoiled his clothes and, worst of all, he had cried, but they weren't mad. Quite the contrary, they were very nice and hugged him. *It's so nice to be here!*

"We still have to clean you. With your sensitive skin it wouldn't be good to just clean you magically," Poppy said and planted Severus in the tub. She had to smile at the puppy-dog-look Severus was giving her with his tearful eyes.

He had lifted his arms again and asked, "Up?"

"In a minute, Severus." She waved her wand, and the boy was naked. "Remember our water is always warm for you, dear," she said so that Severus didn't panic about the water.

Severus already wanted to start crying again when Poppy assured him that the water would be warm. *They never lied to me, so maybe they won't start to now*, he thought hopefully. He held still, and even enjoyed it, when Poppy let the warm water run over him. She cleaned him with the funny sponge again and then carefully dried him. When she applied the moisturizer again, he hadn't even a chance to fidget because Poppy was so experienced with it that he couldn't avoid her hands. She even put moisturizer in between his bottom cheeks. *Minwa hadn't done this. It feels icky.* He hoped Poppy wouldn't be here very often to put the sticky stuff on him.

"Such a big boy," Poppy said while handing him over to Minerva, who dressed Severus in a fresh pair of pyjamas. "The calming draught will kick in soon. You'd better get him into bed," she said to Minerva while packing her emergency bag.

Albus stood up and held the door open for Minerva, who carried Severus, and Poppy, who made her way to the fireplace.

Poppy waved her good-bye to the small family and left through the green flames of the fireplace.

Severus had fallen asleep on Minerva's arms, so they didn't have any difficulties tucking him in.

"If every day is like this, I will die of a heart attack before he is a teenager," Minerva said while stroking Severus hair.

Albus laid a comforting hand on her shoulder. "You know if nothing unfortunate happens we will even be able to see our grandchildren become teenagers. That's the benefit of being magical. I don't think that every day will be like this one. And even if it is, we will get used to it." He squeezed her shoulder and added, "But I'm sure the next days will be stressful, and so we should try to get as much sleep as possible."

"You are right," Minerva said while standing up. She kissed her husband, and both walked back to their own bedroom to get a few more hours of much-needed sleep.

Please review!

Chapter 10 – The Man in the Photo

Chapter 10 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 10 The Man in the Photo

Severus and his new family were sitting at the breakfast table when the fire turned green to announce that someone was about to pop through the fireplace. One second later Charlie's head appeared between the flames. "Good morning, Headmaster, can I come in?"

"Of course," Albus said while waving his wand to lower the magical barrier that stopped unwanted visitors from barging in whenever they pleased.

Shortly after the wards were lowered, Charlie emerged from the fireplace, dusted off the ash, which was covering him, and said, "Damn, I hate to travel like this. Brooms are so much more comfortable." When he looked up, he stopped abruptly. "Oh, I didn't want to interrupt your breakfast. I'm sorry, I will come back later." He turned and headed for the fireplace, but Albus stopped him.

"No, no, Charlie; that isn't necessary. We are almost finished. You couldn't know that we were still at breakfast. We had a very exciting night and so slept in a little. Come over and have a cup of tea or coffee," Albus said while leading Charlie to the table.

"So, coffee or tea, Charlie?" Minerva asked while conjuring a cup.

"Coffee, please," Charlie said while he eyed Severus out of the corner of his eye. He had already heard that Professor Snape had been de-aged *would have never thought that he was such a cute child. When Mom sees him, she will cuddle him to death.*

Severus had been quiet while Charlie had come through the fireplace, and Albus had led him over to the table. *Father didn't like it when I looked at the people who came to visit him.* Therefore Severus fixed his eyes on his bowl of cereal, but couldn't resist looking up quickly from time to time out of curiosity. The man was young, and he had red, long hair and a lot of funny spots on his face and arms. Severus had never seen a man like this. His cereal was forgotten, and also his resolution of not staring at the adults' guest. Quite the contrary, he was ogling the funny man open mouthed, now.

Minerva closed Severus' lower jaw with a tap of her hand. "Severus, it's not nice to stare at our guest. This is Mr. Weasley. He will teach Potions from next year onwards." She looked over to Charlie and said, "And this young man here is Severus."

"Nice to meet you, Severus, but you can call me Charlie. Mr. Weasley is my father," Charlie said kindly and winked at him. "So how do you like it here?"

"Fine! I have lots of toys. Do you want to see?" Severus asked, excited to have perhaps found a new playmate. The others were fun to play with, as well, but they had problems sitting on the floor with him, and if they did, they often groaned and said that they were too old for things like this. Charlie seemed to be much younger and would surely have no problems playing with him.

"No, Severus, Charlie isn't here to play, and you still have to eat your breakfast," Minerva said sternly and moved the bowl towards Severus again.

"I'm not hungry anymore," Severus said, sulking, and pushed his bottom lip out.

"Severus," Albus warned, "what did Aunt Poppy tell you about eating?"

Severus sighed and took his spoon again.

"You know what, Severus? You eat your breakfast now, and I will organize everything I have to do up until dinner, and then I will take you for a walk and a little fly on the broom, if Minerva and Albus give their okay," Charlie said to cheer Severus up.

"Oh please, Minwa!" Severus begged and jumped excitedly on his chair.

"I don't know, Charlie. Flying? He is very young and still not fully recovered," Minerva said worriedly.

"Remember, Professor, I was one of the best Quidditch players in my school years here. While working with the dragons, I got even better. You don't have to worry. I will only fly low, and I'll have a good grip on him. He looks very pale and should get some fresh air." Charlie tried to calm Minerva's nerves.

"I think it will be okay, Minerva, and Severus will enjoy spending some time away from us," Albus said calmly.

"Okay, okay, you've convinced me," Minerva gave in.

Severus smiled at Charlie and started to eat the rest of his breakfast.

After finishing his cup of coffee, Charlie stood up and addressed Albus, "Where can I find Professor Moody? He said he would help me to arrange my new quarters and check the Potions lab and storeroom."

"His quarters are right next to the infirmary. Do you want to use the Floo network again?"

"No, no, I would prefer to walk through the castle. It's quite some time since I last had the opportunity for this. I still remember the way to the infirmary from my school years." He smirked at Minerva.

"Oh, yes, I remember very well, and that doesn't make it easy for me to allow your adventure with Sev."

Severus was shocked. "But you promised!" He spat milk and cereal, which seconds before were still in his mouth, all over the table.

Minerva rolled her eyes. "Severus, don't speak with your mouth full of food." She waved her wand over the spilled liquid and vanished it. "And don't look at me like that. I just said it isn't easy for me to allow it, not that I won't allow it. Now, eat the rest of your cereal before it is completely soggy. You'll need strength to hold yourself on the broom."

That made Severus smile again.

Charlie stood up and said, "I'm older and more responsible now, Professor. I will take good care of your little charge."

"We know, we know, Charlie, but the situation is still quite new for us, and so we are a little over-protective," Albus explained while standing up to accompany Charlie to the door.

"I totally understand," Charlie said and leaned over to whisper the rest. "He looks a little ill and vulnerable."

"Yes, there have been some unpleasant surprises concerning Severus' first childhood," Albus replied in a low voice as they headed for the door.

"If you want, you can join us for dinner up here or join the other teachers in the Great Hall for dinner. There are already a few here in the castle, and I'm sure they would love to meet you."

"Yes, I think I will eat in the Great Hall. That gives me the opportunity to speak with some of them. I really have to see Professor Sprout about supplying me with plants for my potions storeroom. I will come by and take Severus when I have finished dinner and my conversation with her."

"Come over here, Severus," Albus called for him.

Severus had played peacefully on his play carpet while Minerva and Albus did their adult stuff *It must be very boring to look at so many papers*. Severus hated papers because they reminded him of the times when his father forced him to draw the stupid letters again and again. When Albus called, he feared he would have to draw letters again. Grumpily he left his play figures and the small flying carpet on the floor and went over to Albus.

"Climb up on my lap, Severus, I want to show you something," Albus said.

Minerva sat down beside them on the couch.

When Severus was comfortable in his lap, Albus showed him a photo. "That was you while you were an adult, Severus. Do you remember what we told you? You have been de-aged with a potion. Therefore Charlie is here to take over your job as the Potions master, and you don't have to worry about having to go back home."

Severus leaned into Albus' chest to find some comfort. He looked fearfully at the photo. "Father?"

"No, Severus, that's not your father. It's you, as you looked two days ago. You have been a good man and friend to us. In three weeks, the students will come back to the castle, and maybe some will tell you things about your former life. I cannot explain it in detail to you because you wouldn't understand, but I want you to know that you can always come to us when you hear something that makes you sad or confused. We love you, Severus, but some people didn't like your adult self. You had to be strict and a little cold to many people because you had another job besides being a teacher here in the castle. Maybe some of them will be a little cautious around you first or tell you things that will worry you. If that happens, you must promise me to come to us or Alastor or Poppy. We will help you and try to explain everything to you."

"Sev bad man?"

"No, Sev," Minerva said with tears in her eyes. Remembering the adult Severus made her very sad. She took Sev, placed him on her lap and hugged him close. "Sev is the

little boy here, and he is the cutest and nicest child I have ever seen. The man in the photo was one of my best friends, Severus Snape, a great man, who suffered a lot to help others. He should have had a free life after all that happened, but some people were too ignorant to see this. So he had to be de-aged. He is part of you, Sev, but you won't become the same man as the one you can see in the photo. Severus was often sad and bitter because he had gone through so much in his life. You will have a better life, Sev. I promise this. We will make sure that nobody will hurt you again, and we always will be there for you."

"Good man? Friend?" Severus asked bewildered and a little scared about Minerva's behavior. "No cry, Minwa. Sev be good." He hugged her.

"Of course you are a good boy, Sev. I feel much better by having you in my arms."

Severus looked up into her face and smiled.

Minerva couldn't resist his winsome face and smiled. She leaned over and kissed his forehead. "My cute little baby."

"No baby. Sev big boy!" Severus protested.

That made Minerva laugh and her tears stop. "Yes, and you will get even bigger when you eat your dinner nicely. Come on, it's time for the bathroom. I'm sure the house-elves will serve dinner soon."

Please review!

Chapter 11 – Pomona and Filius

Chapter 11 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

Dear readers,

First, I want to remind you again that this story is AU. Originally I wanted to add this information in front of the last chapter, but I forgot. Severus' father was a wizard in my story and not a Muggle! He hated Severus because he just hated noisy children and thought that Severus wasn't intelligent enough to be proud of. His mother was a witch and was very ill. She loved Severus, but wasn't capable of fighting against her husband.

Second, please don't tell me that Minerva is too stern or strict. That's her character, and it doesn't change that she loves Severus deeply and only wants his best. A child needs rules to grow up properly and safely. I think Albus and Minerva complement each other perfectly. Each one treats Severus differently, but both love him the same!

And then I have to tell you that I changed my plans to let Ron and Hermione be a couple. I have a totally different idea now in my head for Hermione, and you will find out later!

Bye, Sunny

Chapter 11 Pomona and Filius

The dinner went well, without any problems. Severus had already finished his meal and was eagerly looking at the fireplace. "When will the red man come?" he asked Minerva.

"His name is Charlie, Sev, and he will come when he has finished his meal," Minerva explained calmly.

"Arlie," Severus mumbled to himself.

One of the portraits announced that a visitor was at the front door.

Severus jumped down from his chair and ran towards the entrance.

"SEVERUS!" Minerva shouted after him.

Severus stopped and stood stock-still. He had spent enough time with Minerva that he knew it wasn't good when Minerva used his full name. He hunched his shoulders and looked at the floor.

When Minerva reached him, she turned him by his shoulder so that he had to face her. "Look at me, Severus!"

Severus was scared. *Please, don't let her forbid me to go with Arlie.* He looked up into Minerva's face and waited for what was sure to come.

"The front door is taboo, Sev. You will only use it when one of us is with you. It's too dangerous if you open it alone, even if you know who is standing in front of it. Do you understand this?" Minerva asked him very seriously.

Severus nodded and looked fearfully at Minerva. He hardly noticed that Albus had passed them to open the door. When Charlie came into the living room, Severus was looking uncertainly from him to Minerva. *Will she tell him that I was bad and won't let me fly with him?*

"Something wrong, Sevvyy?" Charlie asked when he saw the worried look on Severus' face.

"Sev bad," Severus said and looked unhappily at the floor again.

"No, Sev, you are not bad, but you have to learn some rules here. We don't want you to run in the house because you could slip and hurt yourself, and we don't want you to open the door because we want to know who is visiting us and it could be dangerous. These rules have their reasons, and you have to understand them," Minerva explained calmly. "You are not bad, but next time, you need to remember the rules and behave, okay?"

Severus nodded his head. He didn't want Minerva to be mad at him. He knew the rules from his father, but he had other reasons for them or never explained why the rules were important. At home he wasn't allowed to run because it was too loud and he might break something, and he wasn't allowed to speak with visitors because he was just an annoying freak. Here the rules often seemed to be so that he wouldn't hurt himself. He didn't understand why this was so important for the adults here. *Many things are different with Minwa and Albus*, Severus thought.

"Arlie flying with Sev?" Severus asked Charlie hopefully.

"Of course, I have already spoken with Madam Hooch. She is the flying instructor here at Hogwarts. She will give us the best broom that she has," Charlie said to Severus and smiled when he saw that Severus brightened up upon hearing this. "So are you ready to come with me?"

"Yes!" Severus said and started to bounce up and down in excitement.

"Let's look for your shoes, and then we will head down to the Quidditch pitch," Charlie said while leading Severus into the hall by his shoulders.

Severus started to run in the direction of the small shoe cupboard, but remembered Minerva's words and forced himself to walk after a short apologizing look at Minerva. He took his shoes out of the cupboard, sat down on the floor and struggled to put them on.

Minerva knelt in front of Severus and helped him into his shoes, tying the laces.

"Have fun, my darling," Minerva said and kissed his forehead when he was fully dressed. She glanced worriedly at Charlie who smiled soothingly at her.

"Yes, and say hello to Madam Hooch for us," Albus added while patting Severus' head.

"Kay," Severus said and left with Charlie for his first big adventure in his new home.

Charlie offered his hand to Severus, and the lad took it gratefully because now, outside Minwa's and Albus' nice bright quarters, it was a little dark and scary in the castle. The portraits they passed whispered to each other. They were discussing who the two new people were that strolled through the halls.

They had almost reached the big entrance door when the poltergeist, Peeves, crossed their path. "Oh, who do we have here? A red haired one, obviously a Weasley, but not one of the twins," Peeves said unpleasantly while flying circles around the two. "And who is this ugly one? Black hair and so scared. Are you scared of old Peeves?" the poltergeist said dangerously. When he said the last sentence, he hovered only a few inches away from Severus' face.

Severus was terrified and pressed himself as near as possible to Charlie's legs.

"Go away, Peeves!" Charlie commanded, annoyed by Peeves' behavior. When he felt Severus tremble around his legs, he started to get worried. He took Severus by his arm and addressed Peeves again, "I would be careful, Peeves. This is Severus, the new charge of the headmaster, and I think you don't want to cross him."

"Ah, the shrunken old bat of the dungeons. Not so scary anymore, Professor? The students will kick you when they get the chance," Peeves said viciously and grinned evilly.

Severus was crying now and said fearfully, "Want back to Minwa and Albus, Arlie. Please!" He hid his head in Charlie's neck and hoped the bad ghost would go away soon.

"That's enough!" a squeaking voice yelled. When Severus looked up curiously, he saw first a chubby woman and then the tiny little man beside her. The little man had his wand in hand, and it seemed that it was he who had spoken a few seconds ago to the ghost. He waved his wand, and Peeves disappeared screaming. Severus jerked around to see where the ghost was and realized in relief that he was gone.

Meanwhile the other two had come nearer. "You should show Peeves his place, Charlie, or he will walk all over you," the chubby lady said to Charlie. Then her glance fell on Severus. "And that must be our little Severus." She smiled at Severus and held her arms out in his direction. "Won't you come to Aunt Pomona?"

Severus looked at her with big eyes, but she looked very kind, and so he decided that it wouldn't hurt to let her cuddle him. That's what all the people here seem to do, and he liked to be cuddled. So he reached for the nice lady and let her take him in her soft arms.

"How are you, Severus? Do you like the castle?" Pomona asked in a friendly tone.

Severus looked around again, and it was obvious that he still was frightened. "Bad ghost."

"Did Peeves scare you? You don't have to be scared. He is just a mean poltergeist, Sevvy. We will watch so that he doesn't annoy you." Pomona lightly swayed him up and down to calm him.

"I don't want the kids to kick me," Severus said sadly and laid his head on Pomona's shoulder. *What if the kids will hate me like the ghost and my father?* Severus thought worriedly.

"Severus, come on, look at me," Pomona said and positioned him so she could see his face. "The students won't hate you. How can someone, beside a stupid old poltergeist, hate someone as cute as you? They will love you, you'll see. Don't worry about it."

Severus was a little calmer now, and he hoped that the nice lady was right. He remembered that the lady wasn't alone and looked for the small man.

Professor Flitwick had moved over to Charlie's side and looked curiously at Pomona and Severus. When he saw that Severus was looking at him, he said, "Hello, young man, I'm Filius. I teach Charms here at Hogwarts. We will speak with the headmaster about Peeves, and I'm sure he will have a serious talk with him."

"Charms?" Severus let the word roll on his tongue. "You a great wizard. Ghost is dead?"

"No, he isn't dead. He just ran or rather flew away. But he knows now that you are under our protection. He will think twice before he annoys you again," Filius said as calmly as he could with his high-pitched voice.

"So where were you two heading?" Pomona asked Charlie while she still lightly swayed Severus.

"We were going to go flying. Madam Hooch is already waiting for us," Charlie explained. "Do you still want to fly, Sevvy?" he asked Severus because after all this stress, he wasn't sure if Severus still wanted to go flying.

Severus also wasn't so sure about it. He would like to cuddle with Minwa now and tell Albus what the bad ghost had said, but cuddling with Pom was also very nice and so he laid his head again on her comfortable shoulder.

"Of course you want to fly, right? You don't let a stupid poltergeist spoil all your fun. Charlie is a great flier, and you will love flying. The fresh air will do you good," Pomona said encouragingly.

"Come flying too, Aunt Pomo... Pomom...?" Severus tried to say the name, but he couldn't get it right.

Pomona chuckled and said, "Pommy will do, sweetie."

"Aunt Pommy flying?" Severus asked hopefully. He was now much more enthusiastic.

Now Pomona had to laugh heartily, and Charlie and Filius couldn't suppress a chuckle. "Me on a broom? Oh, please, it would be disastrous. Charlie is the better one for this, my sweetie. He will take good care of you, don't worry. Nevertheless, I would love if you two came by the greenhouses when you finish your flight." When she turned to Charlie, she added, "I could also show you the new plants I told you about, Charlie."

"What do you think, Sevvy, will we visit Professor Sprout after our flight?" Charlie asked while holding his arms open for Severus to climb in again.

"Prout?" Severus was confused and looked at Charlie after he managed to make himself comfortable in his arms.

"It's Pomona for you, Charlie. We are colleagues now, and you have to start to get comfortable with calling us by our first names," she said to Charlie. She patted Severus' head and said, "And for you it is Aunt Pommy, okay?"

"Kay," Severus said happily.

"Filius and I will meet with Albus and Minerva now, and I will be in greenhouse four in a half an hour. Just come by if you still have the energy after your flight!" she said, and then Filius and she said their goodbyes.

"Now let's get flying, Sevvy!" Charlie said and planted Severus back on his feet.

Please review!

Chapter 12 – Flying with Charlie and Ro

Chapter 12 of 14

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Duchess_Of_Arcadia and Pookah, for correcting my mistakes.

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I'm not a native speaker of English!

Dear readers,

No drama this time, just a new character and watching Sev play. Hope it isn't boring!

Sunny

Chapter 12 – Flying with Charlie and Ro

When the two came near the Quidditch pitch, they could see Rolanda Hooch busily rummaging in the broom shed.

"Hello, Madam Hooch!" Charlie greeted the busy woman.

The flying teacher turned around, without even looking at Charlie and Severus, and said, "Rolanda, Charlie, just Rolanda." She dusted the filth from her robes and waved the spider webs out of her short, silver hair.

When she finally looked at her guests, Severus could see her odd yellow eyes. They were not only this crazy color but also seemed to have inflexible pupils that made them look hard and demanding. But something about her didn't make Severus scared. *She looks like Mo, the hedgehog, in one of the books in my room.* His eyes jumped from her eyes to her ruffled hair and back.

"If Alastor has sneaked that damn 'Mo, the Hedgehog' book in your room, I swear I will kill him," she said, but when she saw that Severus was scared by this, she tried to smile. "Oh, my, you have to learn not to take everything I say so seriously, Severus. I'm not one of those crazy, cuddle-addicted women in this castle, but I also don't eat little children."

"Yes, Severus, Madam Hooch is very cool, and she can fly like hell," Charlie said admiringly.

"Rolanda, Charlie. What's so damn hard about it?" Rolanda said while handing Charlie one of the two broomsticks she had fetched from the broom shed.

Charlie reached for the broom. "Ah, a Firebolt. I didn't know you had one here."

"It's one of my private brooms," Rolanda said. "I still prefer the Nimbus 2000. It's more flexible," she explained while gesturing towards the broom in her hand. "Minerva wouldn't forgive me if I let you fly with this tyke on a poor Cleansweep."

"Arlie good flyer, Aunt Ro," Severus tried to assure her because he feared that she wouldn't let him fly if she thought Minerva didn't approve. "Minwa says okay."

"Aunt Ro? Oh, please don't call me that. Just Ro will do if Rolanda is too hard for you," she said, amused.

Severus realized that she was really different from the other women. She didn't try to cuddle him, and she didn't want him to call her aunt. There was nobody he could

compare her with, but he thought it could be nice to play with her. It seemed she wouldn't be so easily worried. Maybe, she would even let him try to fly alone. "Me fly alone?" he asked while trying to make the expression the others liked so much.

Rolanda laughed. "Nice try, puppy, but that look won't work on me." She playfully tapped her broom handle on his head.

She looked at Charlie again. "We don't want *Minwa* to have a heart attack, do we, *Arlie*?" she asked teasingly.

Charlie grinned at her. "Of course not, Rolanda." He looked down at Severus and tried to cheer the slightly disappointed child up by saying, "I'm sure Rolanda will teach you how to fly before Bryanna and Kenneth are even allowed to climb on a broom with someone else. They are my brother Bill's kids and are as old as you are."

That really cheered Severus up. Being able to do something before other children his age were allowed to do it made him feel special, and he really liked to feel special. He smiled proudly at Rolanda.

"Yes, I will make a perfect little Quidditch star out of you," Rolanda said and patted Severus' head with her gloved hand. "And now, let's start." With one fluid motion, she was on her broom, zooming away.

Severus stood open mouthed and looked after Rolanda, who still was flying near the ground, but very fast.

Charlie, meanwhile, had straddled his broom and grinned at the awed child. "Come on, Severus, let's see if you like flying." He opened his arms and gestured for Severus to climb in front of him on the broom.

Rolanda was hovering a few meters away from them, two meters up in the air. "Let him sit as near as possible to you, Charlie, and hold him tight with one of your arms." She went into full teacher mode and now addressed Severus, who had become a little nervous. "Everything okay, tyke? Grab the handle and relax. No, more forward, Severus. Yes, that's right." She flew around them and came to a halt directly beside Charlie's broomstick. "Ready?"

Severus was biting his bottom lip, and he felt his heart beat in his chest. *Please don't let him fly as fast as Ro did.*

"What's going on, Severus? Don't want to fly anymore?" Rolanda asked worriedly.

Severus turned his head very slightly to look at Ro. "Don't know!"

"You don't have to worry. We will stop as soon as you want us to, okay?" Rolanda said to calm the child. She wasn't used to working with children of that age, but she had no problem with taking all the time Severus would need.

"Kay," Severus said uncertainly.

"Nice and easy then, Charlie." With that she accelerated her broom, and Charlie followed.

First Severus felt awkward and his tummy started to tingle, but soon he got used to the feeling. After a few minutes, Severus was frantically shouting, "Faster, Arlie, faster." He felt so good. Flying was great. "Get Ro! Get Ro!" His laughter and shouts surely could be heard at the highest tower of Hogwarts.

His laughter is so natural and fresh, Charlie thought and smiled because the laughter was so infectious.

When they finally stopped after half an hour of playing 'Catch Ro,' Severus was still giggling.

"Who would have thought Severus could laugh like this? It's really refreshing," Rolanda said breathlessly. Her normally pale face now had more color, and she looked more relaxed.

"Already getting soft, Rolanda?" Charlie mocked her, grinning madly.

"Yeah, it really seems so, but if you tell anyone, Charlie Weasley, so help you God," she said, but her tone was still too happy to worry Severus, and she couldn't impress Charlie with it either.

"Enough for today, Severus, but you can come back whenever you want, and we can have a fly. Maybe next time a little higher," Rolanda promised.

"What did I tell you, Severus? She is really cool, isn't she?" Charlie asked Severus while placing the lad on his feet again to climb from the broom himself.

"Yeah, Ro cool," Severus said, jumping around excitedly.

"Thanks, for lending us the broom and flying with us, Rolanda. We'll visit Pomona now in the greenhouses, right, Sev?"

"Yes, Aunt Pommy nice," Severus explained to Rolanda.

"Yes, I'm sure you like her. Has she already made you addicted to her homemade toffees?" Rolanda asked. "No?" she asked when she saw the confused look on Severus' face. "Then you should ask her for one."

"Come on, Sev, let's go." Charlie took Severus' hand. "See ya, Rolanda!"

"Sure, Charlie, you are always welcome, and I'm always up for a little race," she said and winked at him.

"Bye, Ro," Severus called and waved his free hand at her while Charlie led him towards the greenhouses.

"Bye bye, tyke!" she said and then turned, head shaking, to the broom shed. *God, I'm getting soft over a miniature Snape. You would have a good laugh if you could see me now, Severus Snape, you old bugger.* Then she had to grin. *But you couldn't have laughed as breathtakingly as this little tyke.*

Please review!

Chapter 13 - The Greenhouse

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

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Chapter 13 - The Greenhouse

When they arrived at greenhouse four, Pomona was nowhere to be seen.

"Maybe she isn't back yet. Let's see if greenhouse one is open," Charlie said and led Severus, who was hopping on one leg beside him, in the right direction. "You really have a lot of energy, Sevvy."

"Bree and Key not?" Severus asked.

Charlie stopped and looked confusedly at Severus. He had no idea what Severus was talking about. "Sorry, but I didn't get that; what do you want to know?"

"Bree and Key no en... ener... gy?"

"Oh, now I understand. You mean Bryanna and Kenneth. They have a lot of energy too, and you will enjoy playing with them. You'll meet them soon because my mother has invited you, Albus and Minerva to the Burrow for dinner tomorrow. The Burrow is where my parents live, and some of my brothers and sisters."

"Many children?" Severus asked, interested.

"Of your age, there are only Bree and Ken, and they are just there during the day and when my brother Bill and his wife visit my parents. The others are older. Ginny is the youngest of us and my only sister. She is still going to Hogwarts; she will be a seventh year. And then my twin brothers Fred and George and my youngest brother, Ron, are living at The Burrow, but they all are working, and so they are only there from the late afternoon or on weekends. Hermione is also living with my parents. She is a good friend of Ron and the twins and so my mother asked her to move in because she has taken an apprenticeship in a hospital near our house. Hermione is Muggle-born, but that would take too much explaining to tell you what that means for the moment."

Severus tried hard to memorize all the names. *It must be great to live with so many people. There would always be someone to play with.*

They were standing in greenhouse one now, and Charlie said, "Look, Sev, that's what I wanted to show you." He pointed at a plant with hairy stems and leaves and with many blossoms, which were yellow in the middle and had white petals. But the strange thing was that the blossoms had tiny faces. Many little eyes with long lashes were blinking tantalizingly at Severus and Charlie, and their little mouths were smiling.

"Already flirting with 'Marry Me', Severus?" Pomona said while entering the greenhouse.

"Marry me?" Severus asked curiously while facing Pomona.

"Oh, I would love to, sweetheart, but I fear I'm a little old for you," she said, grinning, and scooped Severus up into her strong arms. "Just joking, sweetie. So how was the flying?"

"Great!" Severus screamed, excited. "Ro, cool. Sev caught her."

"Caught her, sweetie, not caught." Pomona corrected him while nudging his nose with her index finger.

"Caught her," Severus said proudly.

Thinking about Ro made Severus remember the toffees. "Ro said you have toffee." Severus tried hard to say it right.

Pomona laughed. "Oh, did she? Yeah, I have a toffee for you, but you have to promise to suck it and not to try to bite on it, okay? It could be too hard for your little teeth." She rummaged in her pocket and produced a little squared thing out of it. It was wrapped in brown, crackling paper, and Severus unwrapped it with big eyes. Before daring to place it in his mouth, he looked at Pomona for permission.

"Try it, Severus," she said encouragingly and smiled at him.

"Want one too, Charlie?" Pomona asked Charlie while Severus sucked on his toffee.

"Yummy, Arie!" Severus said and then looked at Pomona, who already was pulling out another toffee. "Thank you, Aunt Pommy."

"Oh, you are so sweet." She kissed Severus on his cheek.

Severus wiped his cheek with his hand and looked at Charlie again.

Charlie was grinning because he was thinking about what Rolanda had said about the other women in the castle *She was right, and Pomona is the biggest mother hen of them all. Her Hufflepuffs love her for it*, he thought.

"Thank you for the toffee, Pomona, but please don't kiss me for saying it," Charlie said teasingly.

"You should not spend so much time with Rolanda, young man. It isn't improving you," she replied playfully.

"You must keep an eye on Charlie, Severus, so that he doesn't become too cheeky," she said while heading out of the greenhouse with Severus in her arms.

Charlie followed them, and soon they were standing in front of greenhouse five.

"You have to let me hold you, Severus! I have some dangerous plants in there, and I don't want you to come in contact with them, okay?"

Severus nodded and already was looking curiously around the door.

"Come on, Charlie, the dragon lady is in there. You will really love her," Pomona said and was satisfied when Charlie followed shortly after.

This greenhouse was dim and it was harder to breathe in it. Severus snuggled closer to Pomona.

"No worries, Sev. As long as you stay in my arms, nothing will happen to you." Pomona drew small circles on his back, and Severus relaxed.

Soon they were standing in front of a big plant, which quickly changed its colour from green, to blue and finally to red. It had four blossoms that were now facing the visitors, puffing smoke. "Try to touch them with the stick over there, Charlie!" Pomona instructed him.

Charlie grabbed the stick and moved it near one of the blossoms. Immediately all four blossoms were turning to the tip of the stick and were breathing flames at it. The stick caught fire, and Severus yelped, surprised.

"Amazing," Charlie said and blew the flame out. "I have never seen one like this," Charlie exclaimed dreamily and a little sadly.

Pomona touched his arm affectionately and said, "I didn't want to make you sad. I'm sorry, Charlie. I know you miss your work in Romania and the dragons."

"It's okay, Pomona. It's just that sometimes I get homesick, thinking of the dragons. I really liked to work with them, and I had found a lot of friends. But I'm glad to be here as well. Potions always was my passion, and the opportunity to take over the position of the Potions Professor was something I couldn't reject. I'm just a little scared that I'm not mature enough for it."

"Nonsense, the students will love to have a young teacher. It's good to have a big variety in the staff," she assured Charlie.

Meanwhile Severus was playing with Pomona's hair and found a little beetle in it. "Look, Aunt Pommy."

"Oh, a little ladybug," Pomona said. "Let's bring him outside. He wouldn't be happy in here."

Outside of the greenhouse, Severus enjoyed the fresh air. In the greenhouse, he had already started to become sleepy. He stretched his arm and index finger where the little bug was sitting and said, "Fly, lady!"

As if the bug had heard him, it opened its wings and flew away.

"Oh, you really have a special charm on ladies, Sevvv." She cuddled him one more time and then let him down.

"Could you give something to Poppy for me, Charlie? She needs the salve I made."

"Of course, we will just pass by the infirmary on our way back. I have to meet Alastor anyway," Charlie said while taking the salve and placing it in his pocket.

"Going to the lake, Arlie?" Severus said while pointing at the water surface a few meters away.

Charlie laughed. "Okay, okay, Severus." He faced Pomona again and sighed, smiling. "I fear I will be more exhausted than he will be tonight. He is full of energy."

"It must be all so new and overwhelming for him, after what we know about his first childhood." She looked thoughtfully at Severus. "You didn't know Severus as we knew him, Charlie. He was a very private man, but sometimes he had opened up to some of us. We knew he had a bad childhood, but this..." She couldn't finish her sentence because she got a lump in her thought.

Charlie placed a comforting hand on her shoulder and then looked at Severus, who was unaware that he was the main topic of their conversation. He had seen a butterfly and was following it from one flower to another. "It must be hard for you all. You lost a friend."

"We would have lost him nevertheless, Charlie. That's the only thing that makes it bearable." She looked at Severus, who was giggling in delight. She had to smile again, and a warm feeling spread through her stomach. "But we also got this lovely child, here. Take him to the lake. Maybe the squid will come out to greet him."

One last squeeze and he let go of her shoulder. "Okay, we will leave. I hope we'll see you soon, Pomona."

"Me, too, Charlie, me, too!" she said, smiling.

"Bye, Aunt Pomona," Severus said, running over to her and hugging her legs.

"Here, Severus." She pushed another toffee into his hand, leaned down and kissed his cheek again.

Severus smiled at her, but nevertheless wiped his cheek again. Then he ran over to Charlie, took his hand and again started to hop on one foot beside him to the lake.

The squid was happy to get some visitors. The holidays were boring, and so it spread its tentacles so that they were hovering over the water surface. With one it reached for the giggling child that bounced happily up and down on the shore.

Severus reached for the tentacle and patted it. It was like a big copy of his small animal toys. Severus loved the squid immediately.

When one wet tentacle touched him on his cheek, he said, "You're like Aunt Pommy."

The noises at the shore made the other citizens of the lake curious, and some of the mermaids were coming to the surface to see where the noises were coming from.

"Hello!" Severus yelled and waved his hand over his head while jumping on the spot.

The mermaids were looking curiously at him, but kept their distance.

"They can't understand you, Sevvv. They speak another language," Charlie explained and took Severus' hand. "Come on, we have to bring Aunt Poppy the salve."

"Kay," Severus said, turned to the lake again and yelled, "Bye Bye."

Please review!

Chapter 14 – Poppy's Disapproval

The Ministry forces Severus to decide between getting de-aged or go to Azkaban. He chooses Azkaban, but Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Alastor Moody disagree with it. So he is a four-year-old now and lives with Albus and Minerva. Fluffy story!

Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, Duchess_Of_Arcadia and Pookah, for correcting my mistakes.

Disclaimer: All recognizable characters belong to J.K. Rowling, and I am not earning anything by writing this story.

I'm not a native speaker of English!

Chapter 14 Poppy's Disapproval

Their journey to the hospital wing passed without any problems. Peeves didn't cross their path again, which Severus really was glad about. He knew they were heading for the big room he had woken up in yesterday and that Aunt Poppy would be there. And where Aunt Poppy was, Uncle Al was. Severus wanted to tell him about the squid and the flying, but most importantly about the bad ghost because he was sure that Uncle Al would help him and punish the bad ghost.

They entered the hospital wing, but nobody was there. Before Severus could feel disappointed, the door to Poppy's office opened and his beloved aunt came out.

"Aunt Poppy!" Severus yelled and ran over to her.

"Oh, it's my little Severus," she said, taking him up in her arms. "So did you have a nice day?" she asked, tickling him lightly on his stomach.

Severus giggled. "Yes, Sev flying and meeting Ro, Aunt Pommy and Squid," he told her as she carried him over to one of the beds.

"Hello, Mr. Weasley. I hope you have taken good care of our little one," she said in a friendly tone.

"Please call me Charlie, Madam Pomfrey. And yes, I have kept a good eye on him."

When Severus was placed on the bed, he looked up at Poppy with big eyes.

"Just a short checkup, Severus. Nothing to worry about." She nudged the tip of his nose and drew her wand.

After some diagnostic spells she shook her head in disapproval, so Charlie became nervous. "Is there a problem, Madam Pomfrey? I really have kept a close eye on him, and he hasn't hurt himself."

"Yes, there is a problem, but that isn't your fault. I will keep Severus here and inform Albus and Minerva myself, so you can leave now."

Charlie could sense that Poppy was angry, not at him but still angry, and he didn't want to cross her. "Okay." He looked worriedly at Severus, who looked as if he would start crying at any moment. "Pomona gave me this salve for you. I will just place it on the night table."

"Yes, thank you, Charlie."

The first sobs could be heard from the bed, and Charlie wanted to leave as fast as possible.

"There is no reason to cry, Severus. You are in no trouble." Poppy gently stroked his hair and Summoned a glass of water. "Come on, drink something, you are almost dehydrated."

Charlie sucked the air in sharply. *Damn I forgot to take something with me for him to drink. How often did I hear my Mum telling Bill that he should never forget to have something with him for the children to drink?*

"Charlie, really that isn't your fault, and you should go now so that I can help Severus."

Severus had tried to drink the water, but it was hard to do it while sobbing. So it was no wonder that he was choking now.

"Severus, calm down; there isn't anything wrong. I'm sure Charlie will visit you again soon, and you just have to eat something and take a little nap. I'm sure Alastor would be glad to have someone to cuddle while he takes his own nap," Poppy explained softly while she rubbed Severus' back calmingly.

Severus calmed down. He was tired, and having a nap with Uncle Al wasn't such a bad option to look forward to right now.

"Oh, I wanted to meet Professor Moody. So maybe it is better if I wait until tomorrow," Charlie said while coming over to Severus one last time to say goodbye.

"No, no, just go to our private quarters; you already know where they are. Tell Alastor that he shall wait for Severus before he takes his afternoon nap." She made a waving gesture with her hand, and Charlie knew that now it was really time to leave.

"Bye-Bye, Sevvy, we will see you tomorrow at the Burrow," Charlie said and ruffled Severus' hair. "I really enjoyed our little adventure today."

Severus smiled at him. "Bye, 'Arlie."

"So, Severus, what have you eaten today?" Poppy asked, eyeing him closely.

Severus looked at her and chewed his bottom lip. *Sweets are not good. Father always said that sweets make children more louder and annoying than they are without eating them. And they are making bad teeth. Aunt Poppy won't like me to get bad teeth.*

"Severus, stop chewing your lip, and tell me what you have been eating today!"

Lowering his gaze, Severus said in a small, "Toffees from Aunt Pommy."

"Was that so hard to tell me, Severus?" Poppy asked, still softly.

Severus looked at Poppy again. "Sowwy."

"Severus, I want you to be always honest to me. It's very important that you tell me the truth, so that I can help you. There isn't anything bad about eating toffees, but you have to take care that you don't eat too many and that you eat something else and not only sweets. Therefore I will bring you some fruit and carrots now, or are you really hungry so that I can give you a sausage or a bread roll."

"Sausage, please, Aunt Poppy," Severus pleaded because he was really hungry after all he had done today. At first he hadn't realized it, but after Poppy told him about all the food he could eat now, his stomach rumbled. "Okay, sweetie. Slide a little further onto the bed so that I can place a tray in front of you."

Severus did as Poppy told him, and soon he had a plate full of sliced apples, peaches and carrots in front of him. A plate with a sausage and a cup full of milk was also on

the tray. Severus grabbed the sausage and ate happily.

"I'll be back in a second, Severus," Poppy said and headed for the fireplace to inform Albus and Minerva that Severus would be staying with her and Alastor and that they would bring him over for supper. She tried to stay friendly, but couldn't stop from scolding them about their lack of care. She had made it very clear that they had to let Severus sleep a lot. Sending him out with Charlie without having a midday nap was irresponsible. She had also given them a lot of books about child care and so was annoyed that they obviously hadn't read them carefully. Otherwise they would have given Charlie a bottle of water, so that he could offer Severus something to drink from time to time. She knew that they didn't take it easy themselves, but that didn't mean that they should not be very careful about Severus. After scolding them through the fireplace, Poppy already felt guilty. Seeing Minerva's shocked face was heart-breaking. She tried very hard to make everything right; Poppy knew this. *I hope that this will make them read the books more carefully.*

Severus was almost finished when Alastor came in. "I have heard there is someone who wants to nap with me?"

"Me," Severus said, with his mouth full, from the bed. When small pieces of apple flew out of his mouth, he looked shamefully at Poppy.

Poppy couldn't suppress a chuckle and vanished the sprayed food. "First chewing, then swallowing and then speaking, Severus."

Severus tried to chew very visibly, so Aunt Poppy could see that he was doing what she wanted him to do.

"That's right, Severus," she said while standing up.

She walked over to Alastor and said, "Watch him while he's eating and then take him with you for the nap. I will go and visit Albus and Minerva. I fear I scolded them too much and have to calm their nerves now. Maybe I should tell them a few more things that are important about children."

"Okay, don't be too harsh with them. They are really trying to make everything right."

"I know." She sighed and then left the hospital wing.

"So what have we here, kid?" He walked over to the bed and sat beside Severus. "Hmmm, apples and peaches."

"Want one?" Severus grabbed a slice of apple and offered it to Alastor.

"Thank you." Alastor took the offered slice and started to nibble at it. "I heard you enjoyed your flight with Charlie and Rolanda."

"Yes, we were very fast," Severus said, trying to speak clearly.

"Oh, yes, Rolanda and Charlie are very good fliers, and you will become a very good one as well. It's not easy to get Rolanda as a friend, Severus. You are really someone special."

Severus smiled and stuffed the last piece of apple in his mouth. Still chewing, he leaned over to Alastor and placed his head on his broad chest. He was very tired.

Alastor patted his head. "Come on, kid. You still have to finish the milk, and then we can take our nap." He offered Severus the half full cup and let the rest of the dishes, including the tray, vanish with just a wave of his hand.

Severus stared in awe at the scarred hand. "No wand?"

Alastor laughed. "You are really observant, kid. Yes, I don't need a wand for simple spells like that."

That reminded Severus of the bad ghost and that he wanted to ask Uncle Al for help. The bad feeling overcame him, and he threw himself at the surprised man. The cup was empty, and so it wasn't so bad that it slid out of Severus' hand while he sobbed hard into Alastor's chest.

"What's wrong, Severus?" Alastor asked, alarmed while already starting to draw small calming circles with his hand on Severus' back.

"Bad ghost, Uncle Alastor. Make him go away." Severus was crying hard and couldn't stop.

Alastor needed a moment to realize that he didn't have to look around for any ghost here. He had heard from Charlie about the meeting between Severus and Peeves in the hall, and so he knew what Severus was talking about.

"Severus, Peeves won't hurt you. He is just a bitter, old poltergeist. I'm sure Albus has already scolded him for scaring you, and when I meet him, I'll also tell him to leave you in peace."

"Send him away, Uncle Al," Severus said in a small voice, almost asleep because he felt so safe in Alastor's arms.

"I can't, Sev. He is part of this castle, and you will learn to live with him. But with Albus as the headmaster of this school, Peeves has to accept his wishes, and so he won't annoy you again."

Severus didn't reply, and Alastor could guess by the slow breathing that he had already fallen asleep. He chuckled and carried Severus into his private quarters. "That was a little much today for a little tyke like you. Soon you won't take a nap so easily," he said to the sleeping child while laying him on his bed and removing his shoes. He changed Severus into the pair of pajamas Poppy had placed in their cupboard for situations like this. Then he crawled beside Severus and pulled him against his chest. Soon both were sound asleep.