

Bound

by kizzy7

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N This was written for the second round of Dyno Drabbles on livejournal. The prompt was: 300-499 words, the Dark Mark, and must include one of two quotes. I was very honored to receive runner-up this round! Thank you to ladyinthecloak for the beta, and to neelix for all her support!

He sits in his favorite chair—high-backed, brown leather, deeply cushioned—and he swirls a small crystal decanter of whisky. Unsteadily, he traces the outline of his Dark Mark, eternally black on his forearm.

He exhales loudly and swallows the last of the whisky, glowing amber in the firelight. Sometimes, even now, he hates himself.

The rattle of the doorknob interrupts his melancholy, and his wife, elegant in a tight, knitted black negligee, enters his study.

“Rowan is in bed. Finally.” She lets out an exhausted sigh. “Come on, Severus. Go kiss your son goodnight.”

He scratches his nails across his Dark Mark, etching red marks into his pale skin.

“No,” he says. “Leave, Hermione. Please.”

She shakes her head and walks to him, and she places her hand atop his, their fingers entwined above the indelible skull and the flickering tongue.

“Severus,” she whispers. “I promised you something once. Do you remember?”

He shuts his eyes. “Whatever you ask for, that’s what I’ll be.’ That’s... that’s what you told me. The night after I awoke in St. Mungo’s,” he replies.

A slight tremor of his hands infuriates him. He shakes himself, leaning back into the comfort of his chair.

“Yes.” She slides onto his lap, wrapping her arms about his neck. “I still mean it, you know. Now, ask me, Severus. Just ask me.”

He loosens her grip and pushes her away until he can see her eyes.

“Rowan is in bed?” he asks her disbelievingly.

He smiles. His son is stubborn, proud, intelligent, kind—much as he imagines he would have been, if given a loving father. He swallows at the thick feeling steadily building in his throat. His son, he knows, will never take a Mark.

Severus kisses Hermione and stands, swaying slightly from the whisky. In three purposeful strides, he crosses the room. Pausing, he turns back to his wife. She is curled contentedly in his armchair, watching him.

"I'll go kiss him goodnight, then," he finally says.

She gestures at him with a graceful flick of her wrist. "I'll be here when you get back, Severus."

Drumming his fingers along the doorframe, he turns towards Rowan's bedroom. Severus glances at his Dark Mark. It has faded, he believes, in Hermione's presence.

He knows it will disappear at his son's bedside.
