

Regrets, Remorse and Resurrection

by magalena

A long drabble series written for the SeverusBigBangBirthdayBash. Severus Snape has lived in seclusion for the past twenty years, separate from the rest of the Wizarding world, in self imposed isolation. Now, he's been tracked down by Hermione Granger with a message and request from an old colleague.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 5

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To whom it may concern:

This means you, Granger.

How you've discovered my location, I don't know. I thought I'd covered my trail, but apparently not well enough since your blasted owl found my home. I immediately burned your missive, unread, and was kind enough not to hex your damn owl. I may not be so kind the next time; make sure there isn't one if you value your owl.

Do not send your Patronus, do not Floo me, do not contact me in any way, shape or form. I cannot make myself any clearer. LEAVE ME ALONE!

S. Snape

Professor Snape,

Kindly don't hex my owl, he is only the messenger. If you had just taken time to actually read the note, you would've realized that I am merely trying to notify you that I am in possession of something that belongs to you. I need to deliver it to you in person.

Believe me, I do not do this for my own entertainment, but because I must fulfill a task that was set for me. Please do not make it harder than it already is. Just respond to my bloody owl, you great unsociable git!

Ms H. Granger

Miss Granger,

Calling me names is unlikely to endear you or your cause to me. Also, I have not been anyone's professor in over twenty years.

I can't imagine anything that you might have that I could possibly be interested in. However, if you will tell me what your task entails, I will determine if I am willing to allow you to visit me.

As I am sure you are aware, after undergoing an extremely arduous recovery, I have removed myself from Wizarding Britain and have no desire to reconnect with my "roots" so to speak.

Mr. S. Snape

Dear Mr. Snape,

Thank you very much for not hexing my owl.

I do humbly apologize for my previous letter and for calling you names. That was uncalled for and I will admit, rather childish of me. My only excuse is that I have been overwrought with the burden of my task and your response inflamed me.

Unfortunately, I'm not allowed to disclose to you what I have, that being part of my task to deliver it to you in person. If you would just allow me to complete my assignment, I would be most appreciative.

Thank you,

Hermione Granger.

Dear Miss Granger,

I am loath to open myself and my home to anyone, much less someone such as yourself, who has been so closely associated with my former life.

However, I must admit to a certain amount of curiosity regarding this "thing" that you have. Can you not give me any other ideas as to what it might be, so that I may better make an informed judgment as to how I should proceed? Any hints would be helpful.

Oh, and by the way, just how appreciative are you prepared to be? Just wondering.

Yours Truly,

Severus Snape

Dear Severus,

I fear that how appreciative I am willing to be is another one of those things that must be determined in person.

Unfortunately, I am not able to present you in advance with any clues, or hints or other information. I am simply compelled to carry out this task which has been given to me. Please just let me complete it and get on with my life.

I give you my solemn word that I will not reveal the location of your home to anyone else without your permission. Please, Severus, believe my sincerity in this.

Sincerely,

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Your last letter has me worried. You said you are "compelled" to carry out this task, whatever it may be. That leads me to fear you have taken some kind of oath. I am assuming this could be anything from a wand oath to an Unbreakable Vow. Surely you must know the danger in something of that nature.

Unwilling to be responsible for your demise, I am inviting you to come to my home Friday evening. Enclosed you will find a Portkey. You may as well come for dinner; we both must eat, after all.

Yours,

Severus

Dear Severus,

Thank you for your concern. You are on somewhat of the right track. I will now reassure you that I have not taken an Unbreakable Vow; more of a strong promise to a very dear friend. I cannot rest until I have fulfilled this promise. I admit to you that this task has weighed heavily on my mind and soul since I was entrusted with it. It will be a great relief to know I have completed it as requested.

I will bring the wine and dessert for dinner, as well as the item in question.

Yours,

Hermione

My Dear,

Nobody knows better than I the burden it can be to mind and soul to take on a heavy task at the bidding of a good friend, knowing in your heart that the promise will haunt you until you have carried it through to whatever outcome is expected of you.

I am relieved to hear that you have not taken an Unbreakable Vow. Believe me when I say with the voice of experience, such a vow is indeed a heavy cauldron to bear.

Uncharacteristically for me, I find myself looking forward to your visit.

My deepest regards,

Severus

My dear Severus,

I too am looking forward to our meeting with great anticipation. Although it has been over twenty years since we last saw each other, it may surprise you to know that I have often thought of you with fondness in that time.

I have always admired you and held you in the highest regard in spite of what you may have believed when I was your student.

I am pleased and excited to be renewing our... what should I call it, Severus? Comradeship? Acquaintance? Friendship? At any rate I look forward to tonight.

Most affectionately yours,

Hermione

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 5

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Hermione stood outside the gate at the edge of Severus' yard, wondering if the last message had been a mistake on her part.

Had she misunderstood his intentions? Had she made a fool of herself? Wanting to turn and run, she knew she couldn't since she had to carry out the job of delivering the packet along with an explanation to Severus.

He had isolated himself from the Wizarding world, but had he kept track of what was going on there? Would he already have heard the news? She hoped so; it would make it so much easier on her.

Severus greeted her at the door, directing her to the front room.

Hermione thought he hadn't changed much in twenty years; a bit of gray in his hair, a wrinkle or two, but all in all, he was aging rather gracefully.

Severus was thinking along the same lines: she'd aged well. She must be what, now? Thirty-nine or forty? She'd stayed in shape, looked quite good, and had managed to tame that wild hair he remembered from her childhood. "Let's enjoy our dinner first, my dear. We will conduct business afterwards."

She could put it off a bit longer.

Their dinner went extremely well. For two people who hadn't met in such a long time, they got along fabulously. Everything seemed to click. They were no longer teacher and student, but simply a man and a woman who shared many of the same interests.

They found they'd shared the same favorite subjects at school: Potions, Arithmancy and History. They had read many of the same books and had a lively debate on several favorites. They also learned they shared the same tastes in music and a weakness for Muggle technology. Both were academics and bibliophiles with tendencies toward perfectionism.

After an enjoyable meal, they adjourned to the sitting room in front of the fire. After sitting awkwardly for a few moments, Hermione spoke, "Well, Severus, I'm sure you must be wondering what all this is about? I need to ask, have you kept abreast of news from the Wizarding world at all?"

"Truthfully, no."

She sighed. "Then you probably haven't heard the news. Minerva is dead."

Minerva McGonagall had been hounding him for twenty years. Tracking him down no matter how often he had moved, sending numerous notes and packages that he had returned all unopened.

The woman who had been not only a colleague and mentor but one of the few people he had ever called friend, was now dead and gone. He'd never made peace with her. He'd always thought that somehow there would be more time.

He knew she had hated him, vilified him, during his nightmare year as Headmaster under Voldemort's rule. But afterwards, once he'd been redeemed, lauded as a hero, she'd tried to contact him. But he'd been hurt and bitter and had wanted to wound her just as deeply. So he had, terribly.

"How? She was only ninety-three."

"Curse damage, from the Battle of Hogwarts. She never truly recovered. She's lived the last twenty years in pain. It got worse with each year that passed. There was nothing the healers could do. In all honesty, Severus, her passing was a blessing. She's at peace now, finally.

"I don't know if you knew: I've been teaching at Hogwarts for the past eighteen years. Minerva and I became very close. That's probably the reason why she entrusted this to me. I know that she's been trying to contact you unsuccessfully for a long time. This is my task.

"I'm fulfilling a death-bed promise to her, to deliver this letter to you personally. Severus, I do know that it was her greatest regret in life that she never got to apologize for

the things she said and did, most especially in that time following Dumbledore's death. She was truly sorrowful, and she never really forgave herself. She made me promise to see this through and make sure you received her letter. Knowing me, I guess she figured that I would be tenacious enough that I simply wouldn't quit until I'd carried out her wishes. So, here I am."

Severus looked devastated. He sat holding his head in his hands. "I'm a bastard," he growled.

Hermione moved to sit next to him, gently laying a hand on his shoulder. "She didn't think that, Severus. Honestly, she thought of you like a son. Just open the packet, read what she wrote to you. It was her last wish. Please."

Nodding, he took it from her.

"Would you like me to leave? I can stay if you'd like, to try to answer any questions you might have. But if you'd rather have your privacy, I would understand that."

"I'd actually like it if you stayed, Hermione. But if you wouldn't mind, I would like a few minutes alone, to read what she wrote to me."

"I understand completely. How about if I go into the kitchen and make us some tea?"

While Hermione rattled around in the kitchen, Severus slowly tore open the packet containing Minerva's last words to him. Not entirely sure what to expect, he unfolded the parchment and with a heavy heart began to read the words of his one-time friend.

My dear Severus,

If you are reading this, I am dead.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 5

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from chapter 2:

My dear Severus,

If you are reading this, I am dead.

~*~

But, if you are reading this, then I know that entrusting its delivery to Hermione was the right choice. The girl is like a dog with a bone when given an assignment; she doesn't stop until it's complete.

He chuckled at her words.

As you've probably already realized, I've been desperately trying to reach you to make amends. I've many things I wish I could say to you, dear boy, apologies I wish I could make. But alas, one cannot change the past. If it were possible, please believe that I would move heaven and earth to make it so.

The first thing I need you to know is I had absolutely no idea the things Albus asked of you. He had no right, Severus. I was furious with him when I learned what he'd expected, of both you and Harry, "for the greater good."

Voldemort was vanquished in the end, but I can't help but wonder, if Albus had allowed us more input into his planning, we might have been able to accomplish the same goals without the sacrifices you were forced to endure. But then Albus was always the great manipulator, as you know better than anyone.

Secondly, I am heartsick over my own treatment of you during your tenure as Headmaster. I could excuse it by saying, at the time, I truly believed you had betrayed us all to Voldemort. And I did believe that.

But I should have known, Severus...I should have realized. I want you to know now that there were others who did question your actions. Hermione for one, and Hagrid, Remus Lupin, Arthur Weasley—they all adamantly expressed doubts and disbelief regarding your apparent betrayal of The Order and Dumbledore, but the rest of us refused to listen to their protests.

This, is my biggest regret, Severus, not that I treated you abominably, although I did. But that somehow, I couldn't even see the possibility that it was all a ruse. That you were still playing the role you had so painstakingly created, the role you and Albus had so carefully honed.

I, who thought I knew you better than anyone else at Hogwarts, I who thought of you as a true friend, a trusted colleague, in fact, like a son. It should have been me expressing those doubts, endorsing you, defending you. Instead I abandoned you, treated you like scum.

For this more than anything else in my life, I am most heartily sorry and I beg your forgiveness, Severus. If you grant me this, I will be able to rest in peace.

Had my health been better, I wouldn't have settled for sending owls to contact you, but would have come myself. It was not until the end, the last few months, that I was willing to enlist Hermione's assistance in completing this for me. If I'd recruited her help earlier, perhaps I could have finished this in person. But, as I stated previously, we cannot change the past.

I know you, and you are now berating yourself. I beseech you, do not. Do not dwell on our estrangement, but instead learn from our mistakes.

I know you've isolated yourself from us, from our world, and have lived alone these many years. I ask this of you now, please, consider returning. Much has changed in those years, but not so much that we couldn't use a good wizard, a strong wizard, at the helm of Hogwarts. That wizard is you, Severus. You have been Headmaster, albeit in bad times. You are needed here. Please come home, home to Hogwarts.

Hermione is aware of the dilemma which my death will activate. She will explain it all to you in detail.

For this too I apologize. I feel a bit like Albus now, manipulating you into situations against your will. That was never my intention; however, at this point I feel I have little choice. Of course you may refuse, as is your prerogative, and there is little that can be done if that is the case. Just consider it for a bit, if you will. That is all I can ask.

With all of my heart,

Love,

Your Friend,

Minerva

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 5

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Severus sat just staring into the fire, one hand over his mouth, the parchment dangling from his other hand. Hermione hesitated in the doorway, unsure if she should proceed or not.

Deciding from his dejected posture that he had finished reading Minerva's letter, she resolutely strode to his side and set the tray on the table. She poured his tea, fixed it to his liking and handed it to him. When he didn't take it, she sat it in front of him.

"Drink your tea, Severus."

"Tea?"

"Yes, you know the ultimate British balm for all situations."

Taking a sip, Earl Grey, Minerva's favorite. He was instantly reminded of the many times he had shared tea, or a shot of good whisky with her. "FUCK!" he screamed, hurling his teacup at the fireplace. "Why am I always such a fucking bastard?"

"Severus, I can only imagine what you're thinking right now. But you need to know that Minerva didn't ever blame you, and she certainly wouldn't want you to blame yourself." Hermione was a little frightened; Severus Snape was a very powerful wizard, after all. Pulling forth her Gryffindor courage she carefully approached him.

Hermione wrapped her arms around him, enfolding him in a comforting embrace, knowing he was hurting and not knowing any better way to offer solace. He held her tightly as if she was his lifeline.

Finally breaking away he stated, "I simply can't deal with anymore of this right now."

"I understand, I should go. I'll come back whenever you're ready to talk."

She turned to leave; he grabbed her hand, stopping her. "Hermione, I'll be honest with you. After our correspondence and even earlier tonight during dinner, I was seriously planning on trying to seduce you."

"But now... I just don't want to be alone tonight. Stay with me. I just need... not to be alone."

She pulled his hand up and kissed his knuckles. Looking into his eyes she confessed, "I came here tonight with every intention of seducing you as well, Severus. But I realize that in the midst of emotional turmoil is probably not the best time to start something. Especially since I was fervently hoping it would be the first of many, not simply a one-night-stand.

"I'll stay, as your friend, if that's what you want."

"Thank you."

They had ended up falling asleep on the couch. Somehow they'd gone from sitting side by side to lying snuggled up, spooned together, legs all in a tangle. Waking first, Hermione carefully disengaged herself and quietly slipped from the room to use the loo, then on into the kitchen to start breakfast.

Severus lay still and let her think he was still asleep, but he wasn't. He knew there was much more to the story. Minerva had alluded to such in her letter. He had a feeling his quiet life of seclusion was about to come to a screeching halt.

They ate in near silence, exchanging only the random, "please pass the salt" or "would you like another cup of coffee?"

Finally Hermione spoke. "Surely you must have questions, Severus. Tell me, what do you want to know?"

"You're aware of what Minerva's letter contained?" At her nod he continued, "Alright, why is she asking me to return to Hogwarts? And why do I get a sense of desperation in her last few paragraphs? And why on earth would anyone consider me, ex-Death Eater and murderer of Albus Dumbledore, as a suitable choice for Headmaster?"

Hermione sighed heavily and proceeded with a detailed account of what Severus had missed out on. The Wizarding world had become complacent over the last twenty years. However, there were still many who secretly clung to the old ideals of Pureblood superiority and longed for a return to the old ways.

There was a new faction that believed the way to take over was not through the tactics of Voldemort, by violent revolution, but through a more subtle, slow, insidious means. If they could infiltrate Hogwarts and instill their beliefs into the children, eventually they could take over from within.

"Things in our world move slowly. They're willing to wait a generation or two for their plans to come to fruition. Wizards live long lives, what difference is a decade or two to them? The outcome is their ultimate goal."

"I don't see what this has to do with me."

"This particular faction has supposedly discovered a little known, never before invoked, bylaw of the original charter written by the Founders, which apparently is legal. They plan to use it to their advantage. If they succeed, Hogwarts as we now know it will never be the same."

"What on earth does this mysterious bylaw entail?"

"It states, that in the event of the death of a currently active headmaster or headmistress, if there is a living, past headmaster/mistress available to take up the reins of power, that person shall be immediately re-instated into the position. There is no interview process involved, no review of qualifications, no question of motives or ethics. They are simply it."

There are currently only two people who qualify under this bylaw. It's to our advantage that there are only a few who are aware that you actually survived the war."

"Who is the other?" he asked, with the sinking feeling he already knew the answer.

"Dolores Umbridge."

"Surely, the Board of Governors wouldn't reinstate that hag? She practically destroyed the school the last time the Ministry maneuvered her into power!"

"They have little choice, Severus. She qualifies. She is the power behind this whole faction. As headmistress, she can change the curriculum, slant the information taught and create her own version of the DA to fight for what she believes in."

Smiling up at him, she joked, "Help me, Obi-wan Kenobe. You're my only hope."

He snorted in response. "I'm no Jedi knight, Princess. No hero."

"But you are, Severus. You're a hero in our world whether you admit it or not. Please, don't let her take over Hogwarts. Do it for Minerva, for Albus, for me, Severus. Hogwarts has been my home and my refuge for the past eighteen years. I love it, but I can't stay there if she takes over. I just can't. She'll destroy everything it has always stood for, she'll turn it into something evil. Don't let that happen, Severus, I'm begging you. You can make the difference."

"My tenure as Headmaster was not the most admirable."

"Severus, you were undercover. You did the best you could in an extremely difficult situation. If the thought of taking over the headmaster's position seems too daunting a task, then take it in name only. No one else would need to know. I've been Minerva's deputy headmistress for nine years; for the past three, I've essentially been the headmistress for all intents and purposes. Minerva's been merely a figurehead. I could do the same for you, if you want."

He seemed to be considering. "I'll do it."

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 5

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Hermione threw herself at Severus, wrapping her arms around his neck. "Thank you, thank you. Oh, Severus. You won't regret this, I promise you." Without thinking, she kissed him repeatedly, on his nose, his cheeks, his forehead. "Thank you, thank you..." she said over and over, her lips finally landing on his mouth. Suddenly she pulled away as she realized what she was doing. Embarrassed, she tried to disentangle herself from him.

"Oh, no you don't, minx, you're not getting away from me that easily," he purred, pulling her closer and sealing his lips to hers.

When they finally came up for air, they discussed their plans. Severus told her she could still be the deputy headmistress, for if he was going to do this, he wanted to actually do it. It would be a chance to redeem himself and be the real headmaster of Hogwarts this time and not someone else's puppet.

They kissed a bit, plotted a bit, kissed a bit, then plotted some more. Knowing she was going to be working closely with Severus in the near future, Hermione decided not to rush into anything, but rather chose to savor their growing affections.

A few weeks later at Hogwarts, a huge press conference was about to start. Up front stood Madam Umbridge in her ever-present pink, looking quite pleased with herself. A group of flunkies surrounded her, awaiting the announcement of her appointment as headmistress and preparing to graciously accept jobs at her new Hogwarts.

An unusual group entered the back of the hall, composed of The Golden Trio themselves, various Weasleys, a former Minister of Magic, a group of Aurors, and the crack legal team of Malfoy, Zabini and Malfoy, among others.

"I object to these proceedings," shouted Luna Malfoy.

"On what grounds?" inquired a pompous looking wizard who flanked Umbridge. "I assure you that the bylaw is entirely legal, and my client is here to claim her rightful place as Headmistress of Hogwarts."

"Oh, we don't object to the bylaw, by all means, it is legal, and should stand," stated Blaise Zabini. "But we are here to represent our client's interests, as we can prove there is a more valid claim than Madame Umbridge's."

"Hem, hem..." Madam Umbridge interrupted, choosing to speak for herself. "I fear you are misreading the bylaw, Mr. Zabini."

"I think not, Madam," spoke up Draco Malfoy.

"It only applies to former headmistresses, not deputy headmistresses. Your client, Miss Granger, is ineligible to make a claim based on her time as deputy head."

"Excuse me, Madam," stated Luna, calmly, "but I believe it is you who are mistaken. Miss Granger is not our client."

"But... but... I am the only living former headmistress."

"You are certainly correct there, Madam. However, there is a former headmaster available."

"There is not!" screamed Umbridge.

A figure stood from the crowd, throwing off his dark cloak.

"Oh, Dolores," he purred, in that oh so distinctive voice. "I beg to differ. There most definitely is."

"Snape!" she exclaimed. "But it can't be... you're dead!"

"Sorry to disappoint, I'm very much alive," Severus said.

"And not only did our client hold the office of headmaster for very nearly a full year, you, Madam, officially were headmistress for just over eight weeks, from March 30th through June 4th of 1996," declared Draco. "He also has sixteen years experience in the teaching profession, making him a much better qualified candidate for the position."

"And," added Draco's lovely partner and wife, Luna, "all this is still in keeping within the guidelines of the bylaw."

"Minister, we demand that you formally reinstate our client, Severus Snape, as Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, immediately," declared Blaise emphatically.

"No!" cried Umbridge. "You can't do this. It's not legal!"

The Minister, the youngest to hold that office for the past 300 years stepped forward. "Oh, I can and I will Madam Umbridge," he stated. "You are, after all, the one who forced this issue in the first place."

Stepping to the podium, he motioned Severus forward. Looking slightly puzzled, he complied while glancing questioningly back at Hermione. She realized then that she hadn't explained to him who the newest Minister of Magic was.

"I, Neville Longbottom, Minister of Magic, do formally hereby declare you, Severus Snape, to be the newest Headmaster of Hogwarts." Shaking Severus' hand with a cheeky grin on his face, he added, "I'm sure you'll do a fine job, Professor."

"Madam Umbridge," he addressed the woman who looked on the verge of collapse, "perhaps it's time to consider retirement, my dear."

Later that evening ensconced in the Headmaster's quarters, with a very relaxed and somewhat tipsy Hermione planted firmly on his lap, Severus scolded, "I can't believe you didn't tell me that Neville Longbottom became the Minister of Magic."

"I can't believe that you've refused to read the news for the past twenty years."

"And Draco married Lovegood, of all people, and they're both barristers? And partners with Zabini?"

"Well, yes. In more ways than one."

He raised an eyebrow in question.

"Well, technically the two of them are married, but unofficially, they're actually a threesome."

"What is the world coming to? I think you need to bring me up to speed on what's been going on here in the years I've been gone."

"I can do that, Severus. But you were gone a long time. You have an awful lot of catching up to do," she told him with a sly look.

"Well, I guess you'll have to stay by my side until the task is completed," he said silkily, carrying her to his bedroom. "There are two weeks before the start of term."

They weren't seen again until school started.

~fin~