

Otto

by quaffswinegaily

I earn nothing for diagnosing her character's problems.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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ONE

No! No, no... Don't touch me.

I don't understand what you want.

I can feel you too close behind me, then arms trap mine by my sides. I struggle to escape. Your touch burns my skin. Let me go!

Your shouting scares me. Why are you shouting?

Sunshine glints off the sharp metal blades, coming closer to my ears. The shearing sounds vibrate through my head. No, not my ears. Don't touch my ears!

You're going to hurt me.

I'm screaming. Stop!

No, no, no. Otto. Otto. Otto!

TWO

"Hold him steady. For goodness sake, Severus, I'm not trying to kill you.

"Sit still like a normal boy and have your hair cut.

"You can't be scared of me touching your ears. It's like your weird snake obsession.

"This is all your fault, woman. It's your sick, fucking magic in his blood that's made him like this. There's no-one like him in my family. We're all normal.

"Stop screaming like a girl, you stupid, little freak.

"That's it. You deal with him. I'm going to the pub."

THREE

"Severus, I'm taking you round to Mrs Evans. You're going to apologise to those two lovely girls.

"I've told you how to act properly so many times. Must I repeat myself?

"I know you're a bit obsessive about Lily, but you must let others play with her, and Petunia's her sister. You're not to be mean to her. You think you're just telling the truth, but you mustn't make personal comments like that. It's rude.

"How did I end up with a son only his mother could love?"

FOUR

"I've tried to help you since we were kids. Don't be difficult.

"If you washed yourself occasionally, you'd be more acceptable. You don't like anyone touching you, but they don't have to touch you to like you. They just don't want to smell you. Okay?

"I know you get angry because you don't understand their jokes, but hexing them doesn't help. Trying to outdo everyone in class annoys people, too.

"Stop drawing those non-stop patterns, lift your nose from the page and look at me. Quit scowling, Sev."

FIVE

"When you found life outside Hogwarts difficult, I took you back, but I do expect a certain amount in return, Professor Snape.

"I appreciate your punctuality, your academic achievements and your meticulous Potions work.

"However, you're a member of my staff. We work as a team, and I expect you to talk to your colleagues in a civilised manner. No sneering and no putdowns.

"Regarding students: you will not chastise them physically, nor will you make derogatory, personal comments.

"As headmaster, I won't allow your more extreme behaviours."

SIX

"You were a gifted, challenging student, but as a colleague I've come to understand you better.

"There are still times when your rigid patterns irritate me. I understand how much change upsets you, but it would make life easier if you could be more flexible. I can't count the times I've had to calm quaking house-elves who have been lambasted for moving one of your blasted snake collection.

"Your interpersonal skills haven't improved much. You don't respect my personal space and you still call me Professor, not Minerva."

SEVEN

"Severuss! This is the end of our... collaboration.

"Oh, please! Don't look at me like that. You didn't really think we were friends, did you? You were never very good at understanding social nuances. Malfoy said it was Asperger's, but I told him it was just Severus.

"You're not laughing. You never did get jokes, did you? That's why I taught you to reply with a non-committal "indeed" to anything you didn't understand.

"Look, here's Nagini. I know how you love snakes.

"Don't scream. I'm not touching you."

OTTO

I like snakes. Their patterns are sinuous and soothing.

I don't understand people. They don't say what they mean, and they touch me when they shouldn't. Dad shouted, Mum cried, and I didn't understand them. I loved Lily; why did she leave me? The others are too complicated.

I like eight. It's curving and complete, symmetrical. Not like the other numbers. I've always called it by its Italian name. Eight sounds rough to my sensitive ears. Don't touch my ears!

Nagini's coming.

I'm screaming.

No, no! Otto, otto!

A/N:

Asperger's syndrome is in the autism spectrum. It is characterised by difficulties with social interactions, sometimes with repetitive behaviour patterns and restricted, or obsessive, interests. Many people with Asperger's have normal speech and intelligence. Often, they find interacting with others challenging, as they don't understand social nuances, such as joking, white lies or personal space.

This piece is written, especially for Severus and others like him, in eight parts of eighty eight words. Otto sounds nicer than eight, doesn't it?

Thanks to sunny33 for her ongoing beta work