

A Final Redemption

by rosewood

Severus reminisces certain moments he shared with Lily.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Originally written for the LJ Interhouse Fest. The prompt request for a story centering around Severus and Lily's relationship was intriguing. By some minor miracle, I was able to work in both prompts: their first kiss and Snape's worst memory. My thanks to ultrasonicbop for taking a moment to beta this little story.

He knew his time was quickly drawing to a close as the last of his carefully selected memories were swept away into the hastily conjured flask. With monumental effort, he reached out with blood-streaked hands to grasp the robes of the young man in front of him.

"Look ... at ... me ..." he whispered.

Soon he was lost in the emerald depths of his youth. Vibrant as the first verdant shoots of perpetual Spring that rose forth in the secret enchanted garden they had stumbled upon at the beginning of term. The small garden was reminiscent of an illustration from a fairytale book filled with all manner of magical flora and fauna which appeared to be highly attuned to its new guests. The air tingled with a magical wave of anticipation, as if it had been a long while since a fair maiden had wandered into its wondrous hidden nook. Even the songbirds seemed to serenade the young wayward friends with mesmerizing harmony.

Her gentle laughter filled the air as she watched the indigo snapping dragons nip playfully at her fingertips. Severus smiled as the enchanted ox-eye daisies vied for her attention by waving their stemmed leaves as if to say, "Pick me! Pick me!" Unable to resist such a tempting offer, Lily reached down and plucked one of the insistent blooms. She cast a coy glance at her friend, and his heart nearly stilled as she began pulling the petals one-by-one.

"He loves me. He loves me not..."

He held his breath as she pulled the last petal and a gentle spray of tiny pink heart-shaped sparks shot forth with a delicate fragrance.

"He loves me."

A small smile danced across her lips and a blush bloomed prettily upon her cheeks. Her auburn hair swayed as a gentle breeze played with her hair. She was youth and beauty personified.

Severus caught her gaze, finding her blush strangely endearing. He brushed her cheek, slowly leaned forward and caressed his lips against hers with blissful ease. As he straightened, he savored the weight of her slender figure leaning lightly against his chest, safely ensconced in his arms. Soft, innocent lips, the sweet sigh of her breath – he would cherish this singular moment in time for the remainder of his days.

The excruciating pain radiating from his throat nearly pulled him from his reverie, but soon his mind was whirling to another distant memory. Visions of a cool autumn night from years past beckoned him into a haze of muted voices, Gypsy music and dancers swirling around the Halloween bonfire.

A slender silhouette in a gauzy dress spun away from the crowd, laughing and breathless, her dark auburn hair tumbling in mutinous disarray upon her shoulders. Her green eyes sparkled mischievously in the moonlight as she swayed at his side. She was simply breathtaking, an alluring enchantress, Fae – his Lily.

His deceptively lazy gaze took in her svelte form. He offered her his hand which she readily accepted with grace. He led her to a fallen log along a secluded area of the school grounds and cast a Notice-Me-Not spell to ensure a small semblance of privacy. She sank down to the wooden seat with a happy sigh and leaned her head upon his shoulder.

“Better, my love?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you,” she murmured.

Her eyes closed dreamily.

“Do you know what I am?” she suddenly asked with a light giggle.

“But, of course, you’re lovely, stunning –”

“Sev, I’m serious,” she interrupted.

“Highly amusing, slightly insane with a questionable taste in boyfriends...”

“Now you’re being silly,” she said while smacking his arm.

“Tell me, what are you?”

“I am the luckiest girl alive,” she replied. “With you by my side, that is. It’s a shame we must remain secretive.”

He stroked a finger along her cheek before gliding down the length of her throat. He let it linger there a moment then traced along her delicate collarbone.

“You know we must keep quiet for your protection,” Severus said. “There’s no other way I can keep you safe from those Marauders and the less savory members of my own House.”

“I know,” she said with a small sigh. “Sometimes I just wish there was another way.”

“One day, Lily,” he promised. “One day.”

Severus took her chin in his fingers, tilting her head up. Slowly he leaned down and touched his lips to hers with a tantalizing effect. She moaned and he deepened the kiss. Her mouth was sweet, sensual and tasted of apple cider.

As that memory faded away, another drifted into view – one he’d rather forget.

He crawled about the ground with the bitter taste of soap upon his tongue while searching for his fallen wand. He heard muddled voices – an argument between Lily and James – just as his fingers closed upon his wand. He hurled a hex towards his nemesis only to find himself flailing upside down in the air. He was mortified as his robes hung around his head revealing his underpants to one and all.

“Let him down!”

Severus tumbled in a disgraceful heap upon the ground, and before he could gain his bearing, Sirius hexed him once again. A heated wave of anger coursed through his veins at the thought of his Lily bearing witness to his humiliation at the hands of his enemies. This slip of a girl was defending him – fighting his battle – again.

He spoke in a moment of blind fury and winced as that ill-fated word left his lips.

“... Mudblood.”

His heart reeled as the color drain from her face. Her emerald eyes were moist with dejection and disappointment. She blinked and quickly masked her heartache with a measure of disgust and righteous indignation.

Everything was lost over the span of a few moments, never to be retrieved or forgiven.

His mind crashed back to the present, the familiar torment in his chest replaced by the agonizing pain in his neck. He realized the green eyes trapped under the intensity of his gaze belonged not to his beloved, but to her son. His hands slackened their grip upon the boy’s robes, weighted by the despondence in his heart, and his world faded into darkness.

As his soul slipped beyond the veil to the next realm, he was surprised to find himself sitting upon a stone bench in the enchanted garden where he had shared his first kiss. The Fates must have aligned against him even in death; he could not envision a more befitting Hell.

Severus closed his eyes in resignation and was startled at the gentle touch of a hand upon his slumped shoulder. He raised his head and was met with the glorious sight of soft, emerald eyes brimming with understanding and forgiveness.

“Lily...” he whispered in disbelief.

A heavy breath rent from his lungs as he sunk into her arms, safely ensconced in the tender embrace of his first and only true love.