

Lean On Me

by savine_snape

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Supporting Role

Chapter 1 of 1

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Tonks sits in the bay window, forehead resting against the cool windowpane; outside a storm rages. Thunder rumbles as lightning flashes across the slate-grey sky. Her heart lies heavy in her chest. Her cousin is dead killed by their aunt and her uncle is now just another number in Azkaban.

How has today turned so sour?

This morning she was sitting having breakfast with her mum and dad, listening to the Wizarding radio that sits on the work-surface beside the cooker. She even got up to dance around to the latest song by her favourite band.

Now, she sits and waits and worries.

It has been four hours since she arrived here at the cottage that to all Muggles appears to be a sorry set of ruins, protected as it is by Dumbledore's magic. It has been four hours and forty minutes since she fought alongside her fellow Aurors and members of the Order of the Phoenix in the Department of Mysteries. It has been four hours and forty five minutes since she watched her cousin fall through the mystical Veil in the basement of the Ministry of Magic.

As another crack of lightning flashes across the sky, she peers out of the window, scanning the foreground for any sign of him there is nothing.

Absentmindedly, she draws a pattern on the windowpane; her heart is pounding in her chest. The longer he is away, kneeling before his twisted pseudo-master, the more likely he is to be seriously injured. She is certain that the Dark Lord must be thoroughly annoyed that her uncle failed to retrieve the Prophecy. Add to that the fact that he is now incarcerated within the impenetrable walls of Azkaban ... well, it doesn't bear thinking about for too long.

She rises from the bay window seat determined to fill the passing minutes occupying herself with something, anything so she doesn't register the passage of time. She goes into the parsimonious bathroom and checks the potions that are stored in the cabinet above the sink: all present and freshly brewed.

Fresh towels and bedding rest on the hot water tank in the airing cupboard.

The kitchen is stocked with sufficient supplies to last them at least a week when he finally deigns to grace the cottage with his presence. Satisfied that there is little she can do but wait, she returns to the window seat.

Another hour slips by and still he hasn't appeared now she's really worried; he's never been before the Dark Lord for this length of time.

Damn Albus and his schemes she no longer minds that she is his contact with the Order; in fact she's thrilled that Dumbledore trusts her to look after his chief spy.

Another roll of thunder is followed by an impressive flash of fork lightning; this time when she peers out of the window, she sees something or someone lying on the ground barely within the perimeter of the protective magic.

She rushes out of the front door stumbling slightly her wand in hand, her heart is racing. It's mere seconds before she kneels beside him. Instinct takes over as she begins to cast the diagnostic spells Poppy drummed into her. Five cracked ribs, his left lung is punctured, and both forearm bones of his right arm are fractured, as is his right leg. Damn, this is going to take time to resolve.

"*Ferula*," Tonks mutters, concentrating on the intricate wand movement Remus showed her.

Carefully, she binds Severus' leg with the splint and bandage. It's not much, but it will allow her to move him into the cottage. She gently places his arms across his chest before casting another spell.

"*Mobilicorpus*."

Severus's body levitates a couple of inches above the ground, and Tonks is able to move him into the cottage, through the living room, narrowly missing the arm of a chair, and into the bedroom. She places him up on the bed before heading into the bathroom to retrieve the potions that she will need to heal him.

She returns, arms laden with numerous potions and pastes.

A wordless incantation strips him down to his greying underpants; she's relieved that the pain has caused him to black out. She gasps when her eyes are drawn to the multiple purple patches that are beginning to form all over his too-lean body. She needs to get the potions inside him. With her left hand between his head and the pillow it rests upon, she lifts his head, as her right hand brings the first bottle towards his barely parted lips. Slowly, she dribbles the potion into his mouth, relieved when more potion enters his mouth than slips from his lips and down his chin. She administers three further potions before she returns his head to the pillow.

Stepping away from the bed, she takes a moment, breathing deeply to still her raging emotions. He looks so human laid out on the bed before her. She should really Floo Poppy and ask her to come and help, but she's sure that Severus would prefer to recover completely before he sees anyone else from the Order.

She returns to his side and removes the lid from the jar of Bruise Paste. Lifting a generous quantity from the jar, she begins to spread the paste across his chest. When she has covered most of his body, she sits down in the care-worn, wing-backed chair and watches as Severus' chest slowly rises and falls with each labored breath. She has done all that she can for now.

Her own exhaustion catches up with her, her eyelids slowly fall and she is too tired to resist her body's need for sleep.

oooOooo

She is not sure how much time has passed since she fell asleep; all she is aware of is the desperate urge to pee. Not wishing to wake Severus, she stumbles blindly towards the bathroom, cursing as she stubs her toes against the end of his bed.

Once her body's needs have been met, she washes her hands and turns to return to her chair and her vigil. As she slips from the bathroom, she notices a change in her charge's breathing: he's awake.

"Where are my clothes, Nymphadora?" he whispers hoarsely, a faint smirk teases the corner of his lips.

Tonks groans; he only ever uses her full given name when he's trying to get her hackles up.

"They're in the wash. I needed to remove them so I could..."

"I'm well aware that you needed access to my sorry body. You've over stepped the mark, my girl. If you'd just given me a pain relieving potion..."

"Fucking hell, Severus! You were out cold. I had to do something. I didn't think..."

"You could have let me be."

"Bollocks! Albus would have my guts for garters."

"That's not very lady like, Nymphadora."

"If I'd only given you pain relief, you'd still be out cold. Now, for once in your life, shut up and allow me to nurse you. Your alternative is that I Floo Poppy, and we both know that she will Floo Albus and tell him that you are in a sorry state. What will it be, Poppy or me?"

She takes his silence as affirmation that she is to continue nursing him. She offers each potion to him without a word he takes each one from her, swallowing quickly, grimacing like a toddler at their bitter, foul taste. As he passes the final vial back to Tonks, the Dreamless Sleep takes effect, whisking him back into Morpheus' realm.

oooOooo

A week has passed. He has resented being dependent upon her, and she has done his bidding without retaliation.

On the second day, she attempted to give him a bed bath; he permitted her to wash his hair, face and upper torso, but when she headed below the sheets, he let slip a cutting remark. She bit her tongue, refusing to rise to his baiting.

When she returned with his lunch, he didn't apologise, and she hadn't expected him to.

On the third day, he felt well enough to walk unaided to the bathroom, relieved to be alone and allowed to pee without her watching him.

On the fourth day, he made it into the living room, resting on the settee before the fire whilst she prepared their meals.

On the fifth day, he offered his condolences although he referred to Sirius as her mutt of a cousin, she knew it was the closest he'd get to being sincere. She was only too aware of the animosity the pair had shared; she didn't blame him for his part. From what her mum had told her, her cousin had been a right git when they were at Hogwarts.

On the sixth day, he could stay quiet no more.

"You're not your usual rambunctious self, Tonks."

Her shoulders relax as she hears him call her Tonks; she's forgiven.

"Yes, well, there's little to crow about now the Dark Lord has revealed himself to the Ministry."

"That is true."

"Truth is, Severus, I don't feel anything at the moment. I'm numb. Don't know if it's pain or tiredness or apathy. I just wish I felt something."

She sits beside him and turns to face him.

"How do you do it? How do you keep going back *to him* when you know that you'll more than likely wind up a punch bag for him? I couldn't do it."

"It's not a matter of being able to do it, *I have* to do it. You know my story, Tonks," he whispers, taking her hand in his own. "I need to do this."

She rubs her thumb across the back of his hand as tears form.

"I worry about you. I hate it when you are called away; I loathe Albus for putting you in this position."

"I agreed to do this, Tonks. I'm in too deep to stop now. The Order needs someone on the inside the Dark Lord trusts me. No one, not even Lupin, could get as deep as I am now."

oooOooo

Tonks' eyes close for a moment; Severus wonders what she's thinking. She's been his first point of call for the last year, ever since the Dark Lord made his return. She's been the one he's Apparated to whenever the Dark Lord has taken his frustration out on him; she's the one who has tended him. She may not be the most graceful creature; she freely admits to being clumsy, but she understands him better than most and she's willing to be there for him he doesn't have many he can call friend but she is one. They've fallen into bed a couple of times he's always put it down to the need to release the stress.

He's not a pretty man. He's older than she is, not by much in Wizarding terms but older still the same. She's young, bright, and vivacious; she could have any man she wanted. Surely she doesn't find him attractive.

She leans towards him and brushes his lips with hers. Sighing, she leans in again, this time wrapping her fingers in his hair, pulling him closer, pressing her tongue against his lips. He doesn't resist. He permits her entrance; they explore one another with their tongues, tasting one another as if for the first time.

"Let me make love to you," she whispers before nibbling the outer shell of his ear. "Let me show you how much I appreciate what you do for Albus ... what you do for all of us."

His mind races; her choice of words confuses him. Does she realise what she's just said of course she must. Love is a strong word, a word he's not used to hearing. He shakes off his growing unease; she's over-romanticising their situation because of what happened.

oooOooo

The brush of her fingers against his skin sends shivers down his spine, his body tenses and yet relaxes at the same time. His breath hitches, his heart races, and his eyes close as he leans in to the small, welcome touch. Reaching out, he presses his palms to Tonks' body; fingers dance across her breasts, caressing the soft curves of her body, brushing across welts of silver scar tissue. A quiet sound slips past his lips, and he knows that the sound brings a smile to both of their faces.

Even after all this time, he never knows when the sensation will take him, (though it always does) and he is certain the feeling will never leave him as long as she is with him, and to be perfectly honest, he's thrilled by that thought.

It wasn't until he had taken up with Tonks that he realised the reason for the reaction. He was touch-starved.

"All right there, Severus?" she asks with a smile.

He returns her smile of course he's all right; she's here with him.

"Never been better," he replies before pulling her down for a kiss. Her smile broadens as he pulls her against him.

"Well, I think we can do better than that," she whispers. Her fingers dance against his chest, twirling amongst the sparse hair, tweaking his nipples.

His eyes slowly close, his body arches up against her and his skin pimples from the contact. He tangles his fingers in Tonks' hair, tugging on the long, mousey-brown strands as he licks his lips. "I could die happy in that case," he moans.

She laughs oh, how he loves her laugh. Her hands and body slowly move down him, her lips place soft kisses against the yellowing bruises on his chest. "You'd better not die on me just yet," she teases before dipping her tongue into his belly button. "Albus would not be amused."

He snorts at the mention of the old man. "He wouldn't be best pleased to know his chief spy and newest recruit were copulating with each other."

She gasps, writhing against his growing hardness. "Serve the old man right. What more does he expect, all that stress and repressed emotion you have, bound to come out one way or another."

He finds himself laughing again at her raised eyebrow. He rolls over, bringing Tonks with him. Running his hands up and down the swell of her hips, he raises his head and places a soft kiss against her forehead.

Tonks seems to revel in his touch, wriggling as she does against his now rock-hard erection; he is powerless as his body responds in kind.

Severus's fingers dip down to Tonks' labia, his fingers sliding between her nether-lips as he whispers a contraceptive spell.

She looks up at him, a grin on her face as she spreads her legs. Rising up, Severus repositions himself, slowly sinking into her. His hands braced on either side of her, fingers grasping the sheet beneath, he leans down to tease a nipple with his tongue just before he begins to rock his hips back and forth.

She groans, reaching up and touching him. Her fingers run riot across his body, her nails graze against his back, leaving a red trail in their wake. She moves her hips in time with his, sliding her body along his cock.

The long slow slides become short, urgent thrusts as their mutual desire builds. She pulls him down, capturing his lips with hers.

Moving against one another, being pressed so tightly together like that rocks Severus' body and mind, sending numerous sensations skittering over his skin. The friction of her body against his, just being touched by someone, explodes throughout his body as she wraps her arms and legs around him.

She cries out, stiffening, as her orgasm rushes through her veins. Severus' thrusts become erratic as he too draws closer to his own crescendo. One, two, three thrusts and he spills his seed deep within her.

As their breathing returns to normal, he rolls over, pulling her against him. "You know, I think I am better... now," he murmurs.

Tonks' laughter shakes them both and Severus closes his eyes, the tingle of her magic across his skin saving them a trip to the loo for now. He shudders at the coolness left by the spell, but sighs once more as she snuggles against him, lazily trailing her fingers down his spine.

As Morpheus swoops, the pair surrender peacefully to their bodies' needs.

Many thanks to the small hamlet that was employed to bring this story to life. Ladies, you rock my world! This is my first venture into this pairing and was a response to leni_jess's prompt over at Wizard_Love.

As always, I do not own any part of The Potterverse; it all belongs to JK Rowling and others too numerous to mention here.