

Sometimes the Best Things Come in Small Packages

by ancientgirl

COMPLETE - The gang is in their last year of the university and get a substitute teacher for their class one day. Ron hasn't been studying and is all nervous. Unfortunately for Severus and Hermione, they get stuck in the middle of the mess.

When Good Potions Go Wrong

Chapter 1 of 19

COMPLETE - The gang is in their last year of the university and get a substitute teacher for their class one day. Ron hasn't been studying and is all nervous. Unfortunately for Severus and Hermione, they get stuck in the middle of the mess.

I've got my last chapter of The Snapes go on Holiday over to June my beta. As soon as she sends it back to me I'll be posting it.

In the meantime, I wanted to start posting my new fic. I'm sure the idea has been done before, but not quite in the same way.

I hope you all enjoy this. I'll have more coming soon.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thank you to June for all of her suggestions and help in filling some holes.

Chapter 1 When good potions go wrong

At barely five minutes past nine o'clock in the morning, they were still late, and Ron and Harry practically skidded into their class. They, along with Hermione and Neville were in their fourth and final year of university studies. While things had been quiet in the years they had graduated, the war was still looming. The Horcruxes had been found just after their sixth year, but Voldemort was still alive and in hiding. Professor Albus Dumbledore who was no longer in hiding had convinced them all to continue their education, in hopes of their learning something to help them finally defeat the Dark Lord.

On this particular day, the fourth year Potions students were to brew a very complex potion. It needed to be prepared in the presence of an accredited Potions master with at least twenty years experience teaching. Since their professor went into labor two months early last night and her healers were trying to stop the labor by keeping her in bed, there was only one such Potions master available on short notice. Much to Harry and Ron's dismay, that person was Severus Snape. Hogwarts' resident Potions master and former Order spy had been asked no, he'd been begged to come and fill in for the supervision of that day's brewing. The news had filtered up to their dorms, so Harry and Ron walked into the Potions classroom late and full of excuses. Severus was already angry at having to go outside the boundaries of the castle. Not only had he been in his labs working on a potion that might help in Voldemorts final defeat, but he was a marked man amongst the Dark Lords followers.

Not only had Severus spent a tiring evening the day before, but he was also none too pleased at having his services volunteered by Headmaster Dumbledore. He didn't even bother to let the boys finish their explanations. He angrily motioned for them to take their seats, and then turned to the front board. With a few flicks and swirls of his

wand, the students' assignment was written on the front board.

"According to your professor's notes, this potion will count for one-fourth of your final grades, which," Severus looked around the room, "will therefore determine whether or not you have learned enough to earn a potions rating on your graduation certificates."

He let a short pause go by, then spoke again.

"All of you would be wise to take your time with this potion. If brewed correctly, it allows one to age backwards and physically become a child again for two hours, yet with intact memories; this particular formula will make the drinker approximately six years old."

He glared at Ron and Harry, who didn't look sufficiently frightened to him.

"Anyone hoping to become an Auror should be aware of this potion for its ability to disguise the identity of a criminal or a kidnapping victim."

That got everyone's attention.

"You must be careful and above all precise. Adding too much or too little of any ingredient will cause the brew to become unstable, and the potion's imbibers will be child-sized indefinitely. If they remain in child form for more than several days, then their thoughts will begin to revert to children's thoughts as well as logic. They will eventually forget who they are and henceforth age normally as six-year-olds. The counter-potion for this takes approximately seven days to brew. So, as you can see, you would be taking quite a chance on even being able to return to your present form, since you will each drink your own potion in this class. Begin."

Snape sat at his desk, leaving the students to gather their ingredients. Taking out some notes he'd been studying for a potion that he was developing, he didn't notice the panicked look Ron had on his face.

The reason Ron and Harry had been late, was because they spent the previous evening going from club to club in Muggle London. Between drinking on their own and drinking with several university-attending witches, they'd barely made it back to their dorm rooms before dawn. Harry, however, had spent most of the week studying, whereas Ron spent most of his week reading the new Quidditch monthly. Even Neville seemed to look as though he knew what he was doing.

The potion the professor had written on the board was one that Ron recognized from the list of those he should have studied. He recalled the name, and remembered commenting to Harry what a pain it would be to have to grow up all over again.

And so here Ron was, gathering ingredients and placing them in front of his cauldron to create the *Adulescens Denuo* spell. To say he was nervous was an incredible understatement. He could literally feel the sweat pouring down his back and slowly seeping down the crack of his ass. *'Not good, not good at all'*, he thought.

Half an hour into the brewing process, Snape had walked past the students' cauldrons several times, and Ron was now drenched in sweat. He could feel the streams of sweat running down his back. At the most critical stage of the potion, Ron couldn't stand it anymore. He needed to cool himself somehow, but a cooling charm could destabilize the potion. Noticing a stray piece of parchment next to him, he quickly picked it up, then began to fan himself. Suddenly his cauldron began to bubble. When he'd picked up the loose piece of parchment, he failed to realize that there had been some small clove buds on it, and as he fanned himself those buds had fallen into his brew. While the potion's ingredients included clove buds, Ron had unknowingly added an extreme amount, making the solution unstable.

Severus looked up from the other side of the room and immediately saw the loudly bubbling potion.

"Get out, all of you, now!" he yelled. Everyone gathered their books and fled. Severus took his wand and approached the boiling cauldron; a responsible Potions master wouldn't leave until all cauldrons were under control.

As he was about to cast a stability charm on Ron's cauldron, Hermione ran back into the classroom. She'd realized after she ran out that her wand was still on her desk, and she went back to retrieve it.

"Miss Granger!" Snape yelled, but with his attention diverted by the potion, it was too late for him to fully protect her.

Ron's unfinished potion blew up and splattered all over both of them, and the cauldron itself flew into the air. Smoke filled the entire room, and the room's wards automatically sealed the doors to contain the fumes. The classroom was setup with automatic fans, which would filter the fumes and clear the air. After about five minutes, the room was clear.

Severus dazedly began to gather his faculties. He heard someone coughing and remembered that Hermione had entered the room before the cauldron blew up. He'd only had a second to cool the unstable boiling potion so that it didn't burn them, but judging by the bump on his head, he'd been hit by the flying cauldron.

"Miss Granger?" he called out, his voice sounding small, and his eyes searching the room. He managed to stand, but as he started to walk before he nearly tripped over his robes, which were now very, very long. He looked down at himself, patted his body and realized he was ... "oh no," smaller. Again he heard a coughing, and he looked towards the corner of the room.

There she was: a very confused, very small Hermione Granger.

"What happened?" she asked in a child's voice.

"I'll give you one guess," he said dryly.

Her eyes opened wide and she gasped. She looked to the now six-year-old Potions master.

"Professor Snape?" she asked.

He rolled his eyes.

"Of course it's me, you silly girl." He stopped, thinking his words just didn't have the same effect coming out of a six-year-old's mouth. He threw his hands in the air and sat on the floor.

"Do you think the instability of the potion will render the time we are like this indefinitely?" asked Hermione, as she gathered her robes up and walked towards him, grabbing her wand along the way.

Severus nodded.

"Yes, I'm sure of it. In addition, we seem to have breathed the fumes for several minutes, and I don't know exactly what Weasley did wrong with his potion. I need to get out of here and back to my lab at Hogwarts. It's imperative that I begin brewing the counter-potion for us, or else we'll be stuck like this; if our memories begin to be affected, I doubt your professor will be able to help us from her own bed at St. Mungo's. And I'll tell you one thing, I am not going through puberty again." Severus got up and turned to leave the room in his usual manner. Too bad his robes were too long to billow. His legs got tangled and he wound up falling on his face.

Hermione ran to him as he looked up at her.

"When this is all over, remind me to kill Mr. Weasley."

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Well there it is. I do recall reading before a few fics in which someone is either sent back in time or accidentally turned into a baby, but I hadn't read one in which something like this happened. I thought it would be fun to put a different spin on it.

The spell that went awry is *Adolescens Denuo* - Young again. I took the translation from an online Latin dictionary, so forgive me if it isn't correct.

Working Together

Chapter 2 of 19

Severus and Hermione get to Hogwarts and begin working on the counter potion, and Albus gets a surprise.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

I want to thank June for all of her help in making this read as well as it does. I appreciate all of your suggestions and help.

Chapter 2 Working together

After the fumes had cleared from the room, the doors were automatically unwarded. Severus stormed out of the classroom or rather, he began to storm out, only to fall again. This time, it wasn't because his robes were too long.

"Our feet are too small for our shoes!" he said in an accusing voice, as if someone had tampered with their shoes.

Hermione had to pull up her robes in order to see her feet. The shoelaces were still tied together, but she doubted she would get far like this.

Severus shook his head, cursing himself for taking this long to just shrink the garments and shoes. He pointed his wand at his shoes and robes and muttered a *Reducio* spell. The robes and the clothes underneath shrank to a perfect fit, as did his shoes. He looked over his shoulder towards Hermione and did the same for her. The last thing he needed was for her to fall all over him if she tripped.

"Thank you," Hermione said as she smiled. *'At least now I don't have to worry about falling on him if I trip,'* she thought. She then snorted to herself, *'He'd really have puppies if I did that!'*

He walked past the gaping students still standing in the hallway. Harry and Ron watch as the very angry six-year-old Potions master brushed past them, scowling and gripping his wand so hard that his knuckles were turning white.

Severus stopped abruptly and turned, then walked in front of the two young men. He began to raise his wand when they all heard a squeaky shout.

"Professor, no!" yelled Hermione as she clumsily struggled with her enormous bookbag.

Severus looked towards her, then back up at Harry and Ron.

"You two are so lucky I need to begin on the counter-potion, but I won't be this size forever," he growled and looked to Ron. "I won't bother to ask you what you did wrong, Mr. Weasley, as I doubt you would even know." Severus then continued on his way down the hall.

Hermione ran after him, finding it very hard to keep up in her own child-size body.

Harry and Ron stared at the two "children" hurrying down the hall, then looked at each other.

"Blimey, Harry. Mini-Snape is scarier than the full-grown version," said Ron.

"He's like a really pissed-off Chihuahua. Hermione is kind of cute, though." Harry patted Ron on the back as they walked away. They weren't worried about their friend; Snape and Hermione both had their knowledge of potions to help them. Besides, they figured Dumbledore would help Snape and Hermione get back to the right size.

"Professor, wait!" Hermione ran as fast as she could.

After several minutes Severus stopped and looked behind him.

"Miss Granger, I don't have time for the incessant amount of questions soon to be forthcoming from your mouth. I need to get back to Hogwarts." He looked down at himself. "Look at me. How am I going to explain this to Albus when he gets back to Hogwarts?"

"I can help you with the potion," Hermione said hopefully. "I'm sure we can do something to speed up the process. Perhaps instead of seven days we can cut down the development time."

Severus looked at her and scowled. He didn't need anybody's assistance, but as it stood, he was quite small. He might need an extra hand in the lab. He knew Albus would be busy taking over his classes.

"Very well, Miss Granger. Come along. Let's get to the Apparition point and leave this place."

They Apparated to the gates of Hogwarts. Severus didn't want to be seen by anyone, so he led Hermione to the edge of the forest where there was a hidden stone door within the pillars of the gates. They walked quietly down the dark corridor with only their wands to light the way. Quietly, that is, until Hermione began to feel something running across her feet.

"Eeek!" she screamed, then grabbed hold of Severus.

"Miss Granger, have you gone mad? Unhand me this instant!" he huffed as he struggled to loosen her grasp on him.

"But...there's something here. I just felt something run across my feet," she said, shaking.

"Well, of course you felt something. It's the rats!" Severus pried her arms from around his chest, and then once again gathered up his dignity. "Stop being so squeamish, Miss Granger. You have dissected rat livers, niffler brains, and newt eyes for years now. These are just ordinary rats!"

He hurried her along until they reached the end of the corridor. Severus held his arm up for her to stay back as he looked both ways into the hallway.

"All right, come on. We need to get to my lab. I can't have any of the students see me like this." They both ran down the hall until the doors to Severus' private rooms appeared. "I've got a private lab set up in my rooms. We can work in there with no fear of being interrupted. I'll have to see if the Headmaster is in his office. He needs to know what's happened." Severus looked up, then scowled.

"Damn!"

"What is it?" asked Hermione.

"I can't reach the stones I need to tap to get in." He looked at Hermione and arched his brow. "Unless..."

Hermione looked at him suspiciously. "Unless what?"

The next thing she knew, Hermione was unceremoniously shoved against the wall, and Severus was climbing on top of her shoulders.

"Hey," Hermione protested. "Watch your feet. You're pulling my hair!"

"Hold still, will you?" Severus teetered on Hermione's shoulders for a few seconds, then regained his balance. He tapped the stones that had several faint runes carved on them, and the door opened. He made a mental note to change his wards to something simpler. Something that would immediately recognize him and just open the door.

Severus hopped to the ground and motioned for Hermione to follow him. She did so, as she rolled her shoulders several times to get the circulation going. Severus had felt like a ton of bricks on her small six-year-old shoulders.

They entered his rooms as the door shut behind them. Severus led Hermione towards yet another dark hallway. As they walked down the hall, torches lit along the way. He pushed a large wood door open and they walked into his private lab. It was slightly smaller than the Potions classroom and had no desks, but other than that looked almost identical.

Severus walked to the bookcase that took up the entire far wall of the room. He looked up, and then grabbed a chair and dragged it to a spot on the edge of the bookcase. He stood on the chair and pulled out a book. He jumped down, and walked to a wooden stool and placed the book on top. He looked up at Hermione.

"Well, what are you waiting for, a formal invitation? Get over here." Even with his childish voice, he still sounded imposing.

"You know it wouldn't kill you to be polite. A simple 'please' works wonders." Hermione walked towards him with her hands on her hips.

Severus rolled his eyes. "Yes, mother."

They looked through the book until they came upon the counter-potion they needed.

"This is good," he said. "It seems that you were correct. We may be able to substitute some of these ingredients to accelerate the recovery process for us." He began to look for the ingredients they needed.

"We need a lower table, Miss Granger. Transfigure the stool for us into an appropriately-sized table." He then gave her an exaggerated smile. "Please."

Hermione shook her head as she cast the spells. He was impossible, she thought.

As soon as they had everything on the table, they began to chop, slice, stir and scrape. They were both skilled enough to adapt to the relatively large knives in their child-size hands. Soon a cauldron was set upon a short flame, and they began adding their ingredients. Severus took time to notice Hermione's technique. He admired the care she took to chop the ingredients carefully. Most students wound up with mush by the time they finished chopping something, but not her. Her ingredients were perfectly proportioned.

"I must see if the Headmaster is here. He needs to know about us."

Hermione nodded as Severus walked to the fireplace and called Albus.

"Albus," he called. There was no answer. "Albus, are you there?" he yelled.

After a few quiet moments, Headmaster Albus Dumbledore's head appeared.

"Hello, little boy. And who might you be?" asked Albus, amused.

Severus scowled.

"Albus, it's me! Severus!"

"Severus? Oh, dear. What in the name of Nimue's titties have you done to yourself?"

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I'll have another chapter up soon. I hope you enjoyed this one.

Thank you for reading.

Like I'd Do This to Myself

Chapter 3 of 19

Severus decides to have a little fun with Hermione, and Voldemort sets a date for attack.

Thanks to all of you who have read and reveiwed. I appreciate all of your comments.

I wrote two which both seemed short, so I combined them into one.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

A huge thanks to June for all of her help and suggestions.

Chapter 3 Like I'd do this to myself

Albus stepped through the Floo and stood over Severus. His Potions Master was dressed in his usual robes, which were open to reveal his black frock coat and trousers. The small Slytherin was looking up at him with an angry look on his face.

It was the most adorable thing Albus had ever seen. He fought back the smile that was creeping up on him, and pushed his spectacles further up the bridge of his nose.

"I have seen you in difficult situations before, Severus. But I've never seen you like this. What have you done to yourself?" he asked as he sat down, hoping to meet Severus eye-to-eye.

Severus was shocked. "Just what the hell makes you think I would ever do this," he gestured towards his own body, "to myself?"

"Why, I honestly don't know. You have left me utterly speechless."

"Thank heavens for small favors," Severus muttered under his breath, before he continued. "There was an accident at the university."

"Well, yes, quite a large one, or should I say small." Albus started laughing.

Severus crossed his arms and actually stomped his small foot.

"Dammit, Albus! This is no laughing matter. I've got Miss Granger in my lab finishing up the counter-potion we need to get ourselves back to normal."

Albus got himself together and stopped laughing.

"Miss Granger was affected as well? What exactly happened?"

After Severus explained the entire mess to Albus, the two men walked into the lab in Severus rooms. Albus smiled as he looked at Hermione stirring the normal-sized cauldron, which due to her size now looked over-sized.

"Good afternoon, Hermione," said Albus.

Hermione looked up as her former Headmaster walked into the room.

"Professor Dumbledore, hello," she said as she continued stirring the potion.

"Please, you are no longer a student, and will soon be a full member of the Order. Call me Albus." The old wizard walked to the open book placed on the stool next to the makeshift table. He knew that they needed to make the counter-potion quickly. When he had laughed at the current situation the young man was in, Albus had noticed the fact that Severus stomped his foot in a very childlike manner, which made him painfully aware that both his and Hermione's mind as well as their actions could already be deteriorating into those of an actual six-year-old. He would need to look further into this without their knowledge.

"Miss Granger and I have altered the counter-potion slightly. We believe this will not affect the potion's effectiveness, but instead of the seven days it would normally take, this potion will be done in four."

"Good, the sooner you two get back to your normal selves the better." Albus looked down at Severus. "Since you said you don't know exactly what Ron did, it would not bode well to take any chances."

"Albus," Hermione said as she finished stirring the potion and lowered the flame slightly to allow the necessary slow simmer. "I can't go back to my dorm like this. Do you think you can set up a Floo connection so that I can stay with my parents?"

"Your parents are still in hiding, Hermione. I am afraid I cannot allow you to go to them even in this state," said Albus. "You will have to stay here for the time being."

"I'm sure Minerva will be pleased. Her favorite cub is back." Severus snickered.

Hermione stuck her tongue out at him as he frowned.

"Well, actually, I was thinking Hermione would stay here with you, Severus." Albus looked at Severus, whose jaw was now in danger of falling off its hinges.

"You're joking, right? Why can't she stay with Minerva? Or maybe she can stay with the house-elves. She's about their size now anyway," said Severus.

"Oh, you should talk, Mr. Midget Master!" countered Hermione.

"Minerva has the flu," Albus said. "Poppy didn't want to give her any unnecessary potions due to her age, so she has to go through this the Muggle way. I'm sorry, Severus. You will just have to share your space."

Severus and Hermione looked at one another, their faces crinkling in distaste at having to spend any more time with each other than they absolutely had to. *Ugh, cooties!* They both thought.

"This is the only logical way. I can't have either of you running around and being seen by the general student population. And the other professors will ask too many questions." Albus looked seriously at Severus. "Also, we cannot risk you being seen by your students and having them owl your condition to their parents; you are vulnerable in this state, and could be easily attacked."

Albus shook his head and turned to walk out the door. As he stepped out, he looked back over his shoulder, with a slightly amused look.

"No, you two will just have to keep each other company for the next few days."

Severus and Hermione quietly cleaned up the lab. The cauldron would simmer for four days. The easy part was over. The hard part would be spending the next four days with each other.

They walked out into living room and took a seat on opposite ends of the couch.

"Well, I suppose if we are to spend the next several days in each other's presence, I think a few ground rules are in order."

Hermione looked at him as though he'd grown another small head.

"Rules? You're kidding me, right?"

"You will not touch my books unless I give you permission. You will not, as I know women tend to do, spend more than five minutes in the bathroom at one time; and you will sleep out here on the couch." Severus looked at Hermione.

She thought he looked quite pleased with himself.

"Well, why don't you just tie me to this couch, Mr. Bossy Pants. You can give me this month's Quibbler and that will take care of both my reading needs and the bathroom tissues."

"That's not a bad idea." He smiled then ducked, just barely missing being hit upside the head with the flying cushion. Severus laughed as he looked at her now pouting lip. He thought she looked cute. Hermione looked like a little doll to him with her curly cinnamon-colored hair and big brown eyes. He shook the thought out of his head and stood up. He walked towards the fireplace and called to the kitchens.

"I'm starving. Let's order lunch." He wrote an order for himself and Hermione, and passed it through the Floo; minutes later, their meal floated through on trays.

They sat on the floor and ate their grilled cheese sandwiches and potato chips. They never even realized why something they had never particularly liked in the past, seemed to taste better than anything at any four-star restaurant they had ever been in. When they finished they ordered chocolate brownies topped with ice-cream and hot fudge, and a glass of milk to make it go down smoothly.

"That was the best lunch I've had in ages," said Severus as he leaned back against a large floor pillow and patted his stomach.

"Me too. Maybe for dinner we can have macaroni and cheese," said Hermione.

Severus' eyes opened wide as he nodded and smiled.

"That sounds good. And for dessert we can have some Twinkies. I haven't had one of those in a long time." He yawned and felt his eyelids growing heavy. His body slouched against the couch.

Hermione laid her head on top of the pillow next to his, and covered herself with the throw she'd taken from the couch.

They fell asleep in front of the fire. As they slept, their small bodies cuddled against each other, and they looked like the picture of two perfect little angels.

A short time later Severus woke up from his nap feeling surprisingly refreshed. He hadn't taken a nap since he was a real little boy. He looked over to the big bushel of hair next to him. He smiled as a wicked thought entered his mind. He consciously knew that the fumes of the potion were already affecting his and Hermione's mind. But, being a Slytherin and being, well, himself, he didn't care. One part of his mind remembered what a sad and lonely childhood he had, while another part told him he was no longer a child and now an adult. At that moment however, he decided he didn't care if he was an adult; plus, any trouble he got into could always be blamed on the potion.

He stood up slowly, not wanting to disturb the sleeping Hermione and went to his lab. Once he got what he needed, he did what he had to do, then sat back and waited for his new roommate to wake up.

Hermione slowly woke up from her nap and stretched her small body. She tried to sit up and realized she couldn't, at least not without taking the very large floor pillow with her. She tried again, this time touching her hair with curious hands.

"What the..." She pulled her hands out of her hair, only to find that she was stuck. "Oh, no, he didn't." She pulled again and again, only to find that her entire head of hair was stuck to the floor pillow, as were her hands.

"Severus!" she yelled. As she struggled to get herself free of her predicament, Severus' upside down head calmly popped into her view.

"Yes?"

"Don't you 'yes' me! What did you do?" asked Hermione, clearly infuriated.

"Do? Well, I took a nap, then I woke up and went to the bathroom, then..."

"Oh, shut it! You know damn well what I'm talking about. What did you do to my hair?" she yelled.

Before he had a chance to answer her, Albus walked through the flames from the Floo. He'd come to Severus' rooms after having an owl delivered a message to his office from the other spy working for their side. Albus looked at the still struggling Hermione on the floor, and Severus standing innocently next to the couch.

"What's going on here?" asked the older wizard.

"He's put glue in my hair!" yelled Hermione.

"I did not, liar!" countered Severus as he crossed his arms and sat on the couch.

Albus sighed heavily. The potion was already beginning to affect the two. After he had left them earlier, he read a bit more about their condition. He knew that they would have moments during the next coming days in which their penchant for mischief would overwhelm their normally rational adult minds. All he could do was try to keep them from actually killing each other. He peered at Severus over his spectacles and frowned.

"Severus? Is there something you would like to tell me about Hermione?" asked Albus.

"Yes. She talks too much," he answered coolly.

Hermione stopped struggling and looked at Severus.

"Well, you're stupid!" She stuck her tongue out at him.

"No, you are stupid!" yelled Severus as he stood and looked over her.

"Enough! Both of you!" Albus took out his wand and had Hermione's hair back to normal within seconds. She immediately jumped up and attacked Severus. They both fell on top of the couch wrestling with each other, neither really getting the upper hand. Albus rolled his eyes, and took Hermione by the waist and pried her from Severus' grasp.

"I mean it, you two stop acting like children this instant!" Albus' voice was so loud Severus felt as though the walls had shaken. He blinked several times and realized what he and Hermione were doing. Hermione looked to him, also coming to her senses. Albus put Hermione down and looked at both six-year-olds.

"I know this is not going to be easy for either of you. After all, the potion now running through your veins is controlling you. But you must do a better job of quelling your six-year-old instincts and allowing them to take over."

Severus bowed his head and pushed on the carpet with his feet.

"I'm sorry, Hermione," he said softly.

Hermione touched her hair, making sure it was back to normal.

"Okay," she said, thinking she'd have to do something at some point to get back at him, potion or no potion.

Satisfied with the fact that they both seemed to be back to normal, Albus sat on the large leather chair next to the fireplace and motioned to Severus.

"I've received a letter from Snowbird." Albus handed the letter to Severus, who took it and immediately began reading it.

"I had a feeling Hogsmeade would be attacked soon, but not this soon," said Severus. "Dammit, and me in this body!"

"I have already sent notice to our people in the Ministry. The other Order members have also been alerted," answered Albus, hoping it would calm his increasingly irate Potions master. "We will have people there the day of the attack. I can't guarantee no loss of lives but we can only do so much, Severus."

"I know. I just wish I could be there. I wish I could help."

"Severus, even if you were fully grown, I still would not allow you to go. You barely made it back alive after Voldemort found out you were a spy. I won't risk you like that again. It was a risk when we set our plan in motion. My boy, you are too precious to me to let that happen to you again, my young friend. You have already given so much more than any of us." Albus' eyes became teary.

It had been almost four months since Voldemort had discovered Severus' duplicity and role in faking Dumbledore's death during Harry's sixth year, which made it clear which side he was really on. If it weren't for the other spy the Order had in Voldemort's ranks, Severus would not have made it back alive. Ever since then, he rarely left Hogwarts. The only reason Albus had even allowed him to go to the university to supervise Hermione's Potions class was because Albus felt it was safe. Both the university and Hogwarts were guarded by strong wards, and their Apparition points were monitored.

Severus nodded in understanding. There were moments when he himself hadn't thought he would make it back in one piece.

Albus patted his little shoulder and stood. He walked towards the door, deciding he would take a walk around the castle before supper.

"Thank you for keeping me abreast of what's happening, Albus." Severus said as he followed the old man to the door, and then closed it behind him. He turned and saw Hermione standing next to the coffee table.

"When will Voldemort attack Hogsmeade?" she asked.

"Tomorrow evening," he answered.

"You're not planning on going, are you?" Hermione was worried. She knew he was a brave man, and she'd heard about what happened to him those many months ago. There was no way he would stay away from this one.

"I can't just stay here and hide," he said. "Up until now Voldemort has been sitting back, waiting for everyone to feel safe, and looking for the wizarding world's most vulnerable spots. Hogsmeade is one of those spots. With all the new shops popping up and the new housing developments, with neighbors not knowing each other, it's the perfect place at the perfect time."

He walked to his room and shut the door. His hunger was suddenly gone. He felt so useless after he'd been caught spying by Voldemort. From the beginning, Severus always knew that his days as a spy were numbered, but he'd hoped that he could last just long enough to make a real difference. He didn't realize that he already had. Over 20 years of spying had saved many lives. But it wasn't enough for him; he needed to be in the middle of it.

Hermione stared sadly towards the dark hallway he'd just disappeared into. She wished she could say something to help him, but knew there was nothing she could say. Knowing there would be an attack on Hogsmeade tomorrow evening made her lose her appetite too, even for macaroni and cheese. Deciding it was too early to go to bed, she turned her attention to the bookcase and picked out a book.

She would read and fall asleep, and hopefully have good dreams, and not the nightmares she suspected Severus would be having that night.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I'll try to have more at the beginning of next week.

Thanks for reading.

Don't Leave My Side

Chapter 4 of 19

Severus and Hermione prepare for Hogsmeade.

Thank you to all who have taken the time to read this story so far and review it. I appreciate all of your support, and hope you continue to enjoy it.

Thank you to June for all of her suggestions, and help with this chapter.

Chapter 4 Don't leave my side.

Hermione woke up to the sound of screaming. She sat up and gathered the blankets up to her chest, as she looked around the room. The room didn't look familiar; she'd had such odd dreams that night.

First, she dreamed that Ron turned her and Professor Snape into children. Then, upon taking her to Hogwarts, Professor Snape put glue in her hair. Hermione jumped as she heard the scream again. That's when she realized what she heard was not part of her dream, but her dream was in fact reality. She *had* been turned into a child, and Professor Snape *had* put glue into her hair. She then realized it was him who was screaming now at the top of his lungs.

Hermione threw the blanket from her six-year-old body and ran into his room. As she entered the door, she saw his small body illuminated by a candle on his nightstand.

"Noooo...stop it. Leave them alone!" screamed Severus.

Hermione climbed onto the bed and scurried over to him. He was thrashing about as she grabbed him by the shoulder and shook him.

"Severus, wake up! You're dreaming," she called out.

Severus was still asleep as he began to push her away from him.

"I'll kill you; I'll kill you, you bastard." Severus then screamed once more as he pinned Hermione to the bed. He clenched his fist and drew his hand back, ready to punch her.

"Severus! No!" Hermione blocked her face as she readied for his punch, but it never came. She uncovered her face and looked up at the panting and very shocked Severus.

"I...Oh, God...I'm sorry," he said as he moved off of her. "Hermione, I'm sorry...I didn't..." He sat back against the headboard and tried to collect his thoughts and steady his breathing.

Hermione sat up and moved next to him slowly.

"It's all right. You didn't hurt me." She studied him as he sat there quietly now with his eyes closed. "That was some nightmare."

"You should be around when I have a really bad one." He chuckled and tried to make light of what she had just witnessed.

"You mean that was a good one?" she asked, not even wanting to know what a bad one was like.

He looked at her and ran his hand through his tangled hair.

"I'm sorry I woke you," he said.

"It's all right. I wasn't sleeping very well anyway." They sat silently for a few moments, neither knowing what to say. "Well, I suppose I better get back to the couch." Hermione started to climb down the bed when Severus stopped her.

"Wait." He'd told her that his nightmare wasn't bad, but in reality it was one of the worst he'd ever had. He'd dreamed that Voldemort had gotten into Hogwarts and was killing everyone while he watched helplessly. Severus wasn't looking forward to falling asleep again. When he'd had nightmares as a child, his mother would come and lie next to him and hold him until he fell asleep.

"I know that couch isn't very comfortable," he said as he looked at her. "If you want, you can sleep here. It's a big bed even when I'm fully grown."

She smiled at him, and then climbed further into the bed.

"You know it's not because I'm scared or anything, it's just..."

"Oh, yes, I know. Thank you, I really wasn't looking forward to sleeping on that lumpy couch." She tucked herself under the covers, all the while knowing that her presence was bringing him a bit of comfort.

Severus was glad she stayed. He hadn't slept with anyone in his bed for several years. When he wanted a woman's company, he'd quench his thirst with one of several shag buddies. He never liked going to prostitutes, and thanks to the few potions symposiums he used to go to a few times a year; he met a few women who caught his eye. He never had a relationship with them, however. He'd go, shag, and then come back to Hogwarts. There was also a matter of trust. Other than his mother, he just never felt comfortable enough to close his eyes and fall asleep next to anyone.

"Severus?"

"Hmm?"

Hermione turned to her side and faced him.

"Are you really going to Hogsmeade tomorrow?"

Severus turned to face her as well.

"Yes. If the Dark Lord is attacking Hogsmeade, then that means he's close to finishing this." He pushed himself up on his elbows.

"This war has gone on long enough," he said. "The despot is attacking one of the central hubs of the wizarding world." Severus looked at her and knew the wheels in her mind were spinning wildly.

"He wants to make an example of Hogsmeade," Severus guessed. "To show the rest of the wizarding world what happens to their own, if they don't join with him."

He lay back down, stared at the ceiling and took a deep breath.

"I can't in good conscience just sit here and wait to see what happens."

"Then I'm going with you," said Hermione.

"No, absolutely not." Severus now sat up and looked at her angrily. "Look at you! You're a child."

Hermione sat up also and made it a point to take her time looking at his entire body.

He noticed her looking at him from his head to his blanket-covered toes.

"Funny, you look rather childlike yourself, Severus."

"Hermione," he said as he shook his head, "you have no idea what happens on a raid like this. People get hurt; they die in very unpleasant ways. It's far too dangerous."

"Look, I'm going with you, and you aren't talking me out of it. It's just as dangerous for you. Why, it's probably more dangerous for you. I know what Voldemort did to you when he found out you were a spy."

"I'm not arguing with you about this. You are not going with me and that's final." Severus lay back down and turned away from her. "Now go to sleep."

"I'll tell Albus," she said.

Severus looked over his shoulder.

"No, you wouldn't," he said.

"Yes, I would."

He scowled at her.

"You know, Severus, you look kind of cute looking at me all mean like you are."

"Oh, all right!" He punched his pillow and dropped his head heavily on it. "Do you ever shut up?"

"Only when I get what I want." With that she lay back down, and they both finally fell asleep.

They slept the night with no more incidents of Severus screaming.

~*~*~*~*~

Severus had a window in his bedroom that looked over the cliffs. The morning light began to stream through the small window and began to illuminate the two figures cuddled up against each other, like two little kittens, sleeping soundly in Severus' bed.

Slowly they both woke up. They both immediately realized they were holding on to one another. Had they been adult-sized, their position would have looked compromising to anyone who walked in.

Severus cleared his throat.

"You're awake, aren't you?" he asked.

"Uh...yeah," answered Hermione.

Severus slowly unwrapped his arm from around her waist and moved back slightly. He thanked his lucky stars nothing was standing at attention; that would have been beyond embarrassing.

Hermione began to get up out of bed. She glanced behind her and noticed that Severus was also getting out of bed. She noticed his small pale body and wondered what he looked like getting out of bed when he was his normal size. Her guess was that he was thin, but she wondered if he was well muscled. Shaking her thoughts away, Hermione got down from the bed and went to the bathroom.

As she was walking away, Severus turned to look at her retreating from his room. He wondered what she was like in the morning when she woke up in her adult form.

"Like you'll ever find out," he muttered to himself. He stretched and hopped down off the bed. After he ordered breakfast for both of them, he took his turn in the bathroom. They both then sat in his room, next to the fire, and ate their breakfast.

Severus found that he enjoyed her company. She was witty, intelligent and had a bit of a dark sense of humor to go along with a hint of sarcasm. He found himself hoping she would come and visit him once in a while after the counter-potion was ready and they were back to normal size. He hoped, but knew she would most probably go on and finish her schooling, then get a low-paying job at some horrible place, working for people who didn't appreciate her.

Hermione also realized she hadn't ever had as much fun with anyone as she'd had while staying with Severus. They talked about everything potions, spells, wizarding politics, and theories for improving existing potions. She almost wished she could stay this size forever, just as long as she could be with him.

As they finished their breakfast, she noticed him becoming slightly pensive.

"Are you thinking about later?" she asked.

He looked at her and smiled.

"Does nothing escape your keen skills of deduction?"

Hermione rolled her eyes. She liked him childlike. His walls were down, and he seemed almost free to be himself.

"I don't want you coming with me, Hermione," he said. Hermione opened her mouth to protest, but he held his hand up to stop her.

"But, since you are adamant about it, we will be leaving after supper."

She smiled and sat back in her chair.

"It should be easy enough for us to blend in." Severus got up and began to pick out some robes and his usual black frock coat and trousers from his armoire. He Transfigured them into a smaller size and began to walk behind a large screen he had, that Hermione hadn't noticed until now.

"You aren't wearing that outfit, are you?" asked Hermione.

"What's wrong with it?" he asked defensively.

"Well, nothing if you're a six-foot-two Potions professor. But you're supposed to be six years old." She stood and walked towards him. She took her wand from the table and Transfigured an outfit a six-year-old would wear.

Severus looked at his new outfit and frowned. She had made him a pair of dark gray baggy jeans, and two long-sleeved shirts, meant to be worn one over the other. He despised his new look.

"I hate being six. I'm going to look like a homeless wizard," he protested.

"That's how most kids dress like now," she said. "This way, tonight in Hogsmeade, you and I will blend in better with real kids."

"My clothes are baggy. Your clothes fit?" he pointed out.

"Girls are different. We have more class."

Now it was his turn to roll his eyes in her direction. He decided to shut up and just get dressed. There was no use arguing with her.

The day went by quickly for them. They read for a while, practiced a few hexes, and then took some time playing hide-and-seek in the castle and tying a few tin cans to Mrs. Norris' tail. At one point, Mr. Filch nearly caught them, but they managed to duck into a niche in the wall. Being small did have its advantages. This was how they prepared for sneaking around Hogsmeade.

They finished their dinner of apple pie a la mode and readied themselves for their trip to Hogsmeade. Before they went through the Floo, Severus looked to Hermione. She took his hand in hers and squeezed it.

"What do we do when the raid begins?" she asked, her small voice shaking with fear.

"We take a position near the Three Broomsticks. We can see most of downtown Hogsmeade and observe things from there." He kissed her hand and looked at her with worried eyes. He was afraid for her. In the little time they had spent together as children, he considered her his friend, something he'd never really had. Albus didn't count, as the old wizard was more like a father or uncle to him. But Hermione and he could be friends, if not more. "Whatever you do, Hermione, don't leave my side."

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I hope this chapter wasn't too boring for you. I hope to have another one up in the next few days. I hope you enjoyed this.

My Friend

Chapter 5 of 19

Severus and Hermione go to Hogsmeade, and Snowbird comes to the rescue.

Thanks once again to those of you who have taken the time to read this story and review it.

Thanks as well to June for all of her help and suggestions.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Chapter 5 My friend.

They arrived at Hogsmeade and were able to walk to their position near the Three Broomsticks virtually unnoticed, two six-year-old children holding hands like brother and sister. If anyone stopped them, they planned to say they were going to meet their mother at the Three Broomsticks. Along the way they stopped at Honeydukes and got a few chocolate frogs and some salted pretzel spheres. Inside Madam Rosmerta's, both of them sat quietly at a table with a window overlooking the street, hoping nothing would happen, yet preparing themselves if it did.

At a quarter past seven all hell broke loose. Just north of their position Severus saw a huge fire explosion coming from one of the newly developed city blocks. Hermione jumped as she heard several more explosions coming from the direction of Honeydukes. They ran outside into the street, and saw the Dark Mark appear in the sky above them.

"This is worse than I thought it would be," said Severus. "It looks like he wants to level the entire town."

"Where are the Aurors?" asked Hermione as she looked in every direction, but finding it hard to see due to all of the smoke now forming around them. There were people running around all over. Some were calling out to loved ones, others running from Death Eaters.

"We need to get moving." Severus grabbed Hermione by the hand and pulled her along behind him. They stayed close to the edges of the buildings. Severus tried to cast a Disillusionment Charm around them but it failed to work. He'd been a Death Eater spy for years, but he remembered only now that the Dark Mark rendered spells such as those ineffective. He ignored the warning voice in his mind that said the *Adulescens Denuo* potion might rob him and Hermione of their memories and magical knowledge.

As they rounded a corner the smoke began to grow denser. Within the smoke they saw flashes of green, indicating that this time around, the Death Eaters weren't interested in torturing; instead, they were there to kill as many people as they could.

"I can't see anything," hissed Severus, as he pulled Hermione close to him.

"I'm scared, Severus," she said as she let go of his hand and wrapped her arms around his waist.

Severus found a corner and settled them both down on the ground. He held her tightly.

"Don't worry, Hermione. I won't let anything happen to you," he said as he nervously looked ahead of him, seeing the shadows of several Death Eaters coming towards them.

"Well, well," said a visibly rotund Death Eater. "Looks like we've found ourselves something for the Dark Lord to amuse himself with this evening." He drew his wand and stunned both children in front of him.

Severus and Hermione blacked out, never having a chance to reach for their wands or run away.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Several hours later they both woke up on a cold dank floor. As he sat up, Severus immediately began looking around for Hermione.

"Hermione, where are you?" he called out, not being able to see in the dim light.

"I'm over here," she called as she heard him moving towards her.

He sat down next to her and they leaned into the wall, holding on to one another.

"It's my fault we're here. I'm sorry," he said.

"No, don't blame yourself. I wanted to come, and I'm glad I did." She squeezed him tightly against her. "I would have been worried had you not come back."

"At this point, neither one of us may get back. It seems we've lost our wands as well," he said grimly as he laid his head against hers.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Upstairs in Voldemort's throne room several Death Eaters were drinking and talking about the raid. They seemed to have had the upper hand at the beginning, but were chased away by the Aurors that showed up shortly after the raid began. Many of their own members were captured, and the few that escaped did so just by the skin of their teeth.

Lucius was kneeling at the Dark Lord's feet, reporting what had transpired that evening.

"Damn them all to hell." Voldemort lifted his wand and Crucio'd two of his followers. "Every time I take one step forward, they come and push me two steps back!" he roared.

"Lucius, this was to be the end of Hogsmeade," Voldemort looked at the still writhing and screaming Death Eaters in disgust and released them from the curse. "Damn Dumbledore and his Order and those goody-two-shoes Aurors." He closed his eyes and rested his head against the back of the chair. "No matter, that just means I shall have to get more creative. Perhaps a visit to Hogwarts is in order."

Lucius smiled.

"Yes, my Lord. I'm sure seeing all of his students' bloodied bodies littered about the castle will make him tuck his tail between his rickety legs and run away."

Voldemort looked at Goyle. "Where are those children you brought back with you?"

"In the dungeons, my Lord," said the overstuffed and now drooling man. He'd been into the ale since they got back from the raid, and was now hoping his words weren't slurred.

"Bring them to me, I am in need of some entertainment." Voldemort waved Goyle away, and sent the remaining Death Eaters to gather Muggles for the next days entertainment. The Dark Lord looked back down at Lucius.

"You may go, Lucius. I will discuss with you my plans for Hogwarts at a later date."

Lucius nodded and backed away from Voldemort, who was ordering the sole remaining Death Eater to bring him food. When Lucius was finally able to turn his back to Voldemort he frowned. He thought he'd made sure none of the other Death Eaters who were at the raid brought back captives. He'd lost his taste for torture so long ago. It was now, several years after his son and wife had died, that he regretted so much of his past. Many lives had been lost tonight in Hogsmeade, but thanks to the information he'd been able to get to Severus, many more were saved. He stayed at the back of the room, waiting for Goyle's return.

Lucius was the other and now only spy embedded within Voldemort's ranks. It was he who had turned his friend Severus in to Voldemort, albeit not by his own choice.

Lucius had been a faithful Death Eater for many years. During Draco's sixth year at Hogwarts, Lucius' son was being used as his punishment for the debacle at the Ministry of Magic, which was when he was captured and sent to Azkaban. Voldemort surely expected Draco to die trying to kill Dumbledore, but the young Malfoy didn't. Instead, Severus, after having made an Unbreakable Vow with Narcissa to protect the boy, had worked with Dumbledore to create a plan to make it look as though Severus had killed the Headmaster.

It was shortly after Severus ran out of Hogwarts dragging Draco behind him that his friend came for Lucius in Azkaban. The night Lucius finally escaped from Azkaban, Severus told him everything. He told him about his work as a spy, and about the plan Voldemort had for Draco to kill Dumbledore or die trying. If Draco succeeded, Voldemort wanted Severus to kill Draco and Narcissa, but only at a later time. But Voldemort never gave him the go-ahead; in hindsight, they should have realized it was because Voldemort wanted to do the deed himself.

As Lucius listened to his friend, he began to feel sick. All he had known, all he had been taught to believe was now imploding inside of him. At the time, Lucius' plan was for him to just hide out with his family at Malfoy Manor, doing some research to aid Severus in the search for the Horcruxes. Even Draco had to hide from the Ministry, because of his work in bringing Death Eaters into Hogwarts.

But his first night of freedom from Azkaban, just before Severus found his first of several Horcruxes, Lucius woke up to find Death Eaters in his home. After years of sleepless nights in Azkaban, he'd fallen sound asleep in a hidden library in his home's basement; what woke him was his wife's scream. By the time Lucius came upstairs, his family had been slaughtered. Narcissa and Draco lay in a pool of blood; standing over their bodies was Voldemort along with four Death Eaters.

As befitting his aristocratic upbringing, Lucius kept his face void of emotion, all the while screaming inside. He looked at Voldemort and smiled.

"My Lord. You have done me a great service, for I have found myself growing tired of their weakness."

Voldemort came to Malfoy Manor because his informants told him Lucius had escaped Azkaban that night. Thinking any wizard who could do that was a worthy servant after all, Voldemort decided to welcome Lucius back into his ranks of most faithful and trusted.

Within a week, Severus brought Lucius to Albus, who was still in hiding himself because he was supposed to be "dead" by Severus' wand. Lucius was inducted into the Order; and from that moment on, Lucius fought just as hard as Severus to bring Voldemort down. The Boy Who Lived and his friends went to university, as Albus told them to. This was almost four years ago.

Less than six months ago, sensing that the end of the war was drawing near, Albus and Severus came up with a plan. Seeing that the Horcruxes were gone, and Voldemort was still alive, Severus knew that the only way to bring Voldemort down at this point was to weaken him enough so that when he finally faced Harry, the Dark Lord would be gone for good with just a simple Killing Curse. But to make a potion powerful enough, Severus would need to do research. He needed time, and he couldn't afford to be called upon by Voldemort each time the evil wizard had a wild hair up his ass.

The plan went without a hitch well, almost. Lucius was to bring Voldemort information that Severus was a spy for the Order. Severus was summoned and questioned by Voldemort. At that point, Severus didn't need to use his Occlumency skills; he allowed Voldemort to see everything, including Dumbledore's faked death. That night he was closer to death than he had ever been before. Had it not been for the Draught of the Living Death he'd taken earlier that evening, Voldemort would have kept on torturing him until he really was dead.

Lucius kept Severus from being dismembered. When Voldemort ordered several Death Eaters to bury Severus in different graves, Lucius followed the Death Eaters and Stunned them all. He then Obliviated their memories and took his friend back to Hogwarts himself. When Lucius came back to the other Death Eaters, he implanted an elaborate false memory in each of them and made them think they had indeed buried the traitor in different graves.

Now Lucius stood at the back of the throne room. He waited to see the children Voldemort sent Goyle to retrieve. He heard a raucous going-on and looked to his left. There was Goyle, walking back into the room with two thrashing children, one clasped under each arm. Lucius looked closely at the boy, who looked familiar, very familiar. Lucius thought back and tried to remember if he'd seen any young children at the Ministry of Magic lately. As he continued looking at the boy, he thought the child looked very much like Severus had at that age. While they first met at Hogwarts, Lucius was a sixth year Prefect and saw pictures of Severus as a child while Severus was a first year, away from home for the first time.

Goyle dropped the children at Voldemort's feet.

"Oomph." Severus looked up at Goyle and scowled. "Neanderthal."

Lucius straightened immediately at the boy's use of the word "Neanderthal." It was a word Severus frequently used to describe Goyle. He moved closer.

"Such a big word for such a small insignificant child," said Voldemort as he eyed Severus and then Hermione. He scrunched his face in distaste. "I despise children, especially those who do not know their place." He rose quickly, and Severus and Hermione took a step back. Severus moved his arm in front of Hermione's and pushed her behind him. Voldemort laughed.

"Ah, I see we have a little hero in our midst." Voldemort bent down until he was eye-level to the boy in front of him. "Is she your widdle girlfriend?" he said in a taunting manner.

Severus narrowed his eyes, and then punched him in his non-existent nose.

"AAHHH!!!" Voldemort recoiled. "You little brat!" Voldemort grabbed Severus by the arm and threw him across the floor violently. He then grabbed hold of Hermione, but she started to struggle and tried to break loose.

"Let me go!" yelled Hermione as she punched his body with her small fists.

Severus picked himself up and ran towards Voldemort.

Lucius stood in the back of the room, trying hard not to laugh at the sight before him. Voldemort was being bested by two children. Goyle and the other Death Eater didn't know what to do; they feared the Dark Lord might be insulted if they tried to help. So they stood there while their master struggled with the two fighting children.

"Leave her alone, you ugly snake! She's my friend!" Severus yelled, then punched Voldemort square in the balls.

The Dark Lord let out a gasp and doubled over in pain. Severus grabbed Hermione by the hand and they began running for their lives. Voldemort lay gasping for air. He pushed himself up slightly and hissed.

"Don't just stand there, you idiots! Get them! Throw them in the dungeons. I'll deal with them later!" He knew he would need his strengthening potion before he did anything to them.

There were only three Death Eaters in the throne room at that time. Since Voldemort had sent the rest to gather Muggles for the next day's entertainment and Peter was tending to Nagini, it was up to Goyle to assist Voldemort to his feet. Lucius and the other Death Eater were the only ones left to go after Severus and Hermione.

"There they are!" yelled the dark-haired Death Eater next to Lucius. He took out his wand and pointed it at the little girl. "*Crucio!*"

Hermione fell and began convulsing. Lucius tripped the other Death Eater and the curse was broken. Severus rushed to Hermione and gathered her in his arms. Lucius Stunned the other Death Eater as he walked quickly to the two children.

"Hermione, it's okay," Severus whispered. Hermione's body was shaking and her face was contorted in pain.

Lucius knelt down next to the whispering boy, who now turned and looked at him with tears in his eyes. "Lucius, you have to help me, please. We have to get her out of here."

It was then that Lucius finally realized it was actually Severus in that small body.

"Severus? What in the name of Circe have you done to yourself?" he asked in wonder.

Severus shook his head.

"It's a long story. Please, Lucius, she needs help now." Severus heard Hermione groan, and then looked down at her. Her eyes were open and looking at Lucius in horror. "It's okay, Lucius will help us; you have to trust him."

Lucius picked up Hermione and stood. He looked back towards the Death Eater he'd Stunned.

"Severus, there's a cupboard around the corner here. Go open the door and see if you can drag him in there. I'll deal with him later." Severus did as Lucius asked. The floor was smooth and the robes made it easy for even him with his limited strength to drag the Death Eater a short distance. Once he had the man inside the cupboard they walked down the hall quickly. Lucius looked around every corner for anyone who might see them. After several more turns they were outside. Lucius looked down at Severus.

"Take hold of my robes," Lucius instructed.

Severus grabbed Lucius' robes and they immediately Apparated away. When they reappeared they were in front of number twelve, Grimmauld Place. Lucius climbed the stairs as Severus followed. Severus opened the door and they walked in. Just as Lucius was approaching the stairs with Hermione in his arms, a tall young woman with red hair came out of the kitchen with her wand pointed in his face. Her hand was shaking as she looked at Lucius, then at the two children with him.

"Wh...what's going on here? How did you get in here?" she asked shakily.

Severus came from behind Lucius and grabbed her wrist angrily.

"Miss Weasley, would you please save the theatrics for later? Hermione is hurt and she needs help now."

Ginny looked down at a pint-sized version of her former Potions professor.

"Severus, leave her be; she obviously doesn't know about me." Lucius continued up the stairs. He looked over his shoulder quickly. "Miss Weasley, your father tells me you are studying to be a Medi-witch. We are in need of your services."

Severus went up the stairs after Lucius and Hermione.

Ginny was dumbfounded. She'd gotten to Grimmauld Place that morning and had been studying all day. She was in the middle of making herself a late dinner when someone had come in. Knowing that no one else was expected that evening, she readied her wand and went into the entry way, only to find Lucius Malfoy standing before her with an unconscious little girl in his arms and a very angry little boy. A girl with bushy brown hair, and a boy with dark lanky hair and a scowl. Ginny suddenly realized that Harry and Ron hadn't been joking with her when they told her that Hermione and Professor Snape were the victims of a potions accident that had made them into children.

"Miss Weasley, we need you now!" yelled Lucius from the top of the stairs.

Ginny immediately ran up the stairs and into the room where Lucius had placed Hermione.

"She was hit with a Cruciatus Curse. Her body is only six years old. You have to help her," said Severus desperately.

Ginny sat next to Hermione on the bed. The brunette looked ashen and was visibly trembling. Ginny turned and looked at Severus and Lucius.

"I've set up a small lab in the attic. I have some healing potions." She noticed the distressed look on the small professor's face. "She'll be fine. Despite being her size, Hermione is strong." Ginny then stood and began to walk out of the room. She noticed that little Severus immediately sat down next to Hermione and took her hand. Ginny smiled and looked at Lucius, who had been looking at the two "children."

"Perhaps I can make us all some tea while Miss Granger regains her strength." Lucius walked out of the room, followed by Ginny. Once outside Ginny grabbed Lucius' arm. He turned and looked at her.

"Whatever questions you have, if I can answer them I will, although I do need to get back to cover my tracks," he said. "But please, help your friend and mine first. I will return shortly." Lucius then continued on his way down the stairs.

Ginny did indeed have many questions, but he was right. She needed to help Hermione first.

Inside the room, Severus caressed Hermione's hand. He felt his mind zoning in and out. At times he felt his mind working as an adult, but ever more increasingly he felt himself thinking like a child. He hoped that both he and Hermione could last long enough to take the counter-potion before their memories were forever lost.

"Hermione, wake up. Talk to me," he begged. Her body was small. She was a child. In his Death Eater years he'd seen many children killed by a well-placed Cruciatus Curse.

"Please, don't leave me, please," he whispered to her, as tears ran down his face.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I hope you liked this chapter. I'll have more soon.

Someone pointed out to me that I had Draco alive in the first chapter. That's my bad. I started this story thinking I'd have something for Draco, but have since decided on another way to go, so I had to kill him. I hope that didn't confuse you guys too much and I'm sorry for not being more vigilant about that. But my muse has taken me in a different direction, and he simple will not shut up about it. You know how men are.

A Recovery and a Few Explanations

Chapter 6 of 19

Hermione gets better, Lucius covers his tracks and Severus explains what happened.

I'd like to thank everyone who is still keeping up with this. I appreciate your wonderful reviews.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Chapter 6 A recovery and a few explanations

At Grimmauld Place, Ginny returned from the attic where she had a small potions lab, with several bottles in hand. As she walked into the room where Lucius had carried little Hermione, Ginny was taken aback by the show of tenderness she was witnessing. Severus was running his hands over Hermione's forehead, then cheeks, then down her arm lightly. He was trying to soothe her in her unconscious state.

She walked to the other side of the bed and set the bottles on the nightstand. Severus immediately began to eye what she had set down.

"I've been reading about several new treatments for the Cruciatus Curse developed by some healers in Norway. One involves a bath using lavender and Black Cohosh," he said as he turned back to Hermione.

Ginny smiled.

"In my Medi-witch training, we've been discussing that bath cure in particular. I've brewed some of it according to the recipe and have been keeping it on stock. I thought it might come in handy, just in case."

Severus then turned to her. "A wise decision, Miss Weasley."

Ginny leaned towards Hermione and spoke softly.

"Hermione," she said, then picked up the bottle of strengthening potion and uncorked it. "Hermione, wake up." Ginny looked to Severus. "Can you lift her a bit for me? We need to get her to swallow this."

Severus nodded and positioned himself so that he was now cradling Hermione, much as he had been back at Voldemort's hideout. As he did so, Hermione began to stir. Her eyes opened hesitantly.

"Se...Severus?" she called out to him weakly.

"Yes, I'm here. Hermione, listen to me. We're at Order headquarters. Your friend Ginny is here. She has strengthening potion you need to take." Ginny placed the bottle on Hermione's lips and tilted it. "That's it, drink it down."

As Hermione drank the potion, her ashen skin began to brighten. Her cheeks were rosy and her skin back to its pinkish hue. She drank the entire potion and began to groan.

"I hurt everywhere. My skin hurts. It's like a million hot needles are poking at me."

Severus brushed her hair back with his small hands.

"It's the residual effect of the Cruciatus Curse you were hit with," he said.

Hermione turned and looked over at Ginny.

"I need to get you into a bath now," Ginny said. "I have something that will help you with that feeling." Ginny made motion to carry Hermione herself, but Severus pulled her toward him instead.

"I can take her. You get the bath ready," he commanded.

Ginny held back the urge to giggle. Even at this size he was imposing. She knew he would most probably struggle a bit. He was a strong man, she had seen that herself in the past. But his small six-year-old body didn't have the same strength. Still, he wanted to help Hermione, and it was obvious he wanted to be close to her.

"All right, Professor. You bring her along as soon as possible then."

She left the room, and Severus looked down at Hermione.

"That wasn't very nice of you, you know," he said sternly.

Hermione furrowed her brow, wondering what he was talking about.

"What did I do?" she asked.

"You scared me," he said softly. "...I thought you were going to die."

She chuckled. "I don't think I was hit hard. I don't recall it lasting long at least. And I've never heard of anyone dying from a Cruciatus Curse."

Severus looked at her soberly.

"You've never seen children hit with that curse, Hermione. Their bodies aren't as strong or large as adult bodies. You can't begin to fathom the number of children I've seen killed by it."

She looked in his eyes and saw the worry she felt in his words.

"Come on," he said, quickly trying to change the subject. "I've got to get you to the bathroom before Miss Weasley turns into Poppy and starts to yell at me."

He picked her up as gently as he could.

"I think you should cut down on the sweets. You weigh as much as a Hippogriff," he said.

Hermione scowled at him.

"I'll have you know that there is nothing wrong with my weight. Those puny arms of yours just aren't strong enough, that's all."

"Yes, well, these puny arms can just as easily drop you, you know."

They sniped all the way to the bathroom where Ginny had already filled the tub and emptied a bottle containing the lilac-colored lavender and Black Cohosh potion into the water. She looked at Severus carrying Hermione. He was being such a little gentleman, even though he looked like he was about to burst from carrying her. He held her so close to him; it was as if she was his precious prize.

"I'll take her now." Ginny stood and walked to them. For a moment Ginny thought she saw Severus hesitate, but then he approached her.

"I'll go down and see if I can help Lucius with the tea," said Severus, as Ginny took Hermione from him and helped her sit on the edge of the tub.

"He mentioned something about going back to cover his tracks," said Ginny.

Just then Hermione spoke up.

"Severus, why did Lucius help me? And how was he able to find Order headquarters?" asked Hermione. As she'd been laying in Severus' arms back at Voldemort's lair, she was visibly shocked when she saw the face of Lucius Malfoy looming over her.

"He's changed quite a bit since the death of Draco and Narcissa," Severus said sadly. The two young women had heard about the death of Lucius' son and wife several years ago.

Hermione then realized who Lucius really was.

"He's Snowbird, isn't he?" asked Hermione.

It was Ginny's turn to look shocked now.

"*He's* Snowbird?" she asked in wonder.

Severus looked at her and cocked his head.

"That's his name among the Order members. How is it that you have heard it?" Severus hoped that Lucius' alias wasn't something freely talked about. He worried for his friend, since he could no longer watch his back from inside the ranks of the Death Eaters, as they had done for each other for several years.

"Well," Ginny had a guilty look on her face. "I was here the last time there was an Order meeting. I snuck downstairs and hid behind the curtains when Moody and Shacklebolt were talking to my father about a raid in Kensington. They mentioned Snowbird and how good it was that we still had another spy in Voldemort's camp. An ex-Death Eater like you used to be, Professor."

"Miss Weasley," Severus said as he approached both women. "Ginny, Hermione, it is imperative that no one outside the Order know about Lucius. If the Dark Lord had even in inkling of suspicion, Lucius would be killed with extreme prejudice. He's my friend first and foremost, but he is also our only hope in getting any information from the other side."

"You can trust us, Severus," said Hermione as Ginny nodded.

"I won't say a word to anyone, not even my brothers," Ginny promised.

Having received their promise of silence, Severus was satisfied that they would keep Lucius' secret. He then turned and walked out of the bathroom, shutting the door behind him.

Ginny undressed Hermione and placed her in the tub.

"How do you feel?" asked Ginny.

"The prickly feeling has stopped. My skin is not on fire anymore." Hermione leaned back against the tub and relaxed.

"Hermione, what in the world happened?" Knowing that her friend was feeling better and now out of danger, Ginny's curiosity got the better of her.

~*~*~

Lucius had returned to Voldemort's lair. He walked to the cupboard where Severus had placed the stunned Death Eater. He dragged the man out and placed him in the middle of the hallway, then kicked him to wake him.

"Get up you fool, you let them get away!" he yelled. The dazed Death Eater shook his head and struggled to get to his feet.

"What happened?" He asked.

"You idiot. The girl stunned you and you fell on me. The Dark Lord will not be pleased." Lucius grabbed the man by the back of his robes and dragged him back to the throne room. There he explained to Voldemort that they had been in pursuit of the two children when the dark-haired Death Eater was hit by a stunning hex and blocked the way for Lucius as he fell. Needless to say, Voldemort was not happy. He sent Lucius on his way and took his anger out on the dark-haired Death Eater, who was totally unaware that his brethren had thrown him under the proverbial bus.

Having been sent away by Voldemort, Lucius went back to Grimmauld Place to see how Severus and Hermione were faring. He also found himself looking forward to seeing Ginny Weasley once more. Arthur had often spoken about his daughter to him on many occasions. The patriarch was very proud of her and her choice of careers. The elder Weasley also expressed disappointment in the fact that his daughter had such terrible luck with wizards in the love department. At times Lucius felt as though he was the lamb being led to the slaughter, as Arthur seemed to be talking about his daughter a bit too much these days. Lucius always shook it off, though. Arthur and the rest of the Order had accepted him, but he doubted the elder Weasley would want an ex-Death Eater to marry his only daughter; Lucius was only about four years younger than Arthur and Molly.

As a matter of fact, now that he thought about it, he hadn't even seen Ginny Weasley since he slipped Tom Riddle's diary into her bucket at Flourish & Blotts in her first year at Hogwarts. And if he had seen her after that, he didn't even remember. During the Department of Mysteries fiasco in Ginny's fourth year, Ginny had been knocked out by a Stunning Spell before the Death Chamber battle even started, a fact he'd learned at his trial, when he and the other captured Death Eaters had been sent to Azkaban. Regardless, he doubted his stunt at the bookstore those many years ago would endear him to the young woman, seeing as she almost died as a result of having the diary.

Upon his return, he found his old rather, his young well, actually small friend, Severus, in the kitchen. Lucius sat at the head of the table, staring into his teacup. He looked over at the stove and noticed a chair had been dragged so that the small wizard could reach the knobs and kettle without setting himself on fire.

"Severus? Is everything all right?" Lucius wondered if Hermione hadn't taken a turn for the worst.

Severus looked up at him with confusion in his eyes.

"I'm slipping, Lucius. Whatever Weasley did to that potion, it was powerful enough to make its effects advance on us, quicker than I thought."

"Step back a bit, friend. Which Weasley and what potion are you talking about?" Lucius poured himself a cup of tea and sat next to Severus.

"Albus sent me to the university yesterday to cover some potions classes. The students are nearing their final exams and the potions they are making are advanced, so they needed the guidance of a Potions Master. It was the first class and I was walking around the classroom as they were making the *Adulescens Denuo* potion. Something happened to Ron Weasley's potion. I yelled for everyone to get out, but Her...Miss Granger came back for her wand. It was too late then. The cauldron exploded all over us."

"I know that potion. How much time do you think you have before..." Lucius didn't even want to say what he was thinking. He knew that if the counter-potion wasn't taken the victim would revert to a child, completely forgetting their adult self.

Severus sighed heavily. "I don't know. We were hit yesterday morning, I think. If today is still Friday, then this makes the first actual full day we have been like this. The counter-potion was started yesterday, so I give it another three days for it to be finished. I would say possibly Sunday evening. I thought we had time, but I feel myself slipping more and more. I gather Hermione feels it too."

"Is there anything I can do to help?" asked Lucius.

"Not really. If you see me or Hermione revert to childlike behavior, perhaps reminding us of who we are will help bring us back to our adult thinking." He took a sip of his tea, then suddenly realized Albus might be looking for him.

"I need to let Albus know I'm here." Severus made a motion to get up, but Lucius stopped him.

"I have already sent word to him. I let him know you and Hermione were here," said Lucius. As if on cue, they heard a noise in the living room and knew it was the Floo. Both Lucius and Severus walked into the living room and met the old wizard.

"Severus, what were you thinking? You and Hermione could have been killed!" Albus walked to Severus, went down on one knee in front of him, and placed his hand on Severus' small shoulder and pulled him towards him for a suffocating hug. For some reason he felt as though he truly could have lost the Potions master this time around. And the fact that he looked like a child made it all the more difficult to keep his emotions from getting the better of him. "My boy, we were all so worried. I know you wanted to help, but you should have stayed behind."

Severus had his head bowed. He knew he should not have ventured out to Hogsmeade, especially with Hermione.

"I know, you're right, Albus. We just wanted to help."

Albus looked to Lucius.

"Thank you, Lucius, for getting them out of there."

"I'm glad I was still there." Lucius looked down at Severus. He reminded him of his own son, when Draco had done something wrong. It tugged at his heart, the memory of Draco at that age.

"Do you think you will be called back soon, Lucius?" asked Albus.

"It's difficult to say. He plans to attack Hogwarts, but still hasn't decided when. I gather it will be soon, though. He was very angry about Hogsmeade."

The three of them sat down and were silent for a while. Albus then looked at Severus and Lucius. The pair had been friends for many years and they cared greatly for each other. Albus knew that after what happened earlier that evening, it would be difficult for him to keep an eye on Severus and Hermione. The "children" had managed to give him the slip easily, not to mention the havoc they caused around the castle. He'd already gotten an earful from Mr. Filch about someone tying cans to Mrs. Norris' tail.

"Severus, perhaps it might be better for you and Hermione to stay here for a few days. You don't have to worry about anyone recognizing you here. I've also instructed Harry and Ron to discreetly Obliviate their classmates of the incident. I've sent word to the university that you are not available to substitute for them. They had only told Ginny so far. I think I should inform Arthur and Molly though, just in case they show up here."

Severus looked at the old man. "A few days away might be nice. The counter-potion won't be ready until Sunday. I have it set to keep itself warm once it's finished. You can watch it for me."

"It's settled then. I'm sure Lucius wouldn't mind looking out for you for the next few days," said Albus as he clapped his hands together and stood.

Severus stood, and then looked towards Lucius.

"Hang on a tick. Albus, I do not need some stupid babysitter looking after me." Severus looked to Lucius. "Not that you're stupid, Lucius. You know what I mean."

"You had better watch yourself, Severus. I'm not above putting you over my knee and sending you to bed without dessert, young man." Lucius smirked. He hadn't planned on staying, but it might be fun after all. Of course, it would be even nicer if Ginny Weasley decided to stay as well.

"I know it's an inconvenience for you both, but I need to begin preparations to the castle," Albus said. "If Voldemort plans on attacking, I need to make sure the wards are strong enough, and that there are no weak spots around the grounds as well." Just before he walked back into the Floo, Albus turned to Severus.

"Oh, and I have asked Harry and Ron to stop by and give Hermione any homework she may have missed. I know how studious she is." With that Albus left.

Severus sat back down and crossed his arms in disgust.

"As if being six isn't bad enough, now I have to look forward to a visit with Tweedle-Dumb and Tweedle-Dumber."

~*~*~*~*~

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Thanks for reading.

Blushes and Pillow-fights

Chapter 7 of 19

Severus and Hermione are slipping fast.

Thank you to those of you who have taken the time to read this and review. I appreciate all of your comments.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks as always to June for all of her help and suggestions.

Chapter 7 Blushes and pillow-fights.

After Albus left, Severus and Lucius went upstairs.

Ginny had already finished Hermione's treatment and taken her to the same room Lucius set her in earlier. They were both giggling when Severus, followed by Lucius, walked into the room.

"Well, you seem to be feeling better," said Lucius, smiling.

Hermione and Ginny looked up.

"Yes, I am. Thank you for helping us earlier, Mr. Malfoy," said Hermione.

Lucius waved his hand and shook his head.

"Please, call me Lucius, both of you. And it was my pleasure. I'm glad I was still about to help."

"Oh, I nearly forgot," Severus looked up at Lucius. "We lost our wands. Do you think you could get them back?" asked Severus.

"I doubt it at this point. I'm sorry, but you may need to acquire new ones. I can go by Ollivander's tomorrow and order two new ones for you."

"That'll have to do, I suppose," said Severus.

They all stood silent and motionless, not knowing what else to say. Ginny finally spoke up.

"Are you two hungry?" she asked the "children."

"No," Hermione said quickly. She and Severus had eaten a dinner of apple pie a la mode before they went to Hogsmeade. Surely, that was good enough until morning.

"Well, I think I'll finish making my dinner and get to bed."

"Ah, you are staying the evening?" asked Lucius.

Ginny blushed, not really knowing why, then thinking it might have been due to the fact that his smile made her shiver. Severus and Hermione were both sitting on the bed, watching the two with great interest.

"Yes, I've been here most of the day finishing up some papers I needed to turn in before I began studying for my final exams." When Ginny got nervous she began to wring her hands, or twist the bottom of her blouse, or whatever she was holding at the time. She was now doing quite a number on the scarf she had tied around her waist. "I was making something to eat when you all showed up. It's probably all spoiled or cold by now, but I suppose I can always make a sandwich or something. I mean, I'm not really that great a cook anyway..."

"She talks more than you do," Severus whispered to Hermione, who promptly elbowed him.

Lucius merely smiled. He knew Ginny was nervous, and it gave him a thrill to know he was probably the cause of her rambling.

"Oh, well, I better get downstairs then." Ginny turned and looked at Severus and Hermione. "I guess you two are staying here for the night then?" The two nodded. Ginny then turned and looked at Lucius. "I'll see you another time then, Mr...I mean, Lucius." She then quickly exited the room, cursing to herself for being such a nervous Nelly.

Lucius looked at his two new charges.

"Is she always like that?" he asked Hermione.

"Ginny can be a bit...animated at times," stated Hermione. She knew perfectly well why Ginny acted the way she did. It was no secret to her that her friend was in serious lust over Lucius, just as she herself had secretly adored Severus these past years.

"I see," was all Lucius would commit to. He then walked further into the room. "Now, I suppose we should all get ready for bed. Severus, I can transfigure something for you to sleep in, if you like."

"Just so long as it fits, please." Severus looked at Hermione and scowled at her, remembering it was her fault he wore clothes that looked two sizes too big for him.

"Wherever did you get that outfit you're wearing anyway? It's positively ghastly," commented Lucius as he made some small pajamas for the small Severus.

"No, they're not. It's what children wear these days," protested Hermione.

"Oh yes, Lucius. Didn't you know it was in vogue for boys to look like unkempt hermits?"

Hermione shook her head and crawled into bed.

"You two are impossible. No wonder you're friends."

Severus looked at his new bedclothes and nodded his approval, then turned and began to crawl into the same bed, next to Hermione.

"Don't hog the covers tonight like you did last night," scolded Hermione.

"I do not hog covers. And if I did, I was perfectly within my right to do so, as it was my bed," he said imperiously.

Lucius wondered how the two wound up in the same bed. What's more, he wondered how they seemed so comfortable sharing with one another. He realized it was the potion influencing their actions as well. Children often innocently crawled into bed with one another. Friends did the same. There had been times when both he and Severus were away for days doing Voldemort's dirty work. During those times it was difficult to find a decent place to sleep, and quite often they wound up curled next to each other just to keep warm.

"If you two are finished arguing, I will see you in the morning. I'll go out to the manor tomorrow and see if I can get you both some clothes as well." Lucius turned the lights out and bid them both goodnight before he shut the door. Before he even made it to his bedroom, he had to turn around and tell Severus and Hermione to stop giggling and get to sleep.

When Lucius was able to get inside his room, he began to undress. He did so without magic. While many wizards preferred to dress and undress using magic, Lucius used this time to relax and think about either the day ahead of him, or the day behind him. Right now, he thought of what Severus had said to him in the kitchen. His friend wasn't kidding when he said that he and Hermione were slipping into childish behavior. He would need to keep an eye on them in the next coming days. By now, he'd taken his shoes and shirt off, and was turning his attention to his belt. Just then the door opened and in walked a very surprised Ginny.

"OH! Lucius, I'm sorry." She quickly turned but stayed in the room. Having seen only his bare chest, she didn't realize he still had his trousers on.

Lucius was speechless for a moment. He'd lived alone for a while, and he hadn't expected for anyone to walk in on him.

"It's all right, Ginny." He chuckled softly. "You can turn around, I'm not naked." He was amused by her shyness to look at him. Had the situation been reversed, he would have found it very difficult to be a gentleman. He most certainly would have not turned away. Lucius watched Ginny slowly turn, her blush very visible even in the dim light of the room. It had been a very long time since he'd made a woman blush. As a matter of fact, it had been a long time since he'd even been alone with a woman.

Contrary to popular belief, there were no such things as revels amongst Death Eaters. Voldemort neither participated in the act of having sex, nor did he like watching it. He saw no use for sex other than for reasons of procreation. To him, pleasures of the flesh were not the kind of pleasures he wanted his Death Eaters to involve themselves in. When sex was on the mind, all else faltered, as far as Voldemort was concerned. The Dark Lord also couldn't take the chance of any of his minions enjoying anything remotely close to being tender as well. There was always the potential for the victim to receive some tenderness from her assailant; it was a small chance, but a chance nonetheless. This he would not allow in any form.

For Lucius and Severus, it had been many years since either of them had been with a woman. It was actually longer for Severus, since his job both at Hogwarts and as a spy had made it difficult to have any real sort of time for women. Lucius hadn't been with anyone since his wife died at the hands of Voldemort. He had spent these last years focused on his ultimate vengeance, so that any thought of sex was put to one side.

Ginny looked at Lucius. She was keenly aware that the man before her was old enough to be her father, but Lucius looked like no father she had ever seen. He was tall, and his chest was well-defined. He wasn't overly muscled, which she liked, and she noticed he had a fine dusting of very light blond hair on his chest. She even noticed an equally fine trail of hair leading down and disappearing inside his trousers. Ginny had never been happy with men her own age. She'd often had conversations with Hermione regarding the lack of wizards that interested them. Hermione had hoped to graduate and then go back to Hogwarts, where she herself had her sights set on a possible relationship with Professor Snape.

Having dated several old schoolmates, Ginny decided to just forgo any sort of relationship with any man. She concentrated on her career and hoped that her Prince Charming would someday find his way to her, but she wasn't holding her breath.

"I'm sorry," said Lucius. "I know I promised to answer any questions you might have, but I'm very tired and have to wake up early tomorrow to get Severus and Hermione some things they will need. Maybe we can talk over breakfast?"

"Of course. I, um...didn't realize you would be staying. You see, this is my room. I usually stay in here when I come to visit." She opened a locked drawer that held some of her clothes.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Lucius smiled, then opened a locked drawer that held some of his own clothes. "This happens to also be the room I use when I stay here as well. It's very comfortable." He walked towards Ginny, and came within an inch of her very still body.

"Perhaps we can share the room?" he asked, thinking she was too innocent for this sort of thing. He found himself hoping she actually wouldn't take him up on his offer, because if she did, it might mean she'd accept such an offer from anybody.

Ginny gasped. Never in a million years would she have thought a wizard like Lucius Malfroy would say something like that to her. She wasn't an ugly woman; she was quite attractive. But she never attracted men like Lucius, as he was simply beautiful.

"I don't think that would be very proper. Why, I barely know you," she huffed. Hoping she sounded sufficiently aghast at his suggestion, she started to turn around so that she could leave. Ginny wanted nothing more than to push him onto the bed and rip his trousers off, but she knew that Lucius was of the old school of thinking. No doubt if she took him up on his offer, he'd think she would do that with anyone. She left the room before he could say anything further.

Lucius was surprised and pleased. Perhaps he would have a talk with Arthur Weasley when he went on his errands in the morning. He wasn't sure yet just what exactly he would talk to Arthur about, but he did know that it would have something to do with Ginny.

~*~*~*~

The following day found Lucius down in the kitchen early. He couldn't very well be seen in public buying children's clothing, since it would look suspicious if any of his Death Eater brothers were walking about, so he would go to his manor to find some clothes for Severus and Hermione. After getting together some clothing for his two new charges, he would visit Ollivander's and get a new wand for both. Mr. Ollivander was known for his secrecy, so Lucius knew that there would be no questions asked by him, and that if anyone came asking any he would keep his mouth shut. After all was done, he would then go to the Ministry and talk to Arthur.

As Lucius sat at the kitchen table drinking his coffee and eating a scone, Ginny walked in.

"Good morning, Ginny," said Lucius as he popped a piece of scone in his mouth and went back to the Quibbler he'd found on the table.

"Good morning, Lucius. You're an early riser," she stated.

He chuckled. "Not usually, but I have some errands to run. I need to get a few things for Severus and Hermione." He set down his paper as Ginny sat across from him with her own cup of coffee.

"I was hoping you might be willing to answer a few questions for me," she said.

"I have some time before I need to leave. I suppose your most pressing question would be how I came to be a spy for the Order?"

Ginny nodded and took a sip of her tea. That was exactly what she wanted to know.

"It really began when I was in Azkaban. I started to have my doubts about the Dark Lord and the organization," he laughed bitterly. "Organization. That's too respectable a word to use for a group of bigots and murderers, and yes, I'm aware that I used to be one of them." He stood and poured himself another cup of coffee.

"It was Severus who all on his own broke me out of Azkaban. He took me back to my manor and told me everything he'd been doing these last twenty years with the Order. He also told me what Voldemort had done to Draco, how he wanted to turn my son into a murderer as well; and if Draco had succeeded, Voldemort still wanted Severus to kill Draco and Narcissa."

"I never wanted that for Draco's fate. I loved my son and I loved my wife. I never truly realized until then, how easily he turned on his own followers. When I realized what kind of a madman I was serving, I decided to join Severus. If one spy was good, then two spies would be better. Unfortunately, my first night home with my family would be my last." Lucius sat back down on the table and looked at Ginny.

"I was downstairs in the basement looking through some old tomes that might give us an idea of how to get rid of Voldemort, but I was so exhausted I fell asleep at the research table. I woke up, I don't even know how many hours later, to hear my wife screaming and I realized there were people in my home. By the time I got upstairs to the main living area it was too late. That bastard had already killed Narcissa and Draco. There was nothing I could do. Nothing but put on my mask and pretend he had done me a favor."

"I can't even imagine how difficult that must have been for you. I'm so sorry," said Ginny softly.

"It was a suffering I hope to have spared someone else from experiencing." Lucius looked at the clock on the wall and stood once again, glad it was time to go, as he felt also the need to change the subject. He placed his coffee cup and plate in the sink, then gathered his cape and walking stick.

"I'm sorry, but I really must go. I have many things to do, and I want to return before the afternoon. I apologize, but I didn't even ask you if you had any plans for today. I need someone to stay here and watch those two. I have a feeling they are going to get themselves into more trouble." He smiled, remembering the fight between Voldemort and Severus and Hermione.

"Oh no, it's all right. I don't have any plans for today. I don't have any plans for the entire weekend as a matter of fact." Ginny hoped she didn't sound desperate. She actually had previous plans to spend the day with a young man she'd met at one of the Ministry's functions last month. However, as soon as she'd found out Lucius was tending to young Severus and Hermione, she cancelled her plans and decided to stay at Grimmauld Place instead.

"Excellent! I shall see you soon then." Lucius turned to leave, but then stopped and looked over his shoulder. "Oh, and don't let them get the better of you."

Ginny sat down heavily and wondered if the idiotic smile she had on her face would ever come off.

Upstairs in the room where Severus and Hermione were sleeping, things were going to get very loud very soon.

As he had done on the previous night, Severus hogged the covers. Not only had he taken the covers, but he was sprawled across the entire bed, which meant that half his body was thrown over Hermione. She looked like a spider crushed by a huge shoe. Severus' mouth had a small bit of drool dripping from the corners, and his hair was spread over Hermione's head. He seemed to be using her not only as pillow but also as his mattress.

He began to slowly wake up, after feeling something moving beneath him.

"What?" he murmured, trying to shake the sleep from his head.

"I said get off of me, I can't breathe," said Hermione, her voice muffled.

"What the..." Severus rolled onto his stomach and looked at Hermione. "What's the matter with you? I'm trying to sleep."

"Oh, I'm so sorry that my gasping for air woke you up, your highness." Hermione turned over and sat up. She looked at him with disgust. "I hope you slept well."

"As a matter of fact I did." He smiled and tucked himself further into his covers.

Hermione scowled at him.

"I can't believe you. Not only did you take the covers, yet again, but you practically slept on top of me all night like I was your pillow or something."

"As I recall, I didn't hear you complaining."

"Of course not, I was too busy trying to keep from suffocating to death." Hermione grabbed her pillow and swatted him with all her might. Before he could hit her back she bolted out of the bed.

"Run all you want, but I'll catch you sooner or later." Severus settled himself back in the middle of the bed and continued to sleep.

Hermione went to the bathroom. She brushed her teeth, went potty, and decided to take a shower. After she finished, she went back to the room and torpedoed herself at Severus, who was by that time snoring.

Downstairs, Ginny heard a commotion. She ran out of the kitchen and up the stairs. The noise was coming from the room Severus and Hermione occupied. When she neared the doorway, she saw the entire room was filled with feathers, and Severus and Hermione were hitting each other with now droopy pillows.

"Stop it, stop it this instant!" yelled Ginny. Both "children" froze, and then looked towards her. "What in the world is going on here?"

"She started it," said Severus as he pointed to Hermione.

"Me? You've got nerve." Hermione indignantly looked up at Ginny. "He spent the entire night hogging the covers, and sprawled all over the bed like he was the only one sleeping in it."

"And that gives you the right to attack me while I'm sleeping?" Severus threw his pillow on the bed and lifted his pajama top. "You almost broke my ribs. That's going to bruise, you know."

Hermione rolled her eyes.

"Both of you cool it. Have you gone and brushed your teeth?" asked Ginny, trying to ignore the fact she had just said something Molly Weasley had shouted almost every day for thirty years.

Hermione nodded, but Severus shook his head.

"I'll get breakfast started. Hermione, come down with me. Severus, you brush your teeth and go potty."

Severus raised his eyebrows and placed his hands on his waist.

"I beg your pardon? I do not go potty!" he said through gritted teeth.

Ginny realized that she was already treating them like children. While she did just break up a pillow-fight, she had to remember they were still, for the most part, adults.

"I'm sorry, I just...well, you both..." She threw her arms up in frustration. "Oh, forget it, just come downstairs when you're done, Severus." She turned and walked out of the room, with Hermione following her.

Before she left, Hermione turned around and stuck her tongue out at Severus, who scowled at her.

"Hmmp, potty, really," he huffed. "I'll potty her." Severus put on his slippers and walked towards the bathroom mumbling in protest.

"Hmm... actually, I do have to go wee-wee."

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. Harry and Ron will be coming for a visit in the next chapter.

Running Some Errands and a Visit From Two Friends

Chapter 8 of 19

Lucius goes about his errands and Harry and Ron come for a visit.

I'd like to thank all of those who have taken the time to read and review this story. I appreciate your comments. Thank you all very much.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks as always to June for all of her help.

Chapter 8 Running some errands, and a visit from two friends

As Ginny was finishing up her breakfast preparation, Severus walked in wearing his pajamas still. He had decided not to wear his way-too-big clothes and would just wait for Lucius to bring him something back from the manor.

He took a seat across from Hermione, who was starting on her scrambled eggs. Ginny placed a plate of eggs in front of him, just the way he liked them, sunny-side up.

"How did you know I like my eggs like this?" asked Severus as he dipped a piece of toast into one of the yolks.

"Hermione told me," said Ginny, then she poured them both some pumpkin juice and began cleaning up the kitchen.

Severus then looked at Hermione.

"How did you know?" he asked her.

"Severus, I spent seven years having breakfast at the same time and same place as you. I just noticed you never had your eggs any other way."

"How does Hagrid like his eggs?" he questioned.

"How am I supposed to know?" said Hermione, not realizing she'd just given herself away.

Severus now knew that she'd been watching him during her years at Hogwarts. But in his now deteriorating logical mind, he couldn't think why she would want to watch him doing anything. He rolled his eyes and shook his head, then continued eating his breakfast.

Ginny was mumbling to herself as she washed the dishes. At one point she forgot she wasn't alone and her voice began to grow louder and louder.

"Look at me, why must I always look so frumpy," she protested as she scrubbed the skillet. "You would think I was some hobbly old witch living in a cave in the woods."

Hermione looked at her friend, and sadly thought she was right. Ginny did dress like a bit of an old spinster. She took a drink of her pumpkin juice and looked at Severus. He made a circling motion towards his head with his finger, as he mouthed the words "she's crazy." Hermione giggled and tried to keep the juice from spewing out of her nose.

Ginny continued her babbling as the two finished eating.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Severus said. "Albus said he asked Potter and Weasley to stop by and give you any assignments you missed." Severus wiped his mouth and took his plate to the sink.

"Good, at least I can occupy my time until tomorrow. Do you think the potion is okay?" she asked him.

"I'm certain it's fine. I asked Albus to look in on it. It should be finished tomorrow sometime. We can go back to the castle in the afternoon and see if it's ready for us to

drink." Severus walked out of the kitchen and into the living room. He took a book from the shelf and threw it on the floor, along with a large pillow, then made himself comfortable and began flipping through the pages and enjoying the colorful pictures.

~*~*~*~

Back at Hogwarts, Albus walked into Severus' private lab to check on the counter-potion. He leaned over the simmering cauldron and took a small chocolate-covered hazelnut from a small pouch he held. As he went to pop it in his mouth, he accidentally bumped against the table and missed the candy, allowing it to fall into the potion. He stood frozen, as though waiting for something to happen.

"Oh dear." The liquid started to fizz, then it turned a light tan color, then brown, and finally back to its original mint green color as it continued to simmer. "If Severus finds out, I think this time he actually *will* kill me."

He backed away carefully from the cauldron and went to his office. He'd have to do some research to make sure he didn't just ruin or change the counter-potion in any way that would be harmful to either Severus or Hermione. There was no time to start a new counter-potion.

~*~*~*~

Lucius was almost finished at the manor. He found three outfits that Draco had worn as a child, and managed to find some of Narcissa's more casual clothes and Transfigured then to fit Hermione. He then placed the clothes in a small case and shrunk it so that he could put it in his pocket.

He then Apparated to Diagon Alley. Slowly he walked through the crowded streets, making sure he wasn't spotted as he passed Ollivander's shop. When you were a Death Eater, everything was questioned. Although he didn't notice anyone watching him, he walked past the shop and cast a Disillusionment Charm on himself. He'd learned to cast it in such a way that he slowly faded out of sight, almost as though he were walking off into the distance. After he was fully out of anyone's eye, he walked back and into the store, where he appeared in front of Mr. Ollivander's front desk. The windows in the shop were coated with a special film so that those inside could see out, but those outside could not see in.

"Mr. Malfoy. Good morning," said the old wand maker.

"Good morning, Mr. Ollivander."

"What can I assist you with today?"

"I am in need of two wands. They are replacements, actually."

"Ah, replacements. I gather the originals were...lost?"

Lucius leaned forward towards Ollivander slightly. "May I assume we are alone?"

"Yes, we are." Ollivander immediately raised his own wand and warded his front and rear entrance. He suspected that Lucius came to him in secrecy, and being the man he was, Ollivander wanted no interruptions.

"I need a wand for Severus Snape, and Hermione Granger. Their original wands were lost yesterday in an unfortunate accident." He knew he couldn't go into details and he also knew that Ollivander would not ask him for any.

"It will take me about two hours, but I can have two just like the originals made for them."

"I will return in two hours then. May I use your back entrance?" asked Lucius.

Ollivander nodded and let down the wards. When Lucius left, Mr. Ollivander set to his task of making two wands to replace the lost ones. He briefly wondered what kind of "accident" the Professor and Miss Granger might have had, but he knew it was best not to think too much of such things. His job was not to question; he was merely a wand maker.

Lucius walked out of the shop and looked at his pocket watch. It was a quarter past nine in the morning. He knew Arthur was already at work, and decided to make his way to the Ministry. While the two men had spent many years feuding, they now had a good relationship. They respected one another, and Lucius knew Arthur was a good and fair Minister of Magic. He continued walking and thinking about Ginny.

~*~*~*~

Back at Grimmauld Place, Ginny finished cleaning the kitchen and went into the study. She was looking for some books for an essay she needed to complete for Monday.

In the living room, Hermione sat in a large leather chair, next to the fireplace. Severus continued to peruse through the large book filled with pictures. He was on the floor on his stomach; his chin rested on his hands, his knees were bent and his small feet were waving around making circles in the air.

There was a loud crackling from the Floo, then Harry and Ron stepped through.

"Hi, Hermione," said Harry. Ron stood next to him smiling.

"How are you doing, Hermione?" asked the redhead. They noticed Severus on the floor and greeted him as well.

"Hi, Professor," said Harry and Ron in unison. They weren't intimidated by him in his six-year-old form.

Severus looked at both of them over his shoulder with a bored expression, and then turned his attention back to his book.

"Thanks for stopping by and bringing me my assignments!" Hermione walked towards Harry and took the book bag he held in his hands.

Harry smiled and sat down in the other leather chair on the other side of the fireplace.

Ron patted his stomach and walked towards the kitchen.

"I'm starving, is there anything to eat? I could eat a Hippogriff."

"I'd like to see you try," mumbled Severus.

"Did you say something, Severus?" asked Hermione.

"I said there's something in my eye." Severus turned slightly and rubbed his eye. "You know how dusty these old books can be."

Hermione shrugged and turned her attention to the books Harry and Ron had brought her.

"Ron and I were hoping you could help with the Alchemy paper for Professor Borgen," said Harry.

"Harry! That's due this coming Monday. You should have done that by now." She'd already had her own paper done the same day it was assigned. Harry and Ron were

world-class procrastinators. She wondered what they would do when they graduated and began their careers.

Ron came out of the kitchen holding a turkey leg.

"What's Hermione yelling about now?" he asked.

"Hermione is yelling because you two are unbelievable," protested the small witch. She knew that ultimately she would wind up helping them, but at least yelling at them cushioned the blow for her somewhat.

Ron looked at Harry.

"Oh, you told her about the paper," Ron stated.

Severus was not even pretending to look through his book, as he was now more interested in the tongue lashing the two young men were receiving from Hermione.

~*~*~*~*~

Back in London, Lucius arrived at the Ministry. He strode through the corridors in his usually imperious manor. While he'd changed in many ways, he was still a bit haughty at times. When Severus broke him out of Azkaban, his escape went virtually unnoticed. The furor over the supposed killing of the Headmaster of Hogwarts by its new Defense Against the Dark Arts professor was the talk of the wizarding world.

Albus had actually been hiding out in a small house within the Forbidden Forest. During a meeting with a few of the Order members, Severus introduced Lucius as wanting to switch sides and help. After the rest of the members found out what Voldemort did to Lucius' family, they knew his offer had to be genuine: Lucius wanted revenge. But in time he came to realize that his views were changing.

After Albus returned to the public eye a few months ago, Arthur, who by then was the new Minister of Magic, granted a full pardon to Lucius, who was still a Death Eater spy and told Voldemort that he'd used the Imperius Curse on the Minister. Almost four months ago, Arthur also exonerated Severus, who was still being hunted for "killing" Dumbledore and being a Death Eater.

Lucius approached the Minister's office. He smiled at the old witch sitting at her desk, guarding the door to the office.

"I would like to see the Minister," said Lucius.

The witch looked at him. There were many who still didn't trust him, but lucky for him he had money. That made it easier for people to forget about his past infractions.

"Do you have an appointment, Mr. Malfoy?" she asked.

"No, I do not. Is he in?" Lucius was growing impatient.

"Have a seat, please, and I'll see if he can see you." The witch stood and walked through the door just behind her.

Lucius continued to stand, not appreciating being told to sit.

A few moments passed and the woman came out, followed by an unsmiling Arthur.

"Lucius, come in," Arthur held the door open and closed it behind Lucius as he stepped into the office. Once behind closed doors both men shook hands and acted more friendly towards one another.

"How are you?" asked Arthur.

"I'm fine, thank you, Arthur, and you?"

"Oh, I'm doing well. A few pounds heavier though. Molly's taken to cooking Italian food now, and all of those rich meals are doing quite a number on my waistline." Arthur took his seat behind his desk and Lucius sat across from him. "You must have your hands full right about now, though. Albus told me what happened with Severus and Hermione." Arthur smiled, wondering what sort of trouble the six-year-old Severus and Hermione might be causing. While he had been tempted to tell Molly about what was going on with Severus and Hermione, he knew that the last thing they needed was Molly tutting over them as though they were actual children.

Lucius chuckled. "They certainly gave Voldemort a run for his galleons, I can tell you that much." He recounted to Arthur what the two did the evening before.

Arthur was laughing so hard his ribs hurt. He stopped laughing, however, when he found out Hermione had been hit with an Unforgivable.

"She's fine now, isn't she?" asked Arthur with concern.

"She's fine, yes. Thanks to your daughter. We are staying at Grimmauld Place. It's the best place for them to be until the counter-potion is finished. I'll be taking them back to Hogwarts tomorrow."

"Ah, Ginny said she would be staying there for a few days also. She goes there to study sometimes. I'm afraid that with Fred and George around while their shop is getting remodeled, the Burrow is rather distracting for her," said Arthur. He studied Lucius for a moment as he noticed the blond wizard's eyes shining with interest as he said his daughter's name. If anyone would have told him a year ago that he would be trying to get Lucius Malfoy interested in marrying his only daughter, he would have sent them straight to the St. Mungo's mental ward. But he'd seen a change in the wizard over the past few years, and he realized that even when Lucius had been a bigoted Death Eater he'd loved his family with passion.

Arthur knew Ginny was special. She didn't like wizards her own age and she could be very bull-headed. It would take quite a man to be able to handle her, and both he and Molly thought Lucius might just be that man. They knew that Lucius would be a good provider, and he would protect her from anything or anyone.

"I was happy to know that she was staying there. It's been a long time since I've had to care for a child," Lucius laughed. "Not that they are actually children, but they are having their moments."

The two sat for a while talking about the raid in Hogsmeade. Lucius also informed Arthur about Voldemort's plans to invade Hogwarts. Arthur said that he would send a few Aurors to patrol Hogwarts until Lucius could gather more information about the attack.

"I'd better get going. I need to pick up the wands I ordered for Severus and Hermione. I shall speak with you again soon, Arthur." Lucius stood and shook hands with Arthur. While he'd wanted to speak more about Ginny, he decided to wait. He wasn't sure yet if Arthur would be receptive to his interest in his daughter.

"Oh, yes," Arthur said. "Perhaps you can stop by one night and have supper with us. You know, Ginny is also a very good cook. I'm sure she's probably already taken over the cooking duties at headquarters." Arthur walked Lucius to the door. He decided to go for the gold. "Yes, she'll make some lucky wizard a wonderful wife someday." He patted Lucius on the back and smiled. "Now you say hello to Ginny for me, and maybe you both can stop by and have supper with Molly and me tomorrow after you take Severus and Hermione back to Hogwarts. I'll send Fred and George away and we can have a nice relaxing meal, just the four of us."

Lucius nodded and left. As he walked down the hall he wondered if he'd just imagined what just happened. It almost seemed as though Arthur had not only invited him to have dinner with his daughter in his home, but he'd just given him the go-ahead to pursue her. Lucius didn't need a brick wall to fall on his head. With an extra spring in his step, he walked to the exit of the Ministry and off to finish his errands.

~*~*~*~

At Grimmauld Place, Hermione sat between Harry and Ron trying to make them understand the Alchemy lesson they were to write their essay on.

Severus was now sitting on one of the large leather chairs on the far side of the room. His book was on his lap and he was using it as a desk. He was making a few notes. He'd come up with a thought of how to possibly alter the very potion he and Hermione had been drenched with. It might be a way to help them fight Voldemort. He'd borrowed some parchment from Hermione and one of her pens. He had to admit that Muggle pens were easier to use when you didn't have the comforts of a regular desk to write on. He'd been sitting there listening to the three discussing the two young men's Alchemy assignment. He rolled his eyes as Harry and Ron struggled to understand the simple equations.

"Honestly, it's a wonder either of you two even graduated," Severus said from across the room.

Harry and Ron looked up and scowled.

"This isn't exactly easy, you know," protested Ron. "They may as well ask us to make another Sorcerer's Stone."

Before Severus could retort, they heard a popping sound outside. A few seconds later the door opened and Lucius walked in. Harry and Ron immediately grabbed their wands and rushed toward the tall wizard.

"How the hell did you find this place?" asked Ron, as he held his wand towards Lucius.

"Hermione, quick, get a hold of someone at the Ministry!" yelled Harry.

Severus ran toward them, and stood next to the very nervous Harry and looked up at him.

"Potter, stop being such a doody face and put your wand down! Lucius is helping us!" yelled Severus.

Harry looked down at Severus.

"Oh right, he just waltzed in here to...hang on. Did you just call me a doody face?" asked Harry.

Ginny, who'd been in the study all this time, ran out to see what the commotion was. She saw her brother and his best friend pointing their wands at Lucius. She walked towards the group and stood between Lucius and the two younger wizards.

"Ginny! Have you gone mad? Get out of the way!" yelled Ron.

"Ronald, Harry put your wands down," said Ginny.

Hermione jumped and snatched Ron's wand out of his hand.

"Hey! Give it back!" yelled Ron, as he now chased after Hermione, who was running around the entire living room.

"What's going on here?" asked Harry, as he now lowered his wand.

"What's going on is that Lucius is part of the Order. He's been helping since..." Severus looked at Lucius who was staring at Harry.

"Since Voldemort killed my wife and son in cold blood," Lucius said somberly. He walked around Ginny and went further into the living room. He'd been reminded of his family's massacre one too many times that day, and it wasn't even noon yet. He took a bottle of firewhiskey from the secret cupboard next to the bust of Merlin on one of the shelves.

Hermione stopped jumping on the couch and looked at Lucius. She'd never seen him look as sad as he did at that moment. She'd asked Severus before they went to sleep to tell her the entire story of how Lucius came to the Order. When he told her, she felt pity for Lucius. No one should ever have to feel such sadness. She gave Ron his wand and jumped off the couch, then approached Lucius and placed her hand on his arm.

"It's all right, Lucius. He'll get what's coming to him and more," she said in her small voice.

Lucius looked down at her and took hold of a long strand of curly hair.

"Yes, he will," he said. He looked at the others in the room, standing in silence. Lucius set the bottle of firewhiskey down, not pouring himself a drink. "I have your wands, and some clothes for you and Severus."

Severus walked to Lucius, who was handing Hermione her wand. He then took his own. Severus waved his wand around several times.

"Excellent," Severus said, then transfigured the coffee table into a huge spider right in front of Ron.

"Ah!" Ron began to shake and was dangerously close to pissing all over himself, when Hermione transfigured the spider back into a coffee table. She frowned at Severus then went back to looking through the clothes Lucius had brought her.

"Lucius, these are lovely." She beamed. Ginny sat down next to Hermione and admired the clothes Lucius had brought her. They no doubt had belonged to his wife at one point.

"They are exquisite, Lucius," admitted Ginny as she looked at him.

"Just a few things, nothing fancy. Severus, these should fit you," said Lucius.

"Thank you, Lucius. I'll take care of them. I know they belonged to Draco."

"I have plenty more where those came from. I don't need them back. The same goes for you, Hermione. I've put all of their things away. They are memories, but just that. I do not wish to dwell on my past."

Ginny cleared her throat. "Is anyone hungry? It's about time for lunch." She looked at Harry and Ron. "You two are welcome to stay for lunch."

They nodded and sat back down on the couch. Harry decided not to ask too many questions for once. He would speak to Albus after they left Grimmauld Place. He decided that if Lucius was here, then it could very well be that he was helping the Order. He had been wrong about Severus when he thought the Slytherin had killed Albus, so he decided he would just give Lucius the benefit of the doubt.

They took their former places. Ron and Harry sat on either side of Hermione. Severus sat on the leather chair, and Lucius took a spot next to the fireplace. Lucius noticed Severus staring at the three Gryffindors on the couch.

Severus was brooding. He didn't like the boys sitting so close to Hermione and monopolizing her time. Now that he had his wand back, perhaps it was time to make use of it. The boys were staying for lunch, and he set his mind to making sure they wouldn't be staying for supper as well.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I hope you all enjoyed this chapter.

How to Get Rid of Unwanted Guests

Chapter 9 of 19

Harry and Ron are the victims of little Severus' jealousy.

Thank you all for your wonderful reviews. I appreciate you taking the time to read this story.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for all of her help and suggestons.

Chapter 9 How to get rid of unwanted guests

Lucius excused himself and went into the kitchen. He thought it would be a good opportunity to be alone with Ginny for a while.

In the living room, Severus was pretending to busy himself with some notes he was making. He actually had drawn out a plan that might help in taking down Voldemort. But at that moment he was trying to figure out something even more urgent: how to get Harry and Ron out of the house. Knowing Hermione wouldn't allow him to hex either one, he had to think of something less obvious.

In the kitchen Lucius came up behind Ginny as she was stirring some potatoes into the stew for lunch.

"That smells wonderful," said Lucius.

Ginny jumped slightly and turned around.

"I hope you like it," she said. While her cooking rivaled Molly's in taste, she wondered if Lucius would like it. Was he used to fancier meals? Would her lunch of a simple stew and soda bread be too poor a meal for him? She stopped herself and realized that he was just a wizard like any other. Thinking she best attend to the stew and stop daydreaming about the man in the kitchen with her, she continued cooking.

"I'm sure I will absolutely devour anything you set before me." He smiled as she saw her cheeks flush, and she stopped stirring for a few seconds. She giggled nervously.

"I saw your father today. I wanted to discuss a bit of Order business. He sang your praises in the kitchen, though."

"Well, my mother taught me, and I think she's a fabulous cook." Ginny smiled. She liked the idea of her father and Lucius getting along so well. She couldn't help wondering what else they discussed, other than her cooking.

"He tells me you visit here often, ever since your twin brothers moved back into the Burrow."

Ginny rolled her eyes, "Oh yes, Fred and George. I swear, sometimes I wonder if they have a serious bone in their body. I can't stay there with them. They spend the day trying out their new inventions for the shop, which by the way I cannot wait to be finished."

They were so heavily into their conversation, they didn't notice the door open and close on its own.

It was actually little Severus sneaking into the kitchen. He looked at Lucius "chatting" Ginny up, as the younger generation would say. Severus smirked; he recognized when his friend Lucius set his sights on someone, and Ginny had best be keeping a watch on her virtue, as she was dangerously close to losing it.

Severus spotted what he needed and carefully reached up to the counter, then crawled slowly back out into the living room. Thanks to the fact that he had his wand once again, he was able to cast a simple charm making a doppelganger of himself on the living room chair he was occupying before. Then another simple Disillusionment Charm and he was all set. When he sneaked into the kitchen he wasn't seen because Lucius and Ginny were "busy," but in the living room it would have looked suspicious for a saltshaker to be floating around in mid-air.

In his Disillusioned state, Severus approached Harry and began to shake salt on his clothes. When Harry leaned forward, Severus put some salt down the back of his trousers. He also put some down the back of his shirt and another bit on top of his head. Satisfied with his work, he set the shaker down behind the couch and went back to his chair. No one noticed any difference when he ended the spell and took the place of the doppelganger Severus.

Before Severus could put his wand away, Harry began to scratch himself. He scratched at his head and then his neck, and rubbed his back against the couch in the hope of finding some relief.

"Harry, pay attention. I've got my own work to do. I'm not going to spend my entire day trying to get you to understand this, if you aren't willing to listen," said Hermione in a huff.

"I am paying attention. I've just become itchy all of a sudden." Harry now began to wiggle around where he sat. He didn't realize he was spreading the salt not only to his ass crack, but also to his balls. "What the hell?" he began to scratch his crotch.

"Potter, do you mind? If you want to have a wank, do us all a favor and excuse yourself," Severus said evenly.

Harry scowled, then looked over to Ron.

"Harry, just go to the bathroom," said Ron.

Harry narrowed his eyes at his friend and stood. He walked to the bathroom, while scratching every part of his body that he could reach.

Ginny opened the kitchen door and popped her head out.

"Lunch is ready," Ginny said. She noticed Harry missing. "Where's Harry gone off to?"

"He's got cooties," said Severus as he walked into the kitchen. Hermione followed him giggling.

"He's in the bathroom, he'll be out soon," said Ron.

"Well, he'd better hurry or his stew will get cold." Ginny huffed.

Lucius and Ginny sat at the ends of the table. Severus sat on the bench near Lucius, and Hermione sat near Ginny. Ron sat in between both of them. Severus decided that Ron would be his next victim. He might have been safe during lunch, but since Ron decided to sit next to Hermione, that rankled Severus to no end. Severus thought that only he should be sitting next to her during meals.

As they all sat enjoying their meal, Severus struggled to remember a spell he'd learned when he was a student at Hogwarts. It was something he'd hit Sirius Black with during breakfast one morning. Sirius had been particularly cruel to Severus the day before, and the young Slytherin spent most of that evening looking for a spell to hex the other boy with a spell that could be cast with no wand and from a distance if need be. Even at a young age, Severus could perform wandless magic as well as non-verbal spells quite easily.

Severus would now cast it on Ron, if he could remember the damned thing. He struggled for several minutes before it finally it came to him. Basically, the hex gave Ron a raging case of diarrhea. While Harry's itching would soon cease, Ron would most probably want to go home and deal with his embarrassing problem in private. At least that was the result Severus was counting on.

He quietly continued his meal, waiting for the shit to hit the so-called fan.

Harry finally came into the kitchen and sat down at the table. As soon as he did, he as well as everyone else at the table noticed an odd smell.

"Eww, what's that smell?" said Hermione as she put her hand over her nose and mouth.

Lucius took his napkin and covered his own nose and mouth. Severus looked over to Ron who was covered in sweat.

"Weasley," he said as he leaned into Ron slightly and scrunched his nose then pinched it. "You smell like something died and decomposed on you."

"Ron, for goodness sake, while we're eating?" Ginny waved her hand around and stood. She walked to the counter and picked up her wand. She tried casting an air-freshening spell, but it would only work for a few seconds before the same foul stench returned.

"I think I'm going to be sick," said Ron as he held his stomach. He was trying so hard to keep his ass cheeks squeezed together that he began to sweat even harder.

"It smells like you already have been sick," said Harry.

Ron narrowed his eyes at his friend.

"I think we need to go, Harry." Ron started to get up, and realized if he did he would no doubt shit all over himself.

"I haven't even eaten," protested Harry.

"How can you eat with that smell?" said Ginny.

Lucius stood and walked toward the kitchen door.

"I think I'll go up to my room and change into something a bit more casual. If you will all excuse me. Ginny, your stew was wonderful." Lucius exited quickly, feeling himself growing ill at the horrible smell emanating from Ron.

The rest of the group also decided to make their way out of the kitchen.

"I was enjoying the stew too," pouted Hermione as she sat on the couch. Severus took the parchment he'd been making notes on and sat next to her. "I'm still hungry."

Severus leaned towards her and whispered in her ear.

"Come on, Hermione. I know where Albus hides the canary creams."

Hermione nodded and followed Severus.

"Where are you two off to?" asked Ginny from the hallway.

"The study. I want to show Hermione a very old potions book." They ran off into the study, leaving Ginny wondering what was happening to her brother.

"Ron, can you get up?" asked Harry as he stood behind his friend still in the kitchen. He'd Transfigured the napkin into an oxygen bubble and placed it over his head.

"Harry, if I get up I'm afraid I'll shit all over myself. I don't know what happened. One minute I was fine; all of a sudden, I've got this horrible stomach ache." Ron tried to sit still.

"Well, we've got to get out of here. Just get up and I'll Scourgify you. Gods, Ron, I've never been so embarrassed," said Harry.

Ron looked at him in disbelief.

"Embarrassed? You're embarrassed? I'm the one who's got crap leaking out of his ass, Harry." Ron shook his head. "And in front of Professor Snape and Lucius Malfoy to boot!" He counted to three, then stood quickly. "Get me out of here, Harry."

With his face twisted in disgust, Harry Scourgified Ron and led him out into the living room. They rushed past Ginny and ran to the Floo. Within seconds they were gone.

Ginny placed her hands on her hips.

"How rude. They didn't even say goodbye."

~*~*~*~

Severus and Hermione were in the study. They'd gone through half a dozen of Albus' stash of canary creams as well as some of his Ho-Ho's. They sat on the floor with a few potion books as Severus related his plan for altering the *Adulescens Denuo* potion.

"I think that if we can change some of the ingredient measurements, we may be able to just wipe Voldemort off the face of the earth," said Severus.

"You mean, he would age back so far that he would just disappear?" asked Hermione in wonder. She leaned back against the ottoman behind her.

"I know it sounds too easy, but it's worth a try. All we have to do is make sure he either drinks it, or spray it on him somehow."

"Severus, it's just so crazy that it could actually work," said Hermione.

He smiled, and they began to make calculations for each ingredient. With the right combination, all the Dark Lord would have to do is imbibe the potion, even if it was a single sip, and he would slowly begin to de-age until he was nothing but a miniscule atom. It would be as though he never existed.

As Severus and Hermione toiled in the study with their plan, Lucius came back downstairs in search of Ginny. He changed into a pair of comfortable black slacks and a loose-fitting Guayabera that he'd purchased on a trip to Spain. He loved the look of the linen shirt, and its sage green color gave his ice blue eyes a sea foam tone. Knowing he was in for the rest of the day, barring any temper tantrums from Voldemort, he made sure he was comfortable.

Ginny finished cleaning up the kitchen and was now lounging on the couch. She was flipping through a copy of the latest CosmoWitch.

Lucius spotted one of the article headlines and smirked.

"What wizards really think about you in bed?" he said as he sat down.

Ginny immediately closed the magazine and sat up.

"This isn't mine. It must be Tonks'," Ginny said as she threw the magazine on the coffee table. "I swear she reads the worst trash." She laughed nervously, hoping he wouldn't notice her name on the small address label.

"Oh, I'm sure they must have some useful information. After all, CosmoWitch has been around for quite a while. Narcissa used to subscribe." He picked it up and began to flip through the pages. As he did, he remembered his beloved wife doing the same as what he'd caught Ginny doing lounging on their couch and relaxing, hoping to find out some secret information about men that even men didn't know about themselves.

He noticed the absence of the two little ones.

"And where have smoke and fire gone off to?" he asked Ginny.

She laughed. "They went into the study. Severus had a large piece of parchment in his hands. I get the feeling they went off to research something. They are so cute together," she said.

"Don't let Severus hear you say that. He's got his wand back and he just might hex you." Lucius thought back to what happened in the kitchen during lunch. He'd noticed Severus eyeing Harry and Ron. He knew that look. Somehow Lucius got the feeling that Ron's troubles in the kitchen might have something to do with the little snake now in the study.

Ginny noticed his clothes. He looked very relaxed, and she thought this might be a good time to ask him what else he and her father talked about. It was time to be bold.

"So, did my father say anything else this afternoon? Other than how wonderful my cooking is?" she asked sweetly.

"Not really. But, he did say we should both stop by the Burrow tomorrow after I drop Severus and Hermione off at Hogwarts."

"Oh dear, I'm sorry. It sounds like my father is playing matchmaker." She hoped Arthur wouldn't do something like this.

"Why would you think that?" asked Lucius.

"He, like my mother, thinks it's time I think about getting married. Every time a man even so much as comes near me, they start to pick out flower arrangements and china patterns." She was so embarrassed she started to get up, wanting desperately to leave the room. "You don't have to come along."

Before she could get past him, Lucius grabbed her arm and pulled her down to his lap. He wrapped one arm around her waist and placed his other hand on the nape of her neck.

"I'm afraid I don't have the patience for picking out flower arrangements, and I detest looking at china patterns. I rather like the idea of being the victim of some matchmaking plot." He pulled Ginny towards him and kissed her.

Ginny was so surprised that for a moment she stiffened. Only when she felt his arm winding around her waist did she begin to relax. She wrapped her arms around his neck and allowed him to kiss her to his heart's content. He felt warm and strong, like he could pick her up like a rag doll and do anything he wanted to her. At that moment, she would have allowed him just that, anything.

Lucius and Ginny were so wrapped up in their lust that they didn't even notice Severus and Hermione coming back into the room.

The "children" stood in the hallway just before entering the living room, and stared at the two snogging away.

"Did you know they liked each other like that?" asked Severus.

"Well, yes, I knew she likes him like that," answered Hermione.

Severus took her arm, and slowly and quietly they backed out of the room. They walked to the back entrance, which led into a small yard, and sat on the steps.

"Lucius hasn't been interested in another woman since he met Narcissa. I've worried for him all these years. He is lonely." Severus stared up at the clouds as Hermione looked at him thoughtfully.

"What about you?" she asked.

"What about me, what?" Severus looked at her confused.

"I've never seen you with a woman. During all my years in Hogwarts, you never had a date to any of the functions. I've never heard anyone even gossip about you with a woman. Aren't you lonely?"

He was quiet, not really knowing how to answer her.

"I am alone because I deserve to be alone, Hermione. The things I've done in my past, the things I've seen." He bowed his small head and began to play with a blade of grass he took in his hands.

"You deserve as much as Lucius does." Hermione placed her head on his shoulder and wrapped her arm around his, then took hold of his hand.

He curled his fingers around hers and looked down at her. He hoped their minds would last long enough to take the counter-potion the following day. He'd grown quite fond of her in the time they had been together in fact, more than fond. If it weren't for their current condition, he would probably be doing to her what Lucius was doing to Ginny in the living room, and then some.

'Little boys shouldn't kiss little girls, not until they're much older' he thought, *'like eighteen.'*

Maybe when this nightmare was over and done with, and they were both back to normal, Severus would ask her if she was interested in taking on her old Potions professor. After all, she was a Gryffindor, she was supposed to be courageous.

~*~*~*~*~*~

The salt thing Severus did to Harry is something I did to my brother when I was about 7. I was eating dinner in his room, which had a TV and decided to get creative with the salt shaker. So I sprinkled salt all over his bed. He woke up in the middle of the night itching and came to my parents room complaining. I almost got away with it but my mom heard me laughing under the covers.

Also, a Guayabera is a shirt that Latin men used to wear for special occasions, like weddings or maybe church on Sunday. They are more mainstream now and they are worn casually too.

Beyond This Night

Chapter 10 of 19

It's the last day at Grimmauld and the counter-potion is ready.

I'd like to thank once again all of those that have taken the time to read this story. Your comments have made me very happy and I'm glad you are all enjoying this story.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks as always to my lovely beta June! I couldn't do this without you!!

~*~*~*~*~*~

Severus and Hermione sat outside on the back steps at Grimmauld Place for almost an hour. Thinking they had given the pair inside enough alone time, they got up and walked back to the living room. To their surprise, Lucius and Ginny were still at it. Severus wondered if the two still had lips, because you would think they would have worn down by now.

Severus cleared his throat, expecting Lucius and Ginny to stop snogging. Nothing happened; it was as though he or Hermione weren't there.

"Gods, they're going to swallow each other!" said Severus a bit too loud.

That did it. Lucius and Ginny both startled and they both immediately got up from the couch.

"Oh," Ginny ran her hands through her hair. "How long have you two been standing there?" she asked.

Lucius in the meantime was too busy being pleased with himself.

"We just came from outside," said Hermione. She walked past the two and sat on the couch. She needed to finish her homework so that Severus and she could continue working on the potion to de-age Voldemort.

Severus crossed his arms and eyed the two adults. He walked past Ginny, then as he was passing Lucius he winked at his friend and smiled. Lucius coughed to cover up his chuckle. Severus sat next to Hermione on the couch and looked at the books she'd spread on the coffee table.

"Can I help you?" he asked. Hermione looked at him and nodded. Together they sat doing her homework, while Ginny and Lucius eyed each other.

"I should get to my own work. I need to finish my essay before I get supper started." Ginny turned and walked back to the study.

Lucius thought about following her, but decided against it. Ginny had been receptive to his advances and would no doubt allow him to do even more. Were it not for Severus and Hermione interrupting them, chances are he would have had her half-naked in the living room. It was a good thing the two "children" showed up when they did.

Lucius hadn't been with a woman since the death of Narcissa, and Ginny's last encounter with the male body was almost a year ago. They were both more than ready to have at each other. He also didn't have to worry about her parents' approval, as it was very evident to him when he spoke to Arthur that he and his wife wanted their daughter married and happy, hopefully to Lucius.

For now, though, he would have to busy himself until he could get Ginny alone once again. Perhaps he would sneak into her room after Severus and Hermione were asleep. 'No,' he thought, *the room she is currently in has a single bed.* He would have to somehow get her into his room. Better yet, he could accost her while she walked to her room. There were little corners and niches in the upstairs hallway he could hide in. Yes, that appealed to his darker side definitely. Smiling from ear to ear, he took the previously discarded CosmoWitch issue and began to turn the pages. He couldn't wait for evening to come.

For the next several hours everyone kept busy. Ginny finished her essay while Severus and Hermione finished Hermione's homework. Lucius had gone through the CosmoWitch issue twice. He knew more about his balls and penis then he ever knew before. Perhaps the magazine was good for something.

Suppertime quickly approached and Ginny had come out of the study. Lucius noticed her walking to the kitchen. As she walked through the hall she quickly glanced in his direction and smiled. He smiled back and started to get up, when Severus and Hermione drew his attention.

"Give it back!" yelled Hermione as she reached for a small piece of parchment Severus held in his hands.

"I don't know how I'm going to get my assignment done," said Severus as he tried to mimic Hermione's voice while reading her note. "He's just so dreamy." He looked at her. "Aha, so who are you in love with, Hermione?"

"None of your business, give me my note!" Hermione tried desperately to get the note from Severus who pushed her away. Severus kept the note far away from her and kept waving it in a teasing way.

"Hermione's got a boyfriend, Hermione's got a boyfriend!" he mocked.

Lucius rolled his eyes and walked toward the pair. He snatched the note from Severus' hand.

"Lucius! Give it here!" said Severus as he hopped up and down trying to snatch the note from Lucius.

"Ah ah ah, Severus," said Lucius, waving his finger. "You were doing the same thing to Hermione and it wasn't very nice. It's not fun when the shoe is on the other foot, is it?"

Severus scowled and crossed his arms in defeat.

"I suppose," he agreed reluctantly.

Hermione came from behind and started hopping up and down, trying to get the note back.

"Lucius, please give me my note," she begged. She'd written the note the day she and Severus had been doused with the potion. She was so infatuated with him. She had been for many years. In fact, she was more than infatuated. She'd resolved to graduate and go back to Hogwarts. She would have taken any job there was; she'd even work in the kitchens, cleaning the toilets, just to be back at Hogwarts and near Severus.

Lucius looked down at her and gave her the note.

"Here you are. I suggest you hide your little love notes better," he said as he looked at Severus, "or else bad little boys will use them against you."

Severus stomped his foot and went back to his former place on the couch, where he could still look at Hermione's books and papers scattered on the coffee table.

Hermione giggled at Lucius' reference to "bad little boys" and sat next to Severus. She put her things away and went to the bookcase to look for a book to read until supper was finished. She made sure to pick something out that Severus might enjoy as well, then went back and sat on the couch. After several minutes, he warmed up to her and sat back to read the book along with her.

Once Ginny had finished making supper, they all filed into the kitchen and ate in silence. Ginny had made steak and mashed potatoes, and for dessert she'd made pudding; she knew better than to try to get little Severus and Hermione to eat broccoli or another vegetable. When dinner was finished Severus and Hermione went up to their room and changed for bed. They were tired from all the energy expelled that day, and they were anxious about going back to Hogwarts to take the counter-potion.

Lucius helped Ginny finish the dishes, then they went into the living room. He wondered if he should suggest they continue their afternoon snog fest, but thought it best they take things slow. He wanted her, badly, but he didn't want to scare her off. They talked for a while, getting to know one another a little better, then went off to their separate rooms.

The plan was that Lucius would take Severus and Hermione to Hogwarts in the afternoon, then go along with Ginny to the Burrow. He decided to talk with her there after dinner. It had been a long time since he'd courted any woman and he wanted to make sure she would be receptive to courting, although he knew by her enthusiasm to his kisses that she would be. That having been decided, Lucius thought it best to leave Ginny alone for the rest of the night. They would be together soon enough.

Morning came and they all had breakfast together. Severus and Hermione talked Lucius into taking them to Hogwarts early. As the "children" packed their few belongings into a small case, they both secretly wondered what it would be like between them once they became adults once again. They would soon know.

Severus and Hermione could no longer Apparate themselves, so Lucius Apparated with Severus, and Ginny took Hermione. They Apparated to the gates of Hogwarts, but as they walked in Lucius grabbed his left arm and grimaced in pain.

"I can't go any further. He's calling me," Lucius stated.

Severus' eyes teared up slightly as did Lucius'. For some reason they both felt a foreboding sense wash over them. They knew something was going to happen that day, and it wasn't going to be good.

Lucius knelt down and looked at his little friend.

"Be careful, Lucius," said Severus as his voice quivered.

Lucius pat him on the shoulder and smiled.

"I always am, my friend." He stood and nodded towards Hermione, then turned to Ginny. "I shall see you soon, Ginny."

"Do be careful," she said as he kissed the back of her hand.

Lucius Apparated away. Ginny and the "children" looked at one another.

"I think the time is drawing near," Severus said as he turned and walked towards the castle. Both women knew what he meant.

Lucius appeared in the throne room along with several dozen or so Death Eaters. Voldemort spotted Lucius immediately and motioned him to his side. As he approached, Lucius noticed the Dark Lord was smiling. *'This is it,'* he thought. Today he would know what Voldemort's plans were for Hogwarts.

"Attention, my followers. Today we will begin to plan our attack on Hogwarts. This will be the beginning. The future of the wizarding world is in controlling Hogwarts," said Voldemort as he looked around the room. He continued his remarks and his ranting, then dismissed everyone except Lucius and a few other Death Eaters. "Remember, kill everyone inside, but save the old wizard for me."

Voldemort looked at Lucius and four other high-ranking Death Eaters. "Come, we need to do much planning."

Lucius and the Death Eaters nodded and followed the Dark Lord to his room. Together, they planned the takeover of Hogwarts and the Ministry for several hours.

It was what Lucius had expected. Voldemort ordered his "faithful servant" Lucius to use his position that he still held in the Ministry of Magic to get into Hogwarts and take down the set of wards near the dungeons. Voldemort knew that it would be easier to enter through the darkened dungeons, where there were few students. Also, there were passages leading to all of the houses that could be accessed from the dungeons.

What Voldemort wanted most was access to Albus's office. He knew that from there he could easily access the office of the Minister of Magic via a Floo connection, since Arthur Weasley was part of the Order. Once Voldemort had Hogwarts students as hostages and access to the Ministry, then he could take it over; and once the Ministry was in his hands, everything else would fall into place. There were many secrets there, secrets that would allow him to rule the wizarding world with no opposition whatsoever.

Meanwhile, as the attack on Hogwarts was being planned, Severus and Hermione had gone to his rooms. Ginny had been so nervous about Lucius being summoned that Albus wouldn't allow her to Apparate; she had Flooed to the Burrow.

Just before seven o'clock in the evening, Severus and Hermione got dressed in their adult clothes. Upon taking the counter-potion, they expected they would immediately begin to grow into their previous forms. Albus, who had been abnormally quiet, was with them inside the small lab. The small Potions Master and his ex-student each picked up a goblet.

Just before they drank, they all heard a tapping above them. There was an owl outside the window near the ceiling. Albus flicked his wand and the window opened. The owl dropped a note in his hands and flew away.

"Oh, no," said Albus as he read the note.

"Is it from Lucius?" asked Severus.

Albus looked at him over his specs.

"Yes, and it's urgent. I need to meet him at Arthur's office." Albus rolled up the note and placed it in the pocket of his robes. He started to run out of the room, but stopped and turned to Severus and Hermione.

"I know you need to take that counter-potion, but please, wait one more day. Don't take it unless I'm here."

Severus and Hermione looked at him in confusion.

"Why on earth should we wait? Albus, if we don't take this now, we may not be able to return to our adult selves." Severus placed his goblet on the table. "What's wrong? Did something happen to the potion while I was gone?" he asked suspiciously.

"Severus, I don't have time. Please, just promise me you will wait. You still have time. I will return before midnight. Surely you can wait a few more hours?" Albus turned again and rushed out of the room, leaving Severus and Hermione to wonder why he felt the need for them to wait.

"Why do you suppose he wants us to wait?" asked Hermione.

Severus took his goblet from the table.

"I don't know, but we can't listen to him," he said as he looked at Hermione. "Do you want to take a chance on waiting?"

Hermione shook her head. She knew as well as he did that if they waited much longer there was a chance that not even the potion in their hands would be able to help them.

"Right then, on the count of three." Severus held his goblet of potion up, as did Hermione. "One, two, three."

They tipped the goblets into their mouths and drank the potion down. Nothing happened. Staring at each other, Severus knew something had gone wrong. The results should have been instantaneous.

"What happened?" asked Hermione, as she looked at herself, then to Severus.

"I don't know. It should have worked." He looked at the notes they had used when they made the counter-potion. He had taken great care in making sure every step was followed to the letter. He'd observed Hermione cutting the ingredients, and she had done so perfectly.

He ran his hand through his hair. "It should have worked...it should have worked...it should have worked!"

Severus began throwing cauldrons left and right. He kicked the stool across the room and began beating at the wall with his small fists.

Hermione came to him and grabbed his shoulder, pulling him away from the wall.

"Severus, stop it! You'll hurt yourself!" she yelled as she hugged him from behind. He was breathing hard, trying to catch his breath, trying to calm down. "We'll start over, we'll try again," Hermione said nervously.

"We don't have time, Hermione." He sank down into the ground, taking her with him. "We don't have time." His body went limp in her arms. "Don't you feel it? Simple spells are getting impossible to even remember, much less perform."

Hermione sighed; he was right. "Yes. I...I feel it too. How long do you suppose we have?"

"I don't know. One day, maybe two." He turned and looked at her. She saw the tears now forming in his eyes. He touched her cheek, and then touched her hair.

"We won't remember each other, will we?" she asked in a whisper.

"No, we won't. Albus will most likely take you to your parents," said Severus.

"I don't think they will let me come back to this world after everything that's happened. I...won't ever see you again, Severus." Tears fell from her eyes now as she realized he would soon be lost to her. She noticed his own tears begin to fall, and he began to shake.

"It's all right. At least you'll be with people who love you. I don't even know what will become of me," he said, now truly frightened.

"Albus will watch over you, or Lucius. I'm sure Lucius will take care of you."

He shook his head. "No, Hermione, no. I'm..." He sobbed now. "I'm afraid that Lucius will not survive this war. I've failed him. I know I could have helped him. Maybe not with the potion that did this to us, but I could have come up with something. But now, now it's all over. My friend will die. Voldemort is bound to find out about his duplicity sooner or later. Albus, he's too old to take care of a six-year-old. Voldemort will be going after Albus, too. There may be no one left to take care of me when this war is over and done with." He leaned into her and rested his head on her lap.

She soothed him by brushing his hair with her fingers.

"I'll be alone, again," he said as he wrapped his arms around her waist and cried.

Hermione allowed him to cry until he calmed down. After almost an hour she finally urged him to his feet and they walked hand-in-hand to his bedroom. They got into bed without even bothering to change into their child-size pajamas. It was early still, but the excitement and disappointment of the day caught up with them. They were exhausted and they had no more fight left in them.

Severus felt as though he would never see her again, and in a way he wouldn't. He knew that by morning he would most probably have no recollection of her once he woke up. To him she would be just a yucky little girl who was next to him in a big bed. Hermione pulled the comforter over their small bodies, and they held each other.

"If I should wake up tomorrow, and I am never to remember you as you are, as you were," Severus said as he looked into Hermione's eyes, "I want you to know that even though these last four days have been the most bizarre of my life, they have also been the happiest. I'm sorry, Hermione. I'm sorry that I shall never have a chance to know what it would be like to love you beyond this night."

Hermione smiled and kissed his cheek. She closed her eyes and held him tighter.

"Severus, you would have made me the happiest woman on this earth if you could have had that chance," she said, holding him as close to her as she could until they fell asleep.

What Severus and Hermione didn't know was that the counter-potion now included a small chocolate-covered hazelnut. Even though Albus had accidentally altered the counter-potion, it still was effective. The dropped hazelnut did two things. The one thing that was most noticeable was it delayed the results. So while Severus and Hermione didn't immediately change back to their adult selves, during the night their bodies began to grow and transform to their former state. The second thing was something only Severus and Hermione would notice eventually.

As morning approached, Severus felt himself begin to awaken. He also felt something on top of him. His mind was in a slight fog. As he woke, he began to remember everything that had happened in the last several days, including thinking that the counter-potion didn't work. He looked down at the brown mass of curls on his chest. It was Hermione, a very grown-up and beautiful Hermione. He could feel her full breasts against his chest and realized that the counter-potion did indeed work. He shifted her slightly to lie next to him and looked at her.

"Why didn't I notice these small freckles on her nose before?" he wondered. He began to trace along the curves of her face with the tip of his finger. He heard her moan quietly, and then saw her eyes begin to flutter open.

Hermione felt something touching her face. She'd been in a deep sleep and was now becoming aware of something hard next to her. She opened her eyes slowly and immediately thought she was dreaming. Her dreams would allow her one last look at Severus before her mind wiped her memories of him away forever.

"I'm dreaming you, I know I am. Kiss me just once, please."

Not wanting to pass on the opportunity, just in case it would be the only time he would ever kiss her, he leaned into her and kissed her softly.

Hermione closed her eyes when he kissed her, but then she felt his warm lips and immediately knew she wasn't dreaming. Her eyes shot open.

"Severus Snape, you tricked me!" she said as she pushed him away.

"I did nothing of the kind. How did I trick you? You're the one who begged me for a kiss." he said indignantly as though he'd just been insulted.

"You let me think you were a dream," she said in a huff.

"But, I am not," he smirked and moved his hand over to her hips, then down her round bottom and squeezed lightly. "Do you really want to lie here arguing about how I may or may not have tricked you? Or do you wish for me to show you what I meant by loving you beyond last night?"

Hermione smiled and pulled him down to her lips. Their investigation into finding out whatever happened to the potion to delay their change into adults would have to wait. For now, they were both going to enjoy the fact that they were no longer six years old.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Well they're back to their adult selves. I've got more planned so this isn't over just yet.

Thanks for reading, I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

Chocolate and Hazelnuts

Chapter 11 of 19

Severus and Hermione find out just what effect Albus' snafu caused.

Thank you all for your support during my writing of this fic. I'm very happy that everyone has enjoyed this so much.

I hope you continue to enjoy this.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for all of her help in getting this read ready.

Chapter 11 Chocolate and Hazelnuts

Severus rolled over on top of Hermione. They were both clothed, but he planned to rectify that quickly. As they kissed, he began to reach for his wand, in order to divest them both of their clothes, when suddenly he heard Albus' voice calling him.

"Severus! Where are you?" the Headmaster called out anxiously.

"Damn!" muttered Severus, as he quickly rolled off of Hermione. They both sat up just as Albus ran into the open bedroom.

"Ah!" screamed the old man. "It worked," he said, surprised.

"Well, of course it bloody worked," said Severus. He looked at Albus and began to grow nervous. "Albus," Severus said as he hopped off the bed and walked toward the Headmaster. "Why were you so insistent last night that Hermione and I wait to take the potion?" He crossed his arms.

Hermione came up behind him. "Yes, Albus. There was really no reason to wait. The potion worked, as you can see." She then noticed the scent of chocolate near her. Hermione loved chocolate. If she could spend her entire life eating chocolate, she would.

"Well, I just wanted to be sure you were both all right. I know it was a complicated potion. You were just children, after all," Albus explained nervously.

Severus narrowed his eyes.

"Albus, what happened to the counter-potion? It didn't change us immediately, as it should have." Severus then looked around. There was the distinct smell of hazelnuts in the room. He loved hazelnuts but hadn't had any in his room in weeks. He'd gone to Hogsmeade a month ago and bought a two-pound bag, but they were gone within a week. He wondered now why he could smell hazelnuts, mingled with lavender and... vanilla, was it?

Albus noticed the Potions master looking around the room in confusion.

"Is there something wrong, Severus?" asked Albus.

"Don't you smell it?" asked Severus.

Albus shook his head.

"Smell what?" asked Hermione, thinking he smelled the chocolate too.

"Hazelnuts; my room smells like hazelnuts." Severus walked around the bedroom, then out into the living room. As he left his bedroom the scent faded, only to grow stronger as he approached his room once again.

"I don't smell anything, Severus," said Albus.

"I smell something, but it's not hazelnuts," answered Hermione as Severus approached her.

Albus' eyes grew large, as he realized what his "accident" in the potions lab may have caused.

"What do you smell?" Severus asked Hermione.

"Chocolate."

Albus gasped.

Both Severus and Hermione looked his way.

"Albus, what the hell is going on here? What happened to the counter-potion?" insisted Severus. Hermione was standing next to him. He leaned closer to her and sniffed.

"Wait, it's you!" Severus pointed to Hermione.

"Me? What's me?" she asked.

"You smell like hazelnuts." Severus grabbed her by the shoulders and began to sniff into her hair, and then he nuzzled her neck.

She giggled and pushed him away slightly.

"Well, you smell like chocolate," she said. Again, they both looked at a very guilty Albus.

The wizard cleared his throat and smiled.

"Um...well now, Severus. You see, it's not anything bad, chocolate and hazelnuts. I can think of worse smells to be surrounded by." His smile faded as he noticed the scowl on the now adult Severus' face.

"All right, all right. It was an accident. I promise, I researched every bit of information on the counter-potion I could find as well as the um...object that I uh..." Albus mumbled the rest of his words.

Hermione quirked her head.

"What was that, sir?" she asked.

Albus again mumbled his words.

"Out with it, old man!" spat Severus.

Albus sighed in defeat. "I dropped a chocolate-covered hazelnut into the counter-potion! It was an accident!" said Albus finally.

"You what!" bellowed Severus.

"Oh no, Albus. How did that happen?" asked Hermione as she grabbed Severus by the arm to try to hold him back.

"I was looking at the potion and as I was popping a hazelnut into my mouth, I accidentally hit the table and well, lost my footing a bit, and it just fell in." Albus made sure he was close enough to the door so that he could make a run for it if need be. At his age, he couldn't run fast; he'd need a head start.

"I don't believe this," Severus said as he threw his arms up. "A hazelnut. A chocolate-covered hazelnut! Is there anything else you may have dropped in there? So help me, Albus, if I start craving those bollicking lemon drops, I think you will actually have to disappear, because I may just have to come after you and cast an Unforgivable your way."

"Severus, calm down," said Hermione. "It's not that bad. I think it's actually sort of nice."

Severus looked at her like she had a carrot growing out of the middle of her head.

Hermione smiled and got closer to him.

"I love chocolate, you know." She nuzzled his neck and whispered in his ear, "I wonder if you taste like chocolate, too." She felt a shiver come from Severus just before he moved away from her slightly. He took a quick look into her mind and saw images of her licking him as he was covered with chocolate. He quickly withdrew, and then looked at Albus.

"Well, I suppose it could have been worse," Severus said. *'The old man could have dropped a clove of garlic into the potion,* he thought.

"There, you see, everything turned out for the best." Albus smiled and clapped his hands. Then his face grew serious once again. "Now that I know you are both fine, I need to speak with you about the meeting. Lucius met with us all last night, and we have some preparations to make."

They went into the living room and sat, as Albus told them what Lucius had reported. It had been decided at the all-night Order meeting that it would be best to stop Voldemort before his attack on the castle.

As the three talked, there was a cracking noise in the Floo. The flames grew high and Lucius stepped through. He looked at his now adult-sized friend, then at the young woman sitting next to him. Hermione, much like Ginny, had grown into a very beautiful woman.

"I see the potion worked," said the tall blond wizard as he entered the room further. "Good." He looked towards Albus. "There is a problem."

"What's happened?" asked Severus.

Lucius took off his cape and sat down at the far end of the couch. He looked tired.

"Wormtail is dead," said Lucius plainly.

"How?" asked Albus.

"He tried to poison Voldemort," answered Lucius.

"What?" Hermione couldn't believe her ears. "Wait, Harry will want to know about this."

"See if he can come," Albus said to Hermione.

Severus rolled his eyes. *'Great, Potter's cooties in my rooms.'* He stopped himself. *'What the hell? Where did that come from?'* thought Severus. Much to his dismay, he was apparently still having some residual childlike thoughts.

Hermione caught Harry just before he and Ron went to the University Quidditch pitch. Both young men walked through the Floo and into Severus' living room.

"Okay, Hermione, so what was so important that..." Harry stopped and looked around the room. The first thing he noticed was that the professor and his friend were now back to their adult forms. Then he noticed Lucius Malfoy sitting at the far end of the couch, and finally he saw Albus sitting across from the three in a large leather chair.

"Harry, nice of you to join us. Ron, you too," said Albus cheerfully.

"Well, have a seat the both of you. Lucius was about to tell us of the timely demise of Peter Pettigrew," Severus said, then he smiled and looked at Ron. "Oh, and Mr. Weasley, I do hope you have that putrid odor streaming out of your ass under control."

"Severus!" snapped Hermione.

"May I continue?" asked Lucius loudly.

"Pettigrew is dead?" asked Harry. "How, when?"

Lucius rolled his eyes. "I was about to tell Albus, Severus and Hermione just that. Now, if you please have a seat, I can continue," said Lucius, feeling himself begin to lose patience. He'd planned on calling on Ginny early that morning after the all-night Order meeting, but instead had been called back to the Dark Lord's lair, where he found out that Peter was being tortured. After Peter was finally disposed of, he decided to make a quick detour to Hogwarts to let Severus and Albus know what had happened.

Everyone quieted down and listened to Lucius. It wasn't entirely clear to Lucius why Peter did what he did, but the ex-friend of James Potter had spent the last week developing a potion to kill Voldemort.

"He came into the throne room to give the Dark Lord his breakfast. There was something in his manner that drew Voldemort's attention. Peter was nervous. He normally comes into the room, sets the food down, and leaves. Today he stayed. He kept looking at the food on the plate. Then he would look at the goblet as well. Just before Voldemort drank from the goblet, he stopped and looked at Peter."

Lucius paused as he remembered the torture Peter had endured.

"Peter, of course, refused to speak. I could tell that Voldemort was using Legilimency on him during the torture. When he stopped he put Peter in a binding spell, then applied the Cruciatus Curse for several minutes. Then he continued with slicing hexes, and washed the blood off of him with salted lemon juice."

"That's horrible," whispered Hermione.

"Then you will not want to hear how Peter finally died," Lucius said as he looked towards Harry. "Before he died, he was thinking about you, Harry. He cried out your name as he breathed his last breath. Peter said, 'I tried. I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, Harry.'"

They were all silent for a moment.

"He must have been trying to pay back the life-debt he owes to me. He tried to kill Voldemort so that I wouldn't have to face him," said Harry in wonder. "But he couldn't have killed him, because the prophecy says I'm the only one that can kill him." Harry shook his head.

Severus then turned to him.

"Potter, stop living your life based on what you think you know, and start living it based on what you ~~do~~ know." Severus stood and walked towards Harry. "There is nothing in that prophecy stating that you cannot have assistance. Or do you plan to rush into the Dark Lord's lair armed with just your wand and your balls?"

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Another chapter down. I'm hoping to start writing the next chapter this weekend.

I hope you all enjoyed this one.

Thanks for reading.

Old Enough for Adult Games

Chapter 12 of 19

Severus and Hermione continue where they left off.

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to post this next chapter. But it took me quite a while to get the lemons done.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for all of her help in getting this ready to post. I also want to thank Deviantauthor for looking over the lemons for me.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Chapter 12 Old enough for adult games

The morning was spent making plans.

In truth, Harry had never been pleased with the thought of facing Voldemort by himself. Severus had made a good point. Harry listened to his former Potions professor as he and Hermione outlined their plan to create a potion much like the one that had transformed them into six-year-olds.

It was agreed that Lucius would be the one to tell the Order when and where to make their move against Voldemort. The dark wizard was growing increasingly paranoid, especially since Peter's attempted poisoning.

Severus and Hermione were confident that they would be able to manipulate the potion to meet their needs. After a few more pleasantries they all said their goodbyes and agreed to meet back at Hogwarts on the coming Wednesday. Harry and Ron continued their plan to go play Quidditch, while Severus and Hermione disappeared into his private laboratory. Albus went out onto the grounds to begin protecting the castle from any attack.

As for Lucius, he went home. He was tired and wanted to get some rest before he visited Ginny. As he flooded home, he felt his excitement grow. He was looking forward to seeing the young woman. Lucius had been alone for so long. Even Severus seemed to have found someone. During the short meeting, he'd noticed how both Severus and Hermione kept looking at one another smiling, thinking they were unnoticed by everyone. His dark-haired friend seemed relaxed, and happy.

Lucius hoped that he too would soon have a lovely young witch sitting beside him in his home. He smiled as he undressed and lay on his bed. After taking a much-needed rest, he would go see Ginny.

In Severus' private lab, he and Hermione worked on four potions. Each potion used the same ingredients. The only difference was that the four cauldrons held different proportions of key ingredients. One of those cauldrons held the potion that would allow them to destroy Voldemort. How they would get it to him was something they would think of later. For now the important thing was getting it finished.

After spending most of the morning and all of the afternoon in the lab, they finally came up with the potion they needed. Deciding to leave further tests for the next morning, wizard and witch ordered dinner in. Severus found he enjoyed being with the adult Hermione just as much as he'd enjoyed being with the six-year-old Hermione. They worked as one, often knowing what the other needed without having to be asked.

As they finished their supper, Severus looked at Hermione appraisingly. She had grown into a very pretty woman. Her hair was now more curly than frizzy, her breasts full and her hips well rounded. He'd felt her that morning, and she felt glorious to him. He wondered if she would want to continue where they left off.

Hermione yawned. It had been a long day. Actually, it had been a long four days. She looked up from her plate and noticed Severus had been staring at her.

"What is it?" she asked as she looked down, wondering if she had something on her blouse.

He smiled and rose.

"You look tired," he said.

"I am a bit. But I don't think I could sleep. I feel...wound up. You know?" she asked.

"I know. I feel the same way. Perhaps we should go to bed. It's still early, but I feel the need to lie down and relax." He walked toward her and extended his hand.

Hermione took his hand and allowed him to lift her to her feet.

"I really don't feel like going back to my university dorm room." She wondered if he would want to continue their sleeping arrangements, now that they were no longer children. As children things would no doubt have remained innocent between them in bed. But now, she couldn't guarantee she would be able to keep from wanting more.

"You may stay here, if you like." Severus wanted to know if she still wanted him. "I can Transfigure the couch into a bed for you. I'm sure it will be more comfortable this time around." He watched her for a moment, and finally saw in her eyes what he needed to know: she looked disappointed.

"Oh, I...well, I suppose it'll be all right." She bowed her head and turned to walk toward her bed for the evening, then felt his arms wrap around her waist.

"What's wrong?" He kissed her neck. "Is there somewhere else you would rather sleep tonight?" He pulled her closer to him.

Hermione leaned her head back to rest on his shoulder. She ground herself against him as she held him tightly.

"I want to sleep, where I've been sleeping for the last three nights." She turned and wrapped her arms around his neck. "I want to sleep in your arms."

He'd heard what he needed to hear. He kissed her softly at first, wanting only to relish the feel of her lips against his own. He lifted his head and opened his eyes slightly. Hermione's eyes fluttered open as he lifted her and carried her to his bedroom.

Severus laid her down gently on his bed, and then slowly lay next to her. They kissed and touched one another for several minutes. He began to undress Hermione. As he removed her blouse, he followed the path of his hands with feathery kisses.

Hermione watched him through hooded, lust-filled eyes; glad they were able to finally continue where they had left off that morning before Albus interrupted them. So deeply was she entranced in both her thoughts and her soon-to-be lover's eyes, she hadn't realized he'd managed to undress her completely.

"You could have just spelled my clothes away," she said as she sat up.

Severus smiled slyly. "But I had a much better time doing it this way." He allowed her to gently push him onto his back, as she began to undress him in the same manner.

As she unbuttoned the many small buttons from his black frock coat, she never took her eyes away from his until she managed to divest him of every scrap of cloth between his skin and hers.

She looked down at his naked body as she felt the heat inside of her build. Finally Hermione could fully appreciate him in his adult form.

No more could his ribs be seen poking through his small upper body. Though he was tall and lean, he was firmly built. Severus' chest was well-defined, and his arms toned and strong. His erection was far beyond impressive.

Severus was also taking his time studying her body. He ran his hands from her small waist to her slightly round belly. He loved that she had a roundness to her. He reached up and cupped her breasts, and smiled as both his hands perfectly covered them; then he chuckled slightly.

Hermione furrowed her brow.

"Not big enough for you?" she asked, slightly irritated, as she thought he was laughing at what she believed was an inadequate cup size.

"Quite the contrary. I never fully understood what Lucius meant when he said 'more than a handful was a waste.'" Severus thought he would have to remember to tell Lucius how right he was about that.

He rolled them both over and settled his hips between her thighs, then felt Hermione shiver.

"Are you..." Before he could finish his question, Hermione interrupted him.

Ginny finds herself in the presence of someone she hoped to never see again.

I'd like to thank everyone who has read and reviewed. Thank you for your comments on the last chapter. I appreciate your kind words. I've got another chapter, as you can see, which I hope you enjoy.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for her help.

Chapter 13 Ginny and Tom, together again

Lucius awoke to find himself in a dark room. He quickly sat up in bed and looked over to his window. Instead of just a nap, he'd slept the entire day away. Cursing himself as he got out of bed, Lucius hoped that Ginny would not think he'd just forgotten about her.

"Dari!" he called his house-elf, and a small purple elf with pink freckles appeared. Lucius had learned several years ago that it was wrong to treat the little creatures the way he was accustomed to when he was a young wizard. While he wasn't planning on giving any of his staff clothes, he did provide them with lovely patterned tea towels and pillowcases.

He also made sure they were taught proper speech etiquette. After Narcissa and Draco were killed, Lucius spent so much time in his home. He found he couldn't stand the normal speech patterns used by house-elves.

"Yes, Master?" Dari asked.

"How long have I been asleep?" wondered Lucius.

"Master, you slept for ten hours," she noted.

Lucius opened his blue eyes wide in shock.

"Ten hours! Dari, why didn't you wake me sooner?"

"Master, you were so tired. He called you twice in less than a day." Dari looked on as her master walked to his armoire. He began to look at his clothes, as though he were having trouble deciding on what to wear. Her master never had a hard time with his clothes.

"Are you going somewhere, Master?" she asked.

"I was to meet a young lady earlier. I hope she won't be too upset with me at missing our meeting." Lucius decided he would wear something casual. Well, casual for him. He chose a dark grey suit and a beige shirt with a Muggle necktie.

Dari smiled and rushed to her master's side.

"A young lady, sir?" she clapped her hands. It had been so long since there was a woman in her master's life. He'd spent the last years so lonely and sad.

"Yes, a very pretty and intelligent young lady." Lucius placed his clothes on the bed and went into the bathroom. He showered quickly, then got dressed and went downstairs. As he walked out the door, Lucius wondered if perhaps he should Floo Ginny first. He needed to make sure she wasn't upset with him. If she was, then picking up some flowers before he stopped by her parents' home would do the trick. He stopped himself then thought perhaps some chocolate might help too. He sat in front of his fireplace and called into the Floo for Arthur.

"Lucius, good evening. Is there something I can do for you?" asked the Minister of Magic.

"Good evening, Arthur. I was actually wondering if I might speak with Ginny."

"I'm sorry, she isn't here. She left here to go back to Grimmauld Place about two hours ago," Arthur said as he looked behind him. "She and the twins got into an awful row. Ginny left, Fred and George are still here, and Molly and I were only just now able to break the hex Ginny placed on Fred. We can't figure out, though, how to break the hex on George. He might have to learn to walk backwards and not sit down for a few days."

"What did she do to him?" wondered Lucius.

"Oh, she reversed his... um...bottom and his face," Arthur said with a chuckle. "I guess he'll just be talking out of his ass for the next few days."

The two men laughed for a while, then Lucius ended the connection. He was relieved that Ginny was angry at her twin brothers, not at Lucius, and that he still had Arthur's favor.

At his home, Lucius took his walking cane in hand and his own traveling cloak, then walked out towards the gates. He would Apparate to Grimmauld Place and pay Ginny a visit. He smiled. It was nice to have something to smile about, to have something so happy and beautiful now in his life to look forward to. Lucius thought he would enjoy courting Ginny. He wanted to fall in love with her, have a child with her someday, and grow old with her. He would do everything within his power to make sure she would want the same things as well.

Unfortunately, Lucius would not see her anytime soon. It wouldn't be until later that evening that those inside the oddly-shaped house known as the Burrow would find Ginny's traveling cloak and wand. Ginny never made it to Grimmauld Place she had disappeared.

Back in his own estate, Voldemort sat on his throne. His eyes were closed as he was deep in thought. He knew that all of the Horcruxes he'd scattered around the country had been destroyed. There was nothing but one part of his soul left the part he carried himself. He was troubled, very troubled. One of his most faithful of servants recently tried to assassinate him. Peter Pettigrew had been able to produce the poisonous potion right under his very roof.

Voldemort needed something or someone to serve as a channel a channel for more power than he'd ever imagined having. It would be easy to tap that magic and take it for himself. Voldemort had taken his first steps towards achieving his goal just a few hours earlier. As he sat on his throne with his eyes closed, he heard his Death Eaters approaching with his new vessel. When he opened his eyes he saw her standing in front of him. She had grown up beautifully. If it wasn't for the fact that he abhorred sex as much as he did, he would have easily taken her to his room and had his way with her.

"Ginny, how nice it is to see you again," said the Dark Lord.

Ginny trembled at his familiarity with her.

"Why am I here?" she asked. He'd changed so much from the young man she remembered. His evil had morphed him into some hideous half-man, half-serpent. When she was in her first year at Hogwarts, he came to her in a dream at first. When Ginny sat in her new dorm room and put her books away for the start of her school year, she didn't realize that one of the books she'd placed on her nightstand was Tom Riddle's diary, something Lucius had slipped into her bucket while they were at Flourish & Blotts. At the time she thought Tom was just a handsome young man, and at first she held a bit of a crush on him. But he quickly became abusive and made her do terrible things; until he released her the next morning, she did not even know she'd done them.

"Aren't you happy to see me? It's been so long after all. I remember such a sweet young girl. You are quite a beauty, Ginny, quite a beauty." His eyes scanned her body. He wondered just how he would use her. Would he allow her to remain aware of his use for her? Or should he hit her with a Sleeping Curse and take her powers without her knowledge, have her serve as a sort of human battery? Voldemort rose and walked towards Ginny.

When he approached her she took a step back, not sure if she should just stay put or take her chances and run. More than likely, she thought, he would kill her before she even got to the door; that is if she even knew where the door was. The room was dark but for the circular area they were both standing in.

"Why should I be happy to see you?" she shouted. "You almost killed me that last time I saw you, and more than likely that's what you are planning to do to me now."

To her surprise Voldemort laughed.

"My my, you have become a feisty one. But then, you always did have that in you," he said as he leaned towards her slightly. "I could always feel that inside of you." Voldemort was close enough to touch her now. He lifted a finger and traced her collarbone with it, then slowly went down her arm. "You do remember when I was inside of you, don't you, Ginny." He took a deep breath as he closed his eyes. He could smell fear on her and smiled.

Ginny shuddered when she realized the double entendre in his statement. She'd hoped he was only talking about being inside her head and not anything else. If there was a horrific memory of him invading her body in any other way and she'd suppressed it, Ginny only hoped it would remain suppressed.

Voldemort whispered, "I think the time has come for us to become closer."

Ginny's head snapped towards the serpentine face of the Dark Lord.

He grabbed her by the throat and dragged her to the floor. He smiled as he looked down on Ginny who was struggling to breathe.

"Sleep, my pet, sleep."

Ginny's vision was quickly turning black. Before her mind succumbed to the blackness, she thought of Lucius and how she wished she'd seen him one last time.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

I hope you liked the chapter. Don't worry about the cliffy. I've got another chapter all finished and off to June. I should have that one up soon.

The Conduit

Chapter 14 of 19

Lucius finds out where Ginny has gone.

I thought I would post this chapter today, since I'm planning on writing another one this weekend.

Thank you to those of you that have read this and reviewed. I appreciate you all taking the time.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for all of her help.

Chapter 14 The Conduit

Lucius arrived at number twelve, Grimmauld Place. He had with him a box of chocolates and some roses so red they seemed black in color. As he stepped through the door, he noticed something odd: the house was in exactly the same state they'd left it in, the morning when he and Ginny took child-size Hermione and child-size Severus to Hogwarts. Severus and Hermione had left several books on the table, which were still there. Ginny's unfinished knitted scarf also lay on one of the chairs.

If Ginny were there, she would have surely put those things in their place. Lucius noticed during the time he spent in the house that the young woman was constantly fussing about; making sure nothing was out of place.

"Ginny!" he called out. As Lucius stepped further into the house he kept calling her name. There was never any answer, though. Ginny wasn't there. He quickly grew nervous. If Ginny told her father she was coming here, then here she should be. Arthur made it a point to always tell him what a responsible and good daughter he had. How she would always let them know where she was going. These were dangerous times, and being a young single witch it was always a good idea to let someone know exactly where you were and what you were doing. Something just wasn't right.

He grabbed some powder from the hearth and threw it in. He called out to Severus, hoping that if Hermione was still there, she might know where her friend was.

"Severus! Severus, I need to speak with you!" he yelled desperately. He heard some shuffling and muffled voices, and then saw his friend's face.

"Lucius? What on earth is wrong?" asked Severus.

"Is Ginny there?" Lucius was almost frantic.

Hermione, who was coming out of the bedroom and tying her robe, knelt down behind Severus, looking over his shoulder.

"Lucius, Ginny went straight to the Burrow after you were Summoned. Are you at home?" asked Severus.

"No, I took a nap when I got home and only just woke up a short while ago. I called for her at the Burrow and Arthur said she was here at Grimmauld Place." Lucius ran his hands through his hair. "Hermione, do you know where she might be?"

"I'm sorry, no. I doubt she would have gone anywhere else if she told Arthur she was going to headquarters," answered Hermione.

"Let me go call Arthur from the bedroom. Maybe she forgot something and went back." Hermione stood and rushed to the bedroom.

"Lucius, perhaps she decided to make another stop. She could be visiting one of her other friends." Severus hoped to calm his friend down, but he too was now worried.

Lucius relaxed a bit. It was true; there was no reason why Ginny couldn't be with another one of her friends.

"You're probably right. There's no reason to jump to conc..." but before he could finish, Hermione came running back into the room.

"Lucius, get to the Burrow. Severus, we need to go. Arthur went outside and found Ginny's cloak and wand on the ground," Hermione said nervously.

"No!" Lucius yelled.

"Go, Lucius. Hermione and I will meet you there."

Lucius faded out from the Floo.

Severus and Hermione got dressed and immediately went to Albus' office. There they found the old wizard talking to Minerva, who had finally recovered from her flu. The witch looked at the Potions professor and her former student with worry. It should have been odd to see them together, but Albus had been filling her in on what happened while she was ill. The Headmaster also told her that Hermione stayed overnight, and that Severus would most probably be having a permanent guest from now on.

"You've heard about Miss Weasley, have you not?" asked Minerva as she wrung her hands.

"Yes, Lucius called us. He went to headquarters to look for her and she wasn't there, so he called us to see if she was here. Arthur told us about finding her things on the ground outside," answered Hermione.

The four then decided to Apparate to the Burrow.

~*~*~*~*~

As soon as they arrived at the Weasley home, they noticed Tonks and Remus were already walking around the grounds. Tonks was there unofficially. Arthur didn't want anyone at the Ministry knowing anything was wrong just yet. One just never knew who was working for Voldemort and he preferred to keep his and his family's business, his own for the time being. Remus was there due to his knowledge of the Dark Arts. Lucius and Remus were talking with Arthur when Severus walked up to them.

"Have you been able to get a trace?" asked Severus as Hermione, Minerva and Albus followed him. While they weren't best buddies, Severus and Remus had developed a sort of truce during the period in which he was suspected of killing the Headmaster. It was Remus who finally convinced the rest of the Order that Severus was innocent and they all had to support him.

Remus shook his head. "Nothing. Whoever took her knew what they were doing."

Lucius and Severus felt their Mark burning. Severus was only believed to be dead, therefore his Mark still burned when Voldemort summoned all of his Death Eaters.

"He's calling everyone," said Severus as he looked at the group, then at a very pale Lucius. He walked to his friend and placed a supporting hand on his shoulder.

"Hermione and I will go back to my rooms and begin testing what we have."

Lucius nodded. Arthur was standing behind him with a crying Molly in his arms.

"Please, Lucius, if he has her, if he's...done something to her, don't let her suffer," Arthur said brokenly as he held his wife closer.

"I have plans for your daughter, Arthur. I assure you, I will not allow anything to happen to her." Lucius then allowed himself to be enveloped by the black whirl of smoke that would take him to the Dark Lord.

Albus and Minerva moved everyone inside. Severus and Hermione Apparated back to Hogwarts and began testing the potion they believed would allow them to finish off Voldemort. Albus then contacted Harry and Ron. They all needed to make preparations for what might be the final fight against the former Tom Riddle.

~*~*~*~*~

When Lucius finally emerged from the dark haze that carried him to his destination, he noticed the huge crowd of Death Eaters surrounding a black altar. As he made his way to the front, an image of something began to emerge on the altar. He didn't see it until he got closer, but there was a body on the large slab.

Voldemort looked up and immediately saw him.

"Lucius, come and see my prize," said the serpent-faced wizard with glee.

Lucius climbed up the short steps and saw Ginny, lying on the altar in a white dress. Her red hair cascaded off the side of the pillow her head rested on.

"Isn't she lovely? You do remember her, don't you?"

Lucius willed himself to stay alert. He carefully leaned against his walking cane. He felt close to fainting, and he had to swallow hard as he felt the bile rising from his stomach.

"Yes, my lord, I remember her." Lucius was thankful that she at least seemed to be unharmed.

"She has power yet untapped, Lucius." Voldemort caressed Ginny's hair. "This is my conduit. I will take all that she has inside of her and become more powerful than even that fool Merlin." He then looked at Lucius. "You are my most trusted Death Eater, Lucius. There is something that you must do for me."

Lucius steeled himself.

"Yes, my lord. Anything you wish, and I shall endeavor to do it for you."

"Even now I am feeling her power, but it is too slow in coming. I need for her magic to manifest itself fully, during a moment when she is not able to control it. Tomorrow you shall take her under the waning moon. Upon her climax, her power will be at its fullest and, since she is under a sleeping spell, it will be uncontrolled."

All Lucius could do was nod. He feared if he spoke it would give away the turbulent emotions now swirling inside of him like a typhoon. He stared down at Ginny and blinked back the tears forming in his gray eyes.

"You should feel honored, Lucius. Tomorrow will be a great day indeed." Voldemort turned away and walked down the platform. He spoke to the hundreds of Death Eaters in the crowd.

Lucius didn't hear any of what was said. It was as though someone had thrown a wet blanket over him. He could neither move nor hear anything. He merely stared at Ginny.

'It can't end like this for us, Ginny. I won't allow it. I've only just begun to live again,' thought Lucius. As he turned to leave, he came face-to-face with Voldemort.

"Do not disappoint me, Lucius. I shall be very put out if you cannot perform your duty for me tomorrow evening." Lucius bowed his head and knelt down. "Consider this your incentive. *Crucio!*"

Lucius began to convulse as every nerve in his body felt like it was on fire.

When he was finished hexing Lucius, Voldemort kicked him down the steps and warded the area around the altar. He then left Lucius on the ground and walked back to his bedroom.

Crawling away from the altar, his teeth grinding as the tremors subsided, Lucius didn't dare look back. He knew that if he did, then he would do something foolish. And now was not the time to be foolish.

~*~*~*~

Severus and Hermione had been at Hogwarts for over two hours. After testing the potion on several different species of bugs, rodents and birds, they concluded that the their hard work paid off. Voldemort's magic would diminish as his body basically devolved its cell structure. As the pair walked out into the living area, they were startled by a loud banging on the door.

"Professor! Professor, come quickly!" yelled Filch from the other side.

Severus opened the door quickly.

"Filch, what the bloody hell is it?"

"It's Mr. Malfoy. He's at the gates, he can barely stand." Filch turned and walked back towards the dungeon entrance.

"Hermione, stay here. If it's really Lucius, I'll bring him back." Severus turned and started running after Filch.

Hermione stood at the door looking after him.

"If it's really Lucius? Oh, no," She realized suddenly what Severus meant by his words. Lucius had been almost frantic when he called them earlier. She could tell he was afraid for Ginny back at the Burrow. Hermione wondered if perhaps Lucius might have unintentionally let his mask down. If that was the case then Lucius was most probably dead and the man at the gates was an imposter.

Severus approached the fallen figure of his friend cautiously. He told Filch to go back to his rooms and that he would take care of the blond wizard. Severus noticed the man begin to stir and moan. As he finally got close enough to move him, Severus knelt down and looked at the man's face closely. He looked like Lucius, but now he had to make sure. *'Now the test'* he thought.

Lucius focused as he tried to find his voice. When Severus recovered from his near death experience at the hands of Voldemort, the burden of spying was left to Lucius alone. They both decided that if it ever came to a situation like the one Lucius was in now, it was imperative for the Order to know it was really him. Lucius allowed Severus to plant something in his mind that could only be triggered by what his friend recited. No amount of Legilimency would ever find it, making it the surest way of making sure this was really Lucius.

"When Caesar crossed the Rubicon against the orders of the Senate, he knew that he must either conquer or die." Severus looked at the visibly shaking man, whose eyes seemed dazed.

Lucius sadly looked at Severus and a tear rolled down his cheek.

"In peace, sons bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their sons."

Severus breathed a sigh of relief and helped Lucius stand. He took his friend to his rooms in the dungeon and gave him a potion for the aftereffects of the Cruciatus Curse. Hermione contacted the rest of the Order, as Severus and Lucius sat and began to formulate a plan.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~

I hope you all enjoyed this chapter.

Lucius' quote comes from Herodotus the Greek historian of the 5th century BC.

Severus' quote is something I saw several years ago when looking up the exact meaning of Rubicon for something I was writing at the time.

One Final Meeting

Chapter 15 of 19

The Order meet one last time before the final confrontation with Voldemort.

Thank you once again for those of you who have taken the time to read this story and review it. I'm very happy you are all enjoying it.

All canon characters belong to JKR. My only profit for using these characters is your kind words of encouragement.

Thanks to June for all of her help.

Chapter 15 One final meeting

Severus, Hermione and Lucius were sitting in the living area of Severus' quarters when members of the Order started coming through the Floo. Severus made sure to unward his fireplace so that it would be accessible for those who weren't arriving from the Weasleys' home.

The last two to arrive were Harry and Ron. Ron eyed Lucius suspiciously. He still wasn't sure about the man, and now his sister was missing. It was all too convenient in Ron's mind.

As soon as everyone was there Lucius began to recount what he had seen earlier. For the most part the grounds around the Riddle estate were not guarded by any Death Eaters; this would make it easy for Arthur to position some Aurors around the area. Severus then suggested that Aurors be posted around Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley;

these were two of the most prominent wizarding places of commerce. Muggle London would also be guarded.

"We also need to get some people into the Riddle estate," said Arthur.

Severus looked at Harry, then to Lucius.

"Why not offer the Dark Lord a gift," he said with a smirk, and looked back at Harry.

"What exactly do you have in mind?" asked Harry warily.

"Must I spell it out?" said Severus irritably. "You simply walk in with Lucius. He can put a false Body Bind on you. One less person to sneak in."

"It will be dangerous, but it sounds like the easiest way to get you inside, Harry," agreed Albus as he looked at Harry. "If you are there, then Voldemort will be distracted by you. He will be focusing his attention on you, and we can better position ourselves."

"I'll do it. But what about that potion? How will I get it on Voldemort?" asked Harry.

"Severus and I will take care of that," said Hermione.

Severus immediately looked at her.

"You will not be doing anything but staying here."

Hermione scowled at him.

"Severus, I'm not going to sit here and do nothing while you are all risking your lives."

"No." Severus took her by the arm and pulled her up. He walked out of the room with Hermione in tow. "Please, Hermione."

Hermione looked into Severus' pleading eyes. He still looked like the little boy that he was just a few days ago the way he looked at her when she woke up after her ordeal with the Cruciatus Curse. He was so afraid for her. She caressed his cheek with her soft hand.

"Oh, Severus. How can I stay here, knowing you are going to what could possibly be your death? Please, let me go with you."

He leaned his head down and rested his forehead against hers. How he wanted to put her into hiding and keep all the dangers of the universe from her. But then he stared into her eyes, and knew he wanted her by his side, in peace and in danger and in death, if they were to die.

"All right, we shall go together." He smiled and kissed her lightly on the lips.

Hermione then gasped in surprise.

"Severus! I know just how you and I can get inside with the potion!"

Hermione took him by the hand and they entered the living room again.

"I have a plan. Lucius," Hermione said as she looked to Lucius. "Do you know if there are any secret passageways inside Voldemort's estate?"

"I know of none. I do know that within the walls there are narrow tunnels, which are used by Nagini to make its way through the estate."

"There goes that idea," said Severus.

"Not necessarily," said Hermione with a smile. "Do you know how narrow those tunnels are, Lucius?"

"Too small for anyone here to get through," answered Lucius.

"But big enough for say a six-year-old?" asked Hermione.

Severus' eyes immediately went wide.

"Hermione, you aren't suggesting we..."

"Yes, Severus, I am."

"No, I will not turn myself back into a six-year-old. We'll think of something else."

Just as Severus was beginning to get his rant on, Albus interrupted.

"I think that's actually a brilliant idea. Once Lucius neutralizes the guards at the door you can easily slip into the tunnels."

Severus rolled his eyes. He had a feeling he would soon be crawling within Voldemort's walls, trying to get away from a snake big enough to make him its dinner.

"All right, I'll go start the potion as soon as the meeting is finished. I suppose I can make it strong enough to last us a few hours. All I need is to get lost and stuck in between the Dark Lord's walls." Severus wasn't going to allow himself to worry this time about the potion making Hermione and himself children forever. With the proper measurements of the ingredients, as they had already proved with the new potion, it was possible to adjust the time limit you would remain a child.

"I have an idea of how to get the potion to Voldemort as well." Hermione stood and began writing a note to her mother. She was going to ask for something she hadn't seen since she was a child, and only hoped her mother still kept it for her in her old toy chest.

"Lucius, when you saw Ginny, did she look like she'd been harmed?" asked Molly.

"I don't believe he harmed her, Molly. And odd as this may sound, she is quite safe as we speak. He needs her to be healthy and untouched." Lucius hesitated then looked away from Molly. "At least until tomorrow evening."

"What's that supposed to mean?" asked Ron suspiciously.

"It means, that the Dark Lord has a plan for your sister. He...he plans to siphon her magic from her body."

"But, that's not possible," said Harry.

"Yes, it is, Harry," said Arthur. "There is one way." Arthur then looked at Lucius. He noticed Lucius hadn't looked at any of them in the eye since they'd arrived. The blond was nervous, and his face pale. There was something Lucius didn't want to say, and Arthur realized why.

When the other Order members realized what Arthur was talking about, there was an unpalatable silence in the room.

Ron and Harry looked at each other, then to Lucius.

"What is it? What's he going to do to her?" asked Ron.

Harry placed his hand on Ron's shoulder.

"Ron, leave it alone." While he wasn't exactly sure how Voldemort was going to take Ginny's magic, Harry knew that it wasn't something pleasant. He tried not to think about it, hoping that they would get to the Dark Lord before he had a chance to do anything to Ginny.

"No, I want to know. She's my sister and I want to know what that snake is going to do to her!" yelled Ron.

Lucius' mind was reeling. All evening he'd been thinking about what Voldemort wanted him to do to Ginny. The sick feeling in his stomach was growing stronger and stronger with each word coming out of Ron's mouth.

"Do you really want to know, Mr. Weasley?" asked Lucius quietly. "I'll tell you, if you want to know so badly." Lucius never took his eyes from the fire. In the flames he could see Ginny's face, smiling at him, calling to him.

"Tomorrow evening, as the waning moon is above the sky, it will be my duty to rape your sister until her body reaches its orgasmic state and her powers are at their strongest and most vulnerable. Her power will then be drained from her body. If she survives she will be less than a Squib she will be a Muggle for the rest of her life, unable to even see Hogwarts or the Burrow."

No one in the room said a word. Molly was sobbing into Arthur's chest as he held her tightly. Remus and Tonks were staring at the floor. Albus and Minerva were staring at one another. Severus and Hermione stared at Lucius as Harry wiped a tear that threatened to fall down his cheek.

Ron was outraged. He'd never truly trusted Lucius; even when he found out the senior Malfoy had been helping the Order. Without thinking, as Ron tended to do quite often, his anger took over.

"I'll bet you'll like that, won't you. I saw the way you were looking at my sister when you were at Headquarters."

"Ronald," admonished Arthur.

But Ron refused to listen; his words kept coming.

"It wouldn't be the first time you've done something to almost get her killed. I remember that diary, we all do. You got to her though, didn't you? Back at Headquarters, did you fuck her then?"

"Shut up, Ron!" yelled Harry.

"Why, Harry? You saw him!" Ron looked at Lucius and walked towards him. "Or did you already get to her? Was she already your whore?"

Lucius shot up out of his chair, grabbed Ron by the collar and threw him violently against the wall.

"How dare you presume to know what I am thinking? Have I not lost enough to satisfy you, Mr. Weasley? Was the life of my wife and only son not a good enough price to pay for my mistakes? Do you think so little of your sister that you would so freely think her my whore? She is lying on a slab, in the Dark Lord's home. She has no knowledge of what is happening around her, or what will happen to her tomorrow night." Lucius let Ron go roughly and looked at him with obvious distaste. "I have no brothers, but if brothers are anything like you, I thank the gods I was an only child." As Lucius walked away Ron mumbled something. Lucius turned and looked at him.

"Louder. You have shown little courage thus far, show me some now," said Lucius.

"I said if anything happens to Ginny, may the gods have mercy on your soul."

"I have no soul, Mr. Weasley, I lost it when I buried my family," Lucius said calmly, then walked out the door. He would go away from Hogwarts to his home and sleep. He needed his strength for tomorrow evening. If the potion that Severus and Hermione developed didn't work, Lucius knew that he would have to do everything in his power to get Ginny and himself out of harm's way.

Back in Severus' rooms, Molly stood before her son.

"I have never in my life been so disappointed in any of my children as I am with you at this moment, Ronald Weasley." She turned her back on him and gathered her shawl. She then turned back to her son.

"Your sister will survive. And I hope by all the gods in the heavens that she accepts Lucius Malfoy as her husband someday. So you had better start to accept him because if you don't, I don't want you setting another foot in my home." Molly then threw Floo powder into the fireplace and disappeared into the flames.

Arthur looked at Ron sadly.

"Why is it so difficult for you to trust, Ron? I thought we raised you better than that." Arthur then followed his wife home.

The rest of the Order silently one-by-one went their separate ways, all knowing their assignments for the following evening.

Harry stood and took Ron by the arm.

"Come on, Ron. We should go." Harry led a shocked Ron out of Severus' rooms, thinking the night air would help his friend come to his senses.

As they walked towards the gates, Ron looked at Harry.

"Why am I always sticking my foot in my mouth, Harry? Why can't I just leave things be?"

"Don't be so hard on yourself. You can't help it that you're an idiot." They both stopped. "Sorry. Let's just go home and get some rest."

Back at Voldemort's estate, Ginny lay on the altar. Her eyes remained closed, but she became aware that she was under some sort of a spell that might be wearing off. Try as she might, her eyes couldn't open and her body remained paralyzed atop a hard cold stone slab. Something was going to happen to her, and she knew she had to be ready for whatever it might be.

~*~*~*~*~

The following evening, the members of the Order met at Headquarters.

Arthur had convinced Molly to stay home. He promised he would send her news of Ginny's rescue as soon as it happened and she was safe. Arthur had also called over seventy-five Aurors, all ones that he knew personally and trusted. They would go directly to Voldemort's estate.

Albus prepared Order members from all over the world. Those members would be stationed throughout Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley and a few around Muggle London..

Severus and Hermione were getting ready to drink the potion that would once again turn them into small children. Only this time, the *Adulescens Denuo* spell would work correctly. They had changed the amounts of the ingredients and were able to make it so that instead of the standard hour as children, they would be child-sized for close to four hours. This insured that both would have enough time to get through the tunnels within Voldemort's estate and get to where Ginny lay, knowing that was where the siphoning of Ginny's magic would take place.

"Hermione, we need to get going. It's getting late, Lucius and Harry will be here any minute," Severus called to Hermione from his potions lab.

"I'm ready," Hermione held an odd-looking contraption in her hand.

"What is that?" asked Severus.

"It's a water pistol," she said.

"What on earth are you going to do with that?" Severus took the small plastic gun from Hermione's hand and examined it.

"We can put Voldemort's potion in that. All we have to do is get him within shooting range and poof." Hermione was relieved when she saw Severus smiling. She was afraid he would think her idea ridiculous.

"Hermione, my dear, you are absolutely brilliant."

He filled the water pistol with Voldemort's potion and charmed it against leakage. The two shared a kiss, then picked up their goblets and drank down the potion. Once again their bodies shrank to the size of six-year-olds. Severus looked down at himself and sighed.

"I'm so tired of being six."

"But you're such a cute six-year-old." Hermione laughed and kissed him on the lips.

Severus took hold of her shoulders and immediately pushed her away from him.

"Hermione, what are you doing? That was wrong on so many different levels. Do you want to give me some kind of a sexual complex?" He scowled and took hold of his wand. After they were once again in child-sized clothing, he began to walk out of the room. He really hated being a six-year-old.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

I'm sorry for another cliffhanger, but this chapter was getting unbelievably long and I had to stop it at some point. I'll be updating again this week so you won't have to wait too long to see what happens.

Deconstructing Voldemort, Potions Master Style

Chapter 16 of 19

The gang make their way to Voldemort's estate to rescue Ginny, and end Voldemort once and for all.

Thank you once again to all of you who have taken the time to read and review this story. When I started it I had hoped it would be a fun story to write and present you all with. I'm very happy you are enjoying reading this as much as I'm enjoying writing it.

All canon characters belong to JKR. I'm not making diddly.

Thanks as always to June. Without her help, this would be a mess of run on sentences and misplaced commas.

Chapter 16 Deconstructing Voldemort, Potions Master Style

By the time Lucius showed up at Hogwarts, Severus and Hermione were ready. He knocked on the door of Severus' rooms and saw no one in front of him when the door opened.

"Hello, Lucius," said Hermione's small voice.

Lucius looked down and smiled.

"Reliving your childhood yet again, I see," Lucius said as he walked in with an amused look on his face. He knew that if Hermione was a child again, so was Severus.

As Lucius was placing his cloak on the couch, Severus came out of the bedroom. He wore a smaller version of his signature black frock coat and slacks, but he also had something else. He wore some sort of a belt.

"Severus, what are you wearing?" asked Lucius.

Hermione immediately turned her attention from some notes she'd made the night before and looked at Severus.

"What in the world?" Hermione walked up to Severus and looked at him. "Where on earth did you get that holster? And why are you wearing it?"

"I saw a picture in one of the books we were reading at headquarters. I Transfigured one of my belts. I can't very well be crawling around those tunnels in the Dark Lord's estate and holding a water pistol at the same time, can I?" said Severus defensively.

"Water pistol?" asked Lucius, now very curious.

Severus turned to him and smiled. He took his toy gun out of its holster and showed it to Lucius. The quintessential little boy showing off his new toy. The modified *Adulescens Denuo* potion was stronger than the original one he and Hermione were doused with. They would have stronger moments of childlike qualities mixed with their adult mannerisms and thoughts this time around.

"Lucius, it's ingenious! You see," Severus said as he showed Lucius the small hole through which the potion was poured. "This part is supposed to hold water, but Hermione and I have filled it with the potion for the Dark Lord. We don't even need to get that close to him, just make sure we have an open shot at him."

Lucius nodded his approval and sat down. They waited for Albus to alert them that the Aurors and Order members were all ready. The previous evening, Albus had placed a tracer spell on Lucius. As soon as Lucius Apparated to Voldemort's estate, the rest of the Order and some Aurors would be able to locate him and follow him there.

As the three walked out of Severus' rooms they were met by Harry.

"I'm sorry I'm a bit late. I forgot my Invisibility Cloak, I had to go back for it." Harry looked down at Hermione and handed it to her, then he looked at the little boy next to her with a bit of confusion.

"Um...Professor Snape, why do you look like Wyatt Earp?"

Severus puffed out his chest and raised his chin, then walked away as though he had just been proclaimed king of the world. Hermione rolled her eyes as they all followed.

They reached the gates and made a few final plans.

"Harry, I need to place you in the Body Bind now. It will be tight, but easy to break free from." Lucius pointed his wand at Harry, who didn't flinch when black ropes began to wind around his body. Unlike Ron, Harry did trust Lucius. He realized long ago that what you saw on the surface wasn't necessarily what was beneath the skin.

"Lucius," Harry said as he looked at Lucius. "I never had a chance to tell you how sorry I was for Draco's and your wife's death. We never got along, Draco and I, but I think if he had lived we might have become very good friends."

Lucius' eyes watered slightly. "Thank you, Harry."

They stood quietly for a few moments. Severus and Hermione draped themselves with Harry's Invisibility Cloak, and they then held on to Lucius' own cloak. Lucius looked at Harry, who nodded he was ready. Then they Apparated away.

They arrived on a hill, just below Tom Riddle's estate. They walked a short distance and reached the gates, which opened automatically for Lucius. As they drew closer, the house's solid oak front door opened and a fellow Death Eater came out.

"You're late, Lucius," growled the Death Eater.

Lucius looked at the man and pointed his wand towards him. On the ground where the man had stood was now a large wooden clock.

"He wishes to keep time, let him do so now."

Harry smiled as he heard disembodied giggling coming from behind them. They all entered the home, but before the door shut, Lucius muttered a spell. The door closed but the latch didn't come down. The door would open easily for anyone coming in behind them, including the Order. He then pointed towards a corner where there was a large vase.

"That vase is the entrance to the tunnels. Be careful, the both of you. Nagini is no doubt slithering about," said Lucius.

"We'll try to be as quick as possible," Severus was heard to say, as the sounds of two sets of footsteps faded towards the vase.

Lucius then bound Harry's legs and levitated him. As he walked to the throne room, Harry's body followed floating just a few inches above the ground. When Lucius entered the room finally, everyone stopped and turned to look at him. As soon as they saw who was behind him, they moved aside and allowed him to walk towards Voldemort.

"I was prepared to cause you a fairly large amount of pain for being late, Lucius. But I see why you have been detained." Voldemort smiled and his red eyes glittered with malice.

"My lord, I bring you, a gift." Lucius bowed slightly then moved a struggling Harry forward.

"I knew I couldn't trust you, you bastard!" he spat towards Lucius.

"Now, now, Mr. Potter, can I help it if all Gryffindors are gullible?" said Lucius.

Voldemort laughed as he saw Harry struggling.

"And just how did you lure our Harry here into your web, Lucius?" asked Voldemort.

"Why, I merely told him that I knew where his little girlfriend was. He really is as dumb as he looks." Lucius and Voldemort laughed as Harry scowled.

"Enough pussyfooting around." Voldemort approached Harry and licked his cheek. "You'll enjoy this, Harry. You see, I am about to become the most powerful wizard of all time. Lucius is going to help me by sticking his cock inside your little girlfriend." Voldemort pointed towards Ginny. Before Harry could say anything, Voldemort backhanded him across the mouth, forcefully enough to draw blood.

"Physical violence is such a primitive way to achieve one's goals, Harry. But sometimes it's so pleasant." Harry's eyes blazed as Voldemort licked his blood off his bony fingers. Voldemort looked at Lucius before he raised his wand, and the roof of the estate disappeared, along with the second and third floors, so they could see the waning moon. He then spoke the incantation that would soon rob Ginny of her magic. "It is time, Lucius." Voldemort turned and walked up the steps of the altar.

Lucius gave Harry a nervous glance and walked behind the Dark Lord. He stood next to the altar looking down at Ginny.

"She is a lovely creature, my Ginny. She can hear us, you know," said Voldemort.

*'No, I'm not your girl, I'm not!'*screamed Ginny within the confines of her mind.

Lucius' eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. She would be aware of everything he was doing to her.

"I want to hear her scream." Voldemort turned away and walked down the steps. He looked over his shoulder to Lucius. "Now, Lucius. Take her now."

Ginny was struggling to move. She tried to find her voice but couldn't form words. All she could manage were barely audible whimpering noises. As Lucius removed his cloak, he looked at her face. She looked calm, almost serene, but for her eyes. He could see her pupils moving rapidly. He looked down the platform and saw Voldemort as well as the many other Death Eaters all looking at him.

Meanwhile, Severus and Hermione were making their way to the throne room, which was as large as the Great Hall at Hogwarts, via the tunnels. They'd gotten lost several times, once while trying to avoid Nagini.

"Hermione, it's this way. I hear the Dark Lord." Severus and Hermione were shuffling as fast as they could.

"I think I hear Nagini coming back, Severus."

"Shit!" They doubled their efforts and finally reached what looked to be the end of the tunnel. Severus slowly moved towards the edge of the opening. There were several Death Eaters standing in front of the opening. He turned and made a gesture to Hermione.

"Shhh..." He waved her to come closer to him. They draped the Invisibility Cloak over themselves and climbed out of the tunnel.

"Severus, I can't see anything," whispered Hermione as she tried to look over the Death Eaters in front of them.

Severus hopped up and down, attempting to see if he could catch a glimpse of what was happening ahead of them.

"Damn this six-year-old body," cursed Severus. He grabbed Hermione by the hand and they began to make their way through the crowd. They counted on the crowd being so enthralled by what was happening at the head of the room, that they would go unnoticed. Hopefully the Death Eaters would assume that what was brushing against them was their lord's familiar and not feel the need to look down to see; none of them liked looking at Nagini that close.

As Severus and Hermione moved among the crowd, trying desperately to reach the front, Lucius positioned himself above Ginny. He carefully pushed the white gown she wore up so that her thighs were exposed.

"Ginny," he whispered, so that no one else could hear him. "Ginny, if you can hear me, I'm so sorry for what I am about to do. We're going to get out of this, Ginny. We all are, and when we do, I only hope that you can forgive me."

Lucius concentrated on his own body. It was difficult for him to become aroused knowing what was happening around him. If Severus and Hermione didn't reach Voldemort in time, then Ginny's magic would begin to react to Lucius ministrations. If that happened, Lucius knew he would have to fight his way out of there with Ginny in his arms. If that happened, he had no doubt that they would both ultimately die.

Voldemort raised his arms and looked into the crowd.

"The time is here, my followers. I shall so become as god!" He turned his head slightly and shouted over his shoulder. "Take her, Lucius!"

Lucius lifted Ginny's hips and positioned her on his lap, and then he placed his weeping cock against her entrance.

"Forgive me, Ginny," he said then slammed into her.

Ginny let out a scream as a shocked Lucius looked down at a laughing Voldemort.

"How do you like my surprise, Lucius? I restored her virginity for you. I know how much you like to make them bleed."

Lucius stared down at Ginny's face. Tears were streaming from her still closed eyes and he could see her struggling to speak.

At that moment, Severus and Hermione finally reached the front of the crowd. Within seconds the room began to fill with a soft wind that began to increase second by second.

"This is it, Hermione! Now!" yelled Severus, then they both removed the cloak which kept them from being noticed. As they became visible the Death Eaters advanced forward towards Voldemort, hoping to experience the magic moving with the wind.

In that movement of the crowd, Severus was shoved to one side and Hermione pushed towards Voldemort.

"What's this?" Voldemort looked down and caught Hermione by the arm.

Harry, who had been waiting for his friend and ex-professor to show up, wrestled himself out of the ropes he was bound in. As they dropped to the ground he took hold of his wand, only to be knocked unconscious by Voldemort, who was quicker than him.

"No, get your hands off of me!" yelled Hermione. "Severus! Severus!"

Voldemort lifted her roughly and looked into her eyes.

"What did you say?" Voldemort said as he looked around the room.

Severus tried to make his way back to the front of the room, but the crowd of Death Eaters became too thick. He heard Hermione calling to him, he needed to hurry.

Voldemort looked behind him and saw Lucius pull out of Ginny and begin to gather her in his arms. His eyes narrowed as he realized he'd been deceived. He dropped Hermione roughly on the floor and kicked her to one side. Hermione lifted herself slightly and crawled towards Harry's body. In her six-year-old body, she couldn't use most magic, so she had to try to wake Harry through normal means.

"I trusted you above all others, Lucius." Voldemort slowly began to ascend the steps, making his way towards Lucius who was holding Ginny possessively. "Yes, that's it, take your little whore into your arms. Hold her close, Lucius, so that you may both die together." Voldemort raised his wand but was distracted by a crashing sound coming from behind him. Aurors were making their way through the crowd of Death Eaters. He looked back to Lucius, who was still holding Ginny.

"Before I kill you Lucius, tell me one thing."

"What?" asked Lucius through gritted teeth.

"Where is Severus?"

Severus made his way through the crowd. He took his water pistol from its holster, and then glanced at Hermione. She cradled Harry's head in her lap and nodded to him. Severus extended his arm and walked up the steps, toward Voldemort.

"Severus is right behind you," said Lucius as he grinned.

As though moving in slow motion, Voldemort turned but saw nothing.

"Down here, you twisted fuck." Severus lifted the pistol, and as Voldemort looked down he pressed the trigger and fired, hitting his target right between the eyes.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I've got another one in the works. Thanks for reading.

Say Goodbye, Tom

Chapter 17 of 19

Things come to a head, and Voldemort loses his fight.

Thank you once again to those of you who have taken the time to read this story and review it. I appreciate your words of encouragement.

All canon characters belong to JKR. My bank account isn't getting any bigger because of it.

A big thank you to June for all of her help and suggestions.

Chapter 17 Say goodbye, Tom

Voldemort felt a cold stream of liquid hit the center of his forehead. He jerked back as he wiped the fluid from his face.

Severus immediately took several steps back.

"Severus, what have you done to yourself?" asked Voldemort, amused.

"If I were you, I would be worrying about what I've done to *you*." Severus smirked.

"Do you think that anything you have in your little Muggle toy will do anything to me?" hissed the Dark Lord. He lunged at Severus but stopped abruptly.

Severus looked on. He continued to back up slowly as he dropped the pistol.

Voldemort touched his forehead where Severus had hit him with the liquid. His skin felt like it was moving.

"What did you do!" yelled Voldemort.

Harry, who'd been knocked out previously, immediately sat up. He screamed. It felt as though his scar were being ripped open.

"Harry, what's wrong?" asked Hermione.

"It's like a vise in my head. Like something..." Harry began to breathe heavily. "Something is being pulled from me."

More Aurors began arriving as well as members of the Order. There were at least one hundred Death Eaters in the large ballroom, all of them too busy fighting Aurors to realize that Lucius was not helping Voldemort, and that Harry was now conscious. Arthur, Remus and Ron concentrated on stunning every Death Eater they came across. Tonks worked alongside Mad-Eye Moody and Shackbolt.

Harry stood shakily. Severus ran to his side then.

"He's getting weaker. It's up to you now, Harry. You can either kill him or let him just..." Severus looked back at the swaying Voldemort. "...Fade away."

The walls of the room began to tremble. Behind the altar, Lucius held Ginny in his arms. He'd taken his wand and whispered into her ear.

"Ennervate."

Ginny's eyes finally fluttered open. She looked at Lucius' worried eyes.

"Lucius," his name rolled softly from her lips. "Hold me, don't let me go."

"I'm here, Ginny, and I've got you now." Lucius held her closely and looked around the altar. He needed to get her away from the estate. Something was happening. He felt the floor beneath him shaking; he feared that the entire structure was going to fall on top of them at any moment. He cast a Disillusionment Charm on them both and walked along the edge of the room. There were several moments when he had to stop to avoid getting them both killed.

Harry stood in front of Voldemort, who seemed to be withering away before their eyes. Voldemort was dragging himself up the steps, his eyes never leaving Harry's.

"I can't tell you how long I've waited for this day to come," said Harry.

Voldemort chuckled.

"Poor little Harry. Lost your mummy and daddy so long ago." As he spoke, Voldemort began to change. His appearance was slowly turning back to the person he used to be. Tom Riddle. "How long do you think you can play the sympathy card, eh, Harry?"

Harry stopped his advance and stared into his adversary's eyes.

"I hate you, Harry. I have killed you so many times in my dreams. I have tortured you, maimed you; I have taken you to the farthest depths of hell and back only to begin all over again when next I closed my eyes to dream."

Harry spread his arms.

"Well, here I am, then. Kill me now." Harry smiled wickedly, "You can't and you know it. That potion Snape hit you with is tearing your entire body structure apart." Harry crouched down on one knee.

Tom began to struggle for air. "You think you've suffered? You cannot imagine the demons I have had to struggle with in my life. Taunting me, taking bits and pieces of my soul every time I closed my eyes."

"And what have these demons of yours looked like, Tom?" Harry stood then raised his wand and pointed it at Tom's head.

Cold brown eyes looked into Harry's.

"They looked like you, Harry Potter. They looked like you."

"Avada Kedavra!" yelled Harry. A flash of green light illuminated from his wand and engulfed Tom's entire body. At that moment the room shook violently and the missing ceiling was restored, only to begin crumbling. Harry stood mesmerized as the body of his mortal enemy began to implode.

He felt a hand grab him by the arm, and he turned to see Albus' face.

"Harry, we must go now!" Albus pulled Harry along with him, as he took hold of Severus' hand. Severus held on to Hermione, and they all began running towards the door.

Outside there was already a crowd of Aurors holding all of the Death Eaters that had been in the mansion within an enchanted circle to keep them from escaping. The Aurors had evacuated their prisoners when they realized the house was falling.

Arthur and Ron paced, frantically looking toward the front doors of the house to see if they saw any sign of Ginny and Lucius. After several agonizing minutes they saw Lucius emerge with Ginny cradled in his arms.

"Lucius!" Arthur called and waved.

Lucius immediately ran to Arthur. He gently set Ginny down on the ground and wrapped his cloak around her.

"She's a bit shaken up, but she's fine," said Lucius. "Voldemort didn't complete the last spell, so her magical powers are safe. She should go to St. Mungos, just in case."

"Thank the gods." Arthur hugged his daughter, then looked at her rescuer. "Thank you, Lucius."

Ron stepped forward and extended his hand towards Lucius.

"I'm sorry for what I said yesterday. I had no right."

Lucius nodded and accepted his handshake.

"They're still in there!" yelled Tonks from behind them. "Albus, Harry, Severus and Hermione are still inside. The house is falling."

Lucius looked at the crumbling Riddle Mansion. He ran towards the doors.

"Lucius!" Ginny saw Lucius running back to the house. "Daddy, stop him."

"I can't, Ginny." Arthur held Ginny back from running. The house was in a dangerous state; it wasn't safe for anyone to enter. He only hoped that Lucius would get to the others in time.

Lucius went inside. There were floorboards and debris falling all over him. He ran back into the ballroom, but didn't realize that as he went through the archway Albus, Harry, Severus and Hermione were coming out from the back part of the house. They had found a way out from the back of the ballroom. As they ran outside, they barely missed a large beam falling on them.

They ran towards the group of Order members and noticed immediately Lucius was missing.

"Where is Lucius?" asked Severus.

"He went back inside for you," said Ron.

Severus turned and ran as fast as he could back into the house.

"No!" Hermione tried to run after him but was grabbed by Harry. "Harry, let me go, please," she sobbed.

"Hermione, it's too dangerous," said Harry as he held her struggling six-year-old body. "There's nothing you can do."

Severus ran into the house. He went back towards the ballroom. The entire structure was going to come down any second.

"Lucius!" He called. "Lucius, are you here?" From behind a large wood beam he saw Lucius' blond mane. He ran towards it and saw Lucius struggling to get free. The beam had fallen on him, and Lucius had no wand.

"Are you all right?" asked Severus.

"Severus, get out of here!" yelled Lucius. "This is all coming down, please go!"

"I'm not leaving you here." Severus tried to push the beam off of Lucius, but as a six-year-old he didn't have the strength. He took his wand out, but again, his magic wasn't strong enough to move the beam. He threw the wand on the floor in disgust. "Dammit! What good is this!"

"Severus, it's no use. I can't move. I'm stuck here. You have to go." Lucius sighed and looked around him. He looked at the altar and saw the ever-growing vortex of energy beginning to suck everything into it. The altar was supposed to drain Ginny's magical powers and then transfer them to Voldemort; without Ginny, the altar simply began draining everything. If Lucius and Severus didn't get away soon, their powers as well as they themselves would be gone.

Severus pushed against the beam until his little arms were shaking.

"Lucius, you're the only family I've ever had." Severus felt the sting of tears in his eyes. "You're my brother. I'm not going to let you die here, at least not alone." Severus fell to his knees. Thoughts of Hermione filling his mind. How he would have loved to make her his wife. To have children with her someday. He loved her, that much he could finally admit to himself, but now it was too late.

"Wait," Lucius said. "I think my wand fell down in that crevice. Can you reach it?" He noticed Severus' hesitation. "Don't worry, I just saw Nagini go into that energy hole just before you ran in here."

Severus began to crawl into a small hole between the beam that was holding Lucius in and a hole in the floor. He was relieved to find out he wouldn't be leaving this world in the pit of the big snakes stomach. After a few very long seconds he came back up with Lucius' wand in his hand. He grabbed his own and put it in his coat. Then he handed Lucius his wand.

Lucius easily moved the beam, then stood and picked Severus up.

"Hold on my friend, let's hope we can Apparate out of here." With a loud pop they disappeared, and not a moment too soon.

Outside the crowd looked on in horror. The mansion that was once the home of the Riddle family was being sucked into a black hole of energy.

Hermione ran towards the hole but was pushed back by the explosion when it closed.

"NO!" cried Hermione.

Ginny walked towards Hermione and fell to her knees as she looked on in disbelief.

"It can't be," said Ginny softly. "He...can't be gone." Ginny fainted and fell to the ground.

Everyone stood motionless. No one believed what they had just seen.

Lucius and Severus Apparated to the spot where they were when they initially arrived. They saw the implosion from where they stood.

Severus saw Hermione running toward the deflating hole. He saw her fall to the ground and begin to cry. He didn't know how far or how fast he ran, but he found himself by her side at last. He took hold of her shoulders and tried to lift her towards him.

"He's gone, Harry," Hermione cried.

"What are you on about, you silly girl?" asked Severus.

Hermione's head jerked up and she smiled.

"Severus!" she threw herself on him so hard he fell on his back. Hermione straddled him and began pouring kisses all over his face. "Oh Severus! I was so afraid," she kissed his forehead, then his eyes, then his nose. "I thought you were dead! Don't you ever scare me like that again! I love you so much, I love you, I love you." She stopped kissing him when she didn't feel him respond, and looked at his face.

He smiled. "I love you too, although I will most probably spend the rest of my life at St. Mungo's for therapy after this."

~*~*~*~*~*~*~

This isn't over yet. I've got maybe another two chapters to go I think. I hope you all enjoyed this one.

On a side note: Some of you might be wondering why Lucius didn't just take Severus wand to move the beam on top of him.

I don't believe its as easy as using another persons wand. In Sorcerer's Stone Harry tried a few wands with disastrous results, until his wand found him. If it were a matter of people being able to borrow another's wand then why didn't Ron just borrow someone else's wand in Transfiguration class in Prisoner of Azkaban?

Minerva told him to replace it. The wand is an extension of the user, and I believe its part of him/her. I don't one person's wand would work properly for anyone else.

That's my thinking on it and that's why I wrote it that way.

Aftermath

Chapter 18 of 19

Voldemort is dead, and everyone begins to make plans.

I want to thank everyone who has stuck with this story. I'm coming to the end of it. I'll most likely have one last chpter and maybe an epilogue after this.

Thank you for your patience in waiting for this chapter. My wonderful beta June was in the hospital for a few days, but she is home and doing very well.

Thank you June for taking the time from your resting to get this chapter ready for me to post.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

~~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~

Chapter 18 Aftermath

Voldemort was gone. There was nothing left on the spot where his mansion once stood. On the surface, it was as though the Riddle family had never existed.

Albus and Harry made their way to the Ministry in order to begin the process of getting the captured Death Eaters sent to Azkaban. Besides the Death Eaters who were caught at the Riddle estate, there were others being brought in from Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley, and several more who had been stationed in Muggle London.

Lucius didn't care about captured Death Eaters. Instead, he sat in one of the waiting rooms at St. Mungo's, hoping to hear something from Arthur about Ginny. She had been taken to St. Mungo's after she fainted, as Arthur wanted to make sure Voldemort's plan to siphon her magic hadn't worked in any way. She remained in an agitated sleep for several hours, alone with her dreams and thoughts. All the while, she believed Lucius to have died in the vortex that inhaled Voldemort and his mansion.

~*~*~*~*~

Back at Hogwarts, Severus and Hermione were waiting to change back to their adult selves. As soon as they'd gotten back to Severus' rooms they changed into some large nightshirts and decided to lay down in bed.

"I'm so tired," said Hermione as she lay on her side, with her head on Severus' small shoulder.

Severus yawned and looked at her.

"So am I. This last week and a half has been quite an adventure."

Hermione lifted herself on her elbow and looked down at Severus. By his earlier estimations, they would be turning back into their adult forms in another five minutes. They hadn't had time to discuss what they would do now. Severus admitted his love for her, but Hermione wondered, what now?

"Severus, did you really mean what you said back there?" she asked, unsure.

"Back where? At the Dark Lord's estate?" asked Severus.

"Yes," affirmed Hermione.

"No," said Severus. He noticed Hermione's crestfallen look and turned to stare soberly at the ceiling. "I really don't think I will need any therapy."

His face was met with a very large pillow.

"Severus Snape, you are such an ass!" Hermione began beating him with her pillow, as Severus' child-like laughter filled the bedroom.

"I answered your question, didn't I?" he asked, knowing that wasn't what she had been fishing for.

"You know very well what I meant when I asked you," she said with a pout.

"Hermione, are you always this easy to bait?" Severus sat up and looked at the clock sitting on his nightstand. *'Just a few more minutes,'* he thought.

"Stop teasing me, Severus. Please, tell me if you meant what you said," she asked softly.

Severus lay back down and studied her face and wondered.

"Do you think," he paused and began twirling a strand of her hair in his small fingers. "Do you think that when we have a daughter she will look like you?"

Hermione stared at him, wondering if she'd heard him correctly.

"Why, I don't know. I...uh...suppose it's a fair assumption to say if we did have children they would look very much like one or both of us. I mean statistically speaking..."

Severus rolled his eyes and sat up once again.

"Hermione, I didn't ask about assumptions or statistics. I just want to know if you think our children will look like you or me?" He felt his body begin to go through the change of becoming an adult again, as he looked at his visibly nervous companion.

"I...I think they might have a bit of both of us. The girls might look like me, and the boys like you. At least, I would hope so; you really are such an adorable little boy, Severus." She smiled as she realized they were changing back.

It took less than a minute for them to become adults again.

"Then I believe," Severus said as he pushed Hermione back gently against the mattress and began lifting her nightshirt. "We should both put that theory to a test."

"Oh, you do?" asked Hermione amused as she wiggled herself into a comfortable position, with an aroused Severus between her knees.

"Yes, I think that you should marry me. And furthermore I think we should do so this weekend. We are after all going to be parents very soon, perhaps in just a few minutes from now, and I don't want our children to be born out of wedlock."

Hermione laughed. "You can't ask me to marry you any better than that?"

"You don't like my proposal?" he asked smirking. He felt her welcoming warmth begin to tighten around his hard length.

Hermione gasped as she felt his slow intrusion. "Actually, I love your proposal, and I accept."

~*~*~*~*~

Lucius waited at St. Mungo's for word on Ginny's condition for almost two hours. At one point Arthur came out to let him know that Ginny still hadn't returned to consciousness, although the healers had determined her magical powers were intact. He told Lucius to go home and get some sleep. It had been a long day and they both needed rest. Arthur needed to get to the Ministry and work with Albus and Harry to straighten out the mess that was there. There were Death Eaters who needed to go immediately to Azkaban, and others who would be held until they had a trial.

Lucius didn't want to leave without seeing Ginny, but realized that if her own father felt comfortable leaving, then it would be okay if he too went home. He'd decided he would get a change of clothes at home, then perhaps spend a few days at Order Headquarters. He wasn't quite sure why he felt the need to spend time there, but subconsciously he felt it was because Ginny had been there. Lucius hoped that she would be released from St. Mungo's soon, so that they could continue where they'd left off.

As Lucius was home preparing to spend a few days away from home, Ginny woke up to find herself alone in a cold hospital room. She slowly sat up and swung her legs over the side of the bed. She thought back to what she'd last witnessed. Voldemort was gone; he along with his home was sucked into some vortex of energy. She remembered that Lucius had gone after Albus, Harry, Severus and Hermione. She also remembered little Severus running back into the house after escaping to look for Lucius.

Suddenly it hit her. Lucius was dead. All of her hopes and dreams had gone into that vortex. She shook her head, trying to forget the memory of the Riddle house imploding in front of her. Deciding she wanted to do nothing more than go to Order Headquarters and be alone for a few days, she looked around the room for her clothes and got dressed. It was easy enough to check herself out since healthwise she was fine; besides, the St. Mungo's personnel were busy with the more seriously wounded, and she knew her father would be at the Ministry. She realized that Molly would have her head on a plate for not coming by the house first. But she wasn't in the mood to speak to anyone. Not now.

Ginny quickly Apparated to Headquarters and sent her mother a note through the Floo. After walking through the rooms making sure everything was picked up, she went to her old room the same room Lucius had spent his time in. Ginny undressed and crawled into bed. She could still smell Lucius' scent on the sheets as she began to cry herself to sleep.

Lucius finally made it to number twelve, Grimmauld Place before two in the morning. As soon as he walked into the living room he noticed something different: the mess was gone. He walked around the house and noticed a lingering scent. Ginny was there. He smiled and quietly walked up the stairs.

Ginny's dreams were restless. She kept seeing Lucius' face and hearing his voice calling to her. As Ginny struggled to keep her visions of Lucius from leaving her, the real man was slowly walking to her bedside. He looked down at her with worry in his eyes. She let out a whimper and he could see her shivering. Lucius sat on the edge of the bed and gently placed his hand on her hip as she sobbed his name.

"Lucius," she cried.

"I'm here, Ginny," Lucius said as he wiped a tear running down the corner of her eye. "Don't cry, love."

Ginny felt a soft caress as she began to slowly wake up. She opened her eyes and tried to focus.

"Why did you leave me?" she asked the image in front of her. Lucius smiled at her. "I wanted to be with you, Lucius. I wanted to be with you forever."

Now Lucius frowned.

"And now you are lost to me." Ginny began crying.

"Lost to you?" Lucius looked at her with confusion as he continued to softly wipe away the tears running down her cheeks.

"I can feel you. It's like you are still alive, Lucius."

Lucius pulled his hand away from her face and stared at her.

"Good lord, Ginny, do you think I'm dead?" he asked.

"Aren't you?" Ginny sat up now, very surprised.

"I most certainly am not. Didn't anyone bother to tell you that back at St. Mungo's?"

Ginny launched herself towards him and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Lucius!" She kissed his neck, his cheek, then his forehead and finally his lips. "I woke up alone. No one was in my room. I was feeling well so I checked myself out. Nobody bothered to tell me you weren't dead, but oh Lucius, I'm so happy, happy, happy you are alive, and here." Ginny held the amused wizard tightly against her chest. He wrapped his arms around her waist and held her tightly as well.

"Ginny," whispered Lucius as he kissed her neck lightly. "My Ginny." He felt her begin to unbutton his shirt as he moved to lie down with her. He toed his shoes off and pulled down the blanket covering her.

"I thought I would never feel you again," said Ginny as his mouth covered hers.

Lucius took hold of the edge of her nightgown. He brought it up over her hips, exposing the delicious pale flesh of his soon-to-be lover.

Ginny swung her leg over his hip and pulled him closer to her.

"You belong to me, Ginny." Lucius stood and used his wand to divest himself of his clothing. He then positioned himself between her thighs and looked into her eyes.

"You started something earlier, Lucius." Ginny shifted her body down the bed slightly, until she could feel the tip of his cock at her entrance. "Finish it."

They both knew they needed to be cleansed of the memory of what happened in the Riddle mansion, when Voldemort ordered Lucius to rape her. Lucius, determined that this time would be different, entered Ginny slowly. Ginny sighed as she felt him stretch her to accommodate his girth.

"I thought you would hate me for what I did to you," Lucius held her face between his hands and kissed her gently.

"You had no choice. I heard you the entire time. Your voice is what gave me hope that we would survive." Ginny moved her hips in tune with Lucius' movements.

As he moved against her body, feeling the softness of her skin against his, he whispered a vow.

"I will never allow you to leave me, Ginny." He kissed her temple. "You belong to me; say you will be my wife, have my children." Lucius looked into her sparkling eyes, still filled with tears. "Give me the chance to have a family again."

Ginny smiled and wrapped her legs around his waist.

"I will give you whatever you ask, Lucius, and more."

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Once again I must apologize for the lemon aid when I wanted to get some lemons. But maybe one day I'll get over my discomfort at writing smut.

I hope you all enjoyed this chapter. Thank you for reading.

Epilogue ? Marriages, Children and Rampages

Chapter 19 of 19

Coming full circle.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to read this story and leave me reviews. I have enjoyed writing this so very much, and I am thrilled that you all enjoyed reading it as well.

I'd like to thank as always my wonderful Beta June, who always gives 110%.

I own nothing. All canon characters belong to JKR.

Epilogue – Marriages, Children and Rampages

The rest of the week went by quickly. Severus moved Hermione's things to his rooms at Hogwarts. They expanded the space to include a small room which they would use for a nursery. While they had no luck conceiving the night of Voldemort's departure from the world, Severus was sure that their first child would come nine months to the day of their wedding night. Hermione contacted her parents and informed them that she would be getting married that weekend to her former Potions professor.

Her mother was overjoyed, since she had known of her daughter's infatuation with her teacher. However, her father took a bit more time to warm up to the idea. But once he met Severus he realized that the Slytherin would take good care of his daughter.

When they made their announcement to Lucius and Ginny, their friends were elated, but had to turn down attending the ceremony.

"But Ginny, I wanted you to be my maid of honor," said a disappointed Hermione.

"Hermione, Ginny and I were also planning on getting married this weekend," Lucius said. "Otherwise we would love to attend your wedding."

Hermione immediately hugged her friend as Severus stepped forward to congratulate Lucius.

"That's wonderful news." The two men shook hands.

Lucius then turned to Ginny.

"Ginny, might I have a word?"

I've got another story in the works. I will begin posting that sometime next week.