

Behind Your Steel Blue Eyes

by Bola

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"I don't understand why we really need a replacement for Professor Sherryblossom," Minerva said, looking at Albus's silver instruments that lay on the table behind his desk. As usual, they were puffing small clouds of mist.

She didn't think that true magic had anything to do with what she called 'guessing away.' "And then especially not why you wanted Trelawney. There were enough other candidates who didn't make me doubt their sanity," she went on in the same tone, subtly pursing her lips. She always did that when there was something she disapproved of, Albus had long known.

"I'm well aware of what your opinions on the Inner Eye are, Minerva," Albus said as he looked at her, eyes twinkling behind the half moon spectacles resting upon his crooked nose. Maybe if he could explain the reason why he had hired Sybill, explain about that one prophecy she had done and what danger she would actually be in once she could no longer call Hogwarts her home, his always-so-rational deputy would understand. Yet he couldn't for certain reasons, even though Minerva had always been very loyal to him.

"I don't believe in such thing as the Inner Eye," Minerva said, then sighed. "However, I cannot argue about the fact that it's always been tradition here at Hogwarts to teach Divination from the third year, and therefore I will not talk to you again about the hows and whys of my genuine disapproval of your decision." One could hear Dilys Derwent snort from her portrait. Dumbledore held up his hand to shush Amberose Swott before yet another heated discussion between both deceased Headmasters could commence. The two were well known for being on opposite sides of the 'Divination Debate', with Dilys falling in the same camp as Minerva.

Dumbledore faintly smiled at the thought of Dilys and Minerva together: the two of them most likely would have been best friends had they lived at the same time.

"Thank you," Albus said smiling, head nodding appreciatively towards his Deputy, when suddenly an almost inaudible knock was heard at his office door. Albus elegantly flung his wand towards the massive oak door, revealing Hogwarts's newest asset to the staff: a shabby figure, clutching a threadbare and ugly flowery bag and three large brown trunks at her feet.

Sybill Trelawney seemed to be wearing the same old shawls as always with the usual amount of chains and beads and bangles and old rings. She smelled strongly of cooking sherry, her eyes flashing in every direction behind the huge thick rimmed glasses she always wore. Minerva's nostrils subtly widened as she eyed and smelled Sybill in the doorway of the Headmaster's office.

"Ah, very well," Albus said, smiling, lightly gesturing his wand again to send Sybill's belongings forward to her new home at the top of the North Tower. It seemed obvious to anyone that Minerva McGonagall wasn't someone who would immediately say 'very well' after seeing Sybill Trelawney in her doorway. She looked as if she had just been forced to eat an insect. She felt like she was forced to look at one, at least. There were many odd things about Sybill, but the huge black rimmed glasses she wore enlarged

her eyes so much that she looked like a dragonfly rather than human.

Maybe from that moment it was already clear that a lot would have to happen to make the new Professor Trelawney rise in Minerva's ranking. Professor McGonagall could be a cynic at times. Some said she acted like that to protect her feelings from interfering and from getting hurt. Others said that she simply was unable to show her emotions. Nevertheless, she did defend her opinions strongly and was certainly not afraid to stand up for what she thought was right. She did have her maturity and age, and maybe that had only made her convictions stronger.

"Minerva, would you be so kind to enlighten Sybill? Some things have quite changed over the past years."

"Of course, Professor Dumbledore," Minerva McGonagall said, then turned around and privately rolled her eyes. One could almost see her thinking, 'I'm sure she could find her way around here just fine with that famous Inner Eye of hers!'

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"The Slytherin common room is found in the dungeons of Hogwarts Castle, located underneath the lake in the school grounds; current Head of House is Professor Snape, who teaches Potions," McGonagall began by summing up in a fast sequence of words. No word came from her companion as both women walked down the stairs from Dumbledore's office.

The pair walked past the gargoyles and McGonagall walked up the stairs in the same fast steps, forcing Trelawney to almost run to keep up, not really paying attention to her route for she knew her way around so well after all these years. "The Ravenclaw common room is at the top of the spiral staircase on the fifth floor; current Head of House is Professor Flitwick, who teaches Charms," McGonagall continued in the same severe voice as usual, walking up another flight of stairs. Sometimes, she really hated the fact that one could not Apparate in Hogwarts's domain.

"The Hufflepuff common room and dormitories are to be accessed near the kitchens. Professor Sprout, our teacher of Herbology, is their Head of House," McGonagall continued. "Gryffindor would be my House," she said, subtly raising her chin with pride. "Gryffindor common room is located on the seventh floor. I would like to think these are the most important things for you to learn about Hogwarts this time. You shall be informed of your course schedule by the end of the week, before our students arrive on Wednesday. I'm sure that you are aware of the new school year starting next week."

Professor McGonagall didn't bother to open the door to Trelawney's new chambers, but simply flicked her seventeen-inch wand at it. "No one has been in here since Professor Sherryblossom left," she said, nodding at the layer of dust covering everything in the room. She briefly flicked her wand once more, making it disappear at once.

"Very good," Sybill said. "Thank you. I'm sure that being hidden from the hustle and bustle of the main school will prevent my Inner Eye from being Clouded. I believe that these chambers need some more decorations, though. My great-great-grandmother, the celebrated Seer Cassandra Trelawney, whom you must have known..." she failed to notice the roll of McGonagall's eyes "...thought of it as great importance as well."

Minerva McGonagall nodded without saying more, then turned around to leave. She wasn't going to spend her energy on this. She doubted that Cassandra would have been any better at Divination than her great-great-granddaughter.

"Behind your steel blue eyes lies an unknown truth. It's not completely unknown to me, though," Trelawney's usually misty, dreamy voice came, once McGonagall's hand touched the door knob.

She wasn't going to listen to this rubbish, she thought, when suddenly, in a voice raspier than before, Sybill said, "He did love you." It was as if someone else spoke through her, her eyes directed straight ahead without really looking at anything at all.

At that moment, McGonagall turned around on her heels to look at the new Hogwarts Professor, who seemed to be in a sort of transcendental state. "I have absolutely no idea what you are talking about," she said, even though her immediate change in attention had already betrayed her.

"You do."

"Are you trying to impress me by exclaiming pieces of trashy romance novels, Sybill?" Minerva asked, voice just a bit less severe than usual. "Perhaps your famous imagined gift is trying to guess away until there's something I would like to believe to be true?"

"If you do not believe in my extraordinary gift, then how, Minerva Gaia McGonagall, would you explain how I see that the only man you ever loved asked you to marry him two years after you both graduated here, then disappeared without ever giving any more sign of living? It has broken your trust in everyone, even those who mean well. It explains why you don't allow anyone close. It still lies heavy upon your heart, even though it has been decades," Sybill said, walking forward, placing her hand over Minerva's chest.

Under normal conditions, she would have simply slapped the hand away roughly. Now however, she however did nothing but stand there. McGonagall tried to compose herself; no Inner Eye was needed to read the level of pure shock within the ocean blue of her eyes. She then pushed Sybill's hand away, but somewhat gentler than she normally would have. "H-How?"

"The Inner Eye sees everything, Minerva," Sybill said, looking at her colleague with her extremely enlarged eyes.

"D-Don't give me that explanation," Professor McGonagall said. She couldn't keep herself from wondering whether Sybill could be gifted after all, even though Divination and everything connected with it seemed useless guessing to her. Now, however, she started to doubt her opinions, which was something that rarely happened. Maybe she secretly hoped that Sybill would now give her the answers she had sought after so long.

How in the name of Godric Gryffindor could crazy Sybill be aware of what lay within her heart? How could she do this with just guessing? It wasn't possible. Yet she must be guessing, if not even Dumbledore knew about his deputy's engagement with Torvald Gentlebreed at the age of nineteen. He had disappeared not long after, leaving her only with a dark blue diamond ring and false hope. After a few months with no news from him, she told herself not to keep on waiting anymore. A man who first made her go wild with fake promises, then disappeared without word or explanation, surely couldn't be the right person for her, Minerva McGonagall, who even at that age had put loyalty and truth above everything else.

She had often found herself thinking about how her life could have been with the two of them together. She wouldn't have been teaching at Hogwarts, and perhaps wouldn't have remained childless... wouldn't have been seen as the poor woman who had never found love, and whom no one had ever wanted. Minerva mostly didn't dwell on or care about what others thought about her. However, even after all that time, even the mentioning of him could make her feel vulnerable inside again. Breakable. Hearing his name was more than she could take.

"Maybe it could be a comfort for you that you parted in love, not hate. The Gentlebreeds..." Sybill's voice trailed off in thin air, as Minerva audibly gasped for air hearing his name, and suddenly seemed to have difficulty trying to breathe regularly.

Sybill's head shook, and she seemed to be herself again as in non-transcendental eyes flashing around her to try puzzle together what had just happened. It felt like she had just fainted, but she was standing upright still. Her sky blue eyes fell upon Minerva's slumping figure, and Sybill immediately reached for her, catching the usually so strict Deputy Headmistress in her arms before accidentally stubbing her toe against one of her trunks. She could as well have flicked her wand to make some kind of chair appear, or simply move the closest one. However, reason number one for her not doing just that was the fact that she had honestly never been good with making things appear or move. Reason number two was that she never had her wand ready when needed. Who needed a wand when there was an Inner Eye protecting you from the worst harm? She hadn't anticipated this, though. Neither would she have guessed that stubbing your toe against a trunk could actually hurt. Maybe her sensitive Inner Eye had been Clouded through the excitement of returning to Hogwarts, where she had once been a student as well. Sybill Trelawney wasn't aware of having been in a trance. That would be the real explanation, one she wouldn't think about, because Sybill was never aware of her little moments of truth.

She couldn't quite think of something that would succeed in calming the upset Minerva down. Sybill's hand ran down the older woman's spine a few times, just a bit too fast

to really have an effect. Slowly, she managed to lead Minerva to one of the empty puffy chairs a few feet away. Sybill broke apart from her and looked into the teary blue eyes that no one could have ever imagined to see. Usually, Minerva's eyes were the steel kind of blue that clearly said she wasn't to be tangled with. Right now, though, it seemed like the gentle kind of blue, as if the bright afternoon sky was being reflected in them.

The deputy Headmistress was not yet crying but still shocked beyond reason. Sybill sat down by the chair in which Minerva was seated and impulsively leaned forward touching the strict Transfiguration teacher's lips with hers. Maybe Sybill thought this to have some hidden kind of healing upon Minerva's soul?

Minerva McGonagall didn't protest. She was simply too shocked at having heard something that true from crazy Sybill to start with. Especially because it had been so long ago and intense, and part of the truth she had longed so much to hear even after all these years...

Sybill slowly continued her healing process on the Head of Gryffindor House. No protest came at any moment.

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Minerva looked through the window at the lights burning in Hagrid's house. Elegantly, she sprang off the window sill and padded over towards the bed, where Sybill lay asleep, scarves scattered around, on and next to it. She purred and appreciatively pushed her head against Sybill's jaw line before springing upon the window sill again and looking back one last time before disappearing. The alert tabby cat left the tower, only the lines around her eyes making her recognizable as she walked towards her own chambers in the moonlight.