

Melodia Who?

by Melodia Snape

This Story begins after the alleged Murder of Dumbledore. The Order of the Phoenix battles Voldemort. A new character, not created by JK Rowling, is introduced, and Snape finds himself in an uplifting relationship that could change the course of his life

Chapter 1: Young Love and Loss

Chapter 1 of 7

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Chapter 1: Young Love and Loss

Melodia Dumbledore was very happy living in the care of her uncle, Albus Dumbledore, at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. With the exception of missing her late parents terribly, she loved everything about the school and her teachers.

Melodia Hadass Vaughn-Dumbledore was the daughter of Belenus Raguel Douglas Dumbledore, younger brother of Albus Dumbledore. She was the miracle child born late in life for Belenus and his wife Pheona.

After helping Albus defeat the dark wizard, Grindelwald, Belenus and Pheona decided it was time to start a family. After many years of failed attempts, Pheona at last gave birth to their first and only child, Melodia.

In support of their brother Albus, they joined The Order of the Phoenix when it was formed in 1970. Sadly, after only two years of service, they were tortured and killed by Death Eaters during Lord Voldemort's rise to power.

Albus Dumbledore took Melodia to raise in late 1972 after the death of her parents. Dumbledore believed since she was due to begin classes at Hogwarts the following year anyway; it would be beneficial to her to call Hogwarts home.

Melodia was very intelligent and eager to learn all that she could. From the beginning, she secretly intended to become an Auror. She wanted more than anything to punish Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters for murdering her parents.

Melodia was an attractive girl, but rather simplistic. She was never worried about trying to be gorgeous. She was gentle, kind, and loving to everyone. She had a lot of friends and was highly respected for her own abilities and attributes, rather than merely being thought of as the Headmaster's niece.

She was much too involved with her studies and her friends to think much about boys... but there was one... a Slytherin boy... he was at least 2 years her senior. He was very tall, lanky and had greasy looking black hair. She heard some Gryffindor boys call him Snivellus, but she knew his name was really Severus Snape.

Severus was a mystery to her, and she sensed a great sadness within him that seemed to create a bitter, rough edge to his demeanor.

For reasons she could not explain, she longed to repair whatever damage had been done to him that made him seem so unhappy and isolated.

Frequently, she found herself watching him and hoped he would not notice how intently she gazed at him. At times when he was deep in thought over a school assignment, she could not help but notice that he seemed almost handsome. But she was sure that no one else saw that, and he seemed to have no good opinion of his own appearance.

He was usually alone, but it was when she rarely glimpsed him interacting with other students, that she knew he was at his loneliest. He didn't fit in too well with anyone and suffered a lot of teasing from other boys. She knew he did a decent job of defending himself ... but at times he would attack those students at random later in retaliation ... and it became a vicious cycle with the lot of them.

Boys! She thought disgustedly. They were so immature!

But ... still ... with this one... she could not shake the fact that she was oddly drawn to him. In spite of his being so very shy and withdrawn, she felt he had to be a decent boy... and she never gave up on trying to get to know him a little better. She hated the fact that he ended up spending a lot of time with some other Slytherins that Melodia felt were a bad influence on him.

She began to speak casually to him during and after classes. Sometimes he was responsive, and sometimes he was not. Her heart felt as if it would break for him at times, but there were other times that he seemed just as brash as the crowd of bullies he ended up following after.

He was apparently very smart, and he excelled in almost every subject. Especially Potions and DADA.

She decided that the best way to get him talking was to converse about school. Particularly, about the subjects that seemed to hold his interest. Therefore, she feigned needing help with Potions, and when he finally agreed to help her, she praised him for his advice and claimed to be in "deep debt" to him for his assistance.

They never became intimately close, but she did enjoy spending time with him, even if it was only for schoolwork. For some reason, he never seemed interested in any other type of conversation or personal activity, but that was enough, she thought, for now...

Although she never realized it, he had become smitten with her. He both loved and hated the gentle way about her, and the way she made him feel when he was with her. Could it possible that she had feelings for him?

"Don't be ridiculous!" he said aloud without thinking.

Of course, why would she ever fall for him? He knew that as the Headmaster's niece, he had as much chance of going out with her as he did becoming the Quidditch Captain. Severus was unbelievably frustrated with himself for acting so nervous around her.

Under his breath he swore to himself, "She's only a kid! Just a stupid... little... school girl!"

But he knew this was not true, even as he said it, he knew better. She was the nicest student in all of Hogwarts. She was kind to everyone and was very sweet with him. He agonized over asking her what she seemed to see in him, but could never bring himself to do it.

"A fat lot of good that would do you, she probably just feels sorry for you because you're ugly as mud, and you talk like a gibbering idiot! Yeah, ask her why don't you?" he said to himself. "Give her a funny story to carry back to all the other giggly girls in the Ravenclaw common room!"

Immediately he hated himself for thinking that. He truly doubted that she was anything like that at all. She just had impeccable manners and was far too great a person to be petty in any way. She is, after all, the Headmaster's niece, and Albus Dumbledore was one of the kindest hearted people he had ever met.

As they sat in Honeydukes, sipping warm butterbeer, he realized that she was very attentive to him. He had never felt this way about anyone before, and he didn't understand it fully. The only thing he knew for sure was that he was a happier person when he was with her, and she seemed genuinely happy to be with him. She was so lovely, and he loved the way her brown eyes sparkled when she looked at him.

Severus had never had a girl look at him that way, and at first he wasn't sure how to deal with it. He was amused both by her spunky demeanor and her delightful sense of humor. The beauty of Melodia was that she was beautiful on the inside as well as the outside. Not many girls fit into this description in his opinion, and to him, she was the most beautiful girl in the world. He was utterly astounded that such a girl would even want to be seen with an ugly git like him. He remembered how difficult he tried to make it for her to get close to him at first and was grateful that for whatever reason that she did not give up and leave him alone again.

He had at last resigned himself to believing that he could at least continue helping her with her Potions homework, and it was kind of nice to have a girl to spend time with. He never really understood why she needed his help. She seemed very bright, but she seemed very anxious to take his instruction, and put it into practice. He thought it would be nice to keep her as his friend, if he were capable of true friendship, and he felt that Melodia Dumbledore was the person that could bring that out in him. He was convinced that there was no hope of ever having any other kind of relationship with her. He thought he would end up ruining things and losing her forever, because he had no idea how to handle that kind of role.

He used to call her "Little Loddie," mostly to annoy her, but she only laughed at his cheek and called him a "shaggy headed git" in return.

That might have normally offended him, but when she squeezed his arm and smiled, his heart skipped a beat, and he would only shake his head and sigh. After spending countless weeks and months with her, he became a bit brave, sitting in Honeydukes and decided to ask the question that he never thought he would.

"What do you see in me, Loddie? That is... er ... why do find so much pleasure hanging round, bugging me about Potions and cheeking me all of the time?" He tried to sound nonchalant, but he began to stammer.

The question did not come out the way he had planned, and he was feeling foolish, so he quickly changed the course of his question.

"I mean... er ... don't get me wrong; if I have to hang out with a girl, and be bugged and insulted, I'd rather it be you than anyone else in the world."

This took Melodia aback, and her smile faltered a bit. She lowered her head for a moment, and Severus was convinced he had blown it completely.

When she looked up again, she was laughing softly, but her eyes were misty.

" Oh. Shaggy, I value your assistance with Potions, and you're truly a very gifted instructor... "Professor Snape," she teased.

His eyes narrowed a little, imagining the pain in the bum that teaching a roomful of rowdy kids could be.

Melodia saw his look of disdain, and laughed again, "That's why I bug you, but I hope you know that I would never intentionally hurt or insult you, Shaggy. I only cheek you to pay you back for calling me childish names like Little Loddie."

Deep down, she loved that nickname, but she needed to keep this exchange as light hearted as possible. If she didn't, she feared she would scare him away. She looked into his dark eyes and could swear she saw a flicker of light there.

"None of that, however, is the reason I like to 'hang around' you." She reached up as she said it and touched the hair at his temples. With a lock in each hand, she allowed them to slip through her fingers, as her hands slid down each side of his face, and she caressed his jaw-lines with her thumbs until reaching his chin.

"Don't you get it? I see a remarkable man behind your eyes. You are going to be very important someday, maybe even a Potions master!" she teased again easily.

He was so astonished by her answer that he could not find his voice to reply.

She continued sweetly, "You are so special, Shaggy," her eyes became wet with tears again, "I know it in my heart. Promise me that you will learn to have more faith in yourself, and never let anyone convince you that you do not matter."

With this, she leaned in and kissed his lips very gently. He was too stunned to react. No girl had ever kissed him that way before.

His nerves got the best of him, and he quickly stood up and announced that he wanted to practice a few new moves he intended to use in the Quiddich match for the next day against Gryffindor.

"That's okay. I have some shopping to do, and it will probably be too 'girly' for you anyhow," she said, smiling sweetly.

He waved as he headed off toward the castle and heard her call out behind him, "See you tomorrow, Shaggy! Don't forget! We have double Potions!"

There was no way for him to know that this was the last time he would ever see her... until....

Chapter 2: An Unexpected Reunion

Chapter 2 of 7

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Chapter 2: An Unexpected Reunion

Hidden Terrace Manor was named for the terrace that stretched the width of the house. It was almost entirely unseen from the driveway due to the mature oak trees, which graced the rolling landscape.

No one would ever guess that within this luxurious home a strategic plan was being formed by an alliance of wizards and witches to save both the Wizarding and the Muggle worlds from the most powerful, evil wizard of all time... Tom Riddle. The self-proclaimed... Lord Voldemort.

Remus Lupin strode across the terrace looking and waiting, as if he were expecting a guest. Worried, he sighed and walked into the massive front door that led into the foyer of the beautiful home that would now serve as the new headquarters for the Order of the Phoenix.

Melodia descended the stairs looking both tired and overwhelmed.

She was of average height and build, very attractive, yet simply stated. Her full, straight auburn hair, which was usually either swept into a ponytail or tied in a loose knot at the base of her neck, flowed loosely down her back between her shoulder blades.

She knew that he would be there soon, and she was very nervous. She had been nearly 20 years younger the last time they were together.

"Is she sleeping?" Lupin asked as he made his way across the foyer to the foot of the stairs.

"Yes, finally. She is having a really hard time of it though. I told her that we would wake her the moment they arrived, but I could tell she doesn't believe that. I wish there was something I could say to comfort her."

Lupin shrugged and said, "I am afraid that she doesn't trust any of us, but I suppose that is to be expected considering the circumstances."

Melodia nodded. Her warm brown eyes reflected the stress that the past twenty-four hours had put on her.

Her gentle facial features, only lightly marred by time and experience, were now lined with concern and grief for a woman and her son that she did not know; however, Melodia especially worried for the man that she loved.

He was out there somewhere trying to make his way to the rendezvous. She felt utterly helpless. The only things that she could do were wait and pray.

"You're tired, Melodia. You should try to get some sleep," Lupin urged.

Melodia knew that he was right, but she just couldn't see herself shut up in her room upstairs. Not now. Not until they arrived. Until then, it was out of the question.

As if seeing this for himself, Lupin relented, "I knew you wouldn't do it, but I had to tell you that you should. Albus might strangle me if I didn't at least try to make you see reason."

He grinned slightly because he knew that was a heavy exaggeration.

"Thank you, Remus, I know you mean well, and you are right. I am very tired, but I doubt I could sleep even if I tried. I know I will not rest until I see for myself that he is all right."

After a short pause she asked, "Does he know I am going to be here?"

"No. I don't believe so, but I honestly don't know," Lupin shrugged as he retired to the kitchen to make some tea.

I'd better go and check on my guest, she thought.

If she wakes up and he's not here yet, she will be beside herself with worry again.

The oversized bedroom was draped in shades of delicate green. The sheers and walls were light camel and were trimmed in gold. Antique tapestries and beautifully coordinated colonial type furniture adorned this bedroom. It was Melodia's second favorite bedroom in the house, besides her own.

Centered in this lavish room was a large overstuffed mattress within a solid oak four-poster bed. It appeared just as new as it had the day that it was purchased. Under the covers of this magnificent bed in a spell driven sleep lay Narcissa Malfoy.

Once Melodia was satisfied that Narcissa was fast asleep, she decided to go check on her uncle and wait for the arrival of the next two members. From the top of the stairs, she heard a knock at the front door. Her heart began to pound inside her chest.

"This is it! He is finally here. Oh, my God!" She gasped as she ran the length of the great hallway to the nearest bathroom and froze in front of the mirror. Her palms were wet with perspiration, and she was trembling slightly.

"Pull yourself together, Melodia!" she scolded herself. "This is the moment that you have waited for ... you will finally see him again."

She appraised her reflection and was not happy with the appearance of the woman staring back at her. She looked tired and weathered.

"I can't let him see me like this! He will think I've gone 'round the twist!" she said desperately to herself.

Melodia splashed cold water on her face and toweled off quickly. A bit more satisfied with her appearance, she pulled herself to her full height, straightened her clothes and her hair, and headed toward the staircase once more.

She heard voices coming from the study. One of them belonged to Lupin. The other one had to be him. His voice was much deeper now, but she would recognize it anywhere. Chills ran down her spine as she listened to him speak. Oh, how she hoped he would be happy to see her; however, given the circumstances in which they departed, in addition to the stress of the current situation, she couldn't help fearing that this might be a bit much to hope for.

As she began to descend the stairs Lupin came out of the study followed by a tall man with jet-black hair. It was longer than she remembered, almost shoulder length, but still greasy looking and unkempt. He wore a rather tattered, long, flowing, black robe and dirty black boots.

At first he did not see her, his gaze was fixed on Lupin. He was getting the news, no doubt, about her uncle and Narcissa.

"We need to get Draco into bed. He is very distraught and has been worried for his mother," the black headed man said.

"I cannot tell yet if he is still frightened or merely relieved to be done with this; however, I do believe that he needs some sleep and the care of his mother now, more than ever."

"Where is Narcissa?" he asked.

Lupin told him that she was sleeping in one of the guest bedrooms at the top of the staircase.

Just as he heard this, he looked up and saw her descending the stairs to meet him.

She was lovely! Just as he remembered her. She was older certainly, but the years had been far kinder to her than they had to him, he noticed, with a pang of bitterness.

"Dear God! Melodia?"

His voice croaked as he uttered the words. He felt that old familiar foolishness he always felt in her presence. She seemed to float down the stairway toward him, smiling the enchanting smile that haunted his dreams. It was the one he thought he would never see again.

His heart skipped a few beats as she reached out her hand for him to take and spoke to him for the first time in over twenty years. "Hello, Severus."

Melodia's voice seemed to tremble with the words she finally managed to speak, but why not? She felt as if her entire anatomy was experiencing a massive earthquake.

He instinctively pulled her into an embrace that almost took her to her knees. No words were spoken for what seemed like an eternity. She noticed that Lupin had discreetly excused himself, and at last she was alone with the man she loved. In his arms she was safe and warm. This man was nothing like the boy she left behind so many years ago. He was sturdy and strong. His arms held her tight, his chin rested on the top of her head. Heaven, she thought to herself contentedly.

Just then, a masculine voice whispered, "I agree, it is heaven."

Slightly startled, she looked up into his dark eyes, which seemed to bore through to her very soul.

Trying to disguise her obvious case of nerves, she teased, "Wow! Uncle was right! You are very good at that, aren't you?"

He did not answer. In truth, he was more nervous than she was. It was not in his nature to have such close physical contact with anyone, especially a woman, and he shocked himself by embracing her at all.

He had occasionally sought attention from a member of the opposite sex, but that was to satisfy physical need. He had no real problem with doing that at all. Those moments, however, called for discretion, not for intimacy. He hated knowing that he was not accustomed to this type of closeness.

Severus told himself that this encounter was different. He had not seen Melodia in many years, and she had played a very special role in his life at one time. He hoped that she would not notice how awkward he felt. It was an odd sensation for him to show any type of affection, but he knew that at that moment that he was truly happy to be holding her.

"It is very good to see you again, Loddie," he said softly as he tightened his embrace.

She shuddered a bit when he called her by the beloved nickname he had given her so many years before. All too quickly the long embrace ended, and she faced him again still looking into his intoxicating eyes.

"For me, too, Shaggy. I am so relieved that you're finally here and safe."

He tried to smile. She could tell that he was exhausted. Everything had happened too quickly for him and the others. He swayed a bit as he released her from the embrace they had shared.

"Oh, Severus, you look so tired. Come with me and sit down."

She walked with him into the sitting room toward the enormous eighteenth century sofa. They sat in silence together for moment before she suggested, "How about some hot tea? Remus was making some earlier and I will go and get you a cup."

She stood up to turn away, but he caught her by the hand.

"No. Wait... Stay with me for a moment first," he asked quietly.

Feeling degraded, he became frustrated with himself for sounding so pathetic. This type of thing was not in his nature to say at all. He simply couldn't believe she was here, and all of the sorely missed years seemed to have melted away the first moment that he saw her.

Smiling, she sat down again. Then suddenly she exclaimed, "Severus! You are injured! What the...!" For the first time, she noticed the gashes in his robes.

Most of them were around his back and neck, but she also noticed a few fine gashes on his crown and on the back of his head. A few of them were bloody but had been dry for some time now, by their appearance.

"What happened to you? It looks as though you have been attacked by a wild animal or something!"

She reached up to brush his hair away from the wounds, and he winced and ducked away slightly.

"You could say that!" he snapped.

"It was Sirius Black's pet! That infernal 'horse-bird or bird-horse' creature he called Buckbeak! The idiot animal was trying to kill me!"

Despite the tormented look on his face, Melodia burst into laughter.

Snape's face became dark and menacing, he curled his lip with intended sarcasm as he silkily retorted, "I am certainly glad that you find humor in this, because I assure you, I do not!"

She cupped her right hand over her mouth, looking like a child that has just been scolded for making too much noise.

He glowered at her for a moment looking as if he'd like nothing better than to throttle her, then quickly spun away from her and strode toward the study.

She desperately tried to stifle her laughter and finally managed to blurt out, "Oh, come on, Shaggy!"

Severus whirled quickly around to face her and was about to respond, when she said, "He's just an animal! Not to mention, he thought you had murdered Uncle Albus and attacked Harry! What did you expect him to do?" she asked sarcastically, then added, "bow to you then give you a lift to the outside of the gates?"

She could tell that she had struck some sort of nerve, but was not sure just what kind or which one.

"If you are trying to get cheeky with me, Little Loddie, I assure you, tonight is not the night for it!" His eyes became black, and he sneered with mild contempt as he spoke the last.

Melodia surprised him by laughing out loud and ruffling the top of his hair. "Oh, my!" she exclaimed. "You must be Professor Snape! I have certainly heard a great deal about you over the years," she teased.

Completely dumbfounded, Severus could do nothing but stare at her with his mouth opened slightly.

"Well, I would say it is a pleasure to meet you, but I haven't decided if that is true or not quite yet." Snape glared at her again clearly incensed at her response. His eyes narrowed dangerously.

She gave no pause to his expression, but said, "You know something, Professor? That look might carry some weight around Hogwarts, but it is completely lost on me! I believe my dear Shaggy... er that is... I assume you are in there somewhere..." looking deeply into his eyes as if trying to see who was behind them, "that you have inevitably met your match."

This time, she turned and walked toward the kitchen, calling over her shoulder, "Wait just there. I will be back momentarily with your tea."

When she returned, she noted that he still looked very tired, but he was no longer scowling. She presented him with a cup of freshly brewed tea and sat beside him once more.

He sipped the delicious tea silently for a moment, then said, "Thank you, Loddie." Hearing her nickname called again made her heart leap with glee.

"You were right you know," he said as he sipped his tea again, and placed the cup back in the saucer.

Melodia looked puzzled. "Right about what?"

"Professor Snape. That was him... or me... a few moments ago when we were speaking." Then he added, "He's kind of an 'ass' really." He paused to sip his tea once more. "You see, he is who I have become."

He sighed heavily and continued, "Shaggy has not been present since you left school," he said as he eyed her carefully anticipating a response.

Melodia felt a sharp pang of guilt as she watched his expression carefully, but said nothing.

"Professor Severus Snape is usually the one seen by everyone else, and he is not the most popular person at Hogwarts, believe me."

He sipped his tea again and yawned. "You, my little Loddie, have caught me on 'an off night' tonight; otherwise you may have seen a bit more of him yourself," he finished with his lip curled in playful sarcasm.

Melodia giggled sweetly, then said, "You know, Shaggy? You're just too irresistible when you snarl like that."

Severus would have normally found this annoying had it come from anyone else, but he didn't. He remembered how she always used to say ridiculous things like that and he usually had the same reaction.

At last he shook his head in defeat and said, "I see that some things never change do they, Loddie?"

She smiled at him again, and this time, his cynical demeanor faded away for good.

Chapter 3: Awakenings

Chapter 3 of 7

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Melodia and Severus sat with Lupin in the living room and relaxed for a time, talking over the events of the last two days. Severus asked repeatedly about Dumbledore's condition and was anxious to check on him again.

"We will check in on him before we retire," she said simply. I just wish I could understand all of this. It seems like such a ... drastic measure to be taking. For both of you," she said as she looked into Snape's eyes worriedly.

Severus told them about how he had made an Unbreakable Vow with Narcissa Malfoy and how Albus had reacted calmly when he learned of it.

"I could not believe how calm he remained after learning that he had been marked for death," he told them.

"He said he knew of a way that we could 'get around' the vow, and I literally cringed when he told me. I will never forget it." He paused, trying to collect himself. "He very calmly told me, 'It is time for me to die, then, Severus,' and I stood paralyzed with shock. Apparently he saw my reaction so he went on to explain what he meant by that, but I remained horrified. I tried to explain to him that too many things could go wrong with this plan, but he wouldn't hear it. I felt trapped and confused. We argued and I lost. I was unwilling to go along with this absurd plan, and he knew it; however, he would not allow me the option of declining."

"Well, I'm not surprised. That sounds like Dumbledore," Lupin interjected. "He would never willingly allow someone to risk themselves for him, regardless of the cost." Then he noticed tears in Melodia's eyes.

"Don't cry, dear." Lupin coaxed her, realizing the impact of his comment. He tried to recover. "He will be just fine. I expect he will be up around in a matter of days, spouting wisdom and assigning tasks as if none of this had ever happened to him."

"I'm sure you're right, Remus, but I just can't stand it. This is all very scary and sad," she said as she brushed tears from her eyes and tried to smile.

Severus studied her face as she spoke and realized that she still seemed somewhat childlike to him. He knew that she was a woman now, and her feelings for him were written all over her precious features. He immediately felt terrible for bringing this subject up, so he reached for her hand and squeezed it affectionately.

Lupin watched their interaction in mild surprise. *It's hard to miss that these two are more than just acquaintances* Lupin thought to himself. He knew that they had known each other at Hogwarts years ago, and it was rumored there was some sort of schoolyard romance; but he never gave that too much merit. Snape was just a geeky kid who was into the Dark Arts and a loner. She was the headmaster's niece. Tonight, however, he had witnessed the embrace at the bottom of the stairs, and he saw how they were looking at each other. It was obvious that whatever had happened between them in their past was far from over, and he was genuinely supportive. Perhaps Melodia's presence would benefit Severus. Regardless of his history with him, he had to admit that it would be nice for Snape to find happiness.

Melodia had begun fussing about Snape's wounds again, trying to survey the damage. She flinched slightly at the sight of them and made a sour face.

"Don't worry. I'll be alright, Loddie. It's not as bad as it must look," he said absently. She knew that no matter what he claimed, he was truly uncomfortable. What he needed was a good hot bath and, at the very least, some topical medication for his wounds.

She gently patted his knee and said, "You should really let me treat those," as she motioned toward the gashes in his head. "And judging from your robe, it would not surprise me to find a few there either."

He groaned, a sound that reminded her of an aggravated forest beast, and she scolded him,

"Now stop that! You stay here in the living room with Remus and drink the rest of your tea. In the meantime, I will run you a hot bath, find you some clothes, and then you will let me tend those wounds."

Lupin thought she sounded a lot like Molly Weasley at that moment. His mouth turned up in a slight smile, as he looked at Snape and shrugged.

Sensing there was no way to win an argument with her, Severus mumbled something in agreement and sank himself into the cushions of the sofa and sipped his fresh tea.

Over the next few days, alternate members of The Order made frequent visits, caring for Narcissa and Draco and, of course, Dumbledore. Melodia advised that it might be risky keeping the Malfoys here for too long. Her visits with them were taxing, to say the least. Narcissa ranted and cried herself into a frenzy about her absent husband, Lucius, which was quite bad enough; but Draco was the most difficult to deal with. He resented being tricked by Snape into taking the deal that Dumbledore had offered him on the tower. He was also very bitter about Snape being a spy on the side of The Order; therefore, it was feared that he was fast becoming a possible threat, despite the fact that his life had not only been spared, but he was also being kept safe.

The growing concern among the members was that he would eventually find a way to fight the sleeping spell and escape. Melodia advised the best way to guard against this was by performing the "Segrego Magos" charm to temporarily remove their magical powers.

After several days of their frustrating behavior, Severus suggested to Lupin and Tonks that Draco and Narcissa be taken to the hospital wing at Hogwarts to hide them there for the summer. This was for their safety as well as that of everyone else. There should be no danger there because everyone presumed them dead, as a result of a fight to escape after being cornered by Aurors.

The Order's goal was to have Voldemort disposed of as quickly as possible in hopes that classes could safely resume in the fall. Professor McGonagall and the other teachers at Hogwarts were advised only that the Malfoys were being held until the conflict was over, and no one outside of the school was to know of their presence.

Mad-Eye Moody, Mundungus Fletcher, and the Weasleys had yet to arrive because they had been going about their normal routines while trying to keep tabs on as many Death Eaters as possible, then reporting their findings back at Headquarters. All members had tasks in addition to their normal daily schedules to attend to, so many of them were in and out of the house sporadically. This left Severus and Melodia as the only Order members constantly in the house to care for Dumbledore. They watched over him in shifts, making sure that he was in no distress, and waiting for him to awaken.

Severus found an experimental potion he wanted to brew and administer to Dumbledore. Medicamentum, he believed, could heal his hand and work as an antidote for the suspected contents of the liquid Dumbledore had consumed on the night of the attack on Hogwarts. Melodia worked with him for two days to produce the first batch. Now all they needed was to have Dumbledore wake up. Their most recent visit looked promising at first because he did stir a couple of times but then moved no more. Severus was beside himself with worry.

He and Melodia walked into Dumbledore's room together.

"He's still sleeping," she said quietly. She walked closer to his bed and reached down to gently grasp his wrist. "He is fine," she said softly. "I can feel a good strong pulse." She bent over him to check his breathing pattern. "I don't get it. He sounds just fine," she said, looking relieved. Severus had sat down in an antique wing-backed chair across from the bed. Watching his only friend sleep.

He agonized aloud, "He should be awake by now, Loddie. I am concerned that he is having a more difficult time with this than we first anticipated," he said regretfully. "This spell was meant to make him sleep for a maximum of two days," he said wearily. "If he doesn't wake today, tomorrow will be five."

"Don't worry, Shaggy. He seems to be resting comfortably." She tried to soothe him. "He did stir a few times yesterday, perhaps he is slowly coming out of it," she said hopefully. Severus leaned back into the wing-backed chair with his face in his hands. She felt he was about to break under the stress. She walked to his chair and sat on the floor at his feet. He felt her brush against his legs and removed his hands from his eyes. She rested her head on his knee and embraced legs as she spoke.

"It's going to be okay, Shaggy. Just have faith," she said.

He marveled at her loving gesture. He was not sure how to react, but her closeness stirred him both physically and emotionally. Before he realized it, he had begun to

caress her silky hair.

"Melodia, I have never had faith in anything or anyone, with the exception of your uncle, and I'm not sure I can begin now." He paused. "I have worried that the combination of verbal and non verbal spells I had to use on the tower, in combination with the potion he consumed, may have been a bit much for someone his age. I hated having to pretend to kill him. He looked very weak even then, and I will not be able stand myself if those actions.... "

"It won't Shaggy," she said sweetly as she looked up. "I just know it."

"I hope you're right, Loddie. Perhaps if your faith and prayers help, you should do that for both of us," he suggested uneasily. The thought of prayer frightened him because he had never bothered with it much. He just couldn't be sure that he would be heard or answered, given his rotten past.

"I do every day, Severus... every ... single ... day." she said, pausing between each word as she laid her head on his knees again.

Just then, Albus stirred and mumbled something.

"Severus, please," Dumbledore mumbled and tossed slightly.

Cold chills ran down Snape's back. Those were the last words he had heard him say before he "killed" him.

Melodia jumped to her feet as Severus's body tensed and ran to her uncle's bedside. "Uncle? Uncle Albus?" she almost pleaded, as she sank to her knees at his bedside. She watched intensely for any sign of his awakening.

For a moment, there was no more movement. Then Dumbledore moved his head in the direction of her voice.

"Melodia?" he asked sleepily.

"Oh, thank God!" she said, with tears falling freely from her eyes. "Oh, Uncle, I am so glad you're back!" she almost choked the last.

Severus was immediately on his feet. "Headmaster, I am here," he said shakily, as he placed his hands on Melodia's shoulders.

Dumbledore looked up slowly at Severus and smiled weakly. "Thank you, my old friend," he muttered softly. "Thank you."

Chapter 4: Snape's Dilemma

Chapter 4 of 7

This Story begins after the Murder of Dumbledore. The Order of the Phoenix battles Voldemort. A new character, not created by JK Rowling, is introduced, and Snape finds himself in an uplifting relationship that could change the course of his life.

Chapter 4: Snape's Dilemma

As they descended stairs from Dumbledore's room that morning, both Severus and Melodia were relieved that he seemed to be out of immediate danger. About halfway down the stairs, Melodia noticed the strong aroma of bacon frying, followed by the smell of fresh brewed coffee.

"Oh, Shaggy! Breakfast!" she exclaimed and bolted down the stairs. "Who's cooking?" she asked anxiously as she rounded the corner of the kitchen from the foyer.

What she saw was amazing. There were eggs scrambling in a small pan on the front stove eye. A pan of bacon was frying and was being taken up on a plate that was padded with napkins. Across the room, the table was set for two. It was complete with freshly squeezed orange juice, toast, and a steaming pot of coffee.

"That would be me," said the familiar male voice behind her.

"You did this, Shaggy? Oh, how domestic!" she teased.

He scowled playfully at her use of adjectives. She squeezed his arm sweetly and dashed over to the table for some coffee.

"You needn't think that I will be making this a habit, little girl," he said silkily. "I was hungry myself and thought it would be rude not too include you," he teased right back. She sipped her coffee and laughed at his cheekiness.

"That was really good, Shaggy. Thank you," she said gratefully as they finished the delicious breakfast that Severus had prepared for them. He nodded satisfactorily and poured them another cup of steaming coffee.

Severus eyed her mischievously and said, "I seem to remember someone that I used to know complained daily about overeating her breakfast." He paused for a moment. "Clearly it was her favorite meal," he chided and raised an eyebrow for emphasis.

"And I am sure that you made this wonderful breakfast for me just so you could tease me about it!" she finished, then pouted openly.

Her pouting amused him. She was just as he had always remembered her, and it felt natural to be sitting with her, sharing breakfast again and teasing her for overeating. He decided that now was the best time he could think of to ask the questions he had wanted to ask since their reunion a few nights earlier.

He laid his coffee mug aside and began, "How did you come to be here, Loddie?" He studied her face intently.

It was clear to her now that the lighter moments had passed. She knew that difficult questions were soon to follow, and her mind scrambled, frantically searching for a way to sidestep this subject without alerting Severus of her efforts.

"I live here, Shaggy. This is my home," she answered casually. Then she poured more sugar into her mug.

Surprised at this answer, he asked, "Is it?" He thought for moment then added, "So... is this where you moved when you left Hogwarts?"

Melodia hesitated for a moment. "No, Shaggy. That is, not immediately. It was a couple of years later."

Severus looked stunned. "Where were you before that?" he asked anxiously.

She knew this would be difficult, but she needed to tell him something and change the subject quickly.

"I... er ... had to finish school first. Then, Uncle Albus set it up for me to live here with a Muggle family that he knew from years ago, the Vaughns--" She paused again, hoping he could not see her trembling. "--until I was old enough to come home again."

"Old enough for what?" he asked. Severus was completely puzzled now. He could tell that she was getting upset about something, but he had a lot of other questions and there was one more question he needed to have her answer first.

Before she had time to reply, he asked the question she had dreaded for twenty years.

"Why did you leave Hogwarts so suddenly, Loddie? Were you ill?" He tried to ask in a tone that was sounded more like concern than it did prying. He looked as if he were about to burst with anticipation of her answer. She knew she had no way to continue this. *Not yet*, she thought.

In an effort to avoid his eyes, she looked down at her coffee cup to conceal the whole truth behind her own.

Watching her closely, he realized that there was something very wrong. She suddenly became pale, and although he was curious, he decided not to press her any further.

"I think the rest is a story for another time," she managed. "We need to take Uncle Albus his breakfast just now," she stated in a responsible tone.

He shrugged and then nodded in temporary agreement. *It is better this way*, he thought. He had plenty of time to find out why she was so reluctant to speak of her years away from him, and he knew she would tell him ...eventually.

They left the kitchen and climbed the stairs to take Dumbledore his breakfast in silence.

Melodia had put together a plate of breakfast for him because Severus warned her that Dumbledore would need a bit of nourishment before he could be given the *Medicamentum*.

To the amazement of them both, they found Dumbledore awake and reading pieces of parchment, which were strewn all around his bedcovers.

"What's this?" Dumbledore asked, as Melodia made her way to his bedside with the savory plate of food.

"It seems that Severus has prepared breakfast for us, Uncle," she said cheerfully, "and you need to eat something before you begin taking your potion."

"Potion?" he asked curiously. "I see. So you intend to medicate me further, I take it?" She smiled broadly and nodded.

"Headmaster, Melodia and I found a recipe for *Medicamentum*. It is a healing potion for injuries that also serves as an antidote for certain poisons." Snape advised knowledgeably. "It can either be taken orally or administered to the specific wounds directly."

"Ah yes, I seem to remember reading about it years ago," he said and then added, "Wretched tasting too, I suppose?" with a touch of disdain in his tone.

Melodia laughed at her uncle's almost childlike remark. "Not at all. Actually, I tasted it as we added ingredients and found the taste to be quite pleasant."

Dumbledore finished his breakfast and drank his potion dutifully.

"Delightful!" he exclaimed as he swallowed the last sip. "Thank you, my dear. You were quite right about the taste... and thank you, Severus. This was a splendid meal," he remarked contentedly.

"Now, if I may, I should like to speak with you, Severus. I have several thoughts and questions that require your expertise," Dumbledore stated casually. "That is, of course, before I become too groggy to continue," he added as he straightened his spectacles.

"Of course, Headmaster. I am, as always, at your service," Snape responded respectfully and pulled the wing-backed chair closer to Dumbledore's bedside.

Melodia smiled and cleared away his dishes. "Good. I will attend to the kitchen so that you boys can visit." She winked as she left the room.

Her mind was full of Severus. She loved him with all of her heart. It was tormenting for her to dodge his questions. She was longing to answer them, but somehow she was afraid. Once he knew the entire reason for her leaving Hogwarts, she feared he would want nothing more to do with her. At least for now, there was a wonderful tension in the house with him here. She wished for so much more with him and wondered if she would ever get the chance to tell him that. Now was not the time, however, with all of the Voldermort rubbish going on. She wasn't sure when or even if that would ever happen.

Tears began to fall freely from her eyes. She was crying for the years that she had missed with him and the missed opportunity to love him the way she had always dreamed of. She cried for not ever really knowing if he loved her the way she loved him; if he were capable of loving at all, that is. She pondered this as she wiped all remnants of bacon grease from the stove.

The night of his arrival to Hidden Terrace was wonderful. He was so handsome. His age was evident, of course, and the difficult life he had led had left lines in that wonderful, masculine face; however, he still possessed those dark piercing eyes which seemed to dance only when he was looking at her. *Isn't that a sign of real love?* she asked herself. Melodia hoped to have the opportunity to find out, but now was not that time.

Perhaps when the battle was over and the danger had passed, they would have the chance they were both robbed of so many years ago. For now, however, she found comfort in the fact that he was there with her, and he was alive and safe. She brushed tears from her eyes as she gazed out over the rolling estate towards the stables. Her horse lived there. Perhaps later she would take a ride. Riding always made her feel better. A little fresh air in her lungs and a vigorous workout for Black Diamond was 'just what the doctor ordered,' as the Muggles say. She smiled at this and began to feel her spirits lift a bit.

She finished clearing the breakfast dishes and decided to pay Black Diamond a visit. He was the horse that she had raised after his mother died giving birth to him. Dimey was almost three years old now. He was a gorgeous stallion with a strong, muscular frame and a solid black coat that was sleek and shiny. He was the closest thing to a child she had ever had, and Melodia loved him deeply.

She entered the stables and searched for his coat brush. The stable was magnificent to behold. It had tiled floors of elegant emerald and tan granite tiles. The walls of the stable were also tile with tan granite with sporadic splashes of green and other faint colors within the design.

With his brush in hand, she walked to the door of Dimey's stall. "Tck,tck,tck," was all she said, and he tromped happily over to meet her.

"There's my boy," she said with great affection. "I'll bet you've wondered what happened to me lately, huh, babe?" Black Diamond snorted and head butted her as if in agreement with this question. She brushed him thoroughly, speaking lovingly to him as she groomed his lovely coat.

"I think you need some exercise, babe," she said as she led him to the huge pasture behind the stables and released the lead from his neck. She watched him frolic and run, smiling and cheering him on.

Just then she heard a familiar voice calling to her from the other side of the pasture.

"Hello stranger!" he called. She shielded her eyes from the sun to get a better look at the voice's owner and saw Drake riding toward her on his chestnut mare, Rusty.

Drake Matteszoff was the nearest neighbor she had. He lived three miles over on a ranch north of Hidden Terrace.

Drake was very wealthy and was only about seven years older than she was. He was also very attractive. He was tall and well tanned. He as of athletic build and had beautiful salt and pepper hair that was prematurely graying here and there, especially around his temples. It made him look a bit older than he was, but Melodia thought he was handsome. He just wasn't Severus.

He had purchased his ranch only three years before the death of Melodia's godparents. He had been very fond of them all. Drake regularly came by to have Melodia accompany him on long horseback rides in the spring and summer. She was always happy to go, but they were nothing more than rides, at least to her. She simply found him charming and enjoyed the riding time.

Marcus and Shelby used to tease her about his apparent affections for her, but she only laughed and passed it off as a joke. They never knew that he had actually admitted once that he cared for her. It was just two summers ago, on a day much like today. He had finally asked her out on an official date, claiming to be falling in love with her.

Although very touched by his confession and flattered by his attention, she was not at all interested. In the most polite way she knew how, she "regrettably declined." Her excuse was that she would be returning home to Europe soon, and that a long distance romance would never work out. He was disappointed of course, but she knew that he would not stay away because of that. Melodia was relieved that he did not become angry and resentful. It was not in his character to behave that way.

There was a new issue now, though. She would have to find a way to keep him clear of the house now that the Order's headquarters was located here. She hated to hurt him, but it was Severus she loved and no one else. It would never do to have him show up for tea in the middle of a meeting of The Order.

"Hello, Drake!" she called to him. He jumped the fence of the pasture and road toward her, stopping Rusty just inside the fence gate before dismounting. He climbed up, hopped over the top of the fence post and removed his riding gloves.

"Gotta hug for your favorite neighbor, Doll?"

She cringed at that pet name. She didn't know why, but for some reason, it made her almost ill. She smiled crookedly, however, and briefly embraced him. He was very tall, so she had to stand on her tiptoes to reach around his neck. Just like Shaggy, she thought, then quickly refocused on her visitor.

They talked and laughed under the shade of the large oak tree that adorned the area near the pasture gate. It was good to see him again.

Meanwhile, Severus had given Dumbledore his potion and came into the kitchen looking for her. He was hoping to continue their earlier conversation when he noticed that the kitchen was immaculately clean. For reasons he didn't know, he walked over to the grand picture window and looked out toward the stables.

At first he saw only Melodia standing under the massive oak tree, but as he opened the back door, intending to join her, he spotted Drake leaning against the fence in front of her.

Who the bloody hell is that? he thought to himself as he witnessed her hugging this man and smiling. Severus first thought that he looked almost old enough to be her father, but at second glance could tell he really was not. There was suddenly a knot in his stomach that began to ache. He had never experienced this feeling before, but he absently passed it off as indigestion of the fatty bacon he had eaten earlier.

Suddenly this man held his arm out for her as if begging her to take it. And she did. They started walking slowly toward the house.

"Dear God! Why is she bringing that despicable Muggle man up here?" he swore aloud.

Quickly, he ducked and made his escape into the foyer. He intended to stay out of sight, yet keep an eye on them all the same. He heard Melodia's voice getting closer, so he crept carefully back to the kitchen door to listen. Her laughter rang out as she opened the patio door and entered.

"Oh, Drake, really!" she teased him. "You really are quite a card!"

Then she called to him, "You stay there, and I will fetch our tea. It is much too nice a day to stay indoors, so we will have our tea here in the garden."

So that was it. *She is actually going to entertain this Muggle!* he thought sourly to himself. She was even brewing tea for him!

Suddenly, the knot in his stomach seemed to be tighter and larger than ever, but he was determined to ignore it. His distress turned to mild delight as he saw her use magic to conjure a pot of tea. He hatefully wished that this man would catch her in the act of performing magic. *Perhaps then, he will run screaming back to wherever the hell he came from,* Severus mused. His lips turned up into a slight sneer as he imagined it.

He remained by the door in the foyer until he saw her go back through the patio door with a pot of steaming tea, two cups, and a few cookies on her service tray. He made sure that she was seated before he slipped further into the kitchen to get a better view of them.

He had positioned himself in such a way that he could hear almost all of their conversation. All they did was make absurdly boring small talk and exchanged mildly flirtatious smiles. This was excruciating. For some reason, however, he could not tear himself away from spying on them.

His boredom quickly halted when he saw Drake lift Melodia's hand to his lips and kiss it adoringly. His face became flushed and the knot in his stomach felt as if it were a chunk of lead. Still, he watched them, and to his dismay, Drake leaned in and kissed her briefly, yet lovingly, on the corner of her mouth as she laughed at another of his ghastly jokes.

Before Severus realized it, he was trembling, wand in hand and ready to curse that wretched Muggle for his obscene lack of physical control. That's what he should do. He needed to hex this Muggle mongrel into the next millennium!

At last he had witnessed enough. He was fighting the urge to curse this man that he didn't even know.

Of course! Why not draw a bit of unnecessary attention to yourself, old boy! he thought bitterly, as he stuck his wand back into his robes and slipped stealthily out of the kitchen and up the stairs to his room.

What Melodia did not know, is that sitting in his room was the man she had been crying over only moments before.

Severus sat on the side of his own large bed. His mind was replaying the horrid scene he had witnessed with Melodia and her Muggle companion.

Frustrated with himself, he sat staring at the wall. His eyes sparkled and grew very dark. They were almost black with fury. He couldn't stand the way she acted around that man, but he despised himself for thinking it.

"Bloody Hell! What is wrong with you? his inner voice nagged. So what are you gonna do now? Deny that you are capable of caring for her that way? If so, do you realize that you are taking the chance of her moving on with someone else?" The thought of Loddie in the arms, or in the bed, of another man infuriated him further. Especially, if the man were the old Muggle from the patio.

His fists were clenched at his sides as he rose to his feet, still glaring placidly at the wall opposite him. He had never faced this issue before, but he knew that he needed to do something. He wrestled inwardly with just what the appropriate thing would be.

Chapter 5: The First Time

Chapter 5 of 7

This Story begins after the Murder of Dumbledore. The Order of the Phoenix battles Voldermort. A new character, not created by JK Rowling, is introduced, and Snape finds himself in an uplifting relationship that could change the course of his life.

Chapter 5: The First Time

After their tea and cookies, Melodia realized what she needed to do. Drake was a dear man, but she had to find a way to keep him from returning without seeming dismissive or rude. Planning ahead to create the opportunity, she invited him out for a ride. An invitation that Drake eagerly accepted

"I have to go in and change," she said sweetly. "Then, I will saddle my horse. I should be ready in a half hour or so."

Drake quickly offered to saddle Black Diamond for her and meet her at the pasture gate sooner.

Knowing she needed to check on her uncle, she graciously accepted his offer, but warned him it would still be close to a half- hour until she was ready. Begrudgingly, he agreed and strode off toward the pasture with a wink.

She entered the kitchen with every intention of cleaning the tea set, but decided it could wait until after her ride with Drake. Besides, she was hoping that her uncle Albus was awake, so she could talk to him about Drake. She also needed to inform him of the course of action she had planned to dissuade his return.

She learned, from Dumbledore, that Severus had just been in to see him and administered another dose of potion. He was fast becoming groggy again, so she kissed him on the forehead and left him to his rest.

Melodia had chosen to wear a pair of faded blue jeans and a loose fitting tank top. She didn't want to bother with her riding habit or boots because of the summer heat. The rides she usually took with Drake often lasted better than three hours, especially, when he wanted to stop and take a rest by the stream that divided his land and hers.

As she hurried along her preparations, she decided to leave a note for Severus and her uncle explaining where she had gone. She left it in the foyer sticking out of the top of her extravagant flower arrangement, which was centered on the Victorian table.

By the time she had dressed and peeked in on Dumbledore once more, it was well after two o'clock. That meant it would be time for supper by the time she returned. Since it was her last ride with Drake, she didn't feel badly about spending the afternoon with him.

Little did she know, Severus had been watching her every move. He watched her place an envelope in the planter before disappearing into the kitchen and out of the door.

Upon closer examination, he saw that it was addressed to him. Curiously, he opened the letter and read:

Severus,

Please don't be concerned. I have gone riding with an old friend. Let Uncle Albus know that I am alright, and I will check in with him later.

Black Diamond needs the exercise, and there are other matters that I should address immediately.

I will explain in detail later.

Love,

Melodia

P.S. I should be home sometime after five o'clock.

He reread the letter several times in quick succession.

"Old friend indeed," he muttered to himself, then added, "immediately address other matters?"

He folded the letter and stuffed it roughly back into the envelope, placed it nonchalantly upon Dumbledore's night table and set out toward the kitchen.

 O

Drake's horse threw a shoe, and they ended up walking back home. She couldn't leave him out there with a lame horse, all alone, or ride back while he walked. She dismounted and walked with him as far as the creek. He tried in earnest to persuade her to have dinner with him, but she knew that was impossible. In the end, it turned out to be much better that way. Saying good-bye was hard enough on her as it was.

He sat on the warm grass beside the rolling creek and beckoned her to join him. Her heart was aching with the knowledge of what she had to do. In the end, however, it would benefit him far more than lying to him again. She sat beside him, and he looked lovingly into her eyes. Melodia patted his hands and thanked him for a lovely afternoon.

"I really should get back," she told him truthfully. "I am very tired, and I still have a million things to do before bedtime." He looked at her differently this time, and before she realized it, he had drawn her into his arms.

"I love you, Melodia," he said breathlessly as he kissed her tenderly on the mouth. "I've been waiting forever to tell you that, and I just couldn't wait any longer."

He looked so young at that moment, almost like a boy. She knew then that her decision to modify his memory was the right one. She would never love him the way he obviously loved her. He needed to move on and fall in love with someone who could return those feelings honestly. Not remembering her would be a step in the right direction. There was no doubt.

She smiled sweetly and backed out of his tight embrace. "I know you do, Drake, and... I am sorry... *Obliviate!*" she commanded with tears in her eyes. His face became a blank canvas as he stared into the distance. Immediately, she repaired the horse's shoe and then spoke to him again.

"Hello, sir? Er... are you alright?" she asked.

He shook his head and answered. "Oh, yes. I guess I must have been daydreaming." His voice was just the same, but his expression was still very blank.

"Okay. See ya!" she called over her shoulder as she rode away and then vanished before he could speak again.

When Melodia finally arrived back at home, it was almost seven o'clock. She was frantic that Severus and her uncle would be worried, especially since she estimated a much earlier time for them to expect her.

 O

Snape walked briskly down the hall, through the double curtains that separated the east wing from the remainder of the house, and saw no one. He moved to the staircase where he looked over the balcony and railings, as he took steps two at a time to the bottom. Still, there was no one.

"Damn!" He swore under his breath. *Where is she?* he thought. *She should have been back a long time ago, and it is about to be dark* he thought, as he descended the stairs to the foyer.

God only knows what he was going to tell Dumbledore if he woke up and asked for her. He could absolutely throttle her!

Just as he was about to climb the stairs, he saw her coming down. She was already in her nightgown and robe. It was evident that she had been there for a while. Their eyes met, and for moment, he wanted to run to her, hold her, kiss her, pick her up, carry her to his room and take her! As if she felt this, her face flushed bright red, and she smiled at him so sweetly that he was ashamed of his thoughts.

He stood stark still as she approached him, and then, in a voice that was silkier than ever, he said, "I see that you have finally remembered where home was," as he raised an eyebrow.

"Shaggy, please," she said humbly, "I have had a very tiresome afternoon, and I really don't need to be lectured."

He smiled sarcastically at her last and retorted, "Really? Did the old Muggle try and kidnap you, my dear?"

"You know? You are really not very funny, Severus," she spat back at him. "If you **MUST** know, his horse threw a shoe, and we ended up walking back," she finished with a look of triumph on her face.

"Dear God! The silly Muggle can't even ride a bloody horse? Well, perhaps he is just too old for that type of activity anymore. "You know, he did look old enough to be your father, Loddie, or is that what you prefer?" He sneered, utterly pleased with his cheek.

Melodia was dumbfounded. "What is your problem, Severus? Are you jealous or something?" she shot back instantly.

Her face flushed with guilt for a moment, remembering Drake's embrace and the loving way he had kissed her. Although Drake Mateszoff was not the man she wanted, she preferred his actions to the man standing right in front of her that was acting like an ass! She glared at him, almost daring him to answer her.

Severus watched her as she spoke and realized that he was jealous.

There was no denying it now, but he wrestled inwardly with what to do about it. Severus was in so much danger, and almost everyone believed him to be dead. Those who didn't believe that wanted nothing more than to find and murder him. He stood listening and watching her, mesmerized by her presence and believing that at last, he may have honestly met his match, as she had suggested only a few nights before.

His expression softened a bit, and Melodia glimpsed, at that moment, the brooding dark headed-boy that she kissed in Honeydukes on that fateful day so many years ago.

"Forgive me, Loddie. I didn't mean those dreadful things I said to you," he said honestly. He held out his hand for her to grasp.

For an instant she was speechless, but she stepped down one step closer to him. As he stepped up to meet her, Severus knew that he could wait no longer, and before she could answer, he pulled her into his arms.

This time it was a passionate embrace that she had only ever dreamed of, and suddenly his mouth found hers. Her body betrayed her as she swooned and gave way to the feel of him. She shuddered slightly as his tongue began to probe her mouth like a searchlight, and she responded in kind.

He pulled away slightly, gazing into her precious face. Shocked at what he had just done, he tried to find the words that he longed to say to her. His body was telling him to claim her, but his mind was still very hazy.

She looked at him in astonishment and said softly, "Wow, where did that come from?" He said nothing, but kissed her again in response. She stood on her tip-toes and wrapped her arms around his neck in acceptance of his passionate kiss.

They stood on the staircase kissing and holding each other. His fear of physical contact gone, his large smooth hands found her buttocks, which he expertly began to massage, then gently and lovingly moved upwards on her trembling body. First to her hips, then waist, arms, shoulders and neck. At last, he was held her tiny face in his hands. He pulled back gently and stared into her beautiful brown eyes. There was no mistaking what she saw in his this time; it was love mingled with penned up passion and desire.

"Do you have any idea what you do to me?" he crooned, as his lips swept her nose, cheek and ear.

Quivering almost uncontrollably, she breathed, "I think I have an idea."

He drew back, as if she had slapped him and pushed his hair out of his face.

Severus leaned in for one last, small kiss, then all but growled, "Think? Then clearly I should demonstrate!" With that, he swiftly swept her off her feet into his arms.

She cried out in surprise at his sudden show of forcefulness and then buried her face in his neck, sobbing softly with delight as he cradled her against him and carried her up the staircase. Paying no attention to where he was taking her, with her eyes closed tight, she continued to shiver and sob.

"*Alohomora*," she heard him say, and instantly they were in his room.

Snape verily glided across the room to his oversized bed and gently laid her upon it. His gaze was fixed on his beautiful lady's face. The tears and sobs escaping her caused his heart to swell so much that he was left overcome with emotion.

"Why are you crying, love? Are you frightened?" He was leaning over her and watching her face, as he awaited his answer.

"Yes... that is... a little bit," she heard herself say. His face reflected disappointment, and she was worried that she had hurt him, so immediately, she added, "Only because I want to please you, and I am not sure that I know how."

Something strongly resembling relief crossed his features, and he tenderly said, "You are a virgin, then?"

Nodding, she closed her eyes and tears began to fall freely from them.

"No. Don't cry, Loddie." Just as his last words were spoken, again, he found her mouth, and he kissed her more passionately than he had on the stairs.

She wrapped her arms about his neck as his warm, moist tongue slid lovingly over her teeth and lips, then plunged again and again into the depths of her eager mouth. *Dear God! He tasted so good!* she thought dreamily. His breath quickened with each passing moment.

Slowly, he lifted himself to his forearms to face her, still nearly breathless from their kiss.

"I love you, Loddie, and I want you more than you will ever know," he said in a whisper. "I truly do, but if this is too much for you, tell me now."

"No," she answered. "I love you too, Severus," she drawled. "Please don't stop. I need you..."

He interrupted her sentence with another kiss before he spoke again.

"I need for you, Melodia, to be sure of this. If we continue, you know what it will mean," he said gently.

"Yes," she heard herself say, but she did not. She didn't care what it meant. All she wanted was to become a woman with this man. Severus was the only man in the world she had ever or would ever submit to.

Through tear stained eyes, she watched for his reaction, frightened that he might pull away. She tightened her arms around him and clung to him as if it were for her very life and then released her arms and let them rest above her head.

Snape said nothing, but gently brushed away the hair from her face.

"Please, Severus. I'm ready. I want you to make me a woman... your woman. And I have never been more sure of anything, ever in my life."

She reached for his hair, which was now hanging in loose locks about his face, and took a lock in each hand. Then, she let them glide through her fingers as she caressed his handsome jaw-line, just as she had done in Honeydukes so many years before.

She thought she saw a tear rolling from his eye when she pleaded, "I want my first time, and all other times, to be with only you, beginning tonight."

He kissed her lovingly and whispered in a dusky voice, "Very well, love; this night shall be yours. I promise to love you so completely that you will experience ecstasy unlike any other."

He kissed her face, her shoulders, and the nape of her neck as he explored her body. With the greatest of patience and self-control, he removed her nightdress and spent what seemed to be hours exploring her body with his magical hands. She moaned softly as they drifted over her body, messaging and stroking all of her most delicate places.

At last, as they were lying naked together, she caressed his smooth abdomen and buttocks. He moaned with anticipation at her touch and kissed her eyes when she cried out again as he entered her. The sharp piercing pain was immediately replaced by an emotion she had never experienced before.

After their lovemaking, she slept in his arms. It was the most restful night of sleep either of them had experienced in their lives.

Chapter 6: The Order of Preparations

Chapter 6 of 7

This Story begins after the Murder of Dumbledore. The Order of the Phoenix battles Voldemort. A new character, not created by JK Rowling, is introduced, and Snape finds himself in an uplifting relationship that could change the course of his life.

Melodia awoke with the memory of her lover's touch lingering in her mind. She smiled secretly to herself and opened her eyes. Staring down at her was Severus. He leaned down and kissed her lips gently.

She smiled again as he stroked her face lovingly and said, "Good morning, love." He was fully dressed in his usual black suit and robe.

"Good morning," she replied. "What are you doing?"

He laughed softly and answered, "I'm watching you sleep, of course. You are truly beautiful you know."

Lost in the intensity of his dark eyes, she realized that he was obviously freshly showered. 'He smells so good!' she thought. In an act of sudden modesty, Melodia pulled the covers up to conceal her naked body feeling completely vulnerable under his gaze.

"Don't do that, darling," he soothed gently into her ear. "I want to see you."

Her face flushed, and she found her voice to reply, "You do?" He leaned down to kiss her again, this time more passionately, and slid his left arm under her back as he stretched out on the bed beside her. His right hand caressed her breast and neck. She responded to his advance by taking his face in her hands and kissing him sweetly on his lips before wrapping her arms around his neck. Her earlier feelings of modesty faded. As the covers fell, she clung to her lover in desperation.

"Yes, I do, love," he breathed as he nuzzled the soft flesh below her ear. She could tell he was aroused again, and to her surprise, so was she. "Does this bother you?" he asked as he touched his clothing.

"In a way", she replied sheepishly, "I'd love to see you too, I mean, last night I..." Her voice trailed off.

He smiled wryly and finished her thought for her, "Didn't see much?" Slightly embarrassed again, she nodded. "I see," he answered mischievously and began to unbutton his robe, very slowly.

"Let me," she heard herself say as she relieved him of this duty.

Her fingers found every button, and then she delicately pushed his robe and shirt from his shoulders. His smooth pale skin was intoxicating! She explored his torso, then his shoulders, finding sparsely placed hairs, artfully adorning his broad chest, and deep scars from the wounds he had suffered a few nights before. She kissed them tenderly.

"Loddie, I love you," he whispered as he became aware that she had found the front of his trousers and began to free his love from the clothing constraints.

"My darling Severus," she breathed heavily. He shuddered with delight as she touched him and began to kiss him again.

Passion consumed them, and they made love again in the morning light. They indulged themselves with each other until, at last, both immense satisfaction and exhaustion overtook them, and they slept again in each other's arms as they had the night before.

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For the next several days, Melodia and Severus spent their time caring for Dumbledore and preparing for the arrival of the other Order members. Melodia had taken great pains to make sure the house was stocked with food, first aid supplies and equipment. She had also taken direction from Severus in gathering the ingredients that were necessary to brew more potion for Dumbledore, Lupin's potion, and a few other remedies that might be required.

Severus and Melodia had also dedicated themselves to cementing their relationship. She had even convinced him to go riding with her, or at least she thought she had. He was not the animal lover that she was and had no desire to sit astride a horse. Instead, he was contented to wait under the great oak and watch her exercise Black Diamond, laughing at her candor and marveling at her grace and skill.

They had also argued about her helping the Order. She was very obstinate, and he was typically Snape. Predictably, the encounters ended with an "agree to disagree" status.

Most of their days and nights were spent talking, laughing and making love. She told him about her education and accomplishments as a sorceress, and he listened with obvious pride for his Loddie. He slowly opened up to her about his past. It was the most difficult thing he had ever done. To his amazement, he found her receptive and non-judgmental about the nastiness of what he divulged to her.

It was a bittersweet time; yet, they both agreed it was the happiest either of them had ever been.

The two of them decided to make the most of the next several days before the other Order members arrived and were informed of the truth. They knew that things would change rapidly within the next few weeks, and it was worrisome not knowing how the end would come or just who out of their midst would still be standing.

It had been more than two weeks since this nightmare had begun. Dumbledore seemed to be gaining both the physical strength and mental resolve to begin the assault on Voldemort and his band of Death Eaters. He presided over numerous meetings with the members of the Order, who were not able to attend many of the earlier meetings on a regular basis. They were now regular houseguests.

The Weasleys were expected to arrive with Hermione Granger in a few days. After they had been apprised of the situation, it would be time to bring Harry Potter in. He needed to be aware of what had been happening, and the plan, which had deceived him, and others, into believing that his Potions master had killed his mentor.

Dumbledore wanted to wait until he was in better health and more himself so that he could be the one to do this. He had already formulated a plan to bring Harry here, and Melodia would be his instrument of choice for this task. It was a matter that he had not discussed with her to this point, but given her desire to contribute significantly for the Order, he felt comfortable with her ability to handle this task.

The only possible obstacle in his plan was Severus. Severus and Melodia had been at odds about her direct involvement consistently for days. Dumbledore realized that they had gotten closer and was happy for them, but Severus was from the old school. Knowing Melodia as such a free spirit, Dumbledore expected there would be more fireworks ahead between them if their relationship progressed the way he suspected it would.

"My precious niece! How wonderful to see you!" Dumbledore exclaimed as Melodia entered the study.

"Hello, Uncle," she replied, kissing him on the forehead. "It is encouraging to see you up and about."

He smiled and confessed, "I must say, it is quite a welcome relief for me, as well."

"What is it that you're doing?" she asked. There were stacks of parchment in front of him, which he was leafing through, with the use of his wand.

"I have gone over all of the information the Order has gathered on Voldemort and his followers and made record of the happenings over the past six years, both inside and outside of Hogwarts. It seems that there are loose ends to be attended to." He paused for a moment and eyed his niece as if waiting for a sign of understanding. Melodia nodded obediently.

"Many of these loose ends are directly linked to Harry Potter; therefore, I have decided that you, Melodia, will both find and escort Harry here."

"I see. Then where should I begin looking? Hogwarts?" she asked.

Dumbledore shook his head, then said, "No. I can see, however, why you believe that to be the logical place to start, but I am not completely certain that is the case." He appeared to be pondering his next thought and then said, "I will need some time to consider our best course of action." He resumed his study of the parchment momentarily and spoke again, "I will call for you again soon, Melodia. At that time, I will have more detailed direction for you." She nodded in agreement. Just as she was about to leave the room, Dumbledore surprised her.

"Until then, I assume you have some other matters to attend to?" Her eyes opened wide in astonishment. Dumbledore smiled before breaking the uncomfortable silence. "As your elder, I feel I need to speak out, my dear." She listened intently wondering where this conversation was going.

"If you and Severus have become as close, as I believe you have, it is time you answered his questions." His eyes sparkled, and his smile transformed to a good-natured yet serious expression.

Melodia was startled by this confession of knowledge. "How would you know about that?"

Dumbledore feigned shock. "What made you believe I wouldn't know?" He paused for another moment then continued, "I am aware of quite a lot, my dear. Severus and I do communicate, you know."

'Great', she thought and could not help wondering what other little tidbits Severus had communicated to her uncle.

Dumbledore noticed her pained expression and he knew that she was struggling with something. He looked at her warmly. "Melodia, you are my only niece, and I love you very much. My only wish for you is your happiness. I fear, however, that you have put your future with Severus in jeopardy by keeping secrets from him."

Again, she was stricken dumfounded. Tears formed in her large brown eyes as she thought of the anger and hurt she would see on her lover's face once he knew.

"Please, Uncle," she pleaded, "don't make me feel bad about this. I can't open this can of worms now. I just can't! He hasn't even mentioned my absence from Hogwarts since the morning after you came around from your sleep. Why should I go and dredge it all up again now? I see no reason to bring it up anymore, unless he does."

Dumbledore leaned back into his chair and eyed her cautiously for a moment before he spoke again. "I think you should know him well enough to expect him to do just that."

She started to tremble with a mixture of anger and dread. "Not unless someone pushes him into it!" she spat in a bitter tone.

It was Dumbledore's turn to look pained. "If you are implying that I have instructed him to ask you again, you could not be more mistaken. In fact, Severus has asked me for the answers, on several occasions. He said he did not want to push you because he believed he had upset you once before." Melodia sniffled a little through tear stained eyes, and bowed her head as her uncle continued. "He loves you, dear. Much more than you know, and far deeper than I ever suspected he could love anyone. He strongly believes that you are his priority. Especially now that you are getting closer."

Dumbledore reached across the desk and touched her hand gently, and added, "He will ask you again; not because I've told him that he should, but because he realizes that I have given him all of the answers he requires of me. You, however, have not."

In her heart, she knew that her uncle was right. Panic set in, and her mind raced. "What will I say if he asks again?" she asked herself. I can't keep ducking his questions, he will get angry with me. Gradually, she lifted her face to meet his.

He was reminded of the young girl whom he had been forced to send away so many years ago. The precious young girl that sat across from him now, just as she had in his office that day, feeling ashamed of her situation, waging an internal war with herself about how she should handle it.

"Uncle, I can't... I just... can't." She was trembling visibly now. Soft sobs escaped her, and she couldn't control them.

Dumbledore could stand it no longer; he made his way around the table and put his aging arms around her shoulders comfortingly.

"It is difficult for you, I am sure, but you must be honest." Dumbledore moved to face her. "Don't you think that he is entitled to know the circumstances that have kept the two of you apart for all of these years?" She continued to sniffle and sob slightly, so he continued, "Yes. I am confident that you will do the right thing, my dear. You always have." Albus touched her arm gently, and said, "Good night, my dear. I will see you in the morning, I trust?"

Melodia smiled at her fragile uncle. "Good night, Uncle."

He winked at her and gave her short wave as she left the study.

~o~

As she lounged in bed that night, her mind raced with what she should do about telling Severus the awful truth. Dumbledore was right, of course. He should be told the truth. It was in the past, she tried to convince herself. Perhaps he would understand and not hate her or be ashamed of her. Then again, perhaps he would not. She began to sob softly again, imagining the best of scenarios but also fearing the worst. At last, she fell asleep, and the bad dreams began... again.

Chapter 7: Melodia's Secret

Chapter 7 of 7

This Story begins after the Murder of Dumbledore. The Order of the Phoenix battles Voldermort. A new character, not created by JK Rowling, is introduced, and Snape finds himself in an uplifting relationship that could change the course of his life.

From the middle of the crowded Hogsmeade street, he stalked her, watching, waiting for his opportunity to make his move. He saw them through the windows of Honeydukes. "The filthy half-blood!" he whispered under his breath before drinking heavily from his flask. "I can't believe he actually thinks he has a chance with her."

Far worse than that... she was clearly flirting with him, and the dunderhead didn't even realize it! "What a waste," he grumbled taking another long drink. "That's all right, my Princess. Your feminine advances will not go unanswered by me. You will be mine soon enough," he drooled. "Far sooner than you expect!"

He watched them leave the candy shop, one at a time. He first, then a few moments later, she followed. How sweet, he thought bitterly. A little secret romance; No one knows, of course, except now I do, and this is where it ends my pet! This is where it all ends!

Oh, good, there he goes, Melodia thought as she followed her dark headed young man back to the grounds of Hogwarts. She was afraid that she had left the candy store too late to catch up to him. Most everyone must have been either still in Hogsmeade, or in the castle, because there was no one else in sight. She watched as he disappeared into the brush beyond the Quidditch field and re-appeared carrying his broom. He mounted the broom and kicked off hard, soaring high through the air. He was so beautiful, she thought and wished that he knew how she felt, but secretly hoped no one else did. She edged nearer to his flight path, but was careful not to let him see her. Her heart leapt with pride and love as she watched his black robes billowing through the breeze that his flying created. He dipped and swerved as if he were avoiding a Bludger.

Caught up in a moment of blissful admiration for her favorite Slytherin, she was not aware of the looming presence sauntering up behind her.

"Now this is something you don't see everyday," drawled a cold, male voice. "Beauty watching the beast!"

Startled back into reality, she turned to find Lucius Malfoy standing, arms folded across his chest trying to look very superior in his navy blue suit and matching cape. He had an expression on his face that made her blood run cold.

"That wasn't very nice, Malfoy. You should really learn some manners," she retorted, then turned away and moved hastily away from him in an effort to avoid his sickening gaze.

"I beg your pardon, Miss, but I am not the one hiding in the bushes spying on innocent young men! I am rather flattered that you know who I am, however," he drawled again, in a very condescending tone. She noticed he removed a flask from his vest and drank deeply from it.

Ugh! He's drunk, she thought to herself with distaste. Without moving she rolled her eyes and replied cheekily, "Of course I do, Lucius; don't be such a git!" Her response seemed to have no affect on him whatsoever.

"Come, come now, Ms Dumbledore, is that any way to speak to a recent school alumni, dropping 'round for a friendly visit? Especially since my family is so prominent in this community? I think perhaps it is you that needs a lesson in manners."

Incensed by his demeanor, she rounded on him suddenly, red in the face. "Go away, Malfoy!" she ordered. "I am not interested in anything else you have to say." His eyes narrowed at her last comment, but she seemed not to notice as she continued to berate him, "Are you deaf? I said you are not invited to stay here with us, so why don't you go prance about somewhere else?"

He was completely unaffected by her snub. Again, she stepped away from him, trying not to let Severus see her standing here at all, much less with this goon! Lucius stepped up with her and moved in much closer than he was before. "Us?" He questioned, "Are you implying that you are with him?" He motioned toward Severus sarcastically and laughed softly as he took another sip from his flask. "If you mean the greasy half-blood up there, he doesn't seem to know you are even here. In fact, I wager he has no clue that he has such a... er... 'captive' audience in you." She shuddered as he talked on. "I wonder what your dear uncle would say if he saw you sneaking about in the bushes hoping to seduce an older boy?"

Her stomach turned over, his presence was completely nauseating. "Get away from me, Lucius, you filthy-minded trash! As usual, you have no idea what you're talking about, so just shut up!"

At this, he grasped her arm and spun her around to face him. This time, his face was reddening with rage, embarrassment, and something else she could not pinpoint, but he spoke with a cool tone that she knew he was having difficulty maintaining,

"I have exciting news for you, my pet. You no longer have to chase after affection. I will see that you have plenty of that because I have decided that I will marry you." Although very angry, she was extremely nervous now. At any moment, Severus would see them together; she just knew it. Then it would be over, his confidence would be shattered, his faith in her destroyed, and all of her hard work to get close to him will have been lost forever.

More loudly than she intended, she spat, "Take your hands off me! Are you mad? Me? Marry you? You're bonkers!"

He grabbed her hard and pressed himself aggressively against her body, his desire was evident, and Melodia she felt like she may puke.

"Understand this, Miss-High-and-Mighty Dumbledore! You will marry me, and our match will be a good one, the talk of the wizarding world, both of us pure-bloods, not to mention a smart looking couple!" His stinking breath now hot against her face, he continued his advance.

"You will have everything you could possibly wish for as my wife, including I am certain, many lessons on the appropriate manner in which you are to conduct yourself with your husband!"

He paused to read her expression, then said, "I see that I must take you now. I need to make you mine while you are still very young and 'pure.'" She was too horror-stricken to move, so he moved his face yet closer to hers and whispered, "At least I will prevent you from making a fool of yourself with that half-blood nothing and spare you carrying the reputation of a dirty, little, brush-dwelling trollop!"

Trembling with a mixture of rage and fear, she opened her mouth to tell him off, but before she could utter a word, his mouth had claimed hers with violent power. He forced his tongue into her mouth and began to thrust it lustily deeper and deeper. She tried to scream, horrified by his actions, repulsed by his arrogance. His left hand groped clumsily at the front of her blouse, roughly fondling her breasts, tearing the very fabric that covered her. His right had remained clamped onto her back then slid painfully to her bottom, where he squeezed and tugged in an effort to rip away her skirt. He meant to dishonor her, and she felt powerless to stop it.

Hot tears streamed down her face as she struggled to get away, but he was much too strong for her. Oh, God, why doesn't he leave me alone? Severus can't see this! He would never understand!

Malfoy's lust to have her was evident. He squeezed and hurtfully fondled her body while he panted like the dirty dog he was. The smell of him sickened her further, and his slimy mouth was still in possession of her own. Dear God, please help me! she pleaded inwardly, and at last, in a moment of desperation she tried the only defense she knew, she raised her right knee into his groin as hard as she could.

Instinctively, he released her and fell to the ground, reaching for his injured area. She tore away from him, ripping her robe as she escaped his grip, and ran sobbing uncontrollably into the castle.