

Vampire!Severus 7: Interlude

by MHaydn

The writers attempt to rescue the narrative.

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"I'll get the coffee," said Theo. "After all, you spent all day yesterday in the Caffeine Palace with Biff.

Is he jealous? wondered Cho.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. *Did I break his heart?*

While he was gone, Cho decided to try her hand at prologue. If Theo didn't need her for inspiration, she didn't need him either. Besides, he was probably too brokenhearted to write.

"I don't know what I can do to help," said Hermione.

"You know this area and the people," said Parvati.

"You might know where those bounty-hunting varmints could be holed up, or you might know someone who does," said Pansy.

"The townspeople are acting as if nothing is happening," said Hermione. "You might think the Malfoys would want to protect their investments, but all they're doing is jogging in the hills in the morning and target practicing in the afternoon as if they hadn't a care in the world."

"It is impressive target practice, skeet shooting with rifles," said Pansy.

"But they're just playing English aristocrats," said Parvati. "Next, they'll want to hire the local cowboys as bearers so they can go on safari."

"None of the male population seems to be doing anything," said Hermione.

The girls sighed. They lived in a lesser age.

"What's the Dark Stranger doing?" asked Hermione.

"He spends his days in the shed, brewing strange concoctions," said Parvati.

"He might be trying to replace the consignment of brandy," said Pansy.

"Maybe he would be willing to help us," said Hermione.

Pansy and Parvati looked aghast. "He might get hurt," they protested.

Hermione thought of the glory awaiting Lucius and Draco if they eliminated that viperous bunch of gunslingers, but recoiled at the thought of their getting

killed or wounded.

"Men, they're so impractical," said Hermione.

The other two agreed.

The editor sat at her desk with troubled mind. Her prose style demonstrated the connectedness of all things, but the others were saying that she was working too hard even though they were certain her readers appreciated it.

"The audience will forgive you, and they might like the variety," they had said when she defended her high level of effort.

How unappreciated are those who strive to make certain the whole is coherent and no loose ends of plot are left to nag at the reader, but the call of duty cannot be ignored, and thus the narrative must record Hermione's and the Dark Stranger's realization that the county record of deeds had to be returned else the Malfoy and the Pansy-Parvati interests would not be able to make sound investments, and with this awareness, the two carried the heavy ledger back to the court house only to discover that the authorities, exercising due diligence, had posted two constables to guard the empty record room whereupon Hermione thought their mission had failed, but her companion announced there was no problem.

It was at this point that the editor pried her fingers loose from their death grip on the pen that had been necessary to make it insert a period and begin a new paragraph.

How relieved Hermione was when the Dark Stranger returned and said that the two guards would not only awaken within the hour but would certainly be rewarded for their essential role in the campaign of due diligence that had resulted in the return of the records, and given these circumstances, who could blame our heroine for regarding the Stranger as one who had saved the day and, ignoring all the warning signals, embraced him in gratitude and, ignoring or perhaps succumbing to the hypnotic gleam of his eyes, let her embrace of gratitude morph into an embrace that expressed her long ignored needs.

There was an interlude of trying to persuade her pen to move off another unwanted and unnecessary period, an article of punctuation that stopped the fluid flow of thought as effectively as it stopped the smooth flow of ink, but the two periods had done their dastardly work. The episode was now in the hands of those with the more robust frames.

Biff and Theo had returned from the Caffeine Palace in robust frames of mind, but it quickly wilted.

"Those girls have written us into a real pickle," said Biff.

"We could get pickled and write our way out of it," said Theo.

"Don't try that literary stuff on me," said Biff. "If you're feeling that frisky, you give it a go.

"Mein Gott, another dame."

"And Sacre Bleu to you too."

The werewolf sniffed the air. "She was ripe for the picking, and all you did was snog. Has your kind lost its moxie?"

"I didn't come here for personal commentary," said the Dark Stranger. "Have you located the bounty killers?"

"All traces lead to the next town. They're probably resupplying."

The werewolf took another deep breath.

"I can reconstruct the scene. How proper you were with your hands on her neck and the small of her back. The young girl coming into bloom eager to kiss you, but too shy to do so until your hand on her neck, that reassuring hand, relaxed her and made her bold, bold enough to close the distance, and after your lips met, did you not give her a kind look, oh how kind, that released the hunger within her and her mouth crushed yours with its eager clumsiness? And did not an innocuous hand most subtly caress her neck, showing your approval of her reckless passion while a chaste hand did barely massage the muscles in her back and gently, oh so gently, nudge her closer and encourage her brushing against you, brushing so lightly against your hard body, your hard body so pristine with its attitude so upright, so upright that she knew you would never lead her into temptation, a temptation she yearned for though all the fires of Hell might try to block her way? Did not her face soften as the flush rose in her cheeks? And when she gave you the doe-eyed look of surrender, did you not aloofly inhale her lust reek, primly kiss her on the forehead, and innocently escort her home?"

The werewolf fought to regain his equilibrium. "Your wussy façade is going to scar her psyche, man."

"How did you develop such a prurient imagination?" asked the Stranger. "Where're the female werewolves?"

"They couldn't stand the constant thieving of the coyotes. Not to mention their yipping all night. Our ancestors in Transylvania never had to put up with such nuisances."

The Dark Stranger reviewed events. "The gang came in twice with guns blazing and got nowhere. The next time will be an ambush."

"You're right," said Biff, reading Theo's effort. "This episode is beyond saving. We'll give it a quick and merciful end."

As the gentle dawn rises for us all and illuminates the world around us, so does reason eventually filter through the mists of our minds.

"The next time will be an ambush," said Hermione.

"Ambushes come at dawn," said Parvati.

"We can't let the gang-of-six creep up on us," said Pansy.

Hermione volunteered for a night patrol – there was a small chance of meeting the Dark Stranger – but the other girls thought that splitting up would ensure disaster.

That night, with moonbeams slicing through the town's dark corners as relentlessly as a secret agent exposing a conspiracy, Hermione knocked on the pair's door, but Parvati indicated there would be a delay.

"Pansy's lost her glasses."