

Cure for the Summertime Blues

by HBAR

His summer may not be so boring, after all.

A Oneshot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Thank you to my wonderful beta, [REDACTED], who always finds time in her hectic life to help me out. You're the best!

Prompt: Something unexpected happens during PSB's summer holidays.

Bacon and eggs: that's the smell which rouses me from my sleep, and I rub my eyes against the bright light streaming through the window. It's the summer hols, and I'm torn between the excitement of endless days of free time and the reality that I've little activity with which to fill them. It's a fine line, and I'm fairly certain I'm about to topple off the side of boredom. At this moment, however, my only concern is the growling of my stomach, so I toss on some clothes and follow my nose to the kitchen.

"Good morning, sweetheart," Mum says and kisses me on the head.

"Mum, I'm too old for that."

"You will never be too old for that. See?" She kisses Dad on the head as well. He takes it better than I do, leaving me alone in my irritation.

"When I was your age..."

Oh, God, here he goes.

"...I would have been grateful for daily kisses from my mother."

If I had a knut for every time he said that, I'd be rich. Honestly, can he even remember being ten? How many years ago must *that* have been? Apparently not enough, though, because using his childhood nickname, Little Sevvie, lands you in your bedroom for the afternoon. Trust me on this. Actually, mention anything from his past and you're going to be in trouble. Sometimes it's worth it, but I do it sparingly.

For the next few minutes, only the sound of fork to plate can be heard as we gobble down Mum's version of Grandma Granger's famous omelets.

"So, have you given any more thought to Quidditch camp?" I ask with an air of nonchalance.

"There's no more thought to be given," he says. "You'll learn to fly at Hogwarts like everyone else. I'm not spending perfectly good money to put my son's life in the hands of a washed up Quidditch junkie with a bad accent."

He glances up and arches his eyebrow, as if he's waiting to get a rise out of Mum. She scrunches up her face and sticks out her tongue at him. Sticks out her tongue! They are so juvenile and weird. Harry says it's because they spent their youth having to act like grown-ups. I say their combined life ambition is to embarrass me in every way

they can think of. After all, Harry and Ginevra don't act that way, and they were as much a part of the war as anyone. *It's Ginny*, Mum would correct, but she would be wrong. This is one of those rare things on which Dad and I agree these days. Only men can understand that women don't have silly names like Ginny.

I'll admit I have a bit of a crush, but hey, I'm supposed to; I heard it right out of her mouth. She told Mum that James has a crush on Luna, but she wasn't worried because it's normal for ten-year-old boys. She expects it, and I've never been one to disappoint.

I don't realize I've sighed out loud until Mum pats me on the head.

"Anything interesting going on in there?"

You think she'd want to know the truth?

"Just thinking about how bored I'm going to be this summer, stuck in this house all day long."

"Actually, you'll have to come with your father and me to the shop."

"What?"

"You know we're going to be busy with the grand opening. I'm sorry you have to suffer for the first few months, but it will be worth it in the end."

"I know, Mum," I grumble and give her an awkward side hug while I place my dishes in the sink. "I think I'll go out back and see if that puppy is still around."

"Don't feed him," Dad says, "or he'll never leave."

Mum flicks him with the dishtowel. "You said the same thing about Ron, and he's only here on occasion."

With her hand on my back, she ushers me out the door. "Go on and have fun."

"Don't name him, either," Dad shouts as the door slams behind me. "That's a sure sign you're planning to keep him."

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I reenter the house caked in mud and sweat, so of course we have company. Mum and Ginevra are chatting away about something presumably boring and adult, and I try to sneak by unseen. As I climb the stairs, I risk a glance into the front room, and she waves at me, confirming the fact that she's seen me, grime and all.

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Dad has joined them when I come back down, and Ginevra ends the conversation with him in favor of greeting me. "Would you like to come over for lunch today? The boys would love to have you stay and play afterward."

I glance at Mum and she nods. "Have you picked up your room?"

"It's pretty clean."

"What about all of the toys you had out last night?" Dad asks.

"I wasn't playing with toys, but I'll make sure it's clean," I say, hoping he'll drop it.

"You were," he insists. "When your Mother tucked you in last night, you had those dolls spread all over the floor."

"Dad, knock it off. They're action figures."

"What about those pastel horses with sparkly flanks?"

"Those are Kate's ponies. She left them here when Mum was watching her last weekend."

"I don't recall her playing in your room." I know that Dad saw them tied up and suspended from my window. The heroes *have* to have someone to save, after all. He just likes to get me riled up, and I can't stand it any more. "Shut up!" I scream. "You're always trying to make me look bad because you hate me!"

"It doesn't seem that you need my help to look bad," he says. The final straw is his parting words aimed at my back as I flee. "Such a fitting exit from the Petulant Snape Boy."

I pound each step with my foot as I head for the safety of my bedroom. The title has already been assigned; I might as well make good use of it.

I sit on my bed taking deep breaths, trying to avoid tears which are not appropriate for a boy my age. Last time I was upset, Mum apologized for my unfortunate genes, saying there was no way around it for a child from two emotionally sensitive parents. Dad took me aside later and told me that I needed to get it under control because I am only a year away from entering Hogwarts, and if I have a breakdown there I will be eaten alive. But I've heard him in the night sometimes. I think it comes with the bad dreams. Perhaps if we ever stop fighting, I'll ask him at what age it once again becomes appropriate.

When the door opens and Ginevra enters, I'm pleased that my cheeks have remained dry.

"You okay?" she asks as she takes a seat beside me.

I nod, not yet trusting my voice.

"That was quite a show down there. Do you two perform every afternoon?"

"All we do these days is fight. I don't like it."

"Why don't you just stop fighting with him, then?" she asks.

"He always starts it. He doesn't understand anything I say or do because it's always wrong. He gets me all riled up and then he stays calm because he knows that makes me angrier than when he yells."

"Listen," she says, "being a parent is very difficult."

I shoot her my best glare. I didn't expect her, of all people, to side with him.

She laughs, and although I am still unhappy, the sound of it makes me grin.

"That's better," she says. "With your angry face on, you're the spitting image of him."

I want to resume the glare, but apparently that wouldn't be in my best interest.

"I'm not entirely excusing his behavior. Your father can be the biggest prat on the planet sometimes, but he is a good man. When you have a baby, it doesn't come with an instruction manual. You have to use what you learned from your parents, and I don't think your father had much to go on."

"We can't even have a conversation without him getting on my case for something. It just comes out of nowhere."

"It's funny," she says, "because your father was just telling me that he's lost count of the number of times you've rolled your eyes at him for no apparent reason."

"There's always a reason," I mutter.

"I grew up with six brothers, and I can assure you that there is nothing abnormal about the way things are going this summer. It'll pass. Anyway, it may not seem like it, but I know for a fact that he cares for you very much."

"If that's true, why does he call me names? 'Oh look, it's the Petulant Snape Boy,'" I say, mocking his tone.

"Perhaps he means it as a term of endearment."

"Does that sound like a nice name to you?" I ask.

"I suppose not. But, would you appreciate being called a know-it-all?"

"Of course not."

"Well, your father calls your mum that all of the time. Does she get angry with him?" she asks.

"No, she gets all ... ooey-gooley. It's kind of embarrassing to watch. And I see your point, but you're wrong. He does it to be mean."

"Perhaps, but I happen to like it. It's all about the presentation, after all."

She tries her new name for me in a variety of tones and accents while making weird faces until I laugh against my will.

"So, I was thinking," she says, "maybe you'd like to come stay for a few weeks."

"With you?" I blurt before I realize what I am saying.

"Well, with all of us, yes. Harry is going to teach James and Al to play Quidditch. I ought to stay on the ground with Lily, so if you were there it would make even teams. What do you say?"

I can tell I'm grinning like an idiot, but at this point I don't care. Time away from my parents and the shop, learning to play Quidditch, *and* quality time with Ginevra ... could my life get any better? "Oh, but Dad will probably say no."

"Don't you worry about it. Leave him to me."

"But I haven't cleaned my room."

"You've been up here long enough to have tidied up a bit."

She waves her wand, and all of my things fly into place. She places her finger over her lips and winks at me as she backs out the door.

Ginevra and I have a secret! Sure, it's quite tame, but a secret is a secret, so it counts.

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After a few minutes, I come downstairs with my bag slung across my shoulder. A nod and a smile from Ginevra tell me that we are golden.

Dad stands with his arms crossed as Mum smooths down my hair. The way she's fussing, you'd think she was entering me in a pageant. "You be good, okay?" Mum says.

Dad nods and chimes in. "I expect you to listen to everything the Potters say and do as you are told."

"I will, Dad. Ginevra told me to learn to play Quidditch, and I plan to follow those instructions exactly."

"We've talked about this," he warns.

Ginevra steps in between us. "Severus, I'll bring him back just as I borrowed him."

He continues to frown, but his eyes soften a bit. "I know you will."

Ginevra hugs Mum, then has enough sense to just pat Dad on the arm. She opens the front door to leave, and in bounds my puppy like he owns the place.

"Oh, he's adorable!" she says as he jumps all over her. "I didn't know you had a dog."

"We don't," Dad says, giving me a pointed look. "He's a neighborhood stray."

"Should we take him with us?" she asks me.

"That's a great idea, Ginevra," I say, patting myself on the back for keeping my girly squealing inside my head.

I give Dad an awkward hug before Mum scoops me up in her arms as if she'll never see me again. "I love you," she whispers in my ear. "Your dad does, too, you know. Maybe a break is what you two need."

"I love you, too, Mum. I promise to try harder when I get back." I let her go and notice that Dad continues to scowl. I should resist getting in one last dig, but then again, I didn't promise to try harder *today*. "I guess we're off," I say, hiking my bag up on my shoulder a bit. "Come on, Sirius." I pat my leg and he bounds toward me.

"Ready to go, Petulant Snape Boy?" Ginevra says from the doorway.

A glance over my shoulder shows Dad looking completely pissed off. With the summer that's ahead of me, I'm finding it very hard to care.