

Reprisal

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After the war, Hermione is left alone at Grimmauld Place. She blames one man for her situation and plans to exact her revenge. Inspired by the Dark!Hermione Challenge on Granger Snape 100.

And So It Begins

Chapter 1 of 2

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The man next to me is still asleep; he sleeps a long time after sex. It doesn't bother me; it gives me time to contemplate, time to plan, time to change my mind.

He is no stranger to me. I have known him for nine years, more so now. I even sought him out.

~*~

The war is over; few were left standing when the ominous green mist cleared. Voldemort is gone, but so are Harry and Ron. Others also did not survive, too many to think about, but I was affected most by the loss of my two closest friends.

Both Ron and I tried to help him, but in the end it had been up to Harry, and he had not been properly prepared. I blame Dumbledore to a certain extent for withholding information from Harry, believing that Harry was too young to understand, but there is no use thinking ill of the dead. The person I blame the most is Severus Snape.

I blame Snape for Harry being orphaned. I blame Snape for not teaching Harry Occlumency. I blame Snape for Sirius' death. I blame Snape for Dumbledore's death. And I blame Snape for Harry's and Ron's end.

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Alone at number twelve, Grimmauld Place, I buried myself in the tomes of the Black library, looking for ways the battle may have turned out differently; something I may have missed that would have helped Harry. I played with 'what-ifs'—I lost days at a time.

Soon, I had nothing better to do with my time than to dwell on my hatred for one man. I just needed to find him.

Sometimes, a voice in the back of my mind tried to urge me to do something with my life, but I had already been sucked into the abyss of revenge.

I needed less and less sleep as vengeance overtook me. The voice in my head became more insistent; I did not relish talking to myself, so I began talking to Mrs. Black's portrait. Actually, I vented my rage about Snape at her while she screeched incessantly about half-bloods and blood traitors. I noticed that she had stopped calling me a Mudblood.

One day Mrs. Black's portrait surprised me by agreeing with me about Snape.

"He did not properly protect my dear Narcissa and Draco as he should have. Why don't you bring him to me?" the old portrait suggested, cackling.

I considered Mrs. Black's suggestion, but I wanted Snape all to myself. I thought of my other options and then decided that the old hag might be of some help in finding him.

She can have what's left of him when I have finished with him! I thought.

I began spending more and more time with Mrs. Black in the entry. A plan to find Snape was in the works. The first part of my plan, I realized, would entail having to leave Grimmauld Place for the first time in months. I opened my wardrobe and looked in the mirror.

I didn't recognize the person staring back at me. I wondered when I had grown so thin and sallow. My skin was so pale, bones protruding along my collar and hips; my hair was as bushy and unruly as ever and looked to be housing a nest of doxies. I could almost picture myself as a young Mrs. Black. A shudder ran down my spine, but I shook it off; I was on a mission.

As I showered, I ran through a mental list of those who had survived and might know or have some clues as to Snape's whereabouts.

Mrs. Black had mentioned the names of a few surviving Death Eaters, but I knew better than to trust any information from them; they would just use me and then toss me aside. No, I would be the one doing the using. I couldn't trust them any farther than I could throw Mrs. Black's portrait. I considered the former Order members and thought I might start with them, namely Kingsley Shacklebolt and Mad-Eye Moody. Certainly, the Aurors would not let a man like Snape get away with his injustices.

Well, some of the Aurors might, but not Moody, I reflected.

Both Aurors were a disappointment. Shacklebolt clearly knew nothing, and Moody was his usual *constant vigilance* self.

Bloody arse!

While at the Ministry of Magic, I decided to call on Arthur. I doubted that he knew anything, but I was too desperate to disregard anyone I was on speaking terms with. As I suspected, since the man barely knew what was going on in his own department, he knew nothing of Snape's location.

On my way out the door, Arthur invited me to dinner the following evening. I'd just opened my mouth to say, "No," when Lupin's name was mentioned.

Lupin? I closed my mouth. He had all but disappeared after the battle. He had been undercover with the werewolves before the battle and had lost Tonks during the battle.

My plans changed.

Plans and Patience

Chapter 2 of 2

After the war, Hermione is left alone at Grimmauld Place. She blames one man for her situation and plans to exact her revenge. Inspired by the Dark!Hermione Challenge on Granger Snape 100.

I did a bit of shopping on the way back to Grimmauld Place. Mrs. Black saw the bags and asked what I was up to. I told her it was none of her business. I heard her yell, "Mudblood!" as I shut the door to my room.

I ate dinner that night, took a long bath, conditioned my hair, painted my nails, and went to bed early.

The next day I awoke full of anticipation for the evening ahead.

Dinner was quiet for the Burrow; the once full house, brimming with noise, now seemed dark and gloomy. Molly was still the same—fussing about, saying how nice it was to have company, and how I should stop by for tea and biscuits anytime. I only half-heard her monologue; I was concentrating on Lupin.

He must not have been living with the werewolves; his clothing was older, as expected, but not tattered, and he was clean-shaven. I can still remember his gold-flecked eyes as he smiled across the table at me.

I steered the conversation towards Order members and casually brought up Snape in my query of those I hadn't seen since the war. Lupin's eyes widened slightly, and his gaze shifted down to the table. It wasn't difficult to discern that Lupin knew something; I just needed to find a way to coax it out of him.

Some people do fine all by themselves, but I knew Lupin was not one of those people. He had felt ostracized almost his entire life; he craved human acceptance and contact, and I was aware that he was lonely without Tonks in his life anymore.

I let Lupin's deception regarding Snape go for the time being, but I didn't forget. As Molly and Arthur went into the kitchen, I told Lupin that I knew how he felt, trying not to sound too hollow. He looked at me, unshed tears glazing his eyes. I reached across the table and took his hand, waiting for him to speak.

He just said, "I miss her."

I nodded my head in what he thought was accord. I suggested that if he wanted to talk about it, he could come by Grimmauld Place. He said there were too many memories there.

Bloody sap!

I reminded Lupin that there were good memories there as well.

"Surely you don't want to bury all your memories."

Then I brought up the one person he couldn't deny.

"Harry would have wanted you to feel as if Grimmauld Place was a refuge, and he would have wanted us to keep in touch. Besides, you were friends with Sirius, and one of our DADA teachers, maybe you can help me make sense of the Black library."

I thought that sounded like my old self. I also thought that he could help me get my revenge on Snape.

~*~

I had laid the foundation; now, I just had to lie in wait. And wait I did. I hate depending on other people; I would just rather do things myself.

Mrs. Black knew something was different as I made sure I was presentable for company before retreating to the library each day. Also, despite my past aversion to using house-elves, I had Kreacher remind me when it was six o'clock, so I might eat a little something—although I did prepare the food myself. Even though I inherited Kreacher from Harry, I did not trust him anymore than Harry did.

My waiting finally paid off. Lupin called around teatime one day. I was a bit surprised to hear the doorbell and Mrs. Black's agonizing screeching. Long before, the Order members had stopped ringing the bell in hopes of avoiding disturbing the aged portrait. I supposed since this was no longer headquarters to the Order of the Phoenix, Lupin felt the need to announce himself properly at the front door.

I greeted him wearing my claret robe; it brings out the gold flecks in my eyes. It is also the color of blood, and this was, after all, about Snape's blood.

Lupin held a tartan tin in his hands. I wondered if he had been in contact with Minerva, or if all Gryffindors were habitually drawn to the plaid-wrapped containers.

We exchanged pleasantries as I led him to the kitchen and made tea. I endured the small talk, chanting various thoughts about Snape in my head, trying to keep a pleasant look on my face.

Setting down his empty teacup, Lupin said something—the word "leave" caught my attention. He stood to go. I quickly brought up the Black library.

"Maybe another time," he said, smiling.

I walked him to the door.

As I said goodbye, I dared to kiss him on the cheek. I wondered how many more afternoons I would have to spend like this before something came of them. Mrs. Black cackled at me as I closed the door.

"I see what you are up to now. Consorting with werewolves... half-breeds... blood traitors." Her voice was high-pitched and rising.

"I think he knows where Snape is," I said, walking past her.

~*~

Lupin began making regular visits around teatime, but he always had some excuse to leave before dinner.

I began letting my kisses linger longer and closer to his mouth.

I needed to get past the small talk and find out what he had been up to since the battle.

One evening, after one of our non-productive chats, I realized that the full moon was approaching. I had just a few days to try to get information from him about Snape before he disappeared for a week. I remembered something about roast being one of his favorite meals. I could have used Molly's help, but I didn't want any outside interference; namely, Molly's way of butting in. Besides, a roast cooks by itself and a salad is easy to make.

About thirty minutes before teatime, I put the roast in the oven. During tea, the aroma of meat began to fill the kitchen. I explained to Lupin that I couldn't possibly make a dent in the roast by myself and invited him to stay. I served wine with dinner, sipping mine slowly as I refilled Lupin's glass. I steered the conversation to certain tomes in the Black library: *Imperceptible Potions*, thinking how I might be able to use Snape's own talent against him, and *Divination in the Dark*—I was even willing to consider this detested art to find Snape.

I remembered a book called *Mysterious Hexes*, although I thought they could not be that mysterious if they were published. I wanted to question Lupin on his knowledge of creating your own spells since I knew that Snape had made up his own hexes and had written them in his copy of *Advanced Potion Making*.

Something else of Snape's doing that had gotten Harry into trouble I thought.

After dinner, I led Lupin up to the library and poured two glasses of brandy. I quickly found the books I had mentioned and sat on the couch next to him.

I let him hold the books as we looked through them, brushing my arm across his to point out a line of text, sometimes letting my hand touch his. When his gaze caught mine, I would lower my eyes and think of my hatred for Snape, which brought a nice pink to my cheeks, resembling a blush.

I purposely dropped a book, and of course, we both leaned down to retrieve it, our shoulders bumping and our hands entwining. I leaned in ever so slightly and parted my lips. Lupin's eyes dilated as he gently placed his lips on mine.

His eyes closed.

I thought, *He trusts me now*.

I kissed him back. He was like a man struggling to breathe, drawing air from me, clinging to me in hope. I let him use me, as I was using him. The thought of letting one of Snape's adversaries kiss me, touch me, thrust into me, gave me a pleasure that the act itself could not.

Lupin disappeared for only three days during the full moon, which led me to believe that he was acquiring and taking Wolfsbane Potion. I couldn't help but wonder if Snape was making it for him.