

Green

by JackieJLH

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Chapter 1 of 1

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She stood firm, blocking the cradle from the Dark Lord's line of sight, defiance radiating from her in waves. A wand came into view, clutched in a pale white hand, but suddenly it wasn't the Dark Lord standing before her. He'd become someone new, someone familiar.

"Severus!" she gasped, looking terrified. "Help us! Please!"

But he ignored her pleas and barked out a curse. "Avada Kedavra!"

She collapsed into a ball of green light, crumbling at his feet. Stepping gingerly over her splayed legs, he neared the cradle. Peeking inside, he began reaching out his hands to grab the child that lay there, but it wasn't a baby anymore. It was Lily, her face cold and lax. Her green eyes, which had once looked at him with warmth and understanding, narrowed and focused on him, filled with hatred and rage.

Pulling his hands back in panic, he turned to run from the room and found himself face to face with her once more.

"This is all your fault," she accused angrily, glaring at him. "You caused this. You killed me, Severus. This is your fault! Your fault!"

He snapped awake with a start, sitting up and looking around the room in fear. Sweat covered his body, soaking his sheets and making them stick to his skin. He reached for his wand where it lay on the table beside the bed and whispered, "Lumos!" A dim light instantly filled the room, and he scanned every inch of it to be sure that he was alone.

Forcing himself to slow his breathing and relax, Severus Snape gave the room one more glance before silently extinguishing his wand and sliding back down onto the damp sheets, pulling the blanket tightly around his shoulders.

I haven't had that dream in years, he thought to himself, mentally willing his heart to slow down. But he refused to dwell on his dreams. The nightmare had no basis in fact, no reason for existing. His own demons were at fault for it, nothing else, and he'd banished them to the far corners of his mind some time ago. Guilt had no place in war.

Had he given the Dark Lord the information he needed to pinpoint the subject of the prophecy? Yes. But he'd had no knowledge of which child it would pertain to, no way of knowing that it would be *her* child, and that his findings would bring about her death. He wouldn't have done it otherwise. They'd been friends once, and could have been more, if it wasn't for Potter and his friends. He'd barely spoken to her since they were sixteen, but still, he would not have put her life in danger knowingly. She'd been his first friend.... But what was done, was done. There was no use feeling guilty over something he could not change.

It's the boy, Severus decided, rolling onto his side and tucking an arm between the pillow and his head*She's on my mind because he's starting school tomorrow.* But that

knowledge did little to reassure him. After Lily had died, he'd had that dream every night for years. It had been half a decade before it had waned off and stopped altogether, and he was loath to begin having it again.

Resolving to dismiss the idea in an attempt to get some sleep, Severus forced his body to relax, but her face was always there just behind his eyelids, and it was many hours before he finally fell into a restless sleep, still seeing her green eyes inside his head.

The room quieted considerably as McGonagall led the first-years into the Great Hall, and Severus found himself watching them closely, though he wouldn't admit it even to himself. Would he look like her? Auburn hair and creamy, pale skin.... Would he have her face? Her soft voice?

But he couldn't spot any auburn-haired children from where he sat. He saw one with hair that bordered on orange, but he was almost certain that it was the last of the Weasley boys. So he waited anxiously for the 'P' section of the list to come along.

Finally, Minerva called out *his* name, and the small boy slowly made his way to the front of the room. Severus struggled to keep from laughing outright. That boy was the very image of his father! What had he been worried about? With any luck, he would barely notice the boy's existence. Or at the very least, it would be a nuisance, just like the existence of every other child that walked the school's halls.

The boy was sorted into Gryffindor. *Of course*, Severus thought with a roll of his eyes, watching the child rush to the Gryffindor table amidst ridiculously loud applause and chanting. *And just like his father, he's already making himself the centre of attention.*

He had nearly put all thought of the Potter child out of his head by the time the food appeared. Quirrell began chatting beside him as he ate. Barely listening to the trembling man, Severus glanced up only occasionally, preferring to focus on his meal.

But when he *did* raise his eyes, his heart stopped. Staring back at him was Lily, across the room and able to be seen over Quirrell's shoulder. But no... it wasn't Lily, just her bright green eyes, glaring at him from her son's face, accusing him, fearing him, hating him. Severus froze. Then the boy slapped a hand to his forehead as if in pain, turning those horrible eyes away, and Severus quickly lowered his gaze, refusing to so much as glance in the boy's direction again.

Severus spent the rest of the week in a growing state of paranoia. The nightmares had returned to their nightly schedule of torturing him, and the first-years' Potions lesson was fast approaching. When that day arrived, Severus had made up his mind. This boy was quite obviously Potter's son just as much as Lily's, and he would just have to remind himself of that. Surely the child was just as arrogant, attention-seeking, and conceited as his father? It should be easy to prove this boy's stupidity....

And it was. Painfully easy.

Lily had come to school having read all her books, knowing most of the answers... she was amazing. But the boy knew nothing—was nothing but a replica of his idiotic father, Severus was certain of that. His miserable performance in his first Potions class had proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt. Still, he couldn't bear to look into the boy's eyes... he couldn't bear to see that hatred and revulsion reflected back in them.

So he tried even harder to see him as Potter's son. It was hardly a difficult task. He proved himself to be his father's child over and over in the following weeks.

The Potter boy broke the rules every chance he got, and was rewarded at every turn for his unwillingness to behave. Minerva placed him on the Gryffindor Quidditch team, refusing to listen when Severus argued that the boy had wilfully disobeyed Madam Hooch, not to mention that he was too young—he was only a first-year! Dumbledore blatantly ignored the fact that the child was violating one of the most basic of rules, proving once again that just as he had favoured Potter and his friends all those years ago, he now favoured Potter's *spawn*. When Minerva actually bought the boy a broom of his own, once again disregarding any protests from the other professors, it became more than apparent that there was no fairness to be expected in how the child was treated. Severus resented him, hated him all the more for it. He *truly* was a Potter... all ego and self-importance and sheer brainlessness.

Hating Potter became easier and easier with every passing day, much to Severus' relief, but he never was able to stare the child in the face without feeling his stomach sink and his breath catch in his throat. Lily's eyes, no longer simply filled with fear, but now radiating pure hatred and loathing as well, were something that Severus was certain he would never become accustomed to seeing.

And Severus often wondered, if only to himself, how he was supposed to survive seven years without once sleeping through the night. For it seemed to him that as long as the boy was an ever-present part of his days, his nights would always be filled with green.