

Fame Isn't Everything

by Leilani King

Severus Snape and Evelyn Dumbledore were best friends until Evelyn and her mother fled Aberforth when the children were 5. When Evelyn returns years later, Sev's heart melts and his wall comes crashing down. To keep her safe from Voldemort, he must give her up. But Evelyn is not your average librarian. And sometimes things don't go as planned... And sometimes they do.

Battle Scars

Chapter 1 of 9

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Fame Isn't Everything

Chapter One

Winter 1965

On January 9th, 1965, Severus Uriah Snape was born. On February 6th Evelyn Fiona Dumbledore joined him in this world. Their parents were neighbors, their mothers best friends, but to Sev and Ev, there were no parents, no people, who were closer than the two of them. They grew up together, napping in the same crib, and had their own language before they began speaking English.

They would usually hide in the attic of her house when things were happening. Severus was so often beaten that he had decided to do whatever he wanted. He would be punished for something anyway; he might as well make it worth it. And he did. His greatest achievement by the age of 5 was the constant theft of his father's broom. He took Evelyn riding whenever he could. She was his best friend, his only friend, and when they grew up they would get married. He knew this because they had kissed once (not counting the kissing of bruises and other wounds, which don't count as *real* kisses), and they held hands when together. When they got married, there would be no screaming and beating. He loved her with all his heart. She was almost as good as he was at nearly everything, and the only thing she did better than he did was run, but he didn't mind. He liked that about her.

They did anything they wanted and got away with most of it. He taught her how to climb in and out of windows. She taught him how to whistle, like birds, another very useful skill. Neither of them knew that broom riding, window exits and entries, and bird call codes were rare in 4 and 5 year olds. They never played with the other children in the neighborhood, and the parents were too caught up in their own turmoil to notice that the kids were any different. No one knows what might have happened had this pair not been parted, but Evelyn and her mother left the summer the children were 5. Both of them suffered quietly, but recovered, and eventually their memories of each other began to fade. Severus had almost forgotten her in a few years and by the time he was grown, she, like almost all memories of early childhood, had been neatly locked into a corner of his mind. For Evelyn, the memories faded more slowly, and she never completely forgot him, but these memories were distant and vague. It is likely that not remembering, not thinking about it was the only way to keep their hearts and spirits intact.

But fate, destiny, whatever powers that be that put them together in the first place, could not be so easily deterred. Not by an ocean, not by half a lifetime.

September Y7

Dreams were haunting Severus's sleep every night now, since before last Christmas, the same one he had occasionally dreamt throughout his life. As always, he was near the edge of a precipice, the ground was shaking and he would fall at any moment. He felt fear and panic. And always he would be holding the hand of a woman; squeezing her hand tightly. It was a different woman each time, but yet they all were the same woman. He didn't know how or why, he just knew. Suddenly he would fall over the edge, but then she would be kneeling, holding him by the hands, as he hung over the seemingly bottomless chasm. "Don't let go!" he would beg her desperately. "Please don't let me go!" And then she would say to him sincerely and calmly, as if unaware of their peril, "Severus, I promise, I will *never* let you go." He would feel a fleeting moment of relief and gratitude, and then the ground would shake violently and they would both fall, still hand in hand. He would hear the sound of both of them screaming, falling endlessly, and then he would wake.

It was driving him crazy. As much as he hated to, he must talk to someone about these dreams. Sybil would be no help, most likely, and besides, he wasn't going to tell his dream to that looney tune. It would have to be Albus. Of course, Albus could help him sort this out. He hoped.

Unfortunately Albus could not comment, other than to remark on how tragic but romantic the dream seemed to be. "I can't say for certain what it means. Dreams are usually symbolic, but in my opinion, symbolism is subjective. It could mean any number of things." Albus patted Severus on the shoulder. "Don't worry, son, it will make sense when the time comes."

But Albus felt uneasy, although he did not tell Severus.

November Y7

Severus whisked into the library, and shut the door. Turning swiftly, he scanned the room with the usual frown on his face, seeing that two of the employees, at the sight of him, had suddenly become very busy elsewhere in the place. He smiled inside, as he rarely did on the outside. He strode across the room toward Evelyn, who was dressed as a saloon girl from the old American west, but she wore a serious expression, except for the eyes, which at the moment were adoring him. He stopped at her table and muttered, "Good morning, Miss Dumbledore."

"Yes... A lovely morning, isn't it Professor Snape?" but with her southern accent, it sounded to him like "Yesss...uh loveleh moanin idinit Prahfessah Sssnape?"

She smiled and walked quickly into the office in the back. He followed her and shut the door, and locked it. She rushed into his arms. "Evelyn," he whispered, and pressed his cheek against hers and held her tighter.

She clung to him desperately. "I've missed you so much!"

"And I have missed you too, love, but please don't cry." He took her chin in his hand and kissed her tears away, although he wanted to cry too, so badly his throat hurt.

"You've been gone too long," she pouted.

And been through too much. Too much he couldn't tell her. He sighed. "I can't bear to see you so unhappy."

Why does it have to be this way? His heart began to ache along with his throat. *I love you Evelyn. I LOVE YOU.* His soul screamed what he was still sometimes afraid to say, and then he looked into her eyes.

Beautiful, he thought, and stood hypnotized by the sight of those eyes he loved so much. She smiled and stroked his cheek. "Ah, well, your package, Professor Snape," she giggled, and reached back to get his items from the desk behind her.

"Yes my package..." He laughed, crushed her to him, hugging her tightly, until she gasped.

"Stop it, Severus! I can't breathe!"

"You are absolutely delicious, darling," he whispered as he kissed and nibbled repeatedly up and down her neck. "This day will seem like an eternity." She shivered as his warm breath caressed her. "Say my name again."

"Severus... Severus. I adore you," she whispered into his ear, and then she reached up, standing on her toes, and kissed him softly on the lips. "I'll see you tonight?"

"Yes. I'm back for a while. I can be there around 8ish. That is, if that's ok with you?" He searched her eyes for answers but saw only sunflowers in green fields.

"I'll be counting the minutes, pumpkin," she smiled that smile again, this time without the tears.

Although he had promised himself he would not, he kissed her until they were both breathless.

"Oh, I've missed you, I love you, but I have to go now," he whispered. "We've been in here too long already."

"No one suspects a thing, Severus. They all think I'm just not scared of you."

He wondered again if he had enough courage for the future. He wondered how he deserved the attention, and affection, of this wonderful woman. What does she see in me? he wondered. Was it that he was her first love? What evidence did he have that they were really meant to be together? And if she ever found out about his past, the mistakes he had made, would she look at him differently? It did occur to him that she had her own past and mistakes of her own, but he forgave her anything and everything she had ever done or would do in the future.

He did indeed feel unsteady, on the edge, and about to fall any moment, but he couldn't decide whether it was scary or thrilling, or both.

There were a thousand things he wanted to say, but instead he kissed her forehead, nose, and finally her lips, lingering there the fleetest moment. He stroked her cheek, and left.

Snape left the library and headed back to his office. He knew the day actually would seem endless. And he wondered how she would look when he saw her again. He had never seen a woman have so much fun using magic. It seemed she was a Squib; not a Muggle because, being Aberforth Dumbledore's daughter, she was half-blood, but was raised as a Muggle, so the magic was all new to her. She had more magical gadgets, and potions than he thought one might need, but she could not be compared to anyone he had ever known. So he kept buying her more and more. He had never imagined himself giving this much respect and love to a squib. But it had happened. Yes, *love really is blind*, he thought.

He coughed to hide a smile. He remembered their first meeting fondly, and often. It was near the beginning the term, and he had to go to the library. The place was busy and he had to wait a few minutes. He noticed a new girl dressed as what seemed to be Cleopatra; the hair, the makeup, the clothing, the jewelry. As he listened to her banter with the others before him, he noticed that she was American, speaking in a leisurely southern drawl that clashed shockingly with her appearance. This was Albus's niece. Suddenly she was there in front of him, she took the list he handed her and then she stared him in the eye for a moment. When she opened her mouth, that's when he lost his heart, most likely. "Love your hair honey," she teased. She then winked, and walked away to fill his order. Severus stood silent, smitten, heart pounding so loudly he was sure she could hear it. His mouth became dry, his palms sweaty. He could scarcely remember the rest of it. He assumed they handled the transaction successfully, despite his inability to think coherently. Two steps away from the library he groaned when he realized that he had completely missed the joke about his hair. As he slowly came to his senses he couldn't really recall what it was about her that made him unable to stop thinking about her. He had seen some beautiful women, but had never been affected like this. She wasn't beautiful, just ordinary, and silly, and she talked entirely too much. But she had the most beautiful eyes he had ever seen and the southern accent charmed him to a degree he would not have thought possible.

Smitten though he had been, he had still resisted the inevitable. And so, being undecided, he did not speak to her again for some time, but always noticed her. Here was a woman who left him speechless. Here was a woman that had him aching to be near her. There was something about her that fascinated him, and drew him toward her, though they had never really met. Although, they really had...

Albus had earlier informed him that his American niece was coming to stay for awhile, and later, when Severus suspected that the girl in his dreams was Albus's niece, Severus had casually (he hoped) steered the conversation to Evelyn. He need not have worried. Albus was so thrilled to have this newly-found member of his family, and so impatient to meet her girls also, he may not have noticed Severus's preoccupation with hearing all about her.

According to Albus, she was charming, intelligent, strong, but with a rebel's soul, and a disregard for authority. Which Severus cleverly interpreted as persuasive, relentless, cunning, stubborn, with a possible criminal record. Severus smiled, knowing that description also fit him.

"She reminds me of Aberforth. She has that same...recklessness. Nothing like him of course," Albus admitted. "After all, she raised 2 children alone. That's partly the reason she's here. Her house was nearly always full of her daughters friends. So she has experience with teens. and now...well, she was there alone; her girls are both in universities back in the US, one on each coast. And then last summer her mother passed away. She came here to give the news to Aberforth in person." Albus sighed. "And perhaps to mend broken ties... That's how I came to meet her again.

"Anyway, she was working in a library there, I offered her a position here." Albus explained. "She visited again for a few weeks after Christmas, and decided to give Hogwarts a try. She's very impressed with the magic."

Albus smiled. "You know, Severus, you might remember her. Your mother and her's were very close friends. And neighbors. She was named after your mother, and you were named after hers, Seven Doves." Albus smiled at Severus. "And Evelyn was born a month after you were; the two of you played together daily until they left..." Albus trailed off.

"Thunder and lightning," Albus chuckled.

Seven Doves had left Aberforth, and returned to the US when Evelyn was 5, but even then, they had already given her the nickname lightning, pronounced in southern, *lightnin*. Severus, noisy, intense, and always a moment or two behind her, had been thunder.

Severus looked puzzled and curious, but said in a bland tone, "I don't remember much about my childhood."

Albus's smile faltered briefly, and then he leaned forward, and said, "Life has a way of keeping things in balance. You have had some low moments in your life, Severus. That is true. But wait for the highs, my son. They'll come."

The Other Side of Sev

Chapter 2 of 9

Severus falls in love and the whole castle buzzes with rumors.

Chapter Two

September Y7

Severus and Evelyn's second meeting was far more memorable than the first, but unfortunately, not completely pleasant. After struggling with his emotions until he was tormented, Severus decided that this indecision could last forever, and unable to sustain his sanity in that state, he would do something about it. He had made up his mind, and then brewed a special potion for this morning. He already felt more confident and courageous, but not cocky. Just the right blend. But he would not do it again. *Damn I'm good*. If he wanted to, he could make a fortune with this stuff, but chose not to, knowing that it was addictive, and possibly dangerous. But just this once, he promised himself again. He couldn't get her off his mind. When he saw her his stomach tied in knots, but at the same time he felt elated. He did vaguely remember a blonde girl who was his best friend when he was very young. This was the woman he dreamed of. Since he had taken every opportunity to watch her, after their first encounter, he soon noticed that she had the eccentric habit of dressing in the most outlandish clothes and costumes, each day something different and more interesting than the last. A different woman each time, but the same woman...

He entered the library in time to hear one of the Slytherin girls ask his beloved about her clothing. As she began to answer, Draco Malfoy laughed and remarked, "It's not Halloween every day, around here. Even if we are witches and wizards." He got a few laughs, but most of the students, especially the girls, just glared at Malfoy. "Really, I mean, what is this nonsense with the clothes? Is it a Muggle thang or a suthun thang?" he asked maliciously, mocking her accent.

Severus had crossed the room like a bullet, and had not Malfoy's comment caused several gasps and then complete silence, his sudden presence there would have. "Mr. Malfoy," Severus snapped in icy tone, "that will be twenty-five points from Slytherin for disrespect to a member of the staff. And twenty-five points for interrupting the lady while she was speaking."

Malfoy's jaw dropped and then he whined, "But thats fifty points!"

"Mr. Malfoy," Severus hissed, "there will be a deduction of an additional hundred points from Slytherin House if you do not apologize immediately and then take yourself elsewhere swiftly."

Draco, aware that he had made a huge mistake, recovered his cool and mumbled an extremely gallant but empty apology, eyes moving from Snape to Evelyn and back again throughout it.

Evelyn glanced at Draco and, unable to speak, nodded her acceptance. Then her eyes returned to Snape; she remembered their first meeting, she had sort of flirted with him, but he obviously didn't get it, didn't care, or just had no sense of humor. Today she had been unable to take her eyes off him from the moment she saw him there, noticing at the same time his voice, which startled her when she heard the anger in it. But he was coming to her rescue, and so she disregarded the menacing snarl.

After that the room cleared quickly, and then Snape was left standing there with her. Thanks to his superior skills at potions, he was able to think of something intelligent to say. It certainly wouldn't make a good impression to stand there like a swooning schoolboy with severe crush.

Severus told her in a much softer and more charming voice, "I apologize for the rudeness of my student." She nodded as he continued. "I hope you won't allow such stupidity on his behalf to hurt your feelings." Then she shook her head no. "Well, I happen to find your, er, unique fashion statement interesting." He smiled at her; although they were communicating, he was not aware, at that time, how rare it was to see this woman speechless. Now, without the icy tone, his voice caused her to feel trembly

and weak-kneed...

"Thank you" was all she could manage to say. She was still reeling with emotions from the events of the past few minutes, disgust, and pity for Malfoy; insecurity and embarrassment, for herself; and respect, gratitude, and attraction for the man standing with her. Alone. All the students, where did they go?

"I have not had the pleasure yet, my dear lady, of being introduced properly, so allow me to do this honor myself." He took her right hand in both of his. The slightest of caresses on her wrist and palm caused her to shiver and she hoped desperately that he wouldn't notice it.

"I am Severus Snape, Potions Master, and head of Slytherin House, and it is an honor and a pleasure to meet you," and kissed her hand. YES!!! He was fearless, and he had never been more charming in his life, except maybe as a small child, before he learned how to be cold and distant. She blushed but he held her hand, examining the many silver and turquoise rings.

Pull yourself together! she told herself, and responded, "And I am Evelyn Dumbledore."

She blushed again, not knowing what to say and then told him something he had never expected to hear in his life, but she was never one to keep a thought in her head if she could get it out her mouth.

"If I'd known I'd be meeting a knight in shining armor, I would have dressed medieval today."

For the second time since he walked in today, her eyes left him. She stared at the floor. I did NOT just say that!! Oh my God, I did.

She heard him softly chuckle, and was unable to resist looking back at him again. Their eyes met. Many moments seemed to pass. She smiled at him. His heart seemed to ache, as freezing fingers do when warmed, and he knew at once that he didn't just want her. He wanted her forever. His mind had been bewitched and his senses ensnared, not with a potion or a spell; she had just done it.

Maybe this feeling would fade, but at this moment, he felt he would do whatever it took to win her heart, except magic. She had captured his heart naturally; and he would settle for no less than hers the same way. While that thought didn't concern him at the moment, because of the potion, it would countless times in the future plague him with doubt and anxiety.

She was unable to stand the mystical magical silent connection between them without a distraction. I can't just stare into his eyes like an idiot all day! He'll think...I don't know what he'll think. She pulled her wits together.

Gently squeezing his hands for a moment, she smiled. She backed away and he reluctantly released her hand. "Professor, today I am wearing traditional Native American regalia of the Sioux Nation. During the 1800's... well, until then, they lived on the plains, hunting the buffalo. Fascinating culture..." she explained, turning in a slow circle to exhibit her ensemble of deerskin, beads, bones, braids, silver and turquoise.

"I am, however, not Sioux, but one quarter Creek, one quarter Cherokee, and half English."

Severus silently beheld with wonder this unique creature he must have, would have, or die trying. He was intoxicated by the scent of her, and his eyes were frequently drawn to the sight of her lips and tongue, which, although surprisingly enlightened his mind in such an enchanting voice, he would rather silence at once with his own. He considered it briefly, but logic prevailed, so he listened, and basked in the moment.

"I'm not exactly sure about the jewelry. I know they didn't wear this much." On her fingers she wore at least half a dozen rings. "I don't even know if the Sioux wore silver, I know the Navaho did..."

"I made the choker myself, and of course the jewelry is mine, but the rest came from my magic wardrobe. I just open it, and whatever I am thinking I want to wear that day is there," she exclaimed with wide-eyed pleasure. He remembered that smile.

Then her smile faded momentarily, remembering the snide remarks Draco Malfoy made earlier. She smiled again, somewhat sadly. "It was gift from my uncle, and I adore it," she confided.

There was a moment of silence then, with only smiles and the meeting of eyes and the mutual awareness of attraction. The more he looked at her, and listened to her voice, the more memories of her came back to him. He remembered when they were about 4 or 5, hiding with her in the attic, he had told her he had a secret, to close her eyes and he would whisper it in her ear, but he had kissed her instead.

He wondered whether he should ask her if she remembered him, but decided not to rush it.

The other girls still seemed to be busy and Severus decided the most favorable moment was at hand. "Listen, I want you to call me Severus," he began, and she nodded.

"Ok, and call me Evelyn." She smiled.

"Evelyn," he repeated softly, and then courageously and confidently asked the question that would change his life forever. "I wonder if you would care to accompany me to lunch this weekend." He waited what seemed like hours.

"Yes, Severus, I would," she answered, smiling. *Oh my God! Oh my God!!*

Is she blushing? he thought.

"Severus?"

"Yes, Evelyn."

"Do you remember...?" she hesitated.

"When we were young?"

"Yes!" she agreed, her eyes dancing. "Uncle Albus told me about it. I had forgotten most of it."

"Me too." He smiled.

"But I'm remembering things, slowly."

"Me too," Severus admitted.

He smiled and suggested they meet that evening. She agreed.

The other girls were on the other side of the shop, unable to hear but now watching covertly. Snape glanced over at them and tried to scowl, but could only manage a half-hearted smirk. *SHE SAID YES!* Due to the potion, he could have stayed for hours and easily charmed all the girls there, but old habits die hard, so now, with his mission accomplished, and no further reason for being there, he felt he should go, though he ardently wished he had an excuse to stay. So with a promise to see her later that day, he walked away, robes flaring, unknowingly making a dramatic and very romantic exit.

Shattered Pieces of Heart

Chapter 3 of 9

Severus Snape and Evelyn Dumbledore were best friends until Evelyn and her mother fled Aberforth when the children were 5. When Evelyn returns years later, Sev's heart melts and his wall comes crashing down. To keep her safe from Voldemort, he must give her up. But Evelyn is not your average librarian. And sometimes things don't go as planned... And sometimes they do.

Chapter three

The next few days were like a dream. Severus and Evelyn were both giddy with falling in love. Even the students noticed a slight softening in his manner. Every night they walked together all over the castle and the grounds, recalling memories, trading stories. Evelyn was full of questions. Why do the staircases move? Why do you live in a dungeon? How did the ghosts become ghosts? Severus answered what he could, and wondered how long his heart could be torn between joy and fear before he lost his mind. They each fell into their beds each night smiling, they slept well, and their dreams were sweet.

On Saturday they strolled, aimlessly, talking constantly. Severus was determined to see again that smile he saw that day in the library, the exact curve of her lips that he remembered from childhood, that wide-eyed innocence that nonetheless promised mayhem. He recalled she had a loose tooth before she left. His heart sank as he realized he had missed her 6 year old tooth fairy smile. And many many other things. But he did indeed evoke that priceless smile many times that day, and in fact he himself smiled so much that his face hurt, a smile seen by only three Ravenclaw third year students, that day in the early afternoon, but by that night the entire castle buzzed with rumors, some true, some not, but no one knew the whole story, not Albus, Severus, or Evelyn, and not Harry, Ron, Dean, Seamus, and Neville, who took turns with the Marauder's Map. They wanted to know the truth about Snape and Evelyn. So far they had done nothing but walk all over the castle and grounds, perfectly innocent, but the whole of idea of Snape dating someone had them all intrigued. And although they all agreed that she was a bit of a flirt, a "friendly flirt" as Neville put it, and Seamus proclaimed her saucy, "but in the nicest possible way," the fact that it was Miss Evelyn from the library had them all unable to believe it until they continually saw Snape and Evelyn walking together. Three of them were exceedingly amused, one was touched by this turn of events, and one was tormented, his heart wrenched every time he saw them together.

The picnic lunch Severus suggested on Saturday afternoon was probably the best time either of them had ever had. After some discussion, they decided that Severus would conjure up whatever they wanted, anything, but it must be bite-sized, and then he would make them both forget what he had conjured. So he did. Then they played their picnic game.

Severus closed his eyes and Evelyn looked into her bowl, chose a macadamia nut, and placed it in Severus's mouth. He opened his eyes, smiled and chewed, and then waved his hand impatiently at her to close her eyes.

Severus chose a strawberry and fed it to Evelyn.

Then Evelyn fed Severus a piece of fried okra, giggling, knowing that he had not possibly ever had fried okra. And it was warm. Evelyn loved magic.

"What was that? We must have more of that," he proclaimed, laughing.

"I don't know. That stuff can kill ya," Evelyn warned.

The game went on. They had everything, anything they could imagine, but it wasn't until halfway through the game that Severus thought to mention that he could have shrunk anything to bite-sized.

"We'll do that next time," he promised, smiling.

After a while Evelyn chose the Hershey's kiss. She pondered for a fraction of a moment and then instead of unwrapping the kiss and feeding it to him, she kissed him.

Severus knew it was happening before it happened. Not only could he feel her thinking it and doing it in his mind, which he could not prevent at this moment, he could also hear the intake of breath as she inhaled, and then he could smell the scent of butterscotch, which was what he had given her in his last turn.

He opened his eyes at the last moment. Hers were closed. She began to kiss him. He waited 2 heartbeats and then grasped her firmly in his arms, and took over. Surely, never in all history, had any two people engaged in such a perfect kiss than Severus and Evelyn did that day. They literally ceased to think until a flapping noise announced the arrival of an owl.

Severus was not pleased about having to leave Evelyn, but he had no choice.

"It's business, darling," he announced unhappily.

"It's ok, Sev," she assured him.

He kissed her once more quickly, but he held her tightly, and then several more quick soft kisses, and they left.

Then Albus brought Severus back to his senses with a crash, that night in his office. "You have been like a son to me, Severus," he paused. "And it hurts me to have to say this to you, but you realize, my boy," Albus said gently, "that by your association, you are exposing Evelyn to danger. And everyone else." Severus, speechless, looked at him with dawning comprehension.

"I have no objection once Voldemort is gone. No objection whatsoever," Albus stressed.

"Nearly any other woman would escape his notice or interest. But my niece? It may be that he would think nothing of it, if he found out, but who knows... Severus, don't you agree that it is too much of a risk? For both of you? For all of us? And if he decides in the end to destroy you, you can be sure he will destroy her also. You have knowingly accepted that danger. She has not."

Severus looked away, but agreed.

"You must wait, Severus. Until it is safe."

Then Severus leaned over, put his face in his hands and confided to Albus, "She's the woman from my dreams."

"Are you certain?" Albus asked. Severus nodded slowly.

"And I don't want to let her go. I'll risk my life."

"But Severus? Will you risk hers?"

"No," Severus answered softly. "Not hers."

Severus raised his tear-stained face and looked at Albus in despair. "I can't let her go." His eyes begged for another answer, some chance they had overlooked.

Reluctantly, Albus said, as kindly as possible, but with quiet logic, "But Severus, in your dreams, don't you both fall into the abyss?"

Severus fled blindly from Dumbledore's office. He ran across the grounds and into the forest, where many creatures heard and witnessed his screaming, kicking, and beating himself, hurling himself against the rocks and trees until he bled, and were relieved when before dawn Severus picked himself up and walked back to his dungeon. Today he would feel all of the pain. Tomorrow morning he would heal the wounds that would not be covered by clothing.

So, unable to think of what to do and what he could say, Severus avoided Evelyn. He rarely saw her, and when he did, would not look at her or speak to her. After a few days, Evelyn, being the bold and outgoing person that she was, sought him out, and found him in his office, sitting at his desk, writing.

"Severus," she said softly. His heart raced. How he loved the way she said his name. He did not take his eyes off his papers.

"Yes, Miss Dumbledore, what is it?" he snapped. He could not speak to her. To begin would be to never stop. He must not.

"Severus? What's wrong?" she asked. He didn't have to look. He could feel her emotions; they fell on him like sharp daggers.

"Nothing is wrong." His heart was breaking, and he could not tell her.

"But I haven't seen you in days," her voice shook. "Severus, look at me. What's going on?"

He glanced in her direction, but wouldn't look at her eyes. He looked at her feet instead. "I've been very busy. Let's leave it at that, shall we?" He managed a believable iciness in his voice.

"Severus?"

"Good evening, Miss Dumbledore."

She left, holding back the first of many tears destined for her immediate future. She turned at the door and looked at him. She saw him sitting there, like a rock, stone cold and still, but she was unable to see the tears that burned as they flowed down his face and onto his papers, ruining the work of hours. Severus didn't care. His entire life was ruined now, as advised by one of the people he trusted the most, and the person he loved the most no doubt hated him now. He wished to die, but logic prevailed, as always. He had a one-way ticket and he was the only one who could use it. After closing and locking his door, Severus screamed and swept everything from his desk onto the floor. Unsatisfied with that, he kicked everything from the desk that had not already been broken in the fall, and then paced, tearing his hair and destroying everything in his path. Later, exhausted, he crouched in the corner, crossed his arms across his bowed head, and wept.

Harry witnessed this scene, the guys knew something was up, and here was the proof. He watched Evelyn run to her room. He watched Snape doing something that included a lot of weird pacing. He knew there were more important things to be doing, but this had captured his attention and now he couldn't quite put it down, like a mystery, he thought, although Professor Snape in the corner was a detail he could do without. He shuddered. He wondered if they should bring the girls into the secret, and it occurred to him that they would probably have some answers, as usual. He decided to put the idea before the rest of the guys. It should be a group decision.

Friends and Enemies

Chapter 4 of 9

Severus Snape and Evelyn Dumbledore were best friends until Evelyn and her mother fled Aberforth when the children were 5. When Evelyn returns years later, Sev's heart melts and his wall comes crashing down. To keep her safe from Voldemort, he must give her up. But Evelyn is not your average librarian. And sometimes things don't go as planned... And sometimes they do.

Chapter four

"A Muggle-raised Mudblood Squib?" Lucius taunted Severus. "Please tell me it isn't so."

Severus waved his hand impatiently. "She's a friend. We practically grew up together until they left for America."

"And I hear that she's a Mudblood even in the Muggle world, a half-breed they call them, don't they? Her mother's one of those *Indians* they have over there. I don't think I could think of anything worse, even if I tried." He chuckled, studying Severus. "Except maybe that old goat of a father..." Lucius's eyes gleamed with malicious mirth.

Severus's expression was bland, although he would have killed Lucius on the spot, if he could have done it and not gotten caught.

He looked Lucius in the eyes and stated scornfully, "The point is, Lucius, that Mudblood Squib or not, she is an employee of this school, not to mention the Headmaster's niece, and it would be wise for Draco to learn early on the ways in which things can be done, and things that would not be excused. Don't you agree?" he asked, eyebrows raised.

"But fifty points, Severus? Don't you think that's a little extreme?" Lucius fondled his stick, wishing he could use it to smack that smirk off Snape's face.

"He's lucky I didn't give him detention. I can overlook harmless pranks and such, but disrespect for authority will not be tolerated here," Severus pointed to himself, "or elsewhere, in this case especially, I would imagine."

Lucius fumed with frustration because he knew that Severus was right.

"Or perhaps you would prefer your son to be pampered and spoiled, to grow into some kind of pansy..." he paused. "Like Girlyboy Lockhart?" Severus scoffed.

Lucius shuddered, and faked a smile. "You're right, Severus."

He walked to the door and then turned. With his most evil smile, he almost purred, "Perhaps a few whacks with this stick will teach him swiftly. Beating is one effective method, I have heard."

Severus's face revealed nothing as he stonily agreed, "It is."

"Good evening, Severus."

"Good evening, Lucius," he replied coolly.

Outside on the stairs Draco waited. Lucius approached him and said in an undertone, "He says they're just friends, made some self-righteous remarks about authority, so that was a complete and utter waste of time." He glared at Draco.

"He's lying," Draco chuckled.

Lucius studied his son's face carefully. "You think so?"

"Huh! I know!" Draco looked smug. "The whole bloody school knows. If you saw them together, you would know. The way they can hardly keep their eyes off each other. The way he caters to her constantly. It is disgusting really."

"You're certain?"

"Look, he goes around *smiling at her* and brings her stupid magical charms and stuff because she's a bloody Squib! I've heard they walk around the castle at night, though we haven't been able to see it ourselves, the rumors are flying." He looked at his father and asked, "Have you ever known Snape to act like that?" and smirked. "He's whupped."

Lucius smiled his most evil smile, told Draco to wait around for him, and strode toward the library. It was high time he met this woman to whom Draco had been forced to *apologize*. And then he might have a few more words with Severus Snape. But first, that bitch. She didn't even belong here. Mudblood, Muggle, *and* Squib!

Lucius opened the door, noting the time. Close to closing time. The place was empty and Lucius felt a vicious glee. He walked toward the woman, noting the ridiculous blue dress and red shoes.

She looked toward him, and was instantly on her guard. Something about the eyes. Something bad. Her face betrayed nothing, but inside her pulse was racing, adrenaline surging. She wanted to click her ruby red slippers and go anywhere but here. *There's no place like Rome. There's no place like Nome. There's no place like... Stockholm!*

"Miss Evelyn Dumbledore, I presume," he said without a smile.

Before she could answer, he began. "Yes I know all about you, Miss Dumbledore. The damsel in distress!" He exclaimed in mock sympathy, "Poor little goat-girl, from a broken home, with mental problems and drug addictions. What a pity."

He began to slowly walk in a circle around her and her heart skipped a beat. The other girls had left earlier; it was her turn to stay late. They were alone.

At this very same moment, Fred and George Weasley were walking into the castle, and Neville Longbottom was watching in horror as Lucius circled Evelyn on the Marauder's Map; he had spy duty tonight. The girls, they had learned, knew not much more than they. Evelyn neither brought up Severus's name, nor did she enter any conversation that had anything to do with him. The girls knew only what they could "see" in Evelyn, which was mainly emotion, rather than actual events. That she still loved Severus was obvious. The boys kept the map to themselves, much to the relief of Neville, who was wondering what would happen if Hermione or Ginny had been on duty tonight. On second thought, they could hold their own in a duel, or even an all out battle if needed. Neville ran harder. Anything could be happening by now.

"And what is the drug *du jour*?" Lucius asked maliciously. "Oh, don't tell me the name, just tell me what color in that rainbow of a pharmacy of yours is on the menu today? I wonder if dear old Daddy and Uncle Albus know about that?"

"No answer?" he sneered. "Ah, well. Perhaps you've given up the pills for potions?"

He looked at her with contempt. "Why would the head of Slytherin House give such an unjust punishment to a Slytherin student? Hmmmm. I think we both know the answer to that, don't we? I'm sure Uncle Albus would find it quite interesting, don't you?"

The mention of Severus made her angry. "That's enough!" she hissed at him. "I don't have to listen to this."

"Yes," he insisted. "You do. Here we are.....alone." He smiled his evil smile. "Let's talk."

Neville had begun to run wildly toward the library, wondering where everyone was, but ready to kill Lucius Malfoy with his bare hands if he had to.

I can kick that old fart's ass, Neville thought. He blanked out the map and tucked it into a pocket of his robes as he ran.

He met Fred and George in the hallway and quickly told them. "Lucius Malfoy. In the library." None of this meant a thing to George and Fred but Neville's voice implied urgency and danger. The twins exchanged a glance and followed Neville.

Evelyn had started toward the door but Lucius caught her halfway across the room. His tight grip on her arm would leave a bruise. She struggled, couldn't get free, so she slapped him hard. He laughed and slapped her in return. He was still laughing when her fist struck him in the gut and then the other right on the mouth.

He fell to the floor, and then his wand was out. "IMPEDIMENTA!" Suddenly she couldn't move. He stood, growling, and raced toward her, hair disheveled, blood on his lip. *He's insane!* she thought. When he reached her he put one hand on her throat and pushed her against the wall, hard. He leaned on the wall beside her, breathing heavily.

Her voice was barely audible, but he heard every word. "I'd have kicked your ass, if you didn't have that wand, you pussy."

"You Mudblood bitch," he panted. "You *will* pay for this."

Then the door burst open and Lucius turned to see the Weasley twins, and Neville, all with wands out and ready. Lucius released Evelyn, and looked at the boys with a haughty expression. "We'll talk later Evelyn," he said in a conversational tone.

"No, you won't," announced the trio in unison.

"If you ever lay eyes on her again," Fred began,

"We will hunt you down," George vowed.

"and kill you," they said together.

"I'm sorry, guys, but I saw him first." Neville glared at Lucius, hating him. "I am already plotting ways to kill you and not get caught."

"Make it look like a suicide," George suggested.

"Or a freak accident," Fred added.

"This will be a great subject for discussion on a night out drinking," George happily declared.

"Or a night in, thinking," Neville broke in.

Fred raised one hand. "I am thinking of ways to work that stupid stick into the murder."

"So if she breaks a *finger nail*," Neville warned.

"You'd better be watching your back," the twins finished.

Lucius ran his fingers through his hair, smoothing it back down, and sneered at the three of them, then turned to glare at Evelyn, who glared right back.

Lucius left, and the boys rushed to Evelyn, who was touching her throat and breathing deeply, still beside the wall. They put her in a chair and conjured a glass of water. Then they hovered around, not knowing what to do.

"I don't know how to thank you. Thank you."

"By the way, I'm George Weasley. This is Fred."

She looked at them with a tearstained face and a sad smile. "I want to go home," she sobbed.

"No way!" George said.

"We're bringing you straight to Mum," Fred told her gently.

Fred smiled, partly to reassure her, and partly because he had just noticed the wickedly wacky outfit and the cute braids in her hair.

"Shouldn't we tell the Headmaster?" Neville suggested.

"No!" Evelyn insisted. "No need to worry him. I'm fine. And I don't want to cause problems."

"Ok then. Neville, you coming too?" George offered.

"As long as Miss Evelyn is ok." He searched her eyes, and at her assurance that she would be ok, he patted her hand, and admitted, "I have so much studying to do."

"Thank you, Neville." She began to cry again. Then she smiled and declared, "The hero always wins a kiss from the damsel in distress." She kissed Neville softly on the cheek, which caused him to blush and smile. He left without a word.

Fred and George were exchanging sly grins.

"What about us?" they insisted.

"En francais, s'il vous plait," Fred teased.

"We'll wait until you're feeling a bit better though," George assured her.

As they left the castle and grounds, George turned to Fred. "Portkey please," and Fred pulled a copper necklace from inside his shirt. He held it out and instructed Evelyn to take hold of the chain.

George suggested she hold the chain in her hand, not between her fingers as he did, "We wouldn't want to lose you and it's your first time."

Fred warned her, "This is not painful, but you may find it somewhat, er, intense, until you're used to it."

Fred and George each put an arm around Evelyn's waist. The was a wrench inside her, and then they were standing in a very cozy warm kitchen, where Molly Weasley, shocked as always by the twins' sudden appearance there, was nevertheless quick to begin fussing over Evelyn. A night with the Weasley's was the best thing for Evelyn, and she did feel better, but she never again left her room at Hogwart's unarmed.

She Belongs to Me

Chapter 5 of 9

Severus Snape and Evelyn Dumbledore were best friends until Evelyn and her mother fled Aberforth when the children were 5. When Evelyn returns years later, Sev's heart melts and his wall comes crashing down. To keep her safe from Voldemort, he must give her up. But Evelyn is not your average librarian. And sometimes things don't go as planned... And sometimes they do.

Chapter five

Remus was absolutely charming. Gentle and soft-spoken, and a werewolf. Evelyn was intrigued, but still couldn't get Severus out of her mind. She tried, and was for a time distracted by the many tales of Remus Lupin, who had been everywhere and was so fascinating. She actually had a good time with him and had decided that further association with Remus was a definite plan, and not only to distance herself from Severus. She really did like Remus.

Remus really liked Ev too. Shocking, she was. And amusing. Her habit of speaking to strangers rattled Remus every time she did it. And then there were the Muggle ways, the southern ways, and the tribal ways by which she continued to live. But instead of turning him off her, it attracted him.

Remus was a gentleman for about a week or so, and then one night, after kissing Evelyn's hand at her door, he slipped his arm around her waist, pulled her close and very softly kissed her lips. His mustache tickled and Evelyn felt butterflies in her stomach. Oh this is good, she thought as he continued his expert exploration of her lips and tongue. Evelyn nearly lost herself as they continued into full fledged frenzied snogging and thought, to hell with Severus, and then a wave of sadness and guilt washed over her. Remus, fully in tune with her physically, felt this and desisted with the seduction. He asked her softly, "What is it, Evelyn?"

She said nothing, but her shoulders sagged and she covered her face with her hands.

Remus gave her a gentle hug and whispered to her, "If you want me to, I will stay. If you want me to, I'll go."

He waited.

Evelyn stared at him, unable to make a decision.

Remus knew the answer when Evelyn whispered desperately, "I don't know! I don't know! Part of me says yes and part of me," she unconsciously put her hands over her heart, "says no."

"I don't know," she ended sadly.

Remus took her hands in his and kissed both of them. "Never, ever would I advise one do anything other than follow one's heart."

He smiled at her, that melancholy half smile which was so sweet to her that it hurt. "I'll see you tomorrow, Evelyn." Then he squeezed her hands and kissed them once more, with all the passion he possessed, and then walked away.

Evelyn slowly entered her room, and cried herself to sleep.

It was becoming more difficult for Severus to avoid Evelyn, and not hearing the rumors and gossip was impossible. That the Weasley twins were trying to lure her to working for them was noted by everyone with amusement.

Severus, being the king of sneakiness, had more than once lurked in one of the secret passages next to the library and stood at the hidden entrance to see her, be near her, and hear her voice, and on this day, he was there when Fred and George made one of their frequent visits.

"Good evening, Evelyn," they said in unison.

"Hey there, fellas," she answered sweetly, and smiled.

"We're here again to offer you," Fred began, and then George continued, "a very important and highly paid position with our enterprise."

"More money," Fred promised. "Loads of it!"

"Choose your own working hours," George offered.

"You name it," they both said.

Evelyn sighed. "I thank you again for your kind offer, but I think I'll stay here with my books and leave the magic mayhem to the two of you."

"Come on, girl!" Fred pleaded.

"You don't belong in this boring old library," George insisted.

"You belong with us," they assured her.

"No" she sighed. She was NOT in the mood for any Fred and George BS, bless their hearts. She looked at them both with blazing eyes. "Enough is enough, already!" Then she smiled to soften her words.

There was a moment of silence.

Severus held his breath.

Fred and George looked at each other grinned, turned to her again and asked her, "Will you go out with us again?"

Severus was staggered when she laughed out loud and gushed, "And here I am, dressed as Scarlett O'Hara today. This is like the first scene of the movie, when the Tarleton twins ask Scarlett to have barbecue with them." She continued giggling, they certainly always know how to cheer me up, she thought, while Fred and George sat there staring at her, amazed by the mood swing, and with no idea what she was talking about.

Severus seethed with jealousy; he wanted to tear the entire building down. On Fred and George Weasley's heads. He listened, feeling sick.

"Well?" the twins asked.

Evelyn's giggles died down, and she sighed and said, "No. I've had a long day. Tonight I want to relax, and have a long hot bath, Zeppelin on the stereo, and a drink or two. And I am not going drinking with y'all again."

"We promise to behave." They tried looking innocent, which caused her to laugh again, because they came nowhere near innocent-looking.

Fred, charming to the bone, implored her, "Come on, girl."

George, with a mischievous gleam in his eye, in a horrible imitation of a southern accent, "My dear Miss Evelyn, we wonder if we could have the honor of your company this evening."

"For barbecue," Fred added.

"Or anything else you might fancy," they said suggestively, and with that, Evelyn banished them from the library.

"Out! I mean it. I'm old enough to be your mother! And I'll tell your mother if you continue acting like this." She put her hands on her hips and threatened, "I might even make up some stuff."

The twins gasped. "Oh, Evelyn, you wouldn't!" George moaned.

"I might... And look." She pointed out the clock. "It's closing time. Scat!"

"Never say never," they reminded her as they reluctantly left, trying to look pitiful, innocent, amusing, and sexy all at the same time. And no doubt doing a better job of it than anyone else on the planet at the moment, she had to admit.

She locked the door after them and turned to go back to her table. She was shocked to see Severus standing there, silent, staring at her. She quickly looked away.

"On the other hand," she announced to one of the paintings on the wall, "Those boys are very attractive." She paused, as if considering them, "And they do make me laugh." The painting agreed.

"And who's to stop me?" she declared angrily to the ceiling.

"Evelyn," She could hear all the emotion in his voice, and her anger vanished, leaving only confusion, curiosity, and a racing heart.

She turned to look at him. He looked years older, broken, and forlorn.

"Severus?"

"Evelyn," he placed a hand over his heart. "I deeply and most humbly apologize for all the pain I have caused you, and I beg you to forgive me for what I have done."

Her heart lurched. How could she not forgive him? "Yes I forgive you."

He reached for her hands. "Ev, am I still in your heart?"

"Oh Sev! Of course! My heart is yours. But I thought you didn't want me." She began to cry.

He held her tightly as she wept. Tears streamed from his eyes too. "Oh, I want you. Always have. More than anything I have ever wanted in my life."

"But Ev," he looked her in the eyes, "we must discuss this, and I want you to be open-minded, and give me a chance. Because I think we were meant to be together."

"Yes" she whispered.

He released her slowly from his arms and took her hands in his.

"If you will do one thing for me," he hesitated, then rushed ahead. "If you will do one thing, I will do anything you want. I will give you anything you desire. You will have only to let me know what you want, and it will be yours."

His voice shook. "I will be your willing slave and servant. I promise this to you." His eyes devoured hers. "Because, I love you, Evelyn."

"Oh, Severus," she whispered. More tears blurred her vision. "I love you too."

He released her hands, moving his fingers slowly from the tips of her fingers to her wrists and gently up her arms to her shoulders. With one hand caressing the side of her face, the other he entangled in her hair, and gently pulling her head back to look up at him, he gazed into her eyes once more and then kissed her until they were both dizzy.

So it was agreed that they would see each other secretly. He only hinted at danger and assured her it was temporary. The one thing was to ask no questions, though her curiosity was aroused, and eventually began to simmer...

It's the Thought That Counts

Chapter 6 of 9

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Chapter six

It was Halloween, and Severus was impatiently waiting for the party to be over so he could go home. With Evelyn. He had a special scary Halloween surprise that would scare her silly.

Later, in the dungeon, he left the bedroom, and walked into his study, telling her he would be back in a moment. He grinned, and listened to her humming a happy tune as she undressed and got into the bed.

After a few more minutes she called out to him, "Severus, what are you doing?"

He waited a moment and then released two small boggarts, mostly harmless. They should turn into those two velociraptors from Jurassic Park, which, oddly, were the most scary thing to her. She had hidden her face against his chest as the kitchen scene had played when they had watched the film. He had been strangely moved to witness the vulnerability of such a bold and saucy woman.

He was prepared for a scream or two, but was shocked to the bone when he heard the terror in her voice. He rushed in and faced the boggarts. He glanced at her. At this point she was hidden under the blankets, still screaming, so she never saw what form the boggarts assumed for him. He quickly got the boggarts into a closet and then he rushed to her, yanked off the blankets and took her in his arms, comforting her. She clung to him for a few moments, crying uncontrollably.

Suddenly she pushed him violently away from her. He realized immediately and belatedly that this had been a very bad idea. He kept forgetting that she was not used to magic. And now the look in her eyes was not hatred, for she still loved him, but it was close enough for rock-n-roll. She rummaged around in her purse, took a few pills, and then then turned toward him again. He said nothing about the pills, and this was the first time she had taken them in his presence. Under different circumstances, he would have something to say, but not at this moment.

When she began to scream at him his heart jumped. His suddenly recalled Evelyn's mother screaming like this at Aberforth, and his heart sank. He was not used to such treatment from *anyone* but since he realized that he was wrong, he hung his head and meekly accepted her verbal abuse until he noticed that she was getting out of her new pajamas that were black with jack-o-lanterns on them. He instantly began putting them back on her.

"Stop it!" she shrieked, and then continued with her screaming, which at the moment concerned his lack of any sort of common sense.

This is bad, Severus thought frantically. She didn't walk back to her apartment from the dungeon. He took her out the window on his broomstick and brought her to her window, just as they had done as children. Sometime in nice weather they rode awhile, but at this time of night, she usually didn't change clothes for that. So she was angry enough to get herself away from him and stubborn enough to do it on her own. He was still buttoning buttons as fast as she unbuttoned them.

Severus realized that angry and stubborn was not a good combination, and that he couldn't do a thing about her stubbornness (or wouldn't, for moral reasons), so he must deal with her anger. If he didn't do it soon, he would become angry, and he used every ounce of control to remain calm. He couldn't trust himself to keep control of his anger. And he refused to become like his father.

He decided that begging forgiveness and apologizing would be the right idea. And since he was sincerely sorry, and she could see that, it didn't take nearly as long as he had feared before she was in his arms again. Which was a good thing, because he had been prepared to use any means necessary to keep her from leaving. *Our first fight*, he thought to himself. He felt fortunate to have come out of it unscathed, and very lucky to be lying here with her, and not alone again. But most of all, he was relieved that he had not lost his temper. As much as he had hurt her in the past, to put his hands on her now would be to lose her, forever.

A few days before Christmas break Neville came to see Evelyn at work. He had a strange look on his face, a smile she had not seen on his face before.

"I have a present for you Evelyn," he announced.

"Oh, you shouldn't have, Neville," Evelyn told him.

"Yes, I should," Neville insisted. "And you'll love it."

They left the library and he led her to a door and explained. "This room will be whatever you need it to be." He paused.

"I have taken the liberty of creating a special place for you, Evelyn. Let me show you." He opened the door.

They walked inside, and Evelyn gasped, "Oh! Neville!" She was unable to say anything else. She was too busy trying to look at everything at once.

It was an animated world. Endless rows of strawberries. Off in the distance she could see the fool on the hill, and when she looked in the other direction, she saw Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band.

She turned to look at Neville. "How did you know...?"

Neville smiled and took Evelyn's hand. "I heard you and Hermione talking about music a few weeks ago."

"Ohhhhh." As they continued walking, Evelyn noticed glass onions. And in the distance a walrus frolicked.

"Do they really go on forever?" Evelyn asked Neville, squinting her eyes to see into the distance.

"Yes. They do." Neville laughed.

Evelyn looked at Neville. "How did you do all this?" she asked.

Neville stopped. "I'm a wizard, Evelyn," he told her.

"Of course," she agreed. She looked around again. She was truly touched by this gesture. "This is beautiful, Neville." She kissed his cheek, and hugged him. "Thank you."

Neville did not completely release her but held her close with one arm. He explained, "It is not really me that made all this, but the Room of Requirement. I only had to know in my mind what should be here. That is how this room works, do you see?"

She nodded. "So.....you mean if I wanted to play basketball, I would come here and everything would be here?"

"Yes," he agreed.

"Including Michael or Shaq?"

He looked at her blankly.

"Players. Professional basketball players who would kick my butt the minute they stepped on the court."

"Evelyn, there is a law about interfering with Muggles. Don't wish for Muggles to be in the Room of Requirement. Please."

"I won't Neville. But you must promise to learn to play basketball with me. Your height gives you an advantage already." She grinned and looked around again

He looked down at her and asked, "Do you really like it, Evelyn?"

"Neville, it is beautiful, and peaceful, and I love it," she assured him.

"That is what I intended," he said. And then he kissed her.

Evelyn was surprised, but even more surprised by her own reaction. Butterflies in her stomach, then heat spreading throughout her body to the tips of her fingers and toes. Then she thought of Severus, and guilt consumed her. She placed one hand on Neville's chest and pushed him away slightly.

He drew her closer and continued kissing her. She could feel his heart under her hand beating fast and hard. She pushed again and he reluctantly ceased, and began whispering to her.

"Hush, Neville," she whispered. "Shhh, you know this isn't right. I'm old enough to be your mother."

"I don't care. It doesn't matter," he said.

"Yes, it does" she insisted. "And besides..." she broke off. She couldn't reveal her relationship with Severus. What could she say?

"I know," he growled. "Snape."

Evelyn stared at him. "How did you know? I mean, what do you mean?"

"Evelyn," he pleaded. "You can't trust Snape! He has everyone fooled! He's evil."

"No, Neville. He is not. You don't know him the way I do."

Neville looked away, and then looked into her eyes once more. He was trembling. He shook his head and then kissed Evelyn on the forehead.

"If he ever hurts you, I'll kill him," Neville vowed.

"He won't, Neville. I promise you that."

Neville slowly released Evelyn, and took her hand again. They began walking back to the entrance. They were silent, each deep in thought.

"Neville. You know that Severus and I have to keep our relationship a secret. I can't say why." She didn't know why, and she was becoming more and more unsatisfied with that situation.

"I know why... What I don't know is why him? Why Severus Snape?"

Evelyn sighed. And then she told Neville the story of her first 5 years with Severus.

"And I know he's not the most cheerful person, and he does not seem to be very warm, or capable of love, but he is. He has been kind to me, and he loves me. He has endured so much to be with me. I am not easy to be with, Neville. But Severus has kept his temper when I have lost mine, he has remained silent when he disagrees with me about my life, when I have not when I disagree with him.

"So, if anyone is the villain here, Neville, it is me," Evelyn stated.

"No, Evelyn."

"Yes, Neville."

Neville asked her, "Are you going to tell him about this?"

"I think I should," she answered. "It is likely that he knows now. If not, he will know *something* the minute he sees me, and it is very likely that he will be unable to refrain from seeing it all in my mind, it happens sometimes, although he is so careful to try and prevent it."

"I will, however, remind him that our relationship is a secret, so you have done nothing wrong." She smiled at Neville. "And I will not mention this conversation, and I hope he can't see it."

She did not tell Neville that Severus would be in such a jealous rage that he wouldn't be able to see into her mind. And then, when she reminded him that Neville, like everyone else, was unaware of their relationship, he would see that he must accept the consequences of that secrecy. And then, although he would be seething with rage, Evelyn would softly coax him back into the mellow and charming Severus she adored.

And that's exactly how it happened that evening.

The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth

Chapter 7 of 9

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Chapter seven

He could tell something was wrong and she didn't have to say a word. She silently screamed at him with every glance, every gesture. It was not subtle; he could feel it.

"Alright then," he said, putting down his wineglass. "Tell me what is bothering you." He was careful to use just the right tone, to make her tell him what it was, and not argue about how he asked the question, or be offended that he would assume something was wrong, which could imply that he thought he knew her so well.... *Oh, please just talk to me*, he wished as hard as he could.

"I want to know what it is that you refuse to tell me," she stated bluntly, and then went on. "All the secrecy." She glared at him, and snapped, "Why? I know you're not married or something like that..." Then *the look*. "Unless you're hiding her, too."

"No, no, nothing like that," he assured her.

"Because I'm a Mudblood?"

"No, no, please don't say that, darling."

"I want to know, Severus," she growled. "and I want to know NOW."

Ever since the conversation with Neville, Evelyn had been unable to stop thinking about Severus's insistence on secrecy. Neville had said, "I know why," and although this had not registered on Evelyn's brain at that time, she remembered it later, and now was obsessed with it. Why should Neville know, when she could not?

Severus looked across the table at Evelyn and sighed. He got up from his chair and paced quickly, running his hands through his hair. This was too much. "Evelyn I have told you over and over, it is not my wish, but it is *for the best, for your safety* that things are this way."

"Yes you have, but you are changing the subject, Severus," she retorted, knowing she was right, and that it was making him angry but she didn't care. She raised her voice a little. "And it's not enough anymore."

He opened his mouth to speak but she cut him off. He listened, knowing better than to make her angry at him. An angry Evelyn is what his boggart would probably change into now. "I don't want to hear about how you can tell me later, one day soon. I know I agreed, but soon is not coming soon enough! How long do you expect me to live like this? And I don't care about any *danger*. Danger, outrageous lies, whatever it is, there is something. We both know there's something you're not telling me, and I'm sorry," she hesitated, and went on, quickly and with determination in her voice, "If you don't tell me tonight, right now, I am not ever going to see you or speak to you again."

She would do it, too, he thought. Just on principle. Because she was most stubborn person he had ever met.

Why can't she just believe what I say? He crossed the room toward her. "WHY can't you JUST BELIEVE what I SAY?" he shouted.

Her eyes widened. He lowered his voice, and asked, "Why can't you trust me?"

She stared him in the eye and, without missing a beat, won that argument. "Why can't you trust me?"

"Alright!" he snapped, pointing one finger at her. He grabbed his cape and then turned to her, and said, in a pleading but resigned voice, "Why are you so stubborn?" He walked quickly to where she sat, and with a quick peck on the lips, he told her "Let's get a potion. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Then he thought for a moment. "No. If we're doing this, I want absolutely no doubt left in your mind, *br your heart*, he added silently. "Would you happen to have Veritaserum?"

"Yes."

"Let's get it."

When they returned to the dungeon with a bottle of Veritaserum, he set it on the table, and he picked up his wineglass. He drained it in one swallow and then looked her in the eyes.

"If you ask it of me, I can modify your memory to forget what I am about to tell you, but I will only do that if you ask me. That's really the best thing.... In case you decide you don't really want to know. You can write yourself a note or something, explaining that your question was answered to your satisfaction but you just choose not to remember...." he trailed off as he noticed her expression.

He grabbed the Veritaserum and looked at the label. "Extra strength," he read in a dry serious voice. He opened the bottle and poured about half a glass. Evelyn noticed that his hands were shaking, but said nothing. He swirled the liquid, then inhaled. "Not bad," he observed. He closed the bottle, and placed it on the table.

She looked up at him and saw the truth in his eyes. No need for Veritaserum. This man was not lying to her. She had seen in those eyes the look of love, but she had never seen it to this degree. This was more than love. This was love, trust, fear, and hope. He sighed, closed his eyes, and drank the potion down all at once. He leaned back in his chair, brushed his hair from his face, and announced, "It will take about 3 to 5 minutes to take effect."

"Good" she remarked, and got up, walked over to him, and stood behind him, and leaned down to hug him and kiss his cheek and with one soft finger traced his chin, cheek, lips, nose, eyebrows. "Because I just want to say, before we get started, that I believe you, I trust you, and I have faith in what you tell me, about how things will be different one day."

He turned his head slowly and asked softly, "Then why are we doing this?"

"Because I want to KNOW."

He sighed, and told her everything.

After the facts were presented, Severus waited, knowing there would be questions. He was surprised to see Evelyn pour a dose of the Veritaserum.

"This potion's effects last for approximately six hours, Sev. Fair is fair." and she smiled and began drinking hers.

They talked for awhile about Voldemort, prophecies, the Order of the Phoenix, but eventually the conversation turned to other things, and in time, came to the declarations of love and loyalty which would never be broken, or forgotten. A good Veritaserum not only compels the user to tell only the truth, it also makes the user tell it in the most efficient way, in such a way as to not be misunderstood, so they made the most of those last few hours of January.

"Severus, listen to me," she whispered.

"I am listening, darling" he replied. "and seeing and tasting and smelling and touching." He continued distracting her from the conversation with soft kisses and caresses. He took one of her feet, by the ankle, and ran a finger slowly along the bottom of it, tickling her. "You ensnare my senses, that's what you do, you know." She struggled but he held her firmly, tickled for a moment longer and then released her.

"I'm listening." He already knew what she was going to say. She had mentioned it before.

"Severus, if the worst should happen..."

"No!" he stated emphatically. "I will not consider it, and you will not either."

"Severus, I love you, but you do not command me," she said softly. "You can't deny my right to make my own decision. You know what my decision will be. You make your own. You know my wishes, but I can't command you either. I can only hope that you change your mind, knowing that you can't stop me."

"Oh, Evelyn," he sighed, covering his face with his hands.

"I am making the plans already. I have everything I need. I have written the letters to the girls. I have written one to Uncle Albus. In case something goes wrong. Have I forgotten anything?" She did not mention her father.

"Oh, Evelyn." He was in tears. In desperation, he begged her again to reconsider. But her mind was made up. And she definitely had the stubbornness that was common to the Dumbledore family.

"I'm sorry, Sev. But we had to have this talk. Now it is over, and we won't have to mention it again." Then she held him and kissed him as he cried until he fell asleep, and then she cried.

The Final Chapter

Chapter 8 of 9

Severus Snape and Evelyn Dumbledore were best friends until Evelyn and her mother fled Aberforth when the children

were 5. When Evelyn returns years later, Sev's heart melts and his wall comes crashing down. To keep her safe from Voldemort, he must give her up. But Evelyn is not your average librarian. And sometimes things don't go as planned... And sometimes they do.

Chapter Eight

Severus sat up in bed, and stared into the corner, where he could see something moving. Evelyn still slept. Severus suddenly spoke a spell that cast light into the corner, and there was Brad Pitt.

"Shhhhhh, don't wake her," Brad whispered.

"No, no, no!" Severus had never felt more afraid in his life.

Brad stood and approached Severus, then turned toward Evelyn.

"Don't touch her!" Severus hissed.

"Why not?" Brad asked.

"Because I would kill you," Severus countered.

"You're no fun at all Sev," Brad remarked. "You could have absolute power over her. You could dictate her every move, read every thought in her mind; you could make her do *anything*, but you don't..."

Severus got up and pushed Brad back away from the bed, away from Evelyn.

"Forget it," Severus said. "I *won't*..."

"She needs some discipline, I think," Brad insisted. "After all, she is such a slut!"

"No!" Severus vowed.

"No? What has she done when she wasn't with you, Sev? And with whom?"

"Remus, Neville, Fred *and* George..." Brad taunted Severus.

"No! She's done nothing! She told me! I can see in her mind that she's telling the truth!" Severus assured him.

"But they all tried, didn't they? They should be killed. All of them. And Argus can hardly keep from drooling when she's around. And Hagrid..."

"No!" Severus screamed. "You're making things up!"

Brad laughed and pushed Severus aside. He walked toward the bed and stood there, looking at Evelyn. "I can see it all in your mind, Severus. It's all her fault, you know."

Severus closed his eyes but couldn't block out the voice. He growled and attacked Brad instead of dwelling on it. Brad laughed and then Severus woke, sat up in bed, and looked around the darkened room.

Nightmares, he thought to himself. *Not real*.

That thought did not comfort him.

It was *his* fault, not hers. He had asked for a film that was "edgy, twisted, violent, and gory, but *not* a horror film."

She had given him *Fight Club*.

How was she to know how it would affect him? How could she know? He had never told *anyone*, not even Ev, about his self-destructive tendencies. He lay back down, wrapped himself around Evelyn, and vowed to remove that entire film from his memory, as soon as possible.

One evening, after being away for awhile, he came directly to her window. Although it was not late, her room was dark. Passion overcame caution, and he entered her room. He lit candles, slowly bringing the light into the room, and saw that she was lying on her bed, still clothed, though his heart fluttered uneasily in his chest when he saw that she was garbed in solid black. His eyes moved across the room and did not fail to notice the medicine bottles and wineglass on her desk.

He rushed to her, grabbed her up, and took her into his arms. Not dead. He sighed with relief.

She opened her eyes, which were swollen and red from crying.

"What's wrong, darling?" he asked her. "Whatever it is, I'll take care of it, don't worry." He stroked her hair and rocked her gently.

She began to cry and continued crying, but managed to tell him that her father had died. He gave one moment's thought to his responsibilities to the Order, and the need to find out if this was related in any way, or just an ordinary death, but he would deal with that later. His first priority was Evelyn.

So he spent the night holding her and stroking her as she slowly unfolded the story of her father.

Her mother had kept the information to herself until Evelyn was 18. That summer, after she graduated from high school, Evelyn learned of another world, where she had a father. Of course, she decided to come to see him. After all, they had left him, although it did occur to her that he could have easily found them had he wished.

Seven Doves would not accompany her to Hogsmeade, but assured Evelyn that she had nothing to fear.

It did not go well, and Evelyn had screamed at him that she hated him. Aberforth had responded by telling her he didn't care. And then she had left.

And then last summer when her mother died, she came back again, to tell him. He took the news without emotion, but this time Albus was there, and he took Evelyn away before the screaming began.

"He loves you, Evelyn, he really does. You remind him of your mother, and it hurts him to see you, can you understand that?" Albus had asked her.

She understood, but she had said things she couldn't take back. And now she never could.

"Shhhh, he knows you don't hate him." Severus tried to console her, but she was distraught. There was nothing he could do but stay with her, where he belonged.

Draco had ditched his buddies and proceeded directly to the library, barely making it before closing. As he entered, Evelyn looked up and he could see in her eyes the suspicion and distrust he had for him. *She has every right to feel that way*, he thought.

She did not know, however, that at some point long before Christmas, Pansy had forced Draco to read every book Evelyn had suggested to the students. Muggle books. His father would disinherit and disown him if he knew. It didn't take long for Draco to appreciate the value of diversity and soon was reading beyond Evelyn's suggestions. When Evelyn had dressed as Sojourner Truth, Draco had read everything ever written about the wise and mighty woman who had been born a slave. When she had worn a mohair suit and electric boots, and suggested Elton John, Draco had readily complied. From Pocahontas to Hitler, Draco had studied them all. He remembered seeing her dressed as Little Red Riding Hood, on a day Remus Lupin had met her after work, back in the fall, and was intrigued. Now the mere thought of it had him so amused he couldn't stop smiling. All the guys figured he had met a girl. They were right, and wrong.

At first, when Draco had seen her dressed as Ace Frehley of KISS, he had been amused, but she was not always frivolous in her selection of costumes. He was somewhat unnerved by the ninja assassin, and the Vietnam Marine, both complete with weapons (he did not know about the concealed weapons she carried daily). He had, however, learned so much about Muggles, he was certain he could live among them if he wished and never be exposed as a wizard.

The thing he loved the best were the Friday night films. Evelyn would always dress as a character in a film on Fridays, and then after the library closed, she was allowed to show the film. He had seen Young Guns, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, Gone with the Wind, The Ten Commandments, The Fifth Element, A Knight's Tale, and the list went on.

He also had confusing thoughts about the wizarding world. He had not thought of the lives or the wishes or happiness of house elves until he began his unofficial and very secret Muggle studies. Now he could see that his world's attitude toward other creatures, and Muggles, mirrored that of Muggles' attitudes toward certain other Muggles for what seemed to him to be foolish reasons. He wished he could discuss this with Evelyn, but he knew she would never be comfortable with him, the way she was with some of the other students.

Then he smiled ruefully as he imagined trying to explain to Hermione Granger that he wanted to help with her house elf revolution.

Today he knew that Evelyn was dressed as Alice, and had read the book by Lewis Carroll, and had read everything relating to that story, including music.

As Draco moved toward her, Evelyn stood, prepared for the worst. Draco would not find her such an easy target today, and not so silent.

Then Draco smiled, and pulled a funny-looking bouquet of flowers from behind his back.

Evelyn gasped. "Wisteria!" she exclaimed.

"I know they aren't proper flowers for a gift," Draco explained. "But I thought you might overlook their sad appearance since my gift to you is their lovely scent." He smiled his most charming smile, and Evelyn wondered how the girls could see this smile daily and concentrate on school.

"They're perfect, Draco," she assured him a shaky voice, wondering how he knew they were her favorite, because of their heady scent.

"And I know they are no substitute for a proper apology." Draco stepped closer and took her hand. He looked into her eyes.

"Miss Evelyn, I do sincerely apologize for my careless words a few months ago. I was a complete idiot. Please forgive me?" he asked.

"Yes, Draco," she said. "I forgive you." She smiled.

"And Evelyn, I have one more thing to say." Draco smiled another genuine smile. Evelyn recognized that he was no longer his father's idea of what he should be, but a completely different person.

"I know you were seeing Professor Snape at one time..."

Evelyn managed to show no expression, but was unable to maintain eye contact for a moment. Fortunately, Draco would regard this as sadness or shame, or whatever. He would never guess the truth.

Draco slowly and carefully placed one finger under her chin, and lifted her face.

She looked at him, almost hypnotized by those eyes, but seeing more than he suspected. He was still unsure about his future, though this was carefully hidden, and he showed confidence that was far advanced for his years.

"I don't know what he did..."

Evelyn could feel his confusion about Severus. On one hand, Severus had always been someone that Draco admired and respected. On the other hand, Draco was getting older and seeing things differently, and seeing Severus as a man and not as an idol.

"Whatever he did, and whatever Professor Lupin did..."

"Evelyn, I would not have been such an idiot."

Evelyn thanked her lucky stars that Draco could perceive no more than she allowed him to see. He also knew nothing about what his father had done and she was not about to tell him. The last thing Draco needed was one more reason to hate his father. Evelyn knew from her own experience. She wouldn't wish what had happened to her and her father on anyone, including Lucius, as much as she hated him.

Thinking of her father made tears fill Evelyn's eyes. Once again, Draco misinterpreted Evelyn's actions.

"Oh, don't cry, Evelyn. Don't you see that both of them are emotionally damaged? Any man would love you, Evelyn, if he's not an idiot."

"Draco," she whispered. "That's truly the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me."

"Oh, I hope not, Evelyn," Draco assured her. "And there are more things I would say, if you would listen."

"Draco, you shouldn't even be here. You know your father would be so angry."

"To Hell with my father," Draco swore. "I do whatever I want. Come with me, Evelyn. I'll show you where I got the wisteria. There is so much of it that you can nearly get drunk from the scent of it." He laughed.

"Draco..." she began.

"Please, Evelyn. You have nothing to fear from me." And while Evelyn had no doubt that Draco was sincere, she knew that to give any more encouragement would only make things complicated.

So she let him down as gently and sweetly as possible, hoping that Draco Malfoy would retain this newfound honorable and sweet disposition, though she knew it would always remain hidden from most.

She was just coming in to work when she heard the news. Severus had been murdered.

Evelyn didn't wait to hear more. She rushed home to change into the white deerskin outfit, the one Stands With a Fist had worn at her wedding in Dances With Wolves, which had been Sev's favorite movie. Then she gathered her letters and her potion and rushed to find her uncle.

She found Argus Filch first.

"Where is he?" she questioned Filch. He looked at her, not comprehending.

"Severus! Where is he now?"

"Evelyn dear," Argus said softly. "He didn't make it. He's gone. Dead." Mrs. Norris rubbed against her leg.

"*Where* is he?"

He told her, and she thrust the letters into his hands and fled. By the time Albus had been hastily summoned and given the letters, she was there with Severus. By the time Albus arrived she was lying next to Severus's dead body, one arm wrapped around his shoulder, her head on his chest, one leg lying across his, her foot comfortably lying between his ankles, the way they sometimes slept.

Just as Albus entered the room she lifted the bottle of potion and drank from it. She was dead before her head landed back on Severus's chest.

Albus covered his face with his hands. He had now just lost yet another loved one in so short a time. *Why?* he wondered. Albus thought frantically. The time turner....exchange her poison for a sleeping potion. *It could work...*

"Albus."

He looked up to see Severus and Evelyn, ghosts now. They would be together forever, just as Evelyn had planned.

"Forgive me, Albus. I just couldn't...."

Albus stopped him with one raised hand and covered his eyes with the other. He was silent for a very long time, and Evelyn was becoming concerned. She needed the acceptance and blessing of her uncle. Severus needed it even more than she did.

"If you had obeyed me, Severus, you would still be dead and she would be alone. As it is, we have you both, and you seem to be happy." He looked at Evelyn. "Are you happy, Evelyn?"

"Yes, Uncle Albus," she replied.

"But you were right Albus, we fell," Severus admitted. "I thought I could make this work out somehow."

"Yes," Albus agreed. "But you didn't fall very far, did you?"

No one had never known of a ghost wedding, but since no one objected, Severus and Evelyn were married as soon as her girls could get there, and after the students had taken their NEWTs, as Severus had insisted on remaining Potions Master.

"Any regrets, darling?" Severus asked his new bride that afternoon.

"None, except one," she answered.

He looked at her, waiting to hear it, and hoping it was something he could take care of.

"You have never had children, Severus. I regret that I didn't meet you years ago, so we could have had a life together, and children..."

Severus held her and kissed her softly. There was nothing he could say.

"But you may think of my girls as if they were yours, Severus. They have no father."

Severus smiled. "Thank you, darling. There is no greater wedding gift you could have given me. And my gift to you is that I will be the best father possible."

"And grandfather, when the time comes?" she asked with a mischievous sparkle in her eyes.

"Of course, darling," he answered.

"Even if they are red-haired, Mudblood Weasley grandchildren?" she asked gleefully.

He stopped and looked at her for a moment.

"I do owe you for that boggart incident, pumpkin," she reminded him.

Severus burst out laughing. He glanced over at Evelyn's twin girls, who were sitting with Fred and George.

"You think?" he asked her, staring at the four of them.

"I strongly feel so," she said. "I may be a Squib, but that doesn't mean I don't have any magic. Divination, you know. That doesn't require a wand."

"So you knew all along how things would turn out?"

"No, dear. Divination is not a precise science. And it was sometimes difficult for me to know whether what I saw was the truth or only my wishes. And sometimes I would try so hard to see ahead, but I never saw us together and alive as we had hoped.

"And here comes Uncle Albus, with a wedding gift for you," she giggled.

Severus, who had given up all hope of ever teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts, was then offered just that position.

He was speechless.

"Well?" Albus asked, grinning. "Don't tell me don't want it, son. I know you always have. Maybe you've changed your mind? Maybe you'd rather spend all your time with Evelyn?"

"We have an eternity to spend together," Severus insisted. "Of course I want it."

"That's settled then." Albus declared.

"Now Evelyn, I wish to give you a wedding gift also, but what? Is there anything I can give you?"

Evelyn thought for a moment and then told him, "I will let you know when I think of something."

"Fair enough," Albus agreed. "Now come along, both of you, and enjoy the party in your honor. The honeymoon can wait. As you said, you have an eternity."

The End

Unhappy Father's Day

Chapter 9 of 9

Evelyn reflects on her relationship with her father.

Chapter Nine

Evelyn drifted through the door to the Room of Requirement. It was Father's Day. She entered what appeared to be the Hogshead Inn. She sat at the empty bar and sighed. Her mind circled one thought, one that deprived her of complete happiness. Although how one could be dead and happy at the same time could be said to be a mystery. Not to Evelyn, though. Not really. And she was quite fond of the Grateful Dead, too.

Evelyn knew her greatest vice had always been her words. Thoughts snapped into her head and came right out of her mouth without a second thought, or maybe with a second thought, but too late. She had said so many things to Severus, but he was so very forgiving. It was almost scary. Especially with his reputation as a snotty smartass. But Severus loved her, and had married her, imperfect though she was. Evelyn shuddered as she imagined how things would have turned out if she had not found Severus.

The thought that plagued her, though, were the words she had said to her father. She had lived the first 5 years of her life with her mother and father, next door to Severus and his parents. One night, her mother packed up and fled while her father was out. She didn't even get to say goodbye to Sev. She was distraught, because he was the only friend she had and they had planned to get married when they grew up. Luckily, although she and her mother went to the US and lived on the reservation, or what used to be the reservation, she had eventually made her way back to England, and Severus. But first she had come to see her father.

Her father was cold, distant, uncaring. Evelyn exploded. Before crashing through the front door, nearly knocking over a startled student laden with books, she had screamed at Aberforth, "I hate you!"

He had told her he didn't care.

She didn't see him again until she was much older, and her children grown and in universities. Her mother had died and she came because it was her duty, to tell him. She had walked through the door and as she approached the bar he had looked up and said "Seven Doves?"

"No," she replied. "Evelyn. Your daughter. You do remember you have a daughter?"

He stared at her silently.

"You don't have a wife anymore, though. She's dead. In case that matters to you." She was losing control of her temper, she knew. But she didn't know how to stop it.

Suddenly a familiar looking man swept her away and out of the bar. It was her Uncle Albus, whom she vaguely remembered. He had talked to her all that day, while she cried and cried. She found herself wishing that he was her father. He was so kind, and wise.

She ended up living and working at Hogwarts, and there she once again encountered Severus Snape. Although that had not been smooth sailing at first, they were happy together now.

But she could not forget that her father had gone to his grave thinking that she hated him. She had wanted to go back to him and apologize and tell him that she loved him, but she never had. There was always the chance that the conversation would end in screaming at each other and then it would be worse than before. So she waited, undecided, and in the meantime, he had died.

Evelyn sighed again, knowing that he would not be here. She could never take it back. And she was almost late for the Father's Day celebration in the Main Hall. It would be a celebration in honor of Albus, who was like a father to her and Sev, and for Sev, as her daughters' step-father, and for George, who would become a father in a few weeks, making her and Sev grandparents. As the planning developed, it had become a sort of Father's Day for all fathers, even the ones whose children were not there, such as Sir Nicholas. Eventually Evelyn had invited everyone at the castle, and everyone they knew, so it would be a big party. All the Weasleys would be there, including Bill. He was gorgeous, he reminded her of Eric Stoltz, and she would have to avoid him or run the risk of Severus seeing something in her mind. Not that she would ever cheat on Severus. Or that she even could. Bill was alive and she was dead. But she didn't even want Sev to know that she thought Bill was attractive. It would hurt him, she knew.

And Evelyn had vowed never to hurt anyone ever again. By thinking ahead, most pain can be avoided. But the important thing now was to find a way to take back those words she had flung at her father. Why had she blown up like that? Why couldn't she have spoken reasonably to him, and calmly? She couldn't change it, but there must be a way to let him know...

Evelyn sighed once more and, with a final look around the Room of Requirement/Hogshead Inn, she departed, and drifted downstairs toward the party.

"I love you, Daddy," she whispered in the empty hallway. "I love you."