

# I Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You

by livvy6

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## And So It Is...

Chapter 1 of 1

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Serena Ferguson

It was my first year at Hogwarts. I was very scared. My father and mother had recently divorced, and I found myself a long way away from my home in Boston, Massachusetts to Cork, Ireland, from where my father hailed. I was ten when I came to Cork, and immediately, strange things started happening to me. I could make things move with my mind and jump off ledges without getting hurt. My friends thought I was so cool...like a real daredevil. The truth was I couldn't resist! The excitement of my abilities scared me and made me feel invincible at the same time. Then, my father caught me folding laundry by just waving my hands. We had a very long talk that evening.

My father was a wizard. He showed me his wand that he had tucked away, since my mother was a "Muggle" and didn't want to be a part of his world. He told me he loved her more than anything and wanted her to be happy, so he forced himself to deny what he was. I will never forget what he told me.

"Never, Serena. Never, ever forget who YOU are. Never let anyone try to force you to be an idea of what they think you should be."

The next year, I got my letter and was packed off to Hogwarts. I was petrified, but my father reassured me everything would be fine.

"You just be you, Serena," he smiled, "and all shall be well."

I sat in a compartment with some other girls who were also first years. They seemed to know all about Hogwarts and were very chatty about into which "house" they would be sorted. I stared out the window, but listened as they spoke about Gryffindor being the best, or maybe Ravenclaw because the smart ones went there. I felt so much pressure! I prayed my father would be right and I would be okay.

We went across on a boat to the castle and my breath was taken away. It was so majestic! All the other first years must have felt the same way because we all gave a collective gasp at the lovely vision of Hogwarts. At first, I was very scared of an exceptionally large man (I think he was a giant) named Hagrid, who accompanied us across the lake, but as he spoke to us, I realized he was very jolly and kind person. After we crossed and left the boats to start our trek up to the castle, I started to relax and began to enjoy the scenery around me when I noticed Hagrid staring at me oddly. As my eyes met his, he tilted his head to one side and continued to stare strangely at me. The other students noticed and parted so I could move forward. I walked up to him and took a deep breath.

"Sir, have I done anything wrong?" I whispered.

He shook his head like he was dumbfounded and then blinked his eyes, as if to clear his head, and then led us into the castle.

We were greeted by Professor McGonagall, who reacted just as strangely as Hagrid had to my appearance. She was talking to us all about the various houses and basic rules when she paused, as if something were stuck in her throat. Her eyes narrowed and her mouth quivered. She shook herself and went back to her speech all the while glancing back at me several times.

The Sorting Ceremony was just terrible! I noticed many of the teachers at the Head Table had the same reactions as Hagrid and Professor McGonagall when I came forward. I thought, *I must not be here; a terrible mistake must have been made. This school must only be for kids who have two magical parents* Suddenly, my name was called.

"Serena Ferguson."

*Oh God!* I thought, *I am the first one!* As I walked up the stairs to the podium, I looked up pleadingly at Professor McGonagall. She blinked several times, and I thought I saw tears.

"Please sit on the stool, dear," she whispered.

The hat was heavy on my head. Suddenly, it began to talk to me! "Well, let's see here. You are a very nervous one, aren't you? But your mind is very determined. You don't seem to have a preference about which house you go to, do you?"

"I just want to be the best witch I can be and make my father proud!" I whispered.

"Yes, there is a lot of ambition and drive in you... better be SLYTHERIN!"

Great clapping erupted throughout the hall, and I was motioned by a large group of people seated at a far table next to a wall. As I walked past the podium, the gasps and whispers amongst the professors grew louder with each step I took. I heard one comment I'm sure I wasn't supposed to hear.

"Professor Snape won't like this, not one bit."

I turned around and stared at the teacher. As I faced her, puzzled, she gave me a sad smile. I slowly turned away and joined my house, sad that already one professor at Hogwarts would not like me, even though I had never met him.

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The next two days passed with more mystery surrounding me, as the stares and whispers abounded. No one wanted to really talk to me in my own house once they discovered my mother was a Muggle. I still had not met the mysterious Professor Snape, who, supposedly, was going to hate me on the spot. Then came the day I had Potions. I sat in the back, not wanting to draw any attention to myself since I had found out this was Snape's class. I had been unable to eat breakfast beforehand and was sick twice before coming to class. If he was going to be cruel to me, I decided, I was going home!

He stormed in with billowing, black robes. He was tall, thin, and had matted, black hair parted down the middle of a very evil-tempered face. I couldn't see any finer distinctions since I sat so far back, but I could still gather he wasn't a "happy" person. Hopefully, I would just fade into the background and not be noticed.

"I apologize to those of you who are first year Slytherins," he began in a deep, muffled voice. "I will be in the common room tonight to officially welcome you."

*Well!* I thought to myself, *he seems all right: business-like, straightforward. I can handle this!*

He began roll call, intermittently pausing throughout to give decidedly barbed comments to those who were not Slytherins. He also gave grave commands of "dos and don'ts." I made sure I took notes. Then, as I was writing, I heard him ring out my name. "Serena Ferguson!"

"Here, sir," I called out.

He sighed impatiently. "Speak up, you silly girl! And stand up if you are going to hide away in the rear!"

I stood up and looked at him in the face. His angry look melted, and his eyes grew huge and soft. His face was white as a ghost. The other students shifted their eyes back and forth between us. It seemed a lifetime went by before I finally sat down.

"Class is dismissed," he whispered without taking his eyes off me. No one moved. It seemed unprecedented for a Potions class to be cancelled so abruptly. Professor Snape finally removed his gaze from me only to sweep his eyes around the room incredulously.

"GET OUT!" he roared.

No one needed telling twice. All of a sudden, I was very popular. Slaps on the back and whispers of "thanks" and "good show" blew past me as I sat frozen in my seat. I was now alone with Professor Snape, who by now had sunk back into his chair and was staring onto his desk. I gathered my bag slowly and softly walked to his desk while plucking up the courage to speak.

"Sir," I began, "have I offended you?"

His eyes snapped up to meet mine, and he fixed on my face, hair, and eyes. There was so much pain etched on his face, I couldn't understand how I could have affected him so.

"Whatever I've done, I'm sorry," I whispered.

He cleared his throat and finally spoke. "No, child, you have done nothing wrong," he muttered weakly. "You are in my house, is that correct?"

"Yes, sir," I said happily.

"Serena Ferguson," he said with determination.

"Yes."

"You may leave," he said firmly as his eyes bored into mine. I turned and slowly walked out, every couple of steps glancing over my shoulder, only to find his gaze still fixed on me.

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I slowly walked to my next class. Professor McGonagall saw me and told me to follow her. I went into her office and she sat me down, appraising me sharply. Finally, she spoke with deliberation.

"Miss Ferguson, I heard you just had your first Potions class, correct?"

I nodded.

"I want to show you a picture," she said as she pulled out a photo album. I saw amazing things in the album. Pictures that were animated! People moving and alive! I laughed with delight.

"You have never seen wizard photos before?" she inquired.

"No!" I exclaimed. "My mother was a Muggle, and my father hid his magic from me. I have only known a year that he is a wizard. This is amazing!" I blurted, unable to rip my eyes from all the wonderful sights.

"Well," she said heavily with sadness, "here is a picture I want you to see."

She took out a photo of a young girl with laughing, green eyes. Her red hair was parted differently from mine...but it was ME! I gasped in surprise.

"Who is she?" I breathed.

"Lily Evans," she said in a strained voice. "Well, at least then, she was. Later, she married a James Potter. This was taken her first year here, at Hogwarts."

"Lily Potter," I murmured.

McGonagall looked at me with such sadness. Then, with much difficulty, asked me about Potions class.

"It was so strange," I mused, "dismissing class, and then when I went to talk to him, he..." I stopped short.

"He what, Miss Ferguson?" she prompted.

"It was like he was in pain. But, he told me I didn't do anything wrong."

"And of course not!" she said, smiling. "Now, I'm going to give you some advice. Many people will probably whisper, or even mention to you how much you look like Lily. Just pay it no mind. Be a good student. Professor Snape is the Head of your house. Obey his house rules and mind your studies! It's all going to be fine," she ended with assurance in her voice.

I turned to leave. I went to turn the door handle and felt compelled to ask, "Professor, did Professor Snape know Lily?"

"Yes," she said firmly.

"Professor, what happened to her? Does she live around here?"

"No," she answered thickly. "Lily Potter is dead."

I opened the door to leave, but I couldn't resist another question that was burning inside me. "Professor, how close were they?"

"Goodbye, Miss Ferguson," she said with finality in her voice.

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As McGonagall advised, I worked hard at my studies, and the next two years flew by. It was true, just as McGonagall predicted, people would stop me in Diagon Alley and exclaim how much I resembled the late Lily Potter, or I would overhear hushed conversations from teachers in the halls about my likeness to Lily.

As I grew older, I asked Professor McGonagall for more pictures of her, to see if I still resembled her. I saw I grew to look more like her than ever. I also grew to be very popular with the boys. My red hair and green eyes were something that the other sex found irresistible. Many boys would grin and wink at me in the halls. I was flattered by the attention, but I never flirted back.

Once, a fourth year Ravenclaw boy tried unsuccessfully to court me. He would come around to ask me if he could carry my books or if I would go watch Quidditch games with him. I was a third year then and found myself agreeing to accompany him to Hogsmeade for my very first weekend. It was all very innocent, nothing happened, except he tried to hold my hand, which I did for a minute and withdrew, feeling strange. Later that evening, I was studying in the library alone when Snape descended upon me from nowhere.

"I see you enjoyed your first visit to Hogsmeade," he sneered coldly.

My face snapped up from my book. He scared me with his sudden presence. I was also taken aback. I did not recall seeing him at Hogsmeade. "Yes, I had a pleasant time," I agreed. I turned my eyes back onto my work. His penetrating glare was too fearsome to handle. I could feel his eyes boring onto my head. I glanced up halfway, only to see his hands clenched at his side in tight, white fists.

"It would behoove you," he began silkily, "as a Slytherin, to not become 'attached' to those outside your house," he finished reprovingly.

"Slytherin boys don't like me," I confided, but with my eyes refusing to meet his.

"All the better for you, Serena," he concluded decidedly. "You have a future. Don't waste your time and energies on the machinations of fickle youths."

He turned slowly from me and I watched him leave. The blackness of his mood left me cold and sick. I felt trapped and ashamed, although I did not know why. My pulse was racing and my heart felt caught in my throat. My breathing was shallow. I looked around me. The library was empty. No one had witnessed our conversation. It took me a long time to calm down.

At the time, I was unable to interpret the anger that flashed in my professor's eyes. I was only thirteen and I greatly feared him. His attention to my Potions work was obsessive in detail, and although I was a fellow Slytherin, he dealt harshly with me when I made mistakes and insisted on my remaining after hours to improve myself. All it took was an icy stare or a sharp comment and I would seize up inside and instantly obey.

After our conversation in the library, I made the decision then and there to consistently rebuff the affections of the young men that came my way, for I found that Professor Snape was constantly in my vicinity, his black eyes never far away. I lied to myself that he had grander plans for my education, and romantic entanglements would only distract me. But in all honesty, a secret corner of my mind held the truth; that I was terrified of what he might do if he saw me with another boy. By now I had heard of his reputation. He had been a Death Eater. "Once a Death Eater, always a Death Eater," the saying went. Once I learnt of his violent past, I knew he could kill.

I was very confused by his attentions. He never acted untowardly, and except for that one time in the library, he never ever spoke to me outside of Potions. For that matter, he never came into close contact with me. I noticed he deliberately keep a great amount of physical distance from me when I came for my extra lessons. I was an "acceptable" student, but he was determined for me to be excellent. He gave me orders from behind his desk, and when he came to inspect my work, I was ordered to take five steps back from my cauldron. I never disobeyed his commands. As I grew older, I became more concerned of his actions. He wouldn't take his eyes off me for a second while I was in his realm. His insistence on extra Potions classes to help me perfect my technique seemed excessive, since he would never think of handing out such a favor to anyone else.

There was a drive in him to mold something in me that I doubt even existed. It was then I began my own "investigation," quite innocently, but with determination, about Lily's past. Whenever a person would stop me to exclaim how much I resembled "dear Lily Potter!", I would listen with rapt attention and inquire how that person knew Lily,

and what kind of person she had been. I learnt she was a very kind and grace-filled woman, who was extremely witty, daring, and popular. I also discovered she was a natural at Potions. When I discovered that bit of information, I remember closing my eyes and my heart fell. The veil was now removed from my eyes. My innocence towards the motivations of my professor was over.

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As I approached my fifth Year, or O.W.L.S. year, as it was known, the time had come for me to decide on a career. When I came into Snape's office for my career consultation, I found it empty. I saw the door to his private room ajar. The fire was burning and he was standing, staring into it. I could see the tears rolling down his face as he gulped down what looked like firewhisky.

I cleared my throat. He turned sharply and dropped his glass. He turned just as quickly away and mumbled, "*Reparo.*"

"I'm sorry, sir," I apologized. "I thought we had a meeting."

"No, I apologize, Miss Ferguson," he replied darkly. He put on his teacher's robe and as I turned to follow him out, I saw a picture by his sofa chair. It was a young Snape with a redheaded girl. They were snuggling close and he was looking at her with obvious love as she laughed into the camera. It was me! A young Snape and a girl who looked exactly like me, at my age. Snape turned, noticing I wasn't behind him. He froze in fear as I looked up into his eyes, the picture limp in my hands. I could feel the tears well up inside my eyes, and then I knew. I knew without a word spoken what Lily had meant to him and what I had ignorantly surmised as a simple, one-sided crush was a relationship that had been very real to both of them. It was obvious from the embrace they shared she did not mind his closeness. They had cared deeply for one another...once. I finally realized what my very presence was doing to him.

His voice shook me out of my fog.

"Put that down! It's MINE!" he howled.

I jumped and obeyed, but I couldn't leave it at that. I strode over to him and looked into his eyes the way he always looked into mine. Then, there were tears. He broke down and grasped my arms crying, holding on to me tightly, as if he might collapse at any moment. At first, I supported him, trying to process the feral pain in front of me. It was too much pain for me to witness and not be affected. I thought of the picture, how his hands were wrapped around her, his eyes wide with desire, and her body reacting, leaning into his. I didn't know what to do...I felt his loss so deeply. My eyes welled up, and I started to weep with him and my hands reciprocated involuntarily, desperately holding onto his arms for strength. We never embraced, just hands on arms, and eyes crying in unison. Then, he put his hands on my face and drank in my red-rimmed eyes.

"Promise me," he whispered, "promise you will never die."

"I promise," I whispered.

I left him then. As the days passed, it appeared a minute did not go by that I was not in his vision. I could feel him, always there, watching over me, protecting me. I was grateful, at least, for his protection, for Slytherin boys thought of me as just a filthy, half-blood American, unworthy of my placement. One evening, just before curfew, I was walking in a lonely corridor when four Slytherin boys descended from nowhere. All of a sudden, my clothes were being ripped off my body, and my long hair was cut. I tried to give as well as I was given. I managed to hex two of them, but four were too much.

Then, out of the darkness, red lights were flashing, and the boys ran for their lives. I was lying spread-eagle on the floor, naked, with my legs spread grotesquely with bloody scratches on the insides of my thighs where they tried furiously to pry them open. Professor Snape said nothing. With his eyes fixated on mine, he threw his cloak to cover my nakedness and scooped me up to carry me back to his rooms. I lost consciousness in his arms.

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While unconscious, he healed me, restored my hair, and repaired my clothes. When I came to, he gave me a Dreamless Sleeping Potion. I slept in his bed that night. When I woke the next morning, I found him sleeping in his armchair by the bed. As I stirred, his eyes snapped open and bored into mine.

"Thank God I came in time," he whispered.

"In time?" I asked groggily.

"You were not...taken..." he whispered in embarrassment.

"Why do you care so much?" I asked softly.

He looked deeply into my eyes, and I saw the familiar tears well up in his black ones. "I don't know," he answered thickly. Then, he lowered his face into his hands and sobbed.

His sobbing frightened me with its intensity. It was in such contrast to the hard and angry man I knew. Now, this was the second time he had exposed his vulnerable side with me. I rose up from the bed with his cloak still covering my nakedness, gathered my clothes, and changed in his bathroom. Upon examination, my clothes never looked better. He had taken great care in restoring them. I then inspected my body, and not a scratch could be seen. Even my hair was as long as ever. I childishly stuck my tongue out at my reflection. I really didn't like red hair! I remembered my thighs and saw my skin was milky white and smooth. Nothing hurt. My gratitude overwhelmed me.

I emerged from the bathroom to find breakfast waiting for me. He watched me eat silently, sitting across me on the other side of the room. He never took his eyes off me. I didn't know what to say. After I finished eating, he told me to go back to my room and rest.

"Do not fear, child," he said reassuringly. "I promise you, NO ONE will molest you ever again."

I believed him wholeheartedly. The next days were abuzz with gossip about the four Slytherin boys who had been expelled, but not before, as some whispered, being whipped within an inch of their lives by Professor Snape. I was detested in my house now, but no one reproached me or spoke to me without the utmost civility. It was as if an unspoken threat hung over the air by Professor Snape: hurt Serena Ferguson and suffer my wrath.

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During my sixth year, I decided I wanted to work for Gringotts as a banker. I loved Arithmancy, and being a banker seemed to be a logical career choice for me. But, Professor Snape was decidedly against it. We had grown closer during this year. At his request, I apprenticed for him and helped with his first years' Potions classes. I still had not forgotten what I learned about Lily's natural talents at Potions, but I was eager to be near him in order to remind him at every turn that I was not Lily. I was Serena. We spent more evenings together talking about books and his various interests than just exclusively on Potions work. I enjoyed being with him. He was a very interesting and intelligent man. I loved listening to his opinions and ideas. He really liked Quidditch, which I hated, but I noticed early on it really didn't seem to register with him what I liked or didn't like. He also had definite opinions on particular aspects of my personality as well. He kept on at me about being more "assertive" and "self-assured" when it came to my dealings with other Slytherins. Though, ironically, when it came to my dealings with the "Head Slytherin," he quickly resorted to anger if I challenged him. So, when I stood my ground about becoming a banker, I knew he would react badly.

"What about being a Potions mistress?" he asked.

"Professor," I laughed. "You've been so wonderful in helping me...but I am terrible at Potions."

"You are not terrible!" he growled. "You must apply yourself more!"

"But, Professor, it isn't my passion," I said quietly. "It's your passion...not mine."

"You could try," he whispered sheepishly. Then, his eyes brightened once more, and he spoke with passion. "We could work together, just you and me," he said eagerly, never taking his eyes off mine. "Wouldn't that be nice, teaching classes together, living in the dungeons?" His eyes started to glaze over. "We could be so happy together!" he exclaimed as his hands grabbed mine. I saw the hunger and desire in his eyes that a man should have for the woman he loved, but alas, it wasn't me!

I searched his eyes for any sense of reality, but he was far away in his past...his world of "might-have-been." I dared to ask, "That's what you would have wanted, right?" My eyes took in the room around me. "You would have wanted to bring her in here." I started to say.

"STOP!" he shrieked as he jumped up and moved away from me. He turned his back on me and refused to speak to me anymore. I could hear his ragged breathing and saw his back clench. I knew he was furiously angry with me, but the time had passed when his icy demeanor and guttural roars could make me back down from him. I knew he was deeply unstable, but I was bound to him somehow, and I couldn't shake him. Honestly, I didn't want to.

I was sixteen now, almost seventeen, and was no longer confused about the reality of my situation. I was becoming an adult, and my protector was now eager to claim me for more. I knew he wanted to be my lover, and the distance he had once forced upon me when I was younger was no longer needed, now that I was becoming a woman. Ever so slowly, over time, the physical space between us began to dissolve. He would now work next to me as I created potions. I would feel his robes brushing against mine; sometimes, his arms would come around from behind me as he added essential ingredients. I would feel the strength of his body from behind, lingering, as he would gently sniff my hair. It was apparent he was beginning my seduction. He wanted me for himself, but not really me, myself, just what my husk represented: my hair, my skin, my eyes...

One evening, we sat together on his sofa in front of the fire in his sitting room. We had been talking about future potions he had wanted us to create together. I felt him turn to face me, his hand touching my hair ever so gently. All of a sudden, strange longings stirred inside me. I wanted to shed my clothes. My breasts felt too full and heavy for my bra, and I wanted to rip it off, and then, I felt tingling between my legs. I noticed my quickening breath. It was all so very wrong!

I stood up and spoke to him firmly, "I'm not Lily."

He jumped up. "I know that!" he spat at me.

"Do you?" I asked incredulously.

He looked away, and I raised my hand to him and forced his face to mine. "I'm Serena! Serena! I hate Potions, and I'm not witty, self-assured, or even popular!" I felt anger and pity for him at the same. I recalled what McGonagall told me, that Lily had married another boy, James Potter. He had lost her in more ways than death; he lost the love he craved so badly. I couldn't wrap my mind around his loss and the time he spent in silent devotion to her memory. All I knew was that I would not be her substitute! I reached over and grabbed his picture from the table and forced it in his face. "I'm not this girl!" I screamed. "She's dead!"

He sank down into the sofa. He looked so broken and defeated. I dropped to my knees, grabbed him to me, and held him tight. "I'm sorry!" I whispered in his ear. I felt horrible talking to him like that after all he had done to save me from those boys. A part of me wished I could reincarnate myself into Lily, be everything he wanted, and stop his pain, but that desire was only his irrational obsession that he had translated onto me. So, I turned and fled the dungeons in order to regain my sanity.

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My seventh and final year came. I refused his offer to apprentice in Potions and refused to meet him after classes for Potions work. I desperately needed space from him. I was of Legal Wizarding Age now and neck deep into my preparations to leave Hogwarts to work abroad in Russia for Gringotts. I no longer had any classes with him, but it did not stop me from knowing that whenever I looked up from my seat at the Great Hall, or walked along the corridor towards my common room, somewhere a pair of black eyes would be upon me.

I needed to get as far away from Snape as I could. It wasn't that I didn't care for him deeply; it was that our connection was so very unhealthy for both of us. I knew now that he was, and had been, *completely obsessed* with me since we first met. His eyes, I noticed, were now less concerned with protection and instead were more hungry and full of passion every time I met his stare.

I would be lying if I said there was no part of me that wanted him to be my lover, that I did not revel in the way his eyes devoured the movements of my legs, waist, and breasts. Ever since that time he had touched my hair the year before and I had felt what I realized now were the first stirrings of sexual desire, I had began my own private exploration of my body and learned how to please myself. I imagined he and I together in his sitting room, myself naked before him and being touched. I fantasized about being underneath him with his black robes enveloping me as he kissed every inch of my flesh. It was an intoxicating feeling to be so desired by such a dominating and formidable man. But when my emotions and fantasies grew too urgent, and I would feel a compulsion to throw my senses away and run down into the dungeons where I knew he wanted me to be, in his bed, I would remember why he looked upon me in the first place: it wasn't me.

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After the graduation ceremony ended and the party was underway, I noticed Snape was absent. His absence frightened me, since I had grown to depend on his presence. I was so connected to him emotionally that I could not bear to not have him near me. I made my way down to the dungeons and found him there before the fire. I felt I owed him so much; at least, my gratitude or a "thank you," for being my protector.

"Why aren't you at the party?" I asked.

"What for?" he mumbled miserably.

"Maybe to say goodbye to me?" I offered.

"Maybe I don't want to say goodbye," he replied darkly.

I turned to leave. There was nothing more I could think to say.

"Serena," he said softly. "I killed Lily."

I turned in disbelief, my mouth gaping open. I always knew from his Death Eater days he probably had killed, but this?

He started to tell me the long, twisted, heart-breaking story of Lily. His Lily. As he emptied himself to me, I was silent as a priest, as if hearing the confession of a dying man. I stared at the floor throughout it all. I felt a desire to give him some sort of absolution, to tell him he was wrong, but I knew it was useless. He needed to punish himself. Somehow, I knew words would be lost on him; this punishment was to be a life-long trial.

Then, just as I thought I wouldn't hear any more revelations, I heard his voice, deep and troubled, say, "You're right. You were terrible at Potions. I shouldn't have forced you to be what you weren't."

I lifted my eyes to the ceiling and closed them, as if in prayer. *Thank you, God*, I thought, *perhaps he has some semblance of sanity left in him!* I fixed my eyes, wide and eager on him.

"And who am I, Severus?" I called to him.

At the mention of his given name coming from my lips...for the first time, he looked at me, shocked. He stood up and walked slowly to me, halfway, "You are Serena. You hate Quidditch, Potions, and love Arithmancy, and want to be a banker. You hated Slytherin House and wished you could have been a Hufflepuff," he blurted out in one

breath. Then he smiled slightly, wagging a finger at me, saying, "And I know you secretly hate your red hair."

I put my hands to my mouth and giggled, for he was right. Familiar tears welled up in my eyes. I walked over and embraced him. He placed his hands on my cheeks and looked longingly into my eyes. He leaned in and kissed me slowly and seductively. "You know," he whispered, as he grazed my lips with his. "You have this mark here." He kissed a tiny mole on my left cheek. "Right here on your cheek, is unique," he whispered into my ear. As he gazed upon me, I looked into eyes that were so full of regret, love, and desire. I gave myself to him, allowing him to kiss me with all the passion he held inside him. I was terrified; I had never kissed anyone before. I knew he would always love Lily, but at least I felt he knew *me* now, he knew *my* difference. I allowed him to take over and kiss me with fervent, impatient desire. I felt myself melt into him as his tongue brushed my own. I knew I had to regain my senses. He was too urgent, holding me flush against his hardness. I finally pulled away, knowing if we continued we would not be able to stop.

"Not now," I breathed. "But, I will come to you," I promised.

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I sat in front of my mirror in my room. The other girls long since asleep. I took off all my clothes and brushed out my hair. My green eyes glowed in the candlelight with fervent purpose. I knew he would be prowling again in the halls.

I was prepared now, ready to meet him. I walked naked though the halls, silently passing the slumbering portraits, making my way to the dungeons. I held up my lamp to guide my path around the twisting stairs to where he was. I was chilled by the coolness of the air with each step I took. My heart raced with anticipation as I reached the bottom step. Then there he was, turning the corner, and he saw me standing several feet away. My lamp, held up as it was, showed him all my nakedness. He slowly walked to me without a word. There was only a breath's distance between us.

We stood looking into each other's eyes. I leaned in and kissed him on the lips. He flinched, apparently unable to process the sight before him, but I was determined not to let him be. The time had come to end the obsession, once and for all, for both our sakes. I took his hand and led him to his rooms. I laid the lamp down on the bedside table and began to slowly undress him. I kissed and licked his lips softly and lusciously, never taking my eyes off of his for a second. He looked as if he were in a trance and gave himself over to my power. I lowered him onto his bed. I straddled his body and let my hair and eyes hover over him. My breasts grazed his chest as I kissed his face, making my way slowly down every inch of his body. All the while he could not speak, the racking sobs that shook from him left him incapable of speech. I rose up over him and lowered myself onto his willing flesh, ignoring the pain it caused. I slowly moved over him, and he moved in me. I never took my eyes off of his. He reached up and ran his hands through my hair and wound his way down my breasts. As my desire mounted, our hands grasped together, creating a stabilizing arc as I rose and descended over him, unashamed to show him my uncontrolled passion. He made love to me, listening to the sound of my moaning pleasure. I made love to him, listening to the sound of his bitter cries.

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The next day, I stood alone in the quad, taking my last look around. I was packed up and ready to leave. I felt a presence by my shoulder. I knew who it was. I didn't turn, just listened.

"Serena," he whispered. "This is for you. Thank you."

A velvet box was placed in my hands. I opened it, and there was a diamond necklace with a large, heavy, white gold locket with an "S" engraved on it. I opened the locket and saw a picture of Severus on one side smiling slightly and a picture of me laughing on the other. I closed my eyes and turned to say thank you, but he was gone. I swiftly turned around to find him, but I was alone. I slowly took my trunk and left.

Up in the tower, a black-clad figure looked down at the red-headed woman walking away from him. He knew he would never see her again. The tears flowed from his eyes, and a hand was placed on his shoulder.

"Severus, you did right to let her go."

"I know, Albus, I know. Besides, she was never Lily in the first place, was she?"

"A sort of a second chance, though?" mused Dumbledore.

"At least this time, I didn't destroy her," Snape said longingly. "By the way, did I ever thank you for sending me away on that fool's errand so I would miss her Sorting?"

"Don't mention it, my boy," Dumbledore said, smiling grimly while patting the young man on the back. "It was the least I could do, understanding the circumstances as I do."

*I will miss Serena's eyes, Snape thought secretly, just as I will always miss Lily's.* And with that emotion tucked safely away, deep in his heart, Snape sighed, content that he could resume his old, solitary life again.

He turned to walk away, and Dumbledore stopped him. "Just so you know, Severus, Harry Potter starts Hogwarts this fall."

Snape took a deep breath and carried on.