

Collide

by livvy6

How can you live when your whole life has been a lie? A Death Eater's daughter needs answers about her dead father, and Severus Snape is the only one who can help her. Unfortunately, he wants nothing to do with dredging up his past. Inspired by "Collide" by Howie Day.

The Dawn is Breaking...

Chapter 1 of 9

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Amanda Dangler

A/N: Warning! This chapter contains very sensitive topics that may be disturbing. This is not to glorify violence; it is actually quite sad. I hope you will review and let me know your thoughts.

"Papa?" Amanda called out. Her voice rang into the grand foyer. The house was dark, and she was concerned.

Amanda had spent the last two weeks waiting for an owl to arrive from her father. Any news would be welcome, but letter after letter she sent gave no reply. She decided it was time to take matters into her own hands. When Saturday came she Apparated to her family's chateau in Bordeaux to find out what had happened to her father.

She walked through the darkened hallways and found him slumped in an armchair in his office. Normally, she was not allowed to set one toe in this room, but she was too concerned to care if he yelled at her.

She walked around the oversized chair to face him. He reeked of alcohol; a bottle of scotch was still attached to his right hand. "Papa?" she called, louder this time.

He opened his glassy eyes and smiled at his only child. "Amanda," he said. "Why are you here? How did you know I wanted to see you?"

She was extremely worried now. She had never seen her father like this. Usually, when he got drunk, he would shut himself up in this office and bar the door from anyone entering. Sometimes there were crashes, sometimes yelling and ranting, but then the next day he would be himself: restrained, temperate, and responsible.

This man was NOT her father.

"Sit down," he ordered.

She sat across from him. "Papa, I was worried, you haven't returned my Owls. I've written...What's wrong?"

"It's over, all over. Remember I told you, when you were a little girl...What was it?" He sounded confused.

"You told me when in doubt, raise the walls of Occlumency."

"That's right. Never can trust. Never. Thought it was done. All this rubbish." He was rambling now as he stood up to walk towards his desk.

Amanda jumped up to help her father. He was stumbling in his drunken state. "Papa, what's happened?" She grabbed his left arm, and he screamed, throwing her from him.

His voice cracked and he cradled his arm.

"Oh, sweetheart, I'm sorry. I'm just in pain. The Mark is burning," he mumbled.

Amanda didn't understand what her father was saying. "Papa, please, let me help you...let me get a Sobering-Up Potion for you." She went to take her father by the shoulders to lead him back to the chair when he suddenly, violently, backhanded her. She flew at least four feet. The left side of her face felt like it had exploded. Then her father was over her, grabbing her by the arm and leaning over her screaming and cursing.

"I have coddled you for far too goddamn long. You are now 17...a woman. I can't protect you anymore. Do you hear me? Answer me!"

She nodded dumbly. He then dragged her up from the floor and roughly deposited her into the chair across from his.

"Now, you are going to listen very carefully." His eyes were weary; they were opening and closing. She wondered if he were about to pass out. "I can't protect you. If it comes to the worst, you'll have to go back to your mother. You'll have to go to that fucking school; that stupid bitch would make you do it too. I wish...Bugger!" He threw his hands up in the air.

"Papa," she said softly, "please, the blood is running down my face. I'm hurt."

He sneered. "Good. It's time for you to learn the realities of life. You won't heal that wound, girl. You keep the scar. It'll help to remind you. Now, if it all comes down to the worst, if I can't be around anymore, you'll need to remember everything I have taught you: your Occlumency, Legilimency, all the Dark Arts, and Defense. You have to protect yourself. I want you to remember a name. If you ever come across him, you hex first and ask questions later. Because he'll...he'll..."

Then he passed out. Amanda waited for a minute and he began to snore. She tiptoed to her room and Owled Madam Maxine to let her know she'd be at home for the remainder of the weekend. Damn the N.E.W.T.'s, her father was in trouble.

She went to bed and slept roughly. It had taken her awhile before she could get the bleeding to stop. She was no mediwitch, and her father had forbidden her to heal it. She decided to use magic to close the wound, but there would be a permanent scar around her left eye. *Why is this happening?*

It must have been three in the morning when she was unceremoniously ripped from her bed by her father and was shaken awake.

"I didn't dismiss you, Amanda!" he roared. He threw her out of her room and then pushed her back downstairs to his office. She was paralyzed with fear. Her father, always doting, always loving, had never treated her so cruelly. She shivered in her nightgown as she sat back down the seat she had occupied earlier. She assessed her father's sobriety. He was still drunk, but more lucid...and angry.

"Amanda, I meant what I said," he lectured as he paced up and down in front of her. You have only one more semester left of school, and then you will be free to go live your life. I can't protect you anymore. If I were to come up missing one day, or turn up dead, don't think I did it to hurt you. I love you...You're my little girl. But life has been too accommodating...too soft. I tried to prepare you, but now you must have some practical lessons in the real world."

"Papa, what's wrong, why are you talking like this?" she demanded.

"I can't *tell* you!" he yelled. "There are things in my past that you never knew about. Things I never wanted you to even hear of! But now, you are a grown woman, and I can't hide it from you."

"You said you wanted me to remember a name," she recalled.

He nodded as he slammed back another drink. "I haven't seen him in 18 years. But, I swear to you, he hasn't forgotten. He is a real bastard for remembering and for holding grudges. I'm sure time hasn't softened him. His name is Severus Snape. Remember that name, girl. Let that scar help you to sink it in. Because if he finds you, he'll do far worse to you than what I did tonight."

"I don't understand, Papa. Why are you saying these things?" Amanda was so confused. What was happening to her father? He truly sounded afraid, and her father was never afraid.

He grabbed her arm and went over behind his desk. He pulled back a panel and took out a Pensieve.

"I need you to see this, Amanda. I hope you can forgive me one day." He pushed her in, and she landed on the floor of a dungeon. There were men around in masks and black robes. It was so eerie and dark, as if some scared ceremony was taking place. She heard scuffling, and a man with long blond hair that peeked out of his hood walked in with a gangly youth. He was blindfolded. He had shoulder length black hair and was pale. He must have been around her age, maybe a year or two older. The blond man stripped off his robe, and he was naked. Amanda gasped in shock. Another man from the group came forward and took off his hood and mask.

It was her father! Much younger and handsome, but her father! She watched as he approached the young man and took off his blindfold. He was very pale with black eyes and a large nose. He was so thin that he looked sickly.

She watched her father torture the young man without provocation. "*CRUCIO*," he screamed. Amanda watched the boy twitch and scream in pain. He started to cry.

Her father bent over the young man and grabbed a handful of his black hair. "*Snivellus*," he taunted. "Isn't that what they call you at that pathetic school? You cry for nothing! You have not yet begun to experience pain," he whispered angrily.

Amanda watched in horror as her father unbuttoned his trousers and dragged the young man underneath him. He cried and fought, but he couldn't get away from her father. Amanda screamed and cried as she watched her father brutally rape the young man. The other men around them were chanting and whistling their approval. She tried covering her ears, but his screams and pleas wouldn't go away...and his face, oh, God...his face was so full of pain and fear!

It seemed to go on forever. Finally, the young man ceased to fight. His eyes just fixed into nothingness as his body was abused. Soon, Amanda could only hear the grunts and moans of her father and the slapping of flesh on flesh. After it was over, her father rose, grabbed a towel, and wiped the blood off him, and threw it at the bloody mess of the young man, who was quiet and dazed on the floor.

"Congratulations, Severus Snape, you are now officially a Death Eater."

Amanda was whipped back from that scene to another, where a young girl was bound, naked, and gagged, strapped to a bed. She saw her father and the same young

man, not older, physically, but darker in purpose and intent. Her father was whispering into his ear as the young man watched the girl wrestle in vain to free herself.

"Do it, Severus; prove to the Dark Lord that Muggles and Mudbloods are filth. Do it and kill her!"

Amanda watched Severus looking at the poor girl with a mixture of revulsion and lust as he raked his eyes over her naked flesh. He finally licked his lips and threw himself on the unfortunate girl. He was cursing and shaking like a leaf as he forced himself on her.

Amanda watched in renewed horror as the young man, Severus, viciously raped the poor girl. Amanda started to vomit. Her father was watching the scene, giving instructions on how to inflict more pain, but as soon as the words left his mouth, it was over. The entire rape may have only lasted a minute. When Severus lifted himself off the crying girl, her father clamped him on the back.

"Well, it was your first time, after all. Young men don't last very long in the beginning. She was a juicy piece, wasn't she?"

Severus stood watching the girl as she cried through her gag. He looked at her bloody core and then the blood on his member. He looked so sad, at first, but then fixed his face to show no emotion. "Do I kill her now?" he asked Amanda's father.

"By all means, let's see how you perform the Killing Curse."

"*AVADA KEDAVRA!*" he screamed. Amanda watched as the green light hit this girl's torso. She was dead.

Amanda fell out of the Pensieve and saw her father: older, sadder, and fearful. She picked herself up off the floor and was repulsed at the sight of him.

"Why did you make me see that? I hate you!" she spat out at him. Her eyes were full of tears. She felt beaten and whipped. She felt manipulated somehow, but couldn't place her finger on the reasoning.

"I left the life. I met your mother and never looked back. But then your mother found out about my past and could not forgive me. The Dark Lord was dead, so I had heard, and I tried to forget...I couldn't. Now, the bastard is back, and I've been informed he knows where I am. Very soon, I will be dead, and you will have to return to England."

"And that's where Severus Snape is?" She figured.

He raised his glass to her in admiration. "Here, take this." He poured another glass of scotch for her.

"Drink it," he ordered.

She sipped it and coughed at the burning taste. She kept on sipping it.

"You never had me hit you before this night. But now I have, and it shocked you. Therein lies the lesson: everyone will have to take a beating once in a while; sometimes by the very ones they trust the most. Never let your guard down. And you remember that name: *Severus Snape*. You ever come across him, don't *ever* let him know you are my daughter, because if you do, he will do to you what he did to that poor Muggle girl, and probably worse! He is one of the most vicious and cunning Death Eaters to have ever served the Dark Lord. I know! I've been keeping tabs on him these many years."

Amanda knew about the Dark Lord, and she knew about Death Eaters, but of this Severus Snape, she knew nothing. She looked straight at her father with such loathing. "I hate you," she said bitterly. She sat in her chair and nursed her drink.

She was in a daze, now that the alcohol had hit her. Suddenly, she heard a strangled cry and whipped around. Her father had slashed his throat. He collapsed onto the ground.

"Oh my God! Papa!" she screamed.

"Mitsy, Cory, come here!" she yelled. Two house-elves appeared by her side. She was cradling the head of her father, her nightgown and hands soaked in his blood. "Get towels and hurry!"

They brought back the towels, but it was no use. Her father was gone. Amanda sat for the longest time, crying over her father's dead body, covered in his blood...

Out of the Doubt that Fills My Mind...Part I

Chapter 2 of 9

Amanda's worst fears becomes a reality. An explosive first meeting with Snape takes place in Dumbledore's Office.

A/N: Please Review! It's better than chocolate! Thanks again to my beta, ImOnMedication.

It was January, and it was fucking cold. How could her mother send her away to this godforsaken climate! She'd been happier in France, but no, ever the Anglophile, Madame Peale-Dangler insisted her daughter get a proper education at a proper British school, even if it were only for one semester.

Amanda Dangler had changed a great deal in a very short period of time. Her father's suicide in November had unearthed a great deal more personal information than she had ever wanted to know about him. She learned her father had not forgone the old ways of the dark arts. The man she had loved and trusted was a liar. More than a liar: a vicious, animal that loved to torture and kill. The rooms that had been kept off-limits during her childhood were now hers to discover. Her discoveries were the stuff of nightmares. The unknown adult face of the man, Severus Snape, haunted her dreams. In her dreams at night, she envisioned a horrible, evil, bloodthirsty monster, and she could only hope she would never have to face him. But at the same time, in the daytime, she thought long and often about the boy, Severus Snape, and felt so sorry for him. In there was the conflict that never ended. She wished to make amends and comfort the boy, but was terrified of the man.

The rape of Severus Snape haunted her dreams, as did the rape he committed against that poor girl. Her dreams recently had turned on her. Now, she became the girl, and Severus Snape was raping her. She believed it in her soul that would be her fate if she were ever faced with him. He would torture and kill her. She would never be free while in Britain. She just had to get through this one semester, and then she could return to France in peace. Amanda was now a wealthy heiress thanks to her father's

demise. She would never have to work a day in her life if she were so inclined.

But after the past two months, she changed drastically. She wanted to do something to get the stain off of her, and perhaps learn how to save her own hide in the future if any one of her father's victims came for revenge. She decided to return to France and become an Auror. She had excellent grades, receiving 'Outstandings' in Defense Against the Dark Arts and Potions, much to her mother's delight. She even managed to scrape by with an 'Outstanding' in Transfiguration. So she was determined to make her mark and, in the meanwhile, try to stay alive long enough to salvage the name her father, Charles Dangler, had ruined.

She kept to herself on the train. She had become increasingly paranoid over the past two months. She was hardened by her experiences. She trusted no one and was suspicious of everyone. She finally settled in a compartment that was mercifully vacant. She sat in her new robes, very plain, not like the beautiful blue robes she loved at Beauxbatons. These were just a dismal black. *Oh, well, it's only for the semester and then I can start my real life* she reassured herself.

She followed the others to the carriages, and the sight of the thestrals made her sad. She never had seen a thestral before. Now she had another reminder that her Papa was really gone forever.

There were chatty girls and boys on her carriage, but she did her best to ignore them, even when they tried to include her in their conversation. She just glared at them and turned away. She wasn't here to make friends.

As they all walked in through the castle gate, a severe looking woman in a tartan hat stopped her.

"Miss Dangler, I presume?" she asked briskly.

"Yes."

"Follow me. My name is Professor McGonagall. I am the Transfiguration instructor here at Hogwarts. I am also the Deputy Headmistress and the Head of Gryffindor House. We are going to the Headmaster's office now to get you sorted immediately, so you can join us for the welcoming feast appropriately. The Headmaster's name is Albus Dumbledore."

They arrived at a gargoyle. "Fizzing Whizbee," she called out. The statue moved and a winding staircase appeared. She followed the Professor on up to the door of the Headmaster's office and entered after knocking.

"Ah, Miss Dangler has arrived!" said an old man with a long white beard and half-moon spectacles that covered his brilliant blue eyes. He was warm and kind. Amanda could tell by his demeanor. She felt comfortable in his presence.

"Headmaster," she replied with a slight curtsy.

"Please meet the other heads of our houses, Professors Sprout of Hufflepuff and Flitwick of Ravenclaw."

Amanda curtsied to both professors and then turned back to Dumbledore. He seemed out of sorts.

"I do apologize, the head of our fourth house, Slytherin, must be detained."

Amanda heard footfalls outside the door, and a blur of black came swiftly through the door. He was a scowling, dark, angry man who looked as if he felt he was doing the whole world a grand favor by being in the room.

"So glad you could join us, Severus," said Dumbledore.

Severus? Amanda thought, and her mind prickled at the name. Her hand tightened against her wand hidden in her pocket *Hex first, and ask questions later, hex first and ask questions later*, she thought over and over in her mind.

She didn't want to look at him; dread was building in her stomach. Then Dumbledore said the wretched words, "Miss Dangler, this is Professor Snape, Potions master, and the head of Slytherin house."

"Snape?" she yelled.

She whirled around. He asked suspiciously, "Dangler?"

That was it. She unfurled her wand and attacked the Professor before anyone could react.

"IMPEDIMENTA!" she screamed at Snape.

He flew back and crashed against the door of the office. He jumped up, furiously angry, wand at the ready, and he yelled, "*Incar...*"

She was far too fast. She ducked under an armchair and yelled, "*Expelliarmus!*"

Snape's wand soared out of his hand. He watched in shock as this slight, blonde child calmly caught his wand. She glared at the dark, evil-tempered man while pointing her wand at him. She walked slowly towards him as if he were her prey. He stood straight and rigid, his eyes glittering madly.

"So, you must be the daughter of Charles Dangler?" he said dangerously.

Amanda was taken aback. She did not expect him to say her father's name. It was her mistake. In a flash, she was up against the wall of the office with Snape's hand clutching at her throat.

"Severus!" Dumbledore yelled. "Release her!"

She was losing consciousness. He was possessed. She raised her wand slightly, and a flash of purple light shot out it, causing Snape to release her. He was forced to pull back. He was crazed with rage. *The bitch hit me with a Repulsion Jinx!* She fell to the floor, gasping and choking for air. He whipped his wand from her hand and grabbed her roughly by the shoulder and placed her in the armchair that she had hidden behind so well beforehand. All the Professors were on their feet, wands at the ready, in shock. It was unbelievable for a student to attack a teacher so quickly, and of all teachers...Snape!

But what was more disturbing was the way Snape took the matter into his own hands. He grabbed the Sorting hat and placed it on her head. Within seconds it screamed, "SLYTHERIN!"

"I might have known," sneered the Potions master.

Without taking his eyes off of her, Snape announced to Dumbledore that he would be taking Miss Dangler to her common room and a lengthy detention would be arranged with Filch. He then leaned into Amanda's face and told her in no uncertain terms that if she EVER brandished her wand in his direction again, she would be expelled.

She glowered at him. She wasn't going to let him frighten her. He studied her face, trying to search out any familiar traits of her father *She looks nothing like him. She's just an average looking girl. She must look like her mother*, he thought.

Minerva had many times tried to speak, but Dumbledore kept hushing her, keeping his troubled and concerned eyes upon the two combatants. Snape grabbed the girl from the arm and jerked her upright and threw her towards the door.

"Severus," said Dumbledore. "I expect you to return here for a discussion over tonight's events, after Miss Dangler has been put away for the night. And please, no more altercations."

"Miss Dangler!" he said loudly.

Amanda looked up at the Headmaster. "Yes, sir?"

"I agree with Severus. Any more displays of that sort and you will be expelled. Am I understood?"

"What if he hexes me first?" she asked boldly.

"Impertinence!" hissed one of the portraits.

Dumbledore ignored the outburst. His eyes were troubled. "Why would you think Professor Snape would attack you? What I witnessed tonight was a terrible lack of self-control on his part, but, my dear, you attacked him first."

She bowed her head, didn't know how to explain the situation. Dumbledore knew there was more to this story, on both ends. For now, he would have to deal with the adult first. He would deal with the child later...although sometimes he wondered in a case such as this: who really was the child, and who really was the adult?

The walk to the Slytherin common room was full of tension. Amanda and Snape did not want to be behind the other, so they walked side by side, giving each other a wide berth. There were no pleasantries or rules given, as Snape normally would have done for a new student. They just sized one another up. He tried to glare at her, to make her fear him, but she was too far-gone in her anger and prejudice against him. She glared back at him with cold eyes of steel. Snape wondered how much this girl knew about her father's past. He would have to find out later. He tried probing her mind, slowly, trying to slip in unawares, but each time he tried, she would only glare at him with seething rage. Her mind was impenetrable, and she knew what he was about. That angered Snape further.

He told her the password and pushed her roughly inside. He told her where she would sleep and expected her to manage her way to the Great Hall for breakfast.

"After all, if you have no qualms over hexing a professor, no doubt you will find bullying your fellow Slytherins of no consequence," he said silkily.

He turned sharply to leave, but at the last moment before slipping out, he turned slightly and glowered at the young witch.

"If you ever repeat anything of this night's events to anyone, whatever evil poison your father has infiltrated your mind with will be ~~be~~ *nothing* compared to what I shall do to you in reality. Good evening, Miss Dangler," he said softly. Then he walked out the door.

Amanda's hands shook and her legs gave out. She sank on the floor in terror. "*What have I done? My God, I can't stay here!*" She finally took control over her senses enough to curl up on a sofa near the fire with her heavy traveling coat. She slept, clutching her wand and dreamt of her Potions master's face hovering over hers in hate.

She must have been in a very deep sleep because she dreamt she was being poked by something, and she woke up to a group of sneering faces wearing Slytherin robes hovering over her, and indeed, one of them was poking at her with a stick.

One boy spoke up and addressed her harshly. "Who are *you*?" he spat.

Amanda already had her fill of rude and obtrusive pricks for one night. If she wasn't going to take shite from the Head Slytherin, she certainly wouldn't from this blighter!

"Who I am is of no consequence to you!" she growled from her reclining position on the couch. She had at one point covered herself with her traveling cloak, and she had her wand at the ready. She peeked the tip out of the top of her cloak, near her face.

"Run along, little boy, or you will have to deal with my wrath. I'm not one to be toyed with," she snarled.

The boy smirked, and the group laughed. "So, think you can intimidate us, can you? Well, I'd like to see you try..."

Amanda whispered, "*Sectumsempra*", and a small gash appeared on the boy's thigh near his privates. He screamed, and the rest were gasping and backing away. When they all gave her a wide enough berth, she cast a Cave Inimicum Charm around her so no one would be able to come near her while she slept.

She didn't sleep long when the door to the common room opened and slammed shut. Her eyes opened slightly, giving the impression she was still slumbering as she watched Severus Snape stalk over to her and with a sneer made her charm disappear as if it were mere child's play.

"Miss Dangler, I have come from the infirmary and have seen your work. *Impressive*. I see you took to heart my comment on 'bullying' your fellow Slytherins?" he said silkily.

"If you call defending yourself from a group of rowdies poking you with a stick and hovering over you as 'bullying,' then I suppose you should expect nothing less from me," she replied just as effortlessly.

Snape's jaw clenched, and he narrowed his glittering eyes. The tension was so very thick with hate and unspoken rage.

He rose and stood over her, his face set in a malevolent smile. "Detention, I believe, will be with me instead of Filch, our caretaker. It seems the worst thing I could possibly do is impose my presence upon you. So be it."

He leaned in over her and studied her face. He noticed the light scar around her left eye. "Had a little run-in with 'Sectumsempra,' eh?" He smirked. "Did your dear old Papa teach you that one?"

He knelt on one knee and leaned into closer to her face, his breath was hot on her left cheek. "I should know, I'm the one who taught it ~~to~~ *him*," he whispered in a deathly tone.

Amanda was frozen in fear and waited for him to back away from her person. She gripped her wand in her sweaty palm.

He backed up enough to look her face to face. He analyzed her face and, although he could not penetrate her mind, he could still see the primal fear in her eyes. It pleased him.

"You should fear me, Amanda," he murmured. "I am just as evil as your father told you, probably more so. After all, he only knew me as a very young man. I have honed my skills and talents over the years."

Amanda kept very still and refused to flinch or cower before him. She held her tongue and watched him as he rose and exited the common room. Now that she knew he could invade her presence at any time, there would be no sleep tonight.

Snape stalked the castle, making his usual rounds. He was at a loss to explain the reaction he drew out of the little chit. She was absolutely terrified of him, and yet, she still had the presence of mind to exhibit powerful dueling skills. But his inability to break into her mind and find the source of her fear would keep him from ever knowing the reason. Seeing the curse she had inflicted on Draco Malfoy highly impressed him. She had more than likely had been schooled by her father in the dark arts since she was a young child. Yes, he hated Charles Dangler with a passion, and if he had ever found him before he took his own life he probably would have done him a favor and sliced his throat for him. *Pity*, he thought, *Dangler deserved a more tortuous death!*

But why on earth is his daughter here? Obviously, he knew she came from Beauxbatons. So why did she transfer with only one semester left of school? It did not make sense. No bother, she would soon be sent packing off again in no time. He would make sure to milk her fear and temper for all it was worth and provoke her into another altercation...*with him*. And he would make sure when she fled Hogwarts in her terror, she would have something real and tangible to be afraid about, than just the memory of her diabolical father's ravings.

... You and I Collide - Part II

Chapter 3 of 9

How can you live when your whole life has been a lie? A Death Eater's daughter needs answers about her dead father, and Severus Snape is the only one who can help her. Unfortunately, he wants nothing to do with dredging up his past.
Inspired by "Collide" by Howie Day.

A/N: Thanks to my beta, ImOnMedication! She's awesome. I would love to get some feedback on this. I'd love to know your thoughts on Snape being a victim. Remember, reviews are better than chocolate!

"I must say, Severus, that was the most disappointing display I have ever seen," said Dumbledore reprovingly. "You acted like a fifth year...damn your infernal temper!"

Snape sulked in his chair. It was uncharacteristic for the Headmaster to speak to him in such a tone, but Snape had never acted in such an unprofessional manner towards a student during all his years of teaching. And in front of the other Heads of Houses! It was a good thing she ended up a Slytherin, or one of the other professors may well have had his hide for breakfast!

Dumbledore sat in his chair behind his desk and observed the surly young wizard.

"Severus," he began in his normal tone. "I have never asked or pushed for you to divulge information that was not pertinent towards the defeat of Voldemort. However, it seems there is some history, some deep-seated...dare I say *hate*...towards this young girl?"

"Headmaster, I have precious little privacy as it is. May I please ask that you not force this issue?" he spat bitterly. "I shall give you my word that I shall treat Miss Dangler no better or worse than any other student."

"Severus, I received an owl today. I was going to discuss this while Miss Dangler was with us, but alas, we must do this now. You do know Madam Peale?"

Severus frowned. "Peale? You don't mean the Potions mistress, Margaret Peale?"

"The very same. She lives here in this country, but years ago, she moved to France when she married and had a child. Soon after the birth, she divorced and returned to England. Her husband refused her to take the child out of France. The child is our Miss Dangler."

Severus was stunned. "Margaret Peale had a child? Isn't she old?"

Dumbledore smiled. "Well, yes, she was 40 when she had Amanda, but that is not the point. You are aware of her reputation. She is one of the most honoured and well-respected Potion mistresses in the country. She is very determined that Amanda be apprenticed in Potions. It seems Amanda wants to become an Auror, and that is unacceptable to Madam Peale. She is insisting that you take her on for a two-year apprenticeship after she finishes her term here."

Snape was incensed. "Absolutely not! *Absolutely* NOT! I don't want that little chit around me anymore than is necessary!"

"And again, Severus, I cannot seem to avoid the issue. What history could there possibly be between you and a 17-year-old girl?"

"It's her father!" Snape blurted out bitterly, annoyed at the insinuation of impropriety.

"Severus," Dumbledore sighed. "Not another student that will bear the brunt of your spleen because of the 'sins of the father'? Aren't you rather occupied in that area with Mr. Potter?"

Snape glared at the old man. "This is nothing like Potter. This is *nothing* like that. And I refuse to talk about it. It's private."

"What shall I say to Madam Peale? Taking her daughter on as an apprentice...that would be a wise move. *Very ambitious* move, Severus." Dumbledore knew he was playing dirty pool. Ambition and recognition were what fueled the Potions master.

Snape glared darkly at the old man again before he swept out of the office with a loud bang.

Amanda woke early, before anyone else. She took her trunk and made her way into the bathroom, showered, and changed. She managed to find her way to the seventh-year girls' dormitory and slid her trunk under an empty bed. A girl stirred in the bed next to her. She quietly stole away and made her way out of the common room with her satchel.

She wandered the halls and stumbled upon the Great Hall. She sat on a chair near the door, fiercely clutching her wand. She must have fallen asleep, she woke up with a start...someone was near her. She jumped.

"I apologize for startling you, Miss Dangler," said Dumbledore. "I noticed you were up rather early and that you had made your way here. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, sir," she answered.

Dumbledore observed the girl. She was clean, showered, dressed appropriately, but had horrible dark circles under her eyes. There was a look there in her eyes, like a hunted animal. Her eyes never stayed still. She was edgy and nervous.

"Is there something I need to know about, Miss Dangler? Something about Professor Snape?" he asked quietly.

"*Snape?*" she blurted as she whipped around.

Dumbledore was deeply concerned. The girl was extremely paranoid and clearly frightened of the Potions master.

He tried in vain to meet her eyes. "I want you to know that Professor Snape gave me his word he would treat you like any other student. You have nothing to fear here at Hogwarts, Miss Dangler. I promise you."

"Okay," she muttered. But she still shook. She was trembling with fear.

Students were filing in as well as the teachers. Dumbledore pointed Amanda towards the Slytherin table, and she sat back at the end, far as she could from the High Table where Snape sat.

Amanda had been thoroughly embarrassed when Dumbledore had announced her arrival as a new Hogwarts student. She stood and refused to make eye contact with anyone. If she had observed, she would have seen the smarmy leers from some of the Slytherins, and the angry look upon Professor Snape. All she could think of was getting through her Advanced Potions class.

She came in and did not know where to sit. Snape roughly told her he wanted her to sit at the front of the class opposite him at his desk. She wearily went forward and went about her business.

Snape announced they would be making the Draught of Peace Potion. Amanda had precious little room to work with, as his desk was full of all his papers and other students' scrolls waiting to be graded. She felt as if she was being baited, but she knew she couldn't risk getting expelled if she lost her temper again. If she were bold, she would try to pry into his mind, but she was too exhausted and jittery to concentrate. If she had infiltrated his mind, she would have seen his plot to vex her into attacking him again...and in front of her classmates as well! As she worked, she felt his glare on her. Then he began his verbal assault, his voice soft and quiet. Only she could hear his bile.

"I don't know why you are here. It seems a waste of time. You should tell your mother to make you return to Beauxbatons."

"I see the older Slytherin boys looking at you. You have not been prepared for life as a Slytherin. If you are still a virgin, you may as well kiss it goodbye. You probably won't be one by the end of tonight."

She felt her jaw clench at that remark. Her anger was rising dangerously.

"Your father was a swine, and you are probably just like him. Are you a little slut, Miss Dangler? I think I know you better than you realize."

That was it. She'd had enough.

She leveled her eyes to his and shouted out loud enough for the entire class to hear.

"What was that, *Snivellus*? That was your little nickname, wasn't it?"

The class fell deathly silent, and then someone tittered. Snape's eyes were ablaze. He didn't think...didn't care. He raised his wand and shouted, "*CONFRINGO!*"

Learning how to Wizard Duel with an ex-Death Eater had made Amanda Dangler a formidable combatant. With amazing skill she screamed, "*PROTEGO!*" and shielded herself from his curse. The room around her shield blew apart, sending students running for their lives. But it wasn't over.

Amanda dashed over towards the door, and flung a table on its side to shield herself and think of what to do next. She had only a split-second before Snape thundered, "*REDUCTO!*"

Her table was blasted to bits. She flew back into the wall, wounded from the bits of flying wood.

"*INCARCEROUS!*" she yelled as ropes flew out of her wand and bound Snape.

He sneered and muttered, "*Diffindo.*"

The ropes burst off him as he slowly stalked towards the girl. Damned if he was let her destroy his room! She was fast, but not fast enough as he shut the door and warded it with a flick of his wand. She tried to work out the wards quickly as he prowled towards her. She finally gave up and ran in the opposite direction screaming, "*STUPEFY!*"

She missed. She stumbled as a Tripping Jinx hit her. She glanced backward at the wizard. What had she been thinking? Battling a grown wizard! She scrambled to get up and get her wand that had flown out of her hand, but Snape was already standing over her. He placed his boot on her hand and squeezed down. She screeched in pain. He let up and assessed her situation. He grabbed her by her long hair, and pinned her against the corner of the room; his hand wrapped tightly around her throat, but loose enough to allow her to talk.

"Why are you doing this? Who sent you?" he ordered.

"No one sent me," she gasped as she tried to claw at his hand.

"What grudge do you have against me?" he demanded.

"I don't have one, Snape. But you have one with my father. I know. I know everything!" she panted. "Now go ahead, rape me, kill me, torture me...just get on with it, and let me die!"

Snape was frozen in horror. He released the girl and quickly backed off from her. She slipped down the corner. Her robes were ripped, her face bleeding. Her eyes were so black from exhaustion and defeat. *What had that animal told her?* he thought.

Suddenly, the door blew apart. There stood Dumbledore and McGonagall with the entire N.E.W.T. level Advanced Potions class, staring in disbelief at the shambles of the Potions room. Dumbledore fixated solely on Miss Dangler, wounded and prostrate in a corner, her face peppered with lacerations and her robes torn, with Severus Snape hovering over her, seemingly in a trance, unaware of their presence.

"Severus?" he called out gently.

"Everyone, get out!" Snape roared. "I take full responsibility for this."

"Severus," Dumbledore pleaded.

"LEAVE!" he screamed.

He whirled around with anguish in his eyes. "I assure you, I will take Miss Dangler to Madam Pomfrey, and I will deal with this situation. Now if you please?" he asked curtly.

Dumbledore looked directly into Severus' eyes. The unspoken words in the young man's eyes told him it would be all right. Dumbledore then nodded and led the group away from the room.

When the room finally emptied, Snape knelt by Amanda. "Tell me," he whispered.

"Just do Legilimency. I can't say it." She broke apart sobbing. All of the terror and fear came out.

Snape saw her father hit her, leaving a scar to make her remember his name: Severus Snape. He also saw him forcing his daughter into the Pensieve and saw his own rape and the rape he committed under Dangler's tutelage. Just when he thought he could bear no more, he heard the threat, "*You come across him, don't ever let him know you are my daughter, because if you do, he will do to you what he did to that poor Muggle girl, and probably worse. He is one of the most vicious and cunning Death Eaters to have ever served the Dark Lord.*" Then he saw the suicide. Amanda was covered in her father's blood, screaming, trying to make the blood flow stop. It was enough.

He released the girl's mind. She was lying on the filthy floor, broken in her fear. She truly believed he would do all those things and worse at the first chance. He hated Dangler, hated what he *and* Lucius had done to him, and hated himself for being the person that such a bright, and intelligent witch would loathe and fear. He looked down again and saw she had passed out. He reached down and picked her up and carried her into his private rooms. He tended to her wounds, and repaired the tears to her robes. He traced the scar on the side of her left eye delicately with his finger. What was he going to do? She knew...she saw the most humiliating moment of his life.

He backed off the bed as if it were on fire. His shame and self-hatred overwhelmed him. She was a mirror of his filth. He had to get her out of here! He summoned Madam Pomfrey, and she helped to get her up to the infirmary. After she was settled, he came back and wrote a letter to the girl, explaining her fears were unfounded and he would not ever hurt her again, and also that it would be best for them to never pass one another's paths. When he finished and had the letter sent, he drank himself into a drunken haze, so full of rage, fear, and shame that he eventually passed out on the floor.

I Lost my Place

Chapter 4 of 9

Margaret Peale-Dangler comes to demand for her daughter, Amanda, to be Snape's apprentice. Amanda confronts Snape for answers about her father's past.

Amanda read the letter from Snape as she sat in the infirmary. She had stoutly refused to tell Dumbledore what caused Snape to attack her so viciously. The old wizard respected her sense of propriety and loyalty to her word that she would never speak to another soul about the private life of Severus Snape. She sat in her hospital bed nibbling on a thumbnail, refusing to look him in the eye. She looked so very sad and forlorn. After a minute of silence, Dumbledore acquiesced, but with the following rules: there would be no more baiting, dueling, hexing, or jinxing. Whatever was between them would be resolved once and for all, or she would be sent packing back to her mother.

After Dumbledore left, Amanda took Snape's letter out from underneath her pillow. As she re-read the letter, tears made their familiar path down her face. She was so weary of crying, so tired of knowing, and so angry with all of the lies that she was so familiar with now.

Miss Dangler,

I am deeply shocked and regretful at my actions towards you, my student and fellow Slytherin. Your tragedies of late have not escaped my notice, as you well know after performing Legilimency on you. I am now aware of everything you were forced to witness. It is a terrible thing to learn a person that you once loved so freely could ever lie and hurt you in such a manner.

My hope is that you will find a sense of peace in your life. Do not fear or upset yourself on my account. I do not wish to make you pay for your father's treachery. Allow yourself to be released from fears of retribution.

I will be formally asking the Headmaster for your removal from this school. There could never be a teacher/student relationship between us; the informality that now exists would only cause further complications, and I cannot have that in my classroom. I do not throw all of this at your feet. My culpability is as equal, if not greater to yours. After all, you only acted purely out of self-preservation. I also acted purely out of my own self-preservation, but your purity far outweighs my own.

My best wishes for a full and happy life,

S. Snape

Amanda sighed deeply as she put away the letter. She still feared the man, but she also mourned for the boy. For somehow, the look on his face as her father brutalized him was not unlike her own face now when she would catch her reflection in the mirror whenever she thought of the Papa she once thought she knew.

Five months later, a tall and volatile woman was making her way towards the Headmaster's office. She was in no mood for any excuses or refusals. She opened the door with a flourish and strode to the Headmaster's desk. Her cold steel-blue eyes flashed murder as she spoke in a low and clipped tone.

"I want to speak with your Potions master, Severus Snape, immediately!" she fumed.

Dumbledore knew of Madam Peale's reputation. She was the most respected Potions mistress in the country, and well known for her sharp wit and impatient demeanor.

This woman did not suffer fools.

Snape was beyond reason when he realized why he had been summoned to the Headmaster's office. *I cannot believe this is happening! Why in the name of Merlin does this haridan want to force her child on me?* he raged inside.

"I do not see why Miss Dangler should apprentice with me. Obviously, she has a mother who has more experience and is far more capable than I to teach her," Snape said silkily.

Madam Peale walked over to Snape in the most intimidating way she could. She fixed her eyes on his. She was a very tall woman and stood eye to eye for her face off with the Potions master.

"Do not ever try to attempt condescension with me, Professor Snape. My daughter's education has been lacking...and I say that in the most positive way I am able. My ex-husband may have been able to manipulate his way into having her attend that idiotic French school, but she is now my responsibility. I want her to have a proper *British* education. As her mother, she cannot become accredited under my mentorship. You, Professor Snape, have a dubious reputation, and even though I am *shocked* and *horrified* at my daughter's treatment by your hands, she is, nonetheless, most eager to return. Although your demeanor makes me question *why* my daughter is so eager to be under your tutelage, nevertheless, I am of the same mind. For even though your social skills are lacking to say the least, your reputation as a Potions master is, for your age...unparalleled."

Snape spoke slowly and deliberately. "Madam Peale, I believe it is because of the past altercations I have had with your daughter that it would not be *prudent* for me to mentor her. Surely, there are other Potion masters that would be more than happy to take her on as an apprentice."

"No," she said calmly. "I reject your refusal, Professor Snape. If you wish to ever have any sort of future either inside or beyond these walls, I suggest you think long and hard about this offer. I will expect your answer by the end of tomorrow. I will be staying in Hogsmeade. You may Owl me at the Three Broomsticks. Good day, gentlemen."

And with that, Madam Peale swept from the room.

Snape was livid. He glared at the Headmaster. Dumbledore shook his head. "I warned you, Severus. Madam Peale holds sway in very important circles in your chosen field and also with the Board of Governors. Not only would it be career suicide for you to refuse, but also our 'arrangement' with your situation here at Hogwarts could be threatened. Madam Peale is a very influential witch. And, unfortunately, the name 'Dangler' still holds much power. There still are influential wizards and witches at the Ministry who still fear that man's name. Please, Severus, how bad could it be? Miss Dangler is now a little older...she did return to Beauxbatons and completed her N.E.W.T.s with top marks. She's now 18, an adult. You and she can act accordingly. I'm sure what had occurred between the two of you is water under the bridge by now. Please, consider this, Severus."

Snape set his jaw and glared at the old man. He left and slammed the door in his wake. He practically ran down to the dungeons, blasting every jar in his office he saw until the rage subsided. His chest constricted tightly. He did not want this. He did not want that girl who forced him to see the image of his evilness to be so near him. Amanda Dangler could bring nothing but more pain into his life. He knew it wasn't her fault. She was nothing like Dangler. But, her earnestness, her anger, and her *pity*...he could remember vividly how she looked at him with such pity right after he performed Legilimency on her. He felt he was a 17-year-old boy again, bleeding on that dungeon floor. Then there was her *revulsion*...as he held her by the throat and she had begged him to go ahead and torture, rape and kill her...just to be put out of her misery and fear. He recalled the same face on the first and only woman he had ever touched, and he *had* raped her. He had never been able to touch another woman after that. There was just something about Amanda that made him face things he had never wanted to face again. He just wanted it all to stay buried. But every time he saw those eyes, that face, it all came back, and they would collide.

He decided to take a walk and hopefully exhaust himself. He was far too angry to get drunk. He needed vigorous exercise, to try and find a way out of this nightmare! Then, just when he started to calm down, he saw her standing on the hill by which he had been climbing. She was being whipped by the wind. He noticed her blonde hair had been curled, and she was lovely. She looked older. Her robes blew in the wind as she made her way down to him.

He could not believe this day. When she had barely reached him, he lit into her.

"Why can't you leave me alone? I don't want you around me, or my school! What do you want from me?" he roared. His mind was reeling. He couldn't find it within himself to intimidate her. He was a boy again, vulnerable and weak. He hated her!

She blanched, but did not back down. "Please, Professor, my mother wants me to be a Potions mistress. *don't*. But, what I do need are answers that can only come from you. Answers...not potions. My life is just one big lie, and I can't seem to make sense of it!"

"How is that any of my business?" he snapped rudely as he tried to side step her.

"Please! Since I left here and returned to France, I couldn't forget you, and I couldn't let go of what I knew. I am so lost now. I'll never be able to have any kind of whole life until I can understand or at least put my father's choices into some perspective."

He snorted. "I am so pleased that by finishing your education at Beauxbatons has gifted you with the ability to *restrain* your emotions. Now if you would kindly allow me to be on my way?" he said sarcastically

She blocked his way, and he tried to dodge her, but she deliberately collided with him and hung on to him desperately.

"Look, I know that you didn't choose for me to know the things I know...but neither did I. My father lied to me my whole life, and my mother doesn't care about anything except her reputation and what I can do for her. Eighteen years of lies, and I don't know who I am!" she cried shrilly.

Snape tried to get her vise grip off his robes. "Remove yourself from my person, Miss Dangler!" he yelled. His chest was constricting, and he felt so weak.

"No! Not until you help me. I need answers!" she screamed.

All of a sudden, Snape grabbed his chest and doubled over in pain. Amanda grabbed him, and he fell into her arms. His breathing was labored and his skin clammy. She screamed for help, but no one came. She grabbed him, pulled his arm over her shoulder, and trudged up the hill. As they landed at the top, she collapsed. Teachers who were chatting nearby saw the tangled mess of the Potions master and an unknown woman. She screamed for help, for Pomfrey. That was the last Snape recalled: the screaming of Amanda for help as she cradled him in her arms like a child.

I'm Open...You're Closed

Snape recovers slowly from his heart attack, while Amanda takes over his first through fifth year classes. She earns her own respect in the classroom from her students, but still has yet to gain respect from the Potions master. And yet again, another fight breaks out between the two.

A/N: Please Review! I want to hear your thoughts, good or bad. Again, thanks to my beta, ImOnMedication, for her hard work.

Snape woke in the infirmary. Madam Pomfrey was tending to him. He had suffered a heart attack.

"No wonder!" she chided. "After all the abuse your body has suffered. It's amazing you are still alive!"

He chuckled at the comment. She looked at him puzzled and then shook her head. She never could get any sense into his hard head!

He spent the summer convalescing. Dumbledore refused for him to return to teaching since he had been summoned by Voldemort numerous times during the summer and had endured more torture, which had set his healing back by months. Snape lost his temper and had to be given a Calming Draught for the Headmaster to continue.

Dumbledore assured him his classes were in the most capable of hands. He would be teaching his N.E.W.T. Levels and all was well.

"What of my first through fifth-years?" he asked suspiciously.

"Well, being Headmaster, I cannot do it all." His blue eyes twinkled. Snape frowned. *Here it comes!* he thought suspiciously.

"Miss Dangler is more than competent to teach your first- through fourth-years. I will be supervising the fifth-year classes, since it is the O.W.L. year and all," he explained cautiously, waiting for the volcano to erupt.

"Let me get this straight. Amanda Dangler is teaching my classes. She has complete access to my stores, *my personal private property?* Am I correct in that assumption?" he asked coolly, but with rage just underneath the surface.

"Yes," Dumbledore answered quietly, closing his eyes.

"That's it!" he roared. Snape whipped out of bed and bellowed for his clothes. Madam Pomfrey tried to calm him down, but he was as desperate as a frightened child. The man was beyond reason. Dumbledore frowned as he assessed the grown man's reaction to Miss Dangler's teaching of his classes. The words, "my stores," and "my personal private property" resounded in his mind. Severus was clearly terrified of this young 18-year-old girl. It was remarkable. Dumbledore had never seen him in such a state over a young woman since Lily Evans Potter. But he must be calmed down, or he'd have another heart attack!

He regretted doing it, but he immobilized him, casting the Petrificus Totalus Charm on him. He would have to stay that way until he could see to reason. Perhaps Miss Dangler could visit and speak with him. *Perhaps... perhaps,* he pondered.

Days later, after Snape had calmed down enough to accept his situation, Amanda came into the Infirmary to see him. One look at her sent the man into a rage. She whipped out her wand and threatened him.

"After all, I am a teacher, not a student," she said with a slight smile. She regarded him. Even in sickness and in a weak state, he still could pull up his defenses and refuse anyone admittance into his personal space.

Amanda had learned a great deal about relationships and the hidden motivations of people, especially those who were insecure. Most often a snarl was a mask for something tenderly felt. Instead of holding a hand...slap it away. Yes meant no, and no meant yes. It had to be an exhausting existence, to be sure, but it was what it was.

"I would greatly appreciate it if you would stop looking at me in that infuriating way!" he snapped.

"What way?" she asked, puzzled.

"You look at me as if I'm some damaged soul, a lost puppy, or a whimpering 2-year-old in need of comfort." He leaned forward and growled, "I am none of those things. And your attempts at conversation...even your mere presence...is unwanted and unnecessary!"

She sighed deeply and looked away, but she did not leave. He had turned his face from hers, but shifted his eyes to glance at her. She was a little older, but not by age, but by anguish. Her face showed so much confusion. He hoped she wouldn't start crying. He would definitely have to hex her if she did. He could not tolerate weepy females!

Instead she stood and then leaned into him, her hands on the bed, and pushed into his personal space. She was unaware her posture gave him a clear view though to her breasts. He forced his eyes to focus on her eyes. Violet sparks flashed in her blue eyes.

"I'm not going anywhere, so you'd better either give yourself another heart attack and die, or accept the situation. I can't live my life without a starting point! *I'm lost!* I don't know what the hell you are!" She snapped up tall and angry.

"Fine," he muttered.

She gave him one last pitiful look and walked out. *"I am such a liar!"* she thought smugly. *Give him enough time, he'll come around,* she reassured herself

Snape watched her walk out. She was quite pretty when she was angry. *Not that I want her!* he thought.

Snape could not resist the temptation of listening in on Professor Dangler's first year Potions class. *First years!* he thought maliciously. *Let's see how she can control a classroom!*

As the class settled in, Professor Amanda Dangler came into the room; her normally long blonde hair that hung free down her shoulders were now up and pulled back in a tight makeshift bun with her wand stuck in it. She wore billowing black robes that covered everything from the neck to the floor, not quite unlike the style of the dreaded Potions master: Severus Snape.

From his vantage point, Snape could see her as she stood in front of the class. She wore no make-up, which made her complexion even more pale and severe against the black robes. She did not smile, but did not frown. She took in the students, as if assessing their worth. The room was silent. Then suddenly, she spoke. Her voice was unlike the usual higher pitch Snape was accustomed. It was booming and commanding.

"My name is Professor Dangler." With a sweep of her hand, words appeared on the board behind her. Whispers floated across the room. Snape was not impressed.*Show off!*

"Now this may be a blessing or a curse...that depends on you and your efforts in this class. This class is not my own. It belongs to Professor Snape, who is a Potions master. I am not. Yet my practical knowledge and the faith the Headmaster has in me should ease your minds that I am perfectly capable of teaching first year Potions. I will be teaching as long as Professor Snape requires my assistance."

"Make no mistake, I do not show favoritism, nor will I accept shoddy work. Each one of you WILL pull his or her own weight. If you have a problem, or do not understand the directions, you WILL come directly to me...not to your partner for help."

She began wandering around the room as she spoke, but Snape could still hear her commanding voice. "I'm sure you all have been regaled with tales of Professor Snape's infamous first year speech of *"bewitching the mind and ensnaring the senses."* I am not Professor Snape. I have a more practical speech for you. Consider it a warning: You WILL respect the materials and substances you handle in this room. I do not want anyone to lose their life because they have not taken time to respect the powerful substances that are in this room. Because of the potential for danger, I shall be diligent in my observations. Do not be alarmed; it is my job to assess and to watch out for any potential disasters."

She was back at the front. Her face again was expressionless, neither smiling nor frowning. "You will respect this room and the Professor to whom it rightfully belongs, as well as to the Professor he has entrusted it. For those of you who are confused...that would be me."

Snape smirked at her haughtiness. *Well, all in all, not a bad start, But will she hold it together under pressure?* He leaned back in his chair to wait for the calamity that was sure to come. Miss Dangler did not have the fortitude to deal with these dunderheads day in and day out...he was positive.

After a lengthy lecture, she set the students to work on the Boil Cure Potion. "Please mind the directions on the board *the letter!*" She frowned. The students were not paying attention.

"OY!" she yelled. That got everyone's attention. Now she was angry. Snape leaned forward in his chair. He could see the flashes of purple in her eyes that made her so beautiful.

"When I am speaking, you will be quiet, or I swear, I will change my pleasant demeanor and start acting like Professor Snape. And no one wants that *do they?*"

The room was silent as death. She stilled her face and repeated herself. "Please mind the directions on the board. If you add the porcupine nettles BEFORE you remove your cauldron from the fire, you will ruin not only your cauldron and the potion, but may cause undue harm to yourself or the people around you. So please, pay attention!"

She went back to prowling the room. Snape listened as she gave praise and correction indiscriminately. She definitely was not going to show house favoritism. It was refreshing for Snape. He stretched back in his chair, his hands resting behind his head. *Oh, to be free to be one's self without worrying if your actions might cost you your life!* he thought.

He made sure to get back into his bed after class was dismissed. He heard her walk into the office. She went straight to work; he could hear the scratching of her quill on the parchment. He fell asleep to the sound. It was soothing.

A week later, Amanda walked into Snape's office and found him back in his usual black robes. He was paler than usual, but other than that, seemed back to his normal, indifferent, self. He glanced up from his work to give her a swift once over and went back to work as he addressed her.

"I have been monitoring your work, your teaching, and your overall abilities to handle a Potions class. I have found you to be *acceptable*. I will continue to observe you and then we shall take things from there. That will be all, Miss Dangler."

Amanda stared at him. He said all that without so much as a break in his stride. *He is an insufferable prat*, she assessed. "Professor," she called out to him.

"I am busy and do not wish to participate in any frivolous conversation you might want to pull me into," he snapped.

Again, he did not look up at her. Amanda backed out, and once she closed the door behind her, she closed her eyes and let out a long sigh. *This is going to take forever!* she thought wearily.

He was as good as his word. He sat in the back of the classroom for each lesson, every day, for two months. He had no comments, no helpful remarks, or disparaging ones for that matter. He eagle-eyed her constantly, which made Amanda very uncomfortable, but she kept on doing the best she could. The older students tried at first to test her mettle, but a few cutting remarks and a showing of her quick temper that slashed away at house points soon brought all her classes into order.

She did, though, carry out her threat to unleash "Snape" on them when one uppity Slytherin tried to usurp her. He must have felt since Snape was back in the room, he could act anyway he saw fit. Amanda came down on him like a panther and dressed him down so badly he did not speak in class for a week. After that particular episode, she stole a glance towards the Potions master. Her flashing eyes bored into his. She defied him to stand up for the boy and take over the class, but he sat still, and she thought she saw a wicked smile creep onto the corners of his mouth.

At the end of the two months, however, Amanda had had enough. She wanted answers and she wanted him to talk to her now! She waited until he went alone to the Forbidden Forest to replenish his stores. She stealthily tracked him, keeping her distance. Once safely ensconced in the Forest, and had time to gather her thoughts, she finally faced him.

He turned to her. "So, you finally decided to reveal yourself?" he said sarcastically.

"I want answers, Severus," she said darkly.

His eyes flashed angrily. "I do not recall *ever* giving you the permission to call me by my given name!" he spat.

"I really could care less," she answered back evenly. "Fine, Professor, sir, whatever... I need you to talk to me."

He resumed his work, turning his back to her. "No," he said coldly.

"Yes!" she yelled as she grabbed his arm. He tried to wrench away from her grasp, but she held on for dear life. They struggled and he finally got the upper hand and whipped her around, forcing her to her knees in a chokehold.

"Why must we continue to collide?" he asked bitterly. "You do not respect my wishes for privacy, even though I have made it quite clear that is all I want. My history, my past, and my pain...it all belongs to me...alone. I do not want to discuss it with *you!*"

He started to relax his hold, and she swiped her leg under his, causing him to fall on his back. She straddled him and, with her wand at his throat said, "Look, I didn't *choose* this life. I did not choose these memories. This isn't about just *you* and what you want. You are going to have to grow up emotionally, Snape. And until you can stop

acting like a sulking child, yes, you and I will continue to collide."

She lifted herself off him slowly, backing away with her wand at the ready. Once she was a safe distance away, she turned her back to him.

"What gives you the right to say I'm emotionally immature?" he yelled after her. "I'm not the one stalking people, trying force them to spill the most intimate details of their life!" he raged.

Amanda sighed as she turned around and shook her head. "I already KNOW the details; I SAW it all! I'm not asking you to talk about the rapes, I just want answers about my father, dammit!" she roared.

"And then you'll leave me alone?" he asked quietly.

"If that's what you want," she said solemnly.

He glared at her as if she were mad. "Of course that's what I want, you stupid girl! You have turned my life inside out. If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have had a bloody heart attack!"

She laughed at him in disbelief. "You honestly think that I GAVE you a heart attack? Snape, you are so brilliant. You are...so gifted in many ways, but when it comes to matters of courtesy, compassion, and just plain old common sense, you are like an adolescent, no different than any fifth-year. My God, what *happened* to you?"

He opened his mouth to retort, but she cut him off.

"No, I mean what happened to you before the Dark Lord got to you. Because you are stunted, like a child that was forced to stop growing. Your very aura is screaming for release, to be free, but you keep binding yourself, like the millions of buttons you hide behind, torturing your psyche. You brought your heart attack upon yourself. I just seem to ignite the fires that you insist on building."

She paused to collect her nerves.

"I'm tired, Snape. I need you to think long and hard about this: about where I am coming from, and where you are at this point in your life. Because, if you don't start to let some of this shite go, you'll be dead, and it'll be too late."

"Too late for what?" he snapped.

"Well, that's the bloody question, *isn't it?*" she snapped back at him irritatingly and mysteriously all at the same time as she left him there standing alone.

I'm Quiet You Know...

Chapter 6 of 9

Snape finally agrees to talk with Amanda about her father, and a *very* interesting conversation follows.

A/N: Please Review! I hope you like this chapter. Thanks again to my beta, ImOnMedication.

It had been a *very* bad day. After her last confrontation with Snape, he stopped coming to supervise her classes. It was her only consolation for what had turned out to be a total crap day! Amanda had an explosion in her third year Hufflepuff/Ravenclaw class. Her anger was so fearsome, it came as no surprise to her when she overheard two Hufflepuffs outside the Great Hall talking about her being just as vile as Professor Snape. It was true, the constant day-in-day-out tension of having to deal with these children handling potentially dangerous materials that could blow them all into oblivion at any given moment had her nerves raw. She could genuinely appreciate Snape's lethal death-grip control over his classes. You had to constantly watch these little fuckers! If they weren't making cow eyes over one another, or knocking over their cauldrons, they were adding WAY too much of this or that ingredient, causing toxic fumes that threatened to kill everyone. So, these were the thoughts of Amanda Dangler as she walked off her frustrations from a *VERY* bad day.

She walked past the lake and skirted the forest.

Then, Snape appeared out of nowhere.

"Great," she muttered.

He was sporting a very smug smile today. He quickly walked in her path when he saw she was going to ignore him.

"What?" she snapped impatiently as she stood in front of him, her arms crossed, and tried looking menacing in her billowing black robes.

"A bad day with the dunderheads?" he smirked.

"Is it all that obvious?" she said nastily.

"If it were not for your blonde hair, I swear it would be like looking in a mirror."

"God, Snape, you really know how to depress a girl!" she retorted.

"Well, yes, minus the hook-nose and evil black eyes part," he muttered quietly.

Amanda grinned. "Is this Snape trying to be genial?" she asked in mock surprise.

He looked down at her with his usual disdainful expression. "What do you want to know about your father?" he asked.

"Everything you can tell me."

They sat underneath a large tree. It was the stupidest thing, in Amanda's opinion, that she ever had to do just to get someone to talk with her. He sat on one side, facing one direction; she sat, facing the opposite. It was one of those "ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies" kind of arrangement. If she were ever going to get to the bottom of things and the truth about her father, she would have to indulge the intensely paranoid and excessively private Severus Snape.

So there they were, two people in billowing black robes facing opposite directions, talking into the air. She would indulge the git, but she just had to say one thing....

She leaned to the side and told him, "I want you to know for the record, I think you are completely insane!"

"Flattery will get you nowhere, Miss Dangler."

She rolled her eyes. "Tell me how you met my father," she demanded. "What was he like?"

"He was very *continental*," he answered sarcastically.

"Oh, do go on with it!" she snapped.

"My, my," he drawled. "You must have had a *really* terrible day with the dunderheads. You're starting to sound like me."

She could feel him sneering. "That's right, tosser, and if you don't start dishing out the information in more than one sentence answers, I'm going to start taking house points and make you do detention scrubbing cauldrons *without* magic!"

He laughed.

She leaned over to see if she were hallucinating.

He was laughing!

Then she started laughing.

She learned a lot that day, sitting under that tree, just listening to Snape's voice talk about her father. She envisioned her father standing in front of her as he spoke. He had been the Dark Lord's darling in the '70s. When he started hanging around the Death Eaters and especially after his fifth year, he spent more and more time with him. He was French, so he was unique and mysterious. He and Lucius Malfoy were constantly trying to goad the other; both men were extremely good-looking and (Snape's voice grew very soft at this point) equally vicious.

Charles Dangler was in the most intimate circle with Voldemort. He was a man not to be crossed. Starting at fifteen, Snape had been in awe of the older man. He was in his 30's, an excellent duelist, very suave, and genteel. He oozed manners. The wives of the other Death Eaters practically fawned over him. Snape admitted he wanted to be just like him. He followed him around like a dog whenever in his presence. Lucius was already being groomed into his likeness, so when he was at school, he followed Lucius around like a dog. Hence, the derogatory term of being "Lucius Malfoy's lapdog" was born.

As Amanda listened, she started to understand why Snape chose to not face her while he said these things. Severus Snape was a very prideful and neurotic man. He had endured far too much humiliation for his 30+ years. This was a very big step for him. He did not have to say these things for her to understand.

Once a week, and the day always changed so he could keep his control over the meetings, she would get an owl telling her the day and time and she would meet with him under the tree, and he would talk. She always found him waiting there. She would take her seat and he would start up where they left off.

Each week became harder and harder to bear. He spared her nothing, but honestly, she had never asked that of him. She would sit and the tears would roll down her face as she listened. Her father had been a sadist, a vicious murderer that enjoyed all kinds of torture, but especially torture of a sexual nature. He loved virgins. His true madness had been hidden from Snape until after he had graduated from Hogwarts, moved into Malfoy Manor and was with the Death Eaters full-time.

"I was taken completely unawares. I thought I knew what I was getting into, but I knew nothing! I was blinded with a desire for power," he said, berating himself.

"What was it like living there? Did my father live there?" These were the only times Amanda spoke, when he got stuck in his remembering and started to either rave about how much an arsehole someone else was or condemn himself for being duped into serving the Dark Lord.

"No, he went from place to place, but yes, he did spend a great deal of time there. Those were the worst times. He knew how to seduce and lure women. He was like that fox in that Muggle fairytale. Where the fox lures the duck, turkey, and chicken, I think, into his lair where he kills and eats them. For as debonair as he was before he came across an unfortunate Muggle girl or woman, once he got them in his clutches, his viciousness towards them was just as efficient. It was *frightening* to behold."

"I'm sorry to interrupt, but can I tell you some things I came across after my father's death and also some things about my father that were confusing growing up? Do you think you could explain them?" Amanda asked.

"Perhaps."

"Well, he drank a lot. But he would lock himself in his office and rage. He never raged in front of me until the night he died. He would smash things, scream. But the next day, he was calm and collected. Our house-elves always cleaned up after him, so I never saw the damage. But I was never allowed in his office, although I would try to catch glimpses. It was always spotless. You would never know that he raged in that room on a frequent basis. Then, after his death I found a secret dungeon in our chateau. There were manacles and things...I don't even know what they were! There was dried blood on the walls and it reeked of stale sex."

"Sex?" He snorted. "What do you know about the smell of sex...from the *Pensieve*?" he sneered sarcastically.

"Snape, I'm not a virgin. I know about sex," she snarked.

He whipped around his side of the tree so fast; she thought he was going to lose his balance. "You've had sex?" he whispered in a shocked tone.

Amanda leaned over to face him, closed her eyes and shook her head. "Snape, I'm 18. I had a boyfriend when I attended Beauxbatons. He was a Muggle from the village. I was 17, he was 17...why in the *hell* am I telling you this?" she snapped at him in irritation.

He whipped back to his side. They were quiet for a while. Then he said in a small voice, "Did you like having sex?"

She was intrigued! *Mr. Snarky is interested in my sex life!* she thought.

"Well, I hurt for the first few times, but I think he didn't put too much into the foreplay department. But, after a while, it got okay."

"Idiot!" he muttered. "Did you ever have an orgasm?" he asked quietly.

Her mouth dropped. Now she knew if they were facing each other he would never have the balls to ask her those questions! *he is being completely*

inappropriate! she thought. *But I am liking it. Why do I like this?*

"Once. But I had to orchestrate the whole thing, you know, do *it* myself. He was a real selfish boy and I think that was the problem. He was a boy, not a man."

She heard a snort. "Just because a male was fortunate to age beyond puberty does not a good lover make!" he snapped.

"Sure," Amanda agreed. "I guess...I just know my own experience."

"But you liked it, or at least wanted to experience it again, even though he did not fulfill you?"

"Yes, I..." she stopped talking. *Oh my goodness! He's never made love to a woman!*

She broke the rule and crawled over to his side. He drew back in horror. "Get back to your side!" he bellowed and turned his face from her.

"*Severus*," she whispered as softly and lovingly as she could. Her heart was broken for him!

He turned to her and his face relaxed. His eyes softened and the tension lines melted away.

"You know, I never get to hear a woman say my name. It's always 'Professor,' or if they don't know me, 'Mister.' Even here, it's 'Snape.' But even the few times Poppy or Minerva says my name, it's so clinical or business-like. When Narcissa Malfoy says my name, I feel *dirty*."

He reached up and took her wand from her hair. Amanda used it to keep her hair up and out of her face. It tumbled down in tangles...greasy tangles...since working with potions day in and out made one's hair a wreck! The wind blew it around a bit, but neither one cared. Amanda knew this was a benchmark moment for him. She was not going to ruin it for him by protesting her vanity.

Obviously, as he touched her hair and ran his fingers through it, he liked what he saw and felt. She did not stop him.

He continued as if a thousand miles away. "Is it too much to have a woman all my own, to speak my name so lovingly like you did, a woman all my own to love me and want to *be* with me and like it? Or maybe I've done too much. I've forfeited the right." He stopped talking, but he did not stop touching Amanda's hair.

She continued to kneel before him and reached her hand up to his face and stroked his cheek. "No, Severus. What you ask for is not too much. You deserve a woman of your own who will say your name in a way that thrills you like no one else can. A woman that in her arms you can feel safe and loved deeply. I wish this for you," she whispered sadly.

He swallowed and she noticed he was breathing hard. He took his other hand and brought it to her shoulder and gently pulled her closer to him. She was just a breath away.

"Please, say my name again," he asked in a voice so full of anguish, Amanda thought he would cry.

"*Severus*."

He kissed her. He pulled her to him and held on so tight she felt lost in his embrace. They were a striking sight to behold. Two people in billowing robes rustled by the wind underneath the fall leaves, kissing so passionately as if kissing were something no one had ever discovered before.

But for Severus Snape, nothing could be further from the truth.

You Fall in Time

Chapter 7 of 9

Snape and Amanda take some huge strides in their relationships, but not without the pain and hurt that comes with opening up old wounds.

A/N: Thanks to all who have reviewed, keep it coming! I truly enjoy reading and commenting on your insights and questions. I know this is a long chapter, but I couldn't break it up. I hope some of you who are "pro-Lily" won't flame me too badly for the things said. Again, thanks to my beta, ImOnMedication.

Amanda didn't see Severus for a while after that. She was concerned as to how he was handling his emotions. As far as she knew, it had been his first kiss. She realized he dealt with a lot of guilt over the rape he committed against that Muggle girl all those years ago. He was going to have to come to terms with his past. Amanda could not absolve him and was wise enough not to try. The only one to absolve him properly was that poor girl, and she was dead. There was no one to say, "I forgive you." He was going to have to forgive himself. And that would be, for Snape, the most difficult step to take.

And talking about difficult steps, Amanda had her own bugaboo to face. The information that Severus had shared with her about her father had left her so sad and empty inside she thought she would always feel as if she had been hollowed out. She had not been blessed with the most upright of parents. Like Severus, she had been forced to find her own way, her own direction, since the directions her parents provided were unacceptable.

Amanda knew she had to forgive her father: her lying, deceitful, conniving, vicious, rapist of a father. She refused to take on his guilt and punish herself for his sins. She would find her own way, but she had to let him go. So she took the separation from Severus to work out her newfound knowledge of whom her father truly had been. She cried and went over all the happy memories of the Papa she knew and reconciled him to the truth of the real person he was behind her back. The man who tucked her in at night also stalked women and raped them. The same man who sang to her and took her horseback riding and threw her birthday parties was also at the same time the man who killed women after torturing them. He had kissed her every night before she slept and afterwards would force his mouth on screaming women. It was enough to drive her insane.

Maybe he had wanted to be good? Perhaps he had tried? NO she decided. *Perhaps no one is completely good or completely evil. We all have the capacity for evil and good.* Her father chose to be a deceptive and cruel person. So, she cried over the loss, over the Papa she thought she knew, and then came to the realization she would have to let him go and forgive him, which meant she would have to give him up, release herself from him, and hand him over to the Great Deity in the Heavens to face and be judged. *That is going to take a long time*, she thought while she cried. Then came the most horrible thought of *allhow am I ever going to be able to trust another man again?*

She was actually grateful now that she and Severus were taking a break. Things had happened so fast and the kiss was so rash. For all she knew, she could have opened a Pandora's box! What had she been thinking? How would she ever be able to trust *him*?

They continued to meet after a two-week separation. Amanda realized upon seeing him how much he needed space from her, and so she did not pressure him into revealing his inner turmoil. The weather was vile, but they persevered, just in heavier clothing. He started to explain some of the things about Amanda's father's personality and the oddities the young woman found that she could not understand.

"You must understand, Amanda, that your father was mentally unstable. He had horrible rages that would come over him. He could be calm one moment, and then would set off and disappear for hours, returning return with a couple of girls. What was reprehensible was that we were forced to watch. I say forced because *I* didn't want to see Muggle women and girls being raped. I developed a lack of interest in sex after I raped that girl. For a 17-year-old to not want sex was *hilarious*. I was the brunt of all kinds of jokes until my magic became dark enough to make them all believe that dark magic *was* sex for me. But, uh, actually for years I was... impotent," he whispered softly.

She did not say one word. That must have been so humiliating for him to reveal. Maybe one day in the future she could say to him how much a respected his trust in her to be so open, but not now.

"I'm not anymore. I realized that after the Dark Lord was gone. A few years went by, and I was noticing some of the seventh year girls trying to flirt with me for better grades. Especially Slytherin girls...they were ruthless and merciless. But I never touched them. I have never crossed that line. I need you to believe me."

"I do, Severus, I do." She didn't know what else to say.

There was an awkward silence and she winced. She was so grateful to be on this side of the tree! Finally, he continued his assessment of her father.

"Amanda, your father, I think, continued in his rages, from what you've told me. And the dungeon you found...well, he probably was indulging in his 'Muggle hunting,' as he called it after you went off to school. Your mother was gone; he probably had either shown her his sexually deviant side or she discovered it, and that's what made her flee. But you would have to talk with her about it. Honestly, Amanda, I am *shocked* to learn he did not harm you before that night. He was an evil man. I would not put him above committing incest." There was tightness in his voice. *Was he crying?*

"Do you want to talk it, Severus?" she asked timidly.

"Not really. I was so used to being ganged up on. Fucking Potter and his *Marauders*! Four against one, always" He all of a sudden bolted and started walking back to the castle. She jumped up and raced after him.

"Severus!" she called out.

He strode fast, ignoring her. She ran faster. By the time he reached his secret passageway to the dungeons, she was on his heels.

"Leave me be!" he snarled.

She grabbed onto his arms. "No, you're far too emotional. You shouldn't be alone," she insisted.

He stood silent and rigid. Amanda did not release him; he was finally going to let it out *Please, please say something!* she begged to herself.

"I trusted Lucius. I knew that there was going to be some sort of sexual initiation. He told me the procedure. After I was branded with the Dark Mark, I was to be entrusted into Malfoy's care. He was to be a kind of "guide" for me to follow as I acclimated into my new life as a Death Eater. He informed me beforehand that some sort of initiation after my audience with the Dark Lord ended would take place. He told me it was going to be sexual in nature. I didn't know if I was going to have to have masturbate in front of them or if someone was going to have sex with me, or if I was going to have to have sex with someone in front of everyone...but Lucius had *promised* me he was going to take care of me, and if I was going to get buggered, it was going to be him. He told me to *trust* him." He clenched and unclenched his jaw. *He's coming unglued, and I'm kind of happy about it. He needs to let it out,* she thought.

"I need a drink," he said abruptly.

"I'll join you," she offered just as abruptly.

He leaned into her and looked down at the young woman with mixed feelings. "Fine. But if come into my rooms, don't expect me to be a gentleman!" he growled.

"If you touch me, I'll hex you six ways from Sunday!" she swore.

"You obviously take me for a desperate man, Miss Dangler."

She looked at him. "Is that the best you can do? You can insult me better than that!" She smirked.

His mouth twitched; he was trying hard not to laugh.

"After you," he said with a formal bow.

He drank and drank. She thought so much alcohol consumption would kill a man as thin as he was *But again, he is tall*, she thought. As he drank he started telling her about an incident in which he lost the only woman he loved...who had been his best friend...and the only person who ever truly loved him. He went on and on about her patience and caring ways, and how that asshole Potter had stolen her from him.

Amanda snorted.

He turned to her, confused, with tears streaming down his face. She was sitting on the sofa, arms crossed, frowning, and shaking her head.

"What! I loved her, I wanted to marry her!" he fumed.

Amanda was annoyed. "You wanted to *possess* her; you didn't *love* her! She was your *obsession*! And I see in death you are *still* obsessed!"

His eyes were boring into hers. "I would have done ANYTHING for her. I wanted to DIE when she died!" he roared.

Amanda covered her ears and looked at the ceiling. His voice was so loud; Amanda thought the ceiling would cave in. This was getting ridiculous and she wasn't going to put up with his delusions anymore.

"Severus," she said calmly as she got up and walked to him. "When you *love* someone, you do what is best for *them*, not *yourself*."

"But that is why I had to get power and acclaim, for her! Potter with his damn Quidditch and women drooling over him. What did I have to catch her eye and keep her?"

"Keep her? *Keep her?*" she shrieked. "People are not to be kept! You have a very possessive nature, Severus. You'd do best to check yourself...because that is fucked up!" she warned him.

They were silent for a while, and then Amanda brought up something he had told her about an argument he'd had with Lily.

"Remember you told me a while ago that you and she almost came to blows after the Lupin/Werewolf incident?"

"Yes," he said, drawn out.

You said you were so angry because she didn't like what your friends were doing dabbling in the dark arts. Then you got angry with her because she defended the Mauraders because in her words, 'At least they don't use dark magic.'

"Correct," he said, weighing her words carefully now.

"Then she says that you are ungrateful because Potter saved your life, and you just went off the deep-end with her!"

"I did no such thing!" he snarled.

"Liar! You told me you knew Potter wanted Lily for himself, and his act of heroism was just a ploy to steal her away from you. You started to tell her you were not going to 'let her' get close to Potter. Then she jumped on your case about you 'letting her' do anything. Do you see what I see? You laid claim on her like she was your property and how dare that evil bully Potter try and take what's yours."

He walked closer to her...he was so drunk, otherwise there was no way he would ever be so forthright!

"What would you suggest of me? What woman wants to be shagged by a man with greasy hair?" he said pathetically.

"Oh, come on, Severus!" she laughed. "You and I both know it's because of the damn potions. I've got the same problem. Why do you think I keep my hair in a bun all the time?"

"What woman wants a pale, hooked nosed, ugly *git*?"

"Hey, some women think a large nose is a sign of good things underneath the robes," she retorted with a wink and a smile.

He glared at her. "I'm thin; I've no muscles."

"Big deal! Some women don't like bulging muscles! It's overrated. Besides, you're toned and strong!" She argued with her chin jutting out in defiance.

"I don't smile, I sneer."

"Women love that!" she said in mock desire, her eyes widening.

He blushed. The stupid git actually blushed! Amanda started giggling and laughing. He started laughing too. But then he got serious and morose again. She noticed they were so close he could kiss her quite easily.

"But you are beautiful. I saw your eyes when I was in the hospital." He leaned into her. "Your eyes are like flashes of magic from a wand...that flash purple. With your hair down, you are so beautiful...." He stopped talking and swiftly took her wand from her hair and ran his hands through it. "I love your hair, Amanda," he whispered as he inhaled her scent. He buried his face into her hair and crushed her to him. She slowly pulled away. He stiffened up a little and walked away to pour himself another drink. She sat back down on the sofa.

Something was happening between them, and she was sure he wanted to kiss her again, perhaps even more. But, before anything more could happen, this whole "Lily situation" had to be put to rest...at least to Amanda's satisfaction. She would have to take a different approach.

"If Lily was really worth all this bullshit crying and mourning, she should have been worthy of it," she murmured, waiting for the explosion.

"WHAT?" he screamed as he slammed his glass on the table, shattering it into pieces.

Amanda jumped up. "Hell yes, Severus! If you had pulled that Death Eater shite on me, I would have lit into you at the start. None of this, 'I make excuses your for bad behavior to other people.' She gave her approval for your bad behavior...by *omission*...because she didn't *love* you! If she had truly loved you, and wanted you, she would have fought for you. That whole 'I can't forgive you because you called me a Mudblood'...well that's just a piss-poor excuse for her to end the relationship so she could have a clean conscience! She had already had enough. That was just the proverbial straw, Severus."

He gaped at Amanda as if he could not register what she was saying. And as she continued her railing against Lily, she walked closer and closer to him, gesturing with her hands until they were inches apart by the end of her diatribe.

"I'm serious! Because when you love someone, you don't sit on your arse and let that kind of shit go down *Five years* she sat back and just watched Malfoy and that lot suck you in. And *sure*, she bitched from time to time, but she never laid down the law with you. And what *is worse* is that she *knew* how love starved and needy you were for acceptance! And that's just bang out of order, Severus! She was not *invested* enough in you to stand up to you and call your actions for what it was: a bag of wank...and tell you flat out that you were on the road to hell! If she ever *really loved you*, she would have told you, 'Severus, I love you, and I don't give a DAMN what those blighters think about their pure-blood bullshit and their power trips. If you want to be a man to me, then be my man and tell those fuckers to go fuck themselves! Because you are too GOOD and DECENT for that lot!'"

Now she was angry. She was so angry that this formidable, intelligent man in front of her, one of the most powerful wizards in the world, was spending his days and nights mourning for a woman so unworthy of him. She couldn't take it anymore.

She had to leave before she really lost her temper and either started hexing him again or snog him senseless! And why she felt such an intense desire to snog him when she was so angry with him was disturbing on so many levels, she didn't know where to begin! So, she grabbed her cloak and started to storm out. She halted at the doorway and turned to face him with one more question.

"Severus, if Lily had ever *once* told you she wanted to be with you for the rest of her life, that she wanted to be your wife, and give you children, would you have taken the Dark Mark?" Then she turned and left him to his thoughts.

Snapé just stood there half-pissed and seemingly paralyzed by her words.

A week later, they were grading papers late one evening...*not speaking*...and silently carried on. He was so angry that she had insulted Lily, and she was completely hacked off that he was wasting so much of himself on some ideal of that woman. *Not that I care*, she thought stubbornly. *I don't want him*

He would glare at her from time to time if she made too much noise with her quill or rustled her papers too much. She half-wished he would just hex her so she could just have an excuse to completely lose it and give him a good thrashing!

She finished her work after four hours of silence. When she rose to leave, and he said, "Tomorrow at 2:00. I'll be there," he did not break his stride.

"Fine," she answered coolly. She was almost out the door when she spun around to address him.

"I've figured out something, Snape," she said haughtily.

He fixed his eyes on hers and sneered at her attempts to goad him. "And what is that, Miss Dangler?"

"You hate teaching because you are faced every day with youth. All that potential, all that future, it reminds you every minute of every day what you lost, what you threw away, and what you can never get back. You live constantly in the failures of your youth...in all that waste."

She leaned in across the desk that separated him. This was what he hated so much. Her earnestness, her ability to drive right through the walls and force him to face all the things he wanted to so desperately forget and avoid. This constant collision between them wearied him, but at the same time sparked a hope that was...*disturbing!*

He bolted up and faced off with her. "Why must you continue to force me to face so much pain? You have stripped me bare. What is your point to all this? Or do you just want to destroy me?" he said angrily.

"No!" she cried. "I just want you to see that life is all around you. Instead of blasting rose bushes and getting off on humiliating students who are discovering love and exploring their feelings, maybe you should be doing some rolling around in some rosebushes yourself! You are alive you know, no matter how much you want to deny it!" she yelled as she stormed out of the room.

"I don't know where to even start with you...you barmy witch! Just go away! Just leave me be!" he yelled after her, so annoyed that she could make him feel like a stupid dunderheaded schoolboy! He sat down hard in his chair. He couldn't even summon his usual sarcastic, indifferent, manner towards her anymore. How was it possible to want to hex a witch into oblivion AND rip her clothes off and fuck her within an inch of her life at the same time?

She had barely enough time to get comfortable against her side of the tree before her hearing was assaulted with the following words, "I raped and murdered a young virgin girl. She was maybe 16. Your father had her ready for me. I did it. I just did it. I had never touched a woman before, except the hugs from Lily and the kisses she'd give me on my cheek, but I had never touched a woman's naked body, or ever had a woman touch me. And then I do this horrible thing, and then I killed her. And if that wasn't wretched enough, I'm partly responsible for Lily's death! I have never touched a woman since. Why should I ever think I deserve a woman, that I have any right to enjoy a woman's touch?"

Oh dear God! It's true! He has never truly been intimate with a woman. And what's worse is that he thinks he should never be able to Amanda thought.

"Well, Severus, I saw it. You know I saw it. You and I know that it was a test of your 'loyalty', and from the look on your face, you were torn between disgust and lust. From what you've told me, you were required to watch these rape sessions, you were being groomed and conditioned to think of sex as power and pain. You were raped yourself before you raped that poor girl. You were violated, betrayed, and I saw that. I saw the shock and horror on your face. The horror on your face was so much like the horror on your face when you raped that girl. You have to mourn the loss of your innocence, Severus. Then you have to let both of them go."

"Both? Who?"

"The Muggle girl and Lily. You have to forgive yourself and let them go. I have to accept the reality of my father for what he was and let him go. He wasn't who I thought he was. Now he's dead, and I'll never be able to have the relationship I should have had with him. It's gone...it's over. You and I were just thrown into this world that was sick and twisted. I hurt for you, I hurt for the evil my father committed against you and I hurt for the evil you committed against that poor Muggle girl. Hurting people hurt people, and they in turn hurt more people. It is a virus that cannot be cured, only contained. There always will be evil and pain in this world. But you turned from it! You did not continue to rape. You were so guilt-ridden you became impotent, for the love of Merlin! If that isn't remorse, I don't what is! Don't keep on hurting yourself, punishing yourself for your past sins. Let yourself be the man you *know* you can be. The man you really want to be. That is all that's needed for amends. At least in my view."

"You talk too much!" he said irritably.

Amanda turned to the side of the tree to get a glimpse of him. *Son-of-a-bitch! Of all the things I said, he had to say that?*

"Are you completely insane?" she snarked.

"Probably."

A/N: So you know, the comment by Amanda, "Women love that" to rebut what Snape said, "I don't smile, I sneer," came from a MASH episode. I am a HUGE MASH fan. It's taken from a scene when Hawkeye and Radar are in Rosie's Bar, and Radar is unsure of drinking his grape Nehi because "It makes my teeth purple." To that, Hawkeye retorts as he downs his liquor, "Women love that!" It just came to me as a humorous retort to so many pathetic excuses Snape uses to sabotage relationships.

You Finally Find...

Chapter 8 of 9

Amanda and Severus struggle to find their way back to each other. The war escalates, and Amanda is separated from Severus. At the end of the war, Amanda finally steps up to her mother and ends the power struggle. Amanda learns Severus is gravely wounded and returns to London.

A/N: Thanks to all of those who reviewed. Also, a special thanks to my beta, ImOnMedication. I also want to thank Southern Witch for her patience as I struggled with my grammar issues! Up next: The epilogue.

The next day they sat in the freezing cold. Amanda was so bundled up she could barely move. "This has now taken a left turn into psychotic behavior," she warned him.

He laughed. "Will you come here to my side and let me hold you?"

"No!" she snapped. "You are going to help me get up from under this tree, and you are going to make us a cup of tea in your rooms, and we're going to sit and talk like civilized people."

They walked back and got comfy in front of the fire. They sipped on hot toddies and snuggled together. He put his arm around her and pulled her close into him. Before she knew it, he was putting moves on her that were so sweet and innocent, she couldn't resist the temptation to see where it would lead. Soon, they were kissing, and after an eternity, he was rising over her, gently lowering her on her back. He was very eager to learn how to be a great kisser. He grazed his hand down her right breast, and she gasped in shock at how good it felt.

His breath was getting ragged, and his hands were trembling. Amanda pushed him upright and knelt in front of him, taking off her robe and shirt slowly and removed her bra. She took his trembling hands and placed them on her breasts. She closed her eyes and leaned her head to the side and sighed in pleasure as he cupped and massaged them. She wanted him to see how he pleased her. He fastened his mouth over one nipple and a moan escaped from her mouth.

"Open your eyes," he murmured deeply.

She opened them and watched him as he explored this new territory. Before long, she was aching and whimpering for more.

He lifted her up and forced her legs to straddle him. He pushed her up on her knees, and as he lost himself in her breasts, his one hand found its way inside her knickers. Amanda's head fell back, and she gave herself over to the sensations he was giving her. She murmured her approval when he found her clit and began to stroke it tenderly. She grabbed at his hair as she rocked her hips against him and screamed out his name as she came.

She opened her eyes lazily, and he was positively smug with what he had accomplished. *Oh, no, mister!* she thought. *Now it's your turn to beg!*

She pushed him down and rose over him. He leaned back on his elbows so he could watch her. Slowly, she unbuttoned his trousers and released his swollen manhood. He gasped for air as she lowered her mouth over the tip. He watched in her shock, his mouth gaping open in disbelief. She barely started licking the tip of his cock when he shook violently and clenched his fists. His eyes were smoldering as he watched her tongue circle around the underneath of the blood-engorged head. She barely completed her way around when he shouted, "NO!" as he came.

He was embarrassed and angry. He turned his back to Amanda as he buttoned up his trousers. His back was quivering. She wondered if he were crying. She placed her hand on his back gently and tried to assuage his ego.

"It's okay, Severus. You did nothing wrong. Honestly!" She tried to comfort him, but he shrank from her touch.

"Please, just go away!"

"No! Why are you pushing me away?"

"Can I please just have some sense of privacy? Is it too damn much to ask from you? Why do you continuously want to humiliate me? GET. OUT!" he raged, his hair covering his face as he cowered on the floor.

She got up, put her clothes back together and silently left. She felt so bad for him. It wasn't anyone's fault; these things just happened. But she did berate herself for pushing him too far. He went into complete sensory overload. She wanted to apologize, but he was so fiercely proud and terrified of being humiliated...it was the absolute worst thing that could have happened! So, it just had to play out.

Over the next few days, she sat at mealtimes in silence next to him. He did not look at her, and she did not try to press him. They worked together in the lab, speaking only of potions, students, grading, and anything else work related. He kept a stiff upper lip about it all and was extremely formal. She knew she could not approach him; she just had to wait it out. It was very trying at times. His physical distance after being so intimate broke Amanda's heart. She fluctuated between wanting to rant and rave at him for acting like an idiot about the whole thing and desperately wanting to stroke his ego and build him up again.

But damned if she were going to do either! After all, against what the male gender believe, women have egos as well, and hers was pretty well bruised. Each time he glared at her with his icy stare, and went out of his way to make cutting remarks about her lack of intelligence, or her ineptitude as an apprentice, made her determined to not do anything to make up with him. She knew it was his defense mechanism, but hell, she had feelings too! It took all of her reserves not to hex him. She would not give him the satisfaction that his childishness would affect her. But every night when she was alone in her room, she would cry herself to sleep, remembering how she had released herself to his touch, and now that same man whom she had opened up to was treating her like dirt. Yes, she understood the whys and reasons therefore, but knowing didn't make her heart stop hurting, or made her ego less bruised, and her feelings less hurt. In short, Amanda was humiliated!

An owl arrived two weeks later and asked if they could meet for another chat. She sniffled as she read his letter. She was weary and couldn't take much more. It was too hard! She got enough information about her father from him that she felt she could retrieve. Severus had recovered fully from his heart attack, and she had never wanted to be his apprentice anyway! Perhaps it was time to move on and start over again.

So, Amanda came and took her traditional seat on her side of the tree, freezing, and determined to end whatever this relationship was between them. They sat there in the snow, in silence for a long time. Amanda didn't know how to begin or where to start. Then he rose up and stood in front of her. His black cloak billowed in the wind. He looked so sad and contrite. He reached his hand out to her, and she accepted it. He embraced her and kissed her forcefully and with urgency. Amanda was intrigued with this Severus Snape, who was open, assured, and determined. So she allowed herself to be led back to the castle.

He took her to his rooms and slowly made love to her. She was bewildered and unsure of his tender passion, but soon she became eager and open to him setting the pace and direction of their coupling. He was silent the entire time, but was deliberate in his intention. It was a precious and tender experience for both of them. He again stroked Amanda and brought her to completion. She watched his tension filled face relax into complete bliss as he buried himself within her. She was enthralled at his joy of being inside her. Although it did not last long, she didn't worry; he would know other ways to pleasure her. She guided his fingers inside her and showed him how to stroke her more intimately. He watched in wide-eyed fascination as she cried out his name as she came. When she started to come down from her peak, he grabbed her and kissed her passionately. It was a dream come true for the wizard who only wanted a witch of his own to say his name in a way that made him feel safe and secure. It was a very intense and gigantic leap of faith for the hardened Potions master to lower his walls for the young Amanda Dangler. It was also a beautiful step in the right direction for the young and hardened Amanda Dangler, who had given up any hope of being able to trust any man ever again.

The next morning, they lay entangled in each other, silently listening to each other breathe, when he finally whispered in her ear, "I'm sorry."

Amanda turned her head to face him. She looked deeply into his onyx eyes and whispered, "I am sorry, too."

Snape walked into Dumbledore's office. The Headmaster was sober and deeply concerned over something. He silently listened to Dumbledore's news without emotion. Madam Peale was very aware of the growing rumors of Voldemort's return and believed them. Her experience as Madam Dangler left a terrible mark on her. She was terrified of Voldemort's return. She was going to France and demanded Amanda return with her.

"Severus, I'm sure Amanda would stay if you asked her to. I'm old, but not so old that it has not escaped my notice how close the two of you have become."

"No, Albus, it is better this way. When this war is over, then perhaps I can...perhaps." He stopped talking and slowly turned and left.

It was horrible! The last two weeks he had spent every spare moment enjoying Amanda's body. He had never been so happy and satisfied. She was as eager, since her own sexual history had been so lacking and dismal. He loved every minute he could spend naked with her, burying himself into her warm flesh and feeling her soft body move underneath him as she cried out her release. There was no other feeling in the world like it, he decided. To know you were giving the woman you loved such intense pleasure that she would cry out your name...that was worth doing anything for. And he hated the thought of giving her up now, just as he had discovered all the pleasures they could give each other! But he knew deep down he couldn't continue this way. He could only focus on one thought whenever he was not with her: when would he be able to bury himself again inside her? She drove him to distraction, and for a spy, it was too dangerous to be so distracted. He would have to send her away.

"No!" Amanda had cried when she found him packing HER things. "I want to stay with you...I belong by your side!" She grabbed him and held him tightly to her. He gently put his arms around her for a moment and pulled her away from him. It was agony. To hear her say she wanted to stay made him so happy he wanted to say fuck it all, leave everything else behind, and just disappear with her. But he had promises to keep.

"If I live through this war, I will marry you. Have I made myself clear?" he said gruffly as he finished the last of her packing.

"What did I tell you about being possessive?" she joked through her tears.

He smirked and held her tightly to him. "I'm just making myself clear so there will be no misunderstandings between us."

"Is that a proposal?"

"No, I will propose after the war. But for now, you have to leave me. I cannot focus with you around. Not being able to do all the things I have to do for the Order without my complete focus is making my life unbearable, not to mention dangerous for both of us. I cannot do the work I need to do and have these feelings around me all the time. It's far too risky and it could cost us our lives."

"Okay. I will leave. You come for me," she warned as she jabbed her finger into his chest. "Don't you dare die on me...I'll hex you so bad you'll wish you were dead!" She stopped...rolling her eyes as she realized how stupid she sounded.

He laughed so hard. "Feisty from the first moment we met...what else would ensure my survival than being threatened by you?"

Amanda Dangler walked into St. Mungo's Hospital. The nervousness she felt was choking her. She was terrified. As she sat and waited for news on Severus' condition, she watched as dozens of people trickled in with various wounds from the war. The moaning and sounds of pain was unbearable.

She had been in Greece when the word came that Voldemort had fallen. Rumors had abounded on the death toll. Amanda had waited two days for a word from Severus, but no owl came. She had felt something wasn't right. She had decided she would take matters into her own hands. She then had a fantastic row with her mother before leaving. She had been hastily packing her valise when her mother had stormed into her room, fuming and irate.

"How can you chase after that Death Eater? He is no better than your father...a vile, sick, evil swine!" she spat viciously.

Amanda did not stop her packing. "Mother, you cannot deter me. I've waited over two years for this day to come! I have to know if he is still alive."

"If he is, he'll be in Azkaban where he rightfully belongs! He murdered Albus Dumbledore! What more proof do you need that Severus Snape is evil?"

Her words had stung. It was true that she had doubted when she had heard about Dumbledore's death, and Severus' complicity in the whole affair, but after a period of reflection, she had decided to remain resolute until real proof could be shown to her, not just the ravings of the various Wizarding newspapers that she knew to be biased!

She had smiled at her mother. "That's what Papa told me. He was wrong too. I'm sorry, but I must go." She then walked to the door with her valise, and just before walking out, her mother had screamed at her from the top of the stairs and had continued ranting on her way down to meet her face to face.

"If you go back to that Death Eater, don't ever think of seeing me ever again! I suffered far too much to ever debase myself with another animal like him! But at least I know now why you were so insistent on going back to Hogwarts...even after he almost killed you! Your father ruined you; poisoned your mind! You must like being used and degraded by men like Snape! Well, if that is what you want, don't come crawling back here after he's broken you and destroyed your ability to ever love again!"

Amanda had been furious! "How can you judge me? You walked out on me when I was an infant! If Papa was so evil as you say...and I'm not disputing the fact he was...why would you leave me behind? I did the best I could with what you and Papa left me. I am tired of answering to you...a woman who abandoned her only child. I owe you nothing! I owe Papa nothing! I owe myself everything!"

Mother and daughter finally faced each other as women. At last, Amanda knew what her father had done to her mother. She felt so sorry for all of them. It was sad, to be sure, but she knew Severus Snape was not like her father. Maybe one day her mother would see it too. But even if she never would, Amanda was now free from her manipulations over her life.

"Goodbye, Mother," was all she had said as she Disappeared.

She sat in the waiting room waiting to find out the fate of the man she loved and had given up everything for. Finally, Kingsley Shacklebolt came out to speak with her.

"Absolutely amazing. If he had not been such a brilliant Potions master and had the antivenin on him, he would have died. He was barely alive when we got to him. His condition is very grave. You must prepare yourself for the worst. He still may die."

Amanda walked into the room. He was so thin and delicate with all the tubes running in and out of him. He looked as if he were already dead. She sat and took his hand in hers, and cried softly as she rested her head on his hand.

For days she stayed, watching over him and caring for him. She told him all about her life the past two years; how she tried to keep up with any news she could find about him. Sometimes she became so scared, she begged him to wake up. She pleaded while crying for him to not leave her. Then she would rage and yell at him to wake up. She even threatened to hex him if he wouldn't wake up!

One night she was half-awake, resting her head on the edge of his bed, her hand holding his when she heard a groaning by her. She lifted her head slightly and watched, holding her breath as Severus Snape opened his black eyes wearily. He slowly looked over at her and gave a twisted smile. She smiled back as the tears flowed down her face.

"I couldn't die," he whispered weakly. "You swore you'd hex me."

She burst out laughing as the tears streamed down her face.

I'm Close Behind...

Chapter 9 of 9

The epilogue.

They raced to the dungeons, laughing and chasing each other all the way. He loved how her blonde, curly hair flew about her face and shoulders as she ran from him, glancing back now and again to see how close he was gaining on her. She wore slippers, so she would be comfortable for the ceremony. Now she was making a mad dash from him, her white train draping over each step and stair she took.

She reached the door first and hurriedly tried to break through his wards. He raced to her, and they collided in front of the door of his private rooms. He passionately kissed her and spared no time in taking off her wedding dress.

"Not here!" she squealed as he started to uncover her breasts. "Anyone could see me! Can't you wait until we're inside?" He smiled wickedly and opened the door. He pulled her inside and resumed his task. He loved her naked. He just loved her. Period. She fell back naked on the bed and watched him strip. She giggled and laughed in anticipation. He had become quite the skillful lover over the past year. Once he had recovered from his injuries from the war, they had taken a year to make up for the two and a half they had spent apart. He had resumed his position as Potions master, and Amanda had begun Auror Training.

Meticulously and with extreme attention to detail, the wizard began to make love to his new wife with the passion he had always reserved for potion making, much to Amanda's delight and pleasure. She never thought the day would come where she would be able to find someone to love her so honestly. And that this blessed day would come with having Severus Snape of all wizards to become her husband! They both were amazed at how life had turned and twisted down such a strange road to this moment where they were now together and could be finally free and happy.

Not that they never, ever collided. Amanda still threatened to hex him whenever he got too snarky, and he still could shake the rafters when his temper got the better of him. But at the end of the day, when the sun set, they had an agreement. Problems would be resolved or at least set aside for the morrow because there would be only one type of colliding allowed when they went to bed at night.