

Of Anklets, Willows and Something New

by Katie616

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{Done in two}

Chapter One

Chapter 1 of 2

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Chapter 1

Marauder Era

6th Year

Gryffindor Common Room

Lily lifted her eyes to the heavens.

"No, I can't possibly just 'forget about it'! It's my sister's birthday, James. I'm going, and that's that."

"Okay, fine then, Lily! But if you're going, I want to come wish her a happy birthday," he said quite stubbornly.

Lily had no choice but to give in, for James was the only reason she had even considered going to her Muggle sister's birthday party. She and Petunia hadn't gotten along very well ever since Lily had gotten her letter from Hogwarts. Petunia hated magic, and she treated Lily like crap for going to what she called 'that freak school'.

Lily also suspected that Petunia didn't like Lily being more important than her for once. Petunia was two years older than Lily, and she flaunted the twenty-two month difference in Lily's face whenever she could. Lily would have never even remembered about her birthday if it wasn't for James.

James had been doggedly pursuing her since first year, and she had accidentally told him 'yes' to one of his frequent requests to a date with him.

* * *

It was late at night, and Lily, James, Remus, Sirius, Peter and Anna Marshall were sitting in the common room doing homework and talking about school. James was talking about Quidditch, and Lily was half-listening to him while doing a Charms essay. James was trying to talk to her, but Anna was the only one who was actually listening to him.

"Hey, Lils, wanna go on a date with me later on this week?" James asked, stopping suddenly in the middle of explaining about the dynamics of a dive to Anna.

"Yeah, sure . . ." Lily murmured distractedly.

A few seconds later, when she finally realized that everything had gone quiet, she looked up, seeing that they were all staring at her with amazed looks on their faces. The expressions, however, were quickly melting into merriment, which gave way to all-out laughter.

"What?" she asked, getting suspicious.

"Y-you just said 'yes' to James . . ." stuttered Anna.

Lily was almost scared now. What had she just agreed to?

"Yes!" James shouted; he couldn't hold in his excitement anymore. "I have succeeded in charming Lily Evans into a date! Oh, yes!"

Lily was horrorstruck. "Anna? Please tell me I'm dreaming," she pleaded with her friend.

But of course Anna couldn't say that; it wasn't true. Plus, she was enjoying this too much to bail Lily out.

* * *

The date happened to be on her sister's birthday.

Once Lily had realized this, she knew that it was the perfect way to get out of her tight spot. She had told James that she absolutely ~~had~~ had to go to Petunia's party because Petunia was leaving to go to University that summer, meaning that Lily might not see her again until next summer.

So James was insisting that he go, too, and wish Petunia a 'happy birthday'. Lily wasn't all that happy about this turn of events, but she had no choice. After all, she was the one who had told her worst enemy that she would go on a date with him and then backed out. She owed him, and he knew it.

'Although,' mused Lily, 'he wasn't nearly as much of a prat this year.' She was almost to the point where she didn't mind if he talked to her. He was acting like a normal human being at last, and Lily found that she liked it.

"Okay, James. But don't even think of doing or saying anything to make people think we're a couple."

James was not surprised at this last bit; in fact, he had suspected she would insist it.

"Don't worry, Lily. I have my battle plans set."

Lily ignored this. She was used to James' little hints. But although all his attempts at getting her to agree to a date were getting a bit wearying, she knew that now that she was going on what he considered a date (and indeed it was, of a sort), he would be even more ready to ask her many, many more times. She sighed. 'Well, I guess it was bound to happen some time. May as well just have done with it,' she thought optimistically. She would never admit it, even to herself, but she had found that it wasn't so bad to be in James' company lately, and she didn't think this date would be as bad as she made the others think she thought it would be.

Lily also found herself looking forward to the party. It seemed her inner feelings were tired of being buried. . . .

6th Year Slytherin Boy's Dormitory

Severus Snape was looking forward to the party also, but he was looking forward to it for a very different reason than Lily. He was anticipating speaking with Lily when she wasn't accompanied by friends.

The greasy-haired Slytherin had heard Lily talking about it to one of her girlfriends, hearing her say that she was going to be going home for her sister's birthday party, and had left to go think on this as soon as he had heard it. Severus was extremely excited about finally talking to Lily in private because he was going to apologize for the 'Mudblood' incident last year. He had been feeling incredibly guilty about that, even almost a year later. He knew Lily was still sore, but he was definitely not prepared for what was going to happen on that fateful Saturday night. It would make him wish he had just stayed and studied when he thought back on it, which he did not like to do.

Oblivious to this ominous fact, the dark-clad figure continued to think about how he would get there, what he should say to Lily, and, most importantly, how he was going to win her back.

Lily had always had a small circle of boys around her since the middle or so of her third year, but at the beginning of last year...Lily's fifth year...all of the boys in the school had fallen hard for her. She always had a knot of friends and admirers around her now; Severus hadn't talked to her at all since the last time he had tried...almost a year ago...to apologize for the incident. The gangly Slytherin dragged his thoughts away from that and steeled himself for the coming apology . . .

Hogwarts Entrance Hall

James arrived in front of the huge Gryffindor hourglass with fifteen minutes to spare. Lily had asked to meet him here instead of in the Common Room, for some reason. James had a sneaking suspicion that this was because she didn't want to be seen with him in front of all their friends. While the messy-haired Quidditch star would have loved to show everyone that he had finally gotten Lily Evans on a date, he figured that it would be a good idea to respect her wishes. Lily had also arranged for them to Floo to her parent's house from Professor McGonagall's office, again (as James suspected), for the same reason.

James was in his best Muggle clothes: pressed khaki trousers and a soft-looking, blue polo shirt. He had been very careful to wear Muggle clothes since Lily had told him that her sister and family were all Muggles. James' mother was always very careful to supply him with Muggle clothes 'just in case'. 'What a mother thing,' James thought, rolling his eyes. Just then he saw a lovely apparition gliding down towards him.

Lily slowly descended the marble stairs, resplendent in a soft, calf-length, chocolate-brown skirt and a dark-green tank top as she glided toward him.

She had dangling, magically chiming earrings with beads of different shades of green and a wooden chain magically carved with roses around her slender, pale neck. Her dainty feet wore nothing but woven straw flip-flops and a beaded anklet with light hues of green that reminded James of the Forbidden Forest at dawn. The only adornment for her hair was a simple, yellow headband, which was perfect with her red-as-a-rose hair. It gave the effect of a miniature sun with the red hair shining from behind the vibrant yellow headband keeping it out of her sparkling emerald eyes.

James thought she looked as wonderful as he had ever seen her. He drank in the sight of her, completely breathless.

"You look. . . beautiful," he breathed as she joined him in front of the twinkling, fire-red rubies in the Gryffindor hourglass.

She smiled, and blushed a bit.

"Thank you," she said, cheeks pink.

They stood silently for a minute in front of the hourglass, just absorbing each other's appearance. Lily found that the silence was not uncomfortable as it might have been before, but that she actually enjoyed his company. The redhead grinned as a handful of rubies soared upwards, signaling a misdeed of a fellow student. She wondered fleetingly what Sirius, Peter and Remus were doing and if perhaps these lost points were their responsibility.

When they arrived in the living room of Lily's home, it was empty. Lily's mother had been very careful to keep everyone out until they arrived. She didn't want anybody to be frightened if, in the middle of the party, green flames shot out of the fireplace and two sixteen-year-olds stepped out.

So when the green flames heralded the coming of Lily and James, the only person there was Lily's dad, who quickly stood up to welcome his daughter and her date. Lily stepped out first and hugged her dad before turning to grab James' hand and introduce him to her father.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mister Evans," James said cordially.

"Ah, yes! James, is it? I've heard a lot about you from Lily!"

"Not all of it good, I suspect," James said, grinning at Lily, whose cheeks looked pink again.

"I'm sure you're perfect for my Lily," said Mr. Evans, winking at James. This time it was James' turn to blush.

"Dad," Lily protested, but she had a hard time trying not to grin as widely as James was. She liked the fact that her father thought she and James were a good match, for some reason. She tried to wipe the smile off her face, however, because she didn't want James to know that she liked the idea that he was 'perfect for her'.

"Lily, it's a parent's sense. You may deny it, but deep down, you know I'm right, and you'll admit it some day," he said, grinning jovially.

Just then, more green flames shot out of the fireplace, and a black-clad figure stepped out.

Chapter Two

Chapter 2 of 2

The second (and last) installment of my second story here on PP. Who has come out of the fireplace? Is James or Lily—or her dad—happy about their appearance? Will or will not James hex this mystery person into little fleshy bits? Find out now!

Severus and James were momentarily stunned, but they immediately leaped into action after about two seconds' surprised silence.

James whipped out his wand, and Severus already had his in his hand and a jinx on his lips. But before either of them could do any magic, Lily shot a Shield Charm between them. It burst into being with a small 'pop' and a millisecond of bright light.

The two boys were forced back a step, the shield of shimmering power between them. James, Lily, and her dad were on one side, Severus on the other.

"Lily, what . . . ?" her father started, but Lily interrupted him.

"I don't know, dad. I was hoping Severus could explain himself," Lily said, her narrowed, flashing eyes never leaving Severus' face.

Severus was unsure of what to do. James had murder in his eyes; he obviously knew (or suspected) that Severus had not been invited, and he was ready to make Severus pay. But Severus knew this was his last chance ever to try to win Lily over, and he had to try.

"I . . . I came to speak to Lily," he said, using every last ounce of his self-control to not sneer at James.

Lily looked slightly surprised at his words, but she nodded and said, "Let's go walk outside, shall we?"

James opened his mouth, but shut it without saying anything when Lily shot him a quick look.

Lily led Severus to the back door, and they walked out into the balmy spring air.

"Lily, I want to apologize for last year. I . . ." But he got no further. Lily had turned angrily on him.

"Oh, so that's why you're here! You're trying to apologize *again*! Well, just so you know, I haven't changed my mind! I still think you're an evil, dark-arts practicing, power-hungry *git*!"

Lily paused for breath; her voice shaking when she continued.

"I can't believe you think you can just waltz into my house and expect me to accept you with open arms when you've been completely horrible to me and ignored me the rest of the school year after you insulted me in front of the whole school! But of course I won't be able to resist your *charm*. . . ." she said sarcastically.

"I was so stupid to think that you would ever be sorry! You probably thought the whole thing would be *just* *andy* and that I'd run happily into your arms when you walked in the door and that . . ." She was crying now, and sobs choked further words.

This was not how Severus had planned it to go. Well, actually, the whole thing had gone wrong from the start. James was not supposed to be there when he and Lily saw

each other face-to-face for the first time in almost a year, and Lily was supposed to be happy to see him! She wasn't supposed to be mad!

Severus tried to comfort Lily, but the words wouldn't come, and she wouldn't let him touch her.

"Just go, Severus. Just leave. Please!" she begged tearfully, and Severus, confused, angry and sad, turned on the spot and was gone.

James, who had watched the whole thing from the back windows, ran up to Lily. Torn between hunting down Snape and killing him and comforting Lily, he made up his mind when he saw that Lily was in no fit state to go back to the party. He instead sat down with her underneath a willow tree, the hanging branches hiding them from view. James stroked Lily's hair until she stopped crying.

Lily sat up a little bit and leaned her head against James' shoulder, her eyes sad in the darkness.

"Do you want to tell me what happened?" James asked softly.

Lily told him the whole story, about how she and Severus had been friends since before she even knew she had magic, about how in fifth year he had called her a Mudblood, and all the things in between. She told him about how she hadn't talked to him since last year and how she had blown up at him just now. Silent tears were still pouring down her face as she remembered and related everything.

James was still suppressing the urge to find Snape and hex him into a bloody pulp. Instead, he sat with an arm around the still-sniffing Lily until she fell silent. They sat like that for a minute, thinking their separate thoughts: James about how happy he was that the moment when he was alone with Lily had finally come, and Lily about why sitting here with James felt so right.

They sat in silence until Lily stirred and murmured, "Shouldn't we be getting inside? My parents are probably worried, and my sister's probably livid I haven't wished her a 'happy birthday' yet."

James made no mention of the fact that Lily had often said that her sister hated her for being a witch, nodded, stood, and turned to help Lily up. She grabbed his hand and he pulled her up. They walked in the back door and into the living room. Lily found Petunia and chatted for a bit while James talked with Lily's mother.

"So, how is school going?" she asked James.

"Very well, thank you," James replied politely. "I spend a lot of my time studying," he lied easily.

She nodded, obviously pleased. "Good, good. . . ." And without another word, she went over to greet Lily.

James had the feeling he'd just been subjected to a brief parental 'boyfriend test.' He also had the feeling he'd passed.

Lily came over to him after a bit. She looked a bit flustered, and Petunia looked angry.

"I think we'd better go soon," Lily murmured to James. James was confused; they'd barely been here twenty-five minutes, and she wanted to leave? Without argument, he nodded.

Lily greeted some people and chatted a bit with some Muggle friends, and then they made polite excuses and went back to the dining room to Floo back to Hogwarts.

"Bye, Mum, Dad. I'm sorry I couldn't stay longer, but you know. School and all." Lily's parents nodded understandingly, pride in their eyes at their daughter's dedication to her schoolwork.

Lily hugged her parents and James shook their hands before taking out the small bag of Floo powder McGonagall had provided for their return to school.

James threw a pinch of the glittering powder into the empty fireplace, stepped into the roaring emerald flames, and said clearly: "Gryffindor common room."

The room spun away from him, and he came to a stop facing an assortment of squashy armchairs occupied by students, some with textbooks in their laps, others talking amongst themselves.

All talk and activities halted for a few seconds as he stepped out of the fireplace and turned to help Lily down.

Lily thanked him and gave him a quick, radiant smile and a heartfelt hug. Then she walked over to her friends and talk started up again in the common room.

For a long time, nothing much was said about Lily and Severus' conversation or James and Lily's moments under the willow tree. But it had been the beginning of a very strong bond between the two teenagers. . .

Severus Snape was never the same after that day. Being called 'evil' by the girl he loved shattered his too-long-unloved heart irreparably, and he was a surlier, more withdrawn and careful person from that day forward. To really live, you have to wear your heart on your sleeve; Severus tried the best he could, loving Lily with his whole being. When she left him, he was lost, turning to darkness to fill his empty soul.

A/N

Please review! I really want to know what you guys think of this!

I don't fully agree with what I said at the end of the story, how 'she left him', because it was part Severus' and part Lily's fault that she left and that he called her a Mudblood. They're both to blame, and poor Severus never really loved again. I'm just glad that most people on here are giving him that chance. Yes, for all of you who might be wondering, Lily was exaggerating when she said that Severus had insulted her in front of 'the whole school', but she was flipping out. I think we can all cut her some slack.

I'd like to thank my brother Joseph for all of his...if sometimes annoying...constructive criticism, my good friend Amy for being so. . . Amy, and my very first beta, Erin, who made up the silliest and most hilarious names ever, kept me focused, and made me laugh even when I never thought I'd ever get this story up.

And finally, thank you to everyone who read my story and loved it, and also to those who read and didn't. The ones who did got a good story, the ones who didn't hopefully learned what not to do, and they all read it!

~Katie