

Angels and Shifters I: I See Dead People

by Alexannah

In the wake of his fifth year, Harry's newly discovered talent goes unnoticed, even to him. He thinks the dreams of Voldemort's victims are just that – dreams. Until he starts falling in love. Harry/Cedric

That Dream Again

Chapter 1 of 2

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He was in a wood of some sort. That was all he could tell. He didn't recognise it, but something told him he should know where he was.

Harry looked down at his feet. The grass was littered with autumn leaves, brown and red and gold, which crunched satisfyingly under his feet. The dew was glistening in the sunlight streaming through the trees. It caught on a spider's web, and Harry grinned at the silvery masterpiece.

There was a peaceful air about the place. One couldn't help but feel at ease. Harry stuffed his hands in his pockets and began, as he did every time, to walk. He paused only to admire the passing of a white cabbage butterfly before he saw a break in the trees.

He'd never made it this far before. Harry picked up the pace and was almost at a run when he stopped dead in his tracks.

Never had he got so far in his dream as to find another human being. But there was a boy sitting at the base of a tree, reading a book. Harry was just about to call out when a pounding ache told him to wake up.

"Ow," Harry muttered, rubbing unconsciously at his forehead and stifling a yawn. Glancing around the Transfiguration classroom, he saw several blurred faces staring at him. A moment later Hermione pushed his glasses onto his nose and elbowed him painfully in the ribs.

"Am I boring you, Mr Potter?" Professor McGonagall reprimanded.

"No, Professor, sorry." Harry struggled to keep his mouth shut against a second yawn threatening to break out.

"Kindly try to pay attention. That is the second time this week."

Harry ignored the sniggers coming from Lavender and Parvati's direction and rubbed his eyes wearily.

"Really, Harry, you have to do something about your sleeping patterns," Hermione said reproachfully ten minutes later. "If you keep falling asleep in class, you'll end up with more detentions than lessons and you'll fail your NEWTs."

"Thanks for that vote of confidence, Hermione," Harry said dryly.

"Oh, leave off him." Ron swung his bag around, almost knocking Neville flying. "Oops, sorry, Neville. What d'you expect him to do, ask You-Know-Who to infiltrate his mind at a more convenient time?"

"It's not Voldemort," Harry muttered. Already the details of the then-vivid dream were slipping away like water. "I can tell. With him, my scar always prickles."

"You said 'ouch' when you woke up."

"That's just a regular headache."

"I still think you should tell someone about these dreams, Harry," Hermione said seriously. "You were dreaming about the Department of Mysteries corridor for months last year because he was thinking about it; who's to say this forest of yours is nothing to do with him?"

Harry opened his mouth to argue and closed it again. There was no use with Hermione.

"Fine, if it makes you happy, I'll go and see Dumbledore after lunch. Not before, I'm starving."

Ron chuckled.

On his way up the spiral staircase, Harry thought hard. He couldn't deny there was something strange about the dreams. They'd begun shortly into term, each one lasting slightly longer than the last. And each time, he woke with a headache. But he hadn't been lying; it wasn't his scar at all it felt more like the time Dudley had hit him over the head with his cricket bat, and it only lasted a few seconds.

The strange thing was the detail. Whenever Harry entered the dream, he knew it was detailed like real life, completely unlike usual dreams but the moment he woke, it slipped away, and all he was left with was a fuzzy image and the feelings from the dream, mainly a sense of peace and tranquillity.

How he could explain it, he didn't know. Part of him was worried, but another part of him enjoyed the dreams and the challenge of trying to reach the end of the forest before his head jerked him back into reality; and also the sense of calm that for the most part was missing in his day-to-day life. The thing was, even with the brief pain, it just didn't feel like anything Voldemort-related at all.

Harry blinked, realising he'd been standing at the top of the staircase outside Dumbledore's door for a whole minute. He shook himself mentally and knocked.

"Enter."

The first thing he noticed was that most of Dumbledore's instruments were repaired. When Harry had apologised (and fruitlessly tried to persuade Dumbledore to let him pay) for the damage, very little progress had been made. Slightly cheered by the difference, Harry looked round at the Headmaster and cleared his throat.

A tired but thoroughly positive smile greeted him. "Good afternoon, Harry. How are you?"

"I've been worse, sir," Harry murmured, reaching out to pet Fawkes. Dumbledore's eyes twinkled.

"Is this a social visit, a vision report, or have you fallen asleep in class again? I assume it is not Voldemort-related or you would have said so immediately."

Harry grinned sheepishly. "Oh, you know about the sleeping thing?"

"There is not a lot that goes on in this school that gets past me, Harry," Dumbledore chided gently. Seeming to think along the same lines as Harry, he added, "Not a lot that is publicly visible, anyway."

Harry could tell from the slight dip in the cheerful tone that Dumbledore was also thinking of Umbridge's detentions and quickly steered the conversation in the right direction to avoid straying back into that topic. "Um, I've been having some funny dreams lately ..."

Dumbledore sat up straighter, what was left of the cheerful aura vanishing. Harry quickly added, "They're weird, but I don't get the feeling they're from Voldemort. But Hermione thought I'd better talk with you anyway."

"Hmm. Your scar doesn't hurt when you have them, then?"

Harry shook his head. "I get a bit of a headache when I wake up but it's definitely not my scar."

"That is strange." Dumbledore considered. "What do these dreams consist of? ... Why don't you sit down, sorry, I'm being very impolite ..."

Harry sat and explained shortly about the forest, the lengthening time he was staying in there for, and the way it came out all fuzzy in his mind afterwards. "I don't understand it."

"Hmm." Dumbledore stared at him for a moment, although Harry got the impression he was actually looking through him, thinking hard. "Well ... I have to say I'm stumped."

Harry flopped back in his seat.

"Hold on."

"Yes?"

Dumbledore paused for a moment before continuing. "I could with your consent, of course try to infiltrate your subconscious with Legilimency to see if I can find out where they're coming from. I will understand, however, if you don't want to go down that road."

"Er ..." Harry thought. He didn't like the idea of anyone poking about in his head. But perhaps it was best if he did find out what the dreams meant. And Dumbledore was the only one he would trust to use Legilimency on him. "OK."

Dumbledore looked slightly surprised at his permission, but stood and made his way around the desk before kneeling in front of Harry's chair. "All right. Just relax, and if there is anything you don't want me to see, or don't want to relive, imagine a closed door, and I won't go through."

Harry hesitated.

"I'll be gentle," Dumbledore promised. Harry swallowed and nodded.

For a minute, he couldn't feel anything. Then a strange sensation, like a finger poking around in a bag of gravel. He resisted the urge to expel it from his mind and tried to relax as images appeared in front of his eyes.

Memories from classes that day. Ron and Hermione bickering over breakfast. Then the crunch of leaves under his feet, and Harry was reliving the dream.

"Who was that boy?" Dumbledore murmured.

"I dunno. I only caught a glimpse before I woke."

Harry got the sensation someone was rewinding a videotape in his head, and a moment later, a still image of the boy appeared as if on pause. From what he could see, he was about his age and fair-haired, but that was all he could tell.

The image faded and Dumbledore moved again. Harry waited patiently.

"Well?" Harry asked finally.

"You'll be pleased to know these dreams are nothing to do with Voldemort at all," Dumbledore replied, standing up again. "However, I would advise you watch your step, Harry. You don't have to stop yourself from having these dreams, but I do think you ought to be careful something about them doesn't feel right."

TBC ...

Beyond the Veil

Chapter 2 of 2

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Chapter Two: Beyond the Veil

"Should we wake him?" Ron asked doubtfully, looking down at Harry's still form.

"I mean, we don't know what Dumbledore said to him."

Hermione hesitated, then shook her head. "He'll wake in a moment anyway; he's never asleep for too long."

She was right: barely a minute later Harry groaned and put a hand to his head. "It was Cedric," he muttered.

"What?"

"Last time I was in the woods, I saw a kid 'bout my age. I saw him again just now; it's Cedric."

"Diggory?" Ron questioned. Harry nodded.

"'In the woods', you make it sound like you were actually there."

"It feels like I was." Harry yawned, rubbing his eyes. "Till I forget all the details."

"What was Diggory doing in your dream?"

"Not much. I called out to him, and he saw me and looked really shocked ... and that's when I woke."

"What did Dumbledore say to you, anyway?" Hermione queried, sitting down on the common room sofa next to Harry.

"Well, Voldemort's been ruled out, but he still has the feeling they're not normal."

"What else could it be?" Ron asked, looking at Hermione.

"I don't know," she murmured. "I could do some research, but ... if Dumbledore doesn't know, then I can't expect to find a clear answer."

"Don't worry about me, guys," Harry insisted. "You've got your own NEWTs to pass."

"And we'll help you to pass yours," Hermione said firmly. "How do you feel?"

Harry sighed. "Really tired. All the time. It's like ... like the dreams are so vivid they're keeping me awake ... does that make sense?"

"Er, sort of. I think."

"You're no help, Ronald," Hermione reprimanded.

Harry chuckled wearily and rubbed his dark-ringed eyes again. "Well, they're not letting me have any rest, if that's a better way of putting it."

Hermione nodded. "Maybe we could make a potion. I know of one that relaxes you but doesn't let you fall asleep it's worth a try."

"Great." Harry's grin was interrupted by another yawn.

He must have been imagining things.

Cedric stretched out further on the grass and picked up his book that he had dropped. Why should someone enter the netherworld and then vanish almost immediately?

His mind was playing with him. Or it was a trick of the light.

But for a minute, he had been sure he'd seen an old friend.

Harry had already missed the afternoon classes, first by visiting Dumbledore and then falling asleep in the common room after the Headmaster gave him permission to

take the afternoon off. After his conversation with Ron and Hermione between their classes, he moved up to his dormitory and promptly fell asleep again.

As always, he lasted in the dream world slightly longer than the last time. Cedric was still there, lying beneath a large oak tree reading a book. Harry drew nearer warily and was only a few feet away when Cedric suddenly looked up.

"Hi, Harry."

Harry blinked. "What are you doing here?"

Cedric chuckled and pushed his book away. "I think/ should be asking that. What are you doing?" He looked Harry up and down critically. "Are you dead?"

"Er ... Not that I know of."

"Well, you should be if you're here. I've never met someone alive beyond the veil."

"Veil?" Harry said quickly. "What veil?"

As he posed the question, he felt his head beginning to pound. Cedric and the wood around him faded, and Harry awoke, crying out, *What veil?*

"Harry, are you okay?"

"Huh?"

Harry rubbed his eyes quickly and saw Ron standing over him, his freckled face creased in anxiety.

"Are you okay, Harry? You were saying something about a ... veil."

Harry let out all his breath in one go and rested his head on his knees with his eyes closed. "I'm okay," he replied finally. "That was the first time I've spoken to anyone. In my dream, I mean."

"Diggory?"

"Yeah." Harry lifted his head from his knees. "He said something about a veil ... Damn it, it's going."

Ron visibly bit his lip. "You should inform Dumbledore. And Hermione's already got started on that potion she sneaked the ingredients out of Snape's store cupboard."

"Same way as last time?" Harry inquired, referring to the incident with the firework when they had needed ingredients for the Polyjuice in second year.

"Don't think so. She got them between lessons, no classrooms have exploded, and she didn't take the Invisibility Cloak, so that's out of the question. She won't tell me how she did it. And don't change the subject." Ron paused for breath. "Harry, I don't like this."

"What, you think she did something ... unconventional ... to get them?"

"Not Hermione! I mean your dreams, or whatever they are. I know Dumbledore told you not to worry but I'm worried. I mean, if they're not normal and they're not Voldemort, what's left?"

"I dunno. Maybe I've just got a strange subconscious."

"No arguments here."

Harry gave him a shove. "What's the time?"

"Dinner time. You going to come down?"

"Yeah, might as well." Harry slid out of bed. "D'you think I should tell Dumbledore about Cedric?"

"I guess if it can help, you should. What did he say to you, anyway?"

"I don't really remember. All the details go fuzzy." Harry paused. "Maybe I'll go and see Dumbledore now."

"Evening, Professor."

Dumbledore looked up in surprise. "Harry! To what do I owe this second pleasure today?"

"Cedric Diggory, actually."

The Headmaster raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

"It was him in the dreams; I actually spoke to him last time. I thought you ought to know."

"That is interesting." Dumbledore paused. "Can you think of any particular reason why he might have popped up in your subconscious?"

"Nope. And I can't really remember what we talked about. The conversation didn't last long before I woke up, then it went fuzzy like it always does."

"Cedric Diggory ..." Dumbledore murmured thoughtfully. "You haven't seen anyone else in these dreams?"

"No."

"Hmm. Well, thank you for updating me ... I'll continue some research ... Maybe you could ask Madam Pomfrey for some Dreamless Sleep Potion? See if that does the trick ..."

The grass was littered with autumn leaves, brown and red and gold, which crunched satisfyingly under his feet. The dew was glistening in the sunlight streaming through the trees.

Harry spotted Cedric first. As Cedric looked up and saw him coming, Harry noticed he was not alone.

"Harry?"

Harry froze in his tracks. There were three adults standing there, staring at him as if they could not believe their eyes. Two men and a woman. At least thirty seconds had to

have passed before one of the men unfroze and rushed at him.

"S-Sirius?" Harry gasped.

"*Harry!*" His godfather swept him into the tightest hug Harry had ever experienced, including the ones from Dobby and Hagrid. "It's so good to see you ... But what the hell are you doing here?"

"I-I'm not really sure," Harry stammered. Suddenly he realised tears were rolling down his face. "I've missed you, Sirius."

"I've missed you too, kiddo." Sirius started crying into Harry's shoulder. Harry spotted Cedric slip away, leaving them to it. His eyes moved from him to the couple watching them. His throat tightened.

"Mum?" he whispered hoarsely. "Dad?"

"Harry," Lily breathed. "Is that really you?"

Sirius finally let him go, wiping his eyes on his sleeve. "That's him, Lil."

"You're right, he does look like me," James remarked.

"I believe his exact words were 'spitting image'."

Harry's voice seemed to have dried up. All his life he had wondered what he would say to his parents if he had the chance ... Now he couldn't think of any of them. His brain was having a hard job processing the fact that they were there, in front of him, talking to him ...

Lily drew hesitantly nearer and reached out a hand to brush him cheek. "My baby," she murmured. "Look at you, all grown up."

Harry was crying again as he clasped her hand with his. A pain was starting to build in his head, and he clung onto his mother like a lifeline. "No! I don't want to go back ..."

His parents and Sirius faded, and Harry jerked back to his dormitory. He tried to focus on the dream, remember everything, but already the details were going fuzzy. He spotted the Dreamless Sleep Potion on his bedside table that he had forgotten to take and smashed it on the floor.

TBC ...