

Raven: Five Years in the Future

by gersknightlady

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Sequel to Raven by gersknightlady

Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione put the final touches on the Christmas tree in the living room of the lair. It had become Severus and her tradition to go there for Christmas.

She dropped an ornament as a scream rent the air and a fierce roar followed. Momentarily lost in thought, she'd had a vision of the final battle. She shook the thought away and went to the door of the lair and watched as Grendel bound through the trees in the yard. A small, raven-haired boy was clinging to his back and screaming with joy. She laughed and resisted the inclination to yell out 'be careful.' There was no one she trusted more with Severus' and her son than Grendel.

"Raven," she called after the boy, "Come inside in about ten minutes for lunch. Grendel needs a rest."

"Yes, Mama," the boy called over his shoulder, urging Grendel to go faster.



Hermione laughed and rubbed her swollen stomach. The baby could come at anytime. She went back to the tree, then felt Severus come up behind her. His hands came around, and he pulled her against him as he rubbed her stomach. Feeling the baby kick his palms, he nuzzled and placed a kiss against her neck. "She is anxious to get out," he murmured, trailing kisses against her neck.

Hermione moaned softly. "Husband, if you don't stop..." She let her voice trail off as he chuckled against her neck and held her closer.

She loved the feel of his big hands as they caressed and rubbed her swollen belly. It felt so good to her tightly stretched skin. She was looking forward to holding their daughter, and she knew Severus was too.



Raven was nearly five, and they had waited a bit to have the second child, having enjoyed Raven's first years so much. He had been the most beautiful baby. He was born with thick, curly, black hair and ebony eyes. He was a very inquisitive child and learned quickly like his parents. He was far advanced for his five years. Living at Hogwarts allowed him to take in education that other children would not have. He was welcome in any classroom and often sat with Aunty Minerva in her Transfiguration class. He'd been two when she'd entered his bedroom and found him floating three feet off the floor. Magical abilities seemed to come naturally to him, and he had exhibited many instances of spontaneous magic.

Severus had bought him a tiny wand with which he had learned a great deal in the Transfiguration class. He still was a child, however, even with all his knowledge, so it was not surprising to find the cat changed into a squirrel or his toys spinning through the air in his room. He enjoyed pranks like any normal small child.

Severus now had a white streak through his hair. It had happened one day here in the cave. He'd come out to find Raven hovering over the 100 ft drop off. The boy had been lying back, as if in a hammock, reading a book.

Hermione was shaken from her thoughts as another scream rent the air...and this time it was a scream of terror. There was a rumble in the cave, and the noise of crumbling stone. Severus set her aside and ran; she dashed after him as best she could.

"Raven!" she called and heard Severus' frantic calls echo hers.

"Oh, God, please let him be alright." Then Severus was there with Raven in his arms. "He's okay. It's Grendel. He fell into the chasm. The path crumbled..."

"Oh, God, Severus!" she cried, suddenly doubling up and clutching at her stomach, "the baby!"

Severus looked at her terrified, she came first, *but what about Grendel?* His heart was torn.

Severus cried out, "*Expecto Patronum*".

He grabbed Hermione and helped her to their bed.

"Raven, go to the front door, and when Poppy arrives, bring her in. Do not leave this house, do you understand me? I know you want to help Grendel, but it's imperative that you stay here with Mommy."

The boy's huge, frightened eyes filled with tears, and they spilled over onto his cheeks as he nodded and then left the room.

"Please, Severus, go to Grendel. Help will come in just a few minutes. I will be okay."

"I will not leave you," he stated emphatically as he helped her out of her clothes and into a birthing gown.

"He may be hurt!" she said.

"He has saved me over and over, and I will not be able to save him if it's bad." Tears filled his eyes as he helped Hermione slip her arms into the gown.

"The gypsy children... call for them. Call for Nicholi and Magi. They can help," she urged him.

There were voices in the living room, and soon Poppy stood in the bedroom door. Min was close behind her.

Hermione urged, "Go, Severus. He's our child, too. Go. I'm in good hands."

He nodded, placing a hasty kiss on her forehead. "The Lord is with you," he said.

As he turned he heard her say, "And you, too, my love."

He ran past Minerva and Poppy. "Grendel fell in the chasm. I'm going after him."

Minerva called, "Do you want me to come with you?"

"No, stay with Hermione. I will send for Nicholi."

Severus raced through the forest toward the chasm and sent his Patronus off again. The path they used all the time had crumbled in a small section. and the huge beast's weight had taken him over the side. Only his survival skills had sent Raven flying onto solid ground before he'd gone over the edge.

Severus used his wand and hovered over the chasm and down it to the black abyss. *Lumos!* he cried. Light pierced the darkness, and he saw his friend's huge body crumpled against some sharp rocks. He came to rest next to the beast and reached out his hand, "Grendel," he cried.

He nearly collapsed with relief when he heard Grendel whine. He was alive. He fell to his knees and sobbed against the animal's back.

Above he heard Nicholi call to him, "Severus, do you need me to come down?"

"Please." He couldn't think... all he could do was listen to his friend breathing.

Nicholi was there in a moment and reached past Severus to examine the animal. "He may have internal injuries. There are broken ribs and I think also his back." Nicholi wasn't that surprised to see that Severus was unnerved by his friend's injuries.

Severus moaned, "Please help him. We need to get him out of here and to the children. Remember how he responded to them when he healed Magi. He got strength from them."

"We will get him out, and the children are coming. We will do all in our power to help him."

Nicholi used his magic to transform a sling of sorts to tie Grendel into. Severus used his Legilimens to help his pet block some of the pain, and with their magic they lifted him to the surface of the chasm. Magi was waiting, and they laid him in the soft grass among the trees. The gypsies set up a camp there and built a fire near Grendel. Severus ran to the house and brought back blankets.

Magi ran her hands carefully over the great beast, assessing the damage. Poppy, able to leave Hermione for a bit, came and gave him pain potions. Soon the children arrived, and they knelt next to the huge beast, their hands gently buried in his thick fur, and they poured out their love. The damage was great. Though he seemed to breathe easier, he did not spontaneously heal as he had the time before.

Magi told Severus, "It will take time, Severus. We are all here with him, and I know you want to be here and with Hermione. Go to her and be there for your daughter's birth. We will stay and take care of Grendel for you."

"If something should happen..." he said, agony deep in his voice.

"We will come and get you, I promise," she said as she began to run her hands over Grendel's fur. He is breathing easier."

Severus knelt next to Grendel and pressed his forehead against his friend's. One of Grendel's eyes opened, and he got lost in the liquid love that filled his mind for a moment, and then the big eye closed again. He caressed the beast's face, and Grendel's tongue reached out to lick his fingers.

Severus said softly, "I love you, my friend. I would not leave you if Hermione did not need me."

The tongue came out and licked him again. Grendel understood and was telling him to go.

Severus stood, took a deep breath and looked into Nicholi's and Magi's eyes. "Take good care of him."

He strode to the door of the house and found Raven hanging onto the door. "Daddy, can I go to him. He saved me, please. I need to be there."

Severus went to his knees and gathered his son into a fierce hug. His hand caressed the boy's black, soft hair. "Go, but follow Nicholi's or Magi's orders."

"Yes, Daddy," he promised, squirming free and running out to Grendel.

Severus turned and went toward the bedroom and heard Hermione cry out. He came into the room quickly and took her hand as he knelt by the bed behind her. She was propped up with pillows; her knees were drawn close to her chest and parted as she pushed through a contraction.

He slipped behind her and held her up. Min stood to the side, watching with anxious eyes.

Hermione asked through clinched teeth, "Grendel?"

"He's alive, and Magi, Nicholi and the children are with him. I sent Raven to him as well."

Hermione clinched her teeth as another contraction hit her, and she struggled through the pain. Severus rubbed her back and helped her through the contractions as best he could.

"I'm sorry," she breathed out. "It hit me so fast."

"Babies come when they come. Grendel understands," he tried to assure her, not feeling so confident inside. *Why was this happening?* The pain he was feeling for his injured friend was overshadowing the joy of his child's birth.

An hour went by, and Hermione struggled to push the baby out. Severus noted that Poppy's forehead creased with concern. Potions were taking care of the worst of pain, but they wouldn't take care of the birth difficulties. Surgery might be necessary if something didn't happen soon.

Magi came from Grendel's side and explained that he seemed to be improving but it was slow, and she was concerned about his back. So far he was unable to move his back legs.

No one knew how he'd drawn strength from the children years ago when he'd taken a lot of Magi's aging and infirmities away from her. Then it had only been drained magical energy. Today Grendel battled his own physical healing, and Severus wondered if he would be able to heal himself. He was agonizing over this situation. His heart was broken in two, wanting to be with Hermione, their baby and Grendel.

"Should we send for healers?" he asked Magi and Poppy. Hermione had not had much difficulty birthing Raven. But there had been some years between the births. He knew that years didn't always make the difference.

Magi said, "I have set his bones and mended what I can with magic. If you wish another opinion, then send for someone. I really think he just needs time." Severus nodded. He knew Magi was the best, and he would not insult her by panicking and bringing in someone else. "I have faith in you, Magi," he told the old woman.

Hermione bore down again, and he said a prayer, "Lord, please let the baby come and let Hermione be alright. Heal Grendel. He is a miracle of life to us, and we need him here with us. We thank you in advance for your healing." He let his tears flow down his cheeks.

Hermione whispered a prayer of her own, for Severus to have strength no matter what happened to her or Grendel.

Another contraction hit, and Hermione screamed with pain that seemed to tear through her. *Dear Lord, what's happening?* she thought. Through the haze of the pain, she heard a baby cry, and she cried with relief and felt Severus shaking with sobs behind her. Her vision cleared, and Poppy was holding a baby close to her, wrapped in a warm pink blanket. The tiny face was red from exertion, but she was the most beautiful baby she'd ever seen. Severus reached out two fingers to caress the baby's soft face. She had a sprinkling of blond fuzz on her head, but she opened her eyes, and they were deep ebony like Raven's.

Raven came now and crawled into the bed from the other side to peer into his baby sister's face. There was a whine near the door and Grendel stood unsteadily. His footsteps were uncertain, but he walked into the room. Nicholi and the children followed quietly; their faces were expectant and angelic.

Grendel poked his large nose close to the baby. She flung a hand out and touched his nose, and a light seemed to leave her fingers. Grendel gave a bark and started to bounce. The baby gurgled happily at him. He went to stand on the other side of the bed with Poppy. The adults sobbed with relief.

Severus felt such overwhelming relief and gratitude. He felt as if his heart might burst. It became a physical pain that leaped from his heart and flew away, leaving such peace in his heart. He realized for the first time not only his Raven personality in him believed that God had answered prayer but he did too. He, Severus Snape, ex spy and cynic, believed in the love of God fully and forever.

He touched Hermione's mind and felt her welcome his thoughts, and he told her what had happened. She wept tears of joy for him, Grendel, and their new baby. With his fingers wrapped around hers and then laid against the baby's face they said, "Faith, her name will be Faith."

He pressed kisses to Hermione's neck and listened as she cooed over the bay. Raven's hands reached out to touch the baby's soft hair, and he laughed, throwing his hands into the air. It was catching, and soon Nicholi and Magi were waving everyone into the room. There was love and laughter in the now-crowded bedroom.



Thank you, Lisa, you have been the best Beta. You have hung in through two long stories and now a third. I look forward to working with you on the next one.

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Readers, please leave a review. I have so enjoyed your reviews of Raven.