

# Hidden Truth

Von YasaiNoVampaia

## Death Reeks Sour

A/N(t): Due to recent occurrences, I will only accept members of ff.net who are longer than one month registered to play in the FF Cup.

Danae: speak Daná?

### 9. Death Reeks Sour

Severus Snape drew in a deep breath and smoothed out the white blanket over the vacant bed. His lips curled slightly, as the penetrant smell of disinfectant rose into his nostrils. Ever since he could recall, he had avoided hospitals at all costs. All the bright white hurt his sensitive eyes, which were used to the dark. The pungent stench of antiseptics and other medical concoctions hurt his nose. Even after all those years of brewing potions, Snape hadn't come over his dislike of the medical ones. Those he'd brewed for Pomfrey had their own unbearable sour scent. Not that there weren't any other potions that smelled horrible sour, but these medical ones just threatened to awake memories. Long buried ones. Severus closed his eyes briefly, and then proceeded to pull open the curtain from the single now empty bed. There were only a few rays of light shining through the windows, indicating that the Potions Master had already been too long in the infirmary.

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The extensive dimensions of Snape Shire lay in relative silence. The building was very old, and this was plain to see. The fresh and green landscape surrounding the Snape home, which reminded strongly of a medieval castle, was a picturesque contrast to the crumbling shire. It looked as though it was a piece of fairy-tale history. History it was, indeed, but far from the fairy-tale.

Every room had its own purpose, and so it didn't come as a surprise, that there also existed a medical chamber. This chamber was currently occupied by Danae Snape, Severus' mother. Her prone figure was nearly invisible under the covers, as she lay, unmoving. The light, falling through the near window, made her brown hair glimmer brightly, reminding of raining gold. 'Raining gold' brought back memories of one of the few happy times in her life, and she smiled sadly. Her life had been a roller-coaster, and as she had thought that it would finally start to get better, she was again proven wrong. 'I miss so you much, Diktys.'

"Does it still hurt, Mother?" Severus rubbed his nose discreetly, as the smell of the medical chamber was nearly too sour to endure. Too many potions stood in their various vials, spreading unbearable scent. Even though, he had visited the chamber way too often, he still couldn't get used to medical potions.

Danae turned her head and smiled at her son, her gift of the gods. Severus was only seven years old, but she pictured him to just look like his father, when he was grown

up. His black hair was smooth and nearly reached his shoulders, it was perfectly in order, indicating that the boy hadn't been running around the house. Severus wasn't the kind of child making trouble, but also not the kind of child having fun; at least it appeared that way to her. "No, dear" She said softly, opening her arms. "Come to me, Verus."

Severus stood rooted to the place, rubbing his nose with his robe sleeve. His eyes began to water, trying as he might, he couldn't hold the tears back. "I want back" He sobbed quietly. "I want to go back ... then you don't have ... to be hurt anymore ... and we can be happy again ..."

Danae's heart clenched. "Oh, my boy, come to me." But Severus didn't follow her coaxing, he couldn't even stand his mother's touch, anymore. "We can't go back again, never. I already told you, didn't I?"

"But Fa- ... Fa- ... he is mean to you ... and to me" He added, sobbing more loudly.

"Listen to me, Severus. Soon you will be old enough, and you will attend Hogwarts and then ... then you will be able to leave, alright?"

"But I don't want to leave without you!" The boy screeched, stamping with his feet. "I don't want to leave you! I want to go back! Why can't we?! I don't understand!"

"Verus, please ..." Danae objected weakly.

"Why can't we go back like it was earlier?! Father would've NEVER-"

"Severus!" She snapped, then. "Stop it!" Danae tried to regain her composure back. She didn't like to raise her voice, but it wasn't easy to control her son, who had developed quite a temper in the last time. Sighing, she shot Severus an apologetic look. "You know, we can't go back, don't you? Father is gone ... We have no other place, where we could go."

"Why don't we go to your father, then?" Severus insisted.

Danae's expression changed drastically at the mention of her sire. She didn't like to be reminded of him. The man who had turned his back on her. The man who had dared to embed his only daughter in a tower, just like Rapunzel, and that only because of one stupid prediction. As it was mentioned before, Danae's life was everything but a fairy-tale. Her voice trembled only slightly, as she answered the question. "That would be too dangerous."

"Dangerous? Dangerous! ... And why don't we go simply somewhere else? We could live alone! We could search a place where it is nice the whole year, maybe where other people are or something! We could go everywhere! Why do we stay here?!"

Danae sighed sadly at the innocent comment of the boy in front of her. "Life isn't that easy, son. You'll have to learn it, sooner or later."

Severus huffed angrily and stalked out of the room, making sure to bang the door especially loud to make his point in that subject clear.

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Ron coughed as he pulled a rather dusty tome from the shelves. They had actually found books in the restricted area which weren't frequently used. It seemed just odd. Hermione glanced up, temporarily stopping sifting through the book before her. They hadn't found anything useful yet. Harry worked in relative silence, but Ron was near frustrating. He hadn't got Hermione's stamina when it got to going through tomes.

'Some kind of recognition spell would be useful' Hermione thought regretfully. 'Then we'd know what this wards are ...' But of course, she knew that this wouldn't be possible. It would take even more time to search after a spell to determine which wards Voldemort had used. And who said that after they knew what wards there were, that they could figure out a way to vaporise them immediately? No-one, to put

it shortly. Hermione let out a frustrated sigh, and went back to work.

"I miss-"

"What ...?" Hermione asked distracted, reading the rest of the sentence and then marking her place.

"I said, I think I may have found something" Harry said, causing Ron to look up, too. The tome Harry had been sifting through, was so tattled that its title wasn't recognizable anymore. He had been very careful for he feared that the century-old book may just crumble to ashes in his very hands if he turned one page too quickly. From its intents it was clear that the book was about Dark Arts, though. "Here" He pointed towards a charcoal drawing in the middle of the page. It showed a rather small cottage in the middle of a clearing, surrounded by a old looking forest. There were dark-clothed, hooded figures, who climbed out of the windows and one even came out of the chimney. The entrance to the cottage was wide open and two children and one adult wizard were obviously trying to get out. It seemed as though there was an invisible barrier, preventing them to escape from their own home. Tracing a finger along one side of the cottage, Harry let a cheese-cover-like web of magic appear. The two children seemed to shriek and jumped back, hiding behind what was obviously their father. "Did you see that?"

"The dark wizards did get through the wards, but the family was trapped" Hermione mused, pulling the book closer to herself. 'I wonder if these wards have any negative effects on their own ... They are Dark Magic, aren't they?' The girl scanned the page for the information to the picture and read out loud what was written there. "The Tarantula Spell. It is considered a very powerful," Hermione snorted at that, there weren't any un-powerful spells they had to encounter, "and also exceptionally dark spell. Only the strongest wizards are capable of casting this spell, and even then there are certain repercussions to expect. The spell forms a web of wards to ensure that the inhabitants won't be able to escape from their home ... Mm. Nothing about a counter-spell. Only that it disintegrates automatically in approximately two weeks, but we already figured as much."

"What kind of repercussions?" Harry asked.

Hermione quickly re-read the article, but then shook her head. "It never says anything about that. Mm. It is often the case that Dark Magic has it disadvantages and that the caster has to pay a price, nothing unusual ..."

"But in the most cases this price is only of importance if the caster is a good wizard, isn't it?" Ron asked.

Harry nodded forlornly. "Yes. It wouldn't do for the dark wizards to punish their own ones if they used Dark Magic ... The intentions to use Dark Magic is primarily to do damage to the Light. So if the Light were to use Dark Magic, they would have to pay, but the Dark wouldn't have to, would they? ... This doesn't make any sense ..." Harry rubbed his forehead, as if the now not-existing scar was hurting.

"Unless" Ron interrupted, drawing the attention to himself. "Unless these 'repercussions' aren't meant to be a disadvantage but an advantage to the spell caster. What if-" The redhead looked as serious as in his best days. "What if the repercussions are indeed echoes, meant to come back to the victims of the spells?"

There was an eerie calmness hunting through the nearly vacant library, as the three of them contemplated the meaning of Ron's words. It didn't take long to sink in.

"Not a very reassuring prospect" Hermione stated solemnly. She rubbed her suddenly numb fingers. "We have to tell the headmaster about this. Better not losing any more time ..." Her voice petered out as a sudden thought hit her unprepared, reminding her

of their current state. "We haven't got any magic."

Ron blanched considerably. "Nothing to worry about, indeed!" He jumped up, ready to bolt, but not quite sure what his destination should be. "We are more vulnerable than ever and this is just because we thought we are safe! Bloody fantastic!" His mind was fast to draw the numerous possibilities of what could be happening in a two days time. Each and every potential outcome was quite bloody and deadly.

Hermione, too, rose from her seat. She shot a glare towards Harry, urging him to hurry. "Don't you come with us?" She asked incredulously.

Harry looked up from where he had been studying the page. "There is something more" He said, picking the book up and pointing to the picture in question.

"Oh, it is, isn't it?" Ron asked sarcastically. "As if these evil wards weren't already enough! Tarantula Spell, indeed" He said, shuddering as he recalled their adventure with one well-known gigantic spider. 'Tarantula' had such a feeling of foreboding attached to it. "I bloody hope this spell got his name from the way the wards are put into a web ..." Even though the prospect of being trapped in a huge spider-web wasn't one, one was particularly looking forward to, the possibility of ending as a tarantula snack was even more something, nobody was too keen on experiencing.

Hermione scanned the picture, but couldn't find anything noticeable. "I don't see anything. Let's get to Dumbledore, I don't have a good feeling." As if to make her point clearer, her skin was suddenly covered in goose-bumps.

"Wait a second, here!" Harry touched the dark wizards one after the other with his index finger. "These are minor wizards. Only the strongest wizards are able to cast this spell, but where is this powerful wizard? These here are only minions."

Hermione rubbed her head warily. "I have no idea what this could mean."

"Me neither."

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It was fairly late already, as Hermione, Harry and Ron made their way to Dumbledore's office, and hadn't it been for the fact that they had snuck food into the library, their stomachs would be protesting quite loudly. They hadn't thought of much aside their research, and they found themselves quite lucky to have such results the very first day.

The three friends nearly run the whole way, but came to an abrupt halt, as they reached the stone gargoyle. Harry hadn't thought about that they didn't know the password, so he began the guessing game. "Lemon drop, kudos, toffee, skittles, chocolate raisins, onion chips, soletti, snips, mars, bounty ..." When they all ran out of sweets, Harry tried to negotiate. "Listen, we need to speak with the headmaster."

"It is important" Hermione added.

"Oh, I don't have the nerve for it" Ron growled. "Headmaster! Dumbledore!!"

"Ron!" Hermione hissed, pressing one hand flat right above her racing heart. "You can't go screaming around when you just feel like it. Besides, Dumbledore has most likely silencing charms around his office, so there's no point in ..." She trailed off, as the gargoyle suddenly moved aside to let them in.

"You were saying?" Ron asked, raising his brows mock-questioningly. He entered the small room leading to the headmaster's office first, leaving behind a growling Hermione and a faintly amused Harry.

A few moments later saw Ron knocking on Dumbledore's door. He opened the door, as he was bidden in, and stopped dead in his tracks as he caught sight of the other occupant of the office besides Dumbledore. Grimacing inwardly, he took a cautiously step forward, greeting the headmaster politely and nodding somewhat reluctantly to

Snape.

The Potions Master rose from his seat. "If this was all, I'm going to take my leave now." But he didn't escape.

"Would you please stay, Severus? I will have some more points to discuss with you and I believe this shall not take too long." Albus asked his friend, then turned towards the three teenagers. "Professor Snape and I had only a small dialogue," he shot a glance towards Harry, "With what may I help you?"

Harry stepped forward, tome clutched in his hands, flinching inwardly at the hostile glare he received from Snape, but he didn't let on. "We made a discovery in this book here," he held up the book in question, "and I think you should take a look at it."

"Very well" Dumbledore said, beckoning Harry closer and motioning for Ron and Hermione to take a seat. The headmaster shot a secret glance towards the Potions Master, who was still standing slightly uncertain. After Harry had given the book to Dumbledore, the headmaster read the article quickly out loud, to let Severus know too, what it was about. He studied the picture, and finally sighed.

"I suppose it is safe to presume that you already searched the spell register what kind of dark spell this Tarantula Spell is and how it is possible to put it out, Mr. Potter?" Snape asked smoothly, raising his left brow slightly. Harry felt his face getting hot, as he ground his teeth. Leave it to Snape to improve his mood.

"We wanted to inform the headmaster as soon as possible, we haven't thought-" Ron said indignantly, while Hermione, sitting beside him, flushed a deep crimson.

"Obviously, Mr. Weasley" Snape cut him off, silkily. "Or should I call you Mr. Potter, as you seem to response to that name, too?"

"That should be enough, Severus" Albus said gently. "I believe that Harry, Ron and Hermione have only acted upon their best intentions, am I right?"

Harry nodded curtly, glancing out of the corner of his eye at Snape who smirked smugly. Obviously he was satisfied, Harry could see Ron practically bristling angrily, but surprisingly the redhead hadn't exploded. Yet, anyway. It was a true mystery to him, what kicks Snape got of the whole acting way-better-than-thou thing.

Severus listened intently to what the headmaster was saying, while one part of his mind was gloating over the usual Gryffindor behaviour the three teenagers had shown. How typical to first act and then think, they would have saved time if the Boy-Who-Lived and his two sidekicks had thought things through first and not just jumped to actions. Even though, Snape's mind somehow regretfully noted that it was a mature thing to inform elder wizards first of their discovery and not to take actions on their own accord - as they had done so many times before. But this was Harry Potter; there was always something for Snape to complain about. Even when it was mature behaviour. Old habits died hard.

"This information is very useful" Dumbledore said, folding his hands on the desk. "I shall assume that you will take up your research again tomorrow morning?"

"Sure" Harry replied, nonchalantly.

"You may come to my office, whenever you need to."

"Oh, 'bout that ... We don't know the password, so ..."

Albus chuckled quietly. "I'll leave the staircase open. So, if that was everything, I believe that the three of you need to head back. You'll need to be refreshed tomorrow to go on in your research in the library. Good night."

After the teenager had left, Albus sighed tiredly. "What do you think, Severus?" He watched his Potions Master, as he sorted his thoughts quickly. He would need to ask Harry the next day if he had any more visions or memories, as Severus had had.

Hopefully not, that would be one problem less.

"I never heard of the Tarantula Spell before."

"Me neither, child."

Snape frowned. "As much as it pains me to admit, I suppose Potter may have found something important. This picture with the dark wizards ... Those were indeed minor ones, none of those should have been able to cast this powerful spell. But that leaves the question, who the caster was."

"Maybe it was someone outside of the house, outside the picture."

"Mm, maybe" Severus mumbled, then he rose from his seat, the second time. "I need to go now, Albus. Good night."

"Good night, Severus." Albus wisely refrained from wishing his friend sweet dreams.

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Chibi Harry: \*@ Kateri1\* 60 points to Ravenclaw.

A/N: The next answers will be in the next chapter.