

Hidden Truth

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Don't You Cry

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It was still too early for Madam Pince, therefore the library was still closed. A simple "Alohomora" wouldn't do the trick and so Draco flew through the door and opened it from the inside, letting Hermione through.

"Where are you going?" Hermione asked bewildered as Draco flew to the restricted section of the Dark Arts.

"Where do you think I'm going?"

"The Dark Arts?" she said, incredulously.

"10 points to Gryffindor," Draco said, sarcastically. "Where else do you think we should be searching?"

"I- in the- well, of course-"

"The Dark Arts. We have to find a spell to kill a ghost, a soul. This is dark magic at its finest. We won't find it in the Spell For Every Occasion Volume II."

Hermione bristled visibly. "I didn't say-"

"We don't have time for this, you know," Draco said, floating into the first rows. He flew right through the middle of the first rack, reading the indexes while doing so. "We'll have to destroy Voldemort's soul for once and for all. He mustn't come back. This is Potter's only chance."

Hermione looked still undetermined, but then she made up her mind. "Right."

Snape trembled as it was over. Too many images had went past his inner eye in too little time. It was still fresh in his mind, the pictures bright and vivid, as if it only happened the other day.

He laughed quietly, suddenly. Voldemort really had the nerve. Who knew what the bastard could do as a ghost? This last 'vision', and when Snape thought about it, all the ones before, could have been easily caused by Voldemort. Even if the last memories were indeed that, memories of his own, this didn't say anything against the possibility that this last one was fake. There could be no way that he was related to both Voldemort and the Potter boy. Sick bastard and his sick little mind games. Severus was so tired of this. He was too close to his breaking point, but he wouldn't allow the Dark Lord to push him over the edge.

It was most likely untrue. After all, the first memories had been his own, but the last one had been from his mother. How should he know if this was truth or lie? It wasn't as if he could ask her.

"Do you understand it now?" Voldemort asked. "Do you see the whole picture? After I'm finished with you, I will see to it that Harry," he smirked towards the confused boy, "shall know the truth. If I told him beforehand, it would spoil the entire fun, wouldn't you agree?"

"What picture?" Harry asked, turning his gaze from Voldemort to Snape and back. There was something going on he should not know about; and that angered him to no end. They talked about him as if he wasn't there. "You being a ghost totally froze your brain over?" The light was faster than the sound. This was the reason why Harry first felt the Crucio, and then heard the ghost say the curse. His mind froze, not in ice but in pain, as hundreds of needles pierced his skin and shot through his whole body.

"Watch your tongue," Voldemort hissed, his wand trembling slightly. "Or I shall not be so generous the next time, boy."

Severus had drawn his wand and pointed it now at his former master. Potter's resistance against the Cruciatus Curse was enormous; he hadn't even fallen to his knees or screamed. The only sign that he had indeed felt the pain had been his clenched fists and the tight line of his lips.

"What will you do?" Voldemort asked, mocking his Potions Master. "Kill me? Ha. I'm a ghost, you can't do that!" He floated a bit closer, squinting his eyes, thoughtfully. "You don't believe me, do you? You think it was only part of this last curse. But it is the truth. I know you can feel it. It was your own potion. I was only the trigger to help you create it. You should be thankful."

"Thankful," Snape spat. "Indeed. I am grateful that you are finally dead. And that you shall be gone soon, I am even more grateful for."

"It is as I said," Voldemort chuckled. "You will never be rid of me."

And Snape could hear the end of the sentence, as if the Dark Lord had said it out loud. 'I am in your blood, my son. We are of one kind.' But that wasn't true! Snape was nothing like Voldemort! Various stages of madness, yes, but there was a huge difference between the two of them. Severus did have potential, but he wouldn't use it in the direction Riddle had taken so long ago. One wrong lane didn't seal your fate

on the wrong side of the table, not if you chose to turn around and take the way back. It was longer, it was harder, but it was satisfyingly right.

"I suppose someone forgot to tell me that today is ghost party or something," Harry mumbled, wide-eyed, as Draco's body floated through the barrier at the portrait hole. Hermione couldn't get through it, as Dumbledore, who still tried to find a way to work around it. It was odd, now that he saw it. It was rather logical that ghosts could pass through this wards. But why did Snape get through, but Hermione and Dumbledore not? Harry guessed that Voldemort had still an account to settle with Snape and therefore made the wards that only he and the Professor could get through.

"Diffindo," Snape cried, shooting a curse at the ghostly Voldemort to distract him from Draco. The Dark Lord split in half, falling half to the ground like a leaf in the wind. But then his parts were pulled together by a invisible power, sealing the split shut again.

"My," Voldemort chuckled. "Convenient, wouldn't you say?"

Snape only gritted his teeth and prepared the next curse. Thankfully, Draco's form had vanished from sight again. He wasn't stable enough, but that came in handy right now, as only his voice was really needed to inform Harry which curse he should use to destroy Voldemort's soul. "Locomotor Mortis."

"I don't need my feet."

While Snape hexed Voldemort more or less effectively, Harry listened to Draco explaining him how the Soul Extinguishing Spell worked and what he needed to do in order to get finally and this time really rid of Voldemort. It was a dark spell, but Harry didn't mind. He had already mastered a rather wide range of dark spells for the final battle. One more wouldn't cause his mental breakdown or his stability. If it meant that it would be over, that was.

Harry collected his magic slowly. The two days after the magic donation were over, but he still felt not as full as before. Hopefully, it would be enough.

"The playtime's over," Harry said quietly. His voice was more mature than ever before, far too old for his age. "As is your time, Voldemort."

"Was that a pun? Sorry I didn't laugh." The Dark Lord shot a Crucio at Snape, too fast to move out of the way or do anything else but hope that it would be over soon. "I'll deal with you later."

"Harry," Voldemort shook his head. "Why do you have to be so stubborn? You cannot win. You know that. Why don't you just be a good boy and die? Or better yet: Why don't you join me? You are a quite powerful wizard and together we could accomplish all that we want. Think about it. All you ever dreamed of is waiting for you."

Harry shook his head slightly. "You can't give me anything that I would want, Voldemort." And with that, he pointed his wand at an amused ghost and muttered the

two words that would end this afterlife.

Voldemort had always been far too self-confident. He didn't see the threat as what it was; his downfall. His second, his last, his absolutely not planned downfall.

One day later, Hermione and a couple of other students were able to put down the Tarantula wards, freeing the Hogwarts students and half of the British Wizarding World, as well.

After the Bloody Baron's lately demise (which was a much discussed term), Draco became Slytherin's house-ghost. He even finished his last school year and got nearly as many NEWT's as his girlfriend Hermione (she wouldn't have let him do it otherwise).

Severus was in his storeroom and prepared the ingredients for the next class. 7th year Gryffindor and Slytherin; his least favourite class. Potter would be there, and that alone was enough sometimes to wake the need to throw himself from the Astronomy Tower.

Severus wouldn't ... he couldn't ... never!

The potion Snape had brewed these few weeks ago had been a concoction which brought the darkest and deepest secret to the surface among others, as well. He had named it 'Hidden Truth', though he would never sell it. Nobody knew what lurked in one's mind. And if he himself as a Death Eater with lots of dark experiences couldn't handle it, what would a normal witch or wizard do? There was no way Snape would ever let anyone get to that potion.

After his hidden truth had risen, the potion would be his new secret.

Harry Potter was his nephew. This was the ultimate shock. Not that Voldemort was his grandfather, though that was pretty hard, too. But the insufferable Potter brat shared the same blood as he. He who he had been late Lily's brother, even if only half. What a complicated family tree.

The students filed into the room and were immediately shushed by one intimidating scowl from him. And when his eyes fell upon Harry, Severus couldn't help but glare. Harry glared back and a staring contest ensued.

They weren't alike. They were not family. They would never be.

And Severus sure as hell would not shed a tear.

Harry took his seat beside Ron who hadn't been so down anymore in the last time. As his sister was now in the magical portrait the twins had bought, she was at least still

there. If not living, but existing.

As Snape tried to stare him down, Harry couldn't but stare back. But his mind was elsewhere. He didn't try to win this little contest. He wondered how Snape could have ever been considered into Gryffindor. And he asked himself what would be different this day if he had been actually put into his house. Would he admit that he had a living family member? Would he be more caring?

It was sad, but also too familiar. All of his family members, as far as he could think back, had hated him. If they had been able to, the Dursleys would have kicked Harry out onto the street the very first day. The mutual disliking had only started to develop after Harry could understand what was going on. He always tried to please them, make them see that he wasn't that bad, wasn't a freak, was worth of them. But they wouldn't look.

Snape himself had judged Harry the very first day, without even knowing him in the least. Harry didn't care who he was related to; even if this someone was Voldemort, thankfully finally dead Voldemort. His only living blood relative didn't want to give a damn about him.

Harry had waited weeks for Snape to approach him, had even tried to nudge quarrels/conversations into the right direction. Snape hadn't cared.

It was sad, but Harry would not try to change Snape's mind.