

Summary: A fertility potion affects Severus Snape and Rubeus Hagrid. Both become pregnant by the other, resulting in fraternal not-exactly-twins conceived on the same day, with different mothers but the same parents. For fear of Voldemort discovering he has children, Snape hides his part in the events leading to Hagrid's strange impregnation, and allows no one to find out about his own.

Categories: [Harry Potter](#) Characters: Albus Dumbledore, Ensemble, Original, Rubeus Hagrid, Severus/Hagrid

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Chapter 1 - The Dugbog's Potion by Drake of Dross

Severus Snape stood in front of the door to Hagrid's small hut at the edge of the Forbidden Forest. He shot one more glance toward the castle. Assured the Headmaster had not yet found him, he rapped on the door with two sharp knocks. "Hagrid!"

"On meh way!" the half-giant's voice floated back, and Severus stole a last glance toward Hogwarts before the door opened. "Prof'sor?" the big man asked in obvious confusion. "Some'at I ken help yeh with?"

Severus stepped inside without being invited. Every moment he stood out under the light of tonight's full moon was another that his whereabouts could be discovered and revealed to Albus. "No, Hagrid. I just thought I would ask if there were any potions you needed for your classes this year?" It was two weeks into the new semester, and it was his job to provide necessary potions

to the other Hogwart's staff. That this excuse (and excuse it was, he normally would never have voluntarily come out here; professors were supposed to come to him with their needs) happened to bring him out where Albus would never think to look for him was added bonus.

"I doan thi- wait. I was gonna have meh sixth years raise up a baby dugbog come spring, but meh mama dugbog can't hold a pregnancy more'n a few weeks without miscarryin'. Wonder if there's some'at yeh could do fer her?"

It was consistant with Severus's luck that Hagrid would find him such an unpleasant creature to work with. However, Severus pitied Draco Malfoy more, as that unfortunate was actually in the aforementioned sixth year class. "Spout will have your hide if your dugbogs get into her Mandrakes," was all he said aloud.

Hagrid nodded, "I'm keepin' special watch on 'em. They willna get t' the greenhouses."

Sending a silent apology to Draco, Severus relented, "I might as well look at her."

He followed the gamekeeper out of the hut's backdoor (the Headmaster still wouldn't be able to see him, thank Merlin, not with the hut between him and the castle). They stopped in front of a magically enclosed sphere which looked as though it went as far underground as it stood aboveground. Hagrid pointed to a pile of dead logs in the middle of it. "There she is," he said with a sickeningly fond note to his voice.

Severus frowned and narrowed his eyes at the logs. With some difficulty he noted that two of them had four paws each. Hagrid tapped the sphere with his umbrella, which he had grabbed before stepping out of the hut. The sphere shimmered and disappeared. Severus followed reluctantly as Hagrid approached them. The half-giant picked up one of the pawed logs, and cradled it as if it were a small child. "Inn't Mossy lovely?" Mossy turned her head towards Snape and bared small but very sharp teeth at him.

"Lovely," Severus drawled, "Almost as adorable as Voldemort."

Hagrid looked hurt, but Severus ignored it, raising his wand and casting several spells on the creature held for his inspection. His study of anatomy was not as complete as Madam Pomfrey's, but he was required to know something of medical conditions and the bodily functions of not only humans but other creatures as well. One could not create potions to have effects on things one did not understand.

"She has an underdeveloped womb," he eventually diagnosed. "There are several fertility and womb-growth potions that would fix the problem." Why he would want to allow another dugbog into the world was beyond him, but it wasn't his job to review the neccessity of the potions, just make them.

"If you have a clean cauldron available, I believe I can collect all the ingredients from the forest in short order. Everything is best used fresh for this one." He intentionally chose one potion where he could get the ingredients from the forest and brew it tonight, without needing to return to the dungeons. It was, perhaps, not the most appropriate one, but it would have the desired effect on the dugbog.

"Yeh doan have ta do it tonight, Prof'sor!" the giant protested.

He let irritation show in his voice and expression, "Are you requiring of me another trip out here? I think it best to be done with it now." He turned and stalked into the forest, his robes billowing, and his wand ready to be drawn at a moment's notice should something unpleasant find him. He heard a werewolf howling in the distance. He glanced to the full moon glowing overhead with mild trepidation. Since the Shrieking Shack incident during his school days, this time of month

always put him slightly on edge. However, nothing more fiercesome than a mosquito attacked him. (Which, though it drew a few drops of his blood, Severus considered himself the victor as it did receive a painful death for its trouble. Squashing was never a pleasant way to die.)

When he returned to the Gamekeeper's hut, Albus Dumbledore was waiting there. Severus sighed and dropped his satchel of leaves, bugs, and roots on a chair. "Headmaster."

Albus's eyes twinkled in amusement. "I have been looking for you."

Severus raised his brows as if surprised, "Really? Whatever for, and why would you imagine that I might have been here?"

"It seems someone has changed the password on both my office and my quarters, and I wondered if, perhaps, you might know how that would have happened?"

Severus's innocent gaze met the Headmaster's twinkling blue eyes. "Someone changed your passwords? Is that even possible? Are you certain you haven't just forgotten them again?"

Albus looked hurt, though his eyes continued to twinkle. He was enjoying this far more than he was supposed to. "I have never forgotten my password," he announced with injured dignity.

"Have you tried 'Albus is a dunderhead' for your office or 'Albus is a meanie' for your private chambers?" Severus asked with a straight face.

The old wizard broke down into helpless laughter, while Hagrid gave the potions master a strange look. "Yeh changed the passwords on the Headmaster's rooms?"

"I admitted no such thing."

"Severus," Albus wheezed, "You must tell me how you did that."

The potions master raised his brows, "What, and allow you to do the same to my passwords? It is bad enough that you can break my wards and turn my underclothes bright green."

The twinkle in the green eyes danced merrily. "You seemed depressed. And I never admitted to that."

"You are the only one who would or could do such a thing."

"I could say the same of you."

Severus smirked, and for just a moment, he let his eyes show his amusement. He had been told, the one time he did this in Minerva's presence, that his eyes could twinkle as awfully as the Headmaster's. After that, he decided not to frighten the poor woman by doing so again. After all, there were very few things more frightening than a twinkling Albus Dumbledore. He imagined a twinkling Severus Snape was one of those things. "Really, Albus. Simply because I would is not proof that I did."

To his surprise, the Headmaster turned relatively serious. "I certainly hope it was you. Else the school has had a security breach."

Severus sighed. The man had an unfair advantage over him in getting admissions of guilt. "Of course it was me, Albus. I would have been in my dungeons had I not. Which returns us to the question, how did you know to look for me here?"

"When you were in none of your usual haunts, the library, the Great Hall, or the staff room, I

became worried and thought you had perhaps gone to a meeting without telling me. So I asked Hagrid if he had seen you heading out toward the forest. He had, but not for the reason I feared. Congratulations, Severus, I would not have thought to look for you visiting Hagrid for Hagrid's sake."

"Truth to tell, the first place I thought of was Trelawny's tower, but I supposed I would have had to kill her if I spent any considerable length of time there."

Albus chuckled. "I would not have looked there, either."

"I suppose it is too much to hope for that you may have been annoyed?" Severus asked forlornly.

Albus twinkled. "Some concern until I discovered it was your revenge, but mostly amusement, dear child."

He had suspected as much the moment he saw the old wizard. "You are aware you have an overdeveloped sense of humour, are you not, Headmaster?"

"Quite," Albus chirped, "Well, I'll leave you to your potion making now. Good night!"

"Good night, Albus." The old wizard and Hagrid exchanged salutations, then Albus left, humming an off-key tune. Severus found the caudron Hagrid had brought out for his use and he began filling it with water. "That man is altogether too cheerful," Severus grumbled more to himself than to Hagrid.

"Did yeh really change his passwords on 'im, Prof'sor?" the gameskeeper asked with a touch of disapproval.

"It is a ritual, Hagrid," Severus told him, not really knowing why he was discussing this except it was something to talk about while he did the tedious bits of potion preparation. "He decides, randomly as far as I can tell, every so often, that I am in need of 'cheering,'" Severus did not attempt in the least to contain the sneer in his voice at the last word. "He pulls what would seem to be a childish prank, except it reveals weaknesses in my wards, which are some of the strongest on the grounds. He leaves a note detailing how he got through, then gives me a present, generally in the form of transfiguring all my furniture or changing the colors of my clothes or some other such irritation."

Cauldron three quarters full, he placed it over the fireplace, and began sorting through his gathered ingredients as it warmed. The first step could not begin until the water was at a full boil. "This was not the part meant to cheer me, of course. But Albus knows me well enough that he recognizes that do such a thing requires me to perform an act of petty revenge. Planning and executing that is what he believes puts me in a good mood."

He commandeered Hagrid's coffee table, a kitchen knife, a round bottom mug, and a wooden spoon to cut and powder his ingredients. The tools were less than high quality, and he had no scales available, but he was a potions master, and any potion was as much art as it was science. Conversation died at this point, as he concentrated on the preparation of the different herbs, roots, insects, and other things he had collected.

When the water began to boil, his fifteen plus years of teaching habits kicked in, and he began to explain what the potion was supposed to do as he added the first ingredient. "This is a combination womb-growth and pregnancy protection potion. It was originally designed for breeding programs where the creatures being crossed were unable to reproduce naturally because they themselves were the offspring of very different creatures. Using it for your dugbog is a bit overkill, but it will guarantee nothing will interfere with the pregnancy. Once this potion is applied, the dugbog should get impregnated within five days before the potion loses its

effectiveness. If she does, nothing short of death on the mother's part will abort the pregnancy prior to the birth of living offspring."

Hagrid nodded his understanding of the effects and they fell into silence again. When only two ingredients remained he took the cauldron off the fire and put it on the coffee table, muttering a cooling charm under his breath as he did so. As he stirred in the second to last ingredient, he picked up his lecture as if almost an hour hadn't passed since he last spoke. "As soon as this is stirred in, and sets for about two minutes the potion is effectively done. The last ingredient just prevents the potion from killing the would-be mother if she fails to become pregnant in five days."

Severus sat back, and started counting to 120, trusting his own timing over that of any clock or watch. He stood again when he reached 100, and gathered the last ingredient. At 120, he held the powder over the cauldron and began to turn his hand over to dump it in. Also at 120, something howled in the Forest, causing Fang to dash across the room to hide under a chair. As the boarhound passed Severus's work area, he knocked into the table, and the cauldron tipped over. The potion master's mind quickly calculated where the dangerous potion would splash to, and reached the conclusion that while Hagrid and Fang were well clear, he would not be able to escape getting doused. The potion was applied through skin contact, not ingestion, since some of the bred creatures didn't really have mouths.

He was going to need to get pregnant within five days or die. The powder to prevent that side effect was still held in his hand.

He closed his eyes. No sense in blinding himself from the faery grass, as well. Then he felt something big pushing him aside a moment before the potion hit him. He landed on his side, and inspected the damage. Both himself and Hagrid were on the ground, dripping with the potion. Fang, the wretched mutt, was safely on the other side of the room already. Severus stood and turned on Hagrid, "What did you think you were doing?! You were clear of the splash zone!"

"Yeh weren't."

He couldn't decide if he was more exasperated or surprised. He decided on irritated. "I couldn't have gotten out of the way. All you've gone and done was get yourself hit!" He tuned out whatever response Hagrid had to that, closing his eyes again and running through the available options.

Fact: He needed to get pregnant. Fact: Hagrid needed to get pregnant. Fact: The mess he was standing in had to get cleaned up before anyone else needed to get pregnant. Fact: He wanted nobody to know about his condition, certainly not Hagrid who could not keep a secret to save his life. Conclusion: Clean up the mess, then he and Hagrid would . . . Severus mentally shuddered, but there was really little choice in the matter. Then obliviate Hagrid. Whatever he did with himself before he discovered his condition couldn't harm the infant. The potion would see to that.

The first step was easy enough. He even collected enough of the potion from the bottom of the cauldron to give to the cursed dugbog. If he was going to suffer the indignity of dying if he wasn't pregnant, he saw little reason for the blasted monster to fair any better. Because Hagrid wouldn't remember much of tonight, he wrote out in his spidery script the instructions for application and a warning that she best get herself mated within five days.

When the rest of the spill was lifted, neutralized, and disposed of, Severus turned to Hagrid. Burying his trepidation, he asked, "You are aware that we have been affected, correct?"

The half-giant frowned. "By the potion?"

It was with great difficulty that Severus bit back a cutting remark. "Yes. By the potion. Is there anyone - who is male, and can arrive here within the next few days - in particular you wish to

have a child with?"

Severus wasn't sure he had ever seen the half-giant blush before. Hagrid stuttered out a few false starts, then answered, "No."

"Nor do I," Severus told him, hesitated only a moment, then added, "So if you have no objection, we could each relieve the other of our barrenness."

Hagrid blinked, looking dumbfounded. "Yer suggestin' that we have sex."

Mentally counting to ten to keep his patience well in hand, Severus inclined his head and confirmed tersely, "Yes."

"Why?"

"Because if we don't get pregnant, we die. I promised Albus I would try to avoid dying," Severus snapped, then fought to regain control on his calm.

The gameskeeper flushed again. "Right, but, why me?"

"Because Albus is like my father thereby making him a nonsexual being as far as I am concerned, and I really can not see myself with Flitwick or Filch, so that leaves you." All of the other males in the school were either students, or not on speaking terms with him. Beyond even that, though, he couldn't see himself propositioning anyone who didn't understand the situation, and he certainly wasn't about to explain it to anybody.

"All righ', then," Hagrid seemed a little put out by the less than stellar endorsement he had received, but Severus doubted Hagrid's opinion of Severus himself was much better. "The bed is back here."

Severus followed, his stomach twisting in fear and apprehension, though none of it showed on his blank face. As soon as he saw the rumpled blankets, the twisting intensified. Ignoring it, he began undressing with steady hands and unruffled outer calm.

He heard Hagrid swallow. Then the gameskeeper drew all the shades on his windows, and began blowing out candles. Delaying tactics, Severus recognized but did not call him on them. Only two candles remained lit when Hagrid turned back to him. He was down to his last button on his great black robes, and he shrugged out of it, revealing black trousers and a black buttoned shirt underneath. After neatly folding the robe and placing it on a convenient chair, he next untied his shoes, and placed them precisely in front of the same chair. He began on the set of buttons on his shirt, starting at the top. Each opened button revealed more of his pale, hairless torso. He felt Hagrid's eyes on him, but did not allow himself to falter.

When he reached the end of the shirt's buttons, he slid out of that as well, and folded it atop his robes. Shirtless, in another man's home, with said fully clothed man's eyes upon him, he unfasted his belt, undid the button of his trousers, and stepped out of them. They, too, were neatly folded and placed with his other clothes. Only his underwear and socks remained. The socks came off first, turned right side out, and placed atop his trousers. He recognized he was delaying as well, but Hagrid was still just standing there, watching, completely dressed.

He hooked his thumbs under the underwear's fabric. Drawing in all the courage he had, he lowered that final article of clothing, stepping out of it, and placing it with the rest. Uncomfortable with sitting on anyone else's bed even when invited and clothed, he instead turned to meet Hagrid's eyes for the first time since he began undressing. "Well?" he asked, impatiently.

Hagrid had already been blushing, but now it deepened. "Righ'." He pulled off his moleskin

jacket, and tossed it onto a nearby chair (not the one where his own clothing resided). His buttonless shirt came up over his head, revealing a darkly haired and fully muscled chest. He kicked off his boots, and yanked off his socks next, tucking the socks into his boots when they had come free. As his pants slid down over his thighs, Severus's eyes tracked the well developed strength of the man's lower appendages. As big as he was, Hagrid had very little in the way of fat other than his gut.

The pants, too, were just thrown aside. As the gameskeeper took hold of his underwear, and slid it off, Severus fought not to widen his eyes. There was nothing he could do about his quickened heart rate. Despite himself, he felt the first stirring in his groin from the sight before him. That log was going to go inside him? The thought was terrifying enough to be arousing.

Severus backed up to the bed, and lowered himself onto it. "Who first?" he asked briefly, fearing his voice would crack if he spoke too much.

"Doan know," Hagrid answered, blushing furiously as he cautiously laid down beside him.

Severus's eyes drifted to the other man's prick again. "I'll take you first," he decided, only a little hoarsely. He was fairly sure he wouldn't be able to move once he was taken. The affair was straight sex - well, unadorned sex, actually, this most certainly wasn't straight. On the contrary, it was downright queer. He cast a lubrication charm, knowing that men could not self lubricate, then poked around with his fingers before deciding that Hagrid was wide enough to take him. He slid in with no difficulty. It was neither passionate lovemaking, nor violent rape. Simply emotionless rutting. Hagrid had his head turned to the side in either shame or embarrassment, Severus couldn't tell. He eventually came, then pulled out and laid on his back, his feet firmly planted on the mattress and his nether region lifted, as ready as he was going to be for Hagrid to take his turn.

As the half-giant took his position between his legs, Severus wondered if the man would ever stop blushing tonight. He was very hesitant and uncertain, and Severus had the distinct impression he was exactly copying everything he had done. This was not such a good thing, because Hagrid hadn't needed much in the way of loosening and stretching. Severus was about to try to point this out, when the other pulled out his two fingers, and positioned his cock for entrance. Panic flew through the potion's master, but nothing came out of his mouth before Hagrid started to push in. In fact, his body had to poor sense to stiffen and tense.

Agony. Over twenty years experience with the crutacious kept him silent and blank expressioned. Only the white knuckled grip he had on the sheets gave him away. Hagrid's gasp covered his own as the huge man slid deeper. "So tight," the big man whispered, the blush receeding as wonder and pleasure filling his face.

Severus dared not respond, afraid that any movement on his part would either make him explode or scream. Though the thought No shit, did reverberate rather loudly within his own head. He held unnaturally still, his expression blank, and his fists clenched painfully, though he could only barely feel that, what with the seering invasion elsewhere.

Hagrid began to move within him, each thrust bringing him deeper. Severus closed his eyes, certain they couldn't hide his pain anymore. Fortunately, he hadn't cried since he was thirteen, so no wet tracks gave evidence against him. What felt like ages later, but couldn't have been more than a few minutes, Hagrid came, and Severus couldn't hold back a soft outcry as his insides exploded. Hagrid, fortunately shouted at the same time, and didn't hear. The half-giant pulled out, and Severus collapsed. He felt Hagrid lie down beside him. "Did I hurt you?" he asked worriedly.

Severus shook his head, covering his weakness automatically. "No, it was fantastic," he lied with

a fake tired smile.

Hagrid veritably beamed in his relief. "It was." In a few short moments, the satiated half-giant was sound asleep.

Severus had guessed right. He could barely move. Every small shift in position he made sent waves of pain through him. But he had walked from the Apparation barrier up to Dumbledore's office in worse states than this. He climbed out of the bed, noting the trickles of blood and semen along the inside of his thighs. A cleaning charm dispelled the fluids from himself, Hagrid, and the bed. Another cleared the air of all scents of sex.

He dressed, being careful to do up every last button, then turned his wand toward the sleeping gameskeeper. "Obliviate," he said softly. Hagrid stirred slightly in his sleep but did not awaken. Severus quietly left the hut. The gameskeeper was in for a nasty surprise in a few weeks. Barely able to walk back to his rooms, Severus could not find it within himself to feel sorry for the other man.

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Chapter 2 - Hagrid's Strange Condition by Drake of Dross

Poppy Pomfrey raised her brows in surprise as she saw Hagrid nervously shifting from foot to foot in her waiting room. She smiled at him, "Hello, Rubeus, is there something I can help you with?"

"I 'aven't been feelin' too well," he admitted, as if this was some shameful secret.

"Well, let's just go see what's wrong with you." Mentally relegating the Care of Magical Creature's teacher from friend to patient, she hustled him into the back room and set him into one of the beds. She immediately initiated several life function recording spells for her later study, then began to ask questions, "When did you first start feeling ill?"

"A few days back. I'm fine most o' the time, but I toss meh stomach every day right after I wake up. Ain't even been t' the pub lately."

Poppy frowned thoughtfully. Her life function spells weren't picking up any diseases or other serious problems, else they would be writing in red rather than green. She wondered if it was coincidence that a "Care for Pregnant Wizards" book had arrived for her by school owl a few days ago and now Hagrid was giving her symptoms that sounded awfully like morning sickness. Or perhaps that diagnosis was just based on the fact that she had been skimming the book a few hours ago. Just in case, though, she cast the spell that would tell whether or not a witch was pregnant. Hagrid, recognizing the spell, opened his mouth to protest, but snapped it shut with an audible click when a blue haze hovered over his stomach. His mouth opened and closed several more times, then gave up, looking at Poppy in confusion.

"Congratulations, it's a boy," she told him, feeling somewhat stunned herself.

"But how?" he asked.

"I expect you would know better than I would."

He blushed deeply. "'Aven't been with anyone. Not ever."

Poppy frowned. "Were you caught in the way of hex or potion that you couldn't figure the effect of?" She cast another spell, and added, "Approximately five weeks ago?" She mentally counted back, "Around the second week of term."

He shook his head, then stopped abruptly. "Tha' was about the time I gave meh dugbog a potion fer gettin' and keepin' herself pregnant, but I'm sure I didna get it on me. She still had t' . . . yeh

know, with 'er mate, anyway."

"Around that time you never got drunk enough to black out or woke up the next morning with an ache in a place you couldn't explain?" she asked, not really expecting a positive on either of these. Hagrid was overfond of the pub, but he never drank enough to do something stupid. Besides which, wizards couldn't get pregnant without special potions or spells. And Hagrid and another drunk would not have access to those.

Hagrid started to shake his head, then stopped. "Maybe. Weren't drunk though. Jest kent remember Prof'sor Snape finishin' the potion and leavin' that night. Next day, I was a mite bit sore, nothin' much though, he was gone, an' the potion waited on the table. Figured I'd'a fallen asleep while 'e worked."

Worried, Poppy cast another spell, and her worry increased as she found four hours of missing memory in Hagrid's mind. She recognized the signature of a powerful obliviation spell. "You were with Professor Snape?" she asked a bit sharper than she meant to.

He nodded.

"You may go or stay, there's nothing more I can do for you right now. I need to talk to Dumbledore. Oh," she went into her office grabbed the strange book that had so ominously appeared just as she needed it. Returning to Hagrid's side, she placed it in his hands. "You may want to look through this. Bring it back when you come for your appointment in two weeks." She had glanced through it briefly, as a curiosity, not as something she would need to deal with, and a closer look was required. However, Hagrid had a right to know what he was getting into.

"I'll stay 'ere a bit and look through yer book," Hagrid told her. "Migh' need help unnerstandin' some o' it."

She nodded her permission. "I'll be back in a little bit," she promised, then floored right to the Headmaster's office. "Albus!"

The headmaster was, for once, doing some actual paperwork, and she felt bad interrupting him, but this was important. "I think Hagrid's been raped."

Dumbledore blinked.

"He's pregnant and doesn't remember how it happened. Someone cast an obliviate on him."

"Have you any idea who?"

Poppy nodded, and gave her accusation with absolute certainty, "Professor Snape."

The headmaster closed his eyes as if pained. "What makes you so sure?"

"He made the fertility potion for Hagrid's creature, he was in the hut at Hagrid's last memory, and when the baby's born, we can test paternity."

Dumbledore sighed and nodded, "Thank you, Poppy, I will speak with him." Recognizing a dismissal when she heard one, Poppy floored back to answer whatever questions Hagrid might have for her.

"You asked to see me, Headmaster?" Severus asked as he was invited into the older wizard's office. He took his usual seat, and noted the solemn, sparkleless expression. "Something is

wrong."

"A very serious accusation has been placed against you, Severus."

Severus frowned and cocked his head to the side, somehow sensing that Albus did not mean anything like being a Death Eater. "What sort of accusation?"

"Rape."

Severus blinked and paled, as much as his skin could, which wasn't much.

"Against Hagrid."

"Shit."

Whatever reaction the Headmaster was expecting, it wasn't that. "Are you saying you're guilty, Severus?"

Severus glowered at him. "I'm guilty of many things, Albus. Rape is not among them. Obliviating him is. And now he can't clear me. I should have known what it would look like."

"You did have sex, then."

Severus nodded. "Yes, the paternity test will bring that out beyond any shred of doubt."

"Why, Severus?"

"He'd have died if someone didn't. I happened to be there. Between dying and having my child, he opted for the later. The potion was spilt before I could add the last ingredient to the Breeder's Reproduction potion. Hagrid pushed me out of the way, but it got him." There, most of the main points, without the fact that he had been affected, too.

"Why the oblivate?"

Good question. "Neither Hagrid nor I are gay, Headmaster. I did not want him to accidentally spread false rumours about my sexual preference. Nor about the identity of his child's father for that matter. If it got back to Voldemort that I was a father, he'd either want to recruit the kid or kill me for my choice of mother. And we both know how well Hagrid can keep a secret."

The headmaster sighed. "Very well, Severus. I will cover for you with both Poppy and Hagrid. This will stay between us."

Severus closed his eyes in relief. "Thank you, Headmaster."

"But you will be publicly responsible for the potion that asexually impregnated him, and as such, I can force you to act like a father, even though there is no blood relation between you."

The potion's master blinked. "Headmaster, I can't be a father!"

"You should have thought of that before spilling your potion on him," the headmaster remarked lightly, the twinkle starting to return to his blue eyes.

"His bloody dog knocked it over!" Severus protested, "It was no fault of mine!"

"Never the less, your child has a right to a father. Hagrid has the right to have someone help him through this difficult time."

What about my other child, the one inside me? Hasn't he the right to a father? Haven't I the same rights Hagrid does? But Severus did not speak these thoughts aloud. "Isn't Hagrid a valid father? Let him choose his own mate. I relinquish all claim to that child. It is not mine."

He had not seen Dumbledore look more disappointed in him since he admitted to being a Death Eater.

"I mean it, Albus, I am not parent material." It was bad enough he was already starting to consider inflicting himself on his own unborn child instead of putting the poor boy up for adoption as he initially intended. But every time he mentally called the fetus his child, or his baby, or his boy, or, worst of all, his son, the ability to give it up lessened, and he was only five weeks into term.

Albus sighed, and Severus saw that he had lost much ground he had fought hard for in the old man's favour. "Very well, Professor, you will not be held responsible for it in any way."

Severus closed his eyes and nodded, accepting the reprieve on Hagrid's child and the loss of trust. "Thank you, Headmaster."

"You are dismissed, Professor."

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Chapter 3 - Severus's Poor Balance by Drake of Dross

Severus Snape looked at himself in the mirror, debating whether or not it was time to start using concealment charms. He turned to get a good view of his profile. He frowned in indecision, wishing such trivial thoughts like do I look fat? had not suddenly taken such high priority in his mind. He turned again, to look at his other profile.

There was now a definite bulge visible. At least, compared to his normal concave thinness. Minerva had remarked yesterday that he was finally starting to look healthy.

He had scoured his copy of "Care for Pregnant Wizards" backwards and forwards until he knew it as well as he did any of his potion texts. He would drop by the kitchen in the dead of night to get recommended foods he normally did not have in his diet, that might rouse suspicion should his habits change. Him, drinking milk, for example, would not be easily lived down. Pickle sandwiches with ketchup, also, might be a bit difficult to explain, but they were all of a sudden one of his favorite foods.

He had taken to avoiding Poppy Pomfrey as though it were the prime tenet of his new religion. All injuries he suffered, whether due to potion class mishaps or Voldemort, he tended himself. He could not afford her checking him over. When Albus questioned this new self-treatment policy, he just explained that Poppy still looked at him as though he had done something to Hagrid. This never failed to quickly end the discussion.

He did not intentionally set out to avoid Hagrid, but their schedules and routines were different enough that it didn't take any effort to not see him for days on end. Neither were in the habit of attending every meal in the Great Hall, and they had a knack for deciding on different times to eat there.

He frowned at the mirror again, mildly annoyed with himself for letting his mind wander into distraction. Deciding on impulse that now was as good a time as any to start concealing his condition, he cast the charm. His appearance in the mirror did not alter. This would be how he looked for the remainder of his pregnancy, and beyond, if necessary.

He stalked from his private chambers, and out to the potions classroom where his first class of the day was already waiting. The first two periods passed without incident. It was during his third, right after lunch, that the problems started to occur. Sixth year Gryffindor-Slytherins, of course.

Why wouldn't trouble occur during the class that contained Harry Potter, Neville Longbottom, Hermione Granger, and Draco Malfoy? The first was simply annoying. The second caused the problem, and the last two had the best chance of making his life miserable by figuring out what was going on.

He hovered over his students as he always did. Longbottom got nervous as he always did. The boy would learn to grow a back bone if it was the last thing Severus taught him. Then a snapped comment at Potter, who was sharing a desk with Longbottom, startled the nervous Gryffindor and he dumped far too much lacewing into his cauldron. An acrid smoke boiled out of the potion. It was fairly harmless, it's only hateful attribute was its smell, but the stink atop everything else going on in his body made him feel light headed. He wobbled.

Malfoy was at his side in an instant, steadying him, eyeing the smoke, "Professor? Are you alright? Is that dangerous?" The rest of the class watched, either frozen in fear, or moving rapidly out of the way of Neville's potion.

Severus recovered enough to cast a ventilation charm. "The smoke is harmless, everyone back to your seats," he ordered brusquely. There was no chair behind the teacher's desk in his room. He had never cared to sit down while teaching. He preferred stalking up and down the aisles even during quizzes. This was the first time he regretted its absence. As Malfoy returned to his seat, Severus drew all his strength and concentration together to sweep up to front of the room and lean on his desk as if he weren't about to collapse.

Only two people appeared less than convinced. Malfoy, who had surely felt him shaking, and Granger, who was just too smart for her own good, and had been trying for the last year and a half to prove to herself and her two friends Potter and Weasley, that the potions master was human like everybody else. So far, she'd had more success on her elf's rights campaign. Minerva found it rather amusing, and kept him up to date on the girl's progress. According to the Gryffindor Head of House, Granger's most salient point so far was that he did, at least once a day, actually inject food in the Great Hall.

Apparently, her belief that he breathed air was shot down as unproven.

His distraction on this topic was abruptly shattered when Harry Potter's cauldron exploded. Mentally castrating himself for his lack of focus during a class with Harry Potter in it, he stalked toward the disruption, glad to see nobody was dead or in need of an immediate trip to the Hospital Wing. Then, the next thing he knew, he was flat on his back, with his head on Malfoy's lap.

"Professor!" the boy exclaimed in relief when he saw Severus's eyes open. "Madam Pomfrey's on the way."

"No! I'm fine, I tripped," he denied, struggling to his feet. Malfoy helped him up, knowing better than to try to stop him or correct the lie. "Class is dismissed. Ten inches on why Potter's potion exploded or Longbottom's smoked, due next class." Then just for the hell of it, "Twenty points from Gryffindor."

He did not wait for them to clear out before fleeing the room himself. He did not know how long he had been out, and therefore, did not know how long until Pomfrey was due to arrive. He sensed more than heard or saw Malfoy following him, but he did not turn around to tell him to leave off. If he collapsed again, he probably shouldn't be alone. The back of his head hurt and he wondered how hard he had hit it when he landed.

When he reached his own quarters, he turned back to meet Malfoy's grey gaze. "I am safely to my rooms now, Mr. Malfoy." Malfoy only held up his hand, which was stained red. The gesture, with his worried expression, said as clearly as words, You're bleeding, sir.

Severus opened his room's wards, and invited the teenager inside with a wave. Malfoy accepted with a pleased grin. Severus took the first chair he came to with less than perfect grace. "I have washcloths in the bathroom," he pointed at a half-open door, "and ice in the backmost storeroom," his finger moved to indicate a short hallway.

"I'll get them, sir," Malfoy volunteered immediately. As soon as he was out of sight, Severus levitated "Care for Pregnant Wizards" into the bedroom where Malfoy wouldn't stumble upon it. The boy returned shortly with both the washcloths and the ice. Severus accepted them, and held them against the back of his head. "What happened, sir?"

"I was Called last night. Our Lord was not pleased that I had not finished developing the new poison he asked for. The fumes of Longbottom's potion reacted with the healing potions in my bloodstream and I nearly fainted. I managed to delay it, but not long enough. I should not have left the support of my desk. Now Poppy will want to examine me, and she'll find that I suffered the Cructacious last night. She'll tell Dumbledore, and he'll want to know what I was doing away from the school." It was not even all lies. Lucius Malfoy could back up parts of it, should Draco ask.

Malfoy winced in sympathy. "It's not easy, is it, Professor?"

"No," he confirmed, then, very carefully, he added, "Being a Death Eater is not all it's cracked up to be."

Malfoy's expression flickered for a moment. "That's heresy, sir," he said quietly, equally carefully. But he did not sound surprised or outraged. That was promising.

Severus nodded his head. "I find, as your teacher, I should at least warn you of what to expect. I am not encouraging you to avoid the future your father has dreamed for you, but neither will I discourage it. It should be your choice, not his. Should you decide to join, rather than being pressured into it, you will be stronger for it. Should you decide not to join, you will be happier for it. The dark lord's way is not the only way, and it may not be yours. It is not my place or Lucius's to decide that it is or isn't."

Malfoy looked away, and the back of his head did not tell him whether this was a positive sign or a dangerous one.

"Were you allowed to choose, sir?"

A bit later than most, but, "Yes, Mr. Malfoy."

"Oh."

A silence fell between them, neither companionable nor tense. "You should go to your next class, but think about it, Mr. Malfoy. It is your future, after all."

The blond nodded, then stood. He had almost reached the door when he turned back. "What sort of future would I have if I said no?"

Severus's mouth twitched into a cynical smile. "First, you'd have to fight against the dark lord, to have that right, then you could do whatever you chose. The most irritating part of this option, is, of course, that the side against the dark lord is full of Gryffindors."

Malfoy smirked, "Well, that's why they're losing, then, isn't it?"

Severus actually laughed. "Very likely, Mr. Malfoy."

Malfoy started to turn back toward the door, then stopped, and frowned thoughtfully at him. "Who's side did you choose, sir?"

Severus stilled, then he gave a small smirk. "My own, Mr. Malfoy."

The boy smiled back, and Severus hoped this conversation would not make its way to Lucius's ear. "You're neatly placed for playing your own side, too, sir." Then he was gone. Severus prayed to whomever was listening that Draco Malfoy was not going to end up in Voldemort's camp, because the young man was far too close to the truth about Severus's loyalties. And killing a student just wouldn't sit well with the Headmaster.

He was in enough trouble on that front as it was.

His left hand drifted to his barely distended waistline, while his right put the washcloth held ice pack aside, cast a minor healing spell on the back of his skull, then joined its companion, resting over his child. He leaned his head back against the chair, and soon fell asleep.

The banging on his door woke him about an hour later. "Who is it?" he asked testily, not opening the entrance.

"Albus and Poppy," the Headmaster announced.

"Go away, I'm fine!"

"That's not what I heard!" Poppy's voice countered.

"A potion exploded, I slipped on the wet floor, end of story!"

"You missed your fourth class," Albus pointed out.

"So dock me two hours pay! Now, leave!"

"Do you have a headache?" Poppy asked, apparently content to do her examination through a closed and warded door.

"Yes! You're giving it to me! Go away!"

There was a muffled conversation between them, then Albus spoke again, "Severus, I'd like to speak with you in my office." That was either ominous, or a trick to get him where Poppy could look over him.

"Wizard's vow that Poppy won't be there?"

There was stunned silence on the other side of his door. Then, "Wizard's vow, Severus."

"Then, I'll floo up now, Headmaster." He beat the old wizard to his office by a goodly amount of time. When the headmaster arrived, Poppy was no longer with him.

"You are avoiding Poppy," Albus opened without preface.

Severus gave him his toned-down sneer. "I can't imagine how you figured that out."

"A wizard's vow, Severus? Over not tricking you into seeing her? Why?" He sounded concerned, "This isn't about Hagrid still, is it?"

Severus shook his head. "It's not Poppy, exactly. Just doctors or mediwitches in general." Best to

cut off the suggestion he see someone else before he made it.

"Why, Severus?" He wasn't sure if the extensive use of his first name was because the Headmaster was worried, trying to get Severus to trust him, or because Severus had finally been forgiven for not taking Hagrid's child as his own.

"I don't trust them," Severus answered the question.

The headmaster blinked. "You didn't mind Poppy a few months ago," he pointed out. Severus noticed with an internal smirk that he said nothing about other doctors and mediwitches.

"Well, I do now. I can take care of myself, Albus. I am a Potions Master, which is the next closest thing to a mediwitch."

Albus frowned, not really convinced. "You've already fainted once, Severus."

"I fell and knocked myself out, I did not faint," Severus 'corrected'.

Sighing, the headmaster gave up. "Very well, Severus. But if you faint again, I am putting you in the Hospital Wing, or St. Mungo's if you insist on avoiding Poppy."

"I won't faint again," Severus promised irritably, noticing belatedly that he had admitted to fainting once. He floored back to his chambers in a huff, read the fainting chapter in the pregnancy book again, decided his classroom needed a teacher's chair, then he went to sleep, forgetting to eat dinner.

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Chapter 4 - Hagrid's Announcement by Drake of Dross

Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley stood in front of the door to Hagrid's small hut at the edge of the Forbidden Forest. Hermione knocked politely, while Harry called out, "Hey, Hagrid!"

The gameskeeper, and one of Harry's favorite people, opened the door with a wide smile, "'Ello, c'mon in." They did and took their usual seats around his coffee table. Hagrid hurried into the kitchen area, then came back with a plateful of rockcakes, which he placed in the center of the table between them. "Eat up," he invited. Reluctantly, each of the three Gryffindors took one. "I'm glad you came out. There's some'at I wanted to tell yeh all."

"What is it, Hagrid?" Hermione asked, lowering her rock cake to her lap without tasting it. At her worried tone, Harry and Ron lowered theirs as well. Not that they needed a lot of excuse.

"I migh' have t' have a sub in my class fer a few months or weeks a' the end o' next term."

"Why?" Hermione asked while the other two nodded their agreement that Hagrid should answer this question.

Solemnity fought with embarrassment which fought with joy. Joy eventually won out and he beamed at them, "I'm gonna be a daddy."

Three joyful shouts congratulated him, wished him luck, told him to contact Mrs. Weasley if he had any questions, and otherwise told him this was great news. Then Hermione asked entirely the wrong question, "Who's the mother, Hagrid?"

The wide smile disappeared as if it had never been. "Well, tha's the trouble, see, I am."

The three students exchanged looks of confusion. Hesitantly, Hermione asked, "Who's the father?"

"I doan know, there migh' not be one, or i' migh' be Prof'sor Snape."

"Ugh," Ron couldn't stifle the sould of disgust. "Snape's?"

"You don't know?" Hermione asked, seeking data before making her opinion on the subject.

"'E made the potion Fang knocked ont' me, 'cording t' Prof'sor Dumbledore."

"Fang?" Harry repeated in alarm.

"Pomfrey says it's not par' dog," Hagrid quickly assured him. "Fully human-giant mix."

"And if it's Snape's?"

"Prof'sor Dumbledore says 'e wants nothin' t' do with 'im - It's gonna be a boy," he added, some of his happiness returning.

Another round of congradulations, then Ron commented, "It's just as well that greasy bat doesn't want him. Can you see him with a kid?"

"He is a teacher," Hermione pointed out.

"Who hates all his students," Ron countered.

"Except Malfoy," Harry added. "And who'd want their kid to turn out like him?"

Even Hermione joined Ron in agreement with Harry. Hagrid cleared his throat, and the three students blushed faintly. "Sorry, Hagrid, we just think you're better off without him," Harry apologized. The other two nodded, though Hermione was a bit reluctant at it.

"Thanks," Hagrid accepted their support. "I jus' doan know if I ken do this by meself."

"My mum would be glad to help," Ron assured him, without consulting his mother.

"And we can be like uncles or step brothers, or whatever," Harry added, sounding almost as excited about this prospect as he was about Hagrid being a parent.

Hagrid's smile widened at this offer of family for his son.

"Do you know what you're going to call him yet?" Hermione asked before he could comment on it.

"'Aven't decided yet."

-----Time Passes-----

The rumour spread through Hogwarts like wildfire. Hagrid was having a baby boy, other parent unknown or non-existant. Harry, Hermione, and Ron weren't quite sure who had overheard them talking about possible names the Care of Magical Creature professor might choose, but there was no stopping it. They refused to answer questions, which didn't stop half the school from asking anyway.

Hagrid happily informed his classes that he was going to be a daddy, admitted he was pregnant, and told them a potion was the father.

Snape grudgingly answered Slytherins' questions. The potion was brewed to impregnate the dugbog. Hagrid's idiot dog Fang spilt it on the gamekeeper. No, the child was not going to be either a dog or a dugbog, though even if it was, Hagrid had an unhealthy fondness for rare and dangerous beasts. After this remark, Ron leaned over to Harry and mentioned that a Snape was a dangerous beast, so Hagrid would probably be happy with a half-Snape for a son after all.

Both Harry and Ron got a detention and lost five points each for laughing in class.

End of fall term came, and Hagrid didn't look any bigger but it was only four months since conception, and he was fairly large to begin with. Alone, Snape stood in front of his mirror, and frowned at the obvious expansion of his waist. There was no doubt he was pregnant. We conceived at the same time, why isn't Hagrid this big? he questioned himself, but he had no answer.

Christmas Eve, and another Death Eater Meeting, Snape falls under yet another crutacious, but this time, as he writhes on the ground, refusing to scream, he hears an agonized cry in his head. He knows that if he had conceived with any other potion than the one he had, his son would be beyond dead right now, but the child's mental scream into his mother's head continues.

Christmas Morning, Hagrid greets Harry, Ron, and Hermione, who had stayed at Hogwarts over break. They laugh and joke, and break their teeth on red and green rock cakes.

Christmas Morning, Snape sits alone in his bed, hugging his stomach as if it were an already born child. Two tears track slowly down his cheeks as he speaks softly to the still alive, but very afraid fetus within him. The mind link created during extreme stress and pain has not completely disappeared, and he uses it to pass soothing, it's-safe-now feelings toward his child. Another tear follows the wet track along his face as he begins to apologize, but cannot promise it will never happen again. Both he and his child still shake with the after-effects of the curse. He calls the child by name, Severin. Severin Sheldon Snape. Adoption is no longer an option.

Spring term begins, and students and staff begin to comment that they can almost see the bulge begin to show under Hagrid's moleskin jacket. Severus studies his profile again in the privacy in his room, and worries that he looks far bigger than the pictures in his book say he should. A concealment charm slims him down to his size at two months.

February. A second year Hufflepuff runs down the hall, and crashes into Professor Snape, but as the tall, skinny professor chews her out for running indoors, and deducts house points, she can't help wondering why, when she had crashed into him, his stomach had felt so round. Not wanting a trip to St. Mungo's, she decides to keep this observation to herself and soon forgets the whole incident. Professor Snape finds a quiet alcove, and calms the startled fetus.

March. Hagrid is definitely showing now, and he waddles about his outdoor classroom as he explains the care of week old dugbogs. Snape rarely leaves the teacher's chair while in his classroom. He eats mostly in his rooms. He does not stalk the halls at night. He sleeps more and more, and has fallen far behind in grading. Albus watches him worriedly, but he does not faint again. Hagrid decides, with the three Gryffindor's approval, that his son's name will be Charles Rubeus Hagrid. Charlie Weasley, the boy's namesake, accepted the position of Godfather. Poppy Pomphrey was delighted to agree to be Godmother.

Early April. Snape stands in front of his mirror, his ankles already killing him and he's barely stood there for one minute. He studies he profile and knows that his son is not going to be able to get out without surgery. But surgery requires someone else to know, and he dares not tell until the birth is imminent. Snape has realized the problem. The boy's father was a half-giant. The kid must have gotten every last giant gene Hagrid had.

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Chapter 5 - Minerva's Help by Drake of Dross

Severus Snape approached Minerva's office, stopping frequently to rest, using a wall for discreet support. The occasional student would give him an odd look, but a glare would always send them running along their way. When he finally reached his destination, the door was open invitingly and she sat at her desk grading papers. He entered, and dropped as gracefully as he could into the chair across from her. It wasn't remarkably graceful. "Minerva."

She smiled. "Hello, Severus. I haven't seen you in a while."

Ignoring her implicit question, he went right to the point. "It's April, Hagrid's due soon, isn't he?"

"A little more than a month," she agreed, surprised as his choice of topic. Until now he had avoided it religiously.

"Do you know much about birthing babies?"

She blinked. What an odd question. "Shouldn't you be asking Poppy this?"

His head shook violently. "No mediwitch." Minerva remembered belatedly that Albus told her Severus had developed an inexplicable phobia of doctors and mediwitches.

"All right," she said, trying to project calm toward the suddenly distraught wizard. She had never seen Severus like this. It scared her. "No mediwitches," she agreed in her Consoling Head of House Voice.

He calmed immediately. "Good. Do you know about birthing babies?"

"I was present when my sister had her two children. Why?"

Shrugging negligently, he said off-handedly, "I just wondered what Hagrid would be going through. Never having been present when anyone but myself was born. I feel . . . moderately responsible for his condition." He looked up at her in quick alarm, "It was entirely Fang's fault, I'm not claiming fatherhood, it's just, I was the one who made the bloody potion."

Minerva did her best to hide her surprise. He was showing human emotion; indifference (subtly different from the blankness he usually wore), alarm, hesitation. Not only was he showing emotion, but he was switching between emotions with unusually quick speed. If that was how he normally was, he might have developed that blank mask to keep people from getting too confused. And that wasn't even mentioning that he was bringing up how he felt about something in an actual conversation.

"It will be difficult, long, and painful," she answered the question from what she had seen with her sister. "I'm not sure how it will differ with him being a wizard and all. I can't imagine it will be any easier."

"If something happened to Poppy, and he started to have his baby, who in this school would probably be the best to go to? Would you be able to help birth it?"

She looked at him strangely. She had the odd sense that his question was not idle speculation. "I don't know. Maybe. Sprout has a daughter, she might be better."

Severus shook his head. "I asked her already. She said all she remembers about it is pain, pushing, and holding the baby afterwards. If there were complications, and you had to take the baby out directly, would you be able to do that?"

The sudden shift in topic was disorienting, but she followed it. Shaking her head no, she said, "I'm a transfiguration teacher, Severus, not a mediwitch or a midwife."

For a second, his eyes became haunted and scared, then they blanked again and he turned his steady gaze on her. "Would Albus be able to, do you think? Flitwick?"

"Severus, do you know something is going to happen to Poppy?" she asked, worried. She knew he was genuinely afraid of something, and if Severus Snape was afraid, the rest of the world was supposed to be terrified. For all Gryffindor was supposed to be the home of the brave, she had never seen anyone except maybe Harry Potter match the current Head of Slytherin House in that attribute.

He shook his head quickly. "No, Poppy should be fine. Neither myself nor Voldemort are plotting her death."

Minerva chuckled faintly, hoping that including himself in that had been a joke. "Then what's the matter?"

"Tell me you can do a Ceasarean section, and I'll tell you." He sounded desperate and urgent, two things she would not have expected to hear from him in regards to, well, anything, but more surprisingly, Hagrid's child.

"Right now, I can't. I'll ask Poppy for a crash course, though. Why do you need someone who can perform that?"

His eyes held, very briefly, a look of desperate hope. "Yes, do that. When you can, come to my quarters, and I'll tell you." He paused for a moment, then asked, "May I use your floo to get back to my rooms?" She waved a hand toward the fireplace invitingly. He stood, rising with some small difficulty, then left.

What an odd conversation.

On April 18th, Minerva knocked on the door to Severus's rooms about two weeks after their strange conversation. She'd been briefed in the basics of the operation Severus requested, but she had very little confidence she could successfully perform one. Poppy had wondered about her interest, but, in light of Severus's strange paranoia, she opted not to tell. She had not seen her colleague since that day. In fact, except for that one conversation, she had not seen much of Severus Snape in almost two months.

"Who is it?" his voice demanded irritably.

"Minerva!"

There was a noticeable pause. "Do you have the skill that I asked you about?"

"As good as I'm going to get."

The door opened, and she stepped inside, absently closing the door behind her. Severus was sitting in the chair closest to the door, looking like he had been napping there. "Severus?" she asked worriedly. Albus's concerns about the potions master's health hadn't included the bone weariness she saw in his face now. "Severus, what's wrong?"

"I can't do it anymore," he whispered, "take him out of me, Minerva." She didn't know where he drew his wand from, but it was suddenly in his hand, and casting a finite incantium.

Minerva screamed, she couldn't help it. Severus broke a smirk for her reaction, but she barely

noticed. Her eyes were stuck on his stomach which completely took over the entirety of his lap. Hagrid wasn't even close to that big.

"So you didn't know?" he asked, sounding very smug with himself. "I figured you or Albus would probably work it out, you two are his godparents, by the way. Take Severin out of me, Minerva. He's not going to come out by himself. I can barely stand anymore. And walking? I can barely manage a waddle, but I need to stride or people will know. Take him out."

Connections connected in her brain, and she reached the solution, "He's Hagrid's."

"No, he's mine. Hagrid's got his own."

"But they're brothers, twins even."

Severus gave her a look halfway between a glare and a what-in-the-devils-name-are-you-talking-about-woman sort of look.

"They were conceived on the same day, by the same parents, weren't they? That makes them twins."

"Fine. Twins. Separated before birth when Severin's mother left his father or Baby Hagrid's father left its mother, depending on your point of view. Now take Severin out."

"You're a month premature."

He turned his death glare on her and said through clenched teeth, "The kid is a quarter giant, Minerva. I'm male and full human, except about one two-hundred-and-fifty-sixths which is vampire, and no larger than a human, so get the boy out."

Minerva decided to save the rest of her questions for later, knowing that, as a mother holds her child for the first time, she barely notices what come out her mouth. She transfigured the chair he was sitting in into a bed. "This'll hurt like hell if you're awake for it," she warned.

"Both myself and Severin have suffered cruciacious, Minerva. I took Hagrid into me. This will be nothing." Minerva's gut twisted at the first statement, and she wondered about the second. Had the experience of conceiving the child really been comparable to the second Unforgivable curse?

But she said nothing, unbuttoned his magically enlarged robes, and revealed his distended belly. It was then she realized that she was about to perform a very dangerous operation on one of her closest friends, in his living room, with no formal training. "Severus, get Poppy to do this. I'll kill you."

"Then, if I die, take care of Severin for me. Severin Sheldon Snape. He gets everything. He will be born alive, the potion guarantees that. Now, get him out of me, Minerva," he finished his final requests impatiently.

Severus barely flinched as she slid her wand across his stomach splitting it open. It was gruesome, but she eventually got the child out and handed the gooey mess of infant over to his father/mother's waiting arms. For all the smile on his face, one would never believe Severus Snape's stomach was cut wide open, and he was being given a squalling child. Then she patched up the cut, using a Fast Regeneration Charm with a Stitching Charm. She turned her attention back up higher where Severus had already cast a cleaning charm on the baby, and was gingerly, and awkwardly holding his son as he laid flat on his back. She slowly transfigured the bed into a partially reclined chair.

When she finished this task, the child had begun suckling on one of Severus's breasts. Minerva

flushed faintly as she realized that they had rounded out a bit. Severus was looking at his son in wonder. "By all laws of pregnancy, he shouldn't be alive," he said quietly. "He shouldn't be healthy. He shouldn't be happy. But he is, and I'll see that he stays that way."

"Of course he's happy," Minerva said quietly. "His mother loves him."

She was surprised yet again. Severus didn't even try to glare at her. He just smiled at the baby, and said, "Yes, he does." Soon the child had drunk his fill, and fell asleep in Severus's arms. Despite her intention to use this time to interrogate him, she just stared in wonder at the scene. "Minerva?"

"Yes?"

"Would you bring him into the nursery? Door across from my bedroom. Not sure if I trust myself to walk with him yet."

Minerva smiled. "Certainly." She took the tiny - well, compared to an eleven year old - child from his parent, and brought him into a room painted blue, with a colorful potion bottle theme. She smirked at Severus's obvious hand in the decorating. The elegantly carved dark-stained wooden crib stood against one wall, and she wondered how he had smuggled it into Hogwarts and how long it had waited there. She laid the baby into his crib and pulled the blanket over him, brushing at his soft black hair. The poor child was cursed with the Snape nose, but the rest of his face was a bit wider and larger, making it not stand out quite so much.

She cast one spell on him, for curiosity's sake, and was surprised by the numbers that formed over the sleeping infant. Eleven pounds eight ounces, and still a month premature. No wonder Severus wanted the boy out.

When she returned to the living room, she was surprised (yet again) to find Severus sitting in his de-transfigured chair, with the concealing charm on him again. "I assume you have questions?" he asked, waving her toward one of the chairs. She nodded and accepted the invitation.

Severus shifted every so slightly, and as she looked toward him, her eyes widened as she saw his wand drawn. "Obliviate."

Minerva couldn't remember going from the door of Severus's rooms to the chair, but she apparently had. He was looking at her expectantly. Irritated, she snapped, "Well, are you going to tell me what I learned that operation for or not?"

"I heard a rumour Poppy might not be around Hogwarts at the time Hagrid's due, and I wanted to make sure there was back up, that's all."

"That's all?" she repeated.

"I've been having nightmares, I was probably half-delusional. Soon, I might even think about letting Poppy see if she can figure out what's wrong with me."

Minerva nodded, anything that would get the man to see Poppy was a good thing. He was seriously worrying Albus, and now herself with his strange behaviour.

"Thank you, Minerva."

She sighed. "Good bye, Severus." That had been a wasted afternoon. When she reached her office again, she was astonished to find how long she had been down in Severus's rooms.

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Chapter 6 - Hagrid's Baby by Drake of Dross

On May 26th, Charles Rubeus Hagrid was born, 10 pounds 4 ounces. The birth was simpler than Poppy had feared. Minerva was relieved that no one, especially herself, was called upon to do a Ceasarian section. About six hours after the first labour pains, Hagrid held his son in his arms, and the baby's godfather, uncles, and aunt were allowed in to visit. Charlie Weasley, Ron, Harry, Hermione, and even Bill who was expecting his own daughter soon, came in to congratulate the new parent, and coo over their new 'relative'.

As Hermione took the newborn into her arms, she smiled at it affectionately, and ran a finger along one soft straight lock of black hair. She wondered if that was a trait of a newborn, or if the baby would never have his parent's course, wild, slightly curly hair. "He does look a little like Professor Snape," she observed, letting her finger continue to skim over the soft skin of his cheek. "Not his nose, thankfully, but the shape of his face. It's narrower than yours, Hagrid."

"How big were you, when you were born?" Charlie asked, curiously. "The baby's smaller than I'd've expected from you."

"I was a wee tyke fer meh Mother, she bein' a giantess an' all. I was only 'bout twenty pounds or there'bouts."

"Only," Bill snorted. "Next time Megan complains about her seven pound estimated baby, I'll bring that up."

Poppy shooed the four out after about an hour, insisting the mother and the child both needed to rest. The infant was already asleep in his father's arms, but she took him over to a waiting hospital crib that she had borrowed from St. Mungo's. Minerva, for some reason, had insisted that Poppy stay at the castle and volunteered to pick it up for her. If it hadn't been impossible, Poppy might have wondered if the woman was the child's father the way she got paranoid everytime Poppy tried to leave the school for a few minutes or hours. And Poppy still couldn't explain the Gryffindor's insistance that she be taught about Ceasarian sections.

Putting the thought aside as pointless, the mediwitch pulled the baby blanket up over the newborn's shoulders. Too small for Hagrid's alone, she thought and touched her wand to the baby's head. "Paternis." Over the slumbering figure coalesed two transparent images, one of a beaming Hagrid, one of a scowling Severus Snape. She glanced about the room quickly and finding no students present and Hagrid already asleep, she cast on impulse, "Conceivus."

The two transparent images were no longer clothed. Hagrid lay on his back, his face turned away in shame, and blushing. He did not fight, perhaps prevented from doing so by some spell. Snape thrust into him, his emotionless mask still in place, even for this. Then Hagrid spasmed, and Snape pulled away. The scene disipated, leaving only the beaming or scowling clothed figures.

"Finite incantium," she whispered, feeling ill. Incontravertable proof. Snape had raped her godson's mother/father. When Albus came by not long after, she repeated the spells, and looked at him almost accusingly, "You said it was a potions accident."

Albus sighed. "And so it was. Neither Severus nor Hagrid wished to share a bed with another man. But the potion was incomplete when it was spilt onto Hagrid. Had someone not impregnated him, he would have died five days after the accident. I begin to believe Severus may have performed the obliviate for more than the selfish and logical reasons he listed to me. He may have wished to spare Hagrid this memory," he said, with a small wave to the empty air where, twice now, the scene had played. "It would live up to his luck that the one time he performs an act of mercy Severus gets accused of rape."

Poppy was unconvinced, but nothing he had been shown terribly surprised him, so perhaps, maybe, Snape wasn't as guilty as he appeared. "So he is the father, then, in all senses of the word."

"No," Albus said wearily and sadly, "not the affectionate sense. He refuses to acknowledge the boy, insisting it was Fang's fault not his own."

"Hagrid had no more choice in the matter," she snapped angrily.

The headmaster blinked, "I hadn't thought of that argument." Then his face fell, "I do not think it would change things. Severus is being very stubborn on the matter. He will protect the boy, provide financial assistance if requested, and treat him civilly, but he will not love him or claim him."

The Headmaster left not long after that, and Poppy fell into a light doze - it was getting to be quite late at night - but she wouldn't leave the wardroom with only Hagrid and his child in it. Something stirred her from sleep sometime later, and she nearly screamed when she saw the dark shape standing over the baby until she recognized Snape. She decided to continue feigning sleep to see what he did.

Her resolve was almost immediately broken as he bent to lift the child, but he did so with such practiced ease that she was stunned back into stillness. He walked in circles around the crib, rocking the child gently. She wondered if she was dreaming. She could hear snatches of whispered words drift back to her, "Lucky with your nose . . . tiny one . . . figures Hagrid would get . . . am sorry . . . you have a . . . Severin . . . when Voldemort dies . . . can't let anyone know . . . tell anyone, all right? . . . your mum's . . . don't mind me . . . can't have you . . . Good night, Charlie." He laid the baby back in its crib, and left the nursery. Poppy barely dared to breathe, fearing she would wake from this most supernatural dream. Because she knew now she was dreaming. She had seen Severus Snape smile.

She didn't wake up, but she did fall back asleep a few minutes later.

When she awoke, she remembered the dream with a clarity she normally didn't have from dreams, but she passed that off as just another element of its oddity. She found, to her surprise, that the next time she saw Severus Snape that she couldn't draw up the feelings of disgust and anger that she had felt for him since she reached her conclusion about what had happened when Charlie Hagrid was conceived. She didn't think it coincidence that only a few weeks after that, Severus started coming to her again with his injuries. There was something off about his health, but she couldn't really put her finger on it. The after-effects of crutacious well disguised whatever else might be wrong with him. She put it down to almost a year's avoidance of her when he needed medical attention almost biweekly.

-----Time Passes-----

One year after conception. Severus hurries back to his room, leaving the Head Girl, Hermione Granger, in charge of his classroom while the baby's wail in his head calls him home. He knows Albus will question him soon about his frequent absences. Meanwhile, Charlie Weasley continues substituting for the Care of Magical Creatures class while Hagrid stays in his hut tending to his child's needs.

A few days after that. Severus paces in the Headmaster's office, unable to provide an excuse for his behaviour. Eventually, he simply promises it will not happen again. Later that night, he begs a Snape Family House Elf away from his Mother, for the space of two years, without offering a reason why.

At a staff meeting in February of next term, Charlie Hagrid sits in a swing in the corner of the room. Charlie Weasley has returned to Romania, and Hagrid sits in his normal seat. Severus, also, sits in his normal spot, but he is distracted by the mental crying in his head. In the dungeons, a house elf changes a diaper.

Severin's second birthday. The house elf is gone. The small - compared to eleven year olds - boy sits in his playpen, alone in the apartment, waiting for his father to come home from classes. He utilizes skills practiced and refined since before he was even born to watch his father's class through his father's eyes. Severus is aware of what the child is doing, and makes an effort to explain today's lesson so even his young son can grasp most of it. There are no mistakes in that class.

Charlie's second birthday. The Care of Magical Creature's class is cancelled. All faculty and staff, as well as a fair number of students, are invited to the birthday party. Most of the Weasleys, Harry Potter, and Hermione Granger also attend. Severus drops off a present and leaves, with barely a glance at his other son.

Halloween of their fifth year of life. The final battle with Voldemort defeats and destroys the dark lord. Severus is severely injured. After less than a day in the hospital wing, he sneaks out and returns to his rooms. Severin is scared by his father's hurts, but follows all his instructions for making them go away, as he had done several times before. His father promises he won't be hurt like this any more. Severus does not open his door for either Poppy or Albus. Not even the Headmaster can break through the wards on the potion master's room. Wards set with Severin's help.

Severin's seventh birthday. Charlie Hagrid plays with the younger students who don't mind a tag-a-long. He laughs happily as they run and play outside in the warm spring weather. Severin sits in his father's rooms, dividing his attention equally between the novel in front of him and the mental link with his father. He occasionally tries to dig into his father's mind to find out what presents he'll be opening later, but his father always catches him, chiding him gently about patience.

Charlie's ninth birthday. He invites his best friends from among the students, mostly first, second, and third years, to his kid's party. All faculty, staff, Weasleys (including Hermione), and Potters come for the family party. Snape, as usual, drops off his present. Severin watches through the mental link, and, as usual, tells his father to come home now. He feels cheated that his brother can have so many friends, but even more, he feels jealous of his father's affection. Even if he does know, by the proof of their link, that the mild favour his father bestows upon Charlie Hagrid is nothing in comparison to the protective, possessive, and unrestricted love and pride his father holds for him. He knows, beyond any doubt, that he is the center of his father's world.

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Chapter 7 - Severin's Eleventh Birthday by Drake of Dross

Severin Snape watched, impatiently and excitedly as his father's hand spellotaped the notice of 'Class Cancelled' on the door to the potions room. He had been told that, for this very special birthday, his father was going to take the day off and bring him somewhere. Bring him somewhere! Severin had never even left these rooms, except by watching through his father's eyes. Though he'd never been beyond the heavily warded door, he already knew his way around the school as if he had explored it personally. Though he'd never met anyone but his father, he could recognize all the teachers, most of the students (especially the ones who got in trouble a lot during potions), and his brother.

He had mixed feelings about his brother. There was curiosity in spades. If he could see through any else's eyes but his father's he'd want to watch the other boy almost constantly. But his father was just that. His father. Not Charlie Hagrid's. Charlie didn't even have the right last name. But Severin would probably be jealous if he did, so it was just as well. Charlie looked kind of like his father. His nose was all wrong and his color was too dark, but he was the right shape. Severin himself was mostly the right shape. His head was too round, but otherwise, he was all right. All skinny and long legged and long armed and pale everywhere, just like Father. He was already up to his parent's shoulder, too.

His father soon returned to the room, and led him down a corridor that Severin knew led to the tunnel which led to the woods. As his father closed the trapdoor leading into the tunnel behind him, he said, "I don't want you using this tunnel when you start going to school here, understand? The forest is dangerous and forbidden."

Severin nodded his head. "Okay. I won't unless you're with me," he promised, the thought of disobeying never occurred to him. If his father said it was dangerous, it was dangerous. Severin knew about dangerous. He still had nightmares about the days he had nursed his father back to health all by himself. Sometimes he even woke up in the night, screaming from a phantom pain that came from everywhere. His father would wake him up those nights, and tell him he was remembering something from before he was born. He was remembering dark magic used against them both.

Sometimes Father had nightmares about the same thing. And Severin would wake him up, and tell him he was remembering bad things from before the Potter boy (that's all Father ever called him, the Potter boy) killed the bad guy. Then Father would smile and everything would be better.

They came out inside the forest, but they didn't stay long. Father took Severin's hand, and they were suddenly not there anymore. Severin felt the flush of magic as his father channeled the spell through them both, and then they were standing in the middle of a crowded street. "Diagon Alley," his father announced as if he had invented it himself.

Severin took in the buildings and people with wide eyes, breathing in the air with so many new smells. "Whoa," he breathed in awe. "Why don't you come here more often, Dad?"

His father chuckled. "I can get everything I need in Hogsmeade. Besides, if I'd come before, this wouldn't be as spectacular. I fear I've already ruined the Great Hall for you. Come, we need to get spending money from Gringotts."

"Okay," Severin agreed cheerfully, tagging along behind his father, pointing out occasional objects or pictures and asking what it was. When he asked about a balloon, his father looked down at him with a wry look. "Severin, if you don't know what a balloon looks like, your father is desperately remiss in your education."

"I'd seen them before," Severin protested, "At Charlie's birthday parties, but you never told me what they were called."

"Hopeless, child, you are hopeless," his father lamented aloud, while his mental voice apologized his failure. Severin understood he was apologizing for more than just not telling him what a balloon was, but what more Severin wasn't sure. Gringotts opened before them, and all thoughts of balloons left him as he stared at the creatures lining the desks.

"Mommy?" Severin asked, slipping into his youngest name for his father in his fright. The amusement from his father's mental link did more to dispell his fear than anything else could have.

"They're Goblins, Severin. They run the bank. As long as you don't try to rob them, they won't hurt you." They approached one of the goblins, and his father handed over a key to the long fingered creature. "Snape vault, number 21."

"Very well," the goblin ground out in a gravelly voice. Then it hopped down from its seat and bid them follow. The creature was tiny, and Severin felt foolish for being afraid of it.

Do not ever underestimate a goblin, Severin, his father's mental voice warned, they are small, but a more vicious creature does not walk on this Earth. Then the voice's tone lightened as he added, Except maybe me.

Severin burst into laughter. The goblin gave him a Look, but Severin expected the unhappy creature just didn't like laughter, rather than because he was put off by its apparent lack of cause. They climbed into what looked like a coal mine cart (he'd seen pictures in some books), and Father warned that he should hold on in a voice that brooked no argument. So Severin held on, and was very glad he had when the cart shot forward. He screamed in exhilaration and terror mixed equally.

When the cart came to a stop, he breathlessly gasped, "Can we do that again?"

His father muttered something that sounded suspiciously like "Insane child." His question was forgotten as the goblin opened the vault door, and Severin stared inside. He'd seen drawn pictures of piles of coins. He'd even seen a handful of coins once. But spending most of his time in the dungeons, and with his father's shopping experiences usually ending with a remark along the lines of 'put it on my tab' or 'put it on the school's tab', Severin really had no concept of money. But he knew what he saw before him was a lot. A lot a lot.

His father stepped inside and took two handfuls of the gold coins, and one handful of the silver ones. As he stepped away, he gestured toward the vaultful of coins. "Go ahead. Take as much as you'd like for your allowance until the next time we come here."

Uncertainly, he took a handful of the gold ones. He looked at his father to see if he thought this was too much or too little, but the man just nodded and told the goblin that they were done. The return trip was almost as terrifying as the trip down, and his father's instructions to hold tight to his money because the bank didn't refund dropped withdrawals prompted his wondering if there was an ulterior motive for the fast, bumpy ride.

Despite that thought, his immediate reaction to the end of the trip back to the bank lobby was, "Again?"

"Next year," his father promised, "Now get out." Once back in Diagon Alley, Father led the way into an unassuming store that Severin probably wouldn't have noticed, but when he saw shelves upon shelves of long narrow boxes, his eyes lit up with excitement. "A wand! I get my own wand!"

The shout brought an old man out from between two shelves of wand boxes. A smile lit the ancient face as it took in his visitors. "Ah! Professor Snape, and young Mr. Hagrid."

Severin straightened in offense, while his father succeeded at not showing the surprise Severin felt through their link. The elder Snape silently instructed, Play along with it.

Why? he respected his father in all things, but the wand maker called him by his brother's name. That was not to be tolerated.

I hadn't thought we could fool Ollivander, so I wasn't going to try, but he really doesn't know who you are. The longer we keep your existence secret, the longer I won't have to explain where you came from. I guarantee that if we reveal who you are to Ollivander now, by tonight all of Hogwarts will know about you.

Severin thought about it, and decided that drawing the Hogwarts gossip mill into focus on himself and his father right now wasn't what he wanted for his birthday. The plan had been to put off informing the teachers until summer, and shocking the students come September first. Fine, he agreed, somewhat sullenly.

"Yes," agreed his father to the wand maker. Only moments had passed since the old man had made his greeting. "Charlie will be starting at Hogwarts in September, and he has need of a wand."

"Of course, though most new students do wait until the acceptance letters arrive." A raised note at the end spoke of curiosity, but his father only frowned impatiently. Severin stepped toward one of the shelves and peered at the wandboxes stored there. A spark of excitement burned through his annoyance at needing to borrow his brother's identity. He was going to get a wand!

"Well, I suppose you would know that young Hagrid will be accepted already. Let us see," and the wand maker began running his fingers along the shelves of narrow boxes. "Your parent was a holly with unicorn hair."

He means Hagrid, his father noted silently, I have an ebony with a pheonix feather.

Severin accepted the wand from Ollivander, but it was snatched away again almost immediately. "No, no, no, that will never do. Let us try, hmm, perhaps? Yes," his fingers teased out another box, "here, ebony, like your other father," a short, quick glance was sent toward Severin's 'escort', "with the unicorn hair."

His father only arched an eyebrow at him, but his thoughts commented, It is remarks like those that made me think we couldn't fool him. Nobody is supposed to know Charlie is mine, least of all Charlie. There was a short pause before he added, Fortunately, he doesn't look nearly as much like me as you do.

Severin suppressed his grin, and remained focused on the wand maker. "My other father?" Severin asked, sounding confused as he accepted the ebony wand. He almost forgot the subterfuge as he felt the warmth fill him, radiating from the wood in his grip. Instinctively, he gave it a sharp swish, and bright sparkles flew from its end. He looked hopefully at his father. "This one's mine?"

His father couldn't entirely hold back his proud smile, but he did turn it into a small smirk. "It appears so."

"The wand chooses the wizard!" Ollivander confirmed, sounding pleased that he had made a match on only the second try. As he took the wand back and boxed it up for sale, he commented solemnly, "It is a most rare combination that has chosen you, young Hagrid. The darkest of woods with the purest of cores."

There was an awkward silence as his father paid the wand maker. Severus accepted the narrow box and handed it to his son. "I am certain your father will be pleased with your wand," he assured him.

Severin smiled, feeling immensely relieved, though he couldn't say why Ollivander's words had so bothered him. "Thanks."

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Chapter 8 - Minerva's Discovery by Drake of Dross

Minerva McGonagall conjured up the list of new first years to whom she would need to write acceptance letters. The list was magically created by Hogwarts itself, she had been told by Albus when he appointed her Deputy Headmistress. How the school knew which eleven year olds in England were born with magical ability, she couldn't begin to imagine, but it had never been wrong so far, and the addresses appearing beside each name were specific down to the room in the house.

She scanned the list, smiling as her eyes reached the entry 'Charles Hagrid, the new room, Gamekeeper's Hut, Hogwarts Grounds'. Though the 'new room' had been added on almost six years ago, this was still how Charlie's bedroom was known. Her smile froze as her eyes kept drifting down the list and came to a halt at 'Severin Snape, second bedroom, Snape Chambers, Hogwarts Dungeon.'

Minerva closed her eyes, shook her head, and looked at the paper again. The name was still there. She tried to recall if she had been hit with any creativity or hallucinogenic charms or hexes recently. Nothing came to mind, so her next thought was that whatever magic created the list must be flawed. She stood, left her rooms, and made her way briskly to the Headmaster's office.

Albus was enjoying the lessened summer workload by feeding his phoenix a custard pie that Minerva hoped wouldn't make the bird sick. "Is that healthy for him?" she asked, distracted for the moment from her original quest.

The Headmaster twinkled at her. "Healthy, no, not any more than it is for us. Nor any worse. Fawkes is quite fond of the pie." He pointed to his desk where the rest of the pie sat atop a pile of parchments that she thought she recognized as the student evaluations each Head of House had painstakingly written for each member of their House and turned in the previous week. "Care for a piece, Minerva?"

"No, thank you, Albus, I was just about to write to the new first years, but," she hesitated, and looked at the paper in her hand again. The name was still there. She wasn't imagining it. "The list is wrong."

He smiled and twinkled at her. "It hasn't been in the eighty years I've worked here, Minerva. What makes you think it is now?" She wordlessly handed the sheet to him, and waited expectantly, frowning slightly. His eyes skimmed the names, and she could tell when he reached Charlie's name. She felt smugly satisfied when he looked genuinely startled and astonished by the name appearing near the bottom of the list. There wasn't a lot that could do that to the old wizard anymore. It took a few moments before Albus spoke again. "I do not believe the list is wrong, Minerva. I do, however, believe that Severus has some explaining to do."

If the list was right, and that was a possibility that she wasn't yet willing to accept, then Albus had just made one of the more ridiculously understated remarks of his life. And Albus was a rather old wizard with a penchant for ridiculous statements.

Ever since sometime during Voldemort's second reign, Severus had ceased answering when people knocked on his private chambers. His wards were the strongest in the castle, dwarfing even the outer defenses, and over the last decade or so, the staff had grown accustomed to the fact that he left his rooms only to teach, and attend staff meetings. He rarely ate in the Great Hall anymore, though he did occasionally sit at the staff table and push food around on a plate. Rumours abounded, even among the professors, that he had truly become a vampire since he no longer appeared to eat. Only the fact that he still visited the Hospital wing once or twice a term after potions accidents assured Minerva and Albus that the man was healthy and less underweight than his eating habits would suggest, particularly since the house elves reported that he did not come to the kitchens either. It was assumed, since not even House Elves, ghosts, or paintings could bypass his wards and enter the potions master's rooms, that he was supplying his own meals.

Thus neither Headmaster nor Deputy even thought about going down to Severus's rooms to confront him. Neither did they consider summoning a House Elf to fetch him. Instead, Albus sent Fawkes to the Professor. For castle security reasons, Severus had constructed his wards to admit the phoenix should the Headmaster need to contact him. Only after the bird had finished his pie and flown away did Minerva realize the significance of these facts. His assumed depression and anti-social behaviour suddenly took on a very different, almost sinister, light. "He's been hiding the child here for years!" she exclaimed in dismay, feeling embarrassed for not knowing and horrified that a child, any child, should be so isolated.

Albus smiled at her, but the expression had more to do with agreement and sadness than anything more positive. "Almost certainly."

"That isn't healthy!"

Blue eyes twinkled a little. "I expect that should be taken up with Severus and Poppy, not I."

Minerva flushed lightly as she realized her tone had been a good deal more accusatory than she had meant it to be. The next few minutes before Severus arrived passed quietly, as both Headmaster and his Deputy trying to search their minds for clues about the secret child not quite in their midst. A gentle buzzing noise, like a bumblebee, filled the office, and after precisely six seconds, Albus called out, "Enter, Severus."

The door opened, and the Potions Master entered with the phoenix flying in over his shoulder and alighting back upon its perch. "You sent Fawkes for me," he stated the obvious when neither of the room's previous occupants spoke immediately.

"Yes, come here, Severus," Albus instructed waving the younger wizard toward his desk, and turning the list of new students toward him. When Severus reached a position where he could read the parchment, the headmaster tapped the name of interest. "What do you have to say about this?"

Nothing changed on the man's face as he read the boy's name. "Congratulations, the both of you are godparents," he stated in a quiet voice that, in sharp contrast to the words, gave no more away than his expression.

Minerva blinked and stared, dumbfounded, at her colleague. Of all the things she expected him to say, that wasn't one of them.

Albus, of course, beamed in joyful delight. "I'm a godfather?"

A small smile cracked through the dour expression. On several occasions she had seen the icy mask slip from Severus's face, all in the company of Albus, and increasingly rare these days when he had retreated more and more to his rooms, away from the rest of the staff. "You are a godfather, Albus," Severus confirmed, a hint of a twinkle dancing in those black eyes. Minerva swore that the man, when he lowered his prickly exterior, was far too much like the old wizard for comfort. She wasn't sure which alarmed her more. The cynical, nasty bastard outside. Or his inner Albus.

She wasn't quite sure when the Headmaster moved. She didn't really think Severus had noticed him move either, or he would have gotten out of the way. But one moment Albus was sitting behind his desk, the next he was crushing Severus in a gleeful hug. Trapped, Severus turned eyes toward Minerva that spoke more eloquently than words. Make him stop this.

A smirk twisted up the corner of her mouth. "Really, Severus. If you did not wish such treatment, you should not have made him your child's godfather."

Albus did release him, though whether it was because of her words or simply because he had finished, she could not say. Severus took a hasty step away, re-establishing his personal space. She wondered how he had managed to conceive a child if a simple hug from his only acknowledged friend made him so ill at ease. Perhaps the boy was an orphaned nephew? But, no. In that case, Severus would not be naming Godparents. Eleven years after the child's birth. She frowned as she wondered if he ever showed any sign of affection to the boy. Frankly, she couldn't imagine it happening, and on top of a life in a single room for eleven years, young Mr. Snape would likely be a most troubled soul.

"I had thought the decade of delay before telling him would have put him off enough to avoid it," Severus continued the conversation, subtly bringing it back on track, despite having been the

one to derail it in the first place.

Still smiling, though less widely, Albus settled back into his seat. "Tell us of him, Severus."

"He was born on April 18th, 1997, about a month before Charlie," Severus stated the dry facts without inflection. "He is fine young wizard and has a seventh year's potion making skills already. I expect him to do very well in his other classes as well. He has had a wand since his last birthday, and has already mastered enough charms and hexes to defend himself should the need arise. His House will likely be Slytherin or Ravenclaw."

The subtle approach having failed, if, indeed, that had been Albus's objective, Minerva asked the question most bothersome to her, "Why did no one know of him?"

Severus met her gaze, but the cool obsidian eyes gave nothing away. "It was for his own safety. Word of his existence would not reach Voldemort if only I knew of it." He looked at Albus. "It was this same reason that disallowed me to acknowledge Charlie. Any child of mine would have been expected to become a Death Eater. There would have been certain . . . brainwashing sessions he would be expected to attend. The boys were five before Voldemort fell, those are formative years, Albus."

Disallowed me to acknowledge Charlie, Minerva reran the words through her mind. Severus was Charlie's father then. Not simply responsible for the potion that had created Hagrid's condition as in the story he had told her. "So why did you not reveal Severin and acknowledge your other son when Voldemort was defeated then?"

Severus turn over his hand, a gesture of uncertainty for him. "In part habit, I suppose. There was some degree of embarrassment, as well. Not," he added quickly, "of the children. I am quite proud of both of them. Severin, particularly, though that may be bias on my part since he is the one I raised. I find no shame in linking my name to theirs. I only am reluctant to explain their conception, which was no fault of theirs." His mouth twitched ever so faintly. "I find, much to my dismay, that I have not only forgiven the bloody coward of a dog his clumsiness, but am thankful for it."

This apparently meant more to Albus than it did to her, for the headmaster drew in a sharp breath of air. "The potion did not only affect Rubeus, did it, Severus?"

Severus looked away and shook his head. "Hagrid only got hit with it because he was trying to push me out of the way. Bloody noble idiot." Severus began pacing in agitation. "I told him what would happen if anyone was doused with it before the final ingredient. He knew I still held the powdered beetle bug in my hand. He was clear of the danger zone when Fang knocked the cauldron. I was dead center. There wasn't a Muggle's chance in Atlantis that he could have pushed me out of the way, even if I was moving already. He was too far away to begin with. The potion hit me at the same time he did."

Albus flied sympathetically, and Minerva almost did the same as she imagined the half-giant ramming into someone at speed. But then something else struck her and she forgot about that impact. "You were pregnant," she deduced, feeling ill and stunned. How could a professor - and Professor Snape in particular - carry a pregnancy to term and have nobody notice?

His pacing stopped abruptly at her statement. He lowered his head and his hair fell around his face. "Yes," he confirmed, almost too quietly to hear.

"Charlie is his full blooded brother?" Albus asked curiously.

For a long moment, Minerva did not think Severus was going to answer. "Minerva called them twins since they were conceived within minutes of each other."

She blinked, and asked, "I did?" before she could control her tongue.

Severus turned, his hair still half in his face, but a small smirk mostly visible beneath it. "You did. When you delivered Severin."

Several more events clicked into place and she paled past white to grey. "Dear sweet Merlin. The Ceasarian section."

"Indeed." There was a short silence between the three. "Thank you," he added.

Minerva felt sucked out and dried. She had known there was something wrong about that two minute conversation that had lasted all afternoon. Why hadn't she investigated? Everyone had noticed the potion professor's poor health that year. Why hadn't they forced him to see a doctor? The entire staff had believed his increase in anti-social behaviour had been a sign of depression. Why hadn't anyone tried to draw him out again?

She closed her eyes, knowing the answers. Because he was Severus. Because everyone, including herself and Albus, expected him to be able to handle his own problems. Because his shields and wards, both real and metaphorical, were strong enough to keep everyone out, emotionally and physically, of his private life. Because Severus never gave any indication of wanting help, and no one had felt it their place or right to force it on him. Albus had tried, at the beginning of the so-called depression, but had been so strongly rebuffed at every turn that he had eventually given up for fear of annoying the younger Professor out of his friendship. And Poppy had confirmed, by that point, that Severus was not attempting to starve himself to death.

"When do I meet my godson?" Albus broke the silence, with a twinkle and a smile.

"September first," Severus answered firmly and without hesitation. Not even Albus was able to beg, plead, cajole, manipulate, or demand a change on that decision.

How the Slytherin managed to extract both their words to not reveal Severin's existence to the rest of the staff was something she would never be quite sure of.

Charlie Hagrid entered the wandshop alone, his father promising to meet him for ice cream afterwards. The shop was quiet and appeared empty, but after a moment, an old wizard, possibly even older than Dumbledore, came into sight. Charlie shifted nervously under his intense stare. The man frowned, continuing to stare. Then, quite suddenly, the old wizard laughed. "Crafty Slytherin."

Charlie beetled his dark brows in confusion. He did not understand where the wandmaker came up with that assessment of him. He'd done nothing remotely crafty. He'd just walked into the shop and stood there. Not to mention, his father had been a Gryffindor, as had all his uncles and aunts and godfather, as well as most of his friends from the Hogwarts students. His godmother and most of the remainder of his friends had been or were Hufflepuffs. He didn't see where Slytherin came into the picture. Those students didn't consort with pre-Hogwarts children or part-giants. His father was never clear on whether he was a half-giant or a quarter-giant. Dad was definitely a half-giant. But there seemed to be some confusion on his other parent's . . . er . . . existence. He'd heard whispers, though, about the possibility that it might be Snape. That had been a disturbing thought. But he was a Slytherin . . . Was that why Ollivander called him a Slytherin? Did he know something about Charlie's parentage that even Dad didn't?

Still chuckling a bit, the wand maker said, "You must apologize to you brother for me, young Hagrid. I mistook him for you."

The man was clearly insane. "I haven't a brother." Then, because he felt it needed to be said, he

added, "And I'm not a Slytherin."

The wand maker clucked his tongue. "I was not calling you a Slytherin, Mr. Hagrid, but your father."

Charlie couldn't have been more astonished if the fellow had said that Harry Potter was really the Dark Lord. Ollivander might make the best wands in the wizarding world, but his sanity was obviously tenuous at best. There wasn't a Slytherin bone in Dad's body. "Right," Charlie agreed, deciding humouring the old coot was the best way to get his wand chosen and paid for so he could get away quickly.

"Hmm, well, let's see your wand arm then."

It was a relief to finally get out of the wand shop with his holly and dragon's heartstring wand. "I think that man is a bit touched," he informed his father as he joined the big man in front of the ice cream shop. He quickly pulled out his new wand and showed it off before Dad could yell at him for speaking poorly of someone he didn't really know. "Holly, like yours was, he said. Dragon's heartstring core and fourteen inches," he displayed his wand proudly. "Took about a hundred tries to find it though." He wasn't about to mention that his 'brother' found his in only two, because he didn't want to get carted off to St. Mungo's for Ollivander's insanity.

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Chapter 9 - Hogwarts Express by Drake of Dross

King's Cross station was crowded with muggles. It was the first time Severin had ever seen a muggle, even through his father's eyes. They dressed funny, but they seemed human enough. Still, Severin kept close to his father. He wore his Hogwarts uniform, minus the robe, already, and his trunk had been shrunk to a manageable size that he carried in a loose fist. His robe was folded several times over and lay draped over his arm.

As yet, he had no familiar. Toads were boring, he had no one to send an owl to, and cats were overdone. Older students were given more leeway in their choice of animal companion, so Severin had chosen to wait and hold out for a snake or weasel.

His father, also dressed normally, but for his robe being folded and carried, came to a stop in front of a pillar with the number 9 sticking out one side of it, and the number 10 sticking out of the other. Between them, father and son probably looked a bit displaced in time, but they didn't draw too many odd looks. Not like the few kids they'd seen pushing around large carts filled with such things as large trunks, owl cages, telescopes, and potions scales.

"Just walk straight at the column," his father instructed. Here, his mental voice added, and Severin was treated to a memory of a far younger Severus Snape crossing the barrier into Platform nine and three quarters.

Severin nodded, drawing together all his courage. "Got it. See you in a few hours, Dad."

His father favoured him with a smile. "You'll do fine. I will see you again at Hogwarts."

They had argued a bit about the necessity of him taking the train. He had been, after all, already at Hogwarts. What was the point of leaving it to take a train just to come back? But his father had insisted, and since Severin wasn't about to verbally admit (though Father surely knew through their link) that his main objection was that he was experiencing an acute fear of leaving his father's side, he had eventually agreed.

He drew in another breath, preparatory to actually moving toward the pillar, when he felt his father's hand on his shoulder. "I'm only a thought away, Severin. Now go meet some people your own age."

Severin smiled up at him, feeling a little better with that reminder. "Bye, Dad," he said and marched through the barrier before he could work himself up again.

The first thing he noticed when he opened his eyes on the other side (instinct had made him squeeze them closed when logic told him he was about to smack into a solid wall) was the bright red engine of the Hogwarts Express. The second thing he noticed was that the crowd here was much younger, sprinkled with the occasional adult witch or wizard.

He weaved his way directly toward the train, making no effort to seek out or talk to anybody. There was nobody here that knew him, though there were quite a few he could recognize by name and potions talent. He was about to climb aboard when he noticed someone out of the corner of his vision. "Charlie!" he called before he could still his first impulse.

Charlie turned, dark eyes searching the crowd for whomever had called his name. Severin was torn between fleeing and approaching his brother. Indecision froze him in place. Finally, curiosity won over panic, and he took a tentative step toward the shorter boy, waving a little to catch his attention. Charlie's brow crinkled, obviously not recognizing him, but he put on a smile and joined him. "I'm sorry, but, should I know you?" Charlie asked, sounding a bit embarrassed.

Severin shook his head with quick sharp movements. "No. I'm a first year, too."

Charlie looked surprised. "But you're so tall!" he blurted, then blushed deeply.

Severin shifted from one foot to the other. May as well get this over with quickly. It was pretty obvious anyway. He was, after all, almost five inches taller than Charlie who everyone knew was Hagrid's son. "I'm a quarter giant, too."

His brother looked delighted. "Really? I'm part giant myself."

Severin managed not to sigh and roll his eyes. "I know. You're Rubeus Hagrid's son."

Charlie looked a bit taken aback by Severin's knowledge of someone he had theoretically never met, but then he evidently came to an explanation, "Oh. Do you have a brother or something who goes to Hogwarts, then?"

The irony appealed to Severin and he couldn't resist an honest answer. "Yeah. A brother."

Sounding interested, Charlie asked, "Oh? Who? Do I know him? What house?"

Severin fought with himself, over telling truth or lie. "He's just a first year, too. He hasn't been Sorted yet."

Charlie looked around the platform, probably looking for a third quarter-giant. "You have a twin?" he asked, sounding jealous. "I've always wanted a brother."

Severin blinked, surprised. Intellectually, he had know Charlie didn't know about him. But he had always imagined his brother didn't want him. "We should get on the train."

Charlie looked around and noticed the thinning crowd now, though he hadn't when he'd been looking for Severin's 'twin'. "Yeah, probably. Are you going to sit with your brother?"

Severin shrugged, "If he sits with me. Do you have a trunk and stuff?"

Charlie shook his head. "Nah, left it at Hogwarts. The house elves can move it from my room as easily as from the train. Where's yours?"

He opened his hand and showed his brother his shrunken trunk. "Easier to carry around like this." House elves had gotten out of the habit of entering his father's room, so it was best to bring it with him, though the wards on his father's rooms had been significantly reduced this morning.

Together, they climbed onto the train and found an empty compartment. "Don't you have other friends to sit with?" Severin asked curiously, then belatedly realized that might sound like a dismissal, he hastened to add, "Not that I want you to leave. I just wondered. Because you've lived at Hogwarts all your life and know some older kids."

Charlie shrugged, "Yeah, I know some, but you're in my year, and I've never met another part-giant before. Besides dad. Did you know your giant grandparent?"

"No, I don't even know for sure which grandparent was the giant. My dad never met him or her." A thought occurred to him, and he asked, "Have you met your giant grandparent?"

Charlie grimaced and shook his head. "Nope. Dad apparently met up with her again a few years back, before I was born, but she's not much for family."

A grandmother, then. He had a giant grandmother. Wow. That was pretty cool. "Never met any of my human grandparents either," Severin admitted, shrugging. "So she's not so much worse."

"That stinks. Never met mine either. Dad's father died way back."

Severin looked out the window as the whistle blew and the train began to move. "Five more hours and we'll officially be Hogwarts students," he said, more to himself than to his companion. "I've been waiting for and dreading that for as long as I can remember."

"Dreading it? Why?"

Severin looked at his brother. He opened his mouth to list the many and varied reasons - fears about getting or not getting in Slytherin (he wasn't sure which would be worse), worry about how people would treat him (both because of his unpopular father and his giant blood), fear that his public debut may poorly affect his father (there were reasons that dad didn't want people to know about him and not all of them had died with Voldemort). But he ended up only shrugging and looking out the window again. Platform nine and three quarters slowly fell behind. "Because I left my rooms."

Charlie smiled sympathetically. "Home schooled then?"

Severin nodded. "My dad taught me. What about you? Did the Hogwarts professors teach you?"

"Some. Mostly Poppy - er, Madam Pomfrey, the school nurse. She's my godmother - and Professor Sprout who teaches Herbology. Dad helped where he could, but he's not so good with book-learning." Charlie grinned, "Bet I know more about raising and caring for Magical Creatures than anybody else at the school though. I shared a room with a hippogriff for a year while she recovered from a really bad fight with a Common Welsh Green."

Severin laughed. "And I thought being practically raised in a cauldron was bad. Swear to Merlin, my nursery was decorated with potions bottles," he confided solemnly, holding his left hand over his heart and his right palm out beside his ear in the standard oath-taking pose.

Charlie's laugh joined his. "Mine was dragons."

They fell into a companionable silence as the conversation lulled. Severin watched the green open fields with interest as London disappeared into the horizon behind them. But grass and sheep could only hold his interest for so long. "You think you'll get Gryffindor?"

Charlie shrugged. "Probably. Maybe Hufflepuff. I'd like Professor Sprout to be my Head of House. What about you?"

"My dad was Slytherin. He hopes I will be, too. So do I, really."

Severin shifted under Charlie's incredulous stare. "No way. A Slytherin married a half-giant?"

Biting his lip, he looked out towards the sheep again. "I never said my parents were married."

"Sorry," Charlie mumbled, blushing.

Severin shrugged, still not looking at him. "Not your fault. Usually, it's the mother left with an unwanted kid, not the father." Of course, in his case, his father was the mother, but Charlie didn't need to know that. He felt a touch on his knee, and his gaze jumped to Charlie, who looked about ready to cry. Severin blinked back his surprise. "What's wrong?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't know. I . . . I'm sure your dad loves you," but by the pity and sorrow on his face, Severin doubted he told the truth.

Severin was only partially successful holding back a smirk and a dark twinkle in his obsidian eyes. "I'm certain of it, Charlie. But I do know I was as unplanned as you were."

"Unplanned's not the same as unwanted," Charlie countered, looking suddenly much more cheerful.

Severin sighed and made an exaggerated show of rolling his eyes. "You are such an optimist."

"I get it from my father," Charlie countered immediately, grinning.

Severin almost choked on his laugh. Charlie's biological father was a lot of things, but optimistic was not one of them.

"I never caught your name," Charlie said suddenly.

"Uh, Verin. My name's Verin," Severin answered, leaving off the first two letters of his name for fear that Charlie would figure out who his dad was just by his first name. He loved and cherished his father, but the elder Snape's reputation around Hogwarts would not lead to many friendships outside of Slytherin.

"Nice ta meetcha, Verin."

Severin gave him an odd look, raising a black eyebrow. "Charmed."

Charlie laughed. "You'll get into Slytherin with no problems."

Giving his brother a suspicious look, he said, "Thank you, I think." Though being called a Slytherin by a quarter-giant raised by Gryffindors and Hufflepuffs wasn't necessarily a compliment.

"You look a bit like Professor Snape when you do that with your eyes," Charlie observed. The other boy startled, "Actually, you look quite a lot like Professor Snape period."

Severin sighed. Caught. He extended his hand, "Severin Snape."

Charlie looked at it uncomprehendingly for a moment before he shook it. "Charles Hagrid."

"I do prefer Severin over Verin. I just thought you'd figure it out if I used my full name. Forgot my nose does that without my name's help," he grinned sheepishly.

Charlied grinned back tentatively. "You're Professor's Snape's son?"

Severin nodded. "He's my dad."

"Did you live at Hogwarts then? I never saw you."

"You wouldn't have. I never left the dungeons. Only my dad knew I was there."

Charlie frowned a little, and his eyes darkened in something that Severin tentatively identified as fear. Why was Charlie afraid? He was Snape's son, yes, but that hardly made him dangerous. Especially to someone who shared a room with a hippogriff. "Did you find your wand on the second try?"

Utterly confused by the non-siguetor, Severin drew his wand as if it could clarify things. His gaze moved from the black ebony wood to his brother's face. "Yes, actually. I did." Did this have something to do with borrowing Charlie's name?

Charlie closed his eyes and made obvious attempts to breath deeply.

"What? Charlie?" Severin asked, starting to worry.

"You knew," he accused, opening his eyes and looking at him with an expression of both hurt and anger. "You knew we were brothers and you didn't say anything! You just hid in your dungeon and didn't ever come see us. You didn't even tell me now!"

"I gave you plenty of hints! I may as well have!"

Charlie froze, then looked at him in astonishment. "We're brothers? We're really brothers?"

Severin stared at him. Hadn't the other boy already worked that out for himself? "Yes. We're brothers. My father is your mother, my mother is your father. We were conceived on the same night. Professor McGonagall called us twins."

"Professor McGonagall knew, too?" He sounded betrayed.

Severin smirked, "Well, she did for about two hours when I was born, but then dad obliterated her. She and Headmaster Dumbledore found out again at the beginning of the summer. Dad made them promise not to tell anyone else."

"Why? Why the secrecy?"

Severin shrugged and looked out the window at the boring sheep. "I was scared. Dad was scared. So we waited until we didn't have a choice anymore."

"Scared of what?"

He shrugged again. "Don't know. People, I guess."

Severin felt more than saw Charlie rise from the seat across from him and take the one beside him. "Why?" Charlie asked, putting a hand on his shoulder.

He shook his head, and let his chin length hair fall down around his face, hiding it. "I don't know."

He gave a humourless laugh. "Snapes don't mix well with others."

"Snapes and Hagrids seemed to mix well enough," Charlie said simply.

Severin turned to stare at his brother incredulously.

"What? We turned out pretty good, I think."

It took several tries of opening and closing his mouth before words came out. "You're nutters, Charlie."

Charlie grinned. "Well, of course you'd think so. You're my brother and jealous of my charm." The other boy beamed happily. "I have a brother!" Severin supposed that this exclamation should have warned him. But Charlie's bear hug still took him by surprise.

When he fought his way free, he retreated to near the door of their compartment, holding his wand defensively, and watching Charlie warily. Charlie was grinning broadly, and his black eyes danced with laughter. "Don't worry, you'll get used to it. Especially when Dad finds out you're his, too!"

Severin's eyes widened. This had obviously been a tactical mistake. Just by looking at his brother's gleeful look, he knew there wasn't any chance that Charlie would keep this to himself. He should have gone with his first instinct and fled when he saw the other boy earlier. He opened his mouth to deny any familial connection with the Hagrids, to declare that the potions master was his and his alone, and vice versa. But the only voice that spoke was his mental one.

Dad!

His father responded immediately, Severin, what's wrong?

Can I oblivate Charlie?

He felt startlement trickle back towards him along the link. I don't think that would be wise. You've never cast that before. . . Why do you want to?

I, uh, sort of, let slip that, um, we're brothers.

There was a long silence from his father's side. And how did he take that?

Severin shot another wary look at his brother. The shorter boy was still smiling at him. He's deliriously happy. Quite. Deliriously. He hesitated a moment, then added in shocked outrage, He hugged me!

What drifted back from the link reminded him of nothing so much as the time his father had found him turned bright blue and green from a misbrewed potion with bluebells sprouting out of his ears. In other words, the man was trying desperately not to let his son know he was being laughed at. But unlike with the potion, his father sobered quickly, Has Charlie indicated what he intends to do with the information?

Tell Hagrid.

This time the suppressed emotion he could almost make out was a burst of panic.

What should I do? Dad?

There was another long pause during which Severin could make out nothing of his father's

thoughts. He considered probing and eavesdropping on the elder Snape's deliberations, but decided to wait for the final decree. What do you want from the Hagrids, Severin? his father's question came back cautiously.

I . . . I like Charlie. I'd like to have a brother. But I don't want him to have you. You're mine.

His father's chuckle went a long way towards calming him. Severin, you can't have it both ways. If you claim him as brother, he has every right to claim me as father.

But I don't want his father! I just want a brother.

I doubt Hagrid will see it that way.

Severin hesitated, bit his lip, and thought nervously, Would you be mad if I wanted to have a brother?

No. I can't swear I won't be jealous of Hagrid if you start liking him, but Charlie *is* your brother. I can admit it if you can.

He pinched his lips together and nodded. Alright, and I won't swear that I won't be jealous of Charlie if you start liking him, but let's give it a try.

Severin, whatever happens, we have a bond unlike anybody else's. We will always have that. Don't worry so much.

Severin smiled. Thanks, Dad.

Now stop making faces at your brother and talk to him.

Talk to him. Right. Well, the first step was probably to lower his wand. He slipped that back into his sleeve, and cautiously sat diagonally from his brother. "So, Ollivander told you about my wand?" he asked, deciding a neutral topic would be safest to begin with.

Charlie's father met the first years at the station. Fortunately, Charlie didn't make any revelations to him yet. The other boy did seem to have that much tact. Despite this, Hagrid did keep shooting indecipherable looks his way. No doubt he was confused that his own son wasn't the tallest in the class. The lake crossing went without incident, and if he hadn't seen the castle from the outside through his father's eyes so many times, he would probably have been impressed. The other first years, with the exception of Charlie, seemed to be.

They were shortly turned over to Professor McGonagall, who immediately picked him out and offered him a small, tight smile. He smiled back, and decided that she was in need of revenge for her disapproval of his father these last few months. "Hello, godmother."

She blinked, and he felt the stares of the other first years on him. He shifted marginally, uncomfortable with being the center of attention, but knowing he had little chance of avoiding it, his father being who he was. He ignored the audience, and his gaze never left his godmother's until she returned a smile and publicly acknowledged him. "Hello, Severin."

Severin gave back a small smile, and inclined his head. There. The Head of Gryffindor's godson. The Head of Slytherin's son. He was golden. And people didn't even know who his godfather was, yet.

She left them in an empty room beside the Great Hall and returned a few minutes later to lead

them into the Hall. Amid the first years, he felt tall and conspicuous, but at least Charlie was also significantly larger than most of them as well. The Hat sang, as it normally did, he'd seen this ceremony year after year through his father's eyes, nothing came as a surprise.

Charlie, evidently, had never snuck in for the Welcoming Feast. He stared as wide eyed as anybody else at the Hat. Severin supposed that was one advantage he had over his brother.

McGonagall began calling names, beginning, predictably, with names beginning with 'A'. Eventually, she called out the only other name besides his own that he was interested in. "Hagrid, Charlie!"

Severin shifted to get a good view of the stool and boy as the hat fell down over Charlie's eyes. Not Gryffindor, Severin thought at him, knowing a freindship with a Gryffindor would be difficult for him, seeing as how his father was Head of Slytherin.

Charlie and the Hat apparently didn't hear him. "GRYFFINDOR!" the tear along the brim cried out, and the table to his immediate right broke out in cheers. Severin did not applaud, though he did give his brother a twisted smile and helpless shrug when their eyes met.

The sortings until his own seemed to pass interminably slow, but finally, McGonagall called out, "Snape, Severin!"

When the other students had walked to the stool, there had been some background chatter. For Charlie, there had been some cheers and urgings to join either Gryffindor or Hufflepuff. Now, it was completely silent. Older students watched warily. His father smiled encouragingly. The other teachers, outside of his father, Dumbledore, and McGonagall, stared at him in shock.

Fortunately, the hat was big enough to fall down over his eyes as well. Though he knew the I-can't-see-you-so-you-can't-see-me fallacy was false, it made him feel better anyway.

Hmm, what have we here? For a second, Severin thought the voice belonged to his father. It didn't feel right though. He felt pretty stupid when he realized it was the Hat. Obviously. His father knew perfectly well what he had here. I see a thirst to prove yourself, but also a quick mind and an eagerness to learn. You would do well in Ravenclaw.

No! Slytherin! I need to be Slytherin! He hoped he sent that to the hat and not to his father.

And why is that, do you think?

Severin gave the question the serious thought it deserved. Because I grew up in the mind of a Slytherin. It's how I think, too. I learn because I'm bored, but that's not what I live for.

What do you live for?

He thought about that, and answered honestly, I don't know yet. But when I do, you can be sure I'll get it. He smirked mentally at the hat, and thought imperiously, blending truth with exaggeration and masking them in mockery, I get everything I want and I want Slytherin. Give it to me.

Either the hat laughed at him or his father was listening in. Very well, then. "SLYTHERIN!"

He grinned smugly as he took off the hat, and nodded politely towards his father before he joined his rightful House. Surprisingly, he saw Charlie cheering as loudly as any Slytherin.

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Chapter 10 - Snape's Son by Drake of Dross

Severus watched his son join the Slytherin table, and offered a tight smile, the most positive

expression he ever wore in public. He felt the gazes of other staff members on him, but he paid them no heed until Severin was sitting down and talking quietly with his Housemates. The other Slytherins seemed very welcoming, at least for the moment. Whether or not that would last once they learned about Severin's brother was another story. One he was not at all eager to meet, though it was inevitable now.

It was with a great deal of difficulty that he had resisted spying on his son during the train ride, and even greater difficulty that he refrained from doing so now. The Slytherins' reactions to the boy would not only affect Severin, after all.

Instead, he looked over to the Gryffindor table where Charlie was laughing with some second years, and cheering loudly as the last student - the first of the new Weasley generation - joined Gryffindor. Hagrid's boy gave no indication of having learned who his father was. Perhaps the boy did have some Slytherin traits. Else he simply hadn't made the connection that brotherhood to Severin meant that he was Severus' son as well.

"Awful tall for a first year," Severus heard from his right. He turned his head to find Madam Hooch looking right back at him. He raised an eyebrow. "I said, the Snape boy is awful tall for a first year," she repeated.

"Both of his parents are very tall," was all Severus replied to that.

"He yours?" Hooch never was much one for subtlety.

"Of course." The Snapes were a small family line, with very little branching. His father was dead. His mother had remarried and moved to Norway. His younger brother hadn't been seen in twenty-odd years and it was common belief that he was dead as well. Where else a Snape child could have popped up from, Severus couldn't imagine. Yet, many of the staff looked surprised by his confirmation.

"His mother raised him then?" the muggle studies teacher asked. Jackson or Johnson or some such muggle name. Appropriate, really, for the position, Severus supposed.

"Yes." If they took that to mean what it didn't, it wasn't his problem. Albus's eyes twinkled, while Minerva sighed quietly.

"Hadn't realized you were married," the ancient runes professor, Anthony Greaves, remarked, taking it for granted that he was, despite the lack of a ring on his hand. Sprout, who knew otherwise, widened her eyes and looked at him in surprise, her head turning quickly enough to draw attention and create speculative looks on the more observant of the professors.

"I prefer to keep my private life private," was all Severus replied, and turned his attention to his meal.

It was the first time in eleven years that he actually ate the food served at the Great Table, and he nearly choked on his pumpkin juice when the muggle studies teacher said quite seriously to the ancient runes one, "I thought he was a vampire."

He did accomplish swallowing, before turning to the pair and asking in disbelief, "Excuse me?"

The man flushed red. "We, I, we thought, well, you haven't eaten anything in years. We thought you, um, got bitten."

"I've been sharing meals with Severin," Severus responded, feeling quite dumbfounded. How had that rumour taken solid root and he hadn't even known? Clearly, he'd cut himself off from the rest of Hogwarts more than he'd realized. No wonder Albus had been asking after his health and

trying so hard to get him to take a vacation to 'see the world and live a little' since Voldemort was defeated. He looked towards the Headmaster who was smiling cheerfully at him. That always made him nervous. "Headmaster, I have reduced the wards on my chambers. A house elf or ghost may now enter, so you needn't send Fawkes should you wish to summon me."

Severus hoped, but doubted, he wouldn't be visited by a long string of them, simply because the option had so long been denied them. The wards were still set to prohibit Peeves from entrance, of course.

Albus nodded, still twinkling, "Thank you, Severus. Do the elves know which of Severin's things to move to his dormitory?"

"The House elves need not bother themselves. Severin brought his things on the train with him." A spare glance around the table told him that Flitwick and Greaves had picked up on the fact that Severin had lived at Hogwarts. Ravenclaws, both of them.

Vector, though, frowned thoughtfully, looking towards Severin. "May I ask his birthdate?"

"April eighteenth."

She closed her eyes briefly, and her fingers twitched against the table. No doubt doing an arithmancy problem in her head. Her eyes snapped open suddenly, and she looked at Charlie. "Are they brothers in truth as well as circumstance?"

Severus inclined his head toward her, granting her the respect due such a deduction. Arithmantic help or no, it would still take a master to work that out so quickly.

Albus chuckled. "Severus, my boy, you've been found out."

Hagrid dropped his fork. Loudly.

"Thank you for removing all doubt, Headmaster," Severus muttered irritably. Albus just smiled benignly.

"Amelia, surely you aren't suggesting that Severus is that boy's mother," Greaves asked his colleague, ignoring the byplay between Headmaster and Head of Slytherin.

"It does make sense," Vector defended her conclusion with more concrete facts than however she had come by it. "He was ill that entire year while Rubeus was pregnant. I imagine they were both hit with that potion." By the certainty of her tone, Severus doubted there was very little imagining involved.

"Surely, Hagrid would have mentioned it if he hadn't been the only one affected," the runes professor argued back, completely oblivious to the Severus's glare and Hagrid's state of shock.

"You are assuming Rubeus knew. Severus has clearly gone out of his way to be certain no one knew of his son until today. He would not hesitate to use an obliviate if he thought it necessary." Vector seemed to know him far better than Severus was comfortable with. "My only question was whether or not the impregnation was potion-induced or sexual."

Severus blinked, and wished desperately that he was anywhere but here. Several professors choked on their food, or in the muggle studies professor's unfortunate case, snorted pumpkin juice up his nose. Sprout blushed bright red, while Flitwick fell off his chair. Dumbledore was laughing helplessly, gaining the attention of every student in the hall that Flitwick's crash had not. Minerva sat stiffly in her chair, pretending she hadn't heard. Hagrid gaped like a fish.

Vector looked confused that she had caused such an extreme reaction. "What?"

"Amelia, please, don't say things like that without warning us first," Greaves complained.

"I don't think it was an invalid question." She clearly did not understand their objection to the topic.

"Snape, tell her she's got a few marbles loose and that it was the potion," Hooch demanded.

Severus fought with the decision of whether or not to comply. Every instinct of self preservation told him to do it, but Albus watched through tears of laughter, and he felt Severin's observing presence in his mind. For reasons he could not decipher, both wizards had detrimental effects on his ability and will to lie. Instead, he ignored the flying instructor by wordlessly attacking his dinner with a vengeance.

"Perhaps not invalid, Amelia, but certainly improper," Greaves spoke into the strained silence when it became obvious Severus wasn't going to.

"Oh, oh my, of course. I forgot. Severus doesn't like talking about his private life. I am sorry, Severus."

Severus weighed the benefits of hexing the arithmancy professor against the disciplinary measures Albus would have to take for assaulting a fellow staff member in full view of the pupils. Perhaps a small one wouldn't be noticed? But no, Severin was watching not only his actions but his thoughts, and it wouldn't do to set that kind of example. And Vector, for all her impertinence, had asked with no harsher motive than academic curiosity. He truly did not believe the woman lived in the same reality as the rest of the world. Her universe was a much simpler one and filled only with fact, theory, and possibility. This was not the first time she had created such a scene and he doubted it would be the last.

"Eat your chicken, Amelia," was all he said.

Eventually, the feast ended. Eventually, the students cleared out of the Hall, thus freeing the professors to leave. He made to slip away at the earliest opportunity, but Albus called out, "Severus, stay a moment." It was with great reluctance that he sat back down and watched most of his colleagues leave through the staff door talking quietly among themselves. He had the impression they were discussing him by the backwards looks they shot in his direction before disappearing.

He felt like a sixth year again, during the time that the rumour about him and Lucius was circulating, when insults still had the power to sting. Except this time the vicious words were true. That made it far, far worse. Lies and malicious slander he took for granted, expected, even used to his own advantage. He took no offense to being assumed a vampire. His reaction tonight had only been in response to the fact that he hadn't realized it was happening. But the thought that they knew Severin came from his womb and was fathered by Hagrid? That left him exposed and defenseless.

Speaking of . . .

The only people remaining in the Hall were himself, Albus, and the half-giant. "Severus, I think it time you told Hagrid what happened that night almost twelve years ago."

"The prefects will be expecting me to talk to the first years in a few moments, Headmaster, can't this wait?"

Albus sighed, "It has waited this long."

Relieved, Severus fled the room as quickly as he could without breaking decorum. He should have just run. "Prof'sor?" Severus stopped with a foot out of the door, but did not turn back. "Is Charlie yours?"

Severus hesitated, uncertain how to answer. Some form of the truth. Albus was right there and expecting it of him. Finally, he settled on, "As much as Severin is yours." He did not give the half-giant time to respond before leaving, at a speed just a hair too fast to be considered normal.

With the exception of Severin, of course, the new lot of Slytherin first years were a fairly pitiful group. Born the second year of Voldemort's second reign, they were mostly the products of marriages arranged to please the Dark Lord. Consequently, with the rest of the wizarding world holding off on having children during the troubled times or losing them in Death Eater raids, this year's Slytherin class was twice the size of the next largest.

Most of them were orphans or fatherless. Of those parents not killed outright, many had been sent to Azkaban. The children were scared, uncertain of their future, distrusted by the world because of their family name, and Severus's responsibility for the next seven years.

He scanned the small crowd briefly, picking out those who lived with their mothers, those sent to live with distant relatives or foster parents, and the ones whose parents had both managed to survive, either due to actually not being involved or doing a good enough job of appearing that way. "Welcome to Hogwarts and to Slytherin House. I am Professor Snape, your Head of House. If you have any questions, difficulties, or problems, I expect you to come to me or a prefect. Rule breaking will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in-House. Rule bending should be subtle enough not to get yourselves into trouble. You are Slytherins. You will not be treated fairly, so do maintain at least the appearance of good behaviour. When you feel you have been treated unfairly by another member of the staff, come to me and I will argue your case. Doing so yourself will more likely get you into more trouble. Over the next few days, I will be holding private interviews with each of you. Timetables of your classes will be handed out at breakfast tomorrow. If there are no questions, you may go to your beds now." His eyes scanned the first years but found nobody with a question. "Good night, Slytherins. Severin, a word."

"Sure, dad."

Severus frowned, "You will address me as Professor Snape in public."

"Sure, dad." When Severus' frown deepened, the boy smirked a bit, "Godmother said our House is like our family, so the Slytherin dormitory is like our home and doesn't count, right?"

Severus gave up. "Fine. The rest of you, go," he shooed away the other Slytherins, leaving only himself and his son in the common room. Mentally, he added, If any of them start calling me dad or Uncle Severus, I will blame it on you and give you detention.

Severin laughed. Might be worth it.

You won't think so by the end of the detention.

Severin shrugged noncommittally. "So what did you want to talk about?"

Severus glanced very briefly towards the spying fourth year in the corner of the room. "Your godfather wishes to have a word with you, and, upon second consideration, I think it best not to have to make introductions the first time you get sent to his office. Besides, I promised him he'd meet you on the first of September, and I don't think watching you eat dinner satisfies that."

The boy grinned while the spy frowned. "Can't disappoint the Headmaster." The spy's eyes widened as his suspicions were confirmed. Severus felt confident that by the time they returned, all of Slytherin would be aware of Severin's godfather's identity. "Dad?" Severin asked, suddenly apprehensive, "He's not going to try and hug me, is he?"

"I'll run interference," Severus promised, eyes sparkling with suppressed amusement.

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Chapter 11 - Albus's Office by Drake of Dross

So, how do we want to play this? Severin mentally asked his father as they rode the spiral stairs up to the Headmaster's office. Just be normal, try to astonish them by acting really happy and mushy and stuff, or scare 'em by being stiltingly formal?

If it is just Albus, we'll do normal, if Minerva's there we must go for the stiltingly formal.

Severin grinned up at his father, and he smirked back.

"Enter Severus!" the headmaster called through the door a moment before it began opening. The two Snapes entered into the office and found Albus, Minerva, and Hagrid all sitting near the cheerful fireplace. Severin stood a little straighter as he caught sight of his godmother and reminded himself to call his father nothing more casual than 'Father' and maybe even through in a few 'Professor's. He stole a look towards his dad and was surprised to find him looking at Hagrid with the expression of a man about to walk into a dragon's den with only an inkbottle to defend himself with. Not that Severin had ever seen anyone about to walk into a dragon's den with only an inkbottle to defend himself with.

The headmaster smiled brightly, "Ah, Severus, I thought you might come by tonight, so I invited along the other two members of the staff who would very much like to meet your son. I hope you don't mind." Despite the words, Severin got the impression that, if his father did mind, he wasn't going to do anything about it. Revenge for keeping Severin secret, perhaps? The headmaster turned to the boy without waiting for a response from his father with a curious smile. "So you are Severus's son who we have heard so little about."

Suddenly nervous for reasons he couldn't explain, he nodded. "Yes, sir." Good thing they had decided on a formal interaction. He didn't think he could handle happy or normal right now. And Dad wasn't helping with the way he was still watching Hagrid as if expecting the half giant to grow fangs and attack.

"Severus, Severin, please, stop hovering and take a seat," the headmaster waved them toward an unoccupied sofa that Severin couldn't remember from the countless other times his father had been in the office. His father managed a recovery and gave the eager-looking floral sofa a sneer before gingerly lowering himself onto it.

When Severin hesitated, his father gave him an impatient look. "Sit, Severin," he instructed sharply, drawing frowns of varying intensity from the other professors.

Severin ducked his head, as much to hide the laughter he feared might show on his face as to act apologetic and submissive. As ridiculous as he found the thought of his father actually meaning the censure in his tone, the boy found it somewhat disturbing that these people who his dad had liked well enough to name his godparents or father his child couldn't recognize the falseness of it. Still, he played his role to the hilt and sat down meekly beside his father. "Yes, sir." At the very least, the current atmosphere would discourage hugging.

The headmaster's smile was starting to look a little forced. "Severin, why don't you tell us a bit about yourself."

A bit about himself, huh? Like he could condense the entirety of his life into a few sentences. Well, he supposed there had been one constant. "I'm good at potions. I can brew every potion on Professor Snape's syllabus, for every year," he said with no small trace of pride. "Professor Snape says I am . . . proficient," he added, imbuing the last word with Essence of Father. Severin could tell it was everything his father could do not to break down and crack a smile.

Dumbledore twinkled and chuckled a bit, "High praise, indeed." Severin nodded agreement, feeling quite irrationally pleased.

His godmother, however, was looking at Dad with a look of dismay. "Surely you don't treat your own son as you do your students, Severus," she asked worriedly.

His father frowned at her. "Of course I treat him as a pupil. Too many young wizards come to this school with no prior knowledge of magic. He also did not attend primary school, so his education in other matters fell to me as well. Severin, tell your godmother how old you were when you learned to read."

Severin frowned in confusion. "I have always been able to read, Father." That was like asking when did he learn to speak. What a stupid question.

"Yeh did let the poor tyke *play* dincha, Prof'sor?"

Both Snapes gave him identical raised-brow expressions. "Play?" they repeated together, making the word sound foreign. The three professors looked at them in horror. Severin broke first. Laughter burst from him in peals, and he had to fold double with their intensity, and wipe away tears. When he recovered enough to breathe and look at the adults again, his father was rubbing his back in circles, smirking in amusement at his fellow teachers. He looked down at Severin and ask, "Alright there, Sev?"

"Doing great, dad," Severin wheezed. "You shoulda seen your faces," he told the three professors, and nearly broke down into laughter again at the mere memory. He grinned back up at his father again, "Sorry, I couldn't help it. It was just so funny." His father's smirk and incline of the head conceded the point and passed forgiveness for the premature end of their game.

"Of course he played, Rubeus. He's a child. They don't know how not to play."

Severin thought his dad sounded strangely defensive, so he added his own two knuts on the subject, "We played Potions Master's Apprentice, and we played Going to Hogwarts, and we played The Potter Boy, and we played -"

"The Potter Boy?" the Headmaster repeated, twinkling madly now.

Dad turned suddenly expressionless, and a mental probe revealed acute embarrassment, but Severus didn't see what the problem was so he explained anyway, "Yeah, I ran around in his bathrobe pretending it was an invisibility cloak, and he'd try to find me and give me a detention, and calling out 'I know you're there, Potter.'" Severin noted the other three adults were looking at his father oddly.

"It was a variation on Hide and Seek," Dad said stiffly.

"And sometimes Death Eaters would attack while I was in my invisibility cloak and I would have to defeat Voldemort," Severin added, "Because that's what the Potter Boy always did. After that I would have to go to the Hospital Wing, because the Potter Boy always did that too."

"The Hospital Wing was his bedroom, and Death Eaters only attacked at bedtime," Dad stated in the same tone as before. "As a six year old, he was impossible to get to go to sleep."

Severin considered this revelation. "Huh. I never noticed that. Sneaky, dad. Very sneaky."

"Thank you." The other professors were staring at them again, looking like they had just watched the two Snapes, or perhaps more accurately, Severin's father, morph into a stranger.

"You played pretend, Severus?" Minerva asked haltingly, sounding shocked.

His father sneered slightly, "A moment ago you were horrified when you thought I didn't play with my son, now you look ready to cart me off to St. Mungo's because I did."

"Yeah, that's really not fair," Severin added, then he grinned widely, "He wasn't too good at pretend anyway. He was almost always a teacher except when he was a Death Eater." There was a sudden tension in the air. "Neither took much pretending," Severin finished with all the caution of a bather sticking his toe in the water to test the temperature.

"He knows about that?" the Headmaster asked Dad sharply.

"Of course he does," Dad snapped back. "It wasn't exactly something I could hide when I came back bleeding and trembling. He could mix a simple healing draught by the time he was three."

"The Potter Boy destroyed Voldemort when I was five and a half," Severin picked up the story. "But Dad was really hurt. He had a fever and sometimes talked about bad things and used bad words and even once blew up the turtle aquarium because he thought it was a bad man named Lucius. Crackers was okay since I had moved him to the bathtub and was keeping wet hand cloths in it instead. When Dad got better he explained what happened: why he was hurt and what the Potter Boy did and that he wouldn't get hurt like that anymore. That's why I started to pretend to be Potter in the first place. He stopped Daddy from getting hurt again."

For some reason, Hagrid looked about ready to burst into tears, while Minerva was subtly dabbing at her own eyes. The Headmaster looked solemn. "Severus, what would have happened to Severin if you had been killed?"

"In the first two years, I had a House Elf of my mother's looking after him. If I failed to return after several days, the elf was to take Severin to my mother. After that," his father trailed off.

"If he died, I was supposed to go to Hagrid." As his name was mentioned, the other adults turned to look at the Half Giant who was staring back at Severin. The boy met the big man's dark eyes squarely. "I was supposed to tell you, let's see if I can remember it now. Um. Hi. My name is Severin," he paused, then made a face and shook his head before looking at his father, "What came next? Was it the part about you being dead or the part about him being my dad?"

"Mommy gave me this note to give you."

Severin scowled at him. "That was when I was like three. I actually had a whole little speech by the time the Potter Boy finished it all." He realized the professors were doing their staring-at-Dad thing again.

"Merlin, Severus."

Dad scowled at her, "My life expectancy was nil, Minerva, what else could I do?"

Just then, Severin remembered and blurted out his speech, "'Hi, my name is Severin. My mum was killed, and you are my dad. Can I live with you and Charlie now?' Ok, it wasn't that long of a speech, it just seemed that way back then." He grinned sheepishly, "I had to remember three whole sentences."

"Headmaster," his father said suddenly, "it is time and past time for Severin to be in bed."

Severin groaned. "But, Dad."

"Don't make me take house points."

He sighed. "Fine. Are you coming, too, or do you have to have that talk with Hagrid?"

Both Snapes looked toward the half giant who looked like he was desperate for answers by now but was somehow just barely restraining himself from asking. Dad sighed, "I suppose I should talk to your father. If only to get it over with." That looked like it only exacerbated the difficulty Hagrid was having.

"Well, good luck then," Severin bid his farewell cheerfully. "Good night, godmother, godfather, Hagrid."

"Straight back to the dormitories, Severin," his father reminded. "I will know if you do otherwise." Severin took that to mean his father would be mentally watching him, so he decided it would be smart to just go straight back.

"Can he find his way?" Minerva asked quietly, to which he just barely heard his father reply, "Yes, of course," before the door to the Headmaster's office closed behind him.

Severus looked around the room as his son rode the spiral staircase back down the corridor and began the trek back to the Slytherin rooms. Minerva and Albus watched the door, as if they could see Severin descending the stairs. For all he knew, Albus could. It would certainly explain how the Headmaster always knew it was him when he came up.

His eye fell next upon Hagrid who watched him as he would a rabid beast. Or perhaps simply a very dangerous beast that he was trying to figure out how to become friends with. Severus wasn't sure which classification would be worse. "I will go directly to the point, then," Severus said, hoping to get this over with quickly. "Hagrid, the night I made the dugbog's potion in your hut, there was . . . a disturbance, a howl, if I remember correctly, from the forest. It startled Fang, who ran across the room and bumped into my work table. The potion was finished except for the final ingredient which would prevent it from becoming fatal if the potion taker did not become pregnant.

"When the bloody hound hit the table, the incomplete potion was jarred enough to splash toward me. You tried to push me out of the way, but it was too late. We both got hit. I cleaned the spill, put aside a small vial for the dugbog, and we . . . we decided that pregnancy was better than death, and neither of us had anyone in particular we wished to have a child with, so we . . . used your bed." Severus swallowed and Hagrid's eyes grew large. "After we accomplished impregnating each other, you fell asleep. Not wanting anyone to know that I was pregnant, I cast obliviate, and left. At the time, I had every intention of putting my own unborn up for adoption once it was born. By Christmas, that was no longer an option."

Minerva smiled, "Did you feel him kick then?"

Severus's eyes turned haunted and he shook his head. "I heard him scream. He should have died. The Cruciatus does awful things to a fetus. But the protection of the potion was powerful and it didn't kill him. I think he has finally stopped having nightmares about it. There hasn't been one in over a year."

They looked at him with sympathetic horror. Albus spoke slowly, "I am surprised he remembered it well enough to have nightmares at all."

"I have read the theory that a child starts to keep memories when he or she has the words to describe them." He looked between his three colleagues. "On Christmas Eve, three and a half months after he was conceived, Severin opened a mental link to me. From that point on, he was exposed to the English language. He had direct access to my mind. He was returning words to me by two months after he was born, though he didn't speak until he was about a year old, and I think that was only because the house elf couldn't hear his mental voice. He never made baby babbles, and when he did speak, he went straight into sentences instead of individual words. The first thing he ever said aloud was 'Floppy, my juice spilled.' Reading followed the same pattern. I never taught him to read, he picked it up from being in my mind while I was doing it. It was something of a shock to return home from classes one day and find my one and a half year old son sitting quietly in his playpen and reading a child's novel the house elf had found for him somewhere."

Albus chuckled while Hagrid and Minerva looked as shocked as he must have that day. "When the house elf left, he had only what I put in the pen with him to amuse himself with. He tended to get bored with those quickly, so he took to watching my day through my eyes. He knows his way around the castle as well as I do. He knows the names, faces, and potions ability of every second year and up in the school. He knows my syllabus inside and out. He has seen Charlie."

"And what does Severin think of Charlie?" Albus asked curiously.

"He knows they are brothers, and told Charlie so on the train this afternoon." Severus smirked, "Charlie evidently hugged him, which Severin did not take well at all." He looked at Hagrid, "I believe your son got off without being hexed, though it was doubtless a near thing." He turned back to Albus, "Severin is quite curious about his brother, but he rarely talks to me about him. He has a severe case of sibling rivalry and does not want me to have anything to do with Charlie. Until now, I have complied with his request. Today, however, I told him he had to choose between having me solely to himself, or extending the family to include Charlie and Hagrid. His curiosity won over his jealousy, and so the boys are not going to attempt to pretend to be anything but brothers. Given their appearances, I expect this is probably the wiser course in the long run anyway."

Hagrid stood abruptly and began moving towards him. He perforce, stood as well, not wanting to get trapped on the floral sofa by a possibly enraged half giant whose son he had kept from him. Except, he didn't look enraged. He looked . . . Severus realized that he looked tearfully happy far too late and did not manage to escape the powerful hug that enfolded him.

Severus stiffened, and every point of contact between them burned with molten fire. He was terrifyingly aware that he was in the embrace of the only man who had ever penetrated him. It was strangely arousing to know that he was again being touched by someone who had enjoyed entering him, strangely arousing to know that he had once seen the soft lump pressed into his stomach. Terrifying, but even more arousing, to realize that the soft lump was hardening.

But it was Hagrid who stepped hastily away. Severus had made no move to escape, not even a look to Minerva or Albus for help. His black eyes met Hagrid's embarrassed ones, and he wondered what, if any, emotion he was giving away to the half-giant. He felt fear, confusion, and arousal all very strongly, but hoped none of them made it to his eyes. He hoped Hagrid just saw a cold blank mask looking back at him. "I have a syllabus to revise," he excused himself and left the office.

"Rubeus," Hagrid jerked out of his contemplation of the door Snape had left through to look at the

Headmaster.

"Aye, Prof'sor?"

"Albus, Rubeus," Dumbledore invited, though the old wizard had given up years ago that Hagrid would call him by his first name. "May I ask you a personal question?" he asked, with a brief darted look toward the door.

"Sure," Hagrid granted, not really giving the request any consideration.

Consequently, the Headmaster's next question took him entirely by surprise, "Have you feelings for Severus?"

"Prof'sor Snape, sir? No, sir," he answered by gut instinct before he remembered what had happened during that ill advised hug moments before. "Leastwise, I doan think so."

"Why do you ask, Albus?" McGonagall asked, sounding a bit shocked by the turn in the conversation.

Dumbledore looked at the door again. "Severus didn't pull away."

Hagrid found himself speared by McGonagall's stare. He shifted nervously. "He didn't, did he?" she said after a moment. "Albus what does this mean?"

The Headmaster chuckled, "Well, it isn't the end of the world or that hell has frozen over. I do think, however, that our potions master has developed a liking for our Care of Magical Creatures professor."

Hagrid wasn't convinced the three were unrelated, and, by her expression, McGonagall agreed with him. Then he reconsidered the hug in that light. Snape had frozen when they had touched. That was normal for him. His personal space was twice the width of anybody else's, and to brush by him accidentally was to risk a hexing. But he had not fought the embrace, hadn't even draw his wand. He hadn't moved. But Hagrid had felt the furious speed of the smaller man's pounding heart. He had taken that for fury at the invasion of his space, but what if it had been something else? And what in Merlin's name had caused himself to turn hard? It had been a simple hug of the variety he gave the Weasleys or the Potters. Had he been subconsciously responding to pheromones coming from Snape? But if that was the case, then Snape must have been . . . surely not.

He recalled with unease the look Snape had given him after the hug. Empty of anything, completely at odds with the wildly pounding heart he could still almost feel. What had gone through the potion master's mind then? And how had he sounded so calm and normal when he excused himself?

"Albus, I'll be the first to admit that he seems to make a fairly decent father after all, but surely you can not expect me to believe that Severus is looking for a relationship of any kind with Rubeus, or anyone else."

The Headmaster's eyes twinkled. "It does seem a bit far fetched. However, before you leave, I give you the observation: even with threat of death if he failed to get pregnant, Severus would not have settled for anything less than his first choice."

"You heard him, Albus, he said Rubeus and himself chose the other because there was no one else they preferred. That doesn't imply they did want each other."

Albus smiled enigmatically, "I am certain Severus sees it the same way. However, the boy is

skilled with keeping secrets. Even from himself. *He did not pull away*, Minerva. He does not even hug his son." Hagrid wondered how he knew that, but did not doubt the Headmaster's word. So. Snape liked him. In that way. This was going to take some getting used to. He found, oddly, that he didn't particularly object. Hagrid hummed the entire way back to his hut.

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Chapter 12 - Severin's Revelation by Drake of Dross

Severin Snape woke to find himself under observation by his three male classmates, his new roommates. Since they had not attended Hogwarts the year before, Severin could not identify them. He hadn't paid as much attention during the Sorting as he perhaps should have. "Morning," he greeted them.

There was a mumbled chorus of return greetings before one of them, a small brown haired one, stepped out of their ranks and extended a hand. "Darius Avery."

Feeling somewhat awkward, Severin sat up in bed and took it. "Severin Snape."

"Are you really Professor Snape's son?"

Severin reclaimed his hand and let it fall into his lap. "Yes, I am."

"And the Headmaster's godson?"

He smirked a bit, "Yes, I am."

"How come I never heard of you?"

Severin shrugged.

"You're not a, a bastard, are you?" He said it like he expected his parents to appear out of the floor and wash his mouth out with soap for saying such a dirty word.

He sighed, and decided to get it over with quickly. He knew perfectly well how some people would see the conditions surrounding his birth. It had been one of the reasons he had half-hoped he wouldn't get Slytherin. With Charlie around as his acknowledged brother, his parentage, impure blood, and illegitimacy was soon going to be very obvious. Best to spin damage control now than keep secrets that would shortly come back to bite him. "My father's not married, now is he?"

Avery took a short step back at the sharpness of the question. "I suppose you'd know that better than us."

Severin's lips twitched in amusement, despite the sullenness he was trying to project. He gave that up, and just shrugged, with a malicious light in his eyes. "Well, he's not. Married, I mean. Never has been, hopefully never will be."

It was safe to taunt a bastard. Even if he was the Head of House's bastard. Avery drew courage from that social fact. "Afraid of a legitimate heir, eh, Severin?"

Severin shook his head, taking no offense. "Nuh-uh." He left it at that, not wanting to go into explanations of why he wanted to keep his father to himself.

One of the other boys frowned, and asked uncertainly, "So you are a, a bastard?" He, too, lowered his voice when he spoke the impolite term.

Severin shrugged, indifferent. He was glad for the circumstance that led to his creation and had never felt cheated out of a 'real family.' He was a little bit jealous of Charlie's birthday parties but

he wouldn't have given up the mindlink to his father for all the birthday parties in the world. And that just wouldn't exist if he'd had a normal mother. Nevermind that he wouldn't have existed himself. "I suppose you could call me that. But I'm still his acknowledged heir. I wouldn't call me that too loudly in front of him, were I you."

"He tell you who your mum was?" Avery asked, curiously.

Severin shook his head. *Here goes. Dad, just so you know, I'm telling the Slytherins about Charlie and Hagrid.* "I haven't a mum. Never have. Do you know about Charlie Hagrid?"

Try to be discrete, please. Nervous dread came back along the link with the words. He felt his father's presence come to observe the remainder of the conversation.

Avery snorted. "The freak giant kid? That oaf of a gameskeeper got himself pregnant with a potion. The clumsy beast-lover couldn't even manage to not spill it all over himself."

Bloody dog, Dad thought, but it was more out of habit than bitterness or malice. Well, towards the dog. He was quietly seething over the indirect insult to Severin. Freak giant kid indeed.

Severin himself was none too happy himself over the insinuation that his father could ever spill a potion. Under the circumstances, he could no more disassociate the insults flung at Hagrid than his dad could the ones aimed at Charlie. He spoke very stiffly, "Perhaps you noticed I'm several inches *taller than Charlie?*"

The three boys looked at each other in confusion, trying to figure out what that had to do with anything.

"Charlie and I have the same grandparents. One of them was a giantess." *Making her the more compassionate and morally upstanding of your grandmothers,* Dad added as an aside.

It took them a moment to work that out. Avery frowned. "Wait. Back up, Snape." His eyes narrowed in disbelief. "You and that, that creature can't share grandparents. That would make you brothers."

Amazing. I think he worked that out all by himself. There may be hope for wizardkind after all.

Severin tried not to smirk at the sarcastic remark. He held a new appreciation for his father's talent to hold a scowl on his face during class while talking with him at the same time. Recalling his roommate's words quickly brought back the anger, though. "Right. Charlie is my brother. I would thank you not to call him a freak or a creature in front of me." His hand subtly sought to draw his wand from beneath his pillow.

"But Professor Snape is your father," he said in honest confusion.

"No. Professor Snape is *Charlie's* father." *Ah,* so you can admit it. Severin wished his father were present to cast a glare at. "He is *my* mother," he finished stiffly, giving the glare meant for Dad to Avery, who was at least equally deserving of it.

This will be fun to live with when it reaches the staff's ears. What happened to discrete?

I can still tell them about that bad dream you had again last night. Severin regretted the words as soon as they formed. The one bad thing about having Dad inside his skull was that his first response couldn't be repressed before the elder Snape heard it.

His father was silent for an uncomfortably long time, and Severin felt guilt churn through him. *Father?*

You saw my nightmare? The calm words were belied by the bubbling panic behind them.

You were scared. It woke me up.

There was another long silence. Then: *Do you . . . have questions?*

Once he realized Dad had no clue that he knew about sex, Severin startled his roommates and accidentally started the rumour that he was borderline insane by bursting out laughing for no reason apparent to them. They backed slowly out of the room, never turning their backs on the laughing quarter-giant until the door closed between him and them.

Severin?

When he recovered enough to think, he answer the question implicit in his Dad's mind-voice. *Dad, I lived more of my life in your head than in mine. I know what sex is. I don't understand why anybody would do that voluntarily, given your dreams, but I know what it is, and that it's needed to make babies.*

Dad was quiet for a few moments, though not as long as before. *You were never a child, were you, Severin?* he asked, sounding sad.

Severin shrugged at the empty room. He had thought 'child' referred to an age less than - well, he wasn't entirely sure where the cut-off was. Headmaster Dumbledore still called Dad 'child' occassionally. But Dad's question implied age wasn't the only factor. Without a complete definition, he couldn't answer. "What makes someone a child?" he asked for clarification, not realizing he had switched to his spoken voice. Not noticing the door wasn't completely closed.

Nevermind. You're missing breakfast. Come eat, boy.

He nearly tripped over one of the other first years as he left the room, but the boy ran off before he could ask what he was doing.

Charlie Hagrid had made fast friends with the new Gryffindors. Being a resident at the school for his whole life, and having a stature significantly taller than them, he quickly assumed the role of big brother to most of them. He had already promised all of his roommates that he wouldn't let them get lost on their way to classes. He played tour guide around the Tower (the prefect had done a pretty bad job, showing them only the way to their own room) and told them about all the professors they were likely to meet.

"McGonagall: stern but fair. Spout: friendly, but don't ever hurt a plant in her presence. Flitwick: kind and cheerful. Hooch: sort of spooky, but nice. Sinistra: smart, not mean, but not especially nice either. Weasley: cool, just plain awesome, and easily the youngest teacher on staff. Fought in the War, you know, and Harry Potter's best friend. My godfather's younger brother. A bit of a temper. Nothing compared to Snape's though. Snape: well, I suppose we'll survive. He hasn't killed a student yet, and he's been teaching for about twenty years."

Then, as they walked down to breakfast, a little late because of the tour, he told them of the other people about the school.

"Filch: the caretaker, stay out of his way, he likes giving detentions. His cat's just as nasty. Aunt Poppy, I mean, Madam Pomfrey: She's the school nurse. She's my godmother. Very nice. My dad doubles as Keeper of Keys and Grounds and Care of Magical Creatures Professor, but that class isn't offered until third year. Pince: the librarian. Defacing a library book is grounds for a stay in Azkaban to hear her tell of it. And she'll know it if you do so much as close it too hard."

By the time they reached the Great Hall, he was explaining what McGonagall hadn't mentioned

last night about the Houses.

"Intense rivalry between Slytherin and Gryffindor. Professor Weasley will go really hard on Slytherins because he used to be a Gryff like us. Snape - the Head of Slytherin - won't let a class go by without taking some points off Gryffindor. If any of you are Muggleborn, you'll get the most trouble from Slytherins."

"What, you're bad-mouthing us already? We haven't had a chance to deserve it yet."

Charlie turned around and grinned at his brother, who was pretending to look insulted and hurt. "Key word being 'yet', Snape."

Severin rolled his eyes. "Oh, like you won't ask for every hex we throw at you, Hagrid."

"I am a peaceful and gentle quarter-giant," Charlie told his brother, trying to look angelically innocent, but his eyes were laughing, and his mouth was grinning.

"Really? You, too?" Severin pulled it off. A sweet, innocent look of inquiry.

It was too much. Charlie started to laugh. "Severin, you really shouldn't do that," he gasped, "You look too much like Snape."

"Wearing an *innocent* look?" his brother sounded shocked. "I thought it was the only time we *didn't* look alike. Mine still works. Sometimes."

"No," Charlie shook his head, using the movement to regroup enough to say the next sentence, "It just so *wrong* to see that look on someone whose face is as much like his as yours." Severin smirked, the expression much easier to accept on those features. "Much better, thank you."

"I suppose it's lucky you got Hagrid's nose then."

Charlie's hand shot to his nose, not having made the connection until now that half his genes must have come from Snape. Severin's black eyes twinkled in amusement at the alarm on his face. "I promise, Charlie, your nose didn't change since yesterday."

"Can you imagine what would have happened if we were *switched*?" Charlie blurted.

Judging by the very brief flash of fear that had lurked momentarily in his brother's eyes, the answer was probably 'yes'. Though what Severin imagined could be that awful, Charlie didn't see it. But then, he hadn't lived with the Head of Slytherin for the last eleven years. That had to do something to one's paranoia levels.

"Charlie?"

He looked at his brother, confused by the note of wariness in his voice. "Yeah?"

Severin jerked his chin, and Charlie followed the direction of the movement to notice that a rather large and stunned looking crowd had gathered around them. "I think the cat's out of the bag."

"Yeah."

Severin smirked again. "Well, brother, it wasn't like my height didn't give it away."

"Snape's tall, brother. You're too skinny to look like a giant."

Severin shrugged. Further conversation was lost to McGonagall and Sprout breaking up the

crowd so they could distribute timetables. As they took seats at the Gryffindor table, Charlie felt the gazes of most of his house and much of Hufflepuff on him.

"Are you and Snape's kid really brothers?" one of his second year friends asked the question in all of their eyes.

"Yes. I found out on the train yesterday. Snape and my dad had the same potion get on them. Snape hid Severin away in the dungeons and never told anyone he even existed."

Those close enough to hear that, looked toward the Slytherin table, then began passing the story down the table. "Poor kid," a third year spoke the Gryffindor consensus for all of them.

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Chapter 13 - Severin's First Day by Drake of Dross

The first class on the Slytherin timetable was DADA with Professor Weasley, who was on his second year at the post. Dad had not been happy about his appointment. Consequently, Severin knew him best as 'that Weasley brat' or 'the Potter boy's friend'. He hoped desperately that he wouldn't slip and call him one of those terms where anyone but his father would hear him. The class was shared with Ravenclaw, and it became quickly obvious that Weasley liked the Ravens more than the Slytherins. Of course, by his father's complaints, Severin knew the problem was less that Ravenclaw was favoured than Slytherin was disfavoured. As soon as roll was called, Severin found that he was probably going to be the focus of most of that disfavour. He was, after all, a Snape, and, therefore, the very model of all the worst traits of his House. The first class was filled with a sort of oral background quiz to see where everyone stood on the subject.

"When do werewolves transform?" Most of the students raised their hands, including Severin. A Ravenclaw was called on.

"The full moon."

"Very good. A point to Ravenclaw. Is there a treatment for lycanthropy?" Only a handful of hands went up for that one, including Severin's.

Another Ravenclaw was called on. "Yes. The Wolfsbane potion."

"Excellent. Another point to Ravenclaw."

There were a few more simple questions on various dark creatures, all of which Severin raised his hand to answer, and for none of which he was he called upon. Slytherins were only called upon for the hardest questions, though they were awarded points when they answered correctly, which was more than Severin could say for his father in Potions. The questions veered into Dark curses and countercurses. In this topic, too, Severin raised his hand for every question. Still, he was not called upon. Weasley began to increase the difficulty, a tactic his father sometimes used to find out who had read the supplemental reading materials. No points were taken for wrong answers, since it was not required reading, but it was worth bonus points and the teacher's good will to answer correctly.

"Who can name ten members of the Order of the Phoenix, current or past?"

Severin's hand snapped up so fast his fingers tingled. Everyone else was still counting on their fingers to see if they knew ten. "Snape," Weasley called on him, sounding disappointed that he had not other immediate options. Using his fingers to tell when he had reached ten, he began listing them in the order they occurred to him,

"Severus Snape who spied for the order, Albus Dumbledore who founded it, the Potter boy," he paused as some of the class giggled behind their hands, and Weasley made a weird face. Severin blushed, but forged on, "who defeated the Dark Lord, Neville Longbottom and you, sir,

who helped Potter, Hermione Granger the know-it-er-nevermind, the Longbottoms Frank and Alice who were tortured to insanity, and James and Lily Potter who died in the first defeat of the Dark Lord."

Ten was not very many. He hadn't even mentioned McGonagall, Hagrid, or the werewolf yet. "Do you want another ten?" Weasley sighed.

"That will do, one point to Slytherin. Who can tell me what defense there is against a jinx?"

Severin's hand shot up in the air again. "Anyone besides Mr. Snape?" There was no one willing to try.

Weasley sighed again. "I begin to understand your father's frustration with Hermione. Go ahead, Mr. Snape."

Potions with Gryffindor came next. Coming from the DADA classroom instead of the greenhouses, the Slytherins arrived first. When Charlie arrived, Severin waved a hand and invited him to share his lab table. Charlie grinned and sat down beside him.

"How's your day going?" Severin grinned gleefully, "I think Weasley hates me."

"Uncle Ron?" Charlie asked, sounding taken aback. Severin rolled his eyes.

"Know any other Weasleys at the school?" Charlie pointed to a red-haired girl sitting a few seats away.

"Yeah, actually. Amanda's a Weasley. Bill's daughter." He shook his head and returned to the previous topic, "Why would Uncle Ron hate you?" Severin raised an eyebrow and stared down at his brother with a patented Snape look of disbelief. To Charlie's credit, he caught on immediately,

"Oh. Guess he hasn't heard the 'we're brothers' rumour yet." Then he grinned, "What I wouldn't give to be a fly on the wall when he hears it. Betcha a knut he goes ballistic." From what he knew from his father about Ronald Weasley, there was no bet. However, before he could say as much, the classroom door was flung open as Professor Snape made his usual grand entrance. Dad swept down the central aisle, his robes billowing dramatically, and he spun abruptly toward the class when he reached the front. A look of annoyed displeasure was fixed on his face as he looked over the first-years.

"I do not expect many of you to understand the subtle art and delicate science that is potions making," he began, flashing a hard look directly at the Weasley girl. Severin's lips twitched. He expected the unfortunate girl would fare far worse in his father's class than he himself had in her uncle's. The rest of the class period proved his prediction true. The girl was picked on mercilessly, asked questions normally reserved for third years or older. When she couldn't answer, he would deduct points, and ask Severin who, of course, knew the answer, thus gaining Slytherin as many points as Gryffindor lost. Amanda was red-faced and furious by the end of the class, but she did, thankfully, manage to hold her tongue, thereby saving her from a detention or more lost points. Severin's father seemed to completely overlook Charlie, thus making him the only Gryffindor in the class to not lose at least one point.

When they began setting up their cauldrons for very simple first practical lesson, Severin leaned over to Charlie and whispered, "Having the Potions Master for a dad does have some advantages, doesn't it?" Charlie snorted.

"Slytherin brat."

"And proud of it," Severin agreed, then went to get the ingredients they'd need.

His other two classes of the day were Charms and Transfiguration, both in which he believed he managed to impress the teachers with his background knowledge. Neither professor treated him any differently than they did any of his fellow students, which he took to be a positive sign. The other students seemed to avoid him somewhat, including the Slytherins, but no one was openly hostile. The other houses would need time to get used to the fact that he was Snape's son. It would be unreasonable for him to expect them to forgive that fact of genetics and upbringing too quickly.

The Slytherins, likewise, were wary about his giant blood, and probably his social status as illegitimate. He didn't want to imagine what kind of twists the fact that Dad was his mother rather than his father were going to introduce into the equation. Heirship was supposed to be by the paternal line, not the maternal. Did that make Charlie the Snape heir instead of him? Not that he imagined it would make one whit of difference to Dad what the other Slytherins thought about that question. Severin was the first born son, and more importantly, he was the son Severus Snape had raised and considered completely his. Both sides needed time to figure out what they thought about him. Severin didn't mind. Charlie liked him. That was one more friend than he had before. It was one friend more than his father seemed to have, unless one counted Dumbledore, which Severin didn't.

Godfather or no godfather, the Headmaster obviously wasn't trusted enough to know about Severin until it had become necessary, and therefore he wasn't to be considered a friend of Dad's. Hagrid and McGonagall were even worse. Friends don't obliterate friends. Co-workers, colleagues, and acquaintances, maybe even a mentor in Dumbledore's case, but Dad did not have friends. An Idea began to form.

"Charlie!" Severin called, running to catch up to his brother as he caught sight of him about to enter the Great Hall for dinner. Charlie stopped, and waved for the Gryffindors he was with (including the Weasley girl) to go on ahead. "Charlie," Severin repeated, drawing even with his brother, "We're twins, right?"

"Right," Charlie agreed, carefully. He apparently was familiar enough with Slytherins not to be too eager to agree with such an obvious ploy to elicit sympathy and familial duty. "Separated before birth, right?"

"Yeah," Charlie agreed again, even more warily.

"It's our job to get our parents together again, isn't it? I mean, every story you read with twins separated at birth, they have to try to get their parents together again."

"Uh."

"They're classics. Richter and Ryan in the Warlock chronicles. Sharon and Susan in the Parent Trap - which was so popular that muggles made a movie about it, losing the witchy stuff of course. Zurlich's -"

Charlie held up his hands. "I get the idea. You're forgetting something though."

"What?"

"We're talking about the Head of Slytherin and a half-giant." Severin's face fell.

"You don't think Hagrid would go for it?" Charlie stared at him.

"I don't think Snape will go for it. Slytherins don't like non-humans."

Severin smirked. "Now you're forgetting something."

"What's that?"

"I'm quarter giant. If he can like me he can like Hagrid. He had to have had enough respect for him to get pregnant by him. And Dad told me that your grandmother was the nicer, kinder, and more upstanding of our grandmothers, and she was a full giant." Charlie appeared unconvinced. "Look, Dad is willing to give the family thing a go, but he's not going to initiate it. We need to help it along."

Charlie's dark eyes twinkled. "Ok. We can start with you not calling your dad 'Hagrid'."

Severin blinked. That was low. It was bad enough he was brewing a plan to that would result in him sharing his dad with the half-giant. Why did he and Charlie have to share parents too? All he wanted was for Dad to have a friend like he did. There was a lot more leverage for getting Hagrid into that position than anybody else. "Fine. What do I call him then? It'll be pretty confusing if we call both of them Dad."

Charlie thought about that for a second, frowning. Eventually, he came to a decision. "We'll both keep calling our mothers 'Dad'. Our fathers, we'll call 'Father'. Sound good?"

Father sounded distant enough. "Deal. But Dad'll have your hide if you call him anything but 'Professor Snape' in public."

Charlie grinned. "Wouldn't dream of it." Severin nodded in satisfaction.

"When can we corner your - er - my father to talk to him about ways to approach Dad?"

"How's tomorrow after classes finish? I think we have Astronomy together last."

"Perfect."

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Chapter 14 - The Courtship of Professor Snape by Drake of Dross

As paranoid and perceptive as Severus considered himself to be, he missed all the signs. Granted, he had an excuse. With the appearance of Severin at Hogwarts, he had expected people's attitudes toward him to change, especially Hagrid's. The other professors watched them closely, whenever they were together. That was too be expected as well. They had had each other's children. He thought he did an excellent job of concealing his nervousness and fear. In hindsight, he apparently did too good a job.

By the second day of classes, Severin had reached the conclusion that being a four-person family, with two kids and two adults, was something that he not only could accept, but wanted. Severus had little choice but to make nice with Hagrid when they did come in contact. With the assistance of the two twins - Severus had quickly decided that Charlie was as Slytherin as any of his students - this happened far more frequently than it ever had in the past.

Severus was polite. He made none of his usual remarks, though surprisingly he only had to swallow back a handful. Likely the simple fact that Hagrid was usually asking after Severin helped in that regard. As the boy's other father, Severus felt the half-giant had some right to hear of Severin's childhood, and favoured the groundskeeper with tales of the boy's first brew, listings of his favourite stories, and fondly irritated remembrances about the incessant requests for Severus to read him "the Little Broomstick that Could" time after time after time. Once or twice he caught himself smirking pleasantly in Hagrid's presence. Later, he discovered that it was a tad more frequent than that, and he was seen doing so.

By the third week of classes, Severus found himself seeking out the chair next to Hagrid. The half-giant had beamed at him when he chose the spot over his usual one. The Headmaster had twinkled at him knowingly. Severus had glowered at the old man and told Hagrid of the boy's latest stunt in potions. The two were lab partners, of course, and Severin was no doubt incredibly bored with the simple lesson. So they did things to make ot smoke. Severin was skilled enough to reverse the effect by the time Severus could stalk toward them. He, of course, make no attempt to dock points. He was quite proud of the boy.

Hagrid even laughed a few times during the telling of the story. Not that it was ever difficult to bring mirth to the half-giant, but the Headmaster twinkled at him more. No doubt the old wizard was pleased his potions master had decided to 'live a little' again. Severus scowled in his direction again and wondered if the man's twinkles were valid enough excuse for the return of petty revenge tactics. But that was what ultimately started the whole mess, so he decided to follow through with his previous decision to swear off the practice. While the revenge-leads-to-pregnancy argument was not often used in moral debates, it was the reason he had let several of Albus's pranks pass while Severin had been a secret. Looking back, it had probably only fueled the old man's worry. Albus was welcome to his twinkles now.

That Albus might think there was anything beyond a simple exchange of courtesies between himself and Hagrid never occurred to Severus.

It wasn't until late-October that he discovered what the other staff thought of his acquaintanceship with the half-giant. He was in the staffroom, grading a pop-quiz he had given his fourth years that day. While he had never come to the staffroom except during meetings while Severin quietly lived in his room, he had found his rooms very empty without the boy's presence, and had recently taken to doing some of his grading where he would be left alone, but not isolated. Besides, if his colleagues were going to think he was a vampire, he wanted to know it.

It was Minerva and Sprout who entered as he slashed red over an unfortunate Gryffindor's test. He recognized them by their voices as they made their way to the coffee pot at the back of the room. Being a Slytherin, and out of their line of sight, he remained quiet, listening to their conversation as they continued, unaware of their audience.

"It's not exactly proper, is it?" Sprout was saying. "I mean, I love Charlie dearly, and Rubeus is a wonderful man, but . . ." But what, Severus couldn't say because she trailed off. He was not surprised that his little 'family' was still under discussion. He had kept a secret for almost twelve years. It would take at least as long for the talk of it to die down.

"Severus has never been terribly concerned with what is 'proper' and I don't think Rubeus would see it that way at all." Severus silently sneered. Of course the half-giant wouldn't see anything wrong. The twins were his children. Naturally, he wanted to make a family of them. As for himself, propriety was important, but not as important as Severin. Minerva continued after a brief pause filled with the tinkle of a spoon against the sides of a mug. "While I agree that I wouldn't expect it of Rubeus, there was the rumour about Severus and Lucius Malfoy back in his sixth year."

Severus froze. That story had resurfaced? If Potter wasn't already dead, he'd kill him. He almost rose to counter the accusation and inform the misled woman that James Potter had not seen any such thing, and, furthermore, Lucius had only played off of the rumour and began touching him in public because the man was a sadistic bastard. Lucius was straight. Mostly. Maybe. Probably not.

But then Sprout spoke again, "Rubeus is very good for him, I think, regardless of what the parents will say when they find out."

"I must admit, I thought Albus had finally lost all trace of sanity when he suggested Severus had feelings for Rubeus -"

Severus couldn't help it. He choked on his own breathing. By the time he finished his coughing fit, Minerva was patting him on the back as he had done for Severin when the boy was an infant. "What did you just say?" he croaked out the moment he was able.

Minerva merely smiled at him, and patted his arm. "I'm glad you've found someone, Severus."

He could only stare at her uncomprehendingly.

The final proof that he had been missing a vital rumour going around the school came three days later at the Halloween Feast. It was then that Hagrid made a gesture that could not be misinterpreted as having platonic intentions. The bloody man held Severus's chair for him. Severus stared at the pulled out chair, then Hagrid's face, then back to the pulled out chair. The fear that Hagrid's presence always prompted in him had begun to fade through repeated exposure. It revived fully now.

For some reason, Severus looked toward his Slytherin son. Severin flashed him two thumbs up, a grin, and a nod. Severus took the offered chair, knowing that he had just set himself on an entirely different path than the one he wanted to be on. How Hagrid reached the crazy notion that he'd be amiable to a relationship that would require the holding of his chair, Severus did not know, but by the wide smile and dancing twinkle on Albus's face - not to mention Minerva's words in the staff room - he had a pretty good guess. But now Severus himself had encouraged it, so anything from this point on was his own damn fault.

The next few weeks saw an increase in 'accidental' touches. Or perhaps he just was overly aware of it now. Severus never called Hagrid on the incidents, and he knew the other staff saw. But he refused to make a scene just because his colleagues watched in amused interest as the clumsy man bumped into him as he reached for a napkin.

Now that he knew what was going on, Severus was very aware that Hagrid was acting very much like an awkward teenage trying to make his crush notice him. It was sickening. But he did not tell the man to stop, either. Severus called himself a dozen kinds of fool everytime he failed to take an opportunity to end it. Nor could he justify his lapse.

As Christmas approached, the brushes became a little more deliberate. It was not uncommon for Hagrid to touch his arm or his shoulder as they passed in the hall or spoke to one another. Severus would just look at the point of contact with an internal mixture of fear, horror, and wonder. His expression would be blank. Then Hagrid would take his hand away, and they would continue on.

On Christmas Morning, Severus and Severin had gone over to the Gamekeeper's hut. Predictably, the boys had a good deal more presents than the two adults. The twins had become a common sight together, and most people who had sent a gift to Charlie also sent a gift to Severin, for which Severus was glad. Severus had bought twice his usual complement of gifts; the usual amount going to Severin, and another set for Charlie now. He smirked as the two boys took in the large piles of paper wrapped boxes. Those wrapped in silver and green were a healthy percentage and Severus had to give a mental reminder to himself that spoiling one's children was a complaint he used to have about parents.

If their shouts of joy hadn't given him a headache, he might have forgiven himself this once. Instead, he smirked down at the pair of them as they tore through the wrapping paper and pretended an indifference he did not feel.

It was then that Hagrid came up from behind him, and slipped an arm around his waist.

If he was given to hysterical laughter, he might have given into the impulse. Distantly, he

recognized the scene as one of impossible domesticity. Two parents watching their children open Christmas presents. What could be more innocent?

But his attention was as far away from the boys at that moment as it could be. He was too busy noticing the weight and warmth of Hagrid's arm and body. He wondered if Hagrid was even half as aware of every point of contact between them as he was. Whether he meant to be standing this close or if the half-giant had simply taken the position without really thinking about it. He did not know which would scare him more.

Still, he made no move to pull away. He did not understand why his body would betray him like this, why his tongue would not rise to his defense as it would if Hagrid had been anybody else. The large, thick fingers brushed lightly against his hip, and Severus gave up trying to keep his breathing regular. A glance at Hagrid's face showed an only partially suppressed smile, though that could have as easily been for the boys who were still whooping happily as they opened their gifts.

However, the half-giant's eyes did widen with surprise and delight when Severus pressed his body against the large one beside him as he instinctively tried to escape the questing fingers. Severus quickly turned his attention back to the children - or pretended to. Having taken his movement as encouragement, Hagrid beamed happily and tightened his hold around Severus's waist.

Severus's heart pounded and he recognized with self-disgust that part of him was enjoying this entirely too much. "Oh God," Severus whimpered, too quietly for the boys to hear as Hagrid turned them so that, if either twin looked in their direction, they would not see that Hagrid's hand had just discovered the interest Severus's body held.

Fortunately, the boys soon finished unwrapping their presents, grabbed their new Lightning Bolt broomsticks and gleefully left the house. Leaving him alone with Hagrid.

The half-giant bent down to kiss him.

No, his mind babbled in denial, Not happening. It's just another nightmare. Wake up, Severus. Wake up! But the Hagrid in his dreams never kissed him. He found himself lifting his chin with some external assistance to meet the lips. Hagrid tasted of earth and sweat. It was, surprisingly, not a bad taste. Curiously, fatalistically, he opened his lips and invited the foreign muscle inside. There was no stopping what was coming now.

It lasted too long. Or not long enough. Severus wasn't sure which. His heart pounded with increasing terror for every moment he did not pull away. For every wet brush the Other made against what belonged in his mouth. When Hagrid broke it, the interested part of Severus's body was fully eager for something more.

He was shaking badly enough that he needed Hagrid's support to stay upright. "All righ', ther, love?" Hagrid asked softly, almost in amusement.

"Fine," Severus managed, deciding now was not the time to contemplate too heavily on Hagrid's chosen form of address. "I need." But what he needed got caught in his throat, and Hagrid grinned knowingly.

The bed was where it had been the last time. Hagrid gently laid him down on it. "If yeh doan want this, if it's too fas' fer yeh, just say so." He waited for the go-ahead, fingers poised over the top button of Severus's robes.

The dream Hagrid never did that either, and Severus hesitated, knowing he should stop this, knowing it was only going to hurt. But instead of the 'Get the hell away from me' that he wanted to

say, what came out - in a remarkably calm voice - was "Do you know what you're doing this time?"

Hagrid blushed, and Severus felt a moment of déjà vu. But Hagrid nodded. "Madam Pince found meh some'at to read 'bout it."

Severus closed his eyes and fell back against the mattress under him. Kill me now. He was fairly certain he was blushing now. "Gods." Convinced now that the whole school would believe they had done this regardless of whether they did or not, he groaned and opened his eyes again to see Hagrid looking down at him with an uncertain expression on his face. "What?"

"Some'at's botherin' yeh."

"I prefer not to have my sex life the topic of Hogwarts rumour."

Severus was somewhat surprised to see this prompt a grin under Hagrid's beard. His large fingers traced Severus's face, and the fear that had begun to ebb flowed back as he realized he had just all but given permission. Oh, hell, it can't be as bad as I remember it. He began to unbutton his robe. Hagrid's eyes and smile widened, then he brushed Severus's hands aside and took over.

It was . . . different, being undressed by somebody else. Almost soothing, yet at the same time, he felt like he was another of Hagrid's presents getting unwrapped. The robe came off first, leaving him in a white shirt and black trousers. Then the shirt slowly came undone, and Hagrid's fingers took liberties exploring his exposed skin. By the time Hagrid pulled Severus's trousers and smallclothes down, his erection was almost painful. Hagrid smiled and ran a thick digit along the rigid length, and Severus jerked under the touch, gasping out, "Merlin!"

Hagrid undressed himself quickly, as Severus was in no condition to help. As the log came out again, his breathing hitched in terror. But his face remained unclouded by the fear and his legs spread apart of their own accord. That Hagrid had been reading up on the subject was clearly obvious as he began stroking Severus's body. It was nothing like the awkward fumbling of the first time. Before long, he was gasping and squirming under the gentle ministrations.

But when Hagrid cast a lubrication charm and the first finger breached him, all of Hagrid's hard work to relax him went up in smoke. Hagrid recognized it; he was too good with dangerous animals not to. He studied Severus' carefully black face. "Do yeh want this, Sev'rus?"

No! his mind screamed. Yes! that traitor body part wailed. "It hurts," his tongue whispered.

Hagrid's expression changed from one of concern to guilt. He wiggled the finger that was still a short ways inside him. "This hurts now?"

Severus shook his head. "No. Last time. It hurt."

"Shh," Hagrid hushed him as if he were Charlie with a scraped knee. The big man leaned forward and kissed Severus's forehead. "Tell me if it hurts," he whispered, and the finger inside began to move around and deeper. It didn't hurt, not at all. Particularly with the added distraction of Hagrid's other hand sliding along Severus's prick. He was beginning to relax into a moaning and groaning pattern when the single finger in his arse was joined by another while a hot wet mouth closed over where a moment ago there had been a fist.

Severus yelped and bucked and began a litany of every member of any pantathelon he could think of. The fingers twisted inside him, stretching probing, sissoring to prepare him. The tongue swirled around his manhood, turning his brain to mush and letting his body take over. His own tongue called out for more in the midst of the catalogue of dieties. He screamed and came into

Hagrid's mouth as the questing finger brushed what he could only assume was his prostrate. Hagrid choked a bit, but Severus was in no condition to remark on it. "Oh God, Merlin, Zeus, Hagrid, Thor. . ."

Hagrid chuckled, sending the most peculiar sensations up Severus's spent prick. A third half-giant finger slid into him as the mouth left him and latched instead onto his nipple. "You'll have to tell me, aah, which books Pince gave you," Severus managed to gasp.

Hagrid left off long enough to grin at him. "Charlie Weasley had sum poin'ers, too."

That was not something Severus wanted to know about his other son's namesake.

Fortunately, he wasn't given much opportunity to think about it. The fingers slid out, and both hands lifted his hips as Hagrid positioned himself. Severus's anxiety began to creep back. "Yeh kin still say no, Sev'rus."

Arguments pro and con flew back and forth in his mind, almost too fast for him to grasp. But his eyes were already closing, and he was already forcing himself to relax. "Do it."

It pushed into him, slowly but implacably. It was big, as big as he remembered it to be. Filling him, splitting him. His breathing came shallowly and he fought to remain calm and relaxed. He had been breached, but Hagrid was still a far cry from fully sheathed when he stopped. "All righ' there, Sev?"

Severus took a moment to adjust himself to this level of invasion before nodding. "Fine."

"It doan hurt?"

Severus gave him a weak glare. "You're a half giant, of course it bloody hurts. But it's not like before. Go on."

A few more centimeters, then another pause. "All righ', Sev?"

"We'll be here all day at this rate. Go on." He went in the rest of the way, albeit slowly, without further pause. Once he was fully sheathed, he looked down at Severus. His eyes asked clearly All righ', Sev? It did hurt. But it was nothing like the searing agony of the first time. He felt overly stretched rather than torn and snapped. "Give me a minute."

"When'er yer ready, Sev." The half-giant's eyes . . . twinkled. "I think I could stay 'ere ferever and die 'appy."

"Pleasant as the thought of a dead man inside me is, I think I'm ready now." The spark of gallows humour and sarcasm were old friends and more comforting to him than a relaxing charm.

"Yer a morbid man, Prof'ser Snape." He gave no opportunity for agreement or rebuttal as he slowly began to move in and out. Severus decided Hagrid was a much better lover when the larger man wasn't nervous, embarrassed, and completely unknowledgable of the mechanics. Hagrid had more control on himself this time, as well, which certainly helped. Severus reluctantly admitted that the undivided attention and concern for his well-being was something he could learn to enjoy. Then the massive appendage inside him brushed that spot, and when he regained control of his thoughts, he decided that the sex wasn't bad either. If the improvement from first time to second was that remarkable, by the fourth or fifth time he probably wouldn't even notice the pain. Then he decided he was thinking too much. He let go of his self-restraint and allowed his body to move by instinct.

Flesh slapped against flesh as he rose to meet each thrust. The pain flared again as Hagrid

penetrated deeper, but Severus had stopped paying attention to that. Soon, Hagrid stiffened and Severus was filled with rushing wetness. Both men collapsed to the bed, breathing hard. "Yeh all righ', there?"

Severus took mental inventory of his physical condition, then nodded, "Fine. Exhausted and sore, but I understand these are common side effects."

Oh, good, you're done. Dad, Uncle Ron just invited Charlie and me to the Weasleys, can we go? You and Hagrid are invited, too, but maybe you want to get washed up first?

Severus felt himself blushing. "Merlin." How much did you see and feel of that?

He felt Severin's bright mental grin. Enough to see why people might want to do that voluntarily. I think I want a smaller boyfriend though.

"Gods."

"Sev?" Hagrid asked in concern, propping himself up on an elbow.

Severus looked up into Hagrid's worried face, hovering only inches from his own. "I think we've just scarred Severin for life." Having been told about the mental link in depth, Hagrid immediately understood the problem and blushed redder than Severus had ever seen him go.

So can we go to the Weasleys? For having just seen at least some of his parents having sex, the eleven year old sounded remarkably normal.

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Chapter 15 - A Final Twist by Drake of Dross

Much to Severus's surprise, Madam Pince did not spread the rumour about Hagrid's choice of library books. Though he doubted the half-giant had kept his new 'relationship' entirely secret, the rumour of it had, so far, not returned to Severus. Ronald Weasley, however, did look at him oddly when he returned from the Burrow late Christmas evening with Hagrid, the boys, and young Miss Amanda Weasley.

Severin, Charlie, and Hagrid all told him he should have come to the Weasley's Christmas party, but he would hold to his own opinion on that matter. Besides, there had been things he needed to think about during that respite.

He had sex with Hagrid again. This time there was no handy excuse of it being a life or death situation to account for it. Worse, if he were honest with himself, he would probably classify the encounter as 'making love' over 'having sex'.

That it happened again after they sent the boys to sleep in Charlie's room compounded the problem tenfold. Mostly because (a) he had still been in Hagrid's hut at that hour, and (b) he had enjoyed it, even more than the second time. As a Potions Master, Severus was well aware of the dangerous nature of addictions. He recognized in himself the beginning stages. Most alarming of all was the fact that he felt little inclination to break himself of the quickly growing dependancy.

Severin was of no help in the matter. The boy was still jealously guarding his position of favourite son, and became sulky if Severus spent any amount of time alone with Charlie, but he made no attempt to keep Hagrid away. Rather the opposite, in fact. Severus blamed (and thanked, not that he would admit as much aloud, even in his mental voice) his elder son for providing the opportunity for several additional romps amid the bedsheets during the remainder of the Christmas holidays.

Severus didn't think the boy was eavesdropping on those encounters, but the boys never returned to the hut until Severus and Hagrid had made themselves and the bed presentable

again. He tried his best not to let too much leak in the boy's mental direction, and could only hope that was successful.

Hagrid asked once if he wanted to top. The force of Severus's refusal startled even himself. Hagrid dropped the subject in favour of undressing his lover, so it was not until sometime later, as he lay sated and mildly sore, in Hagrid's bed, during the dead of night, beside a sleeping half-giant, that he was able to analyse his own response.

The simple answer was that neither had enjoyed Severus's one experience on the top. It was not even that it was unpleasant, but more because it had been empty. Straightforward, mechanical sex with nothing behind it. Even the first time as a bottom had been more passionate. For Hagrid, that first time had been everything sex was supposed to be. That Severus had felt overwhelming agony did not change the fact that he had felt something. Pain and fear, true, but it was better than the nothingness that had created Charlie.

It went deeper than that, though. Severus fought the secrets of his subconscious for the explanation, but it was only when Hagrid mumbled his name in his sleep, and instinctively draped an arm around Severus, drawing their naked bodies closer, that Severus grasped his own reasoning.

By Hagrid's example, he had some small understanding of the expected roles Top and Bottom were expected to play. His role as the Bottom suited Severus perfectly. Well, no, he disagreed with himself almost immediately. Upon objective consideration in the small hours of the night, being fussed over, touched, prodded, made to writhe, beg, and moan, then be entered, did not sound like him at all.

But it certainly beat Hagrid's part. He did not do gentle and loving. He could not reach out to another person. Respond, yes, but initiate contact, no. He seriously doubted he could set the mood for love-making even if he knew the pay-off would be extraordinary. Which, given his past experience, he knew no such thing. It was much easier to accept the praise and doting attention of a lover than give it. Hell, he hadn't told Severin that he loved him since the boy was three. Severin knew it, by their unique bond, but he hadn't actually had to say it in a very long time.

His tongue was too sharp for such sentiments. So as he had been doing with Severin, he let his actions speak for him. He fell asleep in Hagrid's embrace. In the morning, he would justify that action with the fact that it kept the nightmares away. That was the only reason.

The students returned as they did every January. It was an unavoidable hazard of being a Professor. Sooner or later, one had to deal with the pupils. With a full population of Slytherins present again, Severus's absence from the dungeons would not go unremarked. So he packed his things from Hagrid's hut and returned to his own chambers. Exactly when he had moved across the grounds was a mystery to him. Only Severin had packed an overnight bag for sleeping over at Charlie's.

Hagrid was all for a public relationship. He would be. It was his nature. But even without invoking his own reluctance to let people know about his private life, Severus was able to convince him that being obvious about it in front of the students would be a quick route to getting sacked. Neither the half-giant nor the ex-Death Eater were confident of their ability to find work elsewhere.

Consequently, at the return feast, Severus sat between Sinistra and Minerva while Hagrid sat with Hooch and Weasley. Severus managed to answer the questions posed by Albus and Minerva about how Severin had enjoyed his holiday, and picked at his meal. As the conversation dried out, Severus frowned at Severin and Charlie who were both sitting at the Ravenclaw table

with their mixed House group of friends. To Severus's surprise, Severin wasn't even the only Slytherin among them. Albus followed his gaze and chuckled.

"Your boys have done more to ease inter-House rivalries than I imagined was possible."

Severus scowled. "It makes it terribly difficult for me to take away Gryffindor points during Charlie and Severin's class. At first, I only had to avoid Charlie, but now half of them are Severin's friends as well. I hear Mr. Weasley is likewise encumbered, since young Miss Weasley has joined the merry little band." His eyes flickered toward the red-haired girl sitting across from Severin. "Thank Merlin it is only the first years that are affected."

The Headmaster's eyes twinkled. "I understand another age group has fostered a strong cross-House relationship. Slytherin-Gryffindor, no less."

Severus frowned and looked toward the Slytherin seventh years, trying to determine if any of them might have begun dating a Gryffindor. None of them struck him as being that desperate. "Who?"

The twinkle intensified. "Why, you and Rubeus, of course."

"Gods, he is a Gryffindor, isn't he."

That thought helped keep him in his dungeons the next three nights, but by the fourth, he conceded that the addiction was stronger than he had anticipated. Some minutes later found him on the stoop of Hagrid's hut. The half-giant answered carrying a lantern, and wearing a night cap and a sleepy expression. The look was quickly replaced by a beaming smile when he recognized Severus. "Sev!"

Letting the familiar abuse of his name pass, Severus stepped into the hut, closing the door with his foot, and placing himself within a very close proximity to Hagrid. "I believe I have something you want?" he suggested.

Hagrid seemed no less addicted, as he eagerly led Severus to their bed. Er, Hagrid's bed. It had only been four days, but by the urgency in their touches it could have been as many weeks, months, or even years. The wait was worth it, though. It was the first time Hagrid listened when Severus told him to go faster and harder. That he couldn't stand afterwards did not matter so much anymore. Especially with Hagrid holding him close and whispering the disconcerting words that he loved him. Severus answered in the only way he could. He closed his eyes and fell asleep, snuggled close in Hagrid's embrace.

Over the next two weeks, his things began to slowly migrate back to Hagrid's hut.

Filch was the first to notice the late night assignments. They were not every night, but the frequency was often enough that the old caretaker did stumble upon one, and a stake out the following five nights revealed that it was not a one time occurrence. Out of respect for the surly professor, Filch chose not to report that the normally sensible man was behaving like an adolescent in heat.

Albus was the second to discover the pattern. While isolated events could bypass his notice, a marked change in the castle's routines was easy to pick out. Since Christmas holidays, Severus had not given out a single detention after midnight. A curious investigation revealed the cause, and Albus returned to his office chuckling. He confided the news to Minerva the next morning.

Hooch was the third to stumble upon the secret. An early morning broom ride took her in the proximity of Hagrid's hut in time to see Severus leaving. She smirked as she worked out the only possible reason Severus would be leaving the Gamekeeper's Hut at five-thirty in the morning. By

that afternoon, the whole staff knew Severus and Hagrid had begun shagging. In the staff lounge, Amelia Vector innocently asked Severus when the child was due.

Also present were Hooch, Sinistra, Minerva, and Filius. All four stared at the Arithmancy professor as if she had lost her mind. Not unusual for Vector when she chose to speak. Severus had enough respect for her to feel his blood drain from his face as he said, "Why do you ask?"

"Severin was born in April, well over a month early. I assume he was not born through a natural termination of the pregnancy?"

Severus's heart began to pound faster as he gained an inkling of where she was going with the question. "No. A muggle procedure. Ceasarian section."

"And you did use that Breeder's formula, the one that does not wear off until the mother give birth to living offspring, correct?"

The Potion Master's hand drifted unconsciously to his currently flat abdomen as he finished the thought, "And my body wouldn't recognize the forceful removal of the premature fetus as a live birth."

Vector nodded. With expressions of horror, the other four professors looked back and forth between their two colleagues, all but verbally begging one of them to say what they thought they were hearing was wrong. Oblivious, Vector smiled, and fondly patted Severus's middle. He was so taken aback by the presumptuous contact that he forgot to hex her. "So when was the little one conceived?" she asked, straightening and smiling in that absented-minded way that was typical of her.

"Christmas," Severus answered honestly, too stunned to attempt a lie. He was pregnant again. This could not be happening. But knew his potions, and cursed himself soundly for not recognizing the problem before he consented to have sex with Hagrid. This truly was happening.

"What a lovely gift!" Amelia Vector declared.

Severus was inclined to disagree, but he said nothing beyond, "I should go see Poppy."

Severin worriedly hurried his brother and other father toward the hospital wing. Dad was there and refused to tell Severin why. But the elder Snape was scared. And that scared Severin. "Is 'e 'urt?" Hagrid asked, seeming as worried as Severin was. Everytime either of the boys lagged even a little for the quick pace they were setting, the half-giant would give them a nudge to speed them along. As he was rather larger than either boy, this tended to send them into a flying dash to try to recover their balance.

"Doesn't seem to be from what I can pick from him, but he's gotten a lot better at blocking me lately," the last was sent in an accusing tone of voice toward Hagrid. True, Severin didn't particularly care to be woken in the dead of night by his father's . . . ah, excitement . . . but he didn't like being shut out now. It was a bad precedent that Severin was not willing to set. The two Snapes were not supposed to have secrets between them.

They reached the Hospital Wing, and Madam Pomphrey ushered them into the back room where Dad sat up on a bed. He looked reassuringly healthy. His black eyes were alert, and he sat uncomfortably on the bed in the bright room. The whiteness of the room made it difficult for Severin to judge whether his father's paleness was his normal hue or an indication of trouble. That his mind was still blocked did not bode well.

Pomphrey left as quickly as she had come, leaving the four alone. Dad looked at each of them, causing the nervous butterflies in Severin's stomach to flutter all the more wildly. Dad was dying. Severin could see the fatalism in those black eyes so like his own.

"I'm pregnant."

His father survived years of torture under Voldemort, why did he have to die n- wait. "You're what?"

"Pregnant," Dad repeated, the awful word sounding no better than when he had been expecting 'dying' to be in its place. Well, better than dying, Severin granted, but he still didn't like it.

"No," he denied. "Get rid of it."

He was peripherally aware of Charlie staring at him in horror, of Hagrid gently taking his arms and turning him toward his other father and away from his real dad. "Yeh doan mean that, Sev'rin."

Anger began to replace his shock. "Yes, I do! He's mine! He's my mom! Nobody else's!" He realized he was shouting, but he didn't care. This was about Dad. He threw himself at the half giant, flailing wildly. "Your fault! This is your fault! I should never have shared him, he's mine! You can't have him! The baby can't have him! You want a baby, you have it! Dad is mine!" Hagrid caught his wrists, so he began kicking and trying to bite.

"I've been expecting this for months," he distantly heard Dad say calmly, "Give him here." Severin felt himself lifted into the air and put down beside his real father. Familiar arms wrapped around him, and his fury transformed into tears, and he wept into Dad's robes. Long fingers ran through his hair, more soothing than he would have expected. "He's never had to share before," Dad's voice said coming from so close he more felt it than heard it. "He's taking it better than I would have thought."

I'd've been more upset if you didn't react like this, the mental voice slid into his mind with pride and approval. Severin smiled despite his tears and clung tighter.

Not mad at me for crying? Severin thought back, just to be sure.

Just don't make a habit of it. His father's hand moved from stroking his hair to rubbing circles on his back. "It's going to be a girl."

Severin sniffed and pulled away. "A sister?" he repeated, intrigued despite himself. Maybe a girl wouldn't be so bad. A girl couldn't replace him as the favourite son. He tried to picture his father putting a pink frilly dress on a baby and laughed weakly. Dad smiled at him, the hint of humour in his eyes showing that he had caught the image.

I don't foresee experiencing Cruciatius while pregnant again, Severin. Your place is safe. Severin nodded slowly. "Fine. But make her last name Hagrid."

His two fathers exchanged a look over his head, and Dad nodded. "That can be arranged."

Severin smiled again. "Good." He looked over at Charlie, and the smile widened. "We're gonna be big brothers!"

Severus watched the two boys leave the back room of the Hospital Wing, happy with their impending sister's existence. He supposed long exposure to the Weasleys allowed Charlie to

accept the family's expansion with equanimity. Severus had seen the eager excitement light his eyes at the first announcement, only dimming when Severin suggested abortion. That idea had clearly been anathema to the younger twin.

Severus looked over at Hagrid. Now that the issue with Severin's sibling rivalry was currently cleared up, the half-giant appeared as pleased and happy as Charlie about the addition. Only when the half-giant realized Severus was not nearly so cheerful did he sober and sit in a chair beside the bed. "Yeh doan want 'er," he observed. "Sev'rin -"

Severus shook his head, making a cutting gesture. "It has nothing to do with Severin's reaction." He looked away. "In the last century, only one Professor has been pregnant while teaching - two if you count me as well - and that was caused by a potions accident and a life-or-death situation. While the argument exists that this was an extension of that potion accident, it was by no means life-or-death." He leaned forward, resting his head in his hands. "The Board of Governors has every excuse they could want to sack me now. Poor role model to the students indeed. Ex-Death Eater, verbal abuse, homosexuality, extramarital sex, and now a bastard child? How Lucius would laugh."

The bed groaned as Hagrid sat beside him, holding him as he had held Severin. "Marry me, Sev'rus."

It took a while for Severus to understand he heard the words correctly. But, no, he couldn't have. "What?"

"I know I 'aven't much t' offer yeh. But if we're married, they can't sack yeh for havin' a kid."

A shot gun wedding, he believed that was the muggle phrase. He was strangely disappointed. But he nodded. He was Slytherin after all. Slytherins took what they wanted. If he were married to Hagrid, the half-giant could never leave him. The noble idiot was too Gryffindor to do that. "Neither of us are changing our names, though." Because he couldn't be seen as wanting this too much.

Hagrid kissed the top of his head, "Didn' think we would. Love yeh, too, Sev." Hagrid stood and left the room in a hurry, saying something about 'wedding arrangements'. He was left with the distinct and unsettling feeling that *Hagrid* had just manipulated him.

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