

Harry Potter and the Mission of the Tiger

A tale of love and despair...

Von abgemeldet

Falling Embers

Chapter Seven: Falling Embers

AN/ Warning: suicide tendencies, fluff

Harry sat at the table for a few more minutes, half-heartedly listening to Professor Sprout. When Draco, and later Snape and Mc'Caughn, had left, his thoughts had wandered to last night. Hadn't he just fallen asleep on the sheets? Who had covered him? It couldn't possibly have been Malfoy - but who else? What had happened to that ignorant, self-confident snob he had known for years? Another thought passed his mind: had Draco seen him naked, only wearing a towel around his hips? Most likely!

Things were so strange, since the end of the fifth year - since Sirius had died! "Why?" he asked himself, "It was all my fault. If I hadn't played the hero in running into Voldemort's trap, then he would still be alive! I'm scum! I killed my own godfather! I killed my parents, I killed Cedric Diggory and I should have died all the time! I should have never been born!"

He ran down the corridor, when he bumped into somebody. "Sorry, Draco, I didn't look out!" he mumbled before he disappeared.

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The lights got dimmer, and suddenly Severus stepped back and chuckled slightly, grinning, while shaking his head.

Gabriel looked upset. "What's the matter? Are you laughing at me..."

"NO!" the black-haired shouted, now laughing,

"I'm just thinking how stupid fate can be!" Now Gabriel was utterly confused and Severus quickly explained himself. "I think it's the truth when I say I'm absolutely mad at you - am and have ever been! (Gabriel looked even more confused) I had a terrible

crush on you at Hogwarts, back then, but you were in a relationship with Lucius at this time and I was much too shy to say a word."

"I always thought you didn't like me! You never talked to me and I thought you had a crush on Lucius."

"LUCIUS? Erg - no!"

"He wasn't that bad!"

"He always cheated on you!"

"I didn't sleep with him and he was furious and tried to make me jealous."

"That's no excuse!"

"YOU were jealous!"

"Of course I was - every minute I watched you!"

"You watched us?"

"Well - sometimes..." Snape blushed slightly.

"You're ashamed that you watched us!"

"No, I'm not!"

"Yes, you are!"

"No, I'm - we're acting like children! The people start looking at us!"

"I don't mind."

"But I do!"

"Let's get back to the school, Albus will get worried and shout at us, when we don't get back in time!"

"We're no pupils any longer."

"No, but he is still Albus Dumbledore and he will be curious what happened today!"

"Oh no! The old coot manipulated me again!"

"What?"

"Dumbledore, the old matchmaker!"

"Is he?"

"Yepp!"

"You should be thankful!"

"Why?"

"Because if not for him, you would still dream of a relationship with me!"

"We're in a relationship?"

"Of course we are!"

"Okay."

"Fine! Let's go!"

"You always take the lead, don't you?"

"Suppose so!"

"I think I can live with that."

"You had better be able to!"

When they had left the park, they looked for an empty side street and apparated back to Hogsmead. They considered drinking a butterbeer at Rosmerta's, but decided against it. Severus arm around Gabriel's waist they slowly walked back the lonely road to the castle. Though the sun hadn't completely set yet, the moon shone brightly and their surroundings were clearly visible. They had nearly reached the castle, when Severus let out a scream and quickly put out his wand, yelling the Leviosa-Spell. Just now Gabriel saw the dark figure hitting the ground beside the Astronomy-tower...

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Draco had been slightly worried when Harry had run into him and had followed the other boy, when he recognized the way to the Astronomy-tower. /What does he want there? The tower is only used for either Astronomy-lessons, or snogging, and quite suitable to jump off.../

His heart contracted painfully at that image, /Harry had no reason to commit suicide, right!/, he tried to calm himself, but another voice in his head got louder and louder. /Think of all the pressure he must be under. The-Boy-who-lived has a lot of nasty duties and all the nightmares and Voldemort.../

"NO!" Draco shouted in despair and raced up the stairs to the top of the tower. He was completely out of breath, when he threw up the door to the roof. The looked around in hope to see Harry there, safely watching the sun set, and he saw Harry -

standing at the balustrade, ready to jump! "Nooooo!" he screamed and Harry turned around once more...

"Hi Dray!"

"What the hell are you doing, come down there at once!"

"Down - a nice word."

"Are you absolutely crazy? You could fall!"

"I know"

"Then why are you there?"

"To fall."

"NO! You will come back here to me NOW, do you hear?!"

"No." his voice was disturbingly determined and calm. "You cannot stop me!"

"Look - I'll walk over there and you take my hand and..."

"You don't understand - you cannot help me, you don't care!"

"But I do! I care."

"No, you hate me!" his voice began to waver slightly and he turned back again.

"I don't hate you - I, I love you!"

"What!" he turned back quickly and - lost his balance.

Draco ran towards the falling boy, but it was too late. He leaned over the balustrade, desperately trying to catch Harry, but to no avail. He screamed and held out his hands, in his mind the shocked expression in Harry's eyes, when Draco had revealed his feelings and Harry had... "Noooooooo! You cannot leave me! I need you, you stupid boy!" he screamed, tears forming in his eyes, even before he saw the dark figure hitting the ground, "You cannot leave me alone, you hear! I need you so much!" he whispered.

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Gabriel stood still in shock. Severus had pulled him along and just released his hand and knelt beside the huddled figure on the grass beneath him. The boy groaned in agony and he relieved shut his eyes for a short moment, before kneeling beside Severus.

The potions-master had quickly discovered the serious wounds Harry had received by

hitting the ground, though Severus had been able to soften the crash a bit. /Or the boy would be dead!/, he thought darkly.

He had sent an urgent message to Albus and Poppy (a Nuntiarus-Charm: to deliver messages in short distances very quickly) and everything they could do was wait for the headmaster and the nurse to arrive. Harry had just lost his consciousness due to the agonizing pain he surely was in.

Gabriel sucked in his breath. The boy's robes had dark, red patches all over, and the collar of his shirt was bloodstained. His face was bruised, a trail of blood ran down his chin from the edge of his mouth, lips bloody as well.

"Oh Merlin! What did he do!" Severus snorted angrily. "We should have known that it would be too hard for him, but that old fool cannot stop himself from training and manipulating his brain, that he has to defeat the Dark Lord by himself! That couldn't have worked - he's just a boy!"

"I know, Sev, but I highly doubt that Albus wanted to hurt him, but prepare him for the worst."

"Hope for the best, and prepare for the worst - I know! But even with all his wisdom couldn't he see that it is too much for a simple boy? Even if he is our best chance to defeat Him?"

"Shh - cool down! There's nothing we can do now, but wait! You cannot change the past and he's alive, after all! You saved his life, I don't know how often, be proud of yourself!"

"How can I be proud to watch Potter die all the time?"

"He's alive, Sev! All right? He won't die, at least not now, and you rescued him - There are poppy and Dumbledore!"

He jumped up to talk to Dumbledore, while Madam Pomfrey looked after Harry. Gabriel quickly explained the situation and Severus helped Poppy to lift the wounded and transport him to the hospital-wing.

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When she had finished healing the most severe wounds and treating the smaller cuts and bruises, she gave the boy another sleeping-draught and walked over to the three men standing and sitting on the nearest bed. Severus paced the room, while Albus cleaned his glasses (the fourth time!), Gabriel calmly patting his shoulder. Dumbledore had been heavily shocked and due to his former behavior felt extremely guilty in causing the boy even more terror, but what should he have done? Lie to him?

"He sleeps peacefully now," the nurse said, before she let herself fall on the bed next to Dumbledore. "Several broken ribs, many bruises and smaller cuts, left arm broken, but I healed these. I more worried over his head and mind. Gods! He tried to kill

himself!"

Albus shook his head. "I should have known, but he always acted so strong in front of others and even I didn't know how bad he must have felt. I'm an old fool, I should have noticed long ago - now that it happened I remember so many signs I interpreted wrong which I could have done easily right, if I had looked closer just once! He got much more silent after the fourth year, stopped arguing with Mr. Malfoy, never had a girlfriend, his marks increased, so he must have worked a lot lately! Everything makes sense now!"

Gabriel patted his shoulder again. "You have a lot to attend to - everyone makes mistakes at times, and it wasn't your fault! Nor any of us!" He got up and walked to Snape, who had stopped pacing at Harry's bed.

The boy looked awfully pale and thin between the white bedcovers. "He seems so young and frail when he sleeps... so child-like!"

Severus snorted, but it sounded sad instead of provoking. "He IS a child, barely 16!"

Just the moment he said this the door opened and Draco entered; his face wet with tears and his whole body shaking. The staff looked at him confused, but Snape, who knew his 'admiration' for Harry acted at once. "Don't worry too much - He's alive!"

Draco looked up in shock. "A - alive? But how..."

"I caught him just in time."

"Oh Merlin!"

With that, the blonde boy fainted.

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"I haven't had that my whole time at Hogwarts! Two students in the school and BOTH unconscious in the hospital-wing!" Poppy declared, while tending to the blonde, "Can ANYBODY explain to me why a boy jumps off a tower and then another one runs into here, with a tear-stained face, and faints when he hears that the other is still alive?"

Severus cleared his throat. "Partly, I can."

She turned around and towered over him. "And you remember that NOW? C'mon, tell us. What's the matter with these two?"

"Well - to spare the details - I don't know why exactly Potter jumped, but I suppose, that Draco - however - knew that he did, but not that he was still alive. Furthermore Draco told me, and I shouldn't even mention that here, that he is rather fond of young Mr. Potter."

Gabriel gulped. "Draco has a crush on Harry?"

Snape sighed. "Thank you very much! A student tells me his worries secretly and now everyone knows!"

"Oh - sorry. I didn't want to be tactless, Sevy, but it's true then?"

"Yes."

"But Harry doesn't know, does he?"

"No, I don't think so. Potter wouldn't jump off a tower, if somebody is in love with him, he's too gryffindorish for that."

"I see."

Dumbledore loudly cleared his throat. "So I get to know a lot today I didn't notice before!"

Snape looked at him. "Two things aren't that much, don't you think so?"

"SEVY?!" Dumbledore grunted under a giggle.

Severus got pale.

"Not another faint!" Poppy screamed.

betaread by Mary

TBC