

# *A World of Change*

Alice Sampaio

Severus grabbed her hand under the whispering tree, which was fighting against the wind. The waves of cold made her shiver unpleasantly. He didn't notice this, though, since his eyes were observing the world around them.

The peacefulness wasn't even disturbed by the girls giggling next to the lake. They all wore the same Hogwarts robes as everyone else, so the girls had to fulfil their wishes of conquering other boy's hearts. Though this group, with their chuckles and vulgar conversations, would only attract the most stupid and empty brained blokes. He could hear some portions of conversation...

"Huh! That's gross, Ana!" said one girl with curly black hair and an unpleasant face.

"But they like it, Susan! I heard Paul the other day saying to Alison that to make a—"

Severus stopped eavesdropping before the girls' conversation could get any more sickening. The silly black-haired girl wore an expression that most people associated with vomiting. Certainly none of them were better than the one his heart belonged to. The hand touching the grass was getting wetter, due to the foggy weather. However, this made the endless mantle of shiny green grass glow under his feet, extending towards the Quidditch pitch, and continuing silently into the Forbidden Forest.

He could see some boys conspiring near the Whomping Willow. After deeper observation, unpleasantness shot through him. He recognised the famous quartet: Potter, Black, Lupin, and Pettigrew. He admitted only to himself that sometimes he felt jealous of Black or Potter. Never Remus or Pettigrew; the first was too well-behaved to ever do anything worthwhile, and the second was a fearful rat. However, they were so popular amongst the girls- and even the boys- and their looks (excluding Pettigrew) were somewhat good. He wasn't going to lie to himself. Yet, he had a blissful something that they, especially Potter, would never have imagined him as able to pursue.

"Potter," he hissed, a tangible sense of repulsion in every syllable. What he wouldn't do to humiliate Potter once in a while! A hex would deflate that gigantic, stupid, gawking head. Potter always seemed to smile as though the world was a wonderful thing. *Well*, Severus pondered to himself, *the world isn't that bad now*.

His attention was again caught by a group of students leaving the grounds and heading towards the castle. They huddled under their coats, hiding from the wind. He recognised his old friends, Avery and Mulciber, with whom he had shared so many grand moments. But they were gone now; he had to leave their friendship so that he could achieve a greater good for himself. Something he had wanted for years. Severus regretted nothing he had done with them, his old comrades, and, of course, he did slightly regret leaving them to become a peaceful boy.

Actually, Severus hadn't left *all* his interests behind. He was still developing a curse, which, if everything went as planned, would cut human flesh. No one needed to know about it, and he planned on using it only for protection against potential enemies. No, Severus never doubted that one day Potter would go mad- probably after losing an insignificant Quidditch game- and attack he, Severus, from behind!

Lily leaned against his shoulder, which finally fixed Severus' attention on her. He saw her shiver against him in the cold air and took off his coat, throwing it over her shoulders and wrapping her warm inside it. Severus stared at her, mentally tracing her delicate features. Her swollen lips were reddish due to the evening's growing cold. Her cheeks were blushing, the reaction to the sudden change of her body temperature, thanks to his own warm coat. Those beautiful, round, green eyes positively shone as she watched something at a far-off point. Lily's auburn hair framed her perfect face, falling into it somewhat, and brushing against Severus' chin. More than anything in the world, he wanted to pull it aside, and kiss her beautiful lips. Restraining himself was nearly beyond human control.

Severus knew he would do anything to be in her heart as she was in his; to be wanted by her as he wanted her, in a way he couldn't compare to anything he had ever felt. Sometimes he regretted leaving the Dark Arts for her, and sometimes it all seemed useless. But these moments with Lily erased those feelings and let him live his breathtaking dream.

Lily nudged closer to him, holding his arm in hers. He smiled, and blushed a little, feeling her so close to him, but quickly shook his head in annoyance. Blushing was for the weak; he needed to be strong, now, and act according to his feelings towards her! But his feelings made him blush, too, so that now all his body was shaking inside, afraid this moment might get away from them.

Cautiously, he stepped forward, and kissed her forehead softly. He expected her to react much more excessively than she did, which was just to peek at him with those beautiful eyes. It was a relief to Severus that she didn't yell or slap him. Willing himself to take this forward, his new-gained strength, he clutched Lily against him harder, to feel her body. To his absolute surprise, she wrapped her hands around his waist, and leaned her head closer to his neck.

Severus was now afraid his heart would jump out of his chest and just fall down on the ground, killing him, and stopping him from tasting this moment. He no longer felt the wind or the cold, or absolutely anything around him, except her. Lily, so close to him, caused strange waves of heat which seemingly came from nowhere, and were starting to spread around his body.

Severus started to see more of his classmates returning home to the castle; they were giving up their fight against the cold. Probably, they were going to sit next to the common room fires, cuddling in comfortable chairs. But he would exchange all of that warmth forever for just the moment he was living now; hugging Lily like this was priceless.

"Sev...?" she asked, her teeth chattering from the cold. "Aren't you freezing? Do you want your coat?"

"But that way you'll be freezing more than you already are!" He thought that saying she was freezing probably wasn't the best way to keep her there with him. Either way she wasn't looking at him.

"I'm not cold, thanks to you." But her voice was still trembling a little.

"You can't even talk without chattering your teeth! If you want, we can go back to the castle," he said, the last sentence a little sombre.

“I told you, I’m not cold,” Lily said with an impatient voice.

“Neither am I. So why are you shivering?” he asked, confused.

“Because...because I’m so close to you,” she answered in a whisper.

This time, Severus thought his heart really had stopped, and some strange feeling brewed inside the pit of his stomach. There was no air to breathe, and her words seeped into his brain slowly.

“What...what did you just say?” he stuttered.

She turned her face to him, her big green eyes staring into his own dark ones with a glow he had never before seen in her. “I was thinking, here, so close to you, that maybe...we could be more than just friends.”

And before he had a chance to think properly about her confession, he felt something smooth against his mouth. Her lips were touching his. After the awkward feeling passed, he reciprocated, pressing his mouth against hers, kissing her passionately, but slowly, so he could taste every flavour of her.

After the kiss was over, they both continued to stare at each other in an embarrassed silence.

“Think we could go back to the castle, Sev?” she said in a soft voice.

“I think so,” he murmured, and he kissed her again, this time just a peck on the lips.

They rose and shook their robes, removing the earth and grass that had stayed attached, from under the tree. They looked at each other again and started to walk, still in silence. Halfway to the castle, Severus grabbed her hand, feeling her silky skin. She squeezed it with a smile on her lips, which made him certain of what he was doing. He wasn’t going to let her go away ever again.