

Beautiful Now!(english)

Die Originalstory zu "A Lovestory"

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Here is first a little annotation from the author. This all is playing before the Harry Potter books so Dumbledore and Snape are still alive!

Dumbledore looked up from his work, when he heard the knock on the door.

"Come in, Severus!"

The door opened and a ghostlike black shadow floated into the room. "You have send for me?"

Dumbledore glanced over the rim of his spectacles.

"I had send for you because of your. About the job as new teacher in Defense against the dark arts."

There was no detectable reaction in his opponents' face, only raising slightly one eyebrow.

"I'm sorry I have to reject." Dumbledore gave Snape a close look.

"And why, if I may ask?", his countenance frozen to conceal his interior riot.

"Well, because I'll probably never find an equally qualified master of potions and on the other hand there could be some, how shell I put it, you past..." Dumbledore felt uneasy as Snape glared at him out of his pitch-black eyes.

"Because of my past...I understand, Sir", Snape stood up. "Then I may go and get myself prepared." Without another glance he rushed with blowing cape, down the staircase and into his private dormitory at the cellar. After arriving there he grabbed the first thing in reach and smashed it at the wall. He heard glass breaking and saw a sticky, smelly brown liquid running down the wall, dripping on the stone floor. Swearing under his breath he got out his wand and cleaned up with a flick of his wand. He had hoped to some how flee his past. Well, the only thing he could do now, is remain waiting. Waiting and hoping to get another chance.

With malicious joy Snape let his eyes wander over the tables. The new pupils had already been told their houses and Dumbledore just stood up to deliver his harangue. It looked like the new professor would be late. But Dumbledore didn't seem disturbed. With dignity he passed the table and started his speech.

"As you may all know has Professor Grey, teacher in Defense against the Dark Arts, left our school. So let us all greet the new teacher. Professor Xenia MacCarter!"

The Headmaster clapped his hands and the wings of the great door swung open. Snape leaned slightly forwards and focused. He didn't want to miss only one second.

But what he saw took his breath. The new teacher entered the room. Suddenly the room went totally silent. Everybody had focused on the newcomer. She headed directly to the rostra where Dumbledore stood, her cloak flying behind her, giving her a bat like expression. Underneath she wore black trousers that stretched around muscular thighs and a black blouse promised a beautiful, curved body underneath. While stepping up to Dumbledore she let her gaze wander from one teacher to the other. When she came to Snape, her eyes locked with his, taking his breath and making his heart beating like hell. He felt his blood running through his veins like fire. What the hell happened to him?

Then she reached Dumbledore she looked away, giving him a charming smile.

"Thank you very much for your nice introduction, Professor Dumbledore", she said shaking his hand.

After this she circled the table and rested herself at the empty chair beside Snape and Professor McGonagall.

"Now let's start the banquet." He had scarcely ended, when the tables filled themselves with the finest meals anybody could imagine. But even those could not brighten up his mood. Not only, that he had again missed the position as teacher in Defense against the Dark Arts but that he had been overtaken by such a young newcomer who scarcely could now how life could really be. She hadn't seen the Dark Lord's reign. Had never experienced the dark era. Unknowingly he had aggregated his hand to a fist.

"Aren't you hungry?"

Slowly Snape turned his head and gave her a sinister glance. He just wanted to give her a grumpy response, but then he had another look into her eyes. They shone like two honed sapphires, which promised many secrets under the surface and seemed to shine in a new color every second, capturing his whole mind. But with a shake of his head he threw off her charm.

"What do you care?" He stood up and rushed out of the room. What did this impertinent woman believe she was? This day there were several more chemicals broken.

The next day even the Slytherins got to feel his anger. No answer could satisfy the Professor and after the double period everybody was relieved to escape the dungeon. After the last student had gone the Professor let himself drop behind the desk and a sigh escaped his lips. He closed his eyes and rested his face in his hands. What was going on? Every time he closed his eyes he saw again those two sapphires staring at him. That had never happened to him. He decided just to repress those feelings and thoughts. He had enough to do without fussing about this woman. And till the evening he was successful, but then he couldn't avoid meeting her again. Morose he let himself sink at his chair for dinner. As quickly as possible, but without appearing precipitant, he gorged the food and avoided looking at his neighbor. He still didn't know what had happened to him, but he wouldn't look into those eyes again. He was so deeply lost in thought that he didn't realize how Professor MacCarter addressed him. When suddenly felt a hand resting on his arm he jerked.

"Aren't you feeling well, Professor?" An anxious set of eyes rested on him and he again felt his heartbeat accelerate. Abruptly he shook off her hand.

"I'm feeling well!" he hissed between his teeth. He turned demonstratively back to his plate.

"Is he always that lovable?" MacCarter addressed her neighbor, Professor McGonagall,

interrogatory, who sat at her other side.

"Don't take him amiss. It's just, that he's keeping an eye on the position of teacher against Dark Arts and always was rejected. And well, you just came and snatched away his dream job. And you are also pretty young and pretty. Tell me one person who wouldn't be jealous."

MacZisley forced a smile. "Yes, he hasn't really chanced since we went to school together."

McGonagall looked a moment puzzled but then shrugged and turned back to her plate.

"He was a year older and one grade higher. Back then he had already problems getting along with others. The only ones understanding him seemed to be his books and potions. Even his fellow Slytherins seemed to avoid him. He was by far the brightest student in his grade, even if nobody noticed that."

A nostalgic smile crossed her face.

McGonagall raised surprised an eyebrow. "Really? But the school chronicles all say that James Potter was the best student of the year."

"After Snape changed sides to join Voldemort they rewrote the chronicles and the second best student took the credits."

McGonagall looked stuned. How did it come, that a student knew more about this school than a teacher? And why had she never heard of that, although she had already thought at the school at this time?

But she didn't dig deeper and consecrated herself on her food again. That promised to become an interesting school year. She flashed a designative glance to the headmaster. If only that didn't end up in a disaster!

Snape on the other side had missed the conversation. He had himself concentrate on eating. When he had finished up he stood up and without a greeting he disappeared, but that astonished nobody except Professor MacZisley. With agony in the eyes she looked at where he had just sat. Why did he reject everybody, why was he so cold and aloof. A sigh escaped her lips. If he would just let her help him.

In the next months he borrowed himself in work and avoided the contact to others as far as possible. Sometimes he even skipped meals and let the house elves bring him food into his private rooms just to evade meeting MacCarter. One day Dumbledore summoned him into his office.

"Severus, what's up with you? You're behaving strange."

He gave him an intense look across his desk, trying to read in his opponent's countenance, but he couldn't see through stonern mask.

"I know your pissed because you were passed over. But you have to understand", Dumbledore tried to explain, but Snape was at the end of his tether.

"I waiting now for year for this opportunity. Since I began at this school as potions master you have put me off with the same lame excuse. Well, Professor Grey was an excellent wizard. He had rendered outstanding services in the fight against the Dark Lord, but he's gone now. And I have given you enough proof of my loyalty by playing the spy for you and risking my life several times to serve your purposes. But nevertheless you put this woman, merely grown up, right in front of my nose. She probably doesn't even know how to spell death eater. And she surely has never seen anybody be punished with the Cruciatus-curse?" Enraged Snape glared at the headmaster. He had stood up and bent over his desk. But Dumbledore staid clam.

"You totally underestimate her. She's a remarkable young lady. She joined the order of the phoenix directly after graduating from Hogwarts and earned her our respect fighting the Dark Lord and his supporters. Some even thought she should have been made an auror, but then the Dark Lord was defeated the issue was dropped. And above all she is mainly responsible for me giving you a second chance notwithstanding the fact that you had killed her parents while still in service of Voldemort." Snape winched when he heard the name.

"That's impossible. I never heard that name before."

"Because she had changed her name after all the battling. Her real family name is Bones."

All blood left his face, turning him as white as chalk. He could still remember clearly how he the couple tortured to get some valuable information. The had been able to resist quite a long time and he had had to fall back on some very dangerous potions to break their resistance.

Snape wanted to reply something but the Professor cut him short.

"Please go now. I still have many things to handle." He bend over his papers again which were scattered all over his desk.

Snape sensed that it was senseless trying to get more answers. So he stood up and left the office. When he had reaches the door he heard Dumbledore say: "And don't forget that next weekend there will be taking place the great Halloween ball. I hope you will give us the honor of you presence."

Then the door closed behind him. Snape sighted. Anthough Dumbledore had said that very kindly he knew that this had been a command. He would get around it this time. He would have to show up or he would get problems. As he turned into the corridor that led to the cellar he bumped into MacCarter. Snape jerked to a stop and stared at her like as if she was an apparition.

"Oh, hi Professor Snape." She gave him an unassertive smile. Snape needed a moment to recover his countenance. This smile and her eyes touched something deeply buried which he had almost forgotten.

"Hallo", he responded with an arrogant, disdainful note in his voice and it demanded a great deal of self-control to keep up appearances.

"I just wanted to appologize", abashed she played with a strand of her golden hair and averted her eyes. "I know that you are mad at be, because Dumbledore gave me the job as teacher in Defence against the Dark arts. And I also know that you were waiting for this position quite a time now. Probably you think to yourself that I'm just a stupid, ignorant child barely grow up and may be you are right. But it's a great honor for me to be allowed to teach at one school witch some of the greatest wizards of our time. And I really admire..."

With a brisk gesture he silenced her tongue. It cost him great effort to leave his voice at a steady level, sounding rather self-confident and cool.

"You know nothing about me or my feelings. Don't presume understanding me. Just don't bother me anymore." He did another step and built himself up right in front of her to his full size. Not an inch from her face he stopped. He could smell her scent, a mixture of autumn flowers and sweet herbs. A pleasant and bewitching odor. But he pulled himself together. He had to end this once and for all.

"Leave me alone!"

Therewith he turned away and disappeared with flaunting cloak around the next corner leaving a bewildered MacCarter behind.. Reaching his private dormitory he slammed the door shut and locked it.

"Oh severus, why don't you let me help you...?" she whispered. Slowly she turned in the opposite direction Snape had taken and went for the golden fountain hiding the entrance to the headmasters office. There she knocked twice and then entered the room.

"You told him everything, haven't you?" It wasn't a question but a statement. The Professor slowly looked up. "I had no other choice than to tell him the truth."

Wearily MacCarter dropped into the chair opposite to Dumbledore. "Now he'll hate me even more and there will be no way to get through to him." She shook her head in despair. "Why?"

"He would have found out anyway" MacCarter stood up and paced the room.

"Maybe yes, but not now and not like that. Maybe he would have understood."

Dumbledore gave the young woman an astonished look. "Why is that so important to you?"

She gave him a quick glance out of those sapphire eyes. Dumbledore understood. "Sorry, child, but that's beyond my power. I only can wish you good luck and take it step by step."

She sneered. "Why am I not surprised by your answer?"

Without another word she rushed out of the room.

Dumbledore stood up and stroked his phoenix's golden feathers lost in thoughts. "I see some trouble ahead."

The upcoming weeks Snape's mood had hit rock bottom and the points dropped drastically at every house. But Saturday and with that the dance approached inevitably and Snape saw no way to escape. So in the evening he set off for the great hall grudgingly. Because he was already late he used some secret passages to sneak in unnoticed. From his spot in the corner he got a general idea of the whole situation. Most students were dancing, some were sitting at the tables, trying to communicate over the deafening sound of the music. He even saw some teachers dancing and had to suppress an amused smile, while watching McGonagall dance with Flitwick. Finally he spotted MacCarter besides Hagrid and chatting with him. The half-giant looked a bit misplaced. She appeared to be just at trying to convince Hagrid to dance with her. Her laugh sounded through the hall driving a chill down his spine and he felt his stomach tighten. What happened to him? What charm had this woman out on him?

At the other end of the hall MacCarter felt observed and turned around. Her eyes met Snape's and for a second the whole world seemed to vanish. Unsure he stepped forwards but suddenly a small kid bumped into him and their eye contact was interrupted. Abruptly he turned around and disappeared through the same passage he had entered the room. He had known that it would be a mistake to come. But now it was too late.

At the other end of the hall the professor excused herself and swiftly slipped out into the great hallway. She knew where to find Snape. Now was the time to set the records straight and to even all odds. She needed security. About her feelings as much as about his. It could not go on like this.

When arriving at the dungeon she hesitated for a moment. She didn't know where his private rooms were. She took out her wand and murmured a short spell. Then she turned into one direction and went on.

He had scarcely closed the door when he dropped to the floor, his back leaned against the wall. What for heaven's sake was happening? This eyes, her smile. They seemed so familiar. He just couldn't recall where he had seen them.

"Where have I seen you, Xenia Bones, where?"

"You were just about to graduate. I've been in fifth grade. It was at the Christmas dance. Potter and his fellows had stultified you in front of the whole school and Lilly had rejected you as her companion."

Snape whirled around. He hadn't heard her enter the room. He wanted to throw her out of the room, say her that she had no right to be here, but she cut him short and went on.

"I followed you out into the grounds. I wanted to comfort you. I felt sorry for you. But only had eyes for Lilly und you just send me away. Back then you joined VOldemort, leaving school behind you. This night my whole world broke to peaces."

She had only whispered the last words. But they threw Snape for a loop. For a moment he coukdn't help but stare stunned at his opponent. Just as he wanted to reply harshly he noticed the tears running down her cheeks. That was too much.

"Get out of my room immediately." He barked.

"No." Her answer was barely audible but determined. She took a deep breath and raised her eyes.

"I won't leave before I now exactly where I am. And before I have set all the records straight." She took one determined step forward, closer to Snape. It took her a great effort not to turn around and run away, but it had to be done, whatever the result would be.

Snape glared at her in disbelief. What was she thinking she was doing?

"You really want to know, where you are." He felt his temper rising, loosing control more and more. "That's simple to answer. You just dome here, snatch up the post I was waiting for for years. And very likely you even fancy knowing something about the subject you teach. But you don't know how mistaken you are. You know nothing!" He shouted the last words directly into her face.

Now it was his turn to take a step forwards. Only inches separated them now.

"You have know idea about the evil that exists in this world. You never saw the evel one man could do. And most of al you know nothing about me. And don't expect any gratitude towards your advocacy. If you hadn't I would at least hadn't been bothered by you."

He glared at her out of his pitchblack eyes. She turned around and Snape thought she intended to leave when she swung around and slapped him in the face.

Tears were running again down her cheeks. The ache in her eyes riped his soul. What had he done?

"No Severus", she replied. "You don't understand me. I am the only person that knows how you fell. The only one that ever tried to understand how you feel." She stepped up to him again. With every step she raised her voice. It took Snape some effort not to draw back.

"I've seen what a death eater could do. I saw what you did to my parents. But I still believe there is something good in you. I was the only person believing in you, trusting you. So don't tell me I know nothing neither from you nor the world." Her last words were screamed with all the power, all her desperation and all her grief.

Snape stood thunderstruck without moving. Inside him his feelings were fighting. He

didn't know what to do or how to react. He had never before felt this way, even not when he had been at school, longing for Lilly.

It hurt him to see what he had done to this woman and he hated himself there for, more than he had ever thought he could. On the other side he had no greater desire than to hold her tight and never ever let her go again. That he was able to feel this way stunned him. He had thought he had banned those feelings out of his heart, leaving him cold and repellent. After losing Lilly he had thought himself resistant against them returning. Suddenly he became aware of MacCarter beating him, even if it didn't hurt him. It wasn't difficult for him to grab her wrists and hold on to them with a tight grip.

He gave her a thrilling look. "What do you want? Why are you here?"

In the unsteady light of the candles her eyes seemed to have the dark blue of a clear midsummer night. With a shaky voice and barely audible, so that Snape almost believed he imagined them, she finally answered.

"I'm here, because I couldn't stand being separated from you, I just wanted to be near you. I love you!"

With this word she broke free. Now she had said it. After all this years of hiding her feelings they had come out. How often had she imagined this moment, confessing Snape her love, but now she wished she hadn't. Her only wish now was to get away from here as possible and never return.

Snape didn't react for a moment just standing there in the middle of the room, looking puzzled. But then he got out his wand. With a flick he closed the door.

"Where do you want to go?" His algid voice cut through the sinister silence. He stepped forwards. He felt how his self-control slipped away.

"Let me go, please!" She looked at him out of her tearstained eyes. That was the last straw. His feelings exploded, befuddling his mind. As she fumbled for her wand he disarmed her and pinned her against the wall, her feet dangling in mid air.

With a furious look in his eyes he tightened his grip around his wand, making Xenia wince under the pressure of the spell.

"Why?" It was more hissed than spoken, but MacCarter heard him.

She raised her head. It cost her a great effort he saw.

"What?" Some tears dripped on the dress, she wore under her black cloak. Snape's eyes followed the tear, resting for a moment in the dress, wondering if she had bewitched it to shimmer in the same color as her eyes.

"Why have you pleaded for me although you knew what I had done to your parent?" He stepped closer. "Look at me", he commanded. When she didn't react he gripped her chin and forced her to look up.

"Why?", he repeated. His black eyes seemed to look into her soul.

"Because I know how you feel. I know how it is to love someone but know that he loves someone else and doesn't return your feelings."

Her last words were merely whispered.

"I almost followed you, Severus, but I had my parents whose love gave me strength. But you had nobody." The gaze she gave him was full of love, affection and understanding. He couldn't bare it. He lifted the spell and turned around.

"Go", he demanded. Although he didn't look back he cognized from the rustling of her cloak that she stood up. After a while that seemed like ages to Snape he heard the door open and close. For a while he stood there, gazing into nowhere.

Then he looked up. Suddenly the walls seemed to move in on him. He felt choked up and he threatened to drown in a whirl of his feelings. Despairingly he ripped his coat

off his shoulders and fell on his knees, giving a bloodcurdling scream.

Xenia ran like never in her life before. Just away from this place, the incident. How could she have been so mistaken? He still loved Lilly. There had never even been a chance. She had just put a meaning into glances, words, gestures, which had meant absolutely nothing. He would never think of her other than an enemy that stole his job. For a Moment she thought she had heard a scream afar, but it fade away as quickly as it had come and she just heard the echo of her sobs and her footsteps.

Due to the holidays Snape wasn't forced to leave his room for several days. Most time of the day he lay crotchety on his bed or strode through the room like a tiger behind bars. Meanwhile he wrecked more than one chemical. But then he made his mind up and left his bedroom to pay someone a visit.

"Are you shure there is no other way?" He looked at his opponent inquiringly. She gave a curt nod.

"It has to be. I can't be here around him when he..." she broke off and gave the headmaster a desperate look. He stood up and came around.

"Poor child, I know like had been yesterday when you came to join the Order. You were so determined and so vulnerable. And when Severus joined our side everybody was surprised that you spoke in his favor."

He patted her back.

"Dear child, how it must have hurt you." Suddenly all halt collapsed and she flung herself sobbing into his arms. Dumbledore tried to comfort her and patted her back until she got calm again.

"I'm sorry, Sir, I didn't intend..."

"Never mind", he interrupted. "But you can't go right away. Please sty until I found a substitute."

She nodded silently and then vanished down the stairs to prepare herself for the next lessons, her last lessons at Hogwarts she was convinced. It wouldn't take Dumbledore long to find an appropriate substitution.

The headmaster had just sat down when someone knocked at the door. Astonished he looked ad his agitated postions master. What had happened to him?

"Severus, how can I help you?"

Snape strode with flying cloak up and down in front of the desk.

"You have to help me. I don't know what to do."

Dumbledore raised an eyebrow but remained silent. Snape would tell him everything when the time was right.

"Xenia, she just...I don't know what to do", Snape rested on the chair for a moment but then got up again to pace the room.

Dumbledore leaned back. He never hade seen such a troubled Snape. Not even after Lilly's death. He had wanted revenge sure, but now. There had to be something just beneath the surface of the opaque calm sea.

"I can't help you with that, Severus. But let me give you a friend's advice on this matter. Work up the courage not to listen to your understanding, but follow your heart."

With this he led the furious teacher out of his office and locked the door behind him. That promised to be difficult.

Snape heeded Dumbledore's advice and went straight to the rooms where he knew he would find the teacher in Defense against the Dark Arts. But when he reached the door he lost the courage to knock. Coursing he turned around and went back down to the dungeons, to his private rooms to prepare classes.

When school started the next morning the students were uncommonly agitated. He had to drown a steady sound level and after a few minutes he knew that none of the potions his students made would bring a satisfying result. When he was just wandering through class, observing the actions of his students he overheard two students. "Have you heard the rumors? Our new teacher, Professor MacCarter, is going to leave Hogwarts soon. It looks like we're going to get a new teacher the day after tomorrow..."

Snap has heard enough. Limping he managed to finish the lesson. After the last student had left he dropped into his seat behind the desk. What had he done??

Well, the time for dithering was over he had to act.

Xenia packed the last things from her desk into her magically enlarged trunk. The last item was a picture from Snape when he had been in his last year. Lovingly she caressed the frame. Apparently it was not supposed to be her and him.

The hushed creak of the door let her listen attentively. Without turning around she knew instantly that it was him. His mysterious aura and his unique scent were so familiar to her. How much she just loved him. Slowly she turned to face him.

"What do you want?"

"You're leaving?" Snape was shocked when he heard the sound of his voice. She was hardly more than a croaky susurraton.

"Yes" She turned away again. She couldn't bear looking into his eyes.

He stepped forward but then stopped unsurely.

"Why?"

She felt tears rise and tried to blink them away. With shaking hands she picked up her packing.

"This is just pointless. I can't just go on pretending that nothing has happened. Seeing you every day, sitting next to you at meals and knowing you still love Lilly is just too much. Just imagine you had to watch Lilly and James living together happily every day for weeks, months, years." Her voice broke off and she had to take a deep breath.

"Now, please, leave me alone."

Snape did another step into her direction. Hesitating he raised his hand and touched MacCarter's shoulder. With a gentle grip he turned her around and forced her to look into his eyes. When his eyes met hers he stood there thunderstruck and couldn't move for an instant.

"I could bare watching Lilly and Potter living happy ever after right next to me, because Lilly has become a ghost for me, a happy memory from my live at Hogwarts, a live I left behind long ago. That's all. But I live in the present."

Incapable of moving she just stared at Snape. What was he doing?

Snape took a deep breath. That was going to be the hardest thing he had ever done in his live. He worked up all his courage and slowly drew her face nearer.

MacCarter held her breath. What was that supposed to mean? Was that another of his cruel games or...?

But she didn't come to end her thought, because suddenly she felt warm lips touching hers and the kiss took away her thoughts. A pleasant chill went down her spine. She

couldn't believe that finally her dream came true.

Slowly he parted from her. He felt his heart beating like mad and he thought that it would burst any moment.

"I love the present!"