

# **DISCOVERY**

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**Pairing:** Harry/Severus

**Spoilers:** PS, CoS, PoA, GoF, OotP (some HBP details)

**Warnings:** Slash, abuse, implied chan

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**Notes:** Actually, this is totally and unabashedly AU.

**Summary:** Harry's very first detention opens Severus's eyes to . . . rather a lot.

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On the very first day of term, in his very first class for the year, Severus Snape had the dubious pleasure of having one Harry James Potter as his student. And within ten minutes of the class starting, he had managed to assign the boy a detention for that evening. The very idea of it filled him with a perverse sort of pleasure and he looked forward to it over the course of the day with enthusiasm.

It was after dinner when a hesitant knock sounded at the classroom door and he looked up to see Potter haunting the doorway. "Enter," he said, then watched as the child stepped inside and pulled the door closed.

"Where would you like me, sir?" the boy asked quietly.

Severus found that to be a slightly odd question, but tilted his head toward the sinks. "Over there."

Potter gave a jerky sort of nod and approached the sinks, pulling his robe off as he walked, then set it to one side when he stopped. Just as Severus was about to impart his instructions the boy proceeded to remove his horribly common and badly fitting clothes and drop them in a pile on the floor. Once the child was completely naked he paused for a moment, seeming confused, then bent over the edge of a sink and spread his legs.

Severus simply stood there, frozen in shock, then suddenly snapped to and quickly cast the highest level locking and privacy charms he knew. Then he stalked over to stand next to the boy, who was trembling, and say in a deadly quiet voice, "What exactly are you doing, boy?"

Potter cringed and said shakily, "Did I misunderstand, sir? Did you mean a desk instead?"

"No, I did indicate the sinks," he allowed, shaking his head slowly in bewilderment. "Why, boy"—Potter cringed again—"did you react this way?"

"Isn't this what I'm supposed to do, sir?" The child's voice was fraught with confusion and no little fear. "It's what I was taught. Uncle said he was preparing me for how, um . . . how I'd be punished here. It's what he's always done."

Severus pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration and took a good look at what he was presented with. The child's backside and thighs bore evidence of being whipped at some point not so long ago given the welts that marred his skin. How in Merlin's name this could be the child, the son, of his schoolboy rival was completely beyond Severus's ken, especially after having seen him be so defiant in class. Then again, maybe he had seen exactly what he had wanted to see.

"Potter, just so that we're both clear on this, you will tell me exactly what you expect to happen for your punishment."

"Sir?" came a fearful whisper.

"Tell me, boy," Severus demanded, then held back a sigh as Potter cringed yet again. Obviously, referring to the child by that term would trigger certain behavior.

"Sir, uncle always punishes me when I do something wrong by . . . using his belt or a whip, and. . . ."

Severus tilted his head at the pause, noting that Potter's nearly hidden face was not only flushed with embarrassment but twisted in fear. "Go on," he ordered.

"And, then he makes me get down on my knees, sir. Uncle says that because I've forced him to have to discipline me that I need to make it up to him. . . ."

Severus could feel his jaw clench in anger over what he presumed was coming next. And if Albus knew about this he would never trust the man again. "And how exactly do you do that?" he asked almost gently.

"He—" Potter cleared his throat to stall slightly, then said, "He opens his trousers, sir, and I have to, er—please don't make me say it. Sir, just punish me, please!"

Severus sighed openly as shudders started to wrack the rather fragile frame of the boy. He was obviously malnourished on top of being physically and sexually abused. He reached out and gripped the hair at the back of the boy's neck and used that to force the child to stand up, then turned him around.

Potter immediately looked anywhere but at him and started wringing his hands together in distress. The damage was even more noticeable from the front, and Severus could not help but notice that the boy was not exactly . . . disinterested in the proceedings, despite his age.

He ruthlessly suppressed a snort of disgust at the behavior of the boy's uncle and said, "I have never laid a hand on a student in punishment during a detention, and I will not be starting today, Potter. Get dressed."

Severus was not expecting the boy to go into hysterics at that, wailing that his uncle would find out and would punish him even more severely during the holidays, and could the professor please just punish him and get it over with.

After taking stock of the situation Severus decided to take charge in a slightly different manner. He sank his fingers into the boy's hair again and dragged him off toward his desk, and after taking a seat, yanked the boy onto his lap. It took only a moment to pull out one of the drawers and withdraw a vial, which he promptly opened and pushed at the child. "Drink," he commanded.

Potter did so with only a little fuss and within a fairly short amount of time had gone completely limp against him, the calming potion having kicked in. Severus waited until the tear tracks on the child's face had mostly dried before speaking again.

"Potter, your uncle lied to you." He paused as the boy twitched against him, then said, "If and when you receive a detention at this school, you will never, under any circumstances, be expected to remove your clothing and subject yourself to a beating, nor will you be expected to perform sexual favors of any kind. For example, I had every intention of making you scrub cauldrons this evening as your punishment. Another professor might make you write lines, or an extra essay, or clean one of the rooms in the castle."

The boy shifted against him, bringing his arms up to his chest and curling his hands inward. Severus reached down to hook his hand more securely around the boy's thighs to make sure he would not slide off his lap. He could only imagine, given how completely unconcerned Potter seemed to be about his nudity, that the uncle was a truly perverse and sick man.

"I want you to promise me you will never do this in a detention again, Potter."

The boy reacted by curling in on himself and shaking his head. "He'll find out, sir," he whispered, "and then it'll just be worse."

"If you make me this promise, I will promise to help you." Then he internally rolled his eyes around in distress, totally not believing he had just said that, and to a Potter no less.

There was a long pause before he received a response, wherein the boy uncurled a bit and raised his head to give him a nervous look. "Help me, sir?"

Severus nodded. "As I said, your uncle lied to you. Also, what he has been doing in terms of punishing you is a crime. He could be imprisoned for it."

Potter went deathly pale and shook his head violently. "But then I wouldn't have a home, sir. Aunt absolutely hates me and would kick me out, I just know it. She's already nearly taken my head off with a frying pan. Uncle isn't so bad!"

Severus frowned and took a deep breath, then rallied forth with, "Help in the sense that I could attempt to make your family leave you alone, Potter."

"Huh?" The boy uncurled further and looked at him more directly, then slid off Severus's lap and straddled his legs instead, still blithely unconcerned about his nudity. "Why would anyone help me, sir? Aren't I supposed to be punished when I'm bad?"

Severus began to wonder if it would be easier to order the boy around rather than trying to wrench his world view back to something considered standard. "Potter, can you give me an example of when your uncle would punish you?"

The boy bit his lip in thought. "Well, sir, if I don't finish all my chores in time. That's usually why."

"Chores? What sort of chores?"

"Cleaning, washing dishes, cooking the meals, fetching the post, gardening, washing the car, shopping, um . . . laundry, taking out the trash. . . ."

"I see. So you spend most of your day working, is that it?"

"Yes, sir," Potter said with a nod.

"And what happens after your uncle punishes you?"

"Oh. He gives me another list of chores."

"Which you can't possibly finish."

Potter gave him an odd look and nodded slowly, finally seeming to catch on to at least part of what Severus was getting at.

"All right. So it is more or less guaranteed that you'll be punished, possibly as frequently as once per day?" He received another nod. "As well, you receive little food from what I can see."

"Yes, but—"

"No. Don't bother," Severus said quickly. "Your family's treatment of you is criminal, Potter. I will help you as best I can to make them leave you alone if you make that promise I requested. What your uncle has taught you is wrong and illegal. If you had landed a detention with any teacher but me, you would have found yourself in front of the headmaster almost before you could have gotten your clothes off. You might even have been expelled. Do you really wish for that to happen, and have to go back to those people year round?"

Potter's face lost all colour again. "I promise, sir, I won't do it again. Please don't send me away. But, what do I do?"

"In detentions?" After receiving a jerky nod he said, "You will wait for instructions, just like any other student would. Of course, it is better not to get a detention in the first place."

For some reason, that made a look of mild consternation cross the boy's face. "All right, sir. Um, what were you going to have me do, then?"

Severus blinked, having more or less forgotten entirely why the boy was even there. However, instead of reminding him of the example he had already given, he decided to broach something else first. "I will get to that in a minute," he said, then absently ran a hand through his hair. "I need you to understand something, something *very* important. But first, how much do you know about the Dark Lord?"

Potter's eyes widened a bit and he twisted his hands together. "Hagrid told me a little," he said almost in a whisper. "About what happened when I was a baby."

Severus nodded. "I will make this as simple as possible, Potter. I was once a servant of the Dark Lord, but turned against him to work with people like your parents. However, many believe that the Dark Lord is not truly dead, and that he will return again at some point. Because of that there are many people who believe that I am still a servant of the Dark Lord, and that means I must act a certain way in public."

"You mean like you did in class today, sir?" Potter asked softly.

Severus arched a brow at the sudden degree of perception the child was showing. Perhaps he was a great deal more intelligent than first impressions would lead one to believe. "Yes, like in class today. You share that class with Slytherin students, and many of them believe the lie, not to mention have parents who are unquestionably servants of the Dark Lord. And you, as the Boy Who Lived, are seen as a top enemy of the Dark Lord, so naturally, my public treatment of you will not be kind."

"But it's not real, sir?"

"Correct. And, Potter, it is *very* important that you never speak to anyone about that. People cannot know that I am not what I seem to be. If the secret got out it could cause my death. Now, how much do you actually understand about the wizarding world?"

Potter shook his head slowly. "Nothing, sir," he said in a lost little voice.

Severus closed his eyes briefly, his agile mind coming up with a plan immediately. He could berate himself later for being so patient with a child he had had every intention of torturing for seven years. "That's fine. There are a few things I would like you to do, then. First, you will understand that this school has rules for a reason. You will obey them and you will show respect for the staff and your professors."

The boy nodded and shifted slightly on his lap, making Severus want to groan as the child nudged his pelvis with his hands. "I want you to focus on your studies. After all, this is a school, so your primary concern should be learning. Next, you will not get into confrontations with your classmates, regardless of which house they belong to. If I find out that you've been in a fight I will assign you a detention myself. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Speaking of which, if I find out that you've received a detention from anyone you may be sure I will be giving you another since it will most likely mean you've disobeyed me. I'm sure I can find plenty of cauldrons for you to wash, or ingredients for you to process, either of which can be disgusting and tiresome work.

"Now, insofar as the wizarding world goes, you will find an absolute wealth of information in the school library. I suggest you spend a great deal of your time in there reading. However, if you have questions, I will answer them for you."

"But, sir," Potter protested softly, "you aren't supposed to be nice to me, so. . . ."

Severus quite nearly smiled at the boy. "If your questions are urgent, you have my permission to do something that would cause me to give you a detention, such as acting up in my class. Otherwise, you can hand in a list of questions along with any homework I've assigned and I will return the answers along with your graded assignment. Understand, though, Potter, that I will only continue to help you so long as you do your best to behave."

The boy bit his lip again and thought about it, possibly struggling with the idea of anyone attempting to make a deal with him rather than ordering him around and expecting him to obey without question. "All right, sir."

Severus nodded. "Very good. Do you have any questions at the moment?"

Potter pondered for a few seconds, then said, "It's really not right, what uncle does?"

"It's really not right," Severus affirmed.

"And it's really okay to stop pretending I'm stupid?"

Severus arched a brow. "Explain."

The boy looked suddenly fearful again, but answered anyway. "Aunt used to get so mad at me. I would bring home reports from school, good ones, but my cousin didn't."

"I see. Potter, while you're at this school you will study and learn diligently. You will not pretend to be stupid."

"Okay, sir. Um, you know those letters? Like the one that kept trying to deliver itself to me?"

"Your school letter. What of them?"

Potter shifted again and tilted his head to the side. "Um, does the headmaster or anyone else see the addresses on them, sir?"

Severus frowned faintly, wondering why on earth the child would want to know. Nevertheless, he answered. "It is standard practice for the addresses on those letters to be checked prior to being posted to ensure that the quill used did not skip any lines or make mistakes."

Potter's face fell slightly, and Severus could not for the life of him understand why until the child whispered, "Is it normal to live in a cupboard under the stairs?"

"No, it is not." He knew the calming potion had finally worn off when the boy's face fell even further and tears began streaking down his cheeks again. Another deep sigh was ruthlessly suppressed as he reached out to deliberately wrap his arms around the child and pull him close, pressing the boy's head down onto his shoulder.

He felt like nothing so much as skin and bones. There was barely an ounce of fat on the child's body and Severus was not surprised that Potter had begun to shiver given the usual temperature in the dungeons. He himself tended to wear additional layers, being fairly thin, though not to the extreme Potter was. A few flicks of his wand brought the boy's robe to his hand, so he spread it out over the child and tucked it in around him, then ran a soothing hand up and down Potter's back until he stopped crying.

"I will help you," he repeated softly.

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## **1 SEPTEMBER 1997**

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Severus watched with concealed pride as Harry stepped into the Great Hall, the Head Boy badge clearly displayed on the young man's robe. Harry went directly to his usual spot at the Gryffindor table, halfway up with his back to the wall, and sat down. The Longbottom boy slid in next to him, then pointed discreetly at the head table, most likely wondering about the latest buffoon Albus had hired on as the Defense teacher.

Harry had, in his six years thus far at Hogwarts, been a model student, spending the majority of the time with his nose in a book, usually in the library, and was always in the top five for each of his classes, if not first. He was so infrequently in trouble it was almost unnatural. He had also managed to avoid, with Severus's able assistance, the machinations of the headmaster.

In Harry's first year they had supposedly been given the task of hiding and protecting the only known philosopher's stone. Only a select few had any idea that it was a fake, and the spectre of the Dark Lord had fled with his prize only to realize later that he had, in fact, been tricked. Quirrell was found dead not long after.

During Harry's second year the youngest Weasley child had been seen acting strangely, and discreet investigation had revealed a diary she had been given, or had stumbled over, that was a great deal more than it seemed to be. Severus and Harry had quietly liberated it from the girl and destroyed it, and she had never reported the theft.

It was Harry's third year that made Severus want to gnaw on his own liver. The inclusion of Remus Lupin as a professor was enough to make him want to steal Harry away from the school and not return until the man had gone. The last thing Severus wanted was for that man, or anyone else, to poison Harry's mind against himself. He had, after all, refrained from ever speaking ill of Harry's parents, godfather, or other associates, of which the werewolf was one.

He had, however, extracted a promise from Harry to never, under any circumstances, leave the safety of the castle itself on nights of the full moon. The boy had actually come to him that night, after the welcoming feast, to inform him of what had happened on the train. And it had been Severus who had promptly informed Harry of exactly who Sirius Black was, and Lupin, though he advised the boy to let the werewolf make any first moves insofar as the past went.

In the end, the body of Peter Pettigrew had been presented early one morning by Lupin, who was accompanied by a large black dog, to a somewhat surprised Albus in his office. After that it was known, at least among a select few, that Black was innocent of the crimes he had been accused of. Severus had been incredibly irritated when the first thing the mutt wanted to do was to get to know Harry, and give him a home, but had been mollified when Albus pointed out that Black could not, as the Ministry refused to accept Pettigrew's body as proof of anything.

Sirius Black was still considered a dangerous, escaped criminal, and would not be exercising his godfatherly rights any time soon. Harry had been told, of course, by Severus himself, as the headmaster had no intention of telling the boy anything whatsoever. Severus had to wonder if it had anything to do with the fact that he could never quite seem to draw Harry into any of his schemes.

Harry's fourth year was nearly a nightmare what with the Triwizard Tournament being held. Being the incredibly suspicious person that he was, however, Severus had nearly haunted the cup while it was open for students to enter their names. He was, in fact, concerned that one of the students would try to enter Harry's name in place of their own, such as one of the Slytherins.

It might not have occurred to him had Harry not informed him the night he arrived that year of his peculiar dream. As it was, things went more or less smoothly with the selection, and Harry's name never came up. That year was also marked by a number of thefts from his storage cupboards, and subtle telltales on suspect ingredients revealed it to be the Defense professor taking them.

A watch was placed on the man, supposedly an ex-auror of great repute, and was eventually discovered to be a Death Eater in disguise. Harry's response had been to snort in derision and once again question the headmaster's screening process.

The previous two years had been fairly quiet, though not unremarked by oddities such as strange dreams Harry had on occasion. However, he faithfully reported all of it to Severus and asked for help with figuring out what they meant, and Severus immediately began teaching the boy the finer points of Occlumency.

And through all that Severus had been quietly searching, ever since they had eradicated the diary, locating, securing, and destroying artifacts. Near the end of Harry's sixth year the Dark Lord had finally succeeded in one of his elaborate plans, but it was to no avail. He had managed to kidnap Harry and use his blood to regain a physical body, but had died, for good, not long after, having badly underestimated his opponent.

His other mistake had been in having Nagini there for the ceremony, which afforded Harry the perfect opportunity. Before the Dark Lord even had a chance to summon his followers Harry had enchanted the enormous snake to kill the single minion present, then killed her, the last remaining horcrux. And then, while the Dark Lord was still reeling from the death of his pet and keeper of part of his soul, Harry had unleashed a barrage of spell work and quickly taken care of the newly restored man, though he looked as much like a snake as human in some respects.

Severus shook himself back to the present, sneaking a glance at the Gryffindor table as Albus wound up his usual start of term speech, then gratefully began to eat after assuring himself that Harry looked well. Approximately an hour later he was in his quarters, waiting for a knock he knew would come, then hastened to open the door when it did.

He felt someone brush by him so he closed the door, then turned in time to see Harry swirl his invisibility cloak off and lay it over the back of the couch.

"Hello, sir," Harry said with a slight smile.

"I trust you are well."

Harry smiled more widely and said, "May I?"

Severus nodded and watched as Harry sighed with relief and began stripping off his clothing. Everything was dumped into an untidy pile and Harry knelt in the center of the floor as soon as he was naked, then gazed up at him. It was the one thing Severus had simply not been able to train out of the boy, this subservience, not to mention a marked dislike of wearing clothing at all. Despite Severus's best efforts, the boy's uncle had left a permanent impression on him. Though, it might simply have been that the uncle had hit upon something already within Harry, and used it to his advantage.

And yet, they had not done anything remotely sexual together, despite the fact that any time they were alone Severus could barely keep the boy clothed.

Severus stared at him for a minute, then stepped fully into his lounge and sat in his favorite chair. "You'll be the death of me, you know that?"

Harry shuffled around to face him and placed his hands on his thighs, then shook his head in amusement. "No, sir. I don't think anyone has ever died from seeing a naked person."

Severus snorted and snapped his fingers, causing Harry to move over to lean against his leg so he could play with the young man's hair. "How was your summer?"

"About the usual, sir. They ignored me, I ignored them. Dudley has gained even more weight and shakes the entire house when he moves. I'm surprised, actually, that he can still navigate the staircase, or even fit through any of the doors."

"You do not need to return," Severus commented.

"No, sir, but we both know the headmaster would likely urge it anyway. So long as the threat of the Dark Lord's remaining servants is there. . . ."

"And does that matter? You are of age, Harry. Albus cannot dictate your life to you any longer, not that he has ever been all that successful since you first began attending Hogwarts."

"Mainly thanks to you, sir," Harry said firmly.

"You are not stupid, Harry, nor are you lacking in perception."

"I realize that, sir. But neither am I you. I do not have your experience, and up until just recently have not been an adult, no matter how mature I may be. That man is insistent on treating me like a child. If you think for one minute he's going to do an about-face now that I'm seventeen. . . ."

"You can always run away with me," Severus said jokingly, then immediately wondered if it had been a mistake when he noticed Harry's eyes begin gleaming.

"An interesting suggestion, sir," was Harry's restrained comment. His hand, however, slid off his thigh, that arm snaking around Severus's leg rather possessively.

Severus retaliated by gripping the hair at the nape of Harry's neck firmly and hauling back, forcing Harry to tip his head back. "Make yourself useful and get me a drink, brat," he said, then let go.

Harry made an odd noise in his throat and released Severus's leg, then rose to his feet fluidly and sauntered over to his professor's small selection of alcohol. Within a minute he was back with a glass of firewhiskey, which he presented with a bow, then knelt on the floor in his previous position and leaned against Severus's leg.

He was enjoying a sip when Harry said, "So, I'm an adult now."

"Yes, we've already established that," Severus replied, then had another sip.

"So I'm legal, sir," Harry persisted.

"Yes, you are, and I've no doubt you're pleased that you can use magic as necessary now."

Harry turned a sullen gaze on him. After a brief staring contest, Harry stood up again, plucked the glass from Severus's hand and placed it on the table, then straddled his lap and sat down, giving him an expectant, challenging look.

"Was there something you wanted?" Severus asked innocently.

"Do you have any idea how long it took me to get used to being able to sit down without discomfort, sir?" Harry asked.

Severus blinked in surprise and mild confusion.

"I kept wanting to ask you to punish me so I could feel normal, but I was too young apparently, so I kept my mouth shut. I'm an adult now, sir."

Severus arched a brow. "Yes, you are. You are also still a student here, Harry."

Harry smiled, almost in a patronizing way. "Yes, sir, of course. There are also no rules which would prevent such a thing, should it be consensual. You have never lied to me, so please tell me, is it that you don't want me?"

Severus was nearly at a loss for what to say. It was true that he had never lied to Harry. But was he ready to admit that he had lusted after his student since shortly into the boy's first year? An eleven year old child?

Harry narrowed his eyes at the lack of response and reached down with one hand to begin stroking Severus through his trousers, then smirked seconds later. "You do want me, sir," he stated. "I've always done my best to make you proud of me and never give you a reason to be angry with me, and I've never gone to anyone's bed. I will do whatever you ask of me. But please, will you finally make me yours?"

"Finally?" Severus managed to ask.

Harry nodded slowly. "I have been waiting for years, sir. I have been very patient. But I feel like I may go crazy soon if you won't at least acknowledge that you want me and are willing to claim me."

Severus tried to think about that, finally reaching down to still the movement of Harry's hand so his brain would function properly, then looked soberly at his student. "You want me to dominate you, is that it? Or part of it?"

"Dominant partner, sir, yes," Harry said without hesitation.

"And that may or may not include physical punishments," he stated further.

Harry nodded. "I'm not sorry that being punished turns me on, sir. I won't pretend it doesn't affect me. And every time you do that thing with my hair I want to fling myself at you and beg to be taken."

"I know," Severus said, and gave a nod of his own. "I am not blind. I knew that from the first detention." He eyed Harry carefully and nodded again. "All right, I will admit I want you, Harry, but if I take steps in that direction we will go at *my* pace, not yours. You will learn to restrain yourself, understood?"

"Yes, sir. But what does that mean?"

"It means that to start with, I forbid you to wear shorts anymore, unless I specifically instruct you otherwise."

Harry squirmed on his lap and nodded.

Severus abruptly changed the subject. "How do you feel about this year?"

Harry pouted at him briefly, then said, "I feel fine, sir. I can't honestly imagine that I'll have any trouble with my classes, or even the NEWTs. I tend to think the worst of it will simply come from being Head Boy. Well, and after hearing the gossip on the train, I'm a bit worried that Dumbledore will do something like want to plan a grand ball for the Christmas holiday or something equally revolting."

Severus gave a slight shudder. "And what about your two mutts?"

Harry made a face, then arched his back for a moment when Severus slid his hand off the arm of the chair to slap the side of his thigh sharply. "What about them, sir?"

Severus sighed. Either Harry was playing dumb, which he doubted, or really couldn't see the problem. "I think you have done a remarkable job thus far of keeping the mutts out of your private life, Harry, and keeping them out of my way given that I dislike them and they dislike me."

Harry coughed meaningfully.

"Yes, all right. Black, then. I simply wonder how they will react should they find out you've decided to seduce a man they might not think is a good choice for you."

Harry snorted and frowned at him. "About the only person on the face of the planet who might possibly be able to claim the title of 'Harry's Keeper' is you, sir. Not Sirius, Remus, Albus, or whoever. I'm an adult now, damn it, and I can make my own decisions. If they don't like it, too bad. I don't tell them who to, er. . . ." He trailed off suddenly and looked away.

"So long as you are aware of what you might be facing, Harry. You know I do not like it when you walk blindly into things."

Harry looked relieved. He nodded and said, "Yes, sir. I, er, was thinking I might purchase a new wardrobe soon. Get rid of all the rubbish the Dursleys made me wear."

"Harry, you are practically a nudist, and you're telling me you plan on purchasing a wardrobe?"

The young man blushed. "Will you help me, sir?" he asked softly. "No, I don't like wearing clothes, but I must have some, and I don't have any idea what I ought to get or what would look good or how much things should cost and who knows what else. Please?"

Severus released a quiet sigh and nodded. "I will help you," he said, reaching out to pull the warm body close in an embrace, those words making his mind go back into the past.

He had suffered through the second bout of crying that first night, then patiently got the child to put his clothes back on, and had even spelled them to fit a bit better. Then he instructed Harry in the fine art of scrubbing cauldrons, mainly so that the boy would have something to occupy his hands while they talked, and would already understand what a typical detention might consist of.

It had taken a lot of time before he was able to convince the child that his uncle's actions were criminal, and that there was no possible way the man could know whether or not Harry had been regularly punished while at school. He never had quite decided if the man had anticipated exactly the scenario Severus had presented, expecting to get the child back fairly quickly as being delusional or something equally foolish.

Either way, Severus had been the lucky recipient of the child's first detention, and he could not say to this day that he regretted it. Harry had been, during his years at Hogwarts, an unfailingly polite and well behaved child. He was kind, courteous, and often helped his classmates, but never formed any deep attachments. And it wasn't that Severus had advised he distance himself, either. Harry had naturally understood, much like the deception of Severus's own life, that people in general might appear friendly for not-so-nice reasons.

As a result, the closest person his own age to Harry was the Longbottom boy, a child who tended to fade into the background whenever possible. Severus couldn't say either way how he felt about that, as Longbottom tended not to even register on his radar as an entity worth noticing. Once he had dropped out of Potions, much to Severus's relief, he stopped worrying about the boy entirely as it was very unlikely he would be cause for grief.

Harry's incipient return to his family for the summer had caused another bout of hysteria. The boy had come to him under the invisibility cloak he had found in his meager stack of Christmas presents that first year, then practically thrown himself at Severus, sobbing and shaking badly.

At least by then Severus had managed to bring the boy up to a normal weight, though nothing he had tried seemed to affect the child's height—even now he was not tall, being a mere 5'5" in height. Severus had poured another calming potion down Harry's throat and waited for it to take effect, then spent the hours until bedtime soothing him with words and logic and an explanation of what he had done to safeguard him. When Harry had returned to school for his second year he was convinced the sun rose and set on Severus.

And if the Harry currently snuggled up to him did not stop squirming around like that, Severus was going to lose control of his hands and start smacking, which was probably just what Harry wanted. Either way it had the effect of making his mind come sharply back to the present.

And then he did anyway, reaching down and delivering a stinging slap to Harry's backside, causing the young man to moan into his neck and press closer. "Patience, Harry. We will work something out for you in order to obtain a decent wardrobe. Now, I trust that once you have your schedule, and the schedule of your duties as Head Boy, you will be informing me?"

"Yes, sir," Harry whispered against his neck.

"If Albus does get his way and a grand ball is scheduled, do not presume to think you can persuade me to help chaperone, Harry, unless you are prepared to bribe me with weeks of scut work on your part."

Harry sat back and pouted at him, then started playing with one of the multitude of buttons on Severus's robe. "Meanie," he said petulantly, then added, "I like my new room, sir. It's nice to finally have a place of my own here and not have to worry about other people constantly walking in and out."

Severus arched a brow and chuckled slightly. "You mean, nice to be able to prance around in the buff without upsetting the delicate psyches of your house mates."

Harry flashed him a quick grin and nodded.

"And the Head Girl?"

Harry shrugged a shoulder and switched to a different button. "She's all right, I guess. I think she's a bit too, um, rigid, though. Always so damn sure that a person in a position of authority must be a perfectly decent fellow. Still, it shouldn't be too bad. She spends most of her time revising, so I've not often had to listen to her go on for ages about whatever it is she's learned recently. I have no idea what she's doing in Gryffindor, really."

"Oh, like you should have been there?" Severus inquired archly.

Harry wrinkled his nose. "I didn't know any better, sir. And I don't see why *that* matters. After all, you've told me countless times that I make for a better Slytherin than most of the kids in your house. And anyway, if she's too much of a bother in the Head common I'll just revise in my room or the library. There's nothing in the rules that says I have to be best buddies with her. I just have to work with her on specific things."

Severus inclined his head briefly, then gave in to the impulse to stroke Harry's flank with one hand, ostensibly ignoring the fact that his lap warmer was already sporting a half-hard erection. "Do not be surprised if my demeanor in public changes, brat."

Harry's eyes flicked open. "Because the Dark Lord is finally gone?"

"Yes. I know you killed him for good this time. The most I should need worry about are the Death Eaters who were never proven to be so, and they are more likely to either blend into the background, having failed, or rally forth under a new leader, in which case I have no particular reason to get involved."

"Ooo," Harry said quickly. "Sir, if you plan on smiling at anyone in public, please, please, please make sure I'm there! I want to see them pass out from pure shock."

Severus slapped Harry's ass again, causing the boy to rock his hips obscenely. "I simply meant that I shall not be so obviously favoring the Slytherin students. Or rather, so obviously disfavoring everyone else. Now, it is getting late, so is there anything else you wanted to talk to me about before I kick you out for the evening?"

Harry became uncharacteristically hesitant and began gnawing on his lower lip while giving Severus an uncertain look, and after a tortuously long wait finally whispered, "Will you . . . touch me, sir?"

Severus thought about that, arriving quickly at the conclusion that Harry was scared to be rejected, either for having asked at all, or because he was not asking to please his professor, and instead wanted something for himself. And in the time it took him to work through that, Harry's expression had begun to edge from nervousness into actual fear, so Severus aimed a faint smile at the young man and said, "Stand up, Harry."

He reached out to brush his fingers over the rapidly hardening cock in front of him, then looked at Harry's face. "This, Harry, or did you mean for me to punish you?"

Harry did not respond and did not look like he could. His eyes were closed tightly, his lips parted, and his hands were clenched into fists at his sides. Severus had only intended to stroke the young man to completion, but decided to go one step further. "Come here, brat," he murmured as he snaked one arm around the boy's waist and drew him closer, then leaned in and took Harry's penis in his mouth fully and without warning.

Harry stiffened and came almost instantly; Severus never even had the chance to do things properly, but he did milk the boy dry before pulling away and dragging Harry back onto his lap to cradle him against his chest. He spent several minutes stroking the boy's trembling limbs until Harry settled down enough to talk.

"I—I couldn't hold back," Harry eventually said in a broken whisper.

Severus continued to stroke the boy's skin soothingly as he said, "Yes, you've waited a very long time, haven't you. I know that if I were to decide to take you right now, I would not last for very long at all myself."

That had the effect of Harry relaxing, and releasing the death grip he had on the front of Severus's robe. "Really?" he whispered.

"Yes, really. More importantly right now, Harry, is whether or not you enjoyed it."

"Yes." It was almost a hiss.

"Good. Now, I seem to recall stating that it was getting late. Get dressed, Harry, and return to your room."

"Yes, sir," Harry whispered, then pressed a kiss to Severus's jaw before sliding off his lap and heading toward his clothing. It was not long before the boy was fully clothed and being ushered out the door under cover of his invisibility cloak.

Severus went to bed that night with his mind flooded with erotic images of Harry and was forced, for the first time in decades, to bring himself off before he could finally settle into sleep.