

That Day in Diagon Alley

Written by: iLex

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“That Day in Diagon Alley”

Severus Snape walked down the stairs of *Gringotts Bank*, the bag full of Galleons weighing heavily in his pocket. It was a bright, mid-summer day, but he didn't take any notice; his thoughts were on the lists of potion ingredients he'd compiled prior to this trip to London.

Refilling, not only the school storeroom, but his private stock of ingredients, was one yearly chore he looked forward to doing. He could have sent an owl with the school list, but he preferred selecting the various herbs, liquids, powders and other strange ingredients in person; to ensure their freshness and quality.

He'd been Potions Master at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for five years – nearly six, now. Severus was...contented with his lot in life. Few, if any, would have hired him after his trial, but Albus Dumbledore had not only vouched for him, keeping him out of Azkaban, but offered him the teaching position, even as young as he was. It was strange, working in the same school, teaching in the same dungeon classrooms, that he'd vowed, when he had graduated, he'd never step foot in again.

That seemed a lifetime ago. So much had happened; so many had been lost, there were deep regrets and much sorrow. It was easier to deal with those memories by staying apart from Wizarding society, living inside the very walls he had despised, teaching the one subject at which he had excelled. He guarded his solitude jealously.

If only he wasn't subjected to the annual parade of potion-challenged dunderheads who were masquerading as Hogwarts students. Ah, well, it beat spending his time begging in Knockturn Alley, as he had observed some former Death Eaters doing. Where was the wealth, power and glory the Dark Lord had promised all of them? Gone, vanished, along with so many dreams, just as the Dark Lord vanished, too.

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He opened the door of *Slug and Jiggers Apothecary*, the small bell jingling cheerfully on its spring. The shop assistant approached him.

“May I help you, sir?”

“Yes. I am here to purchase the potion supplies for Hogwarts for the coming school year. Plus, I have a list of my own to fill. Is Mr. Jiggers here today?”

“Yes, sir, he is in the back, conferring with a customer. They should be finished shortly, but I will alert him that you are in the shop.”

“Very well. Here is the school list, if you would be so kind as to start assembling the various items, I will have a look around for some of the things on my list while I wait for Mr. Jiggers.”

“Certainly, sir.”

The assistant placed two boxes on the counter and proceeded to gather the various boxes, bottles and packets, checking them off as he methodically went down the list. Severus wandered around the store, selecting a few things that were on his personal list and started a pile at the other end of the counter. The shop assistant placed another empty box next to those packets.

“Thank you,” Severus intoned, inclining his head.

The man nodded and headed for the back of the shop, list in hand. Severus heard voices and Mr. Jiggers came through the archway, beaming.

“Professor Snape, how delightful to see you; annual supply trip, is it?”

“Yes. One of those necessary duties.”

“We...well, I was just talking about your good self.”

“Indeed?” Severus’ eyebrow shot up.

“Yes. Dr. Jones and I were discussing the brewing of the ‘*Wolfsbane*’ potion and...”

“Dr. Jones?”

“Oh...let me introduce you!” Mr. Jiggers stepped back into the archway and called to the back of the shop, “Dr. Jones, it *is* Professor Snape. Please, join us, won’t you?”

‘Doctor?’ Severus thought. ‘A Muggle, here, in Diagon Alley?’

But his musing was interrupted by the arrival of a tall, muscular man, in his late fifties, by the look of him, with short salt and pepper hair and a ready smile, who stuck out his hand to Severus.

“Christopher Jones, Professor. Glad to meet you.”

Severus shook the proffered hand.

“Severus Snape. How do you do?”

“So, you teach at Hogwarts?”

“Yes.”

“My wife went to school at Hogwarts.”

“Did she?”

“Yes. I’m a Muggle physician by profession and Anna is a Healer at St. Mungo’s. I like to think we get along so well because of our shared medical interests, the magic bit being a bonus, of course.” Leaning toward Severus he stage whispered, “That’s my story and I’m sticking to it!”

Then he threw back his head and laughed, eyes twinkling, not unlike Albus Dumbledore’s.

“Indeed. And you were discussing the ‘*Wolfsbane*’ potion?”

“Yes. Anna and I are working to try and improve the efficacy; strengthening the control on the transformation pain. It’s quite the challenge.”

“You have patients in your Muggle practice who are werewolves?” Severus looked perplexed.

“No, lycanthropy is thought, in the Muggle world, to be an old wives tale to cover various psychological symptoms of any number of conditions. However, I *do* know a Wizard, classmate of Anna’s, who is a true werewolf; she and I have been working with him for several months.

Severus felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up.

“I, too, knew a werewolf who attended Hogwarts when I was a student.”

“Did you really?”

“Yes. His name was Remus...”

“Lupin! Yes! That’s him; a delightful chap!”

“I was not that well acquainted with him...”

“But, then you must know my wife Anna...Anna Twigg?”

Severus’ face remained impassive but his heart was thundering in his chest. ‘Anastasia! His Anastasia...well, never *his*, but...’

“Yes, I believe she was in Gryffindor with Lupin. I was in Slytherin...”

“Really?”

“Yes. I’m Head of Slytherin House, now, besides teaching Potions.”

“Marvelous!”

“Wasn’t Anastasia trained as an Auror?”

“Yes, but she took Healer training after Voldemort...”

Mr. Jiggers gasped.

“Oh! Sorry...I forgot... ‘You know who’ disappeared. She thought it was a much more useful profession, since the ‘war’ was over. That’s how we met, as she also attended some classes at the Muggle university where I was lecturing. The rest, as they say, was Kismet.”

“Well, my congratulations.”

“Thank you.”

Severus was reeling, mentally, with this information. Anastasia was alive and well and married...to a Muggle twice her age!

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“Let me ask you a question, Professor, if you don’t mind?”

“Certainly.” ‘Anything to remove Anastasia from being focus of this conversation,’ he thought desperately.

“Mr. Jiggers and I were discussing the different ingredients of the ‘*Wolfsbane*’ potion and how, or if, it would change the effectiveness if the various amounts were adjusted or if other ingredients were added. I know it’s the only solution that’s been found for the semi control of the worst of the symptoms, but as Remus had told me, it’s still amazingly painful and debilitating, even with the strongest dosage advisable.”

“Which ingredients were you thinking of modifying, specifically?”

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Forty-five minutes later, Severus, Christopher and Mr. Jiggers were still deep in discussion, seated in the back room, when the clock on the wall chimed the hour.

“Good Lord! Is that the time?” Christopher exclaimed. “Much as I hate to put a halt to this very informative session, gentlemen, I *must* go and extract my wife from *Madame Malkin’s*, before she bankrupts me! I told her I’d give her an hour and I don’t dare leave her on her own any longer that that!”

“Oh, dear, it sounds like you’d better head over there, straightaway then, Doctor.” Mr. Jiggers agreed, laughing, as they stood up to take their leave.

“And I must finish with *my* shopping,” added Severus.

He had thoroughly enjoyed the intense, deeply involved give and take; the information, questions and debate that had gone back and forth between the three of them. The stark reality that Anastasia was married to the man standing before him, extending his hand in friendship, was still disconcerting to him.

Would she tell Christopher what had happened between them. What would this brilliant Muggle make of his ‘history’ with Anastasia? Severus really did admire the man’s expertise, encyclopedic mind, quick wit and thirst for knowledge. He knew he’d found a kindred spirit in Christopher Jones.

“If you have any other questions, Dr. Jones...”

“Christopher, please...”

“Very well, Christopher...send me an owl, at Hogwarts and I will endeavor to offer any information I have that would help with finding the answer to your inquiry.”

“Why thank you, that’s very generous of you, Severus...I may call you Severus?”

“Certainly.”

“And Mr. Jiggers, how absolutely splendid of you to introduce us. Once again, you’ve given me just what I needed, supplies and information. And now, a new source of referral for cross checking and questioning. What a splendid morning!”

“We strive to serve our customers to the best of our abilities, sir.”

“Well, I really must be off. It’ll take me a while, yet, to pry Anna out of that shop, but it’ll be worth it. She’s a stunner, if I do say so myself!”

Mr. Jiggers led them to the front of the shop.

“Severus,” Christopher stepped over to him. “It’s been a pleasure. I hope to run into you again, sometime.”

“It has been my pleasure, also, Christopher. Good luck with the research and as I said, don’t hesitate to send an owl.”

“I will, indeed. Well, good bye!”

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With a wave, Dr. Jones left the shop and turned down Diagon Alley, heading for *Madam Malkin’s*. Severus quickly finished making his selections, arranged for the school supplies to be delivered and left with his package of potion ingredients. He went directly across the narrow street and into the cauldron shop.

Waving away the eager sales clerk, he wandered around, taking the occasional glance out of the window. His skulking was soon rewarded as Christopher and Anna emerged from *Madame Malkin’s*. Dr. Jones was carrying two large bags, noted Severus with a wry smirk. Anna gave the proprietress a kiss on the cheek and was waved on her way by the smiling shop owner.

Linking her arm with her husband’s, Anna smiled up at him and gave him a quick kiss. They turned and started walking towards the Leaky Cauldron. They would pass right in front of him, so Severus stood behind a tottering stack of cauldrons, hidden in the shadowy interior of the shop.

He couldn’t take his eyes off of Anna. She wasn’t the skinny school girl, or the whip cord muscled Auror that he’d last seen six years ago. She was relaxed, healthy; she’d lost the gaunt look that he remembered...she seemed blissfully happy.

She was chattering away, Christopher listening intently, nodding, until he suddenly stopped, threw back his head and gave a bark of laughter. Anna stopped, too, hands on her hips, glaring at him.

‘Still have that temper, little girl,’ thought Severus, smirking.

But Christopher turned, cupped her chin in his hand, leaned close and whispered something to her, then kissed her lightly. Her eyes sparkled and she laughed at him, and then took his arm again, to continue on their way down Diagon Alley.

Severus' heart was pounding and his brain was not functioning properly. He couldn't think; he just stood there and watched as they passed the window where he was hiding and went through the brick wall into the back courtyard of the Leaky Cauldron. The bricks closed and Anna was lost from sight.

'She's happy. That's the best I could have hoped for.'

Severus walked out of the cauldron shop, took one last look at the brick wall, then Disappeared.