

Everything Will Be Okay Soon

by grugster

Poppy has the wizard flu. Severus and Minerva are taking care of her. But will someone realize that Severus is in need of help himself?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 4

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Thanks a lot to my beta-reader saianwizardgurl for correcting my mistakes!!!

Chapter 1

This goddamned headache was killing him. Severus tried to ease the pain by pinching his temples. Groaning, he shoved away the red marked papers on his desk and laid his head on the smooth, cool surface of his mahogany desk. The silence in his office was the only good thing at the moment. He could hear his own blood flowing through his head and just wished the pain would go away.

The whole day had been horrible. It all started with the Potter brat provoking him again by supporting the know-it-all Granger when he scolded her for helping Longbottom with his almost ruined potion. He felt his neck muscles tighten. The pain crept up his neck and into his head. Even taking twenty points from each of them did not make him feel any better or ease the pain.

When the class finally was over, he gulped down one of his usual painkiller potions even though he knew that it would not help much. He had taken it much too often, and now it only dulled the pain a bit.

He hardly had enough time to hide the empty vial under the workbench beside him when Minerva stormed into the room. To say that she was furious was an understatement. Severus forced himself not to back away from her when she moved fast in his direction. He could barely understand what she was saying or rather, what she was screaming. But what he could understand from her rant was that the Slytherin Quidditch team had hexed the Gryffindor team's broomsticks. Normally they were good colleagues, even friends. But she was very protective of her Gryffindors, and so she wanted to make sure that Severus would punish the Slytherins for it harshly. 'Oh yes, they will be punished,' he thought. 'Not for hexing the brooms, but for letting themselves get caught.' Anything that caused Minerva to come into his office screaming like a banshee and make the potion he just gulped down worthless, was definitely worth a HARSH punishment, Slytherin or not!

When Minerva left, he was wishing that someone would stop the ringing in his ears and the stabbing pain in his head by knocking him out. But it was useless, and there were still the fourth years' Potions essays on his desk that needed grading. Groaning, he sat down again. With his left hand he supported his head and reached for the red ink and the quill with his right. After five essays and the desperate wish for another job in a quiet potions lab, far away from dunderheads who were not even able to write simple essays about Sleeping Draughts, he found himself again cooling his head on the surface of his mahogany desk.

A piercing pain in his neck woke him. Now he not only had a splitting headache but also a muscle cramp in his neck. Slowly, he dragged himself over to his private medical potions shelf. He chose the strongest painkiller he had in stock and a muscle relaxant and gulped them down fast. He leaned against the cool stone wall of his office and felt the pain slowly ease a little bit. Too bad he knew it would not last long. As much as he hated to admit it, he needed to see Poppy. Oh, he hated to be so vulnerable, but Poppy was a good friend. Very stern and strict, but also understanding and warmhearted. And right now, he *really* needed her help.

On his way to the Hospital Wing, he realized that he could tolerate sound at a normal volume without fearing his head would explode. >i>It's almost as if I don't have to see Poppy any more, he thought. But he also knew from experience that in a few hours the pain would be back and then he would need one or maybe even two of Poppy's wonder pills.

When he reached the Hospital Wing, it was empty and silent. That was strange; normally, Poppy came running in the direction of the big wooden door before it was even opened fully. "Poppy?" he called for her, heading in the direction of her office. When he did not get an answer to his call and knock at the door, he carefully opened the door to Poppy's office and peeked around.

His gaze fell on the figure that was bent over the office desk. Her hair was covering her face, but he immediately recognized Poppy. He could see her chest moving and realized that she was breathing hard.

He almost forgot about his headache and was at her side in one fluid motion. Gently, he laid his hand on her shoulder and softly spoke to her. "Poppy, please wake up!"

She slowly raised her head and looked at him through glassy eyes. Her cheeks were flushed, and she needed some time to focus on the tall dark figure in front of her.

"Severus?" she asked hoarsely.

"Yes Poppy, it's me," he told her softly as he gently put his hand on her forehead. She leaned in his touch and apparently enjoyed the feeling of his cool hand.

"You are burning up. What's wrong, Poppy?"

He already knew the answer. According to her hot forehead and her overall appearance, she had quite a fever. It was again this damn Wizard flu time. Some students had already been infected a few days ago, and she must have caught it from them. He had filled up her stocks with flu potion two days ago, so why had she not taken a dose for herself?

As if she could read his thoughts (and sometimes he really believed that she could), she said, "I fear I was too occupied by the amount of patients over the last few days that I forgot to take the potion when I realized the first symptoms. First, Mr. Drake's and Mr. Stumbs' fighting injuries, then Miss Grant's transfiguration accident, and then the flu patients which "

But she could not finish her rant because she started to cough so hard that she doubled over, and Severus feared that she would hurt herself.

He laid a calming hand on her back. "We need to get you into bed."

She started to protest, but she was quieted by a short move of his hand. "No arguing, Poppy! We will get you into bed, and then I will check your temperature."

She tried to glare at him as much as it was possible under her current condition. "Don't speak like that to me, young man. I'm the mediwitch here and I "

And again she was stopped by a coughing fit. Severus quickly guided her to the bed in her office, as it was best to use her weakness to his advantage. She was too distracted trying to breathe without coughing to protest against his Slytherin tactics.

When she realized that she was on a soft surface instead of the hard desk, she finally gave in. It felt so good to lie down and rest. She just wanted to sleep and was already starting to drift off when a soft voice penetrated her mind. "Open up, Poppy. I need to take your temperature." Too tired to fight, she opened her mouth and a thin, cold thing was placed under her tongue.

Severus was very concerned by Poppy's reaction. *I'm no good at interacting with other people, let alone taking care of them.* But Poppy had helped him so many times; she was always there for him.

He remembered long nights in the hospital wing after Death Eater meetings, in which the Dark Lord had enjoyed himself by throwing one Cruciatus after another at his followers. He had been badly hurt, in pain, and cursed with nightmares, but with the mediwitch in a chair beside his bed that would not leave him alone. She had lulled him into sleep when he was restless, throwing himself from one side to another because the pain or the memories would not give him rest. She had softly spoken to him and told him that everything would be okay soon.

With her, he did not have to hold up the strong man facade. She would not allow him to hide behind the walls he had built to hold people away so that they could not hurt him. Her hand on his head, stroking loose wisps of his hair out of his face, always soothed him more than anything else. He loved to hear her wonderful voice when she softly sang to him or even just talked to him while he drifted into sleep. It was such a wonderful feeling to be cared for and watched over.

These moments were rare because he only allowed them when he was very ill. When he was healed enough, he always started to build up his walls of protection again and shooed her away. He told her that he did not need her coddling and that he wanted to be left alone, but they both knew that it was not true.

And now she was here in front of him, lying very ill in bed. He could not leave her by herself. Now he would be the one to watch. He would be the one to be strong and give care. A little payback for what she had done for him all these years.

And so, he fought back the hammering pain in his head and focused on Poppy. He sat on the edge of the bed and bathed her hot face with a cold cloth. He spoke softly to her, telling her that she would feel better soon and that he would be right here, watching over her. He retrieved a flu potion and a fever reducer from Poppy's stocks and spelled them straight into her system every time she woke up speaking in feverish dreams. He talked her through the nightmares and soothed her by gently stroking her hair.

When the night was over, her fever was still very high. The potions he gave her were not strong enough because they were made for children, not adults. They helped when one realized the symptoms of illness very early, but in Poppy's state it was too late for these potions to have much effect. But right now it was the best he had, and so he spelled both again into her stomach. He needed to brew some stronger potions for her and definitely needed to take something for his headache again, even though it would only dull the pain a little bit so that he could brew the necessary potions for his friend.

He needed someone to watch over Poppy while he brewed, so he made his way over to the fireplace to call for help.

Please let me know what you think about it!!

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 4

Poppy has the wizard flu. Severus and Minerva are taking care of her. But will someone realize that Severus is in need of help himself?

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CHAPTER TWO

Severus informed both the Headmaster and Minerva about Poppy's condition. Moments later both were standing in Poppy's office with concerned looks on their faces. They began bombarding Severus with questions about her condition. As soon as the first round of questions had been answered, he began moving slowly towards the door.

"I have to brew more powerful potions for her," he said. Then he left abruptly, not waiting for a response.

'Good thing it's Saturday and there are no classes. Minerva can take care of Poppy without much distraction,' he thought.

He sighed in relief after one last glance over the empty hospital wing. He hoped it would remain empty and that the students would not get hurt or ill while Poppy was not available. If they had to call another healer or medi-witch to fill in for her, Poppy would be most displeased and try to start work before she was truly well. Poppy could be very territorial about her hospital wing and the students.

He had almost forgotten about his headache while he had been busy taking care of Poppy. Back in the dungeons, he immediately started to work on stronger potions for her. The cool air and subdued light brought some relief, but now the painkillers were rapidly losing their already marginal effect. While he was leaning over the cauldron, he could feel the pain creep up from his neck over the back of his skull to his forehead. The pain would soon be back in full force.

He had not slept for over twenty hours, but after so many years in the service for the Dark Lord and the nightmares he subsequently had due to that service, he was used to the lack of sleep. The pain in his skull was the much bigger problem at the moment. There was no way to ignore it any longer: he would have to take another painkiller potion. He knew it would have even less effect on him than the last one, but Poppy would be ill for the rest of the day and maybe even the next. He would not bother her with his problems. After gulping down the potion, he placed a spare one for later in his cloak pocket.

He managed to finish the last potion for Poppy at one o'clock and carried it to the hospital wing.

Unaware of the world around him, he swiftly strode around a corner and plowed into a second year Ravenclaw girl. The girl fell from the force of the collision, and Severus had trouble holding his balance. He almost dropped the potions, and was furious at the almost-crying girl sprawled out on the floor surrounded by her books. *If these vials had been destroyed, I would have killed her. How dare she stand in my way?* he thought angrily.

The pain in his head and the lack of sleep made him even edgier than usual. The fact that he did not get any reaction from the girl or her friends except open mouths, tears, and sobs made him livid.

"Don't you have eyes on your face, girl? How did you manage to get sorted into Ravenclaw with a brain like that? Twenty-five points from Ravenclaw for running into a professor."

Now the girl was crying bitterly, and her two friends were staring fearfully at the Potions master. They did not dare argue that he was being irrational and he had been the one to run into them.

He stepped closer to the girl on the floor and glared at her.

"If you do not move out of my way this instant, I will –"

"Miss Habbant, what are you doing on the floor? You should stand up before you catch cold," the cheerful voice of the Headmaster interrupted Severus before he could finish his threat. The girls sighed in relief. Severus felt one of the Headmaster's hands on his shoulder while the Headmaster addressed the girl's friends.

"Why don't you help your friend collect her books and then go to your dormitory? I have to speak with Professor Snape about a problem."

The girls darted away before the Headmaster had even finished his sentence. He turned to Severus with an intense gaze.

"Are you feeling well, Severus?"

Am I feeling well? Severus thought. *'As if he doesn't know the answer.'*

"I'm fine. I was on my way to the hospital wing to give Poppy the stronger potions when that girl ran into me and almost broke the vials."

Glaring at the Headmaster had never had much effect, and today was no different.

"If you need any help, you know you can call for me, Severus. It doesn't help anyone when you overstress yourself." The concerned blue eyes still held Severus' black ones.

"I said I am fine. I have to hurry and give these to Poppy." He turned on his heel and headed down the corridor without glancing back.

There will be two more chapters. It was too much to submit them at once.

Please review!

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 4

Poppy got her potion.

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Chapter 3

When he reached the hospital wing, he found Minerva sitting on Poppy's bed, reading to her in a soft voice. For a moment he stopped to listen. He always loved Minerva's voice. That was, when she was not screaming at him or scolding him like a child for neglecting to take care of himself. When she came back from one of her many journeys, she would tell wonderful stories. It was one of the few times of the year he looked forward to: sitting in her office with a glass of red wine, listening to her adventures. Hearing her read to Poppy evoked memories of those times, but when he concentrated on her actual words, he began to blush. She was reading a romance novel!

Really, what if someone saw me here, hiding in the shadows listening to Minerva babbling about a 'mysterious dark man' trying to seduce a 'beautiful red-haired lady'?
Really, how could someone read something like that? he thought.

Moving from the shadow, he strode over to Minerva. "Do you want to increase her fever by reading that trash to her, woman?" he asked.

Minerva was so engrossed in the story she was reading that she actually jumped at Severus' deep voice. She rolled her eyes and said, "I see you've finished the potion, Severus."

"Yes, indeed." He smirked at her. Even being in pain let him enjoy that he had made Minerva jump. His eyes fell on Poppy, who was still lying with her eyes closed on the bed. Immediately the smirk vanished and was replaced by a concerned expression. "We should try to give her something to eat first. Or have you already done that?"

"No, she was sleeping restlessly, but when I read to her, she became calm. She was sleeping so peacefully I didn't want to wake her," she said. Her gaze never left the mediwitch's face.

"Poppy, dear." Minerva leant over and gently touched her head.

Poppy's eyes flickered open, and she recognised the two other people in the room. "What happened? Merlin, my patients!" She panicked and tried to sit up, confused. Minerva reacted quickly and stopped her by laying her hands on Poppy's shoulders. She gently pushed her back into the cushion. Poppy hardly needed much pressure to force her back into a lying position; she was still very weak.

"Everything is all right, my dear. There are no patients in the hospital wing at the moment. Severus and I are here when someone needs help. Right now, it is you who is in need of help. You've got a bad case of the wizard flu. Severus already brewed some stronger potions for you, and they will get you back to your old self soon. But first you have to eat something."

Severus already moved a few steps away from the two witches. If Minerva was here to care for Poppy, there was no need for him to make a fool of himself by trying to help. And even with Poppy in her current state, he couldn't be sure she wouldn't notice how ill he was. And the last thing he needed now was the ill mediwitch trying to examine or heal him. Even worse, the deputy headmistress would molly-coddle him if she found out. He really liked Minerva, but he felt like a schoolboy in her presence all too often. And right now, Minerva's eyes were on him. They became small slits as she surveyed him closely. "Have you already eaten?" she asked him with an expression which said "Don't you dare to lie to me, boy."

Oh, yes, and there it was again, that schoolboy feeling. How did this woman manage it every time?

He put on his famous Snape glare. "My eating habits are none of your concern, Minerva," he replied angrily. "You should use your energy to help Poppy."

But Minerva knew him too well and would not be swayed. "A simple 'no' would have been fine, Severus," she stated, very calm. "Now sit down. I will call Dobby to get something to eat for the three of us. I'm sure Poppy will enjoy our company while eating," she ordered, leaving no room for argument.

He was so occupied by the confrontation with Minerva that he missed the mediwitch's still-glassy yet very concerned eyes on him. *Something isn't right with him. And he definitely hasn't eaten or slept lately*, she thought.

Seeing that he was slowly backing away from Minerva towards the door before the deputy headmistress could stop him, Poppy hoarsely spoke up. "Yes, Severus, please sit down and eat with us. If I remember correctly, you were here all night, so a few minutes more wouldn't hurt, would they?" Even when she was ill she could be so manipulative. She could see his mind work behind the curtain of hair that had fallen in his face.

He was too tired to find a good excuse without making himself more suspicious than he already was. "If you insist." He sighed in resignation and moved one of the chairs a little nearer to the two women. Minerva transfigured an empty vial into a small table. Soon after Minerva summoned Dobby, he popped up again, carrying a big tray with some chicken soup, fresh bread, and tea. It smelled delicious.

After taking four potions without anything else in his stomach, it started to protest while getting filled with food. Severus felt waves of sickness roll over him, and small drops of sweat started to appear on his forehead. He tried to hide it as best as possible, but was not successful. Minerva was already observing him from the corner of her eye. When he almost looked in danger of passing out, she spoke up. "Are you feeling all right, Severus? You look very pale." She tried to reach for his forehead, but he jerked back violently.

"I'm perfectly fine! Stop making a fuss, Minerva. As you may recall, I'm always pale," he spat, already trying to stand up and back away.

She knew him well enough to know he was hiding something. She looked at him sternly, seeing the truth all over his face. But before she could do or say anything, she was distracted by a harsh coughing fit from Poppy. Minerva was at Poppy's side in a flash. Her hands gently drew circles on the mediwitch's back, and she spoke calming nonsense to her.

"I'm so sorry to be such a burden. I shouldn't have forgotten to take the potion in time. Now I'm a mess. What kind of mediwitch am I? Merlin, I'm so tired," she said sadly.

Severus and Minerva stared at Poppy in shock. The normally strong-willed mediwitch was reduced to maudlin self-recrimination; she must be very ill indeed. Severus was at a loss. Much as he loved Poppy, he didn't deal with "crying female" very well. But then he remembered the potion vials on the nightstand. He opened the first one and knelt in front of Poppy. With a gentleness that caught Minerva by surprise, he stroked her hair out of her face.

"You should take your potions, Poppy. You will still be tired after taking them, but you will sleep well and tomorrow feel much better," he said.

His hands slightly trembled when he placed the open vial at her mouth, but Minerva didn't notice. Their previous argument was forgotten. When Poppy finished both potions, she sank back in the cushion without another word and fell asleep. The headmaster came by to check on Poppy, and Minerva left with him to help him fill out some paperwork. Severus was alone with her, gently stroking her hair. That evening, he woke her up briefly and made her drink more of the potion. She looked at him with bleary affection and said, "Thank you, Severus, but you should not spend all your time with me."

"Don't be stupid, woman. I'm just watching to make sure that the potions work like they should and don't have any side effects."

Poppy smiled tiredly at him, knowing actions belied his harsh words.

"Sure," she replied before drifting back to sleep.

Please review!

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 4

Finally Poppy and Minerva take care for Severus.

Thanks a lot to my beta-readers, saiyanzwizardgurl and rdholmantx, for correcting my mistakes!

Chapter 4

Six hours later Severus was still sitting beside Poppy's bed. His headache had reached a new level of pain, and he was practically immobile. He had taken the spare pain potion from his cloak pocket two hours ago, and it hadn't worked at all. Now it was five in the morning, and all he could wish for – much to his disbelief – was the return of the stern Transfiguration professor to show up. He wanted to crawl back to his dungeons, far away from anyone and any noise that threatened to make his head explode.

Poppy was still asleep, but she would awaken soon. When she did, there was no doubt in his mind that she would realize that he was not all right. But while he'd originally entered the infirmary intent on asking for help, he was now to the point where he only wanted to hide from the world. He did not want anyone, not even Poppy, to touch him. The pain was unbearable; he did not even realize that he was leaning over until his head met the soft fabric of the bed clothes. He was sure his head would burst if he moved even the slightest bed, and he was too tired to lift it anyway. He stayed very still, listening to the blood pound in his ears.

Dizzy and feeling very sick, he closed his eyes. He tried to think of something else besides the headache to no avail. It felt as if the pain was eternal: that he had always felt this way and always would. His sleep deprived body overrode everything else, and he finally drifted into some much needed sleep.

He attempted to bolt upright when gentle but firm hands were placed on his shoulders, but a wave of nausea passed over him and he couldn't move. The hands were trying to massage the knots out of his muscles.

"Hold still or you will make your condition worse," a strict voice reprimanded. "What good did you think would come of you NOT telling Albus or Minerva that you were in pain when you found me here?"

He wanted to retort that it wasn't that bad. That he could brew the pain potions for himself. He was a Potions master, after all. But he only managed to groan unintelligibly while she worked wonders on his neck muscles. It did not take long for Poppy to work out some of the tension in his neck. The vertebrae in his spine cracked, and the unpleasant sound made him wince. While his shoulders and neck felt much better, his headache become much worse as the blood flow was increased to his head. He shifted in his chair.

"Don't move! I know the pain is getting worse, but it will soon become better," Poppy said and added a little more pressure to fix him in the chair. "You must try to relax, Severus."

His muscles were loose and all his vertebrae were in place again. Her fingers now massaged his skull. "If you had at least told Minerva, she could have given you something out of my Muggle medicine stock to help you," she scolded him. "But now I can't give you anything because there are already too many pain potions in your system. We have to wait until they leave your body. Exactly how many potions did you take, Severus?"

Her hands were so relaxing and he had to force his mind to grasp Poppy's question. He was uncertain whether he should tell the truth or lie. He obviously waited too long to answer because he felt Poppy's fingers increasing their pressure on his skull. "I want an answer, young man." She pressed hard enough to get his attention but not enough to cause the pain to increase. "And don't you *dare* to lie to me!"

"Five," he mumbled.

"When will you ever learn that it isn't a weakness to ask other people for help, Severus?" she asked. She sighed in exasperation, and he could feel her shaking her head. He hadn't opened his eyes yet because the darkness was soothing. He felt guilty for making Poppy worry.

A water tap was turned on. Poppy's hands still on his shoulders, so that meant that there was another person in the room.

Fantastic. Just what I needed. Another person to see me in this state, he thought wearily. When he heard said person heading in his direction, he wanted to protest and

open his eyes to see who it was, but Poppy chose that exact moment to let healing magic flow through her fingers into his head. The energy caused the most amazing sensation to flow through his body, and he groaned in pleasure.

The person had reached him now, but the healing magic was too distracting for him to be bothered. When he felt a cool cloth pressed to his neck, he flinched and tried to open his eyes. Another hand was placed on his chest to stop him from moving. "Calm down, Severus," he heard Minerva say. "It's only me. Let us take care of you."

He was so tired. The flow of healing magic throughout his body was incredible so that even the hand on his chest felt good. Part of his mind screamed at him to run as far away from these two witches as he possibly could, but his body betrayed him. A sound almost like a sob escaped him, and he groaned inwardly. *No, don't make a complete idiot of yourself in front of them, Severus*, he thought. *Breaking down because of a simple headache is so childish.*

He struggled ineffectively against the two witches, but Poppy's massaging fingers had reached his forehead. The healing magic increased and his attempts to resist her ceased. Slowly, he began drifting into the first stages of sleep, and he hardly realized that he was being moved into a soft bed. The hand on his chest was removed, and he whimpered at the feeling of loss. A soft blanket was placed over him, and then Minerva's hands were stroking his arm in a calming motion.

"Sleep well, Severus," she whispered.

He barely registered that she was speaking. There was a fog around his mind, and his only focus in life was sleep. The last thing he remembered was Poppy's soft hands on his head and her kind voice saying, "Everything will be okay soon, Severus."

And with that, he fell into a deep sleep.