

# ✚ *Breathings of the Heart* ✚

by Arionrhod and Mckay

*Letters which are warmly sealed are often but coldly opened.* ~ Jean Paul Friedrich Richter

*Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.* ~ William Wordsworth

## ✚ The ✚ ✚ Daily Prophet ✚

June 1st 1998

Special Edition

Vol. XXX

### **DARK LORD SLAIN — WAR ENDS!** *Harry Potter Savior of Wizarding World*

#### ***All Hail Boy Hero For Defeat of Voldemort***

In a surprising and overwhelming victory yesterday, Harry Potter destroyed He Who Must Not Be Named, ending the war which has terrorized both the Wizarding and

Muggle worlds for the last two years. Details are sketchy at this point, but from all reports Potter destroyed He Who Must Not Be Named in a magical battle on the grounds of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Many of He Who Must Not Be Named's were also killed, along with an unknown number of Potter's

own Order of the Phoenix, a band of wizards and witches originally assembled by the deceased Albus Dumbledore.

As the list of confirmed dead and injured is made available, the Daily Prophet will update with further details....

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
June 2, 1998

## **MURDERER IN MINISTRY CUSTODY**

### ***Killer of Albus Dumbledore Survives Final Battle***

#### **Arrested by Ministry Personnel at Hogwarts**

The Daily Prophet has learned that Severus Snape, murderer of Albus Dumbledore and notorious henchman of He Who Must Not Be Named, was arrested at Hogwarts

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the aftermath of the final battle. His physical condition is unknown at this time, as he was immediately removed by the Ministry of Magic to an undisclosed location. The Ministry will neither confirm nor deny that they have Snape in custody, but witnesses who wish to remain anonymous say that it is unclear why

Snape remained at Hogwarts following He Who Must Not Be Named's defeat. Hero Harry Potter, long time protege of Albus Dumbledore and long-time decrier of Snape's role in Dumbledore's murder, could not be reached for comment, nor could any surviving members of the Order of the Phoenix....

(Page 4 article)

#### **GREYBACK'S PACK TAKEN INTO CUSTODY**

Several members of the pack belonging to notorious werewolf and

terrorist Fenrir Greyback, who was slain in the final battle at Hogwarts along with He Who Must Not Be Named, were taken into custody this morning at a location somewhere outside Surrey. The Ministry reports

that the werewolves were captured easily, having lost any will to fight in the wake of their Sire's death. All have been removed to Azkaban to await trial for their crimes against humanity.

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
June 3, 1998

## **ALLEGED CONSPIRATOR ARRESTED**

### ***Remus Lupin, Former Hogwarts Professor, Arrested with Werewolf Pack***

#### **Claims of Lupin's Loyalty Called into Question**

Remus Lupin, former member of the Order of the Phoenix and long-time associate of Harry Potter who had gone missing over one year ago, was found to be among those members of Fenrir Greyback's pack who were arrested yesterday. The reason for

Lupin's association with the terrorist band seems clear; he was given the curse of Lycanthropy by Greyback himself as a child over thirty years ago. Many members of the Order of the Phoenix, the very ones who had cast doubt on Lupin's loyalties for the past year, are now recanting their stories and claiming that Lupin was actually an agent working undercover

for the Order. Yet there can be no question that Lupin was found with the survivors of Greyback's pack and not with his supposed comrades of the Order, thereby calling into question his true allegiance. Just who was Lupin working for during the war, or was he perhaps playing both sides against the middle in an effort to survive no matter who won the war?

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Special Edition)  
June 4, 1998

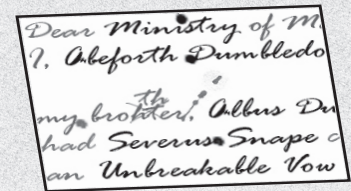
# RUMORS OF SNAPE'S INNOCENCE IN DUMBLEDORE'S MURDER

## **Brother of Slain Leader Claims Snape Is Scapegoat**

Aberforth Dumbledore, brother of murdered Hogwarts Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, has gone public with a statement claiming that

Severus Snape was not responsible for his brother's murder. In a stunning turn of events, the Daily Prophet has received a copy of a letter written by Aberforth which pins the blame for Albus Dumbledore's death squarely on the head of the deceased man himself. Below is a facsimile of the letter in its entirety, but it is

uncertain whether it casts more doubt on Snape's guilt or on Aberforth Dumbledore's sanity.



Dear Ministry of M.  
P. Aberforth Dumbledo  
my brother, Albus Du  
had Severus Snape c  
an Unbreakable Vow

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
June 5th, 1998

# ALBUS DUMBLEDORE'S WILL MADE PUBLIC

## **Slain Leader Leaves Bulk of Fortune Split Between Traitors**

Shock and horror are resounding through the Wizarding World from reports the firm that was entrusted with

Dumbledore's will has finally read and will act upon its contents. The document has been sealed for the past year in accordance with specific instructions left by the late Hogwarts headmaster. The Daily Prophet has learned the reports that Dumbledore directed his entire estate to be split evenly between traitor Severus Snape

and alleged conspirator and werewolf Remus Lupin are true. When asked if he was upset by being left out of his brother's will, Aberforth Dumbledore replied, "What do I need with his money? I have my own full vault and a fine establishment to boot." Further details of the will are being held secret by the Ministry of Magic...

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
June 6, 1998

# HARRY POTTER IN RETREAT

## **Savior of the World Goes Into Seclusion**

## **Refuses to Comment on Battle, War, Snape**

Boy Hero Harry Potter, whose defeat of He Who Must Not Be Named freed the Wizarding World from

two years of tyranny and terror, has reportedly gone into seclusion under a Fidelius Charm somewhere in Scotland. The Ministry will make no comment on this, but longtime friend of the young savior, Molly Weasley, was finally reached at her home in Ottery-St. Catchpole. Before refusing to speak further, she claimed

Potter needed a respite and should be left alone to heal from the stress of the last few years. When asked for Potter's feelings on the developments involving Severus Snape and Albus Dumbledore's murder, Mrs. Weasley issued a firm "No comment, and don't you dare step in my garden on your way out!"

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
June 7, 1998

# MINISTRY DECLARES SNAPE WILL BE PUT ON TRIAL

## **Potions Master, Murderer to Be Tried for War Crimes**

Trial is set to begin tomorrow for Severus Snape, accused murderer of Albus Dumbledore and loyal follow-

er of He Who Must Not Be Named. The Ministry claims to have a solid case against the former Hogwarts professor, and although it cannot be confirmed, rumor has it that Harry Potter will testify in the case. Potter still cannot be reached for comment, although sources close to the

Boy Who Lived indicate he will come out of seclusion to make certain the murderer of his mentor receives his just desserts. The case is, according to one official who prefers to remain unnamed, "cut and dried", and they are confident the trial will last no more than a week.

**DAILY PROPHET**  
(Headline Article, Daily Edition)  
October 15, 1998

# TRIAL OF THE CENTURY ENDED

## **Verdict Reached in the Snape Trial**

After months of shocking testimony and unparalleled drama that left even the Wizengamot divided, the trial that has riveted the Wizarding World has ended at last, and Severus Snape has been declared not guilty. Initial reports from the Ministry declared Snape's trial would be an "open and shut case", but as more and more evidence was presented and witnesses came forward to speak on Snape's behalf, it became clear the Ministry were grossly mistaken.

Pensieve memories, signed documentation from the deceased Headmaster of Hogwarts, and even testimony from a portrait were among the evidence presented to the Wizengamot to disprove all allegations of treason. Aberforth Dumbledore, brother of the deceased, was among those who

testified on Snape's behalf, revealing he stood as witness to an Unbreakable Vow forged between Snape and Albus Dumbledore in 1981 prior to the downfall of He Who Must Not Be Named, which marked the end of the First War. Snape vowed loyalty on pain of death should he betray Dumbledore. Suffering from a slow-acting curse wound, Dumbledore was dying and charged Snape with the task of killing him in order to strengthen Snape's own place within the ranks of the Death Eaters that he might undermine the organization from within as well as smuggle information to the opposing forces via his contact, Aberforth Dumbledore.

Memories stored in Dumbledore's own Pensieve supported these claims, as did signed documentation which was unearthed along with Dumbledore's will. In spite of dismay from the prosecution, all signs pointed to Snape being innocent of treason. But

witnesses who spoke against the accused reminded the Wizengamot that he did in fact murder Dumbledore and cast an Unforgivable, regardless of his motivation.

After lengthy deliberation, Snape was cleared of all charges related to war crimes. Dumbledore's death was ruled suicide by unconventional means, leaving only the charge of casting an Unforgivable for which Snape was heavily fined and placed under house arrest at the Dumbledore estate for a period of six months. The notation will remain on his record, and the more disgruntled members of the Wizengamot have vowed against such leniency should Snape be brought up on any further charges for questionable behavior.

When questioned after the verdict was given, Snape's only comment was "Go away."

**DAILY PROPHET**  
 (Page 15 Article, Daily Edition)  
 October 17, 1998

## WEREWOLF TRIED, FREED

### Remus Lupin Found Innocent Amid New Revelations Concerning Albus Dumbledore's Will

After a lengthy wait while the Ministry of Magic dealt with the trial of Severus Snape, werewolf and alleged Greyback supporter Remus Lupin was found not guilty following a brief trial. Testimony was given by his supporters in the Order of the Phoenix, who lobbied for Lupin's freedom for months and requested charges against the werewolf be dropped for lack of evidence. Minerva McGonagall, leader of the Order, vouched for Lupin and called his long incarceration a "travesty of justice". Other Order members did not wish to go on record - unsurprising, given some

of them are employees of the Ministry - but there was a general spirit of jubilation following Lupin's release. As for the werewolf himself, he only smiled and said, "I just want to go home. Wherever that is now."

Lupin's comment does raise an interesting point in light of revelations today of a codicil in Albus Dumbledore's will. It had been previously reported that Dumbledore's estate was to be split equally between Lupin and recently released spy and former Death Eater, Severus Snape. However, conditions were attached to the division of Dumbledore's wealth, which has been estimated at several million galleons. According to Ms. Amica Curae, Executrix of Albus Dumbledore's estate, Snape and Lupin must both occupy the

Dumbledore family mansion, located in a remote area of northern Scotland, in order to have access to the late Headmaster's fortune. If one of them moves out, the other would be granted the entire fortune by default. There are apparently further stipulations concerning the death of either of them, which one source within the Ministry has been quoted as saying was no doubt to keep Snape from murdering the werewolf for the money. Neither Snape nor Lupin would comment on this latest development, and given the history of bad blood between the two which has been hinted at by our sources, speculation is rampant about who will emerge as the heir: the Death Eater or the werewolf.

**amicacurae**  
 barrister  
 55 diagonalley

October 18, 1998

Dear Mr. Snape and/or Lupin -

*Enclosed with this post, you will find a key to Tingling Gently, the ancestral home of the Dumbledore family located in Murthee-on-Toast, Scotland. As you are both to occupy the residence, please be aware the conditions of the late Headmaster's will are specific and unbreakable: if either of you leave the estate for a period of more than one week before I have received a jointly signed note from you indicating that you have agreed to share the estate henceforth and forevermore, then the party who is absent will forfeit his claim on the estate and the money which accompanies it. You should also be aware that certain magical protections have been placed on the dwelling and grounds, both to protect your privacy and your persons, even from each other. Death is also considered a forfeit, although Mr. Dumbledore was quite, quite direct in stating that murder was a forfeit as well, and the estate would then revert to St. Sinián's Home for Epymongous Equines.*

*If there are any matters which require my attention, such as advancement of additional funds for maintenance and upkeep of the estate, please contact my office during normal business hours.*

Yours,

Amica Curae, Esquire  
 London

[Letter written on plain, cheap parchment, folded and tucked into an envelope, and marked "Lupin"; left on the parlor mantle. Dated October 20, 1998]

Lupin,

I have selected the second bedroom on the left on the third floor. I have also decided to use the nursery on the third floor as a workroom. Those are my rooms, and I will not tolerate any intrusion into either of them. In fact, you may consider the entire third floor off-limits. There are bedrooms on the second floor; I suggest you confine yourself to one of those.

I will take breakfast between five and six o'clock in the morning; I will take lunch between eleven and twelve o'clock; I will dine at five o'clock in the evening. I expect you to avoid the kitchen during those times.

I will arrange to have my own groceries delivered, and I will label them. You will not use them.

Likewise, you will not use any toiletries, linens, clothing, or anything else in this house that is mine. You will be responsible for purchasing and restocking whatever you require yourself.

You will be responsible for your own laundry and cleaning up your own messes. I will not tolerate an untidy house. Nor will I clean up after you. If I find clutter belonging to you outside your chosen bedroom and toilet, I will discard it.

I will not take meals or tea with you. I will not be available for companionship or conversation. I do not wish to be disturbed - ever. Your presence in this house is unwelcome, and the sooner you are gone, the better. After the decades I spent in his service and the sacrifices I made for him, Albus should have left the entire estate to me, and I will have it. In the meantime, the less I have to endure your presence or any evidence thereof, the better.

Keep your distance, werewolf, or you will regret it.

S. Snape

[Letter written on pressed vellum, folded in half and propped up on the parlor mantle. Morning, October 21, 1998]

Severus,

I, for one, have too much respect for his wisdom to question his judgment in this, but Al-

bus disposal of the estate aside, I'm sorry you are inconvenienced by my presence, and I will do my best to make our cohabitation as painless for you as possible. Unfortunately, I am in rather desperate need of the legacy Albus left to us, having no other source of income or means of support, and so I can't leave as you wish. But rest assured, I'm not out to provoke your ire or make your life a misery. I think we've both suffered a bit too much in the last few years, don't you? I am ready to enjoy the end of the war and the rest of my life without having to worry about where my next meal is coming from.

Per your suggestion, I've taken the master suite on the second floor, since you didn't want it. Luckily for me, the closet has a charm which cleans all clothes placed within it. Isn't that delightful? I would also like to take the conservatory on the ground floor in back as my study, since I plan to occupy my time writing a history of both Wars and the role of Dumbledore and the Order in them, as a sort of a tribute to him. If you'd like to contribute your viewpoint so the real truth can be told, I would welcome your input.

I've also arranged for food delivery, and if you see anything in the cupboard that you like, you're certainly free to take it. Ditto if you run out of any necessities, such as toothpaste, soap, shampoo, chocolate, or tea. If you change your mind about companionship or conversation, please feel free to seek me out. No need to stand on ceremony at all.

Oh, in case you are worried, I have already located the room where I will spend my monthly transformations. I'm not certain if Albus family had a werewolf in the closet or perhaps something even less savory, but there was a room below ground with magical enchantments already in place, perfect for my needs. There is even a soundproofing charm, so your rest won't be disturbed.

Let me know if you need anything. Or if you change your mind.

Yours,

Remus

[Excerpt from Severus' private journal. October 22]

This is intolerable. All I wanted if I survived the damned war was to be left alone, and Abus damned well knew that. Why he foisted the werewolf on me, I will never understand. What the hell did Lupin ever do? I am the one who risked my life to gain information, and I am the only one - who was strong enough to do what Abus wanted in the end, even though it meant ruining both my life and my reputation. He damned well knew I couldn't possibly have anything resembling a normal life after that; the least he could have done was left me enough money to run off to Bermuda and live out the rest of my life in peace rather than forcing me to live under the same roof as Lupin.

I suppose I could leave and let Lupin have everything, but that is hardly practical. I have no money, no friends, and no prospects. I haven't even enough money of my own to afford the fare to Dover, much less to start over far away from here. What the Ministry didn't confiscate went to pay legal fees during that damned trial.

Lupin did nothing but cause trouble and complications for years, and a few months of romping in the forest with his own kind under the guise of "spying" does not entitle him to a single knut, much less half the estate. I need this money. It is mine. I earned it, and I will have it.

[Left on the mantle, October 22]

Lupin,

You seem to be laboring under the misapprehension that I give a damn about what you have suffered or under what circumstances you have lived. You are accustomed to poverty; I have no qualms about sending you back to that familiar state. I want to be left in peace by you, your so-called allies, and the rest of the world. I have had enough of people, and I will not continue to suffer your presence for long.

Take the conservatory if you must, but do not expect me to contribute to your inane little project. I have nothing to say on the subject or to you. If you want my perspective, read the trial transcripts, but do not pester me about it.

I will inspect the underground room myself. I will not stand for having my life endangered once a month because of your usual carelessness about your condition.

I will not touch any of your food or toiletries or anything else that belongs to you. Nor will I change my mind about company or conversation. If I must catch it in terms even a Gryffindor can understand: fuck off.

S. Snape

[[Letter written on the back of a Chinese take-away menu, left on the mantle. October 23]

Severus,

Well, I suppose you have been perfectly clear on all points. I stand by my offer, however. Call me a stupid optimist, but there you have it.

Let me know your opinion of the room and if there are any modifications you suggest. As you said, it's your life, and as I've never yet turned another human, I'd not like you to be the first. By the way, I'm ordering Chinese on Friday. This place has absolutely amazing food. If you enjoy it, I suggest you try them. They are Wizard owned and deliver via floo.

Yours, SERS

Remus

[Excerpt from Severus' personal journal. October 24]

I swear if Lupin does not leave me alone, I will hex him to Hell and back, protective charms or no. I do not want that hypocritical little rug chattering at me or offering food or even breathing the same air. It is very presence in the house is obnoxious to me, and the sooner he is gone, the better.

[Letter in an envelope containing the shredded remnants of the take-away menu, left on the mantle. October 24]

I have examined the room and deemed it secure.

You were early in the kitchen this morning by two minutes and infringed on my breakfast. Do not do so again.

S. Snape

[Excerpt from MS entitled *An Order for War — Albus Dumbledore and the Wizarding Wars* by R. J. Lupin]

.... Of course, one of the greatest enigmas in both the first and second Wars was the relationship between Albus Dumbledore and the man who was the instrument of his death, Severus Snape. While Snape's role during the first war was seemingly explained by Dumbledore himself at the trials of the captured Death Eaters following that fateful Halloween night in 1981, there were many unanswered questions about Severus Snape's loyalties which colored the next decade and a half, and which, indeed, caused some to doubt Dumbledore's sanity for his seeming blindness to a man whom many considered to be still in league with the forces of Darkness. Indeed, these naysayers were the first to step forward after Dumbledore's death and decry Snape's actions as complete proof of his guilt; yet the events of history have once again seemed to prove that Albus Dumbledore was right all along. Despite Dumbledore's own words, however, Severus Snape still went on trial, and even his vindication did not completely dispel the cloud of suspicion. It seems likely, in fact, that Severus Snape will always remain an enigma — especially as the man himself makes no apologies and refuses to cast light on the darkness of our collective ignorance.

[Letter scrawled on a napkin embossed with 'Woo's China Palace' and left on the kitchen table next to a salt-and-pepper set shaped like a knight and a dragon. 25 October]

Severus -

Sorry you missed the Kung Pao chicken; it was delightful.

I'm glad the room is secure, and I'll not trouble you on the moon. I found that howling has lost me more roommates than leaving the toilet seat up (and that's a joke, just in case you decide to read too deeply into it).

My clock must be fast; I've set it back by *ve* minutes to make certain I don't intrude on your time. And speaking of intrusions, Mivena is coming over for dinner next Sunday. You're welcome to join us, if you'd like. I'm sure she'd love to talk to you, since she, for one, always believed in your innocence, perhaps because she knew Albus so well.

Leftovers in the fridge. Just so you know.

Yours,  
Remus

[Letter left on the mantle. October 26]

*How dare you invite someone into my home without consulting me? We have not discussed guests, and while I am frankly shocked you have any in the first place, I am most displeased you did not tell me you intended to bring people here before extending said invitation. It is rude and appalling, exactly the sort of inconsiderate behavior I should have expected.*

*I have no desire to speak to your guest. I find it impossible to believe your claim that she - or anyone else for that matter - believed in my innocence. I have both eyes and ears, and I know what everyone truly thought. I have no use for any of them now.*

*If you must persist in your plans, then I expect it to be quiet, and I expect the house to be clean when I go downstairs the following morning. When I said I would discard any clutter, it was not an idle threat.*

S. Snape



[Note penned on a receipt for a large quantity of tea from 'Oslo's Finest Herbals', left next to Severus' mug in the cabinet. October 27]

Severus -

Sorry I didn't consult you before inviting an old friend and colleague of both of ours into our home. You are correct; I should have, but I rather foolishly assumed that in the natural course of events, both of us would have visitors. I do beg your pardon, however, and in future, I will make certain to give you timely enough notification that if you have coming plans, you may register them. As I said before, I have no desire to irritate you. On the contrary, I know that raising your ire would be not only stupid, but quite possibly painful as well.

It seems it would also be foolish to try to convince you that you did have your supporters, but if you would read the documentation submitted at both your trial and mine, you would see the truth. If the truth interests you, that is. I know sometimes it's easier just to clutch at your own misconceptions because they are safer.

Atas, I will tell Minerva that our plans to play raucous disco music and do the limbo to bongo drums are off. I suppose we'll just have to settle for tea and conversation, which will no doubt disappoint her greatly. And I'll be certain to banish our trash before I stagger up to my room, overwhelmed from an evening of far too much indulgence.

Yours,  
Remus

[Letter left on the mantle. Late afternoon, October 27]

*There is no one who would be interested in visiting me, and there is no one whom I would be interested in having visit. Therefore, it will not be an issue as far as I am concerned. If you intend to have people traipsing in and out of my house on a regular basis, then I expect to be informed well in advance as you detailed in your previous missive.*

*Do not presume to lecture me about misapprehensions. You know nothing of me or my situation. Your flippancy*

*makes it clear you have no respect for either, and I am not amused by your attitude or your puerile attempts at humor.*

S. Snape

PS - I found hair on the sofa. It was not mine. Clean it up.

[letter on parchment left on the kitchen table. Early morning, 28 October]

Severus -

I shall indeed inform you of any future visitors well in advance, so long as they are known to me. Perhaps this is a good time to mention that Halloween is in three days; if we receive any tiny ghosts or ghouls, I shall be more than happy to answer the door and dole out their treats. In fact, I've already obtained said treats in anticipation, assuming that with your previously stated wishes, you'd not want to do it. If I am wrong, do let me know.

My trippancy indicates only that, having walked a mile in your shoes to a certain extent, I find that the best way to deal with my issues is to try to make light of them. Were you to laugh at my faults, you'd no doubt find me chuckling right along with you. What else can I do? The alternative is to cry about them, and that just makes my nose run and leaves my face splotchy, a most unattractive sight indeed. Puerile though my humor is, it does allow me to wake up each morning and get on with living rather than curling in on myself to die. I have a great deal of respect for you, Severus; you're a survivor, and given what you've gone through, that means a lot. It shows you are not weak for allowing yourself to be crushed by your circumstances. Merlin knows a lesser man would have been.

I cleaned up the hair on the sofa. Sorry, it must have gotten there when I unexpectedly fell asleep there night before last.

Yours,  
Remus

PS - The last few nights I've been awoken by some very odd sounds from upstairs. Lycanthrope hearing, you know. I do hope there isn't a problem, but if there is, please know I'm always willing to help.


[Letter left on the mantle. Late afternoon, October 28]

*Do not presume to compare yourself to me or your situation to mine.*

*I have taken measures to make certain you will not hear any sounds in future.*

*S. Snape*

[Excerpt from MS entitled An Order for War — Albus Dumbledore and the Wizarding Wars, by R. J. Lupin]



...Although the Order of the Phoenix was disbanded at the end of the first war and the members went their separate ways in an attempt to put back together the fragments of their lives, they still shared a common belief that Voldemort hadn't been completely destroyed. Dumbledore did not try to squelch this belief; in fact, he began to make plans in secret, plans which would lay the foundation for the Order to be reactivated if - no, indeed, when - the need arose. Not the least of these plans was to retain Severus Snape as Potions Master at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It has been speculated by many that Dumbledore actually wished to keep an eye on Snape, proving his lack of trust for the former Death Eater by refusing to appoint him to the position of professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts, lest Snape be lured back into his old ways. In fact, Dumbledore knew the position was cursed, and that no professor could be retained in it for more than a year. He needed Snape around for far longer than that, because Snape could do something that



no one else in the Order could do. He, and he alone, bore the Dark Mark, and through that, he would be able to warn Dumbledore the moment the lingering, un-living essence of what had once been Lord Voldemort gained enough strength to stage his return.

[Note left on the kitchen table. Early morning, October 29]

Severus -

Whether I make comparisons between us or not doesn't change the facts of either of our situations. You're an intelligent man, so I'll merely leave you to draw your own logical conclusions.

By the way, I wasn't complaining about the noise so much as saying that if you have a problem, I am willing to offer any assistance I can. Yes, I know you are a perfectly capable wizard, and I am in no way calling your competence into question. I am merely willing to provide help if you need it, even if it is no more than a set of willing ears (or eyes, I suppose, given the non-verbal state of our interactions). No man is an island, as the saying goes.

Yours,  
Remus

[Note magically stuck to Remus' door. October 30]

*You have placed two tins of your tea on the same shelf as my tea. Remove yours at once.*

*S. Snape*

[Note stuck on Severus' tea tin. 31 October]

Severus -

Moved.

Happy Halloween!

Yours,  
Remus

PS - I'm sorry for coming into the kitchen while you were still there this morning, but I am very certain it was 6:15. You seemed not yourself, as though you weren't sleeping well. Remember that my offer still stands, if there is something on your mind. Sometimes just saying something out loud (or writing it down, as the case may be) can help you sort out your thoughts.

[Note stuck to Remus' door. October 31]

*You did not rinse out the sink after breakfast. I found tea leaves and bits of egg all over. Do not let it happen again.*

S. Snape

[Note tied to a bunch of pure white lilies, left in a slight depression in the ground before the ruins of a house in Godric's Hollow]

To absent friends,  
May grief surcease,  
God let your souls  
Rest in eternal peace.

RJL

## THE QUIBLER

(Headline article, Special Edition)  
October 31, 1998

### BIZARRE LIGHTS SEEN OVER SCOTLAND

The Quibbler has interviewed several eye witnesses who claim to have seen odd floating lights in the sky over a remote area of the Scottish Highlands early this evening. While some claim it was merely an overflight of migrating dragons, everyone knows that dragons don't migrate at this time of year. It is our belief that now that the Dark Lord has finally been defeated, it is, in fact, the long-awaited return of The Gryte Neep, a legendary figure which hasn't been seen since just after Grindelwald's defeat. Further investigation is certainly called for, since the children of Scotland are no doubt anxious for the return of the generous Neep and his presents...

[Note left on the mantle. Late evening, October 31. It is attached to a small black bag containing chocolate frogs and Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans]

Severus -

Sorry that my rinsing job was inadequate; I was distracted by an article in the Quibbler. I've rectified the situation, hopefully to your satisfaction. I also mopped the oor and dusted the entire downstairs in recompense.

I hope you enjoy the treats. By the way, there is some cocoa in the cabinet which I use when I am having trouble sleeping. Feel free to indulge should you need it.

Yours,  
Remus

[Note left on the mantle along with the unopened bag of sweets. November 1]

*Stop pestering me, Lupin. You are a nuisance and a slob, and I am tired of constantly keeping after you to keep my house in decent condition. Just do whatever you must, clean up after yourself, and leave me alone.*

S. Snape

[Note left on the kitchen table, afternoon. November 1]

Severus -

Sorry the treats weren't to your liking. But I must protest your characterization of me as a slob; I have done my fair share of cleaning, and one or two isolated incidents hardly constitute being a slob. Nor do making perfectly civil overtures constitute pestering. I can only assume it is a lack of sleep which is contributing to your increasingly ill humor; it's unfortunate, and I do wish you would allow me to help.

Yours,  
Remus

[Excerpt from Severus' personal journal. November 3]

*Foolishly, I thought there were limits to Gryffindor thick-headedness, but living with Lupin has shown I was wrong. I have told him repeatedly that I wish to be left alone, and I have ignored his prattling notes. Yet he persists in pestering me no matter how clear I make it that his overtures are unwelcome.*

*The worst part is he has noticed my problem, and now he is constantly offering his assistance - as if I would ever*

believe him sincerely interested in my welfare. Perhaps he is simply worried that I will keel over, and he will be accused of trying to off me for the money.

If I do not tell him, he will keep asking even though it is none of his damned business, and there is nothing he can do about it. Even if there were, I would not accept help from him. I suppose it is too much to hope he will shut the hell up and drop the subject, not when he keeps bringing it up. I suppose I had best tell him and get it over with. As much as I loathe admitting any weakness, especially to him, perhaps when he sees it is neither life-threatening nor anything that can be remedied, he will leave me alone at last.

[Note left on the mantle. November 3. There are blotches of ink on the parchment, as if the quill was held over it and allowed to drip. The parchment itself is wrinkled, as if it had been crumpled and later smoothed out. The handwriting seems a trifle unsteady.]

I have nightmares, nothing more. I do not require your assistance.

[Note left on the mantle. Evening, November 3]

Severus -

Well, it's not surprising you'd have nightmares, given what you've been through. You've survived things that would have destroyed a lesser man. Just know that if you ever do need my assistance, it's available.

The full moon is tomorrow; I shall endeavor to be as quiet as possible to avoid disturbing you.

Yours,

Remus

[Note inked in the margin of an MS entitled An Order for War - Albus Dumbledore and the Wizarding Wars, by R. J. Lupin]

The war cost people too much... What nightmares could he be having? Whatever they are, they must be horrific... How unfair it is, in a way, not to be the dead hero, but the alive, unacknowledged hero...

[Note left on the mantle. Morning, November 4]

What part of "I do not need your assistance" and "leave me alone" fails to permeate your thick skull? I do not need or desire any assistance from you or anyone else. My problems are my own affair, and I will deal with them as I see fit. Stop bothering me, and stop pretending you have any shred of understanding or sympathy. In case you have forgotten, there are decades worth of negligence that have proven otherwise. I do not give a damn that we are trapped by circumstance in this house together; it does not mean we must fraternize with one another, and I have no intention of doing so. Go and pester your friends. They might want your companionship; I do not.

S. Snape

[Note left on the mantle. Late evening, November 5. The handwriting is rather shaky]

Severus -

I think I have more sympathy for suffering than you might believe. As for past negligence, I can only apologize and point out that I doubt you would have been any more receptive to my overtures in the past than you are now, but perhaps that doesn't excuse me for not trying harder. I know you don't care, but I do. Whether you want my companionship or not, that doesn't change my offer of it. Whether you take it or not is, of course, your own choice.

Yours,

Remus

[Note left on the mantle. November 6]

I see. My possible lack of receptivity to your overtures is what kept you from reining in your friends, even when you were a prefect. It kept you from revealing you knew Black was an Animagus and thus could enter the school undetected. It kept you from drinking the Wolfsbane, thus endangering the lives of everyone in the school. It kept you from not encouraging Longbottom so that the story of his bogart appearing in my shape, wearing women's clothing, didn't sweep through the school like wildfire. Had I

known saying "hello" once in a while would have prevented all of that, perhaps I might have made a greater effort to be receptive to your overtures.

I choose not to accept your offer. Go and pester your friends. I am certain Miss Tonks in particular would value your company far more highly than I do.

S. Snape

[Note left on the mantle. Early morning, November 7]

Severus -

Since you brought up the past, please allow me to address your points. First, yes, I do doubt that you would have been receptive to my overtures in school, although that is not why I didn't rein in my friends or why I didn't reveal Sirius' abilities. For those two, all I can say is that I acted in a self-ish manner that I have been paying for ever since. I did it out of a need I felt to protect myself, knowing that in many ways, Sirius, James, and Peter had more control over my fate than I did myself, given that they knew my secret and could have destroyed me by revealing it. Was it wrong of me to be self-ish in that fashion? Yes, it was. It was even more wrong of me not to have told Albus about Sirius being an Animagus, although I think the habit of keeping secrets and protecting myself is one that died very hard, even though I knew it was self-ish and wrong. I was made to pay for all of it, however, although I hold no bitterness now for that fact. In a way, it was rather liberating; a secret revealed, I have found, no longer had as much power to control me with fear as it once had.

As far as Neville's boggart, all I can say is that the I was trying to teach the boy, and I'm sorry, but your dignity or lack thereof never entered my mind when I was trying to show a terrified boy that fear shouldn't be allowed to control his life. If you lost face in that, I am very sorry, but to be honest, it never occurred to me that you'd give a bloody damn what the children thought of you. In fact, you always made it painfully clear that you didn't care what anyone thought of you; if that was merely an act, it was a very good one, and I apologize again for not realizing it wasn't the case.

With regard to Tonks, I spend no time with her now, nor do I have any desire to do so. I never did, although once again my abominable habit of, unlike you, caring far too much what people think of me led me into not being as forceful as I should have been in the matter. Which is unfortunate, because my interest doesn't lie with her or with any woman, for that matter. Fortunately, she came to the realization that we were unsuited quite on her own once I nally agreed to 'try a relationship'. Actual practice demonstrated far more satisfactorily than my protests alone ever could.

Hopefully this clears up a few things; however, I am quite certain that any apology I might offer, no matter how sincere, can't make up for the past. For that, too, I am sorry. If there was a way I could change the past, I would. You have no idea how many times I've wished it were possible.

Yours,

Remus

[Note left on the mantle. November 9]

You have no idea how receptive or not I might have been. Do not presume you know or understand me to the point of being able to predict what I would have done. You are neither intelligent nor insightful enough for that.

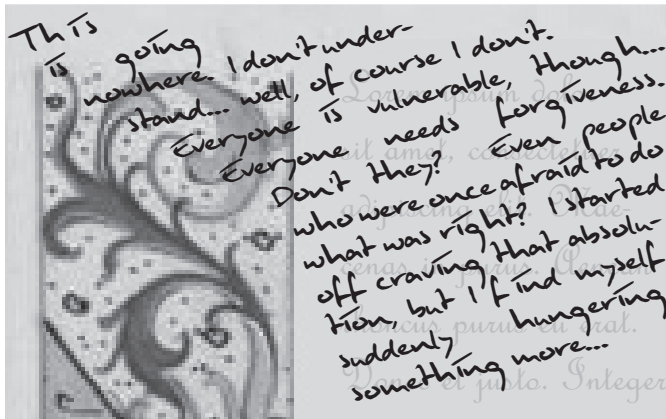
As for the rest, at least you realize you are selfish, although you left off the part about being a coward as well.

I never cared what anyone thought, particularly those spotty faced brats. However, I strove to cultivate a certain demeanor and reputation, which you undermined by giving the little snots something to laugh at me about. I did not care whether they liked me, but I did care whether they respected or feared me enough to pay attention.

Do you have any idea how difficult it was to generate any interest in potions? There were no sparks or light shows, thus it was boring with nothing shiny enough to attract their shallow minds long enough to learn anything, despite the fact that what I had to teach could save their lives. I had a difficult time as it was without you making it worse.

S. Snape

[Note inked in the margin of an MS entitled An Order for War - Albus Dumbledore and the Wizarding Wars, by R. J. Lupin]



[letter left with a tray containing a pot of cocoa and two cinnamon scones, placed in front of Severus' bedroom door in the middle of the night, November 9, and alerted to by a knocking charm]

Severus -

Before you get upset, I didn't come up to the third floor to deliver this. I levitated it up, recalling your order that I am not to ascend to your level, as it were. The reason for the cocoa and scones is that I heard you pacing, and I thought perhaps it might help you to sleep.

To reply to your earlier missive... yes, I have been a coward in the past. I hope that I am past it now, however. I make no excuses for that; it was wrong, but I have learned to not let fear control me. Even as much of a doer as you consider me to be, I do eventually learn.

Well, usually.

I don't think you have to worry about the students at Hogwarts not fearing you; with the single exception of Harry, I believe all of them did, and many of them, years later and full grown, still do. If you wished to leave that lasting impression upon them, you did so successfully.

I didn't mean to make your job worse; again, I apologize for that. I did and still do find potions fascinating, perhaps because they are so subtle. Unfortunately, my lycanthropy and the various allergies to certain ingredients that entails limited my options in the field. But as I

recall, there were a few students who did show promise even during my time there. Perhaps the others, if they couldn't see the benefit of what you were offering, lacked the insight or wisdom to realize it.

I hope your sleep becomes easier.

Yours,  
Remus

[Note left on the mantle. November 11]

I fail to understand why you persist in trying to explain yourself to me, to force attentions on me, and to continue pestering me when I have repeatedly said such is not welcome. You claim to be capable of learning, yet you prove obtuse in this matter, leaving me to wonder why. Just because we inhabit the same house does not mean we must interact or get on. The house is big enough that we may avoid each other easily.

S. Snape

[Note left on the mantle. November 12]

Severus -

I'm not sure, either. Maybe I really am an idiot, since oddly enough, I seem to have begun caring about what you think of me. Or rather, about changing your opinion, since you have been quite clear about the current state of your regard.

By the way, the holidays are fast approaching. I would like to purchase a small tree and put up some decorations. May I place them in the parlor, or should I limit myself to my own study?

Yours,  
Remus

[Note left on the mantle. November 13]

If you care what I think of you, you are indeed an idiot. You should stop behaving toward me as you behaved toward Black and Potter; I will not be your "pack" or whatever it is you are seeking with me simply because I am convenient. My opinion will not change.

As for the decorations, do as you will. I will avoid the parlor if they are too gaudy and obnoxious. Do not expect me to be festive or celebrate the season with you.

S. Snape

[Letter left on the mantle. November 14]

Severus -

Believe me, I am not behaving toward you as I did toward Sirius and James, nor am I looking to make you part of my (non-existent) pack; with you, perhaps I am looking more for forgiveness than acceptance. I may have let them down in small ways during my life, but I never failed them as I failed you. Not that I'm not saying I wouldn't like being friends with you, or, if that is too much to aspire to, at least being non-hostile acquaintances. But I am fully aware that I've done things which have caused you to suffer, and I wish I could make that up to you, even though I know it's impossible.

Lest you think I am motivated solely by a sense of guilt, let me assure you that isn't the case. You are a fascinating man, Severus. I would be both more blind and far more stupid than even you credit me with being if I didn't realize that, and I wish to get to know you better.

Thank you for your indulgence on the decorations. They will be neither gaudy nor obnoxious. I suppose I just want to mark the season as being special, with the war having ended and blessed freedom nally at hand.

Yours,  
Remus

[Excerpt from Severus' personal journal. Evening, November 15]

One would think after all this time, I would no longer care whether anyone apologized, admitted they were wrong, or acknowledged the burdens that have been placed on me since my youth. To hear someone - anyone - say "Yes, I know, and I understand" scarcely seems possible, and yet, that is what Lupin has said.

It is ironic that I was alleged to have sought attention and recognition. I am not certain who began the rumor that I created the Order of Merlin, although I would not be surprised if Abus was behind it to explain what happened at the end of Lupin's term at Hogwarts. It was not a bit of shiny metal I wanted. It was justice, old and new.

It was acknowledgment that I was right. It was not to feel as if I had failed in my duty to protect the denizens of Hogwarts because Harry damned Potter was above following the rules.

What I wanted was to atone for my past mistakes and to make the world a right and orderly place. What I wanted was for someone to say "You did a good job. Thank you." I kept trying, doing everything he asked no matter what the cost, and it was never enough. Others received his attention and praise for far less effort.

I do not know whom I mean by "he": my grandfather, the Dark Lord, or Abus. It is true of them all.

Letter left on the mantle. Middle of the night, November 16]

You have the dubious distinction of being the only person who ever came close to acknowledging fault where I am concerned; everyone else is content to cast me as the villain. Even Abus never acknowledged the weight of the burdens he placed on me, although I have no doubt he was aware of them. Perhaps he assumed I was strong enough not to require such acknowledgment. Then again, people have always had a way of making assumptions about me.

I would find guilt easier to understand than fascination. Again, you have the distinction of being the only one to think such of me.

As for the decorations and the season, I find no cause for celebration nor anything special about it, and I have no interest in seeing garland and fairy lights strewn everywhere. The war may be over, but freedom is relative.

S. Snape

[Note left on the kitchen table. Morning, November 17]

Severus -

I will try not to make assumptions in the future, as hard as that can be. But I do acknowledge, freely, both my fault and my fascination.

I promise to keep the decorations to a minimum. And yes, I do understand about freedom not being all that it might seem. As a Muggle song from our youth said, sometimes all it means is that you have nothing left to lose.

Just to let you know, I will be away tomorrow, possibly overnight. I have to go to St. Mungo's to have some tests done. No doubt you will enjoy the peace and quiet.

Yours,  
Remus

[Note stuck to Remus' bedroom door. November 19]

*What sort of tests, and why were they necessary?*

[Note left on the kitchen table. Late afternoon, November 19]

Severus -

Nothing to be concerned about, really. I'm a werewolf approaching forty, and as you know, there are various physiological conditions which can begin to affect werewolves of that age, especially ones who have been infected as long as I have. I also spent a year living feral, then several months incarcerated; I've found the transformations increasingly painful over the past year, and I just wanted to make certain I wasn't developing arthritis or any other degenerative condition.

I hope you are managing to get some sleep. If the cocoa helps, please take all you need.

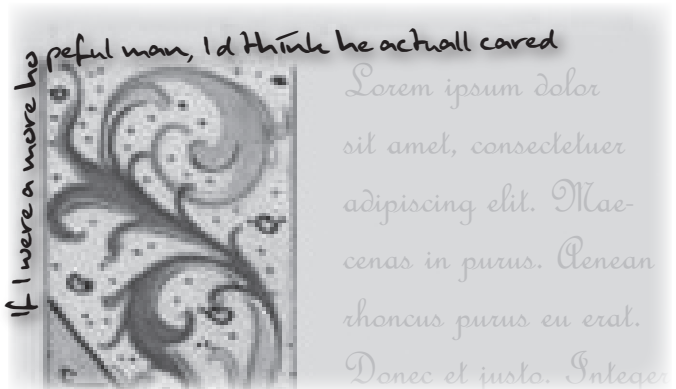
Yours,  
Remus

[Note left on the mantle. November 20]

*Don't be stupid. Cocoa is not a useful remedy against insomnia or night mares.*

*In what ways has the transformation become more painful? Have you developed symptoms of arthritis? Symptoms of other conditions? Are the Healers concerned, or was this a routine examination?*

[Note scribbled in the margin of an MS entitled An Order for War - Albus Dumbledore and the Wizarding Wars]



[Letter left on the kitchen table. Morning, November 21]

Severus -

According to my Mum, there is nothing chocolate can't cure. I shall be very wounded to find out she was wrong!

I've been having far more joint pain and stiffness following my transformations, yes. The Healers say that I probably will develop arthritis at some point, but for the moment, just making certain that I take it easy on the day after the moon, specifically by staying warm and moving as little as possible for twelve to twenty-four hours, will suffice. Other than that, they think I'm fine, or as fine as someone who has been a werewolf for thirty-five years can expect to be. I've been put on some dietary supplements, as well. Apparently my time in Greyback's pack



and my distaste of the feral diet has led to some malnutrition. And here I thought I was only missing my morning tea.

Yours,  
Remus

[Note left on the mantle. Afternoon, November 21]

Your mother was wrong.

What sort of dietary supplements have you been given? Doubtless anything you received from St. Mungo's is swill. I suppose it would be best for all concerned if I began brewing the Wolfsbane Potion for you again. I will no longer have to worry about you breaking free of the room and ripping my throat out, and you may gain some relief post-transformation. If not, I have a salve meant to work on arthritic joints. It provides heat, and I have tweaked it so that it penetrates deeper than the weak, watered-down rubbish from the apothecary.

[Letter left on the mantle, which has been decorated with a tasteful evergreen garland tied with blue and silver bows. Evening, November 21]

Severus -

Well, my heart is broken, if you must know. If one can't rely on the wisdom of one's Mum, what is there left to believe in?

Other than you, of course. Thank you, your offer of the Wolfsbane is not only appreciated, but I wish to do something to pay you back for the trouble as well. I am also very grateful for the offer of the salve; on the morning after, I sometimes think the creaking of my joints could wake the dead. At the least, I have gotten some annoyed looks from a few of the portraits.

My dietary supplements are mostly herbals; the bottles are in the cupboard in the kitchen, if you'd like to take a look. I would appreciate your advice, as well, if there is anything you believe they have overlooked. I know that your expertise in potions is far superior to most healers.

Thanks again. I am definitely in your debt.

Yours,

Remus

[Note left on the kitchen table along with a half-empty cobalt blue jar with a hand-made label reading "joint salve" in Severus' distinctive script. November 22]

Here is the salve. It should help with any joint pain after the transformation as well as if you have twinges during certain types of weather. I will provide more when you run out.

There is no need to take so many supplement pills. I can brew a tonic that will provide what you need in one daily dose, and it will be more efficacious than what the Healers have provided.

I do not need or want recompense, but if you wish to pay me back, taking that "rocking around the tree" song out of your seasonal music rotation would be a start.

S. Snape

[Letter left on the kitchen table. Morning, November 23]

Severus -

Thank you for the joint salve; it worked fabulously. I used some last night before bed on my shoulders and knees, and I woke completely pain-free for the first time in months. If you were ever interested in marketing and selling your salve, you'd be very rich indeed!

Again, I am in your debt, and I would be very grateful for the tonic. I find swallowing all those pills very tedious, but drinking a single glass of something would be much easier. I've no doubt that anything you make would be much better than what I was given at St. Mungo's.

"Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" has been removed from my collection, as well as all other songs by that artist and other songs which resemble it from a musical standpoint. So you see how grateful I am for everything you have done. If there is anything else, please do let me know.

Yours,

Remus

[Note left on the kitchen table. November 25]

I already am very rich indeed, especially since I have no intention of moving out and leaving you with the entire estate, thus I have no need or desire to sell my save. I have had my fill of dealing with people for one lifetime, and becoming a tradesman would be as bad as, if not worse than being a teacher.

Your tonic will be ready in a few days. I have been preparing the recipe; you I must order a few ingredients which I do not already have in stock.

As I said, I do not need or want recompense; that you removed the obnoxious "song" is enough. The research and preparation of the tonic has given me something productive to do! [in the middle of the night has been scratched out].

S. Snape

[Letter propped on the mantle. November 26]

Severus -

True, you are very rich indeed; I tend to have a hard time remembering that we both are. Having lived on so little for so long, having what I want when I want it is something that I've still not grown used to. I doubt I ever shall!

With respect to the salve, I did notice that the jar was half full. Have you been having any difficulties of your own? If you will excuse my inquisitiveness (and no, I know you won't, but I will ask regardless), perhaps if you are having pain, it might be contributing to your nightmares? I cannot help but notice that you are often up late at night. If you ever feel like company, do come knock on my door. I'm often up very late myself.

Thank you again for the tonic. I'll find a way to repay you somehow!

Yours,

Remus

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[Note left on the kitchen table. November 29. Once again, the parchment is wrinkled as if it had been wadded up, and there are numerous scratch-outs.]

The nightmares have nothing to do with why I require the save. In my time as a double agent, I was tortured when I failed the Dark Lord experienced the Cruciatas more than once was occasionally punished took a certain amount of curse damage that has had lingering effects. I am not up late because of the curse damage, however. I sleep little because I wish to avoid waking up screaming my throat raw the nightmares and because I cannot stop thinking about the past long enough to let myself sleep have insomnia. I see no reason to inflict my sleeplessness on someone else, thus I will remain in my own quarters.

And I repeat: I do not want repayment. I do not want an overzealous werewolf with delusions of honor following me around, attempting to repay a non-existent debt.

S. Snape

[Letter left on the kitchen table. Early morning, November 30]

Severus -

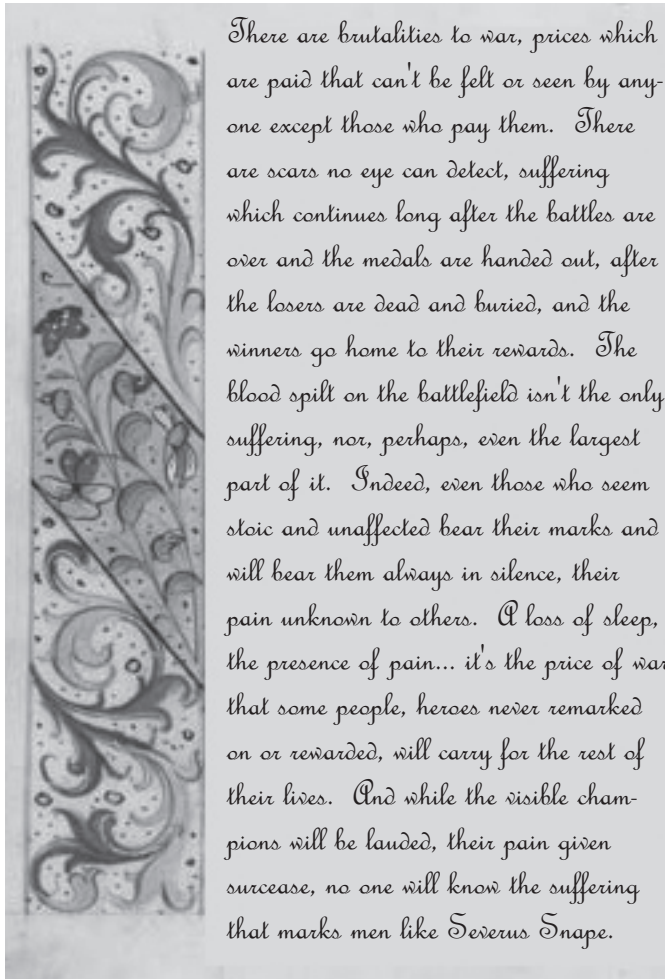
Curse damage? I've heard that repeated exposure to things like the Cruciatas can cause long-term difficulties. I'm sorry that you've been the victim of such. I suppose in a way, it's not unlike my own lingering pain from my curse. As to the insomnia, that's very difficult, I'm sure. I've rarely had to deal with it myself and definitely nothing long term, but I would assume the accumulated effects combined with your pain is a combination that is incredibly unpleasant.

Very well, I will not continue to irritate you about the matter of repayment. But I am grateful, and as you have helped to ease my difficulty and pain, I would not add any burden at all to offer company if you ever require it on those nights when darkness - any Darkness - might be drawing in too closely.

Yours,

Remus

[Excerpt from MS entitled An Order for War - Albus Dumbledore, Severus Snape, and the Wizarding Wars, by R. J. Lupin]



There are brutalities to war, prices which are paid that can't be felt or seen by anyone except those who pay them. There are scars no eye can detect, suffering which continues long after the battles are over and the medals are handed out, after the losers are dead and buried, and the winners go home to their rewards. The blood spilt on the battlefield isn't the only suffering, nor, perhaps, even the largest part of it. Indeed, even those who seem stoic and unaffected bear their marks and will bear them always in silence, their pain unknown to others. A loss of sleep, the presence of pain... it's the price of war that some people, heroes never remarked on or rewarded, will carry for the rest of their lives. And while the visible champions will be lauded, their pain given surcease, no one will know the suffering that marks men like Severus Snape.

[Note left on the kitchen table accompanied by a goblet. Morning, December 2.]

*Here is your last dose for the month.*

*Yes, the combined effects are unpleasant. The damage is not merely from the Cruciatius. There are people on both sides of the war who are creative, shall we say, with their spell work, and I was a double target. As for the darkness, I have lived and dealt with it by myself for twenty-five years. I do not require anyone else's assistance.*

*S. Snape*

[Note left on the mantle. Late evening, December 3]

Severus -

*The Wolfsbane did its normal efficient job keeping the wolf at bay, and it was most pleasant to transform right in my own bed rather than having to worry about dragging myself upstairs or sleeping on a cold stone floor. Between the warmth and comfort and your excellent salve, I feel better today than I have after any transformation in years.*

*You definitely got the worst of both worlds from the war, which is horribly unfair. Yes, I know that life is rarely fair, but it still seems to me that you deserve to be recognized for what you sacrificed and still continue to sacrifice. Unfortunately, I also know that as much as the populace needs heroes, they also need scapegoats. I think the price we both had to pay afterwards shows that being Dark in any way is a guarantee that heroism isn't something to which we can aspire.*

*I've been accused of being overly optimistic before and of seeing too much of the good in people. Those who have said such probably know me least well, since they never see just how hard it is to keep from giving in to the hopelessness that I have very often felt. Perhaps you're right, Severus; everyone can share the light, but we all walk in our Darkness alone.*

*Yours,*

*Remus*

[Note left on the kitchen table. December 4]

*Many people feel I have not received what I deserve, but they are not thinking about recognition for my sacrifices. Believe me, I do not expect recognition, much less for my actions to be regarded as heroism. I have too!*" much blood

on my hands" is scratched out] many burdens to qualify.  
Best to leave that to Potter and his ilk.

You are overly optimistic. I have no use for optimism or hope. I have not been able to rely on either for decades, and I parted ways with them long since. I am alone whether in darkness or not, and I have accepted that fate.

That is why I want this house. It is large and secluded, and I need never see anyone again. I will be able to live the rest of my life in peace and quiet - alone.

S. Snape

[Excerpt from a balled up piece of parchment in the rubbish bin in Remus' study. There are many strike-throughs and inkblots]

Alone. Alone alone alone alone. He wants to be alone, and I... what do I want? Why must I communicate with him? Why do I worry? Why does he matter to me when all he wants is the one thing I don't want - eternal solitude? I thought... well, maybe. Hoped? Dreamed? Stupid. I'm definitely stupid, just as he said. It doesn't matter what I do. He doesn't want me around, he'll never forgive me, he'll never see me as anything but a monster. Why do I care? It shouldn't matter.

It matters. It matters more than I ever could have imagined.

[Letter left on the mantle. December 5]

Severus -

I am going away for a few days, perhaps as much as a week. Perhaps you're right. I have been overly optimistic, and in ways that I am

only now finding are probably even more futile than I had imagined. I suppose I need to think

No matter what, though, don't forget that you are a hero. I may not know much, but I do know that.

Yours,  
Remus

[Letter written on December 6, never sent]

Lupin,

What the devil is going on now? What is all this "you need to think" nonsense? Is that some sort of euphemism for going back for more tests? If you're going to die, do me the courtesy of giving some advance warning so I won't be caught unawares when I find your corpse.

I am not best pleased by this. You put up decorations - and I meant to tell you to stop leaving notes in the parlor where I must subject myself to the sight of Christmas cheer - and then you run off and leave me stuck with seasonal decor. It is hardly fair, and you shouldn't be surprised to return and find it all chucked in the rubbish bin.

S. Snape

[List jotted on the back of an old receipt from Slug & Jiggers, crumpled up and thrown away on December 8]

| Slug & Jiggers   |              |
|--|--------------|
| bee pollen for immune system   | 14 sickels   |
| butcher's broom for circulation  | 2 farthings  |
| 3 bushels tea tree   | 24 galleons  |
| milk thistle for liver   | 12 galleons  |
| 1 jar ground monkey bone   | 123 galleons |
| red clover (needed?)   | 125 galleons |
| 3 jars of moonbeam   |              |
| for sale - comfrey and feverfew running low                                      |              |
| 1 bushel of micorn pain  |              |
| n.b. Check Spirulina's Herbology Compendium for source of vitamin C and calcium. |              |

[letter written on December 9, never sent]

*I could have you thrown out of the house for this, you know. You packed your bags and left, which could easily be interpreted as an intention to move out, and I'm certain I could find a lawyer who would agree. You're damned lucky I haven't begun proceedings to claim the estate as mine.*

S. Snape

*PS - I drank all your cocoa, and I have no intention of replacing it.*

[letter written in the wee hours of the morning on December 12, never sent]

*This is hardly fair. I had only just got used to talking to you, and now you're gone. You're no better than any of the rest of them; you get what you want from me, and then you're off. I should count myself lucky I hadn't done something so colossaly stupid as develop any sort of attachment to you, but I knew this would happen.*

*I suppose, then, I ought to thank you for reminding me of a fundamental truth of my life: no one ever stays. Not my grandfather, not Abus. For all the pretty words used to lure me in, it's always the same in the end. I am always alone. I was in danger of forgetting that for a time thanks to you, but now I remember, and I shan't forget again.*

*I have always been an outsider and never more so than now; for all your prating about people forgiving me, I know better. I know how I am regarded, and I refuse to subject myself to that manner of scorn, loathing, and rejection. Enough is enough. I am tired, and while my life may not be much, I want to spend what is left of it in peace.*

*But I can have no peace while you are in this house, not when I find myself weakening when you are here and missing you when you leave. I cannot decide whom I hate more for it: you or myself.*

[Letter left on the mantle, along with a package of expensive chocolates. December 12]

Severus -

*I returned rather early this morning. I hope I didn't wake you; was trying very carefully to be silent. I noticed that the cocoa was gone; I do hope that it helped you to sleep. I've ordered more, and it should arrive this afternoon with my other foodstuffs.*

*I'm sure you found your peaceful time alone to be restful, and I'm sorry to be inflicting my presence on you again, but I'm afraid I'm here to stay. I would apologize for my abrupt departure, but I suppose you were just as glad I was gone. For my part, I missed our exchanges; strange as they might seem to outsiders, I find our "conversations" to be the highlight of my days.*



Yours,

Remus

*PS - The chocolates are from the best confectioners in Germany. That's where I went, by the way. I wanted to find out if Mum was right about chocolate curing everything, or if you were.*

[A cobalt blue stoppered bottle with a hand-written label reading "take two spoonfuls once daily" is left on the kitchen table along with the unopened package of chocolates. December 15]



[Note left on the kitchen table, December 16]

Severus -

Thank you for the supplements. It is so much better than taking all those pills! Your talents never fail to impress me.

I'm sorry if you didn't like the chocolates.

Yours,

Remus

[Letter left on the mantle, December 19]

Severus -

Your supplements are definitely doing the job. I'm feeling better already.

I noticed you've not replied to me. Is there something wrong? Have I done something to make you especially angry with me? If so, I'm sorry, and I'd be more than happy to do whatever I can to make it up to you.

Yours,

Remus

[Note left on the kitchen table. December 20]

Even if I wanted you to "make it up" to me, you could not. Just leave me alone.

[Note left on the kitchen table. Late evening, December 20]

Severus -

How do you know I couldn't if you won't let me try? And I did try leaving you alone; for some reason, it's almost as though you seem to be angry with me for it.

Yours,

Remus