When Snakes Fall, Lions Do Too.

by **pinkwar**

**Summary**

The tri wizard tournament hasn't just brought dragons to Hogwarts it's brought the Yule ball as well and Harmony Potter is stressing, badly. Frankly she'd rather take on the dragon again than this.

The boy who asked her to the ball seems intent on keeping her at arms length despite her really wanting him to do otherwise, the dress she falls in love with may just send her dad to St Mungos with a coronary.

If that wasn't bad enough, she of the; let's just trip over this thin air persuasion, has to dance in front of a hall full of students, some of which -cough- slytherins- cough- want nothing more than to see her fall flat on her face.

Honestly Harmony Is so over the ruddy thing and it's not even started yet, if she ever finds the idiot who thought the yule ball was a good idea she'll put their balls in a vice and cut them off.

The only plus side she can see to the night Is that she might be able to wrangle her long awaited kiss out of her possibly, may be, hopefully boyfriend.
And don't even get her started on the semi sentient statue wandering the rose garden.

Notes

Yay, it finally here, the sequel/ counter POV to when snakes fall do Lions stand aside

To any old readers welcome back and to any new ones just plain welcome, and I Hope you all enjoy this story.

Honestly this had been a bit of a sod to write in places but it's finally finished- starts sobbing in relief- and ready to be posted. as I said the story Is complete and I will post chapters as they are edited.

which brings me on to a posting schedule.

You know when I called the other fics in this Au Monsters? well it turns out I'm a Lying Liar who Lies. Those fics were mere minnows compared to this thing, honestly I don't want to tell you the word count in case you run away screaming. (^^)

Suffice it to say the posting schedule is likely to be every other day since the chapters are pretty big.

If you want to know the time line for this Au it's at the start of when Snakes fall do Lions stand aside. Its useful to know, but honestly I don't think any one will be to lost if they don't want to read it.

now that, that's all sorted lets get on with the fic. Enjoy !

See the end of the work for more notes.
Petulant Potters and Parental Pillow fights

Tuesday 13th December

Harmony Potter was lounging in a squishy chair, in front of the fire in her parents chambers. Her legs were casually swung over the arm of the chair, while she repeatedly threw a plushie snitch in the air (She didn’t know where it had come from, but she had a sneaking suspicion that it belonged to Padfoot); and she was doing what teenagers do best.

Complaining.

Her dad was no where in sight. He was Probably off doing something juvenile with Padfoot. She was sure of it.

Her mum on the other hand, was grading essays at her desk in the corner, and as far as Harmony could tell; only listening to her with half an ear.

“I just don’t know what to do mum. Me and Hermione went to Gladrags the other day, and there’s absolutely nothing there. At least nothing that would’ve fitted and looked good anyway. I mean I’m not massively bothered about what I wear; I’m not Pansy Parkinson after all, but I’ll be damned if I wear something that’s so froufrou and pink that I look like those things aunt Petunia puts over her toilet rolls”.

(Harmony had only been to her aunts house once in her life, aged all of eight, but the experience was so horrifying she didn’t think she’d ever forget it. Everything was just so twee and pink!)

Harmony felt an involuntary shudder race through her and she stopped throwing the toy.

She honestly wasn’t sure which memory was more horrid; her aunts house in Surrey or that monstrosity of a dress.

The Gladrags gown danced it’s way to the fore front of her mind and she screwed her face up in disgust, the gown was definitely worse; she didn’t care if it was the only thing that would’ve fitted her, she wouldn’t have been seen dead in the thing.

She’d looked through all the racks in the shop for anything that would fit her and had come up empty, in the end she’d given in and asked the sales witch if they had anything in her rather petite sizing.

With a snide look from the rather uppity woman, she’d been handed a mound of pink tulle, that was claiming to be a dress and told that that was all they had for someone of her.. Ahem.. underdeveloped stature.

With a bitchy smile the witch had wandered off, leaving her and Hermione gawking at the woman’s audacity.

Harmony didn’t know what exactly had got up the sale witches nose, but the woman had looked at her and Hermione like a pair of flea ridden cats long before Harmony had asked for assistance.

She'd looked at them like it, as soon as they'd entered the shop, infact.

Although Harmony will readily admit that she’d probably not helped matters by deliberately running her hands over every gown she could reach just to see the horrid woman twitch, it had all
been rather fun in it’s own way.

Of course when she’d started her little game she hadn’t counted on the fact that she might need the woman’s assistance at some stage.

Harmony was half convinced that the sales witch had deliberately handed her the awful dress just to be a cow.

As the woman had walked a way and left them to it, Harmony hadn’t made any attempt what so ever to try the dress on; it was just too hideous to even contemplate wearing it.

If the woman’s uncalled for attitude wasn’t astonishing enough, when Harmony had attempted to put the monstrosity of a gown back on the sales rack, some apparently desperate girl had come over and snatched it from her hand before running off to the counter to purchase it.

She hadn’t even looked at the tag to check the size.

She and Hermione had gawked after the girl, watching as she’d quickly paid and then fled the shop; as if Harmony might chase her down for the disgusting thing.

“I mean seriously, you should have seen the thing mum. It looked like it could have danced on it’s own, the skirt was so big and it had these massive ruffled sleeve that would have made me look like I was growing feathers. I’d rather go to the ball naked, than wear something like that”.

Lily answered her daughter distractedly, not even looking up from her grading. Her bright purple fountain pen scritching over the various essays she had in front of her.

“Well that would certainly gain the boys attention, though I wouldn’t count on your father surviving the night if you do... or Severus for that matter”.

Harmony could hear the Humour in her mums voice, and she got the sudden urge to throw the stuffed toy she was twiddling with at her mums head.

Her mum might be finding her inability to find a dress that didn’t look like an engorged flamingo entertaining, but Harmony certainly wasn’t; this was serious!.

“muuum, I’m serious what do I do?, there isn’t another Hogsmead weekend before the day of the ball and that’ll be too late for me to buy a dress and get it fitted”.

Lily finally looked up from her work and gave her daughter a smug look.

“I told you while we were buying your school things that we needed to get you a gown for the ball. But you were quite adamant that you wouldn’t need one, in fact I can remember exactly what you said when I made the suggestion; what do I need a bloody dress for mum! it’s not like I’ll be going to the blasted thing”.

Harmony scowled at her mum, looking every inch the petulant teenager.

she hadn’t appreciated the imitation her mother had just done of her, or that she’d pointed out that she’d had the opportunity to get a gown and wasted it

“yeah well, as a champion I've got no bloody fucking choice anymore have I?”.

“Language Harmony!”, Came Lily’s admonishment, she knew James and Sirius would be a bad influence on her daughter.
Letting out a soft humph, Harmony threw the snitch across the room where it landed on the carpet with a soft thump before she crossed her arms over her chest; feeling rather put out by her mum’s logic.

Lily remembered this expression well from when she’d been a little girl, it was usually used on James or Sirius when Lily had put Harmony in time out; and Harmony had decided that time outs were stupid and that she wanted her toys or when she got a little older her training broom back.

Too Lily’s consternation the look worked on James and Sirius every damn time.

Lily raised an unimpressed eyebrow at her daughter’s petulant display.

She could be so like her father at times, that Lily sometimes despaired. Unlike her husband and his best friend though, Lily refused to be swayed by her pouting daughter.

Most of the time Harmony knew she wouldn’t get anywhere by acting like a brat, sometimes though; like now, she needed reminding.

“And who’s fault is it exactly; that you’re in the tournament in the first place?”.

“The twins”, Harmony answered immediately, a butter wouldn’t melt smile slapping it’s self on her face.

“Try again young lady. They may have dared you to enter, but no one held a gun to your head and made you do it; you could have said No. Even if it did mean you’d lose face with that pair of trouble makers, the mess you’re in at the moment is your fault entirely”.

Harmony groaned. “Thanks mum, you really know how to cheer someone up”.

She was already wallowing in misery over her lack of dress; her mother pointing out the fact that needing to go to the bloody ball in the first place was her own damn fault, wasn’t helping her mood any.

Deciding that she didn’t want to face her mum’s admonishment over something that was already making her feel rather miserable, one way or another; she pulled out the pillow that was tucked behind her back and attempted to smother herself with it.

*If I hold it here long enough, maybe I’ll suffocate and I won’t need to go the ball at all.*

A rather annoying voice that sounded suspiciously like her inner girl pointed out that if she didn’t go to the ball she definitely wouldn’t get her chance with Severus, Harmony decided to ignore the voice for the time being.

From behind her pillow’s face mask, Harmony could hear the soft pad of socked feet walking over the stone floor, before the pillow was gently lifted off her face.

A waft of jasmine reached her nose; and Harmony found herself looking up in to the fondly twinkling eyes of her mum.

Harmony wasn’t sure if it was wishful thinking or not, but she was sure her mum looked a little more sympathetic to her plight than she had a moment ago.

“Look what’s done is done and I won’t bring it up again; but it’s no use wallowing Harmony. You’re a Gryffindor; we thrive on action, not sitting around twiddling our thumbs waiting for a solution to show up”.

Harmony felt like rolling her eyes at her mother but refrained; she knew it wouldn’t gain her any points, certainly not after the attitude she already displayed to her mum that night.

“That’s all very well and good mum, but what else can I do exactly?. I’m a fifteen year old witch stuck in a boarding school in the middle of Scotland. The only dress shop in miles, which as I said I’ve already looked in and found nothing, is situated in a village that I’m forbidden from entering until the next authorised weekend. Which is on the day of the ball!. What am I supposed to do? sneak out in the middle of the night and raid the place, and hope they might have something in the back?. I’m pretty sure Sirius might end up being called. I can just imagine the papers now, Hogwarts champion arrested for crimes against fashion!”

Releasing another groan at this thought, Harmony pulled the pillow out of her mums hands, quite determined to give smothering herself another chance.

Lily smiled at her daughters dramatics, and gently pulled the pillow away from her daughter face again.

A pair of sulky, vibrant green eyes stared back at her.

“Or instead of becoming a felon in the name of fashion, you could just ask your mum to take you shopping after lessons end tomorrow”.

The sulky look left Harmony eyes instantly and she lit up like a Christmas tree, before throwing her arms around her mum and hugging her tightly in gratitude.

Lily returned the gesture happily, she could never get enough hugs off her daughter and she received far fewer than she once did now that she was a teenager.

“Thank you soo much mum, You really don’t know how thankful I am for this you know”.

The thank you was muffled, because her daughters face was smushed just below her shoulder, but Lily heard it well enough.

The feeling of relief was short lived however and Harmony pulled away from her mum as a nagging thought entered her head.

“Are you sure you can take me off the grounds in the middle of the week though?. I don’t want you getting in to trouble, not over something as stupid as a dress. No matter how much I need it”.

Lily held her daughters face in her hands and gave her another fond look, Harmony might act petulant and pouty sometimes, but when it came down to it; her daughter always put everyone elses welfare before her own needs.

“Honey, I’d like to see anyone tell me I can’t take my own daughter shopping, besides Minerva will approve”.

Lily suddenly got a mischievous sparkle in her eyes.

“She wouldn’t want her champion turning up starkers in front the others schools, it might give the wrong impression after all”.

Harmony let out an indignant squawk.

She grabbed the pillow that had fallen on the floor when she’d hugged Lily and thwacked her mum squarely over the head with it for the comment.
Lily looked taken aback for a moment, before a smile graced her lips, never one to be out done she quickly grabbed another pillow and thwacked her daughter back.

It was this sight that James walked in on some Twenty minutes later.

The room was covered in feathers from where one of the pillows had burst in impact and Harmony and Lily were giggling and Laughing wildly; as they continued to bash each other with various throw pillows and somthing that looked suspiciously like a dog shaped draft excluder.

Where that had come from James had no idea.

“Oi, what’s all this?, leaving your old man out of a full blown pillow fight, it’s a disgrace!. I’ll have you know I’m a champion pillow fighter”.

Harmony glanced over at the doorway where her dad now stood.

Still giggling, she set down the pillow she’d been using moments before and started to brush feathers off her baggy green shirt.

“Hi dad, it wasn’t planned I promise. Next time I’ll remember to inform you well in advance of any pillow fights”.

James sniffed slightly putting on a mock aristocratic air of indignation, “See that you do”, before letting out a big grin and beckoning Harmony over for a hug.

Harmony stopped trying to brush feathers from her shirt and went willingly, with in seconds she was engulfed in her dads strong arms, and she was surrounded by the warm comforting smell of lime and musk.

She felt herself relax in to the hug instantly.

She may have been fifteen, but that didn’t mean she loved her dads hugs any less, and while she might not ask for hugs off either of her parents like she once had; that didn’t mean she was going to turn one down when it was freely offered.

“What are you doing in here any way fawn?, you’re not normally down here on a school night, is something wrong”.

Harmony could hear the instant that her dads voice went from warm and welcoming to tense and worried and held back a sigh, her dad was so very overprotective sometimes.

While she appreciated it in the abstract, actually living with it was becoming a little suffocating as she got older.

She didn’t say this to him of course, she never wanted to disappoint her dad if she could help it and she had no desire to see the look on his face if she actually came out and voiced her thoughts.

“No, no, nothing wrong, just a small issue about the ball, mums sorted it now”.

A small wooden white owl came out of the clock over the fire, and started to hoot the time.

It was nine o’clock; Harmony made a face.

“I better go, Hermione wanted to go over our potions notes before bed tonight, Professor Penwood said we’d have an exam in the morning and Hermione’s worried about it for some reason. No idea why of course, I think she just likes to turn my brain in to goo every few days”.

Harmony gave both her mum and her dad a quick kiss on their cheeks before she said goodnight.

Leaving behind her parents cosey quarters she started to head for Gryffindor tower.
you're not trying to hatch that egg are you?

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies,

Hope you like this next chapter, it's nothing but Harmony and Sev interaction, something that's not yet been seen in this verse, well not when they've got the full ability of speech and enough teenage hormones to throw a rock at from space, any way.

I've also just realised that I haven't put a single disclaimer on this verse any where, so here goes, Ahem...

I, Michelle being of sound mind and body do hereby bequeath.. nope that the wrongs one lets try again.

disclaimer:
All characters excepting any original characters are the sole property of J K Rowling and her various subsidiaries, I make no profit from this work, and it's only for the enjoyment of myself and my readers.

There I think that might do the trick. (^^)

well now that the legal shits out the way lets get on with the fic.
Enjoy !

As much as Harmony loved Hogwarts, she couldn’t help but feel that there had to be a better ways of lighting a magic school at night, other than a few random torches or sconces on the walls.

Everything was so heavily shadowed, it made the normally safe feeling corridors feel really quite creepy.

Not only that, you could never really see who might be lurking in the various alcoves, or further along the corridor; simply because they were both eclipsed by the never ending gloom.

She’d been hexed more than once by Pucey or Malfoy, in these lower corridors, where natural light rarely reached.

They usually managed to get the drop on her, simply because they were hiding in plain sight. The shadows were so thick that it made anyone hiding in the alcoves invisible to anyone walking past.

Not that their victories ever lasted long, she always got them back worse than they got her.

Harmony was so lost in her thoughts, thinking about if someone might be lurking in the shadows; that she failed to notice two things in the dank corridor.

The first was that she was about to trip over a flagstone that was jutting up at an odd angle, and the Second was that, there was someone else in the corridor with her, blending seamlessly in to the
shadows and walking on near silent feet.

They weren’t trying to hex her though or even hide from her, the person was actually heading straight for her.

Which turned out to be a good thing, because just as the person started to become fully visible through the dimness, Harmony caught her foot on the aforementioned flag stone and started to tumble.

She would’ve surely smacked her chin on the flagstones, if it wasn’t for a pair of long fingered pale hands suddenly clasping her upper arms.

She didn’t need to look up to know who those fingers belonged too.

They’d starred in quite a few of her dreams as of late... and she needed to stop that thought right now.

Just before she started to turn post box red from her.. ahem.. thoughts. A low velvet drawl broke through them, which didn't help the thoughts any; but did remind her she needed to concentrate.

“Miss potter, what may I ask are you doing loitering around the lower corridors at this time of night”.

Harmony thoughts halted and she rolled her eye’s at her friend, boyfriend, friend, whatever he currently was.

Severus was obviously in prefect mode at the moment.

Not that she minded, she could have some fun with this.

Her eyes glittered at Severus in the torch light, while her tongue poked out from between her teeth slightly, a cheeky smile touching the corners of her mouth.

“Oh you know, just randomly charming suits of armour, ransacking the teachers quarters, snogging random boys. You know, really extreme levels of mischief. You might just have to take me with you and give me detention, mister perfect prefect”.

Severus merely raised an unimpressed eyebrow at her, his face remaining as stoic as ever and giving a way nothing of his thoughts.

Harmony huffed.

Clearly the boy wasn’t in a playful mood tonight.

Then again when was he ever really, if she didn’t force it out of him.

“Fine, if you must know I’ve been in my parents chambers. I had something to discuss with mum about the ball”.

Severus would still look stoic to any one that didn’t know him well, but Harmony could clearly see that he’d become curious at her statement. Before she could ask why (after all it wasn’t unusual for her to visit her parents); he was reaching a hand out towards her face.

For one heart stopping moment, she thought he might be about to grasp her chin and kiss her, but that moment was short lived.
His hand slid straight past her face and grasped something in her hair instead.

Harmony had to roll her eyes internally, of course he wasn’t about to kiss her. He’d done nothing even remotely boyfriendly since he’d asked her to the ball as his actual date.

More than ten days and the only thing he’d done, that could be even remotely construed as an action of some one who’s more than a friend, is that he’d unexpectedly grabbed her hand when they’d been walking down the charms corridor last Tuesday.

Which was not something she counted, since frankly speaking he’d only grabbed her hand in the first place because he’d had to pull her out of the way of some stampeding Hufflepuffs.

You’d have thought that her saying yes to being his actual date, might’ve made him a little more forward, (Parvati and Lavender certainly seemed to think it should), but he seemed determined to keep them as far inside the, ‘just friends’ zone as he could reasonably get away with.

What he was waiting for, she really wasn’t sure. She’d given him endless signals, but nothing seemed to be working.

May be she just wasn’t attractive enough?.

Her thoughts refocused on the present, as his hand came back in to view. She could just see the small white feather he was grasping between his thumb and forefinger.

“Are you sure you’ve been visiting Professor Evans? It looks more like you’ve been fighting with Hagrid's chickens; or trying to turn yourself in to one. Sitting on that golden egg of yours won’t give you any answers you know”.

Harmony felt an indignant retort on the tip of her tongue, but she stopped it at the last second.

Through the gloom she could just make out the slight flicker of a smile dancing around the dour boy’s thin lips and a rare sparkle of mischief in his dark glittering eyes.

Her earlier assumption had obviously been wrong, Severus was apparently up for being playful after all, even if it was in his own slightly dry manner.

No one would believe me if I told them.

“Har, bloody har, I haven’t been trying to hatch my golden egg or fight Hagrid's chickens, thank you very much. My mum said something and it dissolved in to a pillow fight. Simple as that”.

“Hmm, a likely story I'm sure Miss Potter”.

Severus’s eyes were still glittering at her as he said this, but he’d schooled his features to his normal stoicism, putting the perfect prefect routine on once more.

Harmony didn’t mind too much.

 Honestly this felt like the closest she was likely get to outright flirting with the boy, and frankly she was desperate enough to grasp at it with both hands and savour it.

Harmony could feel his eyes assessing her and felt drawn to the gaze; before a thought came barging in to her head with all the finesse of a heard of elephants.

She shouldn’t be able to be pseudo flirting with him at all, she shouldn't even have been able to trip in to him as she had, because he shouldn't even be down here, not yet anyway.
Prefects rounds didn’t start for another thirty minutes at least; and students weren’t allowed near the teachers chambers unless they were on patrol.

Harmony new this first hand, the rule had caused her all sorts of problems when she’s tried to visit her parents as a first year.

The prefects kept giving her detention for being in a staff only area, they didn’t seem to want to grasp the fact that she was well with in her right to be there since her parents were both members of staff.

Harmony eyed Severus suspiciously.

“What are you doing down here anyway?, Rounds don’t start for a while yet; so there’s no need for you to be this close to the staff chambers”.

“I am down here Miss Potter, because I am endeavouring to look for trouble and mischief. The darkness gives students the bravery to try getting up to all sorts, I need to be here to stop the dunderheads having to much unsolicited fun”.

Harmony rolled her eyes so hard this time she felt them almost wrench in their sockets.

Typical.

“I can never understand why they made you a prefect, you’re such a hard arse. Since they gave you the power to deduct them, the points tallies have never been lower ”.

Severus gave her a bland look remaining completely straight faced.

“They made me a prefect; because I’m good at ratting out miscreant little pre-pubescent cretins who have more hormones than sense”.

Harmony shook her head good naturedly at him. He never seemed to remember that he was one of those cretins too.

“No wonder I'm one of your only friends Sev, well go on then. Go and find your miscreant dunderheads, I won’t keep you from your fun. I’ve got to get back to Gryffindor tower any way. Hermione might just disembowel me, if I miss our study session”.

As she went to brush past him, Severus’s hand closed around her upper arm.

Clearly he didn’t want to relinquish her attention quite yet. Harmony felt her self go a little gooey at that thought, and admonished herself for acting like such a.. girl.

This isn't one of your romance novels, stop acting like it is

piss off

“Well I did say I was looking for trouble and mischief too”.

Severus’s gaze swept over her from the top of her feathered head to the bottom of her ratty trainers.

Harmony felt herself squirm just a little under Severus's gaze and she wondered how lacking she must appear to him with her hair full of feathers and wearing a shirt three sizes to big.

“And I think you fit the bill quite well”.

Harmony stopped wondering if she was coming up to snuff and let out an offended huff (she was doing that a lot tonight, why was everyone picking on her?).

Severus dropped his stoic look when she huffed and let a small grin overtake his features instead, though he was loath to admit it he found her offended face rather adorable under the right circumstances.

Harmony forgot to feel offended and instead, felt momentarily weak kneed at the sight of Severus’s small grin.

For him it was the equivalent of a full blown dimpling smile, and she was only human after all.

“I think it would be in the schools best interests, if I were to escort you up to your tower”.

He held out an arm for her to take. She gave him a contemplating look before happily latching on the his arm. It was almost a boyfriend type gesture.

So she'd take it while she could.

“I think you just want an excuse to give me a goodnight kiss”.

_well a girl can hope at least._

As the pair started down the corridor she noted that Severus had gone stiff shouldered at her comment. His usual shutters had come down over his eyes; and the playful grin? That was now nothing more than a brief memory to his lips.

_What is so wrong with me, that the boy, I'm sort of, may be dating, doesn't want to kiss me?. I mean why ask me to the ball on a proper date at all, if he’s not that interested? I was more than happy for us to go as friends; even if I do and did want more._

_So why won’t he kiss me._

_May be he’s thinks you won’t be any good._

_Fuck off._

As Severus walked Harmony towards the tower, he noticed that she’d lapsed in to a thoughtful, but slightly pensive silence.

She was unconsciously biting her lip, something that Severus had to block out; lest he do something stupid, like give her the goodnight kiss she’d joked about.

It wasn’t that he didn’t want to kiss her; by Salazar and Merlin he wanted to more than anything else.

But he was intensely worried; that once he did, she’d decide she didn’t like his teeth or the way that he kissed or just didn’t feel anything for him at all like _that_, and that they should go back to being _Just_ friends, and that she'd realise that she'd only wanted to date him because she was caught up in the romance of the ball.

It didn’t bare thinking about, It would kill him inside if that transpired, especially after having the possibility of more dangled so tantalising close.

He was more than aware that he’d have to give in to his urge and kiss her eventually. Harmony was (rightly) getting upset with his less than subtle rebuffs. As much as he feared what would
happen when they did finally kiss, he hated seeing her hurt all the more.

(No matter how well she sometimes hid it).

He was resolved however, that he wouldn’t give in and kiss her the way they both (hopefully) wanted; before the night of the ball.

Originally the plan had been to go as friends and he'd been content with that, even happy about. After all he'd wanted to use the ball as a stepping stone to ask her out on his own terms.

The thought being if she agreed once the ball was done, she really did want him and wasn't just getting caught up in some wild romantic notion.

But that plan had been thoroughly shot to hell.

Severus felt a scowl cross his face.

It'd all been that stupid ponce Diggory fault, he'd seen him hanging around Harmony one too may times lately; one to many for the git not to be interested in her.

Then last week Severus and Harmony had been sat at one of the library tables; he was studying, she was trying to get him to stop studying by throwing small paper balls at his head. Quite a normal day all things considered, then out of the corner of his eye, he'd seen Diggory seemingly having some sort of internal conflict in front of a nearby shelf before he'd headed towards their table with a look of resolve firmly etched on his face.

Severus had known what was about to transpire and saw his chance suddenly slipping through his fingers, why would Harmony want to date him if she was given the chance of some one like Diggory?. What else was Severus to do, but throw his original plan out of the window and ask Harmony to the ball there and then.

Severus would be damned if the glory seeking Hufflepuff fathead thought he would take his girl to the ball.

He'd seen Diggory come to a halt at his blurted proposal and Harmony had blinked at him a few times, before saying that she'd thought they were going to the ball together.

Severus had clarified that he was asking her as his actual date, Harmony's smile had been breath taking, and he'd watched Diggory slink off. He'd felt rather smug at the time.

And then the doubts that had already been circling in his head about asking her out returned full force, his belief set in, that doing any type of boyfriend (merlin he hated that word) type things, holding hands, cuddling, kissing. Any of it. Might be found lacking in some manner, and it might turn her off the thought of them as a couple before he got the chance to prove he could be all that she would ever need.

And he couldn't have that.

He was determined that the evenings special memories would belong to him and him alone. She was his dammit, whether she approved or not, in the end she’d been his for thirteen years and some upstart Hufflepuff with perfect white teeth wasn’t going to take her from him.

So he came to the conclusion that he needed to refrain from any type of intimate contact with her to avoid falling at the last hurdle, he needed that ball to make sure she would never feel like she'd been given the short end of the stick by picking him.
This meant the kiss couldn't take place in some dark little corridor or outside some leering portrait of a fat woman.

He hadn't waited three years to ask her out, for his chance to end prematurely. After all it was likely to be his only chance.

Though it didn't bare thinking about if she ended up not wanting to remain as more, once he'd given her the best first kiss he could provide, then he'd let her go.

It'd hurt like hell; but he would let her go.

His future happiness depended on getting her to consent to remaining his, everything hinged on this kiss.

Severus was so caught in anxious thoughts of his own he didn't realise that they'd reached the portrait of the fat lady until he realised that Harmony was looking at him expectantly.

So expectantly that it hurt him some where deep inside.

Glancing in to her shining tsavorite eyes, he felt himself crumble, he couldn't deny her completely but he couldn't give her the kiss she wanted quite yet either.

Severus came to the conclusion that a brief kiss on her cheek wouldn't be enough the possibly send her running, but it might be enough to stop the inevitable hurt if he out right refused to kiss her good night the way she wanted.

Hoping that his plan was sound Severus leaned forwards and placed his thin chapped lips on her smooth cheek.

As soon as Severus did it he knew he'd made a mistake, it was the most intimate he'd ever been to Harmony and it sent his hormones in to overdrive.

His nose and his senses were filled with the scent of roses and lavender, he wanted to roll around in the smell, he wanted to clutch at it and never let it go. The urge to kiss her properly or put his lips against her throbbing pulse point became almost to much to bare.

He pulled himself back from her with difficulty, and came to the conclusion that now that he'd had that taste he was going to have to flat out avoid her if he wanted to get to the night of the ball without dragging her in to the nearest alcove and kissing her senseless.

He avoided her searching gaze and gave her (even by his standards) a slightly gruff goodnight and billowed off down the corridor; feeling more tension from that rather innocent kiss than any teenager had a right too.

Hopefully he could find some students breaking their curfew. They'd do nicely to take his frustrations out on.

Harmony watched bemused as her surly maybe, boyfriend billowed off down the hall.

His lips felt so nice against my cheek, I really hope I get to kiss them soon. Maybe I should just grab him unawares, drag him in to an alcove and snog the ever living daylights out of him.

Harmony sighed unhappily and climbed through the portrait feeling rather glum at the lack of a proper kiss goodnight.
She had at least two hours of tedious study notes ahead of her courtesy of Hermione. Maybe they’d take her mind off her surly possibly, maybe boyfriend and her apparent unkissability.

She doubted it though.

Chapter End Notes

Well I hope you liked this chapter, the next one should be up no later than Tuesday.

Comments and Kudos make my day so leave them if you feel inclined, if you don't then once again I Hope you liked this chapter and I hope to see you for chapter 3.

if you see and grammar or spelling mistakes let me know and I'll deal with them asap.

see y'all soon. (^^)
Love at first sight.

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies (^^)

I imagine you're a little surprised to see this since I said Tuesday for the next chapter but the editing on this was less than I expected and I got done a lot quicker.

I hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

At 6 o’clock the next evening, Harmony made her way towards the charms classroom, her mum should’ve finished her last lesson by now.

She hadn’t said where they were going in the note that was delivered at breakfast. All it said was they would be back in time for class the next morning, but they wouldn’t be returning tonight, so she needed to bring a few things with her and to wear a coat, not a cloak.

Intrigued beyond belief, but knowing pestering her mum for information to be futile; she’d not asked any questions. She’d just gone and packed a few essentials in to her school bag, once her classes were finished.

Entering the charms room, she could see that her mum had a few lingering students, (Ravenclaws, who else) whom she was talking to.

So Harmony set her bag on the floor and slumped down in to a desk at the back of the room to wait.

It was times like these she wished muggle contraptions worked in the castle, what she wouldn’t give to have a working Mp3 player here.

Her mum didn’t take as long as Harmony thought she might and soon Lily was ushering her out of the class room and through the corridors towards of all things the Headmistresses office.

After knocking on the door, Mcgonagall's stern Scottish brogue rang out.

“Enter”

Harmony pushed door open with a slight shove and went in.

As much as she tried; Harmony could never shake the feeling that this office meant she was in trouble.

As her mum closed the door behind them, she saw Mcgonagall finally look up from the mounds of paper work that were scattered in various piles over the elderly witches desk.

“Good evening Miss Potter, your mother requested to be able to remove you from the school for the night, in order that she might take you shopping. Under normal circumstances, I would most likely not agree to such.. favouritism for lack of a better word”.
Mcgonagall’s eyes started to twinkle like Dumbledor’s once had.

“However, your mother has informed me; you are quite prepared to go to the ball naked if a gown can’t be found, and we certainly can’t have that”.

Harmony felt herself flush, she couldn’t believe that her mum and the Headmistress were making fun of her like this.

Actually no, scratch that, she could believe it of her mum. She just couldn’t believe it of the normally stern Scottish witch.

Harmony opened her mouth to respond and nothing came out, she really didn’t know what to say to the strange situation of her elderly Headmistress taking the mick.

“I see, Miss Potter, that I have finally found some way of making you quiet. Such a shame it probably won’t work again”.

The witch got up from her desk and retrieved an old broken china cup.

“She held it out for the mother and daughter to take.

“This is your portkey, it will activate as soon as you both grab it and take you to your destination. It will activate again at exactly 7:25 tomorrow morning and drop you out side the main gates. I suggest you not miss it, I will be very displeased if I’m missing both a professor and a student in classes tomorrow”.

Lily took the broken cup from the headmistress with a grateful smile.

“Thank you Minerva, I trust it’ll drop us off in the place I suggested?”.

Harmony looked at her mother curiously, what place?

“Yes, just mind that you’re not spotted by any muggles”.

Muggles?. Where the hell was her mother taking her?.

Before she could ask, her mum was telling her to grab her bag and grip the portkey.

It only felt like she'd gripped it for all of a second before the uncomfortable feeling of a hook behind her naval appeared, and Mcgonagall’s office disappeared around them.

The next thing Harmony knew, she’d landed in an absolutely filthy alley.

There was an overflowing bin in one corner. While a dim muggle street lamp, twitched and sputtered its light over the grimy area.

There was a distinct smell of Eu Du urine about the place too.

Harmony had to ask her self why on earth her mother had bought her wherever the hell this was.

Lily for her part was quite pleased, they’d landed exactly where she'd wanted them to.

“mum”.

Harmony started quite slowly, wondering at her mothers sanity for requesting this drop off area.
“where the fucking hell, are we?”.

“Language Harmony, and where we are will become quite clear in a moment. Come on make sure you’ve got your bag; we need to get to the hotel, it shouldn’t be far from here”.

With that Lily started to walk off, clearly expecting her daughter to follow. Seeing no other option Harmony hurried after her.

Emerging out of the disgusting alley, she was momentarily stunned to see they had emerged in what appeared to be muggle London.

The street was full of people bustling back and forth doing last minute Christmas shopping; while all around vibrantly coloured store fronts twinkled invitingly in to the dark December night.

All seemingly trying to out do each other, with how bright and inviting they could be.

Harmony felt the momentary Gryffindor itch to explore.

A large red bus rumbled past breaking her from her awed staring.

Harmony quickly tried to catch her mother in the crowd of shoppers. She just managed to catch her at a set of traffic lights, before they went on walk and her mother would have been swallowed by the holiday crowd once more.

Lily to a sharp left and led them in to a much quieter side street. It was hard to believe the bustle that existed no more than ten steps away.

“Why didn’t you tell me we were going to London?”.

Lily smiled at her daughter, more than a little smugly.

“What, and ruin the surprise, I think not. Your dads not the only one who likes being sneaky you know, and I so rarely get to indulge, what with your father always getting in to mischief”.

Harmony gave her mum a knowing look, she had a suspicion that her dad didn’t know where they’d come anymore than she had.

“Does he know we’ve come to muggle London?”,

Lily shook her head in the negative, a sly smile gracing her lips.

“Nope, and I expect you to keep this secret. If he finds out we came to muggle London with out him, at christmas time no less, he’d go bonkers. Don’t get me wrong, I love your father to pieces, but there are some things that mothers and daughters should do alone and dress shopping is one of them”.

Lily looked left and right before leading Harmony over the road and towards what looked like a smallish town house.

“If I’d said I was taking you to muggle London, he’d have tried to barge in and bring Sirius too. You know they can’t resist the muggle store fronts, they always want to know how they work and then they end up causing such scenes, when they inevitabally try to find out’”

Harmony nodded her head sagely, she could remember one very memorable occasion, with her dad and padfoot.
She’d been six.

Her mum had been busy, and unable to take her to get a birthday gift for a muggle girl in her primary school, who was having a party the next day. So she’d asked her dad and padfoot to take Harmony to the toy shop for her.

The whole thing should have been simple, but Lily obviously hadn’t counted on the lack of good sense that James and Sirius showed when they were alone together.

They hadn’t been in the shop long, when Sirius and her dad had started to wonder what was making the oversized toys in the window move.

Instead of leaving them alone, or asking one of the staff how they worked. The pair of them had the bright idea to leave Harmony alone, (to continue looking at a vast array of small blond dolls in bright pink boxes); while they got inside the window display, intent on having a closer look at the giant toys.

Needless to say the shop staff were less than pleased about having to remove two full grown men from their window.

Particularly given that Sirius in his search for answers had (somehow) removed the head of the giant waving teddy and scared a few dozen children in the process.

All three of them were thrown out of the store and Harmony didn’t get a present for the girl.

She wasn’t invited to any more birthday parties after turning up without a gift.

Not that it mattered in the end, her accidental magic had gone so haywire a few months later that her mum had to take her out of the muggle primary anyway.

After all they couldn’t leave her there when she was apparating on to the roof.

“So... where exactly does dad think we are then?”. Harmony asked her mum curiously.

She watched her mother ring the door bell of the town house and the door opened with not one behind it.

This had to be the hotel her mum had spoken of, though if the door was any indication Harmony didn’t think if was a muggle one.

Once they were inside the door snapped shut behind them with neither of them touching it and Lily answered her curious daughter.

“Your dad assumed we were going to magical London, and since I didn’t correct his assumption, it made all the difference. He wasn’t the least bit interested in coming to Diagon alley, he just hoped we had a nice night”.

By now they were walking down a corridor that was definitely longer and darker than it had any right to be, before they emerged into a well lit foyer.

Off to the side there was a small wooden desk that barely reached Harmony’s knees and behind the desk was a beaming house elf, with green tennis ball sized eyes and wearing of all things, a child’s race car onesie and a tea cosy on it’s head.

“huh”
definitely not a muggle hotel'.

After checking in, her mum dragged her back in to the bustling streets of London, leaving their small bags to the very helpful and rather flamboyant elf.

It may have been nearly eight at night, but the streets hadn’t seemed to calm any. People were still bustling about and the traffic was still quite thick.

“Where are we going then mum?”.

Her mum smiled at her, looking truly alive in the muggle surroundings.

Harmony sometimes wondered if as a muggle born, her mum regretted the modern muggle life she’d had to give up to live her more magical one at Hogwarts.

“Well my darling daughter, we are going to head for Covent garden, I have a friend there who owns a shop and she’s more than willing to help us find you a dress. She really wants to see you look like a Prince-ess”.

The weird infliction her mum put on the princess and the sparkle in her eyes, made Harmony feel like she was missing something of significance…or that she was being teased again.

They made there way past restaurants and shops and buskers (who were playing various renditions of Christmas songs using violins and saxophones or clarinets), and before long they were in the heart of covent garden.

The strains of the buskers music bounced around the enclosed brick built space. Making Harmony feel like they were inside some sort of wonderfully weird instrument.

But they didn’t linger in the main area, and her mum led them out of it and off towards a less well lit area, before going even further down and in to a back street.

This was clearly not a tourist area, it was less well kept than the area they’d just left and while the few store fronts were clean, they had an unmistakable air of old neglect.

There were odd patches of peeling paint on the wooden window frames and the street light that was supposed to light the area, was a dim sickly orange, not the bright warm yellow the lights had been the main area.

Lily stopped in front of a darkened store front, the shop clearly wasn’t open and there appeared to be no sign’s of life inside at all.

The sign above the store front declared it was the:

The Magical Dress Boutique.

In the low light Harmony could just make out, that the shop was in slightly better condition than it’s neighbours and the frames seemed to have had a fresh coat of dark green paint recently.

In the poor lighting it was hard to tell, but the green frames seemed to have a thin edging of silver.

Though at the moment, the condition of the shop was of little consequence to Harmony, frankly she was more bothered about why they were freezing their tits off in front of a shop that wasn’t open.

She wondered why her mum was still having them wait in front of the darkened shop, apparently her friend hadn’t waited for them. They needed to go somewhere else quickly before every where
shut for the night, she knew this was London, but even then the shops wouldn’t remain open indefinitely.

She was about to say this to her mum, but before she could her mum stopped looking through the glass curiously (as if waiting for something) and knocked loudly on the shop’s door.

To Harmony’s great surprise a light flicked on in the back of the shop, and she watched as a tall, willowy backlit figure made their way towards the door.

Harmony heard the distinct sound of locks being moved before they were ushered inside by the figure.

Now she was a little closer, Harmony tried to make out the face of the figure that had ushered them in, but with the only light in the space still coming from a slim door at the back of the room, the persons features were cloaked in shadow and it was impossible to make them out.

Harmony did pick up a vaguely familiar smell, but she just couldn’t put her finger on where she knew it from.

The figure abruptly moved to the left and Harmony felt herself react instinctively to the unknown figures abrupt action and reached for her wand. (she’d tucked it in to the back of her jeans).

Suddenly the room erupted with electric light and Harmony had to blink black spots out of her vision.

Once her eyes cleared she felt rather stupid for reaching for her wand and hoped that she wasn’t blushing. Stood in front of her with the same regal glory her son possessed (when he choose to stand up straight), was Eileen Snape.

“Eileen!”

The willowy woman stooped down to hug her.

Harmony felt like smacking herself for not recognising the sent, after all she’d more or less grown up around the woman and the combination of lemon scented dish soap and honey that clung to Eileen constantly was unmistakable, she’d never smelled it anywhere else.

“Hello sweetheart. Your mum said you’re in need of a dress”.

The reason for their being here reasserted it’s self in Harmony's brain and she suddenly felt very confused.

The last time she’d seen Eileen; (just before Hogwarts had started up again) she’d been working in a muggle flower shop.

Not the best of jobs, but it was one she’d held on and off since Harmony had entered Hogwarts at eleven.

Her mum had paid her to be Harmony’s personal tutor before that.

Eileen had took on the job when Harmony had been forced to leave the primary school when her magic had gone wonky, and since Severus was only attending the Muggle primary because she was, he’d refused to go anylonger.

In the end Eileen had become the unofficial teacher to them both.
It’d been a good deal for everyone, Harmony and Severus got to spend all their time together and Eileen got a decently paid job that didn’t leave her looking constantly haggard and still unable to put food on the table.

“Well yes, I Do need a dress, but.. when did you start working in a dress shop?. Severus hasn’t said anything!”

Eileen got an uncomfortable look on her face.

“Well he doesn't know yet, and I'm not just working here, I own it. I didn’t want to tell him, just in case the business doesn’t work”.

Harmony looked at the woman consideringly for a moment, before conceding that it probably was better to keep Severus in the dark; at least for now.

Although Eileen hadn’t said it, they both knew how Severus worried. Stupid though it might sound, if Severus knew about the business and then it failed; he’d find some weird way to blame himself for the rotten out come.

“Fair enough, but why a muggle dress shop?. You love potions just as much as Severus and you make all the stuff in your cupboards and ours, and its better than the stuff in the shops, even Sirius says so. Why not go in to business doing that instead?”

Harmony knew she was being nosey, but she couldn’t help her self.

“Well as much as I like making potions, there are plenty of places that sell them already; and since my names been dragged through the mud by my.. family, I'd never be able to set up shop any where reputable. Not in magical Britain anyway”.

An unnameable emotion crossed through Eileen's eyes (eyes that reminded her so much of Severus’s).

It was a look of regret, anger and something a little like grief all rolled in to one. But it vanished so quickly, Harmony wasn’t sure if she’d seen the look at all.

She was now giving Harmony her usual slight smile, it never lit up her face like Lily's did, but it conveyed her caring happy nature all the same.

Eileen was more prone to smiling than her son was, but they were still perishingly rare.

“Besides, it seemed like the natural choice. After all I've been making and altering clothing since my family threw me out and I ended up married to that.. man”.

The same unnameable emotion flittered over her face again, but it flickered away just as quickly as it came.

“And in muggle London I can just be another shop owner. The muggles won’t know that I've used a little magic to help me along. Their just grateful to get their alterations quicker than the other shops can supply"

"Oh",

Eileen just gave the girl another small smile.

“Well now your curiosity’s been sated; I think we need to be finding you a dress young lady, we
can’t have you going to the ball naked, after all”.

The off hand comment made Harmony direct a scowl at her mum, who was silently perusing the racks of gowns.

“Did you have to tell everyone I made that comment, I was stressed when I said it, I wasn’t going to actually go naked!”

Harmony said indignantly.

Lily looked up from her intense perusal and smirked at her daughter.

“More like wallowing in teenage angst, but No. I didn’t tell everyone, I only told Minerva and Eileen, and they’re unlikely to tell any one else, so you can wipe that scowl off your face honey”.

Lily glanced back over the racks, absent-mindedly fingering red gown as she did so. She clearly hadn’t found what she was looking for.

“I’m not sure that any of these are going to fit Eileen, you know how sm..”

Harmony glared and Lily instantly corrected her self, “How petite Harm is, and these all look a little to long for her”.

“Don’t worry I put a selection of my most petite designs in the back”.

Eileen gave Lily a look that Harmony couldn’t interpret, but her mother suddenly looked quite pleased for some reason.

“It’d be best if we don’t linger in the store front at this time of night. It might make people think I'm still open and once you’re done here, I'm heading straight home for a nice hot bath and my bed”

As Eileen ushered them through the small door behind the counter at the back of the shop, she killed the lights.

Once more the store front was bathed in darkness and the only light that could now be seen, was the sickly orange of the street light, that shone weakly in the gloom outside.

Eileen led them to the very back of the property. Where a small sewing room had been set up.

Harmony could see that Eileen had obviously cast a few minor charms on some of her equipment.

On one of the overcrowded work tables, four small silver needles were diligently sewing gold beads on to a gown made of deep purple velvet.

Their thin bodies, flashing under the merrily humming artificial strip light.

At the very back of the room, in front of a rather grubby looking window and next to a desk that was covered in mounds of paper, was a rack of some of the most beautiful dresses Harmony had ever seen.

Her inner girl; long since beaten in to submission, perked it’s head up in interest at the sight of all of the gorgeous gowns.

There was one that was deep burgundy (the colour of the wine her dad favoured), it appeared to be made in some sort of brocade; there was a pattern of roses woven in to the heavy looking, fine
There was another in white, that while it was completely plain, shone with beautiful pearliness in the cheap lighting; looking almost like it was made from fresh shimmering ice instead of expensive cloth.

There were also three dresses that were stark black. One was run through with silver thread making it shimmer enticingly, while another had a full tulle skirt and long black lace sleeves, the last was plain with very little shaping, it looked like a basic shift dress to Harmony's untrained eye, though it was clearly made of silk, since it draped from it hanger like it was made of water.

All the other dresses were green, One was made of very shiny looking silky material and was such a vibrant green it reminded her of the mistake she'd made in potions last week.

While another one was made of the same heavy material as the burgundy dress; but this one was a dark bottle green, and it had a small amount of pearl beading directly under it’s bust line.

On the very end of the rack, was a dress that was such a dark colour she had thought it was another black gown. That is until she got close enough to see the shimmer of green in the heavy material.

Harmony didn’t think she’d ever known the definition of love at first sight, not until she saw that dress.

She reverently held out her fingers, and delicately brushed the fine material with them. The colour danced between black and green as it dipped under her fingertips.

There was silver beading over much of the dress. Her fingers began idly tracing the patterns the beads were sewn in, as they moved up and down the dresses bodice.

Leaning in closer still for a better look at the intricate bead work, Harmony thought the pattern almost looked like little snakes, but she was sure she was seeing things or perhaps trying to find a hidden meaning in things that weren’t actually there.

Behind her, she was unaware of a shared look of smugness between two old friends.

Whether Harmony knew it of not, she was being set up by a pair of scheming mothers who wanted the best for their children.

As far as they were concerned the best thing for Severus and Harmony, was to make sure they got together and stayed that way. They were both aware that Severus had asked Harmony to the ball, but had made no other moves.

They also knew they cared deeply for each other, and if they (more Severus than Harmony truth be told), needed a friendly nudge in the right direction, so be it.

Too their minds a dress that showed off Harmony’s best features, (ones that might hopefully force Severus in to action) was the best weapon they had in their arsenal.

“Do you want to try that dress on honey?”

“Yes, please”.

It came out so softly, you’d have thought she was in the presence of a new born baby, not a dress. Lily stepped forward to pull it off it’s hanger for her, while Eileen silently went to go and make
them all a cup of tea in the nearby kichenette. Once the dress was free of it hanger Harmony was gently pushed into a small cubicle with a badly hung curtain.

As Harmony stepped in to the dress, her heart felt like it fell from her chest and through the floor. There were a couple of major problems with the gorgeous gown.

First off she clearly couldn’t wear a bra under it, the neck dipped low enough down her chest that it ended several centimetres below where her bra was currently resting. The other issue and the one that was sure to make this dress an impossible dream, was that the back was none existent.

*I can just see dad now, he’ll have a coronary on the spot if I wear this.*

Feeling more than a little down, she opened the curtain to show it to her mum and Eileen.

“Oh honey you look gorgeous. Do you like it?”

Harmony looked down at her feet, (or at least where her feet would be; if the skirt wasn’t blocking them from sight) and she nodded, more than a little morosely.

Lily and Eileen shared a look over her lowered head.

“Well if you like it, what’s wrong?”

Harmony looked up at her mum, her eyes beseeching her to understand the problem with out her having to say anything, she didn't want to say precisely why she couldn't have this dress, just knowing it wouldn't be her was hard enough, with out having to spell it out for her mum.

When Lily continued to look at her expectantly for an answer, Harmony heaved a sigh.

“Can’t you see?, I can’t wear this to the ball! Dad'll have a fit!. He complained about me wearing a crop top in the summer, and I had a shirt on over that. If he sees the back of this he’ll need immediate treatment in St Mungos”.

Lily held back the strong urge to roll her eyes; her daughter could be so damn dramatic sometimes, she was definitely her fathers child.

Though Lily did have to concede; That Harmony's dramatics probably weren't to far of the mark this time. She could envision several ways her husband might react to the dress and none of them would be pretty.

James was anything but a prude (some of the things they’d done together attested to that).

But when it came to Harmony’s clothing, you’d think he’d been born in 1860, not 1960.

It’s the reason he’d been so keen to encourage her tomboy habits over the years; he thought it would keep her covered up and keep the boys away.

He’d lived in fear of her dating. He had ever since she’d grabbed his finger in her tiny fist at no more than half an hour old.

The proclamation of no dating till she was 40 and the look of reverence on his face had melted Lily’s heart at the time; but as Harmony got older, and he’d stayed to true to his proclamation, James attitude towards their daughter had started to grate more than a little at times.

Harmony was a tomboy through and through, Lily was more than aware of that and she wouldn’t change her daughter for the world; but every time Harmony tried to wear something perhaps a little
tighter, a little shorter or just something a little more like other girls her age her dad would give the piece of clothing in question a sort of silent disapproving frown, and before you knew it Harmony was back in her baggy shirts and sweaters.

The only disapproval she’d ever ignored from her father, had been in regard to her friendship with Severus.

Don't get her wrong James had been angry with his daughter, more often than not when she got in to mischief that might have been a danger to herself, but James never disapproved of her mischief, quite the contrary he was quite thrilled by it.

Clearly getting Harm to wear this is going to be harder than we thought.

“Ok, well if you feel that way, you can try on the other dresses”.

Lily stooped slightly to get Harmony to look her in the eye, as she softly stroked her cheek.

“But don’t say no, just because of your dad. He might not approve, but if it’s the dress you like and want to wear don’t worry. If the need arises I’ll take care him, you’re fifteen sweetie, it’s time to stop worrying what your dad thinks of the things you’re wearing”.

Harmony bit her lip, she really did love the dress despite how much more revealing it was compared to her normal clothes. But could she go to the ball wearing something, Knowing full well her dad would hate it on sight?.

“I just don’t know mum”.

Eileen and Lily sighed in unison. This definitely wasn't going to be as quick as they’d hoped.

“Alright, well take that dress off, and you can try on some of the others instead. You don’t have to make the decision right away”.

Lily went to grab the white dress of the rack while Harmony went in to the tiny cubical to remove her lovely dress.

Inside the cubical, and clad in note but her underwear Harmony looked doubtfully at the white one her mum had given her; she just didn’t get the same feeling from this one.

Its going to be a long night.

Harmony steadily made her way through the rack of dresses, but none of them felt right. Her eyes kept catching on the shimmering black-green of the original dress.

By ten o’clock Eileen decided to step in, it was clear what Harmony wanted, she just needed a little nudge.

“Sweetie, what ever you choose to wear you’ll look stunning; but you have to agree, nothings suited you better than that first dress, and I'm sure Severus would love you in it”.

Lily watched Harmony bite her lip at Eileen's comment and glance at the gown again. Lily could almost feel the waves of longing coming off her daughter so she decided to go in for the kill.

“Eileen’s right, you’ve complained endlessly that Severus hasn’t kissed you properly yet, despite him asking you to the ball…. You never know, this gown might just help give him the nudge he needs”.
Harmony wandered over to the dress and fingered the material thoughtfully.

*could this dress really be the thing to help me gain my longed for kiss?* *could a dress really do that?*

“It really is a beautiful dress Harmony”.

She was fingerling the material again, deep in thought; but she turned at the sound of Hermione’s voice.

It was the night of the ball and Hermione had just come out of the shower, her skin was rosy from the hot water and her hair was wrapped securely in a light blue towel.

Every one around her was getting ready with haste for the evening while, Harmony was still contemplating if it was even wise to wear the dress or not.

She’d agreed in the end with her mum and Eileen that the dress suited her best and she let them talk her in to purchasing it, she still had doubts that it had been the right choice though.

Her dad was likely to have a fit at the sight of it and Severus had been avoiding her like the plague since he’d kissed her cheek the other week, she held little hope that a dress was going to rectify whatever was going on between them. She really hated this bloody ball.

“But it won’t do you any good just staring at it, you need to go and get showered and wash your hair. You’ll never be ready in time if you don’t”.

Harmony sent a wry smile at Hermione's way, it didn’t matter what the situation was, she could count on her level headed friend to get straight to the point and knock her in to gear when she needed it most, she really couldn’t have asked for a better friend.

Harmony grabbed her toiletries and made for the showers, Parvati and Lavender had disappeared under a mountain of beauty products nearly two hours earlier and now that Hermione was finished she’d have the shared bathroom to her self, she just hoped that there was some hot water left.

She really didn't want to wash her hair in cold water again.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked the shopping trip, the story will begin to pick up pace from now on since we've now reached the night of the ball.

As always if you see any mistakes or grammar issues let me know and I'll get them fixed asap.

I hope you enjoyed the meatier chapter, the next one should be up around Tuesday, I do mean it this time, I think : P

If you feel inclined to leave them comments and kudos make my day (^^)

see you next time lovelies! Pink. ; )
Sleekeazy's works on all hair types? yeah right!

Chapter Notes

Hello, lovelies.

new chapter, new dramas.

hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As the steam rose around the bathroom and soap suds were washed from long black hair, Severus was contemplating whether Harmony would be pleased with his appearance tonight.

He wasn’t vain by any stretch of the imagination; the way he dressed and the lack of clean hair on a regular basis proved this. But that didn’t mean, that he didn’t want Harmony to think he looked good.

Well as good as I can get any way, I'm certainly not dunderhead Diggory.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Severus turned off the shower, wrapping a towel around his thin waist.

The chilly air of the communal bathroom pricked at his shower warmed skin, causing goose flesh to rise on his arms.

Sometimes he really hated that they lived under the lake, the place was never warm.

He was just combing some knots out of his lank wet hair when Pucey walked in.

Brilliant, just what I bloody need. I'd hoped to avoid the feckless idiot tonight.

Severus’s hope that Pucey would just get on with his shower and not notice him wasn’t to come to pass.

Severus watched in the reflection from the mirror as Pucey set his shower going to warm up, and turned towards the bank of sinks where Severus was stood combing his hair.

Probably wants to make sure that his smug git teeth are still perfectly straight and white.

Seeing Severus stood at the sinks in nothing but a towel, the boy’s eyes gained a nasty gleam and he let out a low mocking wolf whistle.

Severus grit his teeth together and continued to look in the mirror, slowly combing his hair, as if he hadn’t noticed or heard the stupid bastard.

“Well, Well, Well. Would you look at this, Snapey, didn’t think you’d actually take a shower to go to the ball, let alone wash your hair. You better not have clogged the drains with all that grease. Some of us actually have dates to get ready for. Unlike you who’s going to spend the night trying not to get his drippy nose danced on by any couple that comes with in a six foot radius”.

Severus knew he should just ignore the twat, but for some reason his mouth responded to the idiots
taunting, before his brain could tell it not to.

“Actually Pucey, I *Have* got a date. At least I know mine wants to go with me, unlike yours. Whom ever your going with, is probably drugged up to their eyeballs. Merlin knows that no one would put up with your pompous imbecilic arse otherwise”.

Severus watched outwardly stoic, but inwardly amused as Pucey went well.. puce with anger.

“Oh yeah, and just who’re you going with?.. You’re nothing but a poor, disowned half blood. I bet you’ve not even got a decent set of robes. Let alone a decent date”.

Pucey put his hands on his hips, loosing his puce anger and gaining a look of superior smugness at the apparently brilliant insult he’d thrown at Snape.

Severus internally rolled his eyes at the pathetic attempt, frankly these type of comments from the fathead had lost all meaning, he said them so bloody often.

What did Severus care if he was currently poor, he was determined he wouldn't stay that way. And as for being disowned why should he care what people he was never likely to meet thought of him, they weren't his family. He had his mother and he had Harmony and they were his family, their opinion mattered to Severus, not the Princes.

“Well, come on then,? which girl was blind enough or nose-less enough to agree to a date with the likes of your oily repugnant self”.

Severus knew he should walk away, that Pucey's taunting was just to get a rise out of him; but Pucey's comments about his appearance were hitting a little too close to the bone tonight.

“Harmony”.

Pucey went bug eyed for a second, before letting out a vicious laugh.

“Harmony? As in *Harmony Potter!*”.

Pucey really started to howl with obnoxious nasally laughter. It was so loud, that it was drawing the attention of the various slytherin boys that were hanging around the dorm area getting ready for the ball.

Out of the corner of his eye, he could see several fourth and fifth years poking their head in to the bathroom clearly wondering what laughter was about.

Severus felt himself flush, part in rage and part in embarrassment, he hated people looking at him.

“You’ve got to be kidding me. I know you’re not brilliant looking Snivellus, but even you could do better than that little Gryffindork troglodyte”.

He heard several gawfs from the onlookers at the comment and Severus felt his hands forming in to fists, he needed to keep a reign on his temper.

It was always a hair breadth a way from blowing around Pucey, but if he didn’t keep it in check there’d be no ball for him tonight and he couldn’t let that happen. Not when he was so bloody close to fulfilling his plan.

He desperately needed to walk away before his temper blew, but there were two rather large obstacles to this plan.
The first being that his idiot house mates were blocking the door of the bathroom thus making it near impossible for him to make a clean escape.

The other issue was that if he did attempt to leave and push his way through the gawkers, they could very well perceive that he was running away from Pucey's taunts, if that happened the little amount of respect he had amongst his peers would go up in smoke.

For now he had little choice but to grit his teeth, clench his fists and weather the little runts taunts and hope like hell he could keep his temper in check until Pucey either got fed up of taunting Severus, or decided that he needed to get ready for the ball.

Pucey gradually stopped laughing, and Severus glanced over at the door to see that the onlookers were starting to leave now that nothing interesting had taken place.

When Severus looked back towards the now silent Pucey he hoped that he'd find the boy had gotten in to his shower.

What Severus found wasn't Pucey getting in to his shower, instead he found Pucey looking at him with disgust twisting his features and Severus knew there and then that the bastard was far from finished with his taunting and Severus braced himself.

“For Salazars sake Snivellus, even you must be able to see the shame you’re bringing on our noble house by going anywhere with that airheaded, fuck ugly Gryffindor. It’s bad enough that you hang around with the little bitch constantly; but to actually be seen as her date?, have you no shame!. Going to the ball with the giant squid, would be less shameful than taking that repulsive Gryffindork cow, you're making our house a laughing stock”.

Severus’s temper finally snapped, he cared about the ball yes; but he couldn’t just stand by while this disgusting excuse for a human being verbally abused the only person who'd been wholly and forever kind and caring to him.

He’d put up with Pucey insulting his blood status and his bank balance, he'd bare it when Pucey taunted him about his none existent looks. But he would not put up with him saying such repulsive things about Harmony.

Never Harmony.

With a snarl he stalked towards Pucey, the bastard was forced to walk backward so far by Severus’s advance that he ended up taking a fully clothed shower. Severus only stopped advancing once Pucey was back as far in to the cubical as he could go.

Severus felt his face and chest being hit with droplets of water from the shower spray, but he didn't care. All he cared about was making sure the little shit in front of him, never said that crap about Harmony again.

Now that he was face to face with Severus's menacing snarl and dangerously glinting eyes, Pucey no longer looked so smug or so sure of himself.

Rumour was that Snape knew more than a few dark hex’s and Pucey was suddenly very nervous he was about to become acquainted first hand with Snape’s knowledge.

Getting right in Puceys face Severus hoped he looked as pissed as he felt, he thought he probably did; if Puceys paling face and darting eyes were any indication. It was clear the little snot was trying to look for a way out, but because he been pushed in to the shower the only way out was through the livid boy in front of him.
Severus was so focused on Pucey, he hadn’t noticed that the crowd in the bathroom door had grown once more.

“Now you listen, you fucking wanker, and you listen good”.

Severus was so close to Pucey’s face, that the other boy was getting spittle in his eyes.

Pucey didn’t dare blink and he couldn’t move any further away from the furious boy; he was pushed so far in to the tiles already that the metal plumbing was digging in to his spine.

“I’ll put up with you insulting my looks, my bank balance or even my blood status. Frankly I couldn’t give a crap what you think of me, you worthless bag of shit. But the next time you say anything derogatory about Harmony Potter; I’ll hex your fucking nose, off your smug bastard face. Right now you’re really fucking lucky that I care more about taking my date to the ball, than causing you enough bodily harm, that I’d more than likely be suspended for it; otherwise I’d already have you staring at Pomfrey’s ceiling”.

With one last growl at the silent, soaking, shaking piece of shit; Severus stalked away from him and out of the bathroom.

Seeing the fuming boy heading for them the gawkers scattered left right and centre, none them wanted to be the one to attract the attention of the prefect who was projecting fury like a well placed shield charm.

*Disgusting little cockroaches, all they ever care about is gossip.*

Severus scowled all the way to his room and slammed the heavy door shut behind him.

Putting his back to the door, he slid slowly to the floor, his eyes closing in relief at being away from the rest of the fatuous cretins; his relief at being away from the rest of the dorm was palpable.

This wasn’t the first time that he’d thanked god and Salazar that being a prefect afforded him a single room. He really couldn’t stand any of the 6th year boys, infact he couldn’t really stand any one in his house period, but Pucey was a special kind of wanker and he out shone the rest by miles.

Running a hand over his face, he realised that because of Pucey he hadn’t taken care of the light stubble covering his jaw.

‘*for fuck sake*,’ Severus let out and internal groan of frustration.

‘I won’t have enough time shave by the time that tit’s done in the bathroom. He’ll take at least 45 minutes to primp himself. He does on a normal day and with this being a ball he’ll probably take all the longer. I certainly can’t go back in there while he is, I might just give in to the urge to punch his fucking perfect teeth down his fucking poncey throat and I can’t risk that’.

Hoping Harmony wouldn’t notice the stubble, Severus let out a resigned sigh before picking himself up off the floor and going over to the package that was sitting unopened, on his desk; in the same place it had been since it he placed it there four days ago.

When he’d seen Galba, their old barn owl struggling in to the great hall under the weight of a heavy package; the relief he’d felt had been so instant, that he honestly hadn’t realised that he’d been worrying about it as much as he had until he had the package in his hands.

He’d honestly been getting a little worried that his mother hadn’t managed to find him any dress
robes for the miniscule amount of money he'd sent her.

He'd been taking odd jobs around Hogsmead for the past few years. (He needed to earn and save as many galleons as possible, so that he could pay for his upkeep if he hopefully managed to snag himself a potions apprenticeship once he left Hogwarts.)

He'd saved enough through these odd jobs, that he'd been able to spare a small amount to send back to his mother; with a letter explaining that he'd asked Harmony to the ball and he was in need of some dress robes.

He'd asked her to try and find some cheap second hand ones, that were some what decent. He wasn’t bothered if they were the height of fashion, just as long as they fitted and weren’t heavily patched or some disgusting colour.

Severus suddenly looked at the plain package with some trepidation.

Maybe he should have took a look at the things before tonight. What if his mother hadn't managed to find any that were decent? he’d have no choice but to wear them now, he certainly wouldn't have time to change them and he couldn't go in his normal school robes.

Steeling himself for the worst, he cut through the twine and pulled back the plain brown paper, his nostrils flared as they were hit with the curious smell of brand new fabric.

Gripping the fabric in his long fingers, he pulled it from the paper and shook the garment out, they unfurled in his grip with the soft whump of expensive heavy weight cloth.

Severus knew he was looking at the garments in his grip in disbelief, but he couldn't help it. He just couldn't believe what he was seeing.

He wasn't staring because they weren't tasteful or because they were beyond repair, but because the garments in his hand were very definitely new, and more than that they looked incredibly expensive.

'What in Merlin's name has my mother done?. The 10 galleons I sent to her weren’t near enough, to afford something like this. Salazar, I hope she’s not done something stupid.. like spending her food budget on the bloody things.'

Severus had a fair idea why these were so much better than what he'd requested and he shook his head in exasperation at his mothers antics.

He was fairly certain his mother had probably spent a small fortune on these for no other reason than the fact that he'd mentioned that he was taking Harmony to the ball, if he'd said he was going with some other girl the package would have likely contained the second hand robes he'd requested.

Occasionally he wondered how his mother had ended up as a Slytherin.

Sometimes, she had all the subtly of a brick to the head. She’d done everything in her power to hint that she’d like for himself and Harmony to become more.

Half of him was convinced that if he hadn’t asked Harmony out at some point in the next year, his mother would’ve tried setting up a marriage contract; only half convinced you understand, because the other half of him thought she might just hog tie him and hand deliver him to Harmony as a Christmas gift.
She was desperate to have Harmony as her daughter in law in some day, and she was determined that nothing would get in her way; especially not the small matter of her son not moving fast enough. She’d said as much just before he’d got on the Hogwarts express this year.

Not the Severus could blame her for her rampant over enthusiasm; not where Harmony was concerned, she was certainly something uniquely special. Salazar willing his mother would get her wish, it would most definitely be his greatest, and happiest; achievement if one day he could get Harmony Potter to marry him.

Deciding not to dwell on what his mother may have done to afford these, he laid the garments out on his bed to see what he had, and what he would need.

He'd put a pair of passable trousers and his best black shirt on the bed before he'd gone for his shower. He'd never thought that the package from his mother would contain anything other than an outer robe.

These expensive robes seemed to be the full set and Severus really wanted to know how his mother had afforded these.

There was the main outer robe and pair of matching trousers and a waist coat, the only thing he was going to require was his under wear and his black shirt.

Severus donned his under garments, before pulling himself in to the trousers and buttoning the waistcoat over his shirt.

Severus looked himself over in the mirror, (it was a muggle mirror; he'd blasted the magical one to bits when it kept making comments about his hair) appraising his appearance with a fine toot comb.

The waist coat was a little on the fancy side for his tastes, but he couldn't say that it didn't look good, the front panels were covered in some sort of silver beading. It wasn't ostentatious by any means, just a few swirls of decoration here and there and three silver buttons down the centre.

The trousers were probably the best fitting garment he'd ever worn, they were well tailored, and while they hugged his backside they weren't so tight that they made him look like he was advertising his underwear or certain other... assets to the world.

As he crouched to see if he could bend in them properly he realised that the fabric he'd thought was black was actually some sort of greenish material. As he moved it flashed from black to green and back again. It was almost metallic, but you'd only notice the most subtle hint of colour when the wearer moved.

It definitely wasn't something he would have picked, he favoured black in all his clothes and if he'd seen these on a hanger he wouldn't have touched them with a barge pole, but he had to say, his mother certainly had good taste.

Severus didn't think he'd ever had a set of clothes that suited him so well.

Severus finally donned the outer robe and wasn't the least bit surprised to find the this had been tailored to within an inch of it's life too.

The whole set was cut exceptionally well and that made Severus a tad suspicious, his mother hadn't measured him in some time and he'd certainly not provided her any measurements other than the vaguest of ideas of what size might fit.
The outer robe was cut close to his shoulders, but the sleeves widened slightly; giving the illusion of muscles that weren’t really there. It was nipped in at the waist as well; but instead of this making him look like a twig; the nipped in waist, emphasised the broad shoulders he’d gained doing his various odd jobs.

He might not be muscle bound like some of the boys his age, but he had a lot of willowy sinew. His twig like stature, belied the strength that his frame actually contained; he preferred it that way. It was always better to be underestimated by ones opponents; people made stupid mistakes when they thought you were to puny to fight back.

With the outer robe on, Severus could now feel the full weight of the cloth and was pleased to note that while they were certainly the heaviest clothes he’d ever worn, they weren’t stifling as he’d feared they might be before he’d put the outer robe on.

The weight made them feel almost like armour in an odd way and that thought was weirdly comforting. With what he was hoping to achieve tonight a little bit of armour might not go a miss just in case something went drastically wrong.

I hoped like hell that nothing will, but you never know with these things

Getting closer to the mirror, Severus gave himself one last once over now that he had everything in place, he came to the happy conclusion that the ensemble made him look much more passable than he’d originally dared to believe he would look for the evening.

He really hoped that Harmony liked the way he looked in them.

Now that he was a little closer to the mirror he could also see that thanks to Pucey, he’d not gotten all the knots out of his hair, grumbling to himself he went to find a brush.

Picking up a brush, Harmony looked critically at her reflection in one of the two vanities that her dorm room housed. She was pink from her, (thankfully) nice warm shower and her hair was hanging around her face in wet straggling tendrils.

Pulling the brush through it, she realised with slight dismay; that it was already starting to snarl.

Looking hopefully at the array of products that had been left for her by her thoughtful dorm mates, she grabbed the first thing that looked like it might do the trick; Sleekeazy’s Hair potion.

Not really knowing what to do with the stuff and seeing that every one else was busy with their own prep, she decided to wing it. She put a dollop in her hand and started running it through her hair with her fingers; the stuff felt greasy on her hair and more than a little unpleasant on her hands, but if it did the trick, she was willing to put up with a little discomfort.

Once the dollop was all gone from her fingers she glanced up at her reflection, she could see her hair was a little.. well sleeker probably wasn’t the right word, tamer may be?, but it looked noting like the label claimed it should.

Seeing no other solution to her hair problem, (she wouldn’t mix products, there was no telling how they might react if she did). Harmony scooped up another dollop and ran more of the vile substance through her heavy feeling hair.

After a fourth application of the vile goop, her hair finally resembled something like the bottle promised. Her hair was laying around her face in glossy sleek curls.
Though they held none of her normal smell of rose and lavender, something she was, inwardly, rather pissed about).

Nodding in satisfaction at her finally cooperating hair; she began to pick up various make up containers, and began to inspect their contents.

Having next to no idea what any of the stuff did, and only ever having watched her mum apply small amount of foundation or lipstick, Harmony decided to keep things simple and grabbed the least daunting looking pots on the vanity.

She’d applied a small amount of foundation and some tinted lips gloss, when Hermione came over and placed a small glass pot on the vanity in front of her. The lip gloss and the foundation were all that Harmony was going to do to her face, but apparently her friend had other ideas.

Looking at the glass pot Harmony had absolutely no idea what it was. Frankly the substance didn’t seem to no itself, as it kept changing colour, it was like watching the aurora borealis trapped in a tiny space.

“Try this Harmony. I bought it in Hogsmead this morning, while you were off getting that present for Severus; it’s really clever, it automatically changes colour, to best suite your skin tone”.

Harmony sent her friend a bewildered look, “That’s..er...nice I suppose.. but what’s it for, exactly?”.

Hermione rolled her eye’s at her friends sometimes clueless nature. She knew Harmony was a tomboy at heart and that was fine; infact Hermione approved of the fact that she wasn’t glued to a mirror twenty four seven, unlike some people she could think of.

But given that she was on display for the night, Hermione had hoped she might have done some research on how to present herself, even if it grated on her feminist ideals, Hermione knew the importance of making yourself look good at events of this nature.

There were several books in the library on the subject of make up and hairstyles. She’d found them very educational, not that she’d probably be using the information after tonight; but it was still good knowledge to have.

“Honestly Harmony, it’s for your eyes. It’ll give them a slight pop of colour; I’ve also got some self applying mascara if you want to borrow it. I read about in one of the books I borrowed; I managed to find at the same time as this stuff. It’s rather brilliant truth be told, you just hold the brush up to your eye and a charm takes over and does the mascara for you, once you’ve got enough on your lashes it’ll stop moving and you just take the mascara wand away from your face. It’s really easy”.

Harmony smiled gratefully and a little wryly at her friend.

*Trust Hermione to have researched make up the same way she would a charms exam.*

“Thanks”.

Hermione leaned forwards to give her friend a hug, she might be a little clueless at times but she was still her best friend.

“You’re welcome, I’d stay and help you, but I’ve got to go and meet Victor, the balls due to start in half an hour you know”.

Hermione said the last bit with just a hint a reprimand, she was never one for being tardy and
didn’t like the thought of it in others.

She gave Harmony one last reassurance that her dress would be perfect, before making a hasty retreat to meet her date.

Harmony grabbed her wand and cast a quick tempus, she realised the Hermione was right, she had less than half an hour before she was due to open the ball and she was still sitting around in her dressing gown.

Doing her hair must have took longer than she’d realised, she’d been out of the shower for nearly an hour.

She quickly applied the make-up Hermione had left for her, thanking Godric that it was more or less self applying and one less thing she had to worry about. It was times like this she was so very grateful for her friends forethought.

As she grabbed for the emerald and diamond chocker that her mum had got her for the ball, and she was glad that she’d attached Severus’s locket to it earlier in the week. It would’ve been a real pig if she had to try and do it now, the charm she’d used had took her a good forty minutes before she’d gotten it right.

After she’d put her grandmothers earrings in, she was just about to try and figure out how best to put the tiara in her hair when there was a knock on the door.

Making sure her robe was secure she poked her head out and found her mum stood there smiling.

Thank merlin.

If there was ever a time that Harmony had been more grateful to see her, she couldn’t remember it at the moment.

“Mum!”

She quickly grabbed her by the arm and yanked her in to the room, causing her mum to stumble slightly on the hem of her gown.

Lily for her part was rather stunned by her daughters enthusiasm and didn’t put up any resistance to the pulling.

“I don’t think I’ve had a greeting that enthusiastic in some time. What’s wrong?”.  

Harmony sent her mother a wane smile.

“Nothing’s wrong, well not really any way. I’m just really short on time and I’ve absolutely no idea how I’m supposed to style my hair to accommodate this thing”.

Harmony held the heirloom out to her mum, the way she was holding it, you’d have thought it was about to bite her.

Taking a little more care of the heirloom than her daughter, Lily gently took the delicate piece of jewellery off her and motioned for her to sit.

After several minutes of feeling her mum pulling and tugging at her hair, Harmony heard her mutter something and she felt something akin to an invisible pair of hands weaving their way in to her hair and holding the mass in place.
Harmony watched as her mum picked up the tiara from where she’d placed it on the vanity, and firmly pushed it in at the base of the cascade of curls she created on Harmony's head.

Another mutter from her mum and Harmony felt the invisible hands disappear, the tiara was now the only thing holding the hairstyle in place.

For a split second Harmony feared moving just in case she should dislodge the style her mum was now putting the finishing touches to.

Then she gave herself a mental slap and told her self to stop being such a..a. girl.

*It's only hair for merlin's sake.*

Sure if it came undone she’d not look the best, but was she really going to start being that vain?.

She’d never cared how she looked to other people before, as long as she was clean and some what presentable; (i.e. not looking like she’d just rolled out of bed), that was all that mattered as far as she’d been concerned.

This ruddy ball was clearly messing with her head, she didn’t know why it suddenly should matter how she looked; but apparently it did.

If she ever got hold of the git who instigated the Yule ball as a tradition, she’d put their ball in a vice as punishment for coming up with things that mess so badly with teenage girls heads.

She valiantly tried to quash the little voice in the back of her head, that whispered some what darkly that didn’t matter because of the ball, it mattered because Severus had asked her to go with him as his date, and that no matter how shallow, vain or anti feminist it may be, she desperately wanted him to appreciate the way she looked.

Harmony knew down to her very core that he appreciated her for her, and honestly that should be enough..but the lack of any *'boy likes girl as more than a best friend'* type actions, in any sort of setting, added to the fact that since the cheek kiss he’d done everything in his power to avoid her, and her self esteem where her appearance was concerned was beginning to ware quite thin.

*Clearly more than I've realised, if I'm suddenly worrying this much about something a stupid as my hair coming out.*

She knew Severus would never really be one to engage in Pda’s and she was fine with that. She knew him well enough to never expect it, he was much to introvert and private to display himself like that; but would one kiss in a dark deserted corridor be to much too ask?.

Harmony didn’t think so.

Ultimately this and the nasty little voices in her head had led her to think, that perhaps if she made the effort to look like other girls, he might feel like kissing her?. Perhaps since asking her to the ball he’d realised that she was just too tomboyish and now he didn’t want her to be his date?.

She didn’t think Severus would be like that, but she didn’t think she’d ever see the day were Severus Snape would actively avoid her either and that was most definitely happening and honestly did anyone really know what went through teenage boys head?.

Just look at Ron, one day he’s picking on Hermione and the next he’s expecting her to go to the ball with him and flinging a fit when she says no. Where’s the logic in that.
Thankfully her mum’s voice bought her out of her internal struggles. She’d just finished fussing with the last few errant curls.

“There you go, perfect. Although your hairs awfully sticky sweetheart”.

In the reflection of the mirror Lily saw Harmony make a face, while on her part she had to resist the insistent urge to wipe her hands on her clothes, she’d smack her self if she got whatever this gunk was all over her indigo silk dress.

“I know, its all the Sleekeazy's I've had to use, it says a few drops but I ended up needing nearly the whole jar”.

Lily gave her a little pat on the shoulder, (discreetly wiping her sticky fingers on her daughter robe at the same time), they both knew she’d inherited her fathers hair; and there was very little that could be done with the thick unmanageable mass.

It was soft enough, just a pig to do anything with. Something that had irked Harmony greatly at the age of five, when she’d decided that she wanted braids like the others girls in school and Lily had been unable to get her hair to cooperate.

Sirius was constantly joking that the Potters had some sort of plant life in there ancestry.

Harmony got up from the vanity and padded over to where her dress was hanging on the out side of her shared wardrobe.

She looked at the garment adoringly, before biting her lip and beginning stroke the material that made up the ball skirt that draped from the back half of the dress. She made no move to remove it from it’s hanger; just stared at it in contemplation.

Lily could see the uncertainty in her daughters face, maybe her and Eileen shouldn’t have pushed for this dress... but ultimately she knew her daughters problem wasn’t really with the dress; it was with her dads possible reaction to it.

“It really is a beautiful dress honey, but it won’t do you any good just touching it”.

Harmony nodded absently at her mother, her thoughts were thoroughly entrenched in the two possibilities the dress might present if she wore it; it might make her father have a fit.. bit it might also get Severus to finally make some sort of move other than a kiss on the cheek.

But what if it didn’t and she pissed her dad off for no reason? Or what if it did get her, her kiss, would that prove once and for all that Severus didn’t really want her, not unless she was all gussied up on his behalf.

_Godric I’m so confused._

“Hermione said the exact same thing a little while ago”.

“Well I've heard she is rather smart”.

Harmony gave her mum a tiny smile but continued to contemplate the gown.

Lily sighed.

She didn’t want to rush her daughter; she was so clearly unsure about wearing the dress, but she’d had ten days to get over this problem. If it hadn’t happened by now it wasn’t going to until she put
the dress on and went down stairs to face her fears head on.

“Sweetheart, times getting on. You really need to put your dress on”.

Lily walked over to her daughter, her heels clicking loudly in the silence of the room and made to take the gown off it’s hanger; but a small hand on her arm stopped her.

She could see Harmony was still biting her lip, looking far to pensive for a fifteen year old about to go to a dance.

“Maybe I should just borrow a nice dress from one of the other girls, no one expects me to look brilliant anyway, as long as I'm passable. It wouldn’t do any harm. I really don’t want dad to cause a scene. I get enough weird looks and comments as it is”.

Even as Harmony said the words, Lily saw her daughters eyes stray to the gown once more, there was clear longing in those vibrant green eyes.

Lily suddenly had a strong suspicion that there was more than just the thought of her fathers reaction, going round inside her daughters head.

“Honey listen to me. you’re a beautiful girl, with a lovely figure. There isn’t a thing wrong with you wearing this dress, so maybe it’s a little on the revealing side, but you know what”.

Lily put a gentle hand on her daughters shoulder her to look at her properly. Harmony's eyes showed the full tumultuous nature of her thoughts and Lily’s heart ached for her daughter.

“what?”

“Unlike most, You have the ability to pull it off. You’ll knock everyone dead in it. Especially Severus”.

Harmony turned pink, but didn’t say anything.

“Don’t let the fear of what your dad might say, get to you honey. That dress was *meant* for you, it’d be a shame if it went to waste”.

Lily could see that her daughter still wasn’t fully convinced.

*Perhaps one more helpful nudge might be all she needs. James will probably skin me for making this suggestion if he finds out.*

“How about this, you’ve said no one expects you to look brilliant. So put the dress on and then put your school robe over the top. It’ll hide the dress from your dad.. and Sirius too since he’s here. Just before you go in to the ball, call me over and I’ll take it off you; by then it’ll be too late for your dad to do anything or make a scene. But honestly, honey at the end of the day it doesn’t matter what I say or your dad says or any one for that matter, as long as you’re happy that *is* what matters”

Harmony’s gaze turned back to the dress.

Lily could see she was clearly battling with her self still, but after an indeterminate amount of seconds Harmony looked back at her mum, and the pensive uncertainty had vanished. Instead it had been replaced with fiery determination. A determination that had been noticeably absent in recent days.
“You were right earlier, this is my dress. Dad wouldn’t be happy with whatever I wore, so why am I basing what I should be wearing on his biased opinions. I should be basing it on what I want to wear and what I feel right in. So what if I want to look pretty for one night, it’s not suddenly going to mean I’m going to be going around in next to no clothing like dad probably thinks. On the other hand I’m not going to start being overly girly and constantly worrying about stupid things like if I look good enough compared to other people. I’m still me, baggy shirt and all and if that’s not enough for Severus then so be it…”

The look of determination on Harmony’s face cracked ever so slightly as she trailed off.

Lily wasn’t sure where the part about it not being enough for Severus had come from; though she had some ideas. She’d thought earlier that Harmony churning thoughts weren’t solely about her dad reaction and she was obviously right in that assumption.

If Lily had to guess; the lack of certain specific forms of attention from Severus was causing her daughters deeply buried insecurities to raise their head.

She swore too Godric and Merlin if she got hold of that boy tonight, they’d be having words. There was a fine line between acting noble and acting like a cold bastard and Severus was very nearly crossing it.

“And any way, if you say I'm fine to wear it and I wear the robe to conceal it from dad until I'm ready to go in, then there’s really nothing he can do. He’ll just have to put up with it, won’t he”

Lily looked at her daughter fondly, you could tell she hung around with a slytherin on a regular basis.

Finally certain that wearing the dress was the right thing, Harmony removed it from it’s hanger and her mum held it for her while she stepped in to it.

After shucking her robe, she pulled the straps of the dress up over her arms. If she was honest she felt a little exposed with no bra on; but the cool silken feel of the taffeta against her bare skin felt so divine, that that the feeling of being exposed didn’t last long.

As soon as the exposed feeling left it was replaced with one much nicer, it was that same feeling she’d had in Eileen's shop ten days ago.

This dress felt like hers and hers alone. How she could’ve contemplated not wearing it, she had no idea. She’d never felt more right in any piece of clothing in her life.

Frankly her dad and Sirius could have a break down on the dance floor for all she cared at the moment; she wasn’t removing this dress for any one… well she might if Severus asked nicely.

She felt the her cheeks heat up at that thought; she probably wasn’t quite ready for something like that, even if he did ask nicely.. that didn’t mean she wasn’t still aiming for a decent snog out of the boy though. she’d tie him up if she had too. With the way he’d been acting lately it might be the only way.

She just hoped it didn’t come to that and the dress did do the trick; because, frankly if looking like this still didn’t achieve anything, then she was all out of ideas. The thought that Severus just didn’t find her attractive, was one she didn’t want to contemplate.

And if he does give me what I want and then reverts back to avoiding me as soon as I look more
“normal, I’ll hex him in to next month.. and then I’ll probably cry for the rest of the week.

She looked at her mum once she’d smoothed the skirt out and Lily helped her put her robe on over the dress.

After a brief argument about flats or heels, which Harmony won, there was no way on earth that she was ever wearing heels, she wanted to be able to move tonight; not just keep falling over.

Harmony squared her robe covered shoulders and left her dorm, her mum trailing behind her.

They said nothing to each other as they left Gryffindor tower, through the deserted common room and they remained silent as they started down the main stairs to the entrance; The silence wasn’t uncomfortable or heavy it was a silence that conveyed her mums support.

As they started down the last set of stairs her dads head came in to view, she could see he was sat at the bottom with his head in his hands.

With her dad now in sight there was no going back and what would happen, would happen. But Harmony was certain of one thing, whatever did happen tonight; whether it was with Severus or her dad or both her mum would always have her back.

Taking a deep breath she stepped up behind her dad just in time to hear what he was saying to Sirius.

“...don’t want my little girl going off with boy’s Sirius. What if she gets hurt or what if she decides she doesn't need me anymore. She’s growing up so fast”.

Harmony had to smile, perhaps she wasn’t the only one in need of reassurance that everything would still be fine.

Chapter End Notes

well I hope you liked this chapter.

I was unsure about the way I’ve done the characterisation of Severus and Harmony angst-ing all over the place. The way I see it is you’ve got two teenagers who are very much in to each other, but of the belief that the other is unlikely to want them in return, for various reasons.

I think that comes across, but let me know if you think differently.

next chapter should hopefully be up for Thursday, but I've got my dads and my grandmothers birthday presents to make this week so we'll see.

As always if you see any mistakes, let me know and I'll correct them asap, and comments and kudos make my day so leave them if you want to.

See you soon. Pink (^^)
Did anyone else just get hit by the Hogwarts express?

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies

Hope you enjoy this much awaited chapter, Severus finally gets to see Harmony. (^^)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Severus had managed to escape the dorms, well before any of the other Slytherins had even started to think about leaving.

Thankfully he’d not seen Pucey since the confrontation in the showers. Though if the atrocious singing coming from the bathroom as he left was any indication, the fatwit was still in there, and apparently none the worse for wear.

The git never seemed to be able to resist the sound of his own voice.

Unfortunately for him, leaving early to avoid any more confrontations with the dickheads he lived with, meant he’d now been waiting around outside the Great hall for a good twenty minutes and there was still no sign of Harmony.

*What on earth is keeping her?*, *It’s not like she needs to do much to look good for tonight, she’s already beautiful.*

In that time he’d had only two things to occupy himself with, the first was scaring a gaggle of firsties who'd been stood in his current spot, trying to spy on the ball.

The fact that they were all wearing their nightclothes and stood giggling like a bunch of twits, meant that they weren't being as subtle as they'd thought they were, and Severus had, had an enjoyable few minutes dressing them down and deducting points.

Once they'd fled and Severus had taken up his current residence he'd started to look around the rest of his surroundings and found them very boring until he'd set eyes on Potter, Black and professor Evans.

He'd watched inwardly amused as Potter, had become more and more frustrated by somthing, before Professor Evans had clearly got fed up with how her husband was behaving and had turned to leave Potter and the Auror behind.

Severus had happily watched; as Professor Evans had turned around at the last minute and delivered some sort of parting shot to the pinheaded pair, that had Black looking like he was going to faint.

He’d always liked Professor Evans… though, he obviously liked her daughter more. Neither of them would take peoples shit, it was rather refreshing. Most people would rather wander around like a herd of gormless sheep, than confront the idiots who made society hell.

By now he'd been waiting so long, that he was roused out of watching the Potter, Black and Lupin trio. (Professor Lupin having joined the pair not long after Professor Evans had left). By the
clattering of feet on the stairs leading up from the dungeons.

*Oh joy, my house mates have finally arrived.*

For whatever reason the Slytherins started to congregate in a group next to him.

He was just about to put on his perfect prefect sneer, as Harmony called it, and hopefully get them to fuck off; when the last person he wanted to see again tonight -or frankly any other night- appeared.

Pucey in all his smarmy, perfect toothed, glossy haired glory, was swaggering up the steps and heading straight towards the large group of chattering Slytherins, with his cronies trailing behind him.

He’d obviously been right when he’d left the dorms; it was quite clear that the altercation in the showers hadn’t dented the wankers smarm in the slightest.

Severus had never quite figured out if Pucey was really so self absorbed that the threats didn’t penetrate properly; or if he was thick enough to think, that Severus wouldn’t ever follow through with them.

If he thought the latter the boy would be in for a severe shock one day soon; Severus was quickly reaching the end of his rope where Pucey was concerned.

He’d been boning up on some of the darker hexs, (some Harmony wouldn't approve of and some she possibly would).

They were sure to get him suspended if he used them, but the effect they would have on Pucey would be soo worth it. And Severus was becoming more and more tempted to just give in and let the consequences be damned.

Severus was just enjoying the image of Pucey walking around with out a nose or teeth, when the guys grating voice cut through his pleasant thoughts.

When Severus realised what that grating voice was proclaiming; loud enough that it could be clearly heard, above the noise the rest of the group were making, he looked over in clear derision.

Pucey was talking about all the things he was going to do too his date this evening. If Harmony had been on hand, she’d have hexed him just for being a pig.

Severus snorted quietly at the stupid twits disgusting talk. If Pucey seriously thought he was getting anything more than a snog out of Daphne Greengrass tonight, he was totally delusional.

There was no way in hell that Daphne was bestowing more than that on anyone; not until she’d got a decent marriage contract out of it.

As old fashioned as it may be in 2005, the girl was still a pure blood; with pure blood morals and restrictions.

She’d know full well she wasn’t going to get a contract out of Pucey; the boy was just too much of a whore. Why she’d even agreed to go with him, he had no idea.

*May be I wasn't too far off the mark in the showers when I implied Pucey's date must be drugged.*

He’d have to ask her tomorrow, just why she'd agreed to go with Pucey.
Greengrass was one of the few slytherins he could somewhat tolerate, she’d been his first kiss in fact. Not that it had been intentional on her part, he was sure of it.

There’d been a dark hallway and her suddenly coming out of the shadows and grabbing him as he’d gone past.

He still had no idea just who it was that she was supposed to have grabbed in the dorm that night. He'd been to shocked to ask and once he'd got his wits about him, she'd already scuttled when she'd realised just who she'd garbbed in the dark. As she'd run off she'd looked more than a little pink and possibly a little disgusted as well.

He'd done the gentalmanny thing and let her go, after all he's not sure he would've wanted to kiss his second year self either. He'd had a really bad case of acne at the time.

But that had been several years ago and Severus and her could have something that passed for somewhat intelligent conversation if they chose to.

By now Pucey had stopped grandstanding and had noticed Severus stood alone at the side off the group.

Severus knew the exact moment he’d seen him because he started to smirk, his lips pulling back over his teeth like a shark scenting blood.

Clearly the wanker just wasn’t going to get the message and learn to leave Severus alone.

“All right there, Snivellus”.

This got a few guffaws out of his cronies, though none of the others Slytherins responded to it. They might not like him much, but as a prefect with a temper whose reputation preceded him; the rest had learned to not outright say anything detrimental to his face.

Severus stoically stared straight ahead, for now pretending not to have heard him. He wasn’t going to be baited, not with Mcgonagall so close at hand. He could kiss his date with Harmony good bye if she found him hexing another student.

Or strangling one. Where the hell is Harmony, if she'd just turn up already, I wouldn't have to put up with these fatwits.

Pucey made an exaggerated show of looking around Severus, before putting on a mocking look of pouty sympathy.

“Aww, what’s wrong Sniv, has the fugly little Gryffindork decided that you’re not a good enough date and gone with some one more her level instead.. like the giant squid”.

Severus felt his hands turning in to fists at his sides, but forced himself to keep calm as best he could. As much as he wanted to and Salazar did he; he couldn’t fight him over the insult, not now, not here.

“Clearly you’re all talk Snapey, I've just insulted your little friend and you’ve not done a bloody thing. So come on then, where’s your date”.

Severus didn’t answer him, he just continued to stare straight ahead.

Apparently, Severus not acknowledging what Pucey said seemed to piss him off. So Pucey stalked
over to the outwardly stoic boy determined to get a reaction.

*I refuse to be ignored by some up start, disowned, muggle half breed, who needs to learn his fucking place.*

Pucey got right in Severus's face, hoping to intimidate him, but Severus didn't even blink.

Pucey felt his temper begin to boil, giving the to stoic boy a shove to the shoulder.

“I said, where’s your date Snivellus. Don’t think some filthy little half blood like you, can get away with out answering me. You’d do well to remember that I'm your social better...”.

Pucey was starting work up a good head of steam and was about to grab Severus and force a reaction out of him. When one of his friends hissed that some one was coming over.

Pucey was more than willing to insult a house member with only other Slytherins around, but even he knew better than to do so when others were close by. As Slytherins they were supposed to present a united front to the school and internal conflicts weren’t really supposed to be paraded outside of the slytherin dorms.

Pucey backed away from where he’d been stood in front of Snape, quickly slinking off to join the edge of the group.

Severus breathed an internal sigh of relief as Pucey backed off, his temper would’ve got the better of him sooner or later and he was determined to have this ball with Harmony.

As it turned out the person approaching the group was the same one Pucey had been mocking.

Harmony had finally arrived.

Severus’s first glance at Harmony left him feeling vaguely like some one had hit him on the head with a mallet. He almost couldn’t believe that this girl who was approaching him, was the same one who’d dragged him through mud or persuaded him to help her collect slime to smear in the twin terrors beds.

This girl looked like a princess.

It was still the girl he lov... liked, there was no denying that the girl headed towards him was Harmony Potter. But seeing her like this just emphasised his thoughts that he was no where near good enough for her... and that ultimately she’d find some one better.

Severus needed to pull himself together, otherwise he was going to make a right tit of himself once she was Infront of him.

He’d been determined not to stare like a hormonal teenager at any point tonight, and here he was breaking his own ruling as soon as she was in sight.

She’d ditched her square frames for the night, and her luminous green eyes were, for once, free of the monstrosities. Making her eyes appear brighter and bigger in her petite face.

She was also wearing make-up, something he’d never seen her do before. It was a very light application. Especially compared to most of the girls around the entrance hall that night; but it was just enough to emphasise the beauty he saw in her everyday.

It made her gorgeous milky skin even more flawless than normal. While making her eyes pop and
her lips look soft and plump and more kissable than he'd ever seen before.

*I really want a taste of those.*

He watched, feeling completely enamoured as those plump pink lips lifted in to a tentative smile, just for him.

“Severus, hi. I'm sorry I'm late, but I was having some... er.. issues with my dress”.

Pucey obviously hadn’t looked at Harmony properly yet, because he made another snide little comment about her; one that he mock whispered to the cronie next to him.

“Yeah, the thing probably tried to run away in terror”.

This caused a ripple of vicious snickering to erupt around the group. After all they wouldn’t be slytherins if they didn’t take great pleasure in mocking Gryffindors, and they took more pleasure in mocking Harmony than any other.

There was no love lost between Harmony and the other slytherins, they all seemed to hate her or be prejudice against her for one reason or another. It was his friendship with Harmony that had made him an outcast in his own house.

Well more than he’d already been, any way.

They hadn’t liked him much as a first year. He was a muggle half blood and a poor one at that.

To his housemates it had been more than enough reason to ostracise him at first sight. But the ostracization had been reasonably subtle that first year and they’d at least spoken to him respectfully, even if it wasn’t really sincere.

He’d been friendless, but at least they’d left him to his own devices most of the time and they hadn’t been mean or belittling to his face; though he strongly suspected they had been behind his back.

But then Harmony had arrived the next year and after a brief argument about his hygiene practices, he’d happily resumed hanging around with her, the way they had since toddler hood.

His houses overall dislike of him became much more blatant after that.

Away from prying eyes they’d started to subtly taunt him and "accidentally" destroy his few possesions or his homework. When that hadn't worked they just began flat out bully him.

Frankly the thought that people could hate him so much, for such petty reasons, had cut deeper than he’d thought it could.

During those first few horrendous months of second year. He’d tried, once, to cut Harmony loose and be more involved with his house, be more Slytherin.

He was often accused of bringing great shame on their noble house by consorting with Gryffindors and not shunning them as he should.

He’d never admited it, but being in a house that hated your guts for no real reason, was exceptionally lonely; and at the time the thought he’d had, had been that if he let go of Harmony, his house might just make the effort to go back the way they were before, cold and distant but ultimately willing to leave him in peace.
He knew he'd have had no friends at all if he'd ditched Harmony and it would hurt him badly to let her go, but at least he'd have had somewhere where he could be comfortable again for ten months of the year.

In the end the attempt hadn’t lasted more than a week, and if he was honest it wasn’t really much of an attempt any way.

He’d been vasilating over his plan for weeks and in the end he’d only tried it because Harmony had been in the infirmary with flu, she’d been quarantined with Granger, who’d also caught the virus.

Pomfrey hadn’t wanted to take any risks of the bug spreading and the two girls saw no one other than the matron and the odd house elf for the entire time they were sick.

Given that he was barred from seeing her anyway, he’d decided it would be the perfect trial run for his plan, if it worked he could politely tell her they could no longer be friends and if it didn't Harmony would be none the wiser.

As far as his twelve year old brain was concerned, the plan had been perfect. All he had to do was hang around the other Slytherins more, engage in the type of rhetoric they often liked to spout and be generally nasty to every other house but especially the Gryffindors.

But he hadn't seen the flaw in his plan, a flaw he was sure Harmony would have been quick to point out if she'd known about his asinine plan in the first place.

The flaw was that he'd forgotten that the people he lived with were complete morons; who’d hated and dispised him even before Harmony arrived at Hogwarts.

That week with out her, had been a real wake up call.

He’d quickly come to the conclusion that it would never matter how much he tried to act like them, the damage had already been done.

They wouldn’t ever accept him for who he was.

Harmony always had though and likely always would, and that thought, more than anything; made him realise how stupid he’d been to even contemplate throwing her away; even if it was to fit in with the house of noble Snakes.

By the time she was released from the hospital wing, he’d been so fed up of having no one but Slytherins who hated his guts for company; that he’d actually slept in the gryffindor common room that night, with Harmony curled up at his side.

He didn’t remember a time he’d ever felt so content.

When they been found the next morning curled around each other on the common room settee, all hell had broken loose.

She’d gotten more than a bit of flack from her house mates about allowing a snake in to their tower; but she’d shut them all down with nothing more than a look and a few well placed cutting remarks.

No one in Slytherin was ever going to do that on his behalf, he watched completely mesmerised as she'd torn her housemates a new one.

He thinks that's probably about the time, he’d realised that his feelings might run a little deeper than mere friendship.
It was also, ironically (considering he’d been wanting to cut ties with a certain Gryffindor completely that same week) when he’d started spending more time in Gryffindor tower than he did in his own dorm.

And now he was more accepted in the Lions den, than he ever was in the Snake pit. They didn’t like him but they tolerated him and were civil enough, and he was on friendlyish terms with Granger, though he still thought she was a blatant overachiever.

In the end he’d never regretted not trying harder with his rather stupid plan.

Harmony's voice drew him from his musings. He could see she was looking a little confused, no doubt she was wondering why he been so silent since Pucey's comment.

“..erus?...Are you ready to go in?, Mcgonagall's about to have my head if we don’t get in line soon”.

“I've been ready to go in for sometime, I've been waiting here for at least half an hour".

He knew it came out slightly gruff, but he was a little out of sorts after getting lost in his own head.

“Oh”.

Severus watched the slight pinking of her cheeks and not for the first time thought she looked rather lovely when she blushed.

“Well just let me get rid of this thing, and we’ll go in”.

Harmony made some sort of hand gesture, which must have been to get her mothers attention, because Professor Evans started making her way through the crowd towards them.

No longer lost in his own head or dumbfounded by her even more lovely than normal face, he finally noticed that she was wearing her school robe.

Severus frowned, no wonder Pucey was making snide comments about her dress running off.

“why exactly are yo..”

All thoughts, comprehension and speech came to an abrupt screeching halt.

If seeing her made up like a princess had felt like being hit over the head with a mallet, the sight of her dress made him feel like he’d been hit by the Hogwarts express.

He wasn’t sure he had the ability to breath at the moment, let alone think.

Severus wasn’t entirely certain what he was supposed to do with the vision he was now presented with, and if the all encompassing silence that had descended over the previously snickering Slytherins was anything to go by; he wasn’t the only one.

Professor Evans took the robe from Harmony and Severus suddenly realised that he’d been gaping (very uncouthly), since Harmony had removed it.

Not that he felt he could be blamed for that, who wouldn’t gape like an idiot when presented with the sight of all the pale creamy skin, he wanted to feel it under his fingers so badly.

Realising these thoughts would only lead him down the wrong sort of path, he tried to get his wits about him.
He hoped to Salazar that he didn’t look as completely gaumless as he felt when Harmony thanked her mother and turned back to him with a shining smile.

Dear Salazar and Merlin.

The front of the dress was almost as bad as the back, it was so figure hugging that it showed every dip and curve of her extremely fit figure and the neck line was so low that the libidinous part of his brain helpfully supplied him with the fact that, she could in no way, be wearing a bra.

He honestly hoped he hadn't started to drool.

If I'm having thoughts like this, what the hell are the other hormone bags thinking?.

That unwelcome thought was like a bucket of ice water to his libido. He needed to stop gawping and get her away from eyes that had absolutely no right to see this much of her up close. She was his.

As Harmony turned back towards Severus after handing her robe to her mum she was pleased to see that Severus was trying to put his usual stoic mask back in place, this was probably good, because it meant that the dress had, had some sort of effect on the boy.

For the moment the nasty voices had been quieted by his reaction, and Harmonys inner girl was smiling smugly and settling down with a bag of pop corn ready for the ball to start. She'd woken up when the dress had gone on and showed no signs of going back in to her cage for a while.

Severus crooked his arm and she slid her own through it before he led them over to where the other champions had been hearded.

Harmony noted as he led her over, that they matched.

His robes were the exact same colouring as her dress. She hadn’t been paying much attention to the colour or the robes in general when she’d first spotted him, she’d been paying more attention to Pucey, who'd been Infront of Severus and who'd appeared to be up to his usual tricks.

But then Pucey had slunk off and all she could focus on was the handsome figure that Severus had cut in his well tailored clothes, with his clean, shiny hair falling in a straight sheet to his shoulders, as he’d leaned stoically against the stone wall.

He'd looked (in her opinionoat least) like he'd just stepped off the cover of witch weekly.

She didn’t think she ever seem him look more handsome than he did tonight, she just hoped that the other girls didn’t get it in to their heads, that he was worth a shot, now that he was all dolled up for the evening.

He was hers and hopefully she'd find out tonight; one way or another, if she was his in turn.

As soon as they'd got close to the other champions Mcgonagall wasted no time in hearding her and Severus to the front of the procession line, before stalking off somewhere, in an obvious snit.

As they stood there and watched the others students begin to enter the great hall, Harmony saw Severus glance at the others that were in line with them and she had to suppres snigger when she saw Severus do a double take at the sight of Viktors date.

Hermione had scrubbed up very well and she was sure that Severus wouldn’t be the only one to do a double take of her tonight.
She suddenly felt a delicate tap on her shoulder looking behind her, she saw it was Hermione discreetly trying to get her attention.

Seeing she had her friends attention Hermione leaned forward to whisper in Harmony's ear.

“Did you have any problems from your dad?”.

It was clear Hermione was whispering to prevent Mcgonagall from hearing them talking in line.

Personally Harmony couldn't see the point, the cacophony from all the other students was so loud Mcgonagall was unlikely to hear them even if she was stood right next to them, but Hermione was never one to blatantly break the rules without good reason, so she indulged her friend and whispered back

“No, though mum told me to put my school robe on before I came down, so I've not been near him with the dress showing in all it’s glory”.

Harmony saw Hermione flinch slightly she was probably imagining the scene that might transpire once her dad was in the vicinity of the revealed garment.

Harmony could Invision it herself and it wasn't pretty.

“Well.. lets just hope that your mum can keep him from causing to many problems, at least before the opening dan..”

Hermione was cut off by Severus deliberately clearing his throat, in such a way that warned they had company.

It was the signal the trio had used for years when they were looking out for each other, usually when one of them was up to something they shouldn't be, it had saved their skins more than once.

This time it had probably saved Harmony and Hermione from a severe tongue lashing. Mcgonagall was heading straight for them, and she was clearly far from pleased that they were running late.

Harmony and Hermione quickly moved away from each other and straightened them selves up.

Just as Harmony was fussing with her skirt, she heard a loud shout echoing around the entrance. Glancing around she saw the source of the shout was Sirius. He was running after her mum and dad who were heading in with the last of the stragglers.

Harmony saw him say something to the pair before, he put his arm through her dads and steered all three of them in to the ball. Her mum looked completely mortified as the halls doors closed behind them with a loud bang.

A low drawl in her ear caught her attention, “your godfather had no decorum what so ever”.

Harmony grinned at her dour companion. “I know, he’s brilliant isn’t he”.

Severus rolled his eyes and Harmony was sure that some fantastically sarcastic comment was about to come her way, but Mcgonagall who'd been temporarily way laid on her way over was finally in front of the group.

Harmony noted that she looked even more flustered than she had a few minutes ago and more than a little like she needed a nip of whiskey.. or some cat nip.

The tinsel on the brim of her hat was falling down the side of her face and she kept batting at it
with absent minded annoyance.

“Right, now that every one is finally present”.

The headmistress flashed her lenses at Harmony, and Harmony felt herself flush.

If she didn’t no better she could’ve sworn she heard vaguely familiar titters coming from behind her, but of course her best friend would never laugh at her getting reprimanded; so she must be imagining it.

“The doors will open momentarily, when they do I want you to walk in, in a straight line and head directly to the round table at the centre. You will be dining with the heads of the various schools and several ministry officials. I do hope that I don’t have to remind you, that you are representing your schools and I expect you to be respectful and polite at all times. On a similar note I want no political talk at the table what so ever, this is neither the time nor the place to be making points about things like house elf rights”.

Mcgonagall sent a look at Hermione, who was the one who flushed pink this time. The headmistress knew her friend well apparently.

“When every one has finished their meals, the tables will be moved to the sides of the hall and you three couples will officially open the ball with a dance. Your opening song is a waltz, so I hope for your sakes that you’ve been practising your dancing”.

As she said this she looked over her horn rimmed glasses at Harmony, who huffed offended at the implication that she wouldn’t know how to dance the opening dance.

She’d learned how to waltz when she was seven, it’d been when Eileen had taken over her education. She knew Severus had hated every minute of those lessons, but he was a fabulous dancer when he tried, and she was more than passable. She was about to tell Mcgonagall this, when she felt a gentle squeeze on her wrist and she saw Severus subtly shake his head and direct his eyes at Mcgonagall.

Harmony cooled with understanding, Severus was right to stop her. After all, getting in to an insignificant argument with a woman, who was already pissed that they were running late because you hadn’t turned up on time, really wasn’t a good idea.

So in a respectful voice she said, “yes headmistress, we’ve been practising”

Mcgonagall nodded in approval; and finally looked less like she was about to burst a blood vessel.

“Good, well I’ll leave you now. As I said the doors will open momentarily. I'll see you at the table. Do try not to make fools out of your respective schools during your procession and everything should be fine”.

As Mcgonagall walked away Harmony really had to fight the urge to say something to the parting barb from her headmistress, but the French champion at the back of the group apparently had no such compunctions about holding her tongue.

“..just ooh duz she think she is to tell moi ow tu behave, I shall be having words with Madam Maxime about th..”

Fleur’s tirade was cut off by the doors opening, and Harmony suddenly felt like she was about to be fed to the wolves.
Chapter End Notes

Well there it is lovelies

Hope you enjoyed the chapter, all the hormones and Severus's reaction to Harmony. :-
P

Next chapter should be up around Saturday,

As always if you see any mistakes let me know, and comments and kudos make my day if you want to leave any.

See you next time lovelies! Pink x (^^)
Harmony took a deep breath; suddenly feeling very self conscious as the doors opened revealing rows of expectant faces, they would be watching every move the champions made for the rest of the evening, and Harmony was more than aware that there were certain... students, who would like nothing more than to see her make a tit of herself by falling flat on her face.

She absently felt Severus pulled her arm back through his and give her hand a gentle squeeze of support as he did so. She glanced at him gratefully as they made their way towards the hall and the waiting wolves.

Not for the first time she felt lucky that Severus had agreed to do this at all, she knew he'd asked her to the ball officially but they had still been going to go as friends, which was no little thing when she truly thought about it.

She did truly hate the attention but could put up with it when needs must, but for Severus who was introvert by nature, this had to be hell, and yet here he was giving her support through her nerves as they walked past the hordes, his own probable discomfort forgotten in the face of hers, it was rather sweet really.

The mere thought made her smile and before she knew it, they'd walked past all the gawking students (thankfully without tripping up) and were in front of the large round table Mcgonagall had mentioned.

She felt Severus let go off her arm as he stepped forwards to pull her chair out for her.

She knew it was old fashioned and that it was probably more likely to be Eileen's hard ingrained etiquette training kicking in, than Severus's own desire to be a gentleman, but that didn’t mean that the gesture was any less appreciated and Harmony couldn’t help the beam she sent toward Severus for it.

She was gratified to see his ears and the tops of his cheeks go a little red.

*Good at least I'm not the only one blushing tonight.*

He may have been a tad embarrassed by her gratitude, but he sent her a small smile of acceptance none the less.

As usual the smallest of smiles was enough to make Harmony feel like her heart was about to beat out of her ribcage, and she absently wondered if she looked as smitten as she constantly felt in his presence.
Thinking about her mum and Eileen’s comments when she was getting her dress, she probably did.

Severus finally took his own seat and two little white pieces of parchment appeared on the empty plates.

Severus clearly hadn’t noticed this; he was looking up at the table with all the other staff members. Harmony followed his gaze and could see he was looking at her mum and dad, who were whispering to each other and apparently not concerned by the world around them.

Severus turned back to Harmony to whisper in her ear.

His voice was a low drawl, when he spoke, Harmony always felt that this particular tone was like a soft caress, mixed with the most velvety of drinking chocolate. Deep, smooth and deliciously warm. It gave her tingles every damn time.

“I’m glad Professor Evans is keeping Potter occupied, it might just keep him from murdering me when I inevitably touch your bare back during the opening dance”

Harmony could hear he was only part joking and that he was probably really worried about her dad, but she couldn't help teasing him just a little.

“Dad won’t murder you..” she looked at him from under her eyelashes.

“He might maim you a little though”.

Severus gave her a look that was so heavy with sarcasm you could have cut through it with a knife.

“Yes, because having a maimed date is soo much better”.

Severus said it so dryly she couldn't help herself; she had to laugh.

As her laughter died, she sent him a smile and gave him a sympathising pat on his hand.

"Don’t worry Sev, if you need it, I'll protect you from my dad. I like you a little too much to lose you over something as stupid as a dance”.

As soon as Harmony said the words she wanted to pull them back, the air between them becoming suddenly and inexplicably awkward.

Unthinkingly Harmony had aired the one thing they were both worrying about. That for better or for worse this ball might just be the end off their long friendship.

Harmony started to fidget at the uncomfortable feeling that had settled over them and awkwardly cleared her throat as she racked her brain for a change of subject.

Her fingers brushed against the parchment on her plate, seeing this as a possible escape she picked it up an was thoroughly confused to see they were menus.

Her awkwardness momentarily forgotten, she turned to her still slightly shifty looking date to ask what they were for.

"Why have we got menus, why aren’t we just helping ourselves like normal?”

Severus was always very willing to prove how very thick people were being, when presented with something that was; to his mind atleast, clear as day, and unlike most aspects of his personality this wasn't one Harmony was spared from.
With a put upon sigh, Severus set about explaining the menus to Harmony in what she described as his crotchety professor voice.

It was the one that clearly said: *how are you so naive*

“This is a formal event. Therefore helping yourself would be all manner of uncourteous. Not only that, but the normal self service can be prone to spillages and the last thing any one wants is to get food all over their very expensive clothing. They almost always have this type of service at formal events, provided of course that the host has elves, if they don’t then the more muggle method of wait staff is usually used”

“Oh”.

Harmony discreetly glanced over at her friend, wondering what Hermione was making of all the extra work for this was likely to be causing for the elves.

To Harmony’s surprise she wasn’t up in arms or spouting rhetoric at people, in fact she seemed to not really be paying attention to anything other than Viktor.

She would have thought that she’d working up a good head of steam by now, though she supposed Headmistress Mcgonagall had warned against political talk of house elves in particular; perhaps Hermione was ignoring the situation simply because of that..

“We should order something, we’ll be expected to open the dance soon”.

Severus’s voice broke in to her thoughts about her friend and she could see that Severus was giving her a rare sly look, she knew this meant trouble.

“After all we don’t want you to end up fainting from hunger again, do we?. Poor faint hearted Gryffindor that you are”.

Harmony let out an indignant squawk, which was much louder than she intended; because she drew Mcgonagall's flinty attention.

“Something wrong Miss Potter?” Harmony quickly shook her head negative.

“no”.

McGonagall gave her a reproving look before tucking in to her duck. Harmony let out a breath, she really needed to avoid Mcgonagall's attention for the rest of the evening if she could.

Harmony leaned closer to Severus, to hiss a him indignantly.

“It was one time, and you said you’d never mention it again”.

The sly look left Severus's face, to be replaced by one of the utmost seriousness.

“I never made such promises, all I promised was that I wouldn’t tell your parents. I thoroughly intend to keep reminding you of the incident. At least until you understand, that food and sleep are not optional extras. I don't care if you were on a research binge for the next task, it’s still no excuse to go nearly 36 hours without a decent meal”.

If Harmony had been standing she would have had her hands on her hips, as it was she pursed her lips at the boy and gave him a condescending look.

“you’re one to talk. Just last week I had to pull you away from that potions book you’re constantly
scribbling in and tell you again that you’d missed dinner, frankly its a good job I know how to get in to the kitchens other wise you’d be skin and bones by now”.

Severus has the good sense to look contrite, but he wasn’t going to let her win this argument.

“That’s neither here nor there. I worry about you, and I'll keep worrying about you, whether you like it or not; you’re already small for your age and you do a lot of physical activity, the last thing you need is to be forgetting to eat”.

Harmony felt like a cat that had been petted the wrong way at the mention of her height; but Harmony had seen this look of resolve many times and she knew he wasn’t going to back down.

Harmony knew which battles to pick with Severus and this one really wasn’t worth fighting him on, not when he was mostly right anyway.

Harmony let out a small defeated sigh.

“Alright fine, just as long as you understand that I worry about you just the same, I always have and I always will”.

She looked at Severus's face while she said this, and she watched as a look appeared in his eyes that she couldn't interpret. Whether she could interpret it or not, the look was making her feel like she was being pulled towards him by some unknown force.

She absently noticed that she was leaning further in to Severus's space and the he was unconsciously mimicking her; but the moment was broken by the loud clinking of some one being over zealous with their cutlery on the gold plates.

Severus pulled back as if burnt and quickly set about ordering them both something to eat, not looking at Harmony once as he did so.

Harmony felt a twinge some where deep inside, why is this so hard.

***

This shouldn't be this hard, for fucks sake you know what the plan is and here you are getting almost pulled in to a kiss in the middle of dinner, for Salazars sake. Focus you dunderheaded fool.

The voice was reprimanding and sounded almost identical to the one he used when he was reprimanding the firsties, to Severus’s annoyance another voice - one bearing the distinct hallmark of teenage petulance and hormones - came forward to argue another point of view.

He felt like he was getting split personalities, this pair had been arguing back and forth since he’d asked Harmony to the ball and he was getting sick of the inside of his own head.

But she looks so pretty and perfect. Surely one kiss ti those plump pink lips wouldn’t hurt, all those other filthy boys might try and take her from us if we don't

The more stoic Severus, the one that controlled his outward personality was quite adamant however

No we need to stick to the plan, if we go after her like a crazed hormonal cretin we won’t get to keep her. We need to prove we’re more mature and more romantic and the better long term prospect. After all she’d not going to stay with us for our looks.
The teenage voice responded with a sneer, *you won’t get her at all if you keep hurting her.*

The stoic voice didn’t say anything more and the teenage one stormed away.

Now that silence reigned in his head, Severus surreptitiously glanced at Harmony out of the corner of his eye.

She looked okay at the moment – she was just finishing the last of her treacle tart - but he’d have been a fool not to miss the hurt that flashed in her eyes when he’d jolted back from her.

He knew he was being a complete arse but he needed that perfect kiss.

He needed to make it like something in those blasted bodice rippers she liked to read. His mother was such a bad influence sometimes.

He honestly couldn’t think of another reason, why Harmony would want to stay as anything other than friends, if he couldn't give her that perfect romantic moment and promises of more in the future. And being sat at a table with nine other people stuffing their faces; was about as far from romantic as you could get.

Severus felt his resolve firm he didn’t care what the teenage voice said he’d come this far already, so he'd stick to the plan and hope for the best.

That didn’t mean, he didn’t want to get Harmony smiling again though.

Severus was just about to get her attention, when the mostly empty plates started disappearing from the table.

McGonagall dabbed her face with a napkin and requested that everyone stand from the table so that they could make room for the dance floor.

Once they'd shuffled out of the way, their table disappeared from sight, while the other smaller ones starting positioning themselves around the edge of the room.

Harmony was about to move off with the rest of the champions, when Severus lightly grabbed her wrist; stopping her before she could, she gave him a questioning look.

He subtly gestured his head towards the edge of the massing crowds; Harmony looked in the direction that he’d indicated and could see her mum, dad, Remus and Sirius making their way through the masses of eager students.

“I see your dogfather is in his full uniform at a formal ball, are you hoping to have someone arrested tonight?”.

He said this with a small grin, not enough for anyone else to notice it, but it was enough for Harmony to see it and understand that her date was teasing.

Harmony gave Severus a beautifully mischievous grin in return, her eyes sparkling with happiness.

“That depends”.

Harmony lowered her voice so she wouldn’t be overheard, and it had the unintended effect of sending her voice slightly smokey.

“Are you planning on doing something illegal tonight, Sev?”.
While this was still obviously her usual form of teasing—something he’d been subject to a million times—the smokey countenance her lowered voice had took on, had a more carnal effect on Severus than normal and he felt himself stir slightly.

It didn’t help matters any either, that she was now looking up from under her lashes and smirking at him.

*Salazar and Merlin, I hate teenage hormones.*

Apparently all she has to do is look at me a certain way or speak to me a certain way and I become a hormonal mess. I feel like I’m about to snap, or do something that would be quite scandalous in a public setting...and probably in a private one to.

*I really shouldn’t be having thoughts like this. She’s never even been kissed! I need to be thinking sweet and gentle, not of throwing her on the nearest flat surface and snogging her senseless; no matter how delectable she looks...or sounds...or smells...or generally just is.*

Clearing his throat slightly he hoped he wasn’t red or showing certain downstairs issues in the tight fitting trousers. The only thing Severus could think to do was fall back in to his usual stoic habits and hope that she didn’t notice anything.

As deadpan as possible he responded to her teasing (flirting), but he was still a teenage boy and couldn’t resist responding with his own teasing (flirting) abswver, even if it did come out sounding dryer than the Sahara.

“I’d planed on no illegal activities whatsoever tonight... however your clearly illegal dress might just force me to become a felon, when I inevitabably have to touch you. I’m quite sure that Black will have no problem arresting me for such an infarction.. or possibly help your father bury my body in the forbidden forest”.

That certain sparkle hadn’t left Harmony’s eyes; but she pouted prettily, while making her eyes look as big as possible. Which with out her normal lenses in the way, really was very big indeed.

“Don’t you like my dress then?”.

The innocence she was trying to put in her voice wouldn’t have fooled any one, least of all him. She was clearly enjoying this and Severus would be damned to hell if he wasn’t too.

Severus took a deep breath making his nostrils flare slightly, there was a fine line between friendly teasing and blatantly flirting and they’d most definitely crossed it.

*May be she really is as interested as she appears. Perhaps the kiss she wants won't be the end of us after all.*

Severus was just about to tell her in exacting detail just how much he did like her dress, (after all there was no harm in testing the waters with some more teasing - (flirting), but he was interrupted by Mcgonagall calling the champions to take their positions on the floor.

The couples lined up across from each other, while the room around them continued to buzz with noise.

When the majority of the hall realised the champions were in position the noise suddenly died, leaving an anticipatory silence in it's wake.

Severus would've thought he’d gone suddenly deaf, if it wasn't for the melodious, but vaguely
melancholic song that began to reverberate around the near silent hall.

The boys bowed and the girls curtseyed, and then Harmony and Severus were suddenly right Infront of each other, as the music began to flow in earnest.

They clasped hands and while Harmony put her spare right hand on his shoulder, his unoccupied left hand came to rest in the middle of her bare back.

The contact bought with it an instant frisson of something. Like a spark of wild magic had been released from where they were touching.

They’d clearly both felt it, their eyes had locked in wonder at the feeling of the first spark through their skin.

Thankfully, something must have broken through the wonder, because with out realising it they’d begun to dance.

The tune sounded strangely distant in both their ears and neither of them were aware of just where they were in regards to the other happily dancing couples on the floor.

All they were aware of was each other.

Harmony felt all but lost in Severus's obsidian black orbs, but she had just enough awareness left, to realise that she needed to profusely thank Eileen for those dance lessons she’d forced Harmony and Severus to endure when they were children.

With out them she was sure she’d have given the Slytherins exactly what they wanted and made a tit of herself.

All her brain was capable of focusing on was that pair of fathomless onyx eyes and the feeling of the slightly calloused, but impossibly warm hands that were touching her.

Severus for his part was just as glad for those lessons; he was dancing on nothing more than luck and muscle memory.

He was just as lost in his partners vibrant green gems as she was in his black ones.

How could he be expected to be thinking about something so paltry as dancing, when he had this glowing smiling creature in his arms and the feel of her silken smooth flesh under his palm.

With out any conscious thought, they started to slow to a stop as the music did.

A smattering of applause made Severus realise that the opening dance was already over and he’d spent the entire thing completely unaware of anything other than Harmony.

She had apparently been in a similar state of mind as him during the dance, and he watched as the fog seemed clear and she came back to herself.

Somewhere in the recess off his mind, he felt some part of himself preen at the thought that he had such a similar effect on her.

Severus saw Harmony turn scarlet with the realisation that her godfather was wolf-whistling some where in the crowd.

He knew he had a horribly fond look on his face but he couldn't help himself.
As feisty as she could be she would never be one who welcomed attention with open arms, not in front of a crowd this big anyway.

Thankfully the look was mostly hidden by his hair to any one other than her. Severus was quite sure that some of the students might have fainted from shock, if they caught even a single glimpse of him looking anything other than stoic or surly.

As he was contemplating if it was possible to have a mass fainting episode, another song started up, this one was more upbeat than the first.

“Would you care for another dance, Miss Potter?”

Harmony gave him a nod and a soft look.

They hadn’t parted from their waltz hold yet; they were still maintaining it in a loose limbed sort of fashion. Their hands were still clasped, but resting at their sides in stead of held high and Severus’s right hand was resting loosely near her waist in stead of being splayed tantalisingly on her back.

Severus tugged their joined hands upwards and placed his palm on her lower back once more before steering her in to another dance.

The rest of the ball goers faded in to obscurity around them, as they became lost in each other once more.

Chapter End Notes

well I hope you enjoyed that.

if you want to see the dress that inspired Harmony's you can find it here https://www.jovani.com/couture-dresses/red-embellished-bodice-fit-couture-dress-33780

Next chapter shouldn't be up later than Tuesday, for now I'm off to enjoy the rest of my birthday.
as always comments and Kudos make my day so leave them if you want to, and if you see any mistakes let me know.

See Y'all soon Pink X
Harmony was unsure if it was hours or mere moments later, when she heard a familiar voice cut through her Severus induced fog.

“Do you mind if I cut in?”

She glanced over her shoulder in surprise, breaking the eye lock she and Severus had been engaged in, in the process.

_How the hell did I miss my parents coming towards us?, I hadn't even realised they'd started dancing._

In a distant recess of her mind, Harmony realised that she'd likely not noticed something as inconsequential as her parents whereabouts, simply because she was too caught up in her date.

No matter how logical the thought was, it didn't stop Harmony from feeling just a tad disconcerted.

She'd challenge anyone not to feel that way, if they'd just realised that they'd got so lost in a boy, that they'd failed to pay adequate attention to their surroundings, after all she'd been taught better than that. Constant vigilance had been drilled into her since a very young age.

She was more than aware that her attention was almost always completely took up by Severus if she knew he was around, she tended to forget about what she ought to be doing and did something with him instead.

As far as Harmony was concerned it was quite normal for him to take all her attention, afterall she hadn't found anyone more intriguing than him in thirteen years, and she thought that, that was unlikely to change...but this was something else. Whether she found him intriguing or not she was still always aware of her surroundings in his presence...and yet tonight as soon as she was close enough to breathe him in her surroundings seemed to keep fading around her.

It was like she'd had a puff of those things the twins sometimes smoked. The one time she'd tried one, it had left her feeling completely out of it. She'd come back to her senses a little while later and she'd found herself in the headgirls private bathroom, of all places.

She supposed she really shouldn't be too shocked by this new development though, after all time it's self had always seemed to run a little differently around Severus, it always felt like their time was infinite and yet at the same time it never seemed to last long enough.

Perhaps her sudden acute lack of awareness about her surroundings, was simply because he finally
seemed to be returning her own overtures?

For the moment she decided it was probably best just to let the problem slide and instead turned her attention to one of the other important men in her life.

He was looking at her so earnestly after his request for a dance, and she didn't have the heart to deny her dad at least one dance. Even if it would take her away from Severus for a while.

“Oh, sure. You don’t mind, do you Severus?”

She gave Severus an apologetic half smile. One that her dad probably couldn’t see.

Severus gave her dad a curt nod of ascent, before giving her a much softer look, one that said she had nothing to apologise for.

She hoped her dad wasn’t picking up on quite how melted she felt under that look. Her inner girl was already swooning like some 19th century heroine.

Godric help her, if Severus kept giving her these unexpectedly tender looks after the ball was over, she wasn’t sure she ever be able to get anything done again. She’d be to bloody dopey.

“I’ll just go and wait over there until you’re finished”.

Severus indicated to the far side of the dance floor with a subtle tilt of his head, (sending the long strands of his hair into his face in the process), the area he was indicating had a long refreshments table, that had clearly been set up by the elves while everyone was busy dancing.

Thankfully it was well away from the dance area, or some of the other students rather energetic dancing might have knocked the entire thing flying.

Severus removed his hand from Harmony’s and detached his other from where it had settled comfortably on her waist.

They had been touching since the opening waltz and now that he’d suddenly had to let go of her, Severus felt an almost jarring, aching sense of loss.

Why is this so hard?, I’m in her presence often enough and it’s never been quite this intoxicating, though perhaps I should have expected this, after all I’ve been having to avoid her for the past week or so simply because a kiss on the cheek left me feeling drugged and out of control.

Severus didn’t get to dwell on the aching feeling for long, because quite unexpectedly, Professor Evans suddenly grabbed hold of his hand, stopping him before he’d even managed to get more than a few steps away from her daughter.

Severus frowned at the hand clasping his, he looked at professor Evans a question already forming on his lips as he did so.

Whatever he’d been about to say, fled from his lips immediately and Severus felt himself swallow when he sae her face, because he knew that look in her eyes, whatever it was she wanted, that look didn’t bode well for him. It never had.

He wondered absently if he could persuade Potter to kill him after all, it might be less painful than whatever Professor Evans wanted to talk to him about.

“Oh nonsense Severus. I’m down a dance partner. You can partner me till they’re done”.

There was a certain tone in her voice that told Severus it would be in his best interests not to refuse. Harmony and Potter didn't seem to be picking up on it however, since his date seemed blissfully unaware of the fact that she was about to loose him to the probable wrath of her mother.

With no more explanation, Lily pulled Severus through the throngs until they were out of ear shot of Harmony and her dad.

She pulled the hand she was clasping in to the proper position and slapped his unoccupied one on to her waist, before waiting for him to begin. completely resigned to his fate, Severus began to dance with her, as she’d requested.

At this moment in time he really didn’t know if to feel. Should he be more anxious about what she wanted, or more mortified that he was dancing with a teacher.

He liked professor Evans, he really did, but even he was aware that as a teenager, there were certain things you just shouldn't do Infront of your peer group and dancing with a teacher was just asking for problems.

Out of the corner of his eye, he could just see Harmony and Potter laughing at the sight he and professor Evans made, and thought, that right at this second?, he was definitely more mortified than anxious.

Then he made the mistake of looking directly at his dance partner, instead of his feet and decided that he’d had that thought a little prematurely.

He certainly didn’t feel mortified anymore or anxious. Honestly, he suddenly felt terrified; he clearly done something to earn her ire and whatever it was, he was sure that he wasn’t going to like whatever she was about to say.

In order to understand why Severus was feeling so fearful, there was something that you first needed to understand about professor Evans. She might be renowned for her fiery temper, one that she more often than not, let rip on the drip headed Potter and Black. But you really knew you were in some deep shit when she became quiet and gave you a certain look, the look he was currently receiving.

It was the *I'm deeply disappointed in you and I thought you were better than this*, look.

Harmony and his mother could do the same look to various degrees, but in it's own way professor Evans’s was so much more potent. She wouldn’t hex you like Potter or his mum or even Harmony might, but that deeply disappointed look made you feel like you had been every damn time, it was like a hot knife in the chest.

But that wasn't the worst of it, the look was always accompanied by some sort of calm speech, during which she listed all the ways you'd fucked up and how you had earned her deep disapproval by your stupid actions. Before you knew it the speech left you feeling small and dirty and generally wondering why you'd gone through with your clearly imbecilic actions in the first place.

Personally Severus would prefer the hexing, he couldn't give a shit what most people thought of him or his actions, but to disappoint one of those three woman in his life whom he thought the world of? it always left him feeling wretched when they looked at him like this. At least a hex was over with quickly, but these quiet heart felt disappointed speeches and looks, lingered for weeks in his soul and in his head like a septic wound that refused to heal.
The point remained however that as of right now he'd clearly done something wrong and for the life of him he had absolutely no idea what it could be.

As they continued to dance amongst the students a heavy silence had settled over the pair, professor Evans was clearly waiting for him to say something, but since he didn't know what he'd done, what exactly could he say?

Feeling very uncomfortable, Severus cleared his throat and took a gamble on what the look might be about.

“I'm sorry if you didn't approve of me touching Harmony during the dance but I couldn't have."

He was cut off abruptly by Professor Evans huffing out a breath and rolling her eyes.

ok, that clearly wasn't the issue.

“That’s not the problem. If anything the problem is that you're not making any real moves on her at all"

Severus was positive his eyes must be bugging out of his head right now, professor Evans couldn't seriously suggesting that she was upset that he hadn't defiled her daughter enough.

"You’ve not held her hand in public, you’ve not kissed her. Infact you’ve not treated her any differently to what you have for the past thirteen years, even though you asked her to be your date to the ball. So what exactly is going on? she was so happy when you first asked her, but over the past few weeks I've watched as she’s become deflated and listless, don't get me wrong when she knows me or her father are watching, she's never looked happier and thankfully for you James hasn't noticed that its more or less a show, but I have".

Severus felt winded, but didn’t look away from her and as her eyes filled with fire he didn't dare speak either.

“So help me Severus Tobias Snape if you’re leading my daughter on, they’ll not find your body”.

Severus began shaking his head negative before she'd even finished, how could she believe he was leading her daughter on?.

“No, I promise on my life that I'm not leading her on, I wouldn't do that to her, I swear”.

Lily eyes still full of fire searched Severus's face for an answer but found none.

“so what's the problem?. You'd better have a damn good explanation for the way you've been acting, because from where I'm standing it doesn't look like anything but you leading her on”.

Severus shook his head vehemently.

“No, I promise you’ve got it wrong”.

Severus had the urge to run his hands through his hair in frustration, but couldn’t give in to it while he was still dancing with his professor. Just how could he explain things to her without looking stupid? the plan sounded ludicrous in his own head half the time, how could he expect professor Evans to understand. He supposed he hadn't got much choice, the professor wasn't going to leave him alone with out an adequate explanation. He was going to have to tell her the truth and hope that she understood.
I knew this was going to turn out more painful than a hexing would.

Lily felt her heart go out to the boy who'd stolen her daughters, she knew she was coming off as a bitch and clearly Severus hadn't set out to intentionally hurt her daughter, the boys adamance that he wasn't leading her on proved this, but she couldn't help either of them if she didn't know what the problem was. She watched as Severus's face became devoid of emotion and his eyes shut down.

His voice sounded almost hollow as he started to speak it was as if Severus had fled and let some one else take over the use of his body.

"The reason I haven't acted less like a friend and more like a romantic partner, is simply because I knew as soon as I gave in and started doing that stuff with her I'd want more, so I decided that the best way to secure the more I was inevitably going to want, was to wait and give her the best first kiss I was capable of, waiting till the night of the ball seemed like the best option for this. I know it sounds stupid, but you know what she reads in those damn books my mother gives her, she's bound to have some over hyped sickeningly romantic ideal in her head, one that I can only compete with if I waited for tonight and I know that there are...

Severus took a deep breath trying to gain courage for the next bit.

"There are.. other boys who are much better looking than me, or have better personalities than me. I have nothing else to offer her other than the most romantic first kiss I can provide. If I give her that fictional ideal, then maybe she won't think about how big or hooked my nose is or how crooked and miss coloured my teeth are or.. or how completely unsuited I am for some one as uniquely glorious as her".

Lily felt rather shocked by the Severus's confession, she'd mistakenly thought, the same as Eileen, that this lack of action from Severus was due to him being an overzealous gentleman. She'd have never thought that he had insecurities like this. She'd thought that Severus wasn't the type.

She's been completely sure that he had to know how much Harmony mooned over him, frankly you'd have to be blind and deaf not to see it, but clearly Severus was unaware of what Lily and pretty much everyone else could see, that Harmony Potter was completely besotted with Severus Snape.

Lily truly didn't know if to give him a hug or a smack around the back of the head.

In the end she settled for both.

Professor Evans brought them to an abrupt halt at the edge of the dance floor, not far from the refreshments, and suddenly pulled him down in to a hug. This was more than a little awkward, since he hadn't ducked down towards her for it and he was nearly a head taller than she was. If Severus had been shocked by the sudden hug, he was much more shocked when she gave him a good hard smack across the back of his head, while she was giving him the aforementioned hug.

Lily pulled back from Severus and watched as he tried to subtly rub at the back of his head.

She tugged Severus out of the way of the dancing couples until they were stood in front of the refreshments table, there wasn't any one around so the rest of their conversation was unlikely to be heard, which was good, she needed to deliver a few home truths Severus's way; but she didn't want to do him the disservice of other people hearing such delicate information either.

From where they were stood she could just see Harmony and her dad dancing, they appeared to be
having a discussion of their own.

“You know, either you think too little of yourself or you think too little of Harmony, so which one is it?”.

Severus who was still rubbing his stinging skull, (Professor Evans may have been a girl but she had a smack like a wooden paddle), looked at the Professor questioningly; unsure of what, exactly, she was getting at.

“Pardon?”

The professor green eyes were searching his face, for what he wasn't sure but he felt incredibly exposed under the scrutiny. Thankfully she looked away and back towards the dancing couples, Severus did the same as the professor quiet voice broke through his unease.

“It’s a simple question Severus. Either you think too little of yourself of you think to little of Harmony”.

Severus didn't look away from the dancing couples though he could feel that the professor was most definitely looking at him again.

“I don’t think either of those things Professor”.

Lily huffed, honestly getting through to this boy is like trying to talk to a stone sometimes.

“well clearly you must. After all what on earth makes you think that Harmony of all people, is going to turn round and ditch you for something as stupid as crooked teeth, and as for you nose I've heard her defend it on more than one occasion, so you can’t seriously believe that that'll turn her off either. She isn’t so shallow as to take a person on looks alone. Not that, that's a real concern for you anyway, I happen to know that she's rather enamoured of your looks and has been for some time”.

The boy at her side remained silent, continuing to look over the dancing crowd as if he hadn't heard her.

“So that brings us back to the other option, why are you so positive that you’re not good enough for her?”.

Severus turned away from the watching the crowd then and gave her a pained look, one that said she should know why.

“Because I know I'm not, she’s kind and gentle and loving and loyal and fiercely protective.. and honestly she’s the most beautiful girl I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. Then there’s me, I know what people say about me and for the most part they’re right, I'm an unfeeling cold bastard, with no friends, a personality that could peel paint and no matter what you say; I know I have appearance that could crack mirrors. I might be passable as a friend, but who in their right mind would want me as a boyfriend. They wouldn't, not once they truly realised what it entailed. Harmony can’t be immune to that, no one else would be”.

Lily put a gentle hand on Severus's face and a pair almost vacant eyes looked back.

“Severus I think you need to revaluate some of your thoughts, Number one. You are not a cold unfeeling bastard, you're a human who’s had a rough life at times and grown a shell to protect himself. But you're not that way around to the people that count and Harmony is very much one of those. Number two. Yes your personality leaves something to be desired sometimes, but this is
unlikely to turn Harmony away!. She's already more than aware of how acerbic you can be and it's never stopped her yet. Number three. No matter what you might think of your looks, I certainly don't see a face that could crack mirrors, I see a distinguished, handsome young man, who doesn't recognise himself”.

Lily eyes softened as she saw a crack appear in his vacant façade, her words were starting to get through.

“Harmony is more than aware of who you are, and what you act like, the point is she cares for you as you are. She doesn't want a boy with straight teeth and a sunny personality, she wants you and you're hurting her by letting your own insecurities rule your head, understand?"

Severus gave her a little nod of understanding, Lily leaned forward and gave him a conspiratorial smile.

“I’m going to let you in on a little secret Severus. Woman are simple creatures really and Harmony more so than most. The kiss doesn't need to be the height of romance, you won’t loose her just because it’s not something straight out of a fantasy. Frankly she’d be happy if your first shared kiss was in a cupboard. All Harmony's bothered about, is that it’s you that kissing her, not the setting. So I suggest remove your head from your arse and make a move before you hurt her more than she can take and you do end up loosing her"

Severus gave appeared to be giving her words some real consideration. It was the first real sign of emotion she’d seen from the stoic boy since she'd asked him what the problem was. she didn't get a response to her words but at least they looked like they might have had the desired effect. Hopefully they’ll be alright. If they’re not I'll lock them in a store room until they are

Severus for his part was considering what Professor Evans had said he and thought that he’d definitely done Harmony a disservice by continuing with his foolhardy plan despite seeing the effect it was having on her.

To hear it said so plainly that she definitely wanted him as something more and most definitely wanted him for him. looks and acerbic personality an all, was immensely gratifying, if not a little dizzying.

Though he didn’t realise it his shields collapsed under this happy realisation and he was looking at Harmony with a mixture of fondness and hope and more than a little gratitude that this wonderful creature might just want him above all others.

"you know, I'm going to get all sorts of smarmy little comments for dancing with a professor don't you?".

Lily got a almost feral grin cross her features before she schooled it in to a look of indifference.

"All part of the plan my dear Severus, don't hurt my daughter any more than you already have and I promise not to ruin your reputation anymore tonight".

"I promise".

Chapter End Notes
well there it is folks hope you liked this chapter,

if you see any mistakes let me know, and as always comments and kudos make my
day if you want to leave them, I optimistically hope to have the next chapter up for
Friday, but it might not be up until Saturday.

See y'all later lovelies, Pink x (^^)
As the mismatched pair of student and professor began to dance, James and Harmony were shaking with laughter at the image they presented.

James wrapped an arm around his daughter and gave her a half hug.

“Well your date looks suitably terrified at the prospect of dancing with your mum”.

Harmony rolled her eyes at her father, as they got in the right positions and started to dance themselves.

“I don’t think he’s terrified of mum. Maybe a little anxious, but I think it’s what your reaction might be, that he's worried about. He’s quite adamant that you and Sirius would try and off him as soon as he put his hands on me or that Sirius is still in his work robes because he’s going to try and arrest him”.

She gave James a withering look.

*I Think Severus was mostly joking around about that but there has to be at least a grain of truth to what he said.*

“Would I do a thing like that!”.

Harmony wouldn't even need to be looking at her dad to know that his exclamation, was about as faux innocent as you were ever likely to hear from a full grown adult.

As it was she was looking at him and raised an unimpressed eyebrow at her dad, James at least had the sense to look suitably chagrined at being caught out.

“In all fairness this dress is hardly helping me keep those type of thought’s in check. Which by the way me and you are going to be having a chat tomorrow about suitable clothing”.

Harmony rolled her eyes in exasperation.

“Oh please you and Sirius would’ve been sending threatening looks his way even if I were wearing a habit. Besides mum approved of the dress. She encouraged me to buy it in fact, so there’s not really anything you can say”.

James could hear the *so there* in her tone and wondered when his daughter had become so
uncaring of his parental authority.

*Probably when you kept giving her, her broom back when she was supposed to be in time out; a voice that sounded suspiciously like Lily’s said.*

“Yes, I'm already well aware of your mothers role in this and I've already spoken with her”.

Harmony bit her lip.

She didn’t want to start an argument between her parents, particularly over something as stupid as a dress. Before she could defend her mum’s actions however, James continued.

“Although it pains me to say it; I quite agree with your mother. You look absolutely stunning in this dress. I just wish it showed a bit less skin at the back and far less of your figure, that’s all”.

Harmony blushed at her father’s compliment, but got the petulant look back at the mention of the dresses less than modest nature.

“Honestly dad, I'm sure no one but you and Sirius have even noticed”.

James lifted his eyes to the ceiling, and took a deep breath in through his nose.

*How can she be so naive to the way she looks?, She just doesn't seem to see herself properly.*

“well I know of at least one boy who’s noticed”,

“go on then who?”.

James motioned his head towards the edge of the dance floor.

Severus was stood in the exact spot that her dad had gestured at, at she felt her breath catch just a touch.

He was stood next to her mum not really saying much though her mum appeared to saying a great deal to him. Both of them where looking over the dance floor and Severus’s gaze was fixed solely on her.

He looked away as soon as he saw her looking in his direction.

She knew she was blushing again but at the moment she didn’t care.

It might have been her dad that had noticed Severus's intense gaze, but that didn't mean she didn't feel just a little pleased about it.

She could feel the grin on her lips and she saw her dad make a face, he'd clearly not thought through the fact that his comment was going to draw her attention back to a boy he very much loathed.

*You're going to have to get over it dad. I like him and if tonight goes well I intend to keep him around for a long time.*

As the song came to a close and James and his daughter finished their dance, he placed a gentle kiss on his daughters head.

If Harmony didn’t know better she’d swear that that gentle kiss almost felt like a goodbye.
“Come on, I better give you back to your date”.

He led her through the throngs of dancing students to where her mum and Severus were standing at the edge of the crowd.

Once they'd reached the pair, Harmony was vaguely aware of her dad saying something to Severus; but if she was honest she was paying more attention to her date than whatever her dad was prattling about.

She was about to give in and reattach herself to her date, when her dad's unrelenting grip on her hand bought her up short, and she finally decided to pay attention to what her dad was saying.

“...ake sure you get her back to me in one piece, or there’ll be hell to pay. Understood?”.

Harmony scowled at her dad for the second time in the past few minutes.

She felt her dad finally release his death grip on her hand, and was just about to tell him that she could bloody well look after herself and to stop trying to bully her date; when she felt Severus take hold of her now free hand.

She looked up at Severus questioningly, but he wasn't looking at her, he was looking her dad straight in the eye, seemingly assessing something, before she saw him swallow slightly as he answered her dad in the most earnest tone she'd ever heard from the boy.

“Of course sir”.

Harmony saw the fond glance he sent in her direction before once more looking stoically at her dad.

“I'll not let anything happen to her, ever”.

Harmony didn’t know what to think. On the one hand she wanted to rail at Severus (in the same manner she’d wanted to rail at her dad), for this chauvinistic assumption that she apparently needed looking after.

On the other hand, the shear conviction in Severus’s voice, made it sound like she was the most precious thing he knew of in existence and she’d challenge anyone not to feel just a little gooey if they were presented with that same conviction from the person they liked.

*Mum’s right, men are confusing to be around.*

“See that you don’t”.

She could hear the *or else* in her dads tone, and as gooey as Severus’s declaration might've made her feel, she’d had quite enough of her dads posturing for one night.

*Time to leave the testosterone behind, I think.*

“Alright that’s enough posturing. Come on Severus I want to have a look around the rose garden. See ya later guys”.

With those parting words to her parents, she started to pull Severus through the swaying crowd if students and towards the door that led to the rose garden.

All the professor’s (her parents included), had been casting spells out there most of the day and she was sure it was going to look rather lovely in the moonlight.
Well I hope you liked the filler,

On to a more serious topic.

I had a less than pleasant review yesterday, that (amongst other things) called this a badly written Mary Sue, now I have no issue with constructive criticism, and frankly I think this review was likely a troll more than anything, since they were rather cowardly and left the review as a guest with no way for me to respond.

I have deleted the comment.

The reviewers real problem seemed to be that I'd listed Harry potter as a character and apparently Harmony doesn't count as that, if that's your issue all I can tell you to do is steer clear of fem!Harry.

It's clearly tagged.

But the point remains if you think this is badly written could you give me an explanation as to why you think that?, I want to learn where I'm going wrong, if I am.

Well I didn't mean for that to turn in to a rant, but the point still stands, anyway if you see any mistakes as always let me know and I'll correct them asap.

Next chapter should be up either Sunday or Monday

See you later lovelies, pink x(^^)
Severus allowed Harmony to tug him through the throngs of dancing students and out of the side door that would lead them in to the rose garden.

But Harmony didn't relinquish her hold on him once they were through the stone door, instead she led them further in to the garden and away from the cacophony of the ball.

Severus felt no need to take in his surroundings as he was pulled down one path and then another. He was quite content just memorising the feel of her hand in his and gazing at the lovely creamy skin of her back.

He could just make out two small freckles on her spine and his fingers itched to trace them.

Severus was pulled from his musings about her skin, when Harmony pulled them to a stop in the middle of a random garden path; apparently she was now satisfied that they were far enough away from the ball. Indeed when Severus looked back down the path the entrance to the ball was nowhere insight.

It wasn't just the entrance that had disappeared either, as far in to the garden as they now were, not a single sound of the rambunctious ball could be heard.

The garden was pleasantly still and it felt like a balm to Severus nerves, the only sounds that could be heard out here were the rustle of the leaves in the breeze and the odd muffled giggle, of some overly amorous couple that had hidden themselves from sight.

Feeling calmer than he had all night and realising his dates attention was else where at the moment, he decided to finally take a proper look at the area Harmony had stopped them in.

The path they'd stopped on, tapered through the garden in a gentle curve, this gave him the perfect view of the staff's hard work. It was quite clear that they'd gone all out to create a romantic winter wonderland.

This shouldn't really surprise Severus, he knew that the Hogwarts staff were rather fond off showing off their skills when given the chance, and he couldn't blame them for that; afterall he couldn't believe teaching a bunch of hormone riddled fatheads nine months of the year offered much in the way of stimulation.

On the other hand he did find it ironic that they'd essentially created the perfect make out spot for those same hormone riddled students.
(If at least one student wasn't caught with their trousers around their ankles tonight, Severus would eat his cauldron.)

There were white rose trees dotted along the of edges path. Someone had gilded their petals and they shone ethereally in the small amount of moon light. Their pots had been gilded too, though these were done in gold as opposed to silver.

Behind them were thick banks of box hedges, these appeared to be dividing the garden up in to various zones, no doubt the giggling couple were hiding behind one of these.

In between the potted rose trees, there were random plinths or statues or even the odd stone bench.

All of it looked like it was made from white shining marble.

Severus wouldn’t be the least bit surprised if it was all transfigured from random lumps of old wood; that come tomorrow wouldn’t be fit for anything other than a bonfire.

There were also real fairy lights hung in various places along the path, the majority of them where over the benches; thus creating little pockets of romantic warmth where couples could sit together and talk.. or snog each other senseless, really want had the staff been thinking when they'd created those.

Normally the sickeningly romantic scene would make him want to gouge his eyes out with a rusty knife.

However, just for tonight, he was willing to put up with the decor. The setting couldn't be more perfect for his plan, and he wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth.

He knew what Professor Evans had said about Harmony not caring about where her first kiss was, but he'd already come this far, he might as well put his plan in to action. It would be stupid not to.

Harmony appeared taken in enough of her surroundings, because he felt her give his fingers a light squeeze to gain his attention.

“Come on, let's go this way. I think I can hear a fountain”.

Severus had a moment of disappointment as he felt her fingers slip away from his, but as soon as he felt it, it disappeared because she was slipping her arm through his and leaning in to his upper arm, and happily sighing.

He felt slightly ashamed that his first reaction to the unexpected contact was to stiffen up, but when heard her happy sigh, all he could feel was content, and he softened in to her touch embarrassingly quickly.

He gave her fingers a gentle squeeze and they set off at a sedate pace down the curving gravel path, they were more or less draped over each other and Severus felt that there was no better position to be in.

As they moved along the path, they appeared to be leaving the hormone bags behind, because the sound of giggling was growing fainter while he could suddenly hear the unmistakeable, if some what distant, tinkle of water.

How Harmony had heard it above the amorous couple he had no idea, but he was almost certain that she was correct and that, that sound was coming from a fountain.
Deciding not to dwell on his dates apparently super hearing, he gave her fingers another gentle squeeze and leaned in to her just a little more, there wasn't enough gap between them for even the smallest particle of light to get through, he heard Harmony let out another happy sound and smiled to himself.

They'd been wandering down the seemingly endless garden path for some inconsequential amount of time, the silence between them unbroken, but comfortable; when he felt Harmony stop walking and release a small startled noise.

Severus had been regarding the various statues with intrest when she'd suddenly come to a stop, and he was about to ask her what was wrong, but she appeared transfixed by something. following her line of sight, he found what had made her stop so suddenly.

Honestly he wasn't sure that they weren't having a shared hallucination because what he was seeing just couldn't be right, he knew this was a magical castle but this was ludicrously odd even by Hogwarts standards. Because no more than ten feet in front of them, one of the many statues had gotten off it's plinth and was picking roses from one of the trees.

At his side Harmony still seemed to be in a certain state of disbelief, while he'd been over come with a sudden sense of wariness.

The statue was unlikely to have been deliberately animated by the professors, since it was steadily and systematically destroying the rose trees, all the trees in the statues immediate vicinity had been plucked bare of their flowers. leaving the statue with a rather large bouquet and the tree looking very forlorn.

So in the unlikely hood that the statue had been deliberately animated, there was a good chance that one of the enchantments in this area had gone wrong, meaning this situation could become very dangerous indeed.

Severus doubted that the statue was violent, but he was well aware that you couldn't assume that semi sentient objects would be docile either.

Keeping his wary gaze on the statue he tugged on Harmony and pulled her as far over to the opposite side of the path as they could get, and began edging closer to the statue, hopefully they could walk behind it and remain unseen.

The attempt to go unnoticed was quite in vain, once they were within a foot or so, the statue abruptly turned to face them, staring them down with its creepily blank stone face.

How the statue had become aware of them, only once they were close to it Severus had no clue.

Caught, Severus took a good look at his opponent and realised that it was a statue of the Greek god Anteros.

Severus wasn't sure what was more disconcerting about the statue as the seconds ticked by; the creepily blank face or the fact that it sounded like fingers down a chalk board, when it made an attempt at a bow, despite it having no working waist that would permit such an action.

Severus continued to regard the statue with wariness, completely unsure how he was supposed to respond to this display, at his side Harmony still hadn't said a thing.

Harmony wasn't one to let an odd situation go with out comment, so either she was just as worried about what the statue might do as he was or she was still unsure that what she was seeing was quite real.
Severus was about to tentatively suggest that they might be better going back the way they'd come and hope it didn't follow, when the statue took a sudden juddering step towards Harmony.

He could feel her go tense at the sudden movement and was just about to pull her behind himself and reach for the wand he'd tucked in the pocket of his robes, when the statue did something even more odd than bowing at them. It presented it's bouquet of gilded roses to Harmony.

Blinking owlishly at the offered gift, Harmony did the only thing she could and accepted the flowers, feeling rather silly as she did so.

Severus knew his mouth had dropped open in a very unattractive manner, and that he was gaping like some one had slapped him with a week old fish, but he just couldn't wrap his head around what he was seeing.

Apparently it wasn't only the likes of Diggory he had to worry about courting Harmony, he now had to worry about the bleeding architecture to.

Some one out there was laughing at his life, he was sure of it.

With the both of them still in varying states of disbelief, the statue gave them one last ear wrenching attempt at a bow; before judderingly sauntering back to its empty plinth further along the path, where it grindingly moved it's self in to it's proper pose, before going completely still.

Harmony and Severus shared a look and through some sort of mutual no verbal agreement, they both decided it would be best to leave the statue behind as fast as possible, just in case it decided that it wanted to do more than hand out roses to unsuspecting students.

Harmony grabbed the hem of her dress with her free hand (so that she wouldn't trip), while holding the roses a little tighter in her other, and she and Severus made there way quickly down the path.

Harmony was mildly annoyed and mildly amused that as they passed the statue on it's plinth, Severus grabbed her upper arm in a frim grip and almost herded her past it. Whether this was because he was worried about her falling or if it was simply so he could pull her out of the way if the statue decided to launch an attack she wasn't completely sure.

She had a feeling it was probably the latter, she hadn’t missed the way he’d gone to step in front of her when that statue had taken it's first unexpected step towards her. He'd clearly thought that the statues intentions were less than pure, and had been getting ready to defend her should he have had to.

Once more Harmony was left feeling equal parts annoyed and gooey.

Harmony chanced a glance back over her shoulder as they got further away, and felt herself jolt just a little when she realised that the statue was watching them leave.

It clearly had some way of sensing them, because as soon as she'd glanced back, the statue had started to wave goodbye. She'd didn't get much chance to watch it though, because Severus was suddenly pulling them through a rose arch at the side of the path and the strangely friendly statue disappeared from view.

*I'll need to get hold of my parents pensive to show Hermione my stony Romeo, she'll never believe me otherwise.*

Harmony finally got a good look at Severus now that they were through the archway. She was
somewhat pleased to see that he looked uncharacteristically out of sorts, in some weird way it was nice to know that; if a truly bizarre situation did crop up, he was just a susceptible to being wrong footed as the rest of them were.

They'd left the statue behind a good few minutes before by now and Severus still wasn't looking any less ill at ease, they were about to go through another arch when Harmony began to rack her brain for something to try and ease him back in to his earlier happy mood.

“Well, I have to say that was one of the oddest things to happen to me in a while. Though it was nice to get some flowers. I've never been given such a nice romantic gesture by anyone else, just wait till I tell Hermione that I got my first ever bunch of flowers off of a statue".

She felt herself cringe as the last word left her lips, even to her own ears that had sounded like a dig. One that she hadn't intended. As normal she'd tried to make light of the situation and instead she'd put her foot right in it and probably made things worse.

She felt Severus’s grip on her arm tighten, as he went stiff and ramrod straight.

Well the comment had almost had the intended effect, he certainly wasn't ill at ease anymore, he was just pulling down the emotional shutters instead. It was something he rarely did in her presence, and Harmony wondered, not for the first time, why she could never seem to say the right thing.

Her only defence for the stupid comment was that she was still somewhat in shock after being given a bunch of roses by a statue. But even in her own head, the excuse sounded lame.

Perhaps some small, unhappy part of herself had intended for it to be a dig, though she really hoped not.

As they made their way through yet another rose arch, the air between them felt heavy, none of their earlier ease remained. Harmony’s mind was going a mile a minute, what could she do to rectify her unthinking comment? what could she do to bring back her teasing boy from earlier in the night.

As they breached this latest archway, Harmony was hit with the full on sound of tinkling water, up until now the sound had remained muffled, no matter how far they walked through the garden, but now the sound was crystal clear.

The fountain they’d set out to find, was now right in front of them and flowing merrily; as if it'd always been there and not just erected that after noon by the staff. They'd managed to create a rather beautiful space in such a short time.

The merrily twinkling fountain was made to look like white marble and depicted a small family of deer, with the fountains water flowing from the magnificent stags many antler points.

Other than the rose arch they’d come through, there were three others set an equal distance apart in the thick hedges that made the circular wall of the small courtyard like space.

The thick hedge wall made the space seem endlessly private and enclosed, even if logic dictated that it probably wasn’t.

The entire area was lit up beautifully with an abundance of real fairy lights, causing the space to have a soft romantic glow. There was also a thin stone bench encircling the base of the fountain providing couples a place to sit and enjoy the ambiance.
Any other time Harmony would have been awestruck by the space, it was like something straight out of one of her romance novels. She might not be an average girl in most ways, but she was a sucker for a good romance.

Right now though, she really couldn’t care less about the beautiful space.

What she really cared about was Severus and the fact that since her (hopefully) inadvertent dig, he gone completely stoic, locking his emotions up tight, and that just wouldn’t do. She knew from experience that the longer you let him brood the more likely he was to come up with some sort of ridiculous scenario.

It’d happened many times before, for one thing or another and she’d be damned, if she was going to let his brooding anger take hold tonight.

The problem was she didn’t know what to say to make it right.

She could feel an internal sigh building and had to make sure it didn’t become and external one.

Any outward sign of negative emotion when he was in this state would be even less wise than the original comment had been. It was like trying to approach a dragon, do the wrong thing, at the wrong moment and you were likely to get burned.

There was nothing for it she supposed. She’d just have to say something and hope she didn’t make things worse; because if she didn’t, the flirty teasing boy from the opening dance wouldn’t be coming back.

Harmony gently removed her arm from Severus’s grip and turned to face him, looking up in to his shuttered face as she did so, he wasn't looking at her, he was looking at some random spot over her shoulder.

It irked her endlessly that she always got a crick in her neck, if she had to look up at him, with out him bending forwards a little first. But right now really wasn’t the time to be bitching about that. She needed to fix this fast, before the night was completely ruined. For her and for Severus.

She felt her fingers start to itch with the urge to run them through her hair; it was a very bad, anxious habit, that she’d inherited from her dad. She was about to give in to the urge; when she remembered the copious amounts of gunk in her hair and refrained.

She bit her lip slightly, before releasing a short breath. She had no idea why she felt so nervous about this.

*It’s only Sev for Merlin's sake.*

“Sev, I’m sorry if my comment sounded like a dig. It really wasn’t, you know the way my mouth is sometimes. I Know that you’re doing your best, with whatever this thing between us”.

Harmony gestured between her and Severus.

“I know you’re not touchy feely, trust me after 13 years I really do know that, and I don’t expect you to be springing romantic gestures at me left and right. Certainly not around others at any rate. But when we’re alone, I have to admit it’d be nice if you showed some inclination to liking me as more than a friend. I know you’re probably not awar-”

“I’m aware”.
Severus’s voice cut through hers, he still wasn't looking at her and she didn’t think she’d ever heard him sound so hollow.

Harmony felt momentarily stunned.

*What does he mean he’s aware? He can’t mean what I think he means surely.*

“You’re aware of what?”

If he answered that like she thought he might, she wasn't sure that she wanted to hear it. On the other hand she also couldn’t not ask.

She *needed* to know if Severus was more aware of her advances than she’d thought he was, and she needed to know if he knew how much he’d been hurting her, when he'd rebuked them with friendly but cool indifference.

“I’m aware of how I've been acting, I’m aware I've been rebuffing you and I’m aware that you’ve been unhappy when I have. But I had to stick to my plan”.

Harmony felt like she’d been hit in the head with a bludger.

This couldn’t been right, it just couldn’t.

It didn’t make the blindest bit of sense, Severus had never wanted to see her hurt. What plan could possibly have justified his actions of the past few weeks.

“What plan! And what do you mean you knew I was unhappy. If you knew I was unhappy, why did you keep..”

“Because I Had No Choice!.”

The words exploded out of Severus, and Harmony's world seemed to narrow in on it's self. The words echoed in her head, though the ability to comprehend them seemed to have fled.

*no choice, no choice, no choice.*

Chapter End Notes

...well I hope you enjoyed that lovelies, next chapter should be up around Tuesday or Wednesday.

See y'all soon Pink. X (^_^)
assume makes and ass out of u and me

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies,
new chapter for your enjoyment,

I have to say that this chapter out of all of them had given me the most hassle out of the entire story, to that end it's probably not my best, but after 5 total rewrites, 7 edits, another partial re-write yesterday and another edit today, it probably as good as I'm going to get it, it just refused to flow for some reason, and while there are parts that I love there are also parts that I find a little meh!.
but I hope you enjoy it any way.

Harmony watched in a sort of detached fascination, as Severus tangled his hands in to his silky hair and gripped the strands hard, it was a clear sign of distress in the normally stoic boy.

But at the moment she really couldn't bring herself to feel anything for his obvious distress, her world felt like it was crumbling around her and landing in a pile at her feet.

He began to pace agitatedly in front of her and didn't stop as he began to speak once more, the words seemed to be tumbling from his mouth as if he had no way of stopping them and all Harmony could do was listen in dread.

“I had absolutely no intention of asking you to the ball as my date. But I had no choice but to ask you, otherwise Diggory would've asked you to go with him and you would've ditched the idea of going with me. I hadn't counted on the problems that would arise by asking you to go with me as my actual date. I hadn't counted on the past three weeks being so bloody hard. I hadn’t counted on the fact that you’d start giving me these openings to kiss you and hold your hand..or..or.. other couple-ly type things that I couldn't do. I had.”

Severus was cut off abruptly by a voice that was almost unrecognisable through all the hurt it contained, every word that was spoken by it seemed to be cracking under the weight of the emotion it held.

“What the hell do you mean you had NO choice, you had plenty of choice. The first one being that you don’t just ask a girl out, so that she won't go to a stupid bloody dance with some one who's not you!. Particularly when you apparently didn't want to go with said girl in the first bloody fucking place!"

In his head Severus went over the words he'd just said, and came to the horrifying realisation of just how bad that the hastily spilled truth would've sounded to Harmony.

He'd more or less implied that he'd never wanted to date her in the first place and that he'd only asked her because he selfishly didn't want his friend leaving him on his own.

He needed to better explain himself before the whole evening went up in flames through his own stupidity.
“I didn’t mea-”

But Harmony wasn't having it and raised the volume of her pain filled voice to make sure that he didn't get the chance to interrupt her

“More to the point, where the hell have you gotten this idiotic idea, that Diggory of all people was going to ask me! Even if he had, I would’ve said No. I wanted to go to this ruddy fucking ball with you, no one else. Even if we were only going to go as friends, I would’ve been happy with that, and I still would've told any body else who tried to ask me to sod off. Don't you get it!, A night with you; even if it was just as a friend, was always, always going to be better than going with some random person I don't know from Adam. I was happy to leave things as they were, but then completely out of the blue you asked me to be your actual, proper date and I don't think I've ever felt so bloody happy as I did then”

Harmony let out a bitter, water logged snort, before turning he back on her friend, the pain was just to much.

“And now I find out that you didn't actually want anything to do with me in a romantic sense, you've essentially been using my own feelings against me, to make sure that I didn't pick someone else's company over yours”

That snort had pierced his heart like a red hot needle. He'd never seen her so emotionally broken.

“Harm..”

Severus tried to put a hand on her shoulder, in some vain attempt at comfort; but she violently shrugged it off.

when she turned back to face him, her eyes were glistening in the low light of the gardens, but it didn't lessen the effectiveness of the glare she was levelling at him.

Severus felt himself gulp. He'd seen this glare many times, though it had never been levelled on him to this degree.

“How could you be so fucking selfish!. I care about you so fucking much and when you asked me to the ball I felt complete. I fucking knew something wasn't right though. No sooner had you asked me, you started to act really fucking weird when we were together, you've been detached and emotionally distant, and you've wanted to spend less and less time with me and giving me the most stupid excuse's as to why”.

She took a step towards him, her face was mere inches from his chest, and she was now looking up in to his face. Her glistening eyes bore in to his very soul feeling like they were ripping it to shreds.

She'd lowered the volume of her voice now, but the hurt was as loud as ever.

“At first I was confused, I couldn't understand what was wrong, was it something I'd done?, so I asked my mum and Hermione for advice. They seemed to think you might be acting reserved, because you were unsure what the change to our relationship might entail or that you might just be trying to act all noble and shit. Their advice was to give you time, let things settle. So I did, at least to begin with; but giving you space wasn't stopping you from acting weird. So I thought hey maybe he just needs to know that I'm in to this, so I tried to encourage you with some favourable advances”.

Harmony shook her head, a look of disgusted self loathing came over her beautiful face, warping it in to something unrecognisable from the girl he loved.
"Yeah, cause that was such a good fucking plan!. All that got me was you blowing hot and cold, you’d seem OK with the advances at first and then you'd start your stoic must not touch routine. What happened the other week is the perfect example, you kissed my cheek, went all weird and ran off in to the night, I've barely seen you since, I've actually watched you purposely walk in a different direction to me, for Merlin's sake!, tonight is literally the first time in over a week, that you haven't run in the opposite direction at the sight of me”.

Harmony gave a mirthless laugh, the sound of it chilled Severus's blood.

"I guess I should've took the bloody hint, that you blowing hot and cold like this was only ever going to mean one thing for me. But I hoped so badly, so badly, that what I was thinking had to be wrong, but clearly it wasn't. Which begs the question, when the ball was over and you'd gotten what ever it was that you wanted to gain from tonight, what exactly were you planning to do?. Let me down gently or just blow me off completely and tell me that I gotten the wrong end of the stick, and then try and go back to being best friends again, like none of this had ever happened”.

“Harmony, pleas..”

Severus tried to touch her again and she shook him off once more, anger burning in her eyes.

“No, you’ve said more than enough. Godric Severus, if you didn’t like me like that, why didn’t you just tell me you’d made a mistake!. I would've been sore with you for a while, but we could’ve gone back to being friends. We’ve been friends for so long and I thought that our friendship meant as much to you, as it did to me. Obviously I was wrong, because there's no way you could have the same investment in this friendship, if you've been so callously able to play with my feeling for you, feelings that you were clearly aware of. That's not just fucking cruel Severus.. it down right heartless”.

Severus heard the exact moment her heart finally caved under the weight of her hurt feelings and shattered. He felt his shatter right along with it.

Her voice was barely above a whisper now and so clogged with emotion, that the words would be barely audible to most people, but to Severus every word was still crystal clear and everyone felt like a punch to the gut.

“I care about you so much… and now I find out I've been making a fool of myself this entire time, because you never had any intention of returning my feelings, did you? is that what the plan was for?. A plan to make sure that you'd get what you wanted with out having to kiss the midget troglodyte Gryffindork bitch.”

Severus had watched feeling completely broken as she spoke those heart rending words and began to swipe angrily at her damp eyes.

He badly wanted to refute those words and correct her assumptions, but thought it best to let her get the rest of her hurt out before he tried, but when she began to refer to herself in those same disgusting terms as his house mates, he decided he couldn't bare to hear anymore.

With out giving her a warning or a chance to protest, he gently but firmly grabbed both her wrists.

She once more tried to shake off the contact, but his grip was too firm and there was no way she was going to be able to dislodge her wrists from it. Unable to get away, but not wanting to look at the person that had caused her more hurt than she would have ever thought him capable of, she moved her head down and to the side, blocking him out as best she could.
Severus's actions might have stopped the flow of vitriol that she was about to start spewing about herself, but she was now refusing to look him.

Honestly he couldn't blame her for that, not with her current thoughts about his recent behaviour, he wouldn't want to look at her either if the situation was reversed.

Severus released one of her wrists. The freed arm immediately went to her side; her hand automatically balling in to a fist.

He gently put his fingers under the edge of her chin and tilted her face up towards his. She made a valiant attempt at resisting, but in the end Severus got what he wanted, and her eyes met his once more.

Gone was the longing fog of happiness from earlier in the night, all that was left was raw pain, seeing it felt like a physical blow.

A blow made all the worse because his own unthinking comments had put it there in the first place.

On the other hand, the sheer amount of pain he was seeing was unlikely to be solely from his few unthinking comments.

Clearly these ludicrous thoughts that he didn’t like her, had been festering away for sometime and slowly rotting her soul. His unthinking comment was just the final push that broke it.

Professor Evans had been right, this plan of his had pushed Harmony to her breaking point and he could very well loose her if he couldn’t fix the damage.

He supposed if one must look for something good in this whole mess, he was now very much assured that her feelings for him had been genuine. Though that was unlikely to do him much good now, not if he couldn’t repair what he’d broken, through his own stupidly petty thoughts about his appearance.

And they were stupid, because if he really thought about it properly, when had she ever stuck her nose up at the way he looked?. Even when someone rightfully called him a greasy bastard, she’d told them were to shove it.

He’d been a blind fatheaded arse, it's just a shame it had took this shambles for him to realise it.

The only thing he could do now, was bare his soul to her and hope it was enough to fix the rotten hole he’d caused in hers.

“Now that I have your attention I want to make a few things clear. Number one, I Never Ever, want to hear you describing yourself in those derogatory terms again. You are not a troglodyte, a Gryffindork or a bitch. Understand? And you are anything but disgusting”.

Harmony’s eyes were wary, as if she didn’t want to believe anything he said.

“Number two; I am very aware of how fucked up that comment about asking you out was. I could've worded it much better and for that you have my deepest apologies. I have never wanted to intentionally cause you pain and that comment was thoughtless. When I said I had no choice~”

Severus saw Harmony wince, but ignored it as best he could.

“When I said I had no choice but to ask you out. I meant in no way to imply, that I had no desire to
date you. Far from it in fact. I'd originally planned for us to go to the ball as friends, and hopefully by the end of the night I'd hoped to have asked you on a proper first date. One that could've been conducted away from the prying eyes of the dunderheaded students and the expectations of the teachers”.

Severus took in a deep breath through his nose and exhaled in a short burst of nerves.

*Well here goes nothing.*

“But since the end of the first task, I'd noticed Diggory seemed to be increasingly in your vicinity; after a little while, I began to notice the ever increasing glances and longing looks he was sending your way. You didn’t notice a damn thing of course. You never do when people start paying you that type of attention. Then that day in the library, I'd watched him looking at you for fifteen minutes solid, he wasn't even bothering to pretend to read and then he'd started to make his way over with such a determined expression. I suddenly realised what it was he wanted and I felt my chance slipping through my fingers. I was so certain if he asked, you'd go with him and not me”.

Severus could see Harmony was about to protest and gently but firmly placed his thumb over her lips to stop her, while the rest of his fingers remained holding her chin in place.

Harmony didn’t look best pleased at being silenced like this.

If the situation wasn’t so precarious he’d have laughed at her petulant look.

“I’m aware of how stupid this sounds now, but at the time all I could see was my future happiness running down the drain. So I did the first impulsive thing I've ever done in my life; I asked you before he could, hoping you'd say yes. I am rather…. territorial of your affections, and I honestly couldn’t believe that if you were given the choice between him and me, that you’d still choose to go with me. After all he’s a much better match for some one as wholly exquisite as you, so I decided to remove the choice before it was presented”.

Severus felt Harmony trying to interrupt again; but she was unable to move her lips to a full enough extent to speak coherently and gave up with a huff.

“As to the reasons for not wanting to do the couple-ly type things. It wasn't that I didn't do them because I didn't want to. Fuck no, I want the everyone to know you're mine and no one else’s. I didn’t do them, because I feared, wrongly I'll admit, that your apparent affections may not be strong enough, not to wane once we did those types of things and you found them lacking in some manner. My original plan had been to develop your affections over time and hope that they developed in to a strong enough foundation that they wouldn't collapse at the last hurdle”

Severus gave a wry shake of his head.

"But then you threw me for a loop as usual and once I'd asked you to the ball, it became apparent that you already felt something for me, I wrongly thought that these feelings couldn't be as strong as the ones I'd hoped to build, so I stupidly came up with a new plan to make sure that the possibly fragile feelings you already felt didn't disappear".

Severus gave a self deprecating huff, he honestly couldn't believe how idiotic he'd been recently.

"I knew you'd have some weird over the top romantic ideal in your head about the way things should play out between a man and a woman, so I thought it would be best if I tried to recreate it as best as I could, so that I could keep your affections alive"
Severus saw Harmony eyes flare, once more trying to say something and releasing no more than a string of babble against his thumb.

"I don't have a romantic ideal in my head"

Remarkably he still understood what she was trying to say.

"It's no use denying it Harmony, I've seen you reading those blasted books with a dreamy look on your face often enough to know that you do have one in there somewhere. So after my hand had been forced and my original long term plan had been scuppered, and having a vague idea of what I thought was needed to keep your affections, I came up with a new plan".

Harmony had narrowed her eyes at him in disapproval, whether this was because of what he was saying or the fact that he was stopping her from talking he wasn't sure.

"I thought that the best way to prove that I could be everything you'd need to fulfil that ideal, and therefore prove there would never be anyone better, would be if I could give you the most romantic first kiss a sixteen year old boy in a boarding school in the middle of Scotland could provide. Since I couldn't think of anything more romantic than the upcoming ball and since I'd already asked you anyway, it seemed like the best place to put my new plan in to action”.

Severus licked his lips, Harmony’s gaze was piercing him, but he knew he needed to get this last part out.

“So I made a monumentally foolish decision. One that I will forever regret. More than anything simply because my decision had caused you so much hurt. I made the decision that I wouldn’t engage you in any type of romantic contact at all before the ball. This was for two reasons; one it meant that you wouldn’t be given the chance to reject me before I could put the plan in to action. As I said, I was very much of the thought that should you be given the chance at romantic contact before the ball, you'd decide you didn’t like me for one vapid reason or another. I now realise it was quite foolish of me to think like this, I have known you long enough, that I should have known that you were unlikely to be turned off by something as stupid as my teeth or my scent, all I can say to defend my thoughts, is that I was scared of loosing you"

Harmony’s glare changed slightly, it became admonishing it that way that clearly said, yes you should have bloody well known better than to think me that shallow you fucking twit.

“The second reason was much more simple. If I gave in to the most simple of contact, I knew I was bound to give in and kiss you wherever we were, the plan be damned, and I couldn't have that. I was so sure that I needed to give you that perfect kiss above anything else. I’ve worked my self in to a right frenzy over the past few weeks. As the urge to just say fuck it and kiss you got stronger, I started to avoid you”.

Severus removed his hand from where it was gripping her wrist and slid it down until it tangled with her fingers, he felt something deep inside him rejoice when she tentatively responded in kind.

Keeping eye contact, he pulled the tangle of fingers up to his mouth and pressed a gentle kiss to the back of her hand, before gently letting it fall back to her side once more.

“I can do nothing but apologise for my thoughtless actions towards you as of late. I can only hope that my back and forth behaviour hasn’t dented you to badly and that you'll eventually be able to forgive me”.

“Can I speak now"
Severus realised that he was still gently keeping her lips shut and instantly removed his thumb from her lips. He’d said his piece, he just had to hope that the explanation was enough.

Severus could see Harmony’s eyes searching his face, she was clearly looking for some sign of subterfuge.

Severus was so distracted watching her searching eyes, that he missed Harmony bringing her hand up towards his head. He only became aware of it when he felt the impact to the back of his skull for the second time that night.

*Like mother like daughter.*

The unexpected blow (though honestly this was Harmony so it really shouldn’t be), caused Severus to bring both his hand up to the back of his head in a defensive manner. Glancing at Harmony as he did so he could see a range of emotions filtering across her features. She was clearly pissed, Severus couldn’t blame her for that. But she also looked bewildered, with just the faintest glimmer of something he might just dare to call affection.

“You Severus Tobias Snape”.

Severus winced at the use of his full name, this was going to be bad.

“Can be incredibly thick for some one who is so incredibly smart”.

Harmony took a pace away from the infuriating boy, her thoughts were tumbling in such a jumbled mess she really didn’t know what to say to him.

Just how was she supposed to address all the things that he'd said?

When she glance back at the boy in question his head was bowed and his hair was obscuring his face from view. He looked more than a little pathetic at the moment. She'd known him foe thirteen years and she couldn't recall another point in time where he'd ever spoken so much, or so sincerely about his feelings.

That in it's self spoke volumes, perhaps he really had realised how badly he fucked up, not only with his earlier comment but with all his other actions recently to.

she contemplated the boy for a few seconds more before, coming to a decision on what she was going to do.

“First things first, I want to make one thing abundantly clear, I have no desire to date Cedric Diggory in the present, the past or the future. He's nice enough, but he’s to Hufflepuff for my tastes, I much prefer surly snakes who bottle up their thoughts and fuck with their dates heads for weeks on end”.

Severus had looked up slightly at her declaration about not wanting Diggory, but ducked his head again when she mentioned the fucking with her head.

"Second, I know I've already said this once, but I think it bares repeating, then perhaps it might penetrate your thick skull of yours, it would never have mattered if any one else asked me to go to the ball with them. I was always going to spend the night with you, the only thing that would've stopped me would've been if you'd gone and agreed to go with someone else”.

She saw his head twitch slightly at this declaration.
“Thirdly, we’ve known each other for thirteen years Severus, if I was ever going to be repulsed by anything about you it would’ve happened a long time ago, and the only thing that’s ever made my affections for you wane in thirteen years, has been your cool demure towards my advances during this entire shit fest of the past few weeks”.

Another head twitch.

“I apolog-”

Harmony stopped him before he could, she needed to get this out in the open and another heartfelt apology from him might just mean that she never got there.

“Let me get this out, please Sev”.

Severus nodded his head, but he felt the little ember of hope burn more brightly at the fact that she was referring to him as Sev instead of Severus.

“OK, I want you to understand something Sev. This plan of yours has meant that I have been having some severe self doubts. My ranting from earlier should be proof enough of those doubts, but do you really understand how severe the hurt is that your rebukes have caused?”.

Severus gave her a small, almost forlorn nod of his head, but his face and his emotions were still hidden behind a curtain of black hair.

Harmony took a step towards him, the sound of crunching gravel made him raise his head and she gently laid her hand on his cheek, before giving it a brief caress, feeling the stubble on his jaw as she did so.

Severus felt his eyes slip closed at the delicate touch it was like heaven and hell rolled in to one.

“I don’t think you do Sev, not really. I thought you’d decided that I wasn’t good enough and that you wanted some one better, some one more fashionable or more girlie or more normal.. or.. or some one pretty. Some one who was nothing like me”.

Severus’s eyes widened and he shook his head vehemently.

“No I -”

Harmony cut him off with an admonishing look and he fell silent again.

“I know you’ve said that I shouldn’t put my self down, but these thoughts have been raging through my head for weeks. I mean every time you turned away or went stiff on me..or just ignored me, another horrid thought would push it’s self in to my head and eventually I couldn’t quash them any more, I began to listen to them and they’ve started to wear at me”.

Harmony removed her hand from Severus’s cheek and turned her back on him, wrapping her arms about herself in a protective gesture.

“I had a boy who’d asked me to go with him as his date and I was overjoyed. I thought ‘this is it Harmony your wish is coming true he’s finally noticed you as a more than his tomboy friend’. But then the days went on and you were either treating me with stoic indifference or you were still treating me like your life long tomboy friend, and then the complete avoidance started in earnest after that night you walked me back to the tower and frankly.. it hurt. Mum and Hermione weren't
giving me any usable advice, so I listened to the voices in my head instead, at least the things they were saying seemed to hold more merit for your actions, than mum and Hermione's explanations did. So I started to listen to my toxic thoughts, and their reasoning for your avoidance was very clear, simply put, they told me that everything I am must be wrong”.

Severus wanted to comfort her and tell her just how wrong those voices were and that there wasn't a thing wrong with her, but her stance was a self protective one and any physical contact from him at the moment was likely to be very unwelcome. so he kept his hands to himself.

Why did I ever think this was a good plan.

“And now I find that all that anguish, all those toxic little voices that kept shredding my self esteem every time you rebuffed me, all off it was because you'd gotten it in to your head that I needed some sort of sodding romantic ideal, otherwise I was going to throw you away like a threadbare jumper"

Harmony let her arms falls, and turned back to Severus, she's come to a conclusion on what she was going to do.

Severus could see the determination in her gaze and wondered if this was what the final death blow to their friendship was going to look like.

“Well I've got news for you Severus Snape”.

Severus flinched, waiting for the blow. Waiting for her to say he’d lost her anyway, any hope that was still alive felt like it was about to extinguished.

But instead of the cutting remark, telling him just what he could do with his plans and his friendship, he felt her tiny hand start to caress his face again.

“I’ve been yours and you’ve been mine for thirteen years, and I'll be damned to hell if your stupidly screwy, plotting brain is going to stop me being yours for a lot bloody longer, you've hurt me, badly, and you're not forgiven yet, not by a long shot, but I hope that we can move on from this, who knows may be we'll end up stronger for it. But I swear to merlin if you ever try and pull shit like this again, that it, we're through. No second chances”.

Severus quickly nodded in agreement, there was no way he was going to even attempt something like this again, if Harmony could see her way to forgiving him, even if it wasn't immediately it was enough. They'd just have to take things slow and see where it took them.

“Oh, and just for the record, you could’ve kissed me for the first time in the potions supply cupboard and I wouldn't have given a damn. All I care about is that it's you who's kissing me, not the location”.

She was still caressing his cheek with a touch that was barely there, but to Severus it was the greatest feeling in the world. He slumped his head in to her hand as the relief that he hadn't lost her started to course through his veins.

"So if I'm not yet forgiven, which I don't blame you for in the slightest, where does that leave us? do you want me to back off or do you want to just continue from here and forget that tonight was so fucked up”

Harmony bit her lip looking contemplative.

"well I don't think we should forget tonight, but I don't want to start from the beginning either"
Severus pulled the hand that was caressing his cheek to his mouth and kissed the palm reverently.

"what ever you want to do, I'll do it. I only want you happy, even when I was being an arse that never changed"

Harmony smiled, a true blinding happy thing, something that Severus was sure he’d never be graced with again, during that dreadful conversation. It felt like home.

“Good”.

Harmony decided not to waste another moment, and closed the gap between them.

Severus was completely shocked by the unexpected press of lips to his own and it took him several precious seconds before his brain caught up and he began to respond in kind.

Harmony had kept her eyes open to see his reaction to the kiss, once the shock had passed and he finally began to respond to her kiss in earnest, she surrendered to the feeling of Severus lips, closed her eyes and wiped every other unimportant thought from her mind.

Chapter End Notes

WE HAVE SNOG OFF!!!!!!! WHOOP! ahem, sorry (^_^)
well I hope you liked this chapter and once again I apologise if it's not quite as good as normal.
next chapter should be up some time between Friday and Sunday.

if you see any typos let me know, I broke my glasses the other day so i'm now blind as anything and I can barely see the screen at the moment, which made editing this really fun, I can tell ya. :)

See y'all soon Pink X (^_^)
Fire whiskey, Free fall, Electricity or Magic?, I'm not sure but it feels bloody brilliant either way

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies.
would you look at that less than 24 hours and another chapter. I think I might faint.

It's not a long chapter, but I have to say that out of the whole story this was one of my favourites to write.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As soon as Severus got over the initial shock of Harmony's sudden kiss, he quickly got his head in the game and began to respond in earnest, pressing hard against the lips that had been softly placed over his.

The feeling that the contact evoked was remarkable, it was like fire and ice and electric and magic were all sizzling through his veins. It was like he'd ingested some wonderful potion.

His mind had gone blank to everything that wasn't the kiss, all the stupid reasons of the last few weeks went up in smoke and he was left wondering why he hadn't just given in and kissed her like they'd both wanted.

Because you're a dickhead.

Fuck off.

Severus felt one of Harmony small hands threading in to his hair, and as they twisted gently through the silky strands, they sent little tingles of pleasure down his spine.

He felt distantly glad that he'd washed his hair for the ball, her actions would've left him feeling more than a little mortified if his hair had been filthy as it normally was.

Harmony suddenly gave a slight tug on the hairs at the base of his skull, causing another pleasurable tingle to race down his spine.

He made a mental note to keep it a damn sight cleaner from now on, if this was going to be the benefit.

He was aware that one of his hands had released it's vice like grip on her waist, intent on finding it way in to Harmony's own hair, as the hand made its way around to her back, it paused in it's endeavour and decided to dally over the silky smooth skin it found there instead, just for a little while.

Perhaps it could find the freckles he'd been so occupied by earlier.

Harmony heard Severus groan just a little as she played with his hair, as the kiss grew more intense she didn't think she was ever likely to feel anything as fantastic as this for the rest of her life, it was
like a shot of fire whiskey and the thrill of free fall all rolled in to one.

It was remarkably heady and she was quite sure that if she was given half the chance she could drown in the sensation.

Harmony became aware one of Severus's hands delicately moving in intricate patterns over the chilled skin of her back, the sensation it invoked made her toes curl and something warm and tight settle in her lower abdomen.

Before she could even try and comprehend what this new feeling, she felt Severus's tongue gently probing at the seam of her mouth, gallantly asking for entrance.

She was more than happy to oblige him and opened up for him almost instantly.

As those perfectly plump pink lips parted under his probing tongue, Severus couldn't hold back his groan at what was waiting for him.

She tasted treacle sweet from the desert that she'd consumed at the feast, and perhaps just a little minty, no doubt from when she'd cleaned her teeth earlier in the day, but under all that there was something that was undoubtedly pure Harmony.

It was just a little spicy and a little dark but so very much her, that he didn't even try to stop another groan from escaping.

It was glorious.

Although she'd readily given permission for Severus to enter her mouth, Harmony was positive that it was going to feel more than a little odd to have his tongue in there, and it was in it's own way, but it detracted nothing from the experience and as odd as it might have felt, it felt so very right as well.

With Severus seemingly determined to map every surface of her mouth like it was a new undiscovered world, Harmony decided that there was no harm in doing a little exploring of her own.

As Severus's tongue stroked along the roof of her mouth, she tentatively moved her own tongue in a smooth caress along the side of his. She felt the shudder that Severus released at the contact and did it again, the second time he released an audible moan and Harmony couldn't help but feel extremely pleased with herself.

Harmony would've been quite happy to continue in this manner, until they were both completely depleted of oxygen, but she felt the hand that had been dallying around her chilled back suddenly change directions, it was suddenly heading directly for her hair, she was unsure why this was setting off alarm bells in her head.

It wasn't until the hand was at the top of her spine and nearly at it's destination, that she remembered all the product in her hair.

Internally letting of a string of curse words that would've made even Padfoot blush, she broke the kiss with barely a second to spare.

As soon as the kiss broke the hand halted it's upwards wandering and stilled just below her hairline.

They were both panting, their bodies taking in the much needed oxygen that they'd both been quite willing to deny themselves. In the now increasingly chilly garden, their much warmer breaths,
joined together creating a small amount of mist around their faces.

"What's wrong?"

Severus was unsure what he’d done that had caused Harmony to abruptly break the kiss and was worried that his earlier fears might have come to fruition after all.

Severus's face was still close to her own, and as a smile began to tug at her lips, she leant her forehead against his and breathed him in for a moment or two, before letting out a small warm laugh.

Severus immediately relaxed. There couldn't be too much wrong if she was laughing so good naturedly.

“Nothing's wrong. I wouldn't have stopped the kiss at all, but you were about to put your hand in my hair and you need to trust me when I say that, that's not something that you want to be doing; it's disgusting"

Severus rolled his eyes.

“There is nothing disgusting about your hair; it’s lovely”

Harmony snorted and pulled her forehead away from Severus’s so that she could look at him properly.

“Most people, including myself wouldn’t agree with you on that, it’s really rather horrid honestly. However I wasn’t talking about my hair in general terms. I was thinking more along the lines, that you wouldn’t want to be smeared with Sleekeazy’s hair potion for the rest of the evening. My heads sodden with it right now”.

Harmony reached up and carefully plucked at a caked strand with her finger nails, pulling it away from her head to show him.

“I had to use an entire jar to beat the damn thing in to submission”.

Severus looked more closely at the hair that Harmony was gingerly pulling on.

He could see that the unusual sheen that he'd been seeing on her hair all night, was from the over abundance of potion that had been smeared all over the sorry looking strands.

Now that his attention had been drawn to her hair he also noticed that the odd sheen wasn't the only thing that was off with it.

He couldn't smell a single hint of her normal rose and lavender shampoo, all he could smell was the astringent scent of whatever ingredients made up the potion that was covering her head. Severus wrinkled his nose in distaste.

He'd much rather have her hair wild and smelling normal, than tamed and smelling so foreign.

Unfortunately, he could understand why, she’d done what she’d done. Appearances needed to be a certain way tonight and to avoid being a laughing stock she would've had no choice but to beat her hair in to submission, no matter how much he preferred it when it was natural.

“Hmm, it would seem that the potion is obviously making false claims, your hair really isn't that bad, there should've been no need to go to such lengths if the product really worked”.

"Nothing's wrong. I wouldn't have stopped the kiss at all, but you were about to put your hand in my hair and you need to trust me when I say that, that's not something that you want to be doing; it's disgusting"
Harmony moved away from him a little, though the hand still resting possessively on her waist wasn’t going to permit her to go far.

“Well whether that’s true or not, just remember to keep your hands out of my hair for the night and we should be good”.

Severus got a mischievous little grin on his face.

"Only your hair Miss Potter?. Does this mean that you wouldn't be adverse to me putting my hands anywhere else that I desire?"

That bought several slightly racy scenarios to her mind, and as much as Harmony willed herself not to, she knew that she was blushing like a tomato.

“Any one would think you were propositioning me Mister Prefect. As much as I would like to say yes, I’m going to have to set a proviso if you want to touch me again tonight”.

Severus’s eyes widened that wasn't the response he’d been expecting.

“Oh, and just what would this proviso be, Miss Potter?"

Harmony bit her kiss swollen lip before replying, she knew what she wanted, she was just unsure if he'd agree.

“I want you to promise to take me on a proper date, like you said you wanted to originally. I don’t care where or when. I just want to have a proper date as boyfriend and girlfriend”.

Harmony chanced a glance at Severus to see his reaction to her request, even after the mind blowing kiss some of her uncertainties were still lingering, and she was sure that even if he agreed to the date that the worst of them would take a little time to vanquish.

Severus could easily read the uncertainty in her face as she made her rather benign request. Knowing that he was the one to put this uncertainty in the normally boundlessly confident girl, was a bitter pill to swallow.

There and then he decided to do everything in his power to make up for his previous mistakes, and the first step towards that was to grant her, her request of a proper date.

It not like it was going to be a hardship for him to endure after all.

Harmony watched intrigued as Severus removed his arm from around her waist before standing straight and bringing himself up to his full and not inconsiderable height.

He looked so very solemn as he did so, that Harmony feared for a brief moment that her request had been too much, but then he placed the hand that had been gripping her waist over his heart, and grabbed her left hand in his other.

After pressing a feather light kiss to the back of the hand he was holding, he suddenly and unexpectedly dropped down on one knee, this brought their faces level and Harmony was able to see just a hint of something playful in his onyx orbs.

“I Severus Tobias Snape, solemnly swear I will take Miss Harmony Jacqueline Hosta Potter, on a proper date during the next Hogsmead weekend”.

Harmony tried to hold in her mirth and ended up letting out a sound, that was a rather unladylike
cross between a giggle and a snort. As he began to rise she could already feel the large, stupid grin spreading over her face, and the giggles that she was trying to suppress finally broke free.

Once he was standing again she slapped his shoulder in mock admonishment, which caused him to begin exaggeratedly rubbing at the supposedly grievous injury.

Harmony rolled her eyes at him, when it was just the two of them Severus could be quite the dork at times. She loved him all the more for it.

Severus felt his heart lighten considerably when Harmony started to giggle. And even though he’d had to make a idiot of him self to do it, Harmony being happy was all that ever mattered.

“You’re such a dork sometimes, you just ought to be glad no one else is around. I’ll hex you silly if any one ever finds out that one of my middle names is Hosta”.

Severus put both his arms around her waist and pulled her to him tightly, while Harmony positioned hers around his shoulders, her fingers automatically starting to twiddle with his hair again.

(Severus did his best to ignore the tingles that had once again started at the touch)

“It’s a lovely unique name, for a lovely and unique young woman, it suits you”.

Severus watched as Harmony’s all but melted at his words, he saw her lick her lips slightly before beginning to move her face towards his.

Knowing what she was about to do, Severus began to bend his head so he could meet her half way, however before their lips got chance to meet in that new, but age old dance once more; they were interrupted, by a mighty ripping of twigs and foliage as something came crashing through the bushes to their left.

*I swear to merlin if it's that ruddy statue again, i'm going to blast it to cement.*

Severus glanced over to where the crash originated, a fierce glare on his face for whatever had interrupted them.

His glance proved that it wasn't the statue, it was in fact a couple.

A couple that had landed in a heap of limbs on the gravel path, seemingly unbothered by the fact that what they'd been leaning against had disappeared. It was quite clear that the transfigured hedge had been unable to keep supporting them during their.. activities and had finally given way.

Severus sent a nasty sneer in their direction, not that the couple was aware of it, they'd still yet to notice that anything was amiss with their current positions and were quite happily sucking each others faces off with out a care in the world.

While Severus continued to glare and sneer at the oblivious pair, Harmony laughed in to his chest at the absurdity of the situation.

Finally getting control of herself, Harmony wiped her streaming eyes, and put a hand on Severus's face to gain his attention.

“I think that’s our cue to leave and go back inside, don’t you?”
Severus sent one last glare at the couple, before giving her a wry smile and pressing a chaste kiss to her plump lips.

“You’re probably right”.

Severus released her from his hold and took a few steps away from her, before holding out an arm for her to take.

“I suppose we’d best be getting back anyway, before Potter thinks I’ve been having my wicked way with you and really does decide to kill me”.

Harmony gave him a slight shake of the head and smile before taking hold of the offered arm.

Severus led them in a wide ark around the amorous couple deliberately making the gravel crunch loudly beneath his feet.

Neither the girl or the boy on the floor noticed Severus and Harmony as they walked passed, but as they left the courtyard Harmony heard the boy let out a loud exclamation.

"Merlin's balls!"

"what!"

“I think I've got a bloody thorn gone in my arse from this blasted bush!”

If Severus happened to have shot a mild stinging hex at the couple as they'd left then no one but him was any the wiser.

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Chapter End Notes

well I hope you enjoyed the more in depth kiss. I know I did ;)

as always let me know if there's any blaring mistakes and I'll get those corrected.

next chapter should be up some time around Sunday if I'm not too busy.

See y'all soon Pink X (^^)
Hello lovelies,

Sorry it's a little late, but I've not been overly well over the weekend.

Hope you enjoy!

Though the crowd had thinned considerably, the ball was still in full swing when Harmony and Severus re-entered the hall from the chilly rose garden

Harmony glanced around at the dancers hoping to find a specific person, not seeing them anywhere in the jubilant crowd she turned her attention to the edges of the room instead.

She could just make out her dad and her godfather sat at one of the tables on the other side of the room, they appeared to be sipping on a couple of butter beers and not having the slightest care that her father, at least, was supposed to be patrolling the students, not sat there relaxing.

Her mum and Mooney weren't sat with them. She couldn't see Mooney anywhere in the vicinity, but the blue of her mums dress was easy enough to spot and her gaze found her stood near the entrance chastising a third year Gryffindor who'd tried to sneak in to the ball.

As Harmony's gaze flicked over the refreshments table, she finally spotted the person that she was looking for.

"Do you mind if we get a drink?".

Severus had been subtly glaring across the hall at something and it took him a second to register that he'd been asked a question. Seeing the hopeful look on his dates face and feeling a little sheepish at having let his attention wander, he offered to get the drinks himself.

"I don't mind getting the beverages by myself, if you'd rather find us somewhere to sit. I imagine your feet are starting to ache by now".

Harmony smiled and leaned up on her tiptoes to press a gentle kiss to his cheek, no one was aware enough of the couple to see it, but that didn't stop Severus's from becoming a little ruddy cheeked. It wasn't the most attractive of looks on the slightly sallow boy, but Harmony found it rather adorable all the same.

"That's sweet but there's no need, Hermione's near the refreshments and I want to talk to her anyway".

Severus nodded his head in understanding, he might not understand the female mind, but he did know that girls seemed to have the endless need to dissect every interaction that they had with their respective paramours.

It wouldn't surprise him in the least, if this talk that she needed to have with Granger, would be
nothing less that a full post mortem of what had transpired in the rose garden.

Knowing that it would be futile to try and intercede with such an age old ritual, Severus tangled his fingers through hers and led her around the edge of the dance floor and towards the refreshments table, as they got nearer they were able to make out Krum absolutely butchering Grangers name.

“Hermy-own”, Severus saw Granger shake her head at the gormless quidditch star, before phonetically saying “Her-my-oh-nee”.

“Herm- own-ninny”.

Severus was honestly waiting for Granger to let out some sort of annoyed retort, before getting out a thesaurus and asking her date to write a 2000 word essay on how to pronounce someone's name correctly. To Severus's surprise the retort, nor any sort of reprimand was forthcoming from the bookish girl and she simply smiled at the half brain dead sycophant instead.

“Close enough”.

Granger caught sight of them as they were approaching the table and Severus would be an idiot to miss the way that her eyes widened and locked on to his and Harmony's entwined fingers. Granger got a rather odd look on her face, it wasn't all that dissimilar to a lioness scenting it's prey and Severus just knew that as soon as they were near the table Granger would no doubt try an accost information out of his date.

He wondered if he'd even get the courtesy of the inevitable discussion that Granger and Harmony would have about himself out of ear shot (like it should be), or if he would be a forced participant in it.

Severus wasn't the only one to catch the predatory look on Hermione's face at the sight of their tangled fingers and Harmony knew that she needed to get her friend away from her boyfriend, before Hermione began to try to twitting them both for information.

Harmony was more than aware that Severus only tolerated Hermione for her sake, and most of the time that they spent together as a trio was often times accompanied by a half hour lecture of all the ways that Hermione was an overachieving know it all.

When they were within touching distance of the other couple, Harmony saw Hermione open her mouth ready to begin the barrage of questions before they'd even come to a stop.

Thinking fast Harmony blurted the first thing that came to mind.

“I need to go to the bathroom!”.

It was the first thing that came to mind to cut off her friend, simply because she was in rather desperate need of the bathroom. Of course she could've done with out blurring that particular fact out, but her mouth was never subtle and she saw no reason that, that would change simply because she was in front of other people.

Her sudden out burst about her bodily functions caused various looks of astonishment from the other three, though Hermione and Severus at least looked some what resigned to Harmony's habits of blurring things out with out meaning to.

Deciding that she wasn't going to let it bother her, she reached out and grabbed her friends arm. She had every intention of dragging her to the bathroom with her, she needed to talk to her, and she also was going to need to some major help keeping this dress out of the toilet while she peed. In
Harmony's mind it was a win, win, situation. They could discuss Severus in private and she'd finally get to do something about her bladder, which was making itself become increasingly known.

“Come on Hermione, I’ll need some help”.

When She saw Hermione about to question why, Harmony sent her friend a look that she hoped conveyed the fact that Hermione's presence was required for a multitude of reasons. Her friend who was undoubtedly the smartest girl in school reason, didn't disappoint her.

“Oh.. yes of course.. right yeah you’ll need help”.

After the less than articulate response from her bookish friend, Harmony pulled Hermione's arms through her own, and together the pair walked briskly through the dancing crowd.

Because they'd tried cut through the crowd as opposed to around it, they ended up keep having to duck and dive out of the way of various flailing limbs, Harmony thought it was rather rich of McGonagall to have a go at her about whether she knew how to dance or not, when it was quite clear that at least half the student population either couldn't dance or couldn't give a shit even if they could.

Just as they got to the edge of the crowd and had thought themselves out of danger, Hermione narrowly avoided being knocked flat on her back by Lunar and Neville, who were still going strong and appeared to be dancing to a beat of their own design, certainly the moves they were doing didn't match in the slightest to the song that was playing.

As it was Harmony had gripped on to her friend more tightly and pulled her out of the way before the collision could occur.

As they left the hall Harmony and Hermione were unaware that they were still being watched by the dates that they'd left standing on their own by the refreshments.

Devoid of all the warm gyrating bodies, the air in the corridor was much cooler, and Harmony felt herself breath with relief, she really didn't like crowds. Now that they weren't having to push through the dancing crowd the two girls slowed their pace and made their way towards the nearest girls bathroom.

By unspoken agreement they cheeked all the stalls once they were inside the bathroom, finding that the room was deserted for the moment, Hermione cast a mild repulsion charm at the entrance. It would make sure that they wouldn't be disturbed by any random girls who suddenly needed to use the facilities.

With the charm cast, Hermione turned back from the entrance and gave her friends an assessing look, what ever it was that Harmony wanted to discuss was making her friend extremely twitchy.

"I'm going to take a guess and say that whatever you want has something to do with Severus".

Harmony bit her lip, may be her friend hadn't caught on to everything she was trying to get across with her look after all.

"Err, sort of? I definitely do want to talk about Severus, but I sort of have a more pressing matter with my dress that needs dealing with first" 

Hermione raised an eyebrow at her friends odd response.
"A more pressing matter, with your dress?".

Hermione looked more than a little lost and she supposed in this instance she couldn't really hold it against her friend, Harmony figured that it was highly unlikely, that her friend would've ever before been subtly asked to hold up a friends dress while said friend had a much needed piss.

"what type of pressing matter could you possibly have with your dress? it looks more than fine to me".

Harmony held in the urge to roll her eyes, she was going to have to spell it out for her after all.

"The pressing matter is with my bladder, and the reason my dress is part of them problem is that it's too bloody big for me too hold up and away from the loo while I take a much needed piss, I'll need you to hold it for me while I'm on the loo".

"your going to take your dress off in the middle of the girls loo!".

Honestly, for someone so smart Hermione could be a little dense at times.

"of course not!, when I say I want you to hold it for me, I mean that I want you to get in the stall with me and hold it around my ears while I'm on the bog".

Harmony saw her friend go a little pink before her shoulders slumped, resigned to her fate, Harmony was honestly shocked that she wasn't being admonished for her supposedly vulgar language.

"I was afraid that's what you meant, I suppose I've got no choice have I?"

Harmony shook her head, giving her friend a smile. "Nope".

"Come on then lets get this over with".

With Hermione resigned to her fate, the two girls attempted to squeeze themselves in to a stall that was barely big enough to hold a second year in a set of summer robes, let alone two fifth years who were both in ball gowns.

After a hell of a lot of negotiating, two elbows in ribs, one head bang and an awful lot of cursing, they both managed to fit and Harmony finally got to go to the loo.

As she sat there Harmony became very glad for two things, her friends discretion, Hermione was currently looking any where other than Harmony and humming a rather odd tune to try and block out any embarrassing noises.

The other thing she was glad about? her friends forethought to put up a repulsion charm, because although they had both fitted in the stall there was no way they could get the door to shut, meaning that if the charm hadn't been up there was a good chance someone could've walked in and seen her on the loo with her ball gown around her ears.

It wasn't a pleasant thought.

Once she was done, Harmony offered to do the same for Hermione just in case her friend wanted to go herself, this made Hermione go rather pink before stuttering out a polite "no thank you".

Harmony couldn't blame her, while it was nice to know that Her friend had her back in even the most embarrassing situation it wasn't an experience she could say that she wanted to repeat any
time soon.

After Harmony had set her dress to rights, she begun to wash her hands and she could see in the mirrors above the basins that her pink tinted friend was giving her an expectant look.

Obviously it was time for the gossip portion of the evening, and while Harmony had been the one to seek Hermione out, she suddenly felt uncertain that she should be discussing something as private as what happened in the rose garden.

After all Severus wasn't just some random boy that she's snogged in a dark corner, he didn't deserve that type of insipid dissecting gossip, but that didn't stop Harmony having the feeling of wanting to get things off her chest either.

perhaps she could just tell Hermione about some of what had gone off and leave of the more private bits?. She didn't want to rehash the whole affair after all.

"Well come one then, what went off in the garden? I saw you head out there not long after the first dance and that was and hour and a half a go! something must have happened!".

Apparently her friend was done waiting, Harmony bit her lip unsure where to start, the minutes ticked by and nothing filled the silence that had settled around the bathroom.

Hermione could read her friend like a book most of the time and now wasn't any different, Harmony clearly wanted to talk but was unsure how to proceed. Now normally when her friend got like this she was more than willing to wait her out, Harmony would talk when she was ready. But tonight it was frustrating to say the least, Harmony had asked her in here under the guise of talking, (though if she was being fair, her friend had actually needed to toilet to) and now her friend had clamed up.

Hermione loved Harmony dearly and she would do pretty much anything for her, but she had no desire to spend the rest of the evening stuck in a girls bathroom, while her friend sorted through the contents of her head. Hermione had a date waiting for her outside and she wanted to spend the remainder of the ball with him, the evening would be over soon, after all.

Hermione decided to give her friend an out if she wanted it.

"We don't have to discuss this now you know?, we could talk once we get up to the dorm later, after the balls ended".

Green eyes looked at her with an understanding that was just a little unnerving.

"What you mean is you want to get back to your date".

Hermione went a little pink and was all set to protest when Harmony cut her off.

"Don't worry about it, I want to get back to my date just as much as you do. It's not that I don't want to tell you anything 'Mione, merlin knows that's not the case, there's so many things that I want to tell you that my heads swimming with all the information, but I just don't know where to start".

Harmony slumped against the sink behind her, her ball skirt acting as a cushion against the bite of the porcelain sink.

Hermione took in the defeated posture of her friend and decided that her date could wait just a little while longer.
"well you want to talk about it, so how about we start with something easy, you've clearly sorted out what Severus's problem was, so was I right? was he scared about the abrupt change in your relationship?".

Harmony grimaced at her friend, *start with something easy, yeah right*, Hermione certainly knew how to get to the bones of the issue even when she thought she was easing you in to it.

"I suppose that you could say that, was sort of the issue? we.. talked about things..".

Harmony trailed off she was unsure how to word this with out putting Severus in a bad light, yes he'd been a dick, and yes he'd hurt her, but Harmony knew that his intentions had been pure, even if he had a shitty way of achieving them.

"Well I say we talked but it was more like a really bad argument truth be told. I hadn't said anything to him about his behaviour and we were just enjoying a pleasant walk through the gardens, and I thought that everything seemed ok so let sleeping dogs lye you know?".

Hermione shot her friend an exasperated look. "That's not the way to a healthy relation..".

"I know its not, trust me I know, but anyway like I said we were just enjoying the garden and then we came across this statue picking roses and it-"

Harmony was cut off by in indelicate snort from her friend, "you can't be serious? A statue picking roses? are you sure that you and Severus aren't on better terms simply because you've both been at the twins funny fags again?"

Harmony felt her lips twitch in to a smile at her friends disbelief.

"I promise I'm quite serious about the statue, I'll even show you the memory if you'd like. But that's neither here nor there at the moment, I thought that you wanted to know about me and Sev so that you could get back to your date, so if you'll let me get this out we can be on our way, yes?"

Harmony raised an expectant eyebrow at her friend and Hermione has the good grace to mouth an apology for interrupting her.

"like I said we came across this statue and it gave these roses to me and then long story short, Severus got all sort of overprotective and once we got away from the statue everything felt really awkward and I .. sort of said the first thing that popped in to my head".

Hermione let out an audible groan, letting her head fall in to her hands, She was well aware of the way Harmony's brain to mouth filter worked, she dreaded to think what she'd said.

"Let me guess you said something that was less than tactful".

Harmony bit her lip self-consciously.

"I might have implied that the romantic gesture was nice because no one else had ever bothered?"

"*Harmony!*" 

"Trust me I know it wasn't very tactful, but in some way its probably a good thing?. I mean I tried to apologise for the slip, and then I started spurting out all the this stuff about how I knew he wasn't sure how to act around me now and that he wasn't aware that he was hurting my feelings and stuff but he cut me off before I could get everything out"
Harmony started to chew on her thumb nail, unsure how to proceed if she told her the whole truth it was likely Hermione would go off and try to eviscerate her boyfriend, but if she'd didn't Hermione would likely still want to know why Severus had been acting like a dick and telling lies about that could lead to all sorts of problems in the future.

Deciding that she could protect her idiot boyfriend well enough from her best friend, she thought that perhaps even a partial truth might be better than and outright lie.

"He told me that he was aware that his rebuffs were causing me some element of pain and .."

"What!"

Hermione's steely voice cut through her like a knife through hot butter, and the bathroom rang with the sound of the shouted exclamation.

"Mione, honestly, it's not as bad as you think we .."

"No Harmony, just No. I don't care if you've talked this through or whatever it is that you've done. Whatever way you want to dress it up, that slimy bloody bastard had been deliberately hurting you. I've had to watch and do nothing but offer feeble advice as my friend had become more and more withdrawn and unhappy, and to find out he knew that he was doing it! I don't care how much you like him, its not fucking acceptable Harm, I'll skin the bloody bastard".

Hermione was red in the face and swearing, this alone told Harmony that her friend was likely serious about her threat to skin her boyfriend, but when she saw Hermione start to march towards the entrance with her wand in hand, she knew she had to stop her before her friend did something that they both regretted.

Rushing towards the entrance Harmony managed to get in front of her friend and cut her off before she leave.

"No, Mione, please listen, it's sorted, it's fine just leave it be please".

"I don't care, he hurt you, you shouldn't be so bloody forgiving!".

Harmony shook her head, before putting her hands on Hermione's shoulders trying to placate her angry friend.

"I haven't forgiven him, not by a long shot. I'm still hurt and I've made Sev aware of that, but we have talked it through, we both said things, he explained why he did what he did".

Hermione opened her mouth with another angry retort about the slytherin on the tip of her tongue, but Harmony hastily cut her off at the pass.

"And before you say it, I know that the fact that he explained his actions doesn't excuse the hurt he caused, like I said I haven't forgiven him yet. But I do know him, and I know the way his screwy mind works, once he explained himself, everything that's gone on made, some sort of stupidly perfect sense. It doesn't stop the hurt and I've told him if he ever tries anything like this again, we're through in all senses of the word, but I will forgive him eventually and now at least I know that he cares for me like I'd hoped he did, and despite the crappy way that the confession was arrived at; I can honestly say I feel happy about the out come and that I feel lighter than I have in weeks, so in the end it all worked out fine".

Harmony gave her friend a placating smile.
"Besides you make it sound like I've been moping for weeks, I've only been truly withdraw for a few days, let's be honest 'Mione when he first asked me to the ball I was so happy, you yourself said that I was making you want to be sick with how overjoyed I was".

Hermione crossed her arms over her chest and gave her friend a mild glare.

"You can try and paint a better picture of the past few weeks all you like Harm, but I've been watching you and I know that the deliriously happy feeling you had when he asked you had worn off long before the main funk set it in. I know you said that you've not forgiven him yet, but I hope you didn't just accept his excuses at face value and leave it at that, he has to know there are consequences for messing with people like this"

"No he knows there are consequences, like I said he knows he's not yet forgiven and he also knows that if he ever pulls something like this again we're done. I might have also smacked him round the head for being so thick headed too"

'Should have done more than that to the git',

Harmony heard her friends mumble, but chose to ignore it.

"Alright I get it, you're eventually going to forgive him and nothing I can say will change that, but what was the reason for acting like this because I'm coming up blank here, and don't try and fob me of with some lame excuse that it's just down to the way his screwy mind sometimes works, I want a real explanation otherwise I will hex him".

Harmony smiled at her friend, she wasn't quick to anger, but you hurt someone she viewed as a friend and it was like facing off against an angry lioness.

“Can you believe that all this boiled down to, was something as stupid as him believing he needed to give me the perfect first kiss, other wise I might run off with Cedric Diggory?”.

Hermione didn't think she could've heard right, she knew she was gaping, but honestly all that pain that had been inflicted on her friend and it was because of something as simple as that Neanderthal headed boy believing that he needed to prove his worth with a perfect first kiss.

Hermione wasn't sure if to think that Severus was incredibly sweet or incredibly dense.

“That is so stupid, though I have to grudgingly say it's a little sweet too. Won’t stop me from hexing him the next time I see him though”.

Harmony rolled her eyes, why was every one so bloody protective of her?.

“Really 'Mione, it's sorted just leave it be”,

Hermione looked mutinous, so Harmony decided to try and get her friend on side by discussing something a little more teenage girl.

“That not all we did though, like I said we had it out and he apologised for being a dick, and.. he wanted to know if we should forget about what happened tonight”.

Hermione scoffed, typical male always wanting to take the easy way out.

"Or did I want for us to essentially go back to the beginning and start from scratch"

"what did you say?"
"well I said that I didn't want to forget about tonight, but that I didn't want to start from scratch either".

Hermione nodded at her friend, "And?"

"Well then he more or less said that whatever I wanted to do was fine, as long as I was happy he didn't care".

Hermione saw the grin start to form on her friends face and had to wonder what was suddenly making her look so smug.

"So I said good, and well.. I kissed him before he had a chance to object".

Hermione was once more gaping at her friend, of all the things she'd been expecting Harmony to say this wasn't one of them, but Harmony appeared not to notice Hermione's expression she was too caught up in memories of the kiss.

"I just kissed him and then he kissed me back, and Godric ‘Mione, I've never felt anything like it in my life it was glorious... I don't think words could adequately describe it even if I could. It was just so.. wow”.

Hermione may have wanted to bust Snipes bollocks, but she couldn't deny that at this moment, her friend looked soo very happy, in a way she hadn't seen before, and whether she liked the boy or not, it was Snape that had done that to her friend, no one else.

“So his hair brained plan worked in the end then?, he gave you the perfect first kiss”.

Harmony blushed, a little self consciously under Hermione’s scrutiny, she knew she was gushing just a little, which was rather unlike her. But she dared any one not to gush after being kissed by Severus, not that any one else better be, he was hers.

“I suppose I did, yeah. Though I told him that I couldn't have cared less where he'd kissed me, just as long as it was him doing it, that was all the mattered"

Hermione’s scrutiny continued for a few more moments before she broke in to a reluctant smile.

"Well I'm not happy about how he's mucked you around, but I Am happy that you've got the outcome you wanted. You're a wonderful friend Harmony, and you deserve to be happy"

Hermione pulled her in to a bone crunching hug, that was a little awkward with them both wearing formal gowns but neither girl seemed to mind much.

“Thanks”, Harmony knew she sounded a little chocked, but she been through the emotional ringer tonight, Hermione's comment was just one to many she guessed.

"But I'm warning you now, if he ever tried anything like this again, there's no way I won't be cursing him to the next continent and back".

Harmony pulled back from her friend with a wet laugh.

“I wouldn’t expect anything less honestly and I'd be right there beside you helping. You know I’d do the same for you right?”

“Of course”,

Hermione gave her a twinkling look.
“I’ve already warned Viktor to expect the shovel talk from you, it took a while to explain but once he got the gist of it, he looked rather nervous, so be a dear and don’t disappoint”.

There was a beat of silence before the two girls fell about laughing, Harmony couldn’t remember the last time she’d felt so light. It must have been at least a week or more. It felt good to be happy again.

Once they’d got control of themselves, they’d checked to make sure nothing was out of place and that their magical makeup was holding up under the emotional rigours of the evening, before walking out of the bathroom arm in arm.

They hadn’t got far, when a heavily accented shout caught their attention.

“Herm-own-ninny”.

Looking to their left they could see Viktor making his way towards them, Harmony saw her friend light up at the sight of the broody Bulgarian, and hid a smile.

Hermione often told Harmony she just couldn’t understand her long standing crush on Severus. She continually said that he was surly and broody and not a particularly pleasant person, but if Hermione’s looks at the boy heading towards them were any indication, it looked like she might have just a bit of a crush on a dark broody wizard herself.

Harmony was quite prepared to tease her mercilessly once they got back to the dorm. Only once Lavender and Parvati where fully asleep though, she might tease her friend, but that didn’t mean she was going to let any one else do so.

“Herm-own-ninny I wondered ver you haf got to, wouId you care for a valk in the rose garden before the final dance?”.

Harmony saw the uncertain glance her friend shot her, so she gave her friend a good natured shove towards to the waiting boy.

“Go on, I’ve got my own date to track down any way”.

“If you're sure” she said to Harmony, at her friends nod, Hermione turned to her date with a smile, “That would be lovely Viktor, thank you”.

“You are most welcomer herm-own-ninny, shall ve go?”.

Hermione nodded, “see you in a bit, Harm”.

“See ya”, Harmony watched the pair make their way down the corridor heading for the only other entrance that would take them outside. I sudden thought struck Harmony and she shouted after the pair.

“Oi”, Hermione and Krum turned at the shout.

“Hermione, don’t forget to watch out for wandering statues while you’re in there”.

Hermione looked briefly confused before a look of understanding came over her face and she started to nod, seeing her friends understanding nod Harmony was just about to re-enter the hall when the unmistakable sound of a Bulgarian accent carried down the corridor.

“Vatch out vor vandering statues? Iz this one of those english you-pho-miz-ams I’ve heard so much
about?. I promise I vill be nothing but a perfect gentle man miss Herm-own-ninny”.

Harmony couldn't help herself, she had to look back and see her friends reaction to this question. As expected Hermione had gone bright red and seemed unable to look her date in the eye.

Harmony started to snigger, which was enough to draw her friends attention in the quiet corridor. Hermione's look was so peeved that she knew her friend was likely to get her back for her shouted reminder. It wouldn't matter that what she'd shouted hadn't been about what Krum had assumed. The fact that it had embarrassed her all the same, would be enough.

Harmony wished she could stay and watch Hermione try and explain to the Bulgarian that it wasn’t a euphemism at all.

But time was getting on and she had her own date to find, hopefully he had something for them to drink by now, she was parched.

Chapter End Notes

Well hope you liked this chapter. Even if there wasn't much Severus in it.

He'll get much more air time in the next chapter promise. ^_^

As Always see any mistakes let me know and I'll get them dealt with, next chapter should be wendsday-ish

See y'all soon, Pink X (^^)
Severus watched as his date and Granger weaved their way through the dancers at a fast clip, and only just avoiding the flailing limbs of Longbottom and Lovegood. Severus was unsure what the odd pair were doing on the dance floor, it certainly looked nothing like dancing.

“Vy vould Arm-inny Potter require assistance to use the bathroom?”

Severus had quite forgotten that his date had left him in the less than stimulating company of the Bulgarian when she'd essentially fled with Granger, and he let out an internal sigh of annoyance. In no way, shape or form, did he want to spend time talking to someone who was so lacking in brain cells that they didn't even have enough ability to grasp how to say their dates name correctly.

“I'm quite sure I have no idea”.

With that Severus turned away from the Bulgarian and turned his attention to the refreshments table instead. Severus waited a beat before he heard the tell tale click of the Bulgarians overly polished shoes walking away from him.

Thank Salazar.

Now that he was sure he was alone he took a good look at the table, their was certainly plenty of sweets on offer, he reached for truffle popping it in his mouth and Savouring the rich burst of dark chocolate and raspberry over his tongue.

He might no like much, but he was definitely a fan of good rich chocolate. Even if his teeth weren’t.

Severus remembered that Harmony had said she was thirsty before she dragged Granger off to talk, having nothing else to do he decided to get them both a cup of punch for when she got back, they couldn't be that long in the bathroom surely.

He’d just filled a goblet with some strawberry punch for Harmony and was about to fill a cup for him self when he felt a presence at his side. He prayed like hell that the seeker hadn't returned to try and make conversation. Looking to his side he thought he might have made his prayer just a little to soon, he'd rather have had the Bulgarian back for the rest of the night, than who'd decided to grace him with their company.
Leaning against the table with a tipsy, smug smirk fixed firmly in place was none other than Pucey. Severus knew that the smirk meant trouble.

*Clearly the fucktard isn't going to get the hint, and just leave me the fuck alone.*

Deciding the best course of action was to ignore the other boy and hope that Harmony was back soon so he could leave the table, he turned back to get his own goblet with punch.

He'd just reached for the ladle, when the boy next to him began to speak, his words were slightly slurred and Severus could smell the liquor on his breath with each word he exhaled.

He seen Pucey and his sycophants drinking from some sort of flask when he'd come back in to the hall, he'd guessed it was some sort of alcohol but now he knew for certain.

"Snapey, Snapey, Snapey". Severus grit his teeth and continued to get his drink as if he hadn't heard anything.

“You're certainly a dark horse ain't ya, I can honestly say I didn’t believe my eyes earlier, Snivellus”.

Severus rolled his eyes internally, he’d have thought the prick would have come up with a better nick name for him by now.

Severus saw Pucey retrieve his flask from his dress robes, before taking a long swig and putting it back in his pocket. Seemingly with out a care to what he'd just done in front of a prefect and the full view of any staff that might be watching.

Typical, thinks he can get away with everything just because he's got money.

“I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes. That dress certainly made me see her in a whole new light a tell you. I can honestly say, that I can now see why you’d hang around with something that normally looks like it lives in the black lake on a good day. There are obviously certain benefits to it, when she’s hiding such a bang-able bod like that under her crappy clothes, I bet you’ve tapped that more than once. Gagging for it was she? I bet a cheap half blood mongrel like her knows how to suck cock like a pro”.

Severus felt the blood in his veins turn to ice, before going completely still, if the idiot next to him had been paying attention, he’d have known he was in trouble. But Pucey just kept blathering away with even more disgusting comments about his Harmony.

“..ll if I’d known I might have tried to be a bit more friendly towards the Gryffindork bitch. So what do you say Snapey? fancy letting a fellow snake give her ago. After you’re done breaking her in of course. I mean she’ll be used goods an all, but I wouldn’t mind having something second hand just this once".

The last word was uttered with a leer and the breath that washed over Severus was stringent enough to strip paint.

Severus turned to fully face the disgusting excuse for a human. With out conscious thought Severus's wand dropped down in to his hand from where he’d been storing it up his sleeve.

In a cool, deadly voice Severus finally addressed the disgusting wanker.

“what did you just say”.
Severus was unsure if Pucey had a death wish, if he thought that Severus wouldn't do anything or if he was just to inebriated to realise the riling Snape more than he already had was a supremely stupid idea. Whatever it was, Pucey leaned in closer to Severus his smirk widening and the leer becoming more filthy.

“You heard me Snivellus, but if you’re deaf as well as ugly I'll repeat it shall I?”

Severus was gritting his teeth so hard he could swear that he could hear the enamel cracking under the pressure he was exerting.

“I would strongly suggest that you don not repeat”,

Pucey completely ignored the threat.

“I said, I can understand why you hang around with the Half blood mongrel cock-sucking bitch, when she’d hiding such a bang-able bod under her clothes. Well Snapey fancy hooking a dorm mate up for the ni-”

Severus had felt his wand creaking in his grip as the repulsive excuse of a boy repeated all those horrid revolting sentiments about his Harmony. She was none of those things and to hear it being to blatantly made him want to rip Pucey to shreds.

When Pucey got to the part about hooking him up for the night, as if Severus was some sort of pimp, Severus felt any resolve to hold back shatter. He'd thought that he was about to curse the boy, certainly it was his wand arm that shot forwards, but to his surprise and Pucey's as well, the curse never came instead his wand hand connected solidly with the repulsive bastards face.

The crunch of bone and cartilage that followed the impact was incredibly satisfying, he’d wanted to punch or curse the privileged dick for years. Severus loomed over the dick; while murderous fury danced in his veins.

He continued to watch as Pucey attempted to scramble away from Severus's fury, while also trying to contain the blood that was no spurting freely from his broken nose. Severus was vaguely aware of a crowd forming around them, Severus didn't know if they'd arrived before or after he’d hit the dick and frankly he couldn't care less.

Severus began to raise his wand to make sure that this lesson really stuck in this idiots head, he was looking up at him with fearful and suddenly sober eyes, but Severus really didn't care. The dark curse was on the tip of his tongue and ready to be cast on the vulnerable scared looking twit, when Severus became aware of the crowd suddenly dispersing and he heard the last voice that he wanted to hear.

"Mister Snape what on earth is going on here!"

Professor Potter.

Shit.

Chapter End Notes

Well I hope you enjoyed your super early chapter.
I'm not even going to bother putting up a update day because they're clearly useless.
see any typos ect let me know.

See y'all soon, Pink (^^)
“Mister Snape, what on earth is going on here”.

Before Severus could come up with a suitable answer -the worm, otherwise known as Adrian Pucey- answered for the both of them.

“He, attabed me!”

Severus narrowed his eye’s at Pucey, he felt the instant need to tell the boy to shut his fucking mouth, but there was no need. Apparently Potter hadn't appreciate Pucey's interruption any more than Severus had and sent the bleeding student a quelling look.

“I asked Mister Snape what is going on here, not you Mister Pucey”.

Unfortunately for Severus this meant that Potters unwavering attention was once more directed at himself.

“Well, mister Snape”.

Severus knew that Potter was expecting an answer, after all any professor would, but what could he say?. He didn't want to repeat what that bastard had said, even less so to her father, and even if he was willing to repeat the vile filth, the mere act of repeating it would being going against every unwritten rule about house solidarity that existed for the slytherins.

Fair enough Pucey had been quick to try and sell him out for attacking him, but there were two differences with that. He hadn't said what the problem was and Pucey was well .. Pucey. As much as it pained Severus to admit it, if Pucey was caught breaking the unwritten rule, he'd be in less hot water than Severus would. The fact that Pucey would have broken the rule against Severus would likely be a point in Pucey's favour.

Unable to see a viable option, Severus chose to keep his mouth shut and send a murderous glare at Pucey instead, he hoped it conveyed his feelings that the git needed to keep his gob shut.

Severus knew that this course of action would test Potter's none-existent patience where Severus was concerned, after all there was no love lost between himself and Potter, but at the moment all he could do was grit his teeth and hope that the punishment wouldn't be to severe.
“If you don’t tell me why you have attacked a fellow student Snape, you will be in serious trouble with your head of house and I will be forced to make you leave the ball early and go back to your dorm”.

Severus turned his murderous glare to the floor and he felt his mouth tighten at Potter’s ultimatum, he couldn’t let the man see that his words had had an effect on Severus.

Severus had known there would be consequences for his lack of response to Potter’s question. Leaving the ball early hadn’t even crossed his mind and he wondered why he’d been such an idiot not to think that, that would be the most likely response to his actions.

Merlin he hoped that Harmony understood why he was having to leave before the night had come to a natural end. Hopefully he could find her and explain the situation before he was forced to leave. Or perhaps Potter might explain for him if he was forced to leave before he could, Severus knew he didn’t like him, but explaining things was more for Harmony’s benefit than Severus’s. Potter wouldn’t deny him the ability to make sure his daughter was hurt, surely?

The obvious option was to just give Potter what he wanted, but there wasn’t a guarantee that he still wouldn’t be asked to leave, all he’d gain would be the ire of his house mates, currently his best option was to keep quiet and hope like hell that Harmony understood.

Potter’s grating voice cut through his ever tumbling thoughts.

“I’m quite sure that your date wouldn’t appreciate you cutting their evening short. And with her not currently being present to know you’ve been ordered to leave she may just think you’ve ditched her”.

_Bastard, Bastard, Bastard_

Severus peeked out from behind his hair, his face giving away nothing of his internal thoughts, he had a horrid feeling that he knew what Potter was about to say and he couldn’t believe that the man was callous enough to sacrifice his daughter’s happiness just to get back at him. At the same time he wasn’t the least bit surprised, he had a feeling he knew exactly what the man was trying to achieve, through his words.

“And after all, I’m a busy professor, it might just slip my mind to tell her why your not here any more; and if she thinks you’ve just left her at the ball; with out even saying goodnight? I’m sure that would upset her, wouldn’t you agree Mister Snape? Where is your date anyway? Since she’d clearly not been here to witness you acting like your thug of a father”.

Severus couldn’t suppress the automatic wince at the mention of his filthy, evil, muggle father.

_I am not a thug damn it, I might have hit that fucking wanker, but I’d never lay a fucking finger on Harmony. I am not my father Potter, what ever you might be trying to imply._

By telling Severus that he wouldn’t tell Harmony, where he’d gone, as Severus feared that Potter might, he was trying to force his hand and make him spill the beans. And fucking hell it was likely to work too. After what had transpired between them outside, there was no way in hell that Harmony would be receptive to him for some time, if he was suddenly to disappear in to the night with out a word. He didn’t fear her ultimatum about Severing ties with him, he was positive that she wouldn’t do so, if he could explain himself another day, but he was likely to be treated to the cold shoulder treatment for some time even then.

Potter was essentially making him pick between his house, or his girlfriend. He knew which one
would win, but perhaps there was a way of giving Potter more or less what he wanted, while keeping his house loyalties intact. He had to try.

With his thoughts in free fall and completely unsure what to do to put Potter off, Severus pasted his patented sneer in place and answered the one question that he could answer truthfully with out doing any harm.

“she’s gone to the bathroom”, ‘bastard’, “sir”. ‘So fuck you’.

Severus knew his tone was barely respectful, if he’d been talking to Mcgonagall like this he’d already have been frog marched out of the hall and would be half way to the dungeons by now.

So that begged the question, why wasn't Potter- who clearly despised his very existence- doing what any of the others professors would have already done. There were two options that Severus could think of and neither of them would have good out comes from him. Either Potter was that desperate to pin something on him that he was willing to wait him out, disrespect an all, or he was desperate for information that would prove to Harmony just how unsuitable he was for her to acquainted with.

With these thoughts in mind, he very carefully answered the man in front of him, and only permitted Potter to see the emotions that he wanted the man to see.

“I was getting us both a drink when Pucey and I had a.. disagreement”

His tone wasn't even bordering on respectful anymore, even he could hear the why don't you go fuck yourself undertone that his words held, but he didn't care, he was going to be punished whatever happened. He wasn't going to kowtow to the likes of Potter, or Pucey. He'd felt the dicks eyes on him when he'd given Potter his carefully worded answer and he turned a fire filled glare on the bastard.

Having to label what that filthy bastard said about Harmony as a mere disagreement, had made him feel dirty and not a little disrespectful to his girlfriend. But it was the only way he could think to word it without out right saying anything to Potter. He hoped his glare got across the fact that that Pucey was going to pay for this once they were back in the dorms.

But even a dunderhead like Potter wasn't going to put up with his tone for long -no matter how much he might want to pin something on him- and Severus saw his eyes glint with displeasure.

“I would recommend that you answer me with out the tone Mister Snape, 10 points from Slytherin for being disrespectful when talking to a professor”.

Removing his glare from Pucey, Severus clenched his jaw and told himself it wouldn't be worth the extra punishment, if he were to tell Potter exactly what he thought about showing a bully like him respect.

Apparently satisfied that he'd been put in his place by the minor reduction of point, Potter continued his questioning.

“A disagreement?,what type of disagreement warrants this severity of attack?”.

Potter gestured his head towards Pucey. Severus looked back at the prick and could see that he looked truly pathetic right now. Potters questioning about exactly what the disagreement had been about, had left Pucey looking ghostly pale and apparently uncaring that blood was now dribbling freely on to his expensive robes from between his suddenly lax fingers.
Severus felt truly disgusted with himself for what he was about to do, because it would protect that disgusting bastard from punishment if Potter accepted it, but if he didn't at least attempt to get Potter to accept his explanations on these terms, he didn't stand a chance of being able to live peacefully in his dorms again.

If Potter kept pushing, which he had a feeling he might. Severus could at least claim that he tried to adhere to the houses code and that the Gryffindor hadn't been willing to play ball.

Teeth still clenched, he uttered words that made him feel like he was eating glass.

“With all due respect sir, disagreements between slytherins are supposed to remain between slytherins”.

Out of the corner of his eye he watched as the disgusting little worms colour returned and his shoulders slumped in relief. Of course the slimy coward would be relieved, he wouldn't want Potter finding out what he'd implied about his daughter, never mind about the fact that Severus felt like he'd shredded his own tongue in the process of achieving the dicks relief.

Severus could see Pucey starting to nod in agreement with his statement, even if he did look like he was in hell at the thought of having to agree with someone as lowly as Severus apparently was.

Severus was ninety percent sure that the statement wasn't going to fly with Potter and the look he got on his face proved Severus right, Pucey the naïve fool didn't seem to notice this and was still nodding his head in some sort of hopeful gormless fashion.

Potter looked a second away from strangling the both of them, but apparently he decided to settle for a glare that would have made the Headmistress proud instead.

“If you wanted it to remain a slytherin matter, you shouldn’t have attacked him in front of a hall full of people. You should have waited till you were in your dorm. So either you tell me, what caused this altercation right now or I'll be forced to make you apologise to Mister Pucey for the damage to his face”

Severus could feel himself turning red from the sheer anger that this statement provoked, there was no way in hell he was going to apologise to that rat faced scum. He could see the smug git look on the pretty boys face at the mention of an apology, and had the strong urge to punch him in the face again. Or hex his fucking nose off. But apparently Potter wasn't done.

“...ake you serve two weeks detention for not giving an adequate explanation to a Professor when asked. I will also have to hand you over to your head of house, for any other punishment she deems fit for attacking a fellow student with out provocation, do I make my self clear?”

Potter had clearly picked up on the suspiciously smug look on Pucey's face, because he looked more than a little disconcerted by the sudden bloody smile that the boy had released at the mention of an apology.

But Severus couldn't care less about whether Potter suddenly had enough brain cells to pick up on how distorted this situation was, because all Severus could think about were the three words that were flitting about his brain, two weeks detention.

If he had two weeks detention then he'd have to break the promise he'd made to Harmony about their first date. He was sure that she'd understand if he could explain, and if he could catch her before he had to leave the ball. But to break a promise he made to her barely and hour after making it, was a horrid thing to do, particularly after what he'd already put her through by being a dick.
“But sir I prom…” dear lord he was stuttering, “promised Harmony that we could.”

Apparently his lack of answers had pushed Potter to far, because he cut him off before Severus could even get the words out.

“I couldn’t care what you’ve promised Harmony; at the moment I am your Professor and not your dates father. So either tell me what caused you to attack this student or you’ll be leaving the ball right now with out a goodbye to your date and no free time for at least a fortnight”.

Severus had known it was going to come down to this in the end, but it didn't stop his conscience from arguing with it's self.

You’ve got to tell him what the wanker said

If you do you’ll be ousted from slytherin proper they'll never accept you in any way again

Harmony already accepts us, is it really worth hurting her to curry favour with people who already don’t give a rats ass.

He'd come to the conclusion earlier, and his resolve had only strengthened, he'd tried to keep house loyalty intact, but it in the end Harmony was more important, and he'd be damned if he was going to break a promise to her, to keep house loyalties that he couldn't give a damn about, he'd only been willing to even try and keep them in the first place in the hopes that his life would remain bearable, if worse came to worse he'd just have to bed down in Gryffindor tower, he'd done it before.

His resolve to give Potter the answers he sought, must have shown on his face because Pucey had gone the colour of milk, and looked like he was heading straight for the noose, it was a similar feeling to what Severus had. Knowing it was the right thing to do didn't stop him dreading the outcome any less.

However fully resigned he was to ratting out Pucey and taking on his houses displeasure, he still didn't want to regurgitate the vile words that Pucey had spewed about Harmony, so the information he gave Potter was still very evasively worded.

“The disagreement was about my date sir, Pucey made certain Suggestions about what I could do with her; suggestions that I took issue with. When he wouldn’t stop I felt he needed more than words to shut him up.. sir”.

Hearing a small chocked off squeak coming from where Pucey was stood, Severus once more thought that the boy was just as cowardly as he was pompous, how he'd become the unofficial leader of all that was slytherin he'd never know. Pucey's personality traits would be a horrid mix in any person, the fact that he also had money to burn just made them worse. Severus knew that some people might say this was the pot calling the kettle black, and Severus knew that he was far from being the ideal human, but he'd rather be the way he was than try and imitate the scum that Pucey had grown from.

A look of understanding settled on Potters face, and Severus was pleased to note that Pucey had lost whatever colour he'd had left and was now an unappealing chine clay white, but that wasn't the best bit as far as Severus was concerned other student's gallows look had intensified, and he now looked as if he was staring death himself in the face.

If Severus was being honest with himself, there was a good chance he possibly was, there wasn't a thing in this world that Potter valued more than his daughter, even Pucey knew that.
It might teach him not to go insulting people, just because he thinks they're below him... who am I kidding of course it won’t.

Potter turned his back on Severus so that he could face Pucey head on, this meant that Severus couldn't see whatever Potters expression was, but it must have held promise of serious pain and/or retribution, because he could see Pucey's adams apple bobbing away, as he repeatedly gulped down his nerves.

The fact that he couldn't see Potter's face meant that Severus had to rely on his auditory sense's to gauge what the man was thinking while talking to Pucey, although his voice sounded as calm and measured as it might during any normal class with him, Severus was able to discern a definite edge of; *I am a pissed off father and you're in Serious shit.*

“Exactly what suggestions, *did,* you make about his date Mister Pucey?”

“I..I..it wasn’t anything wearly sir, Snape’s exaderating I dust made a corment how.. how nite her dress was, that’s all”

As Pucey tried to worm his way out of the situation with his half garbled speech, Severus felt his anger growing from the bastards bold faced lie. He reigned in most of his temper, he was rather adept at that particular skill, but he couldn't quite contain the angry noise of protest that passed through his tight lips. He opened his mouth to counter the dickheads ludicrous statement, but Potter sent Severus a look that made him think he might be better off not speaking quite yet.

Once Potter's attention left him and he turned back to Pucey, he thought that Potter glare must have kicked up a notch (or ten) because Pucey looked like he was about ready to faint... or have an accident.

It was a shame that Severus couldn't enjoy Pucey's fear more, but with so much at stake, it just wasn't something he could bring himself to do right now.

“Really Mister Pucey?, I find that hard to believe. What could you have possibly said to Snape, about how nice my daughters dress is; that he felt the need to hex you in the face for it?”

Severus rolled his eyes at the Potters back.

*Fucking idiot you can clearly see I've fucking well punched him, not hexed him!, what type of professor are you exactly that you can’t tell the fucking difference.*

Severus was sending looks of pure loathing towards Pucey, and although he didn't realise it, he was clenching and unclenching his fists where they were resting at his sides, all the while mumbling his thoughts about Potter incompetence. His mumbling must have been louder than he realised it was, because it caused the man's attention to focus back on him again.

“What was that?”

*Fucking Shit.*

“I said I didn’t hex him sir. I hit him”

Clearly Potter wasn't expecting his answer, because his eyebrows rose up to meet his hairline in surprise.

“You hit him?. As in with your fist?”
Severus gritted out a brief "yes sir", though what he really wanted to say was.

'Just how thick are you, of course me hitting him means I did it with my fist, do I look like I could lift a fucking table!"

The gritted Yes sir, was apparently enough for Potter to turn his astonished attention back to Pucey, leaving Severus to stew in peace once more.

“So you mean to tell me Mister Pucey. That what you said about my daughter dress was totally innocuous, and that Mister Snape punched you in the face completely unprovoked, for no reason, what so ever. Is that the gist of what you’re saying Mister Pucey”.

Severus's hadn't thought it possible but his loathing for the worm up another few notched when once more began to nod his head in a gormless manner(he was nodding his head so vigorously that he was sending little droplets of blood flying with each movement).

He obviously thought that the quicker and the more enthusiastically he could agree with Potter statement, the more likely it was that the Professor would believe him.

“Yes, Sirb I didn’t say anything to the iserbale ittle half blood, he’s ust touchy”.

Severus was positive that people outside must have heard his last shred of restraint snap, before he was even aware of what he was doing he was throwing himself at his sorry excuse for a house mate. Consequences be damned.

Unfortunately Severus never made contact with Pucey, Potter managed to grab him before he could. He struggled in Potters restraining hold, not thinking of the Professor or seeing that he was drawing the attention of an increasing crowd of students. All he could think about was Pucey's in his smug git face, and all he could see was the red haze that seemed to have veiled his vision.

All his thought's and emotions were focused on one singular linear point, he wanted to pound the disgusting chauvinistic blood purist bully in to the stone floor of the hall, until there was nothing left but some over shiny teeth and a set of obnoxiously expensive dress robes.

"Fuckingarseshittingmotherfuckingcuntfacedbasta"

Severus wasn't aware that he was letting out a litany of abuse as he continued to struggle, or that it was loud enough to be heard by not only Potter and Pucey, but the vast majority of the students who'd stopped dancing to watch the altercation.

Sirius wasn't far from where Pucey was stood, trying to hustle students away from the spectacle that was taking place, from the corner of his eye he noticed Pucey's aggressive movements towards the swearing snake, and with Auror trained reflexes grabbed hold of the boy before he could get to close to James and the still struggling swearing student in his arms.

If Sirius was being honest with himself he could've stepped in before now to give prongs a hand, but he'd been having to much fun watching from the side lines as prongs pulled his metaphorical hair out. Poor sod wasn't cut out to be an authoritarian, and Sirius was having a whale of time watching him try. McGonagall would have had the two boys begging for mercy, long before now.

The boy that Sirius had grabbed was cursing up a storm of his own, having no other outlet for his anger, and both Sirius and James were having a hell of a time keeping hold of the teenagers.

*I shouldn't be feeling this winded from trying to retrain a bloody teenager! I'm a big badass Auror for fuck sakes. I am not going to be bested by a sixteen year old twig!. At least Prongs isn't looking
any better, red and strained is not a good look for him.

“That is enough, both of you! What are you both! sixteen or six?!”

Sirius retracted his early thought that Jamie wasn't cut out to be an authoritarian, his voice cut above the swearing and the two teenagers stopped struggling so quickly that you'd have thought that their string had been cut. Both Students had the good sense to look shame faced when they realised the spectacle they were creating and the gawking crowd that they'd attracted.

Well done prongs you’re still no Minnie but maybe you’ll get there one day.

With the boy in his arms no longer struggling, Sirius eased up his hold.

“What the fuck is all this about James?”

His friend still looked a little red in the face from exertion, and his words came out with a puff of annoyance.

“That’s what I’m trying to find out, but neither of them has given me anything much to go on other than, that comments were made about a dress”.

The look James sent him told Sirius that that should be enough for him to know what this was about, Sirius might be slow sometimes but he wasn't thick and the look Prongs gave him and the comment, coupled with the fact of exactly who one of the students was that was fighting; and it was enough for Sirius to get the general idea of what had gone off here.

The little bastard in his arms had likely said something offensive about prongslet, something that he'd said to the Snape kid, who'd likely retaliated on his dates behalf.

Sirius's face hardened and he sent James a subtle look of understanding, before deliberately tightening his arms more around the boy that he was still holding in place. Sirius was more than a little pleased that the little bastard squeaked as Sirius gave him a good hard squeeze.

You’ll be getting a damn sight more than that from me, if you’ve been being vulgar about my goddaughter.

Severus had witnessed the silent conversation that Black and Potter had seemed to have before his eyes, he saw the dawning look of understanding on the idiot Black's face before he'd started to squeeze Pucey like he was a stress ball. Severus knew that a less than pleasant smirk settled on his lips when he heard Pucey squeak, but he didn't care.

Potters arms suddenly fell away from him and he found himself free of the professors hold. The man in question looked moved so that he was facing him, before he gave Severus a look that could almost be regarded as soft and understanding and perhaps even a mite of sympathy.

In all the time that he'd known the man he'd never received a look like this before. If he was honest it filled him with more dread than it had a right too, what the hell was Potter trying to pull?

“Look I know you and I don’t get on very well, but I need you to cool your temper and just give me the facts. You’re only hurting yourself by staying quiet, and Mister Pucey's clearly had no such thoughts as yours when it comes to house loyalty. If you don’t tell me exactly what he said you’ll end up being punished for something that I think probably isn’t your fault. Do you want that?”

So that's what he want's, who'd have thought that an idiot like Potter would pick up on the fact that he was only getting half the truth. well I'm not going to give it to him, I'll be damned to hell if I'm
Severus was about to open his mouth and tell Potter that he didn't care what he thought or what he wanted he wasn't going to sully himself by repeating what that worm had, and the chances were that he'd get punished for hitting Pucey regardless of the why. So why should he repeat those vile words just to sate Potters curiosity. But he never got the chance, because his name was being called from somewhere across the hall.

***

As Harmony entered the great hall she could see that the crowds had thinned out even more than they had before she's gone in to bathrooms with Hermione. Not that this made the crowd less rowdy, if anything it was probably more so because the once that remained were in fine fettle and appeared to be in no hurry for the evening to end.

She could see Fred doing a rather sultry dance with Angelina despite the music not matching to the moves one jot. George was at one of the table near her, chatting up a Hufflepuff who most definitely wasn't the one he'd come with. Neville and Luna were still going as strongly as they had been when they'd nearly sent Hermione flying, and Harmony felt honest surprise at this. She really hadn't thought that the normally timid boy had it in him to continue making such a deliberate spectacle of himself in front of a crowd. Perhaps it was Luna bringing his hidden nature out to play, or perhaps he was so enamoured of his date he just hadn't realised the way he looked. Whatever the reason the couple looked happy to be in each other's company and appeared to be completely oblivious to the people that they kept sending flying with their ostentatious dance moves.

The song suddenly changed to one that was a little slower (though it had no impact on Neville and Luna), Harmony got the feeling that the festivities were starting to wind down for the night. A quick wandless Tempus showed that it was already 11:22 meaning that there was little more than half an hour of the ball left before the teachers (or in her case her parent's) would be herding the students up to bed. No wonder the ball was half empty, most were probably already in their respective beds for the night, or giving it one last effort to sneak in to their dates.

Deciding that she'd rather spend the last half an hour dancing than getting something to drink, she looked around for Severus.

A quick glance in the direction of the refreshments showed him to be more or less where she’d left him. Having eyes only for her date she failed to notice the odd crowd that was surrounding him as she called his name across the hall.

“Severus!”

Chapter End Notes

I wanted this chapter to give you everything that the other stories did with out retracting from it and also giving you something new to get your teeth in to, so I hope I've achieved that for you.

comments?
As always if you see any mistakes eet let me know.

See y'all soon, Pink X (^^)
You're a terrible liar dad!

Chapter Notes

hello lovelies,
not a long one today, but I hope you enjoy it none the less.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Severus felt himself go cold at the shout of his name, he'd wanted her to appear, but not when
Potter was so close to getting his answers. This would now truly put him between a rock and a hard
place, he didn't want to give Potter the information he sought but if he refused, Potter would likely
tell Harmony what had been going off and Severus would be made to repeat what that odious cretin
had said any way, the difference being that he'd have to repeat it in front of the girl herself and that
scenario was so much worse Severus didn't even want to contemplate it.

With his date hurrying towards them and completely out of other options Severus came to a quick
decision and decided to make a deal with Potter.

“I’ll tell you, just make sure Harmony isn’t here to hear it, please!”.

Severus hated himself just a little for pleading with Potter of all people, but he hated what he was
going to have to do, once Harmony was gotten out of the way a damn sight more.

Severus saw Potters nod of ascent to his plea, and he wasn't going to try himself in to thinking it
was in any way being allowed for his own sake, the look on Potters face told Severus that he
wanted his daughter as far away from this particular conversation as he himself did.

“Alright, but only on the condition that you’ll tell me exactly what he said when we’re out of
earshot understood?”

Severus just managed a small nod of agreement, before Harmony was suddenly on them.

“Severus are we going to have another da..”

Harmony trailed off, for the first time she realised the odd mixture of people that were around her
date, she hadn't been bothered looking at whoever was around him once she'd spotted him, she'd
been more bothered about collaring her date before he'd wandered off. But now she had the
opportunity to take in the scene that she'd stumbled in to she found it to be rather a odd one.

Her date, was stood with her dad, her godfather and Adrian Pucey off all people. Now this
probably wouldn't have seemed to odd if it wasn't for a couple of very obvious reasons. One, all
these three people loathed Severus and he loathed them back, Two, her godfather seemed to have
such a tight hold of Pucey that he appeared to be having some difficulty with his breathing, and
Three, the aforementioned snot was covered in what appeared to be his own blood.

There was another thing that Harmony realised as she took in the scene, the dance floor hadn't been
so devoid of couples because they'd all scampered off for the night, no the reason appeared that
they were gawking at whatever had gone off here.

Now Harmony wasn't as smart as Hermione, but she wasn't thick either and it didn't take a genius
to figure out that some sort of fight had taken place while she'd been in the loo with Hermione, whatever it was about she had absolutely no clue, but the fact that it was Pucey that was covered in blood led her to believe that the little bastard had said something to Severus which had led to her date retaliating.

_I wonder if the twat said something about Eileen again._

She decided that she was more likely to get an honest answer if she played dumb.

“what’s wrong? Why are all these people here? why has Pucey got blood all over his face?”.

Her dad took a step towards her, apparently thinking that by blocking her view of Severus and Pucey she was less likely to realise what had gone off. If her dad thought that this tactic was going to work he was sorely mistaken, and then she noticed the smile that her dad had plastered on to his face and she just knew that getting any semblance of the truth from the man was non-existent.

That Smile told her that whatever was about to come out of her dads mouth would be complete bullshit, it was a smile that reeked of, ‘no I haven’t hidden the Christmas presents in the airing cupboard darling, why ever would you think that?’.

“Err Pucey.. just err tripped and.. and hurt himself, yes he tripped and hurt himself”.

As the terrible lie tripped from her dads lips, she couldn't help feeling just a tad embarrassed by it. Her dad apparently wasn't just satisfied by the one abysmal lie, he's apparently decided to add an even more ludicrous one to the already unstable foundation of the first.

“Snape is just going to help me take him up to the hospital wing. Why don’t you go and have a dance with Sirius. He’s been complaining about wanting one all night and the ball will be over soon, I’ll have Snape back to you before the last dance, don’t worry”.

The cherry on top of this lie, was what her dad clearly considered was a charming smile, but with how strained he looked, it made him appear more constipated then charming.

Harmony felt her eyes narrow, she'd been willing to play dumb if it got her, her answers, but she didn't appreciate her dad outright lying to her and then expecting her to buy the crap he was selling. She didn't like being made a fool of, which is what her dad was going to do if she accepted his falsehoods.

She was about to rip her dads flimsy lie to shreds and admonish him for thinking that she'd believe his tripe in the first place, when her righteous anger was derailed by her godfathers intervention.

“Yeah, come one prongslet. I want to dance with my favourite goddaughter”.

Sirius had released Pucey and was now in front of her giving her the puppy dog look and holding his arm out expectantly. She didn't want to go dancing with her godfather though, well that was a lie she did, but if she left now it'd look like she bought her dad pathetic attempts. On the other hand it doubtless wouldn't matter how she tore in to them at the moment, her dad and apparently Severus too (if his pained look was anything to go by) weren't going to tell her jack shit at the moment.

Her best option was to walk away, while letting them know that they'd been caught out. She would find out what had caused the fight eventually, she had her ways, but for the moment she was grudgingly willing to let them keep their secrets.

Harmony gave the assembled males one last narrow eyes suspicious glance, before taking the offered arm of her godfather.
“I’m your only goddaughter”.

With those words she permitted him to lead her through the gawkers and towards the small group of dancers that were still dancing and not standing around like idiots in search of the next hot piece of gossip.

Once they were far enough away that her date and her dad would've thought that they were in the clear, but still close enough that they could hear her above the music and the crowds Harmony released her bomb shell.

“Don’t for one minute think that, that lies going to work on me by the way. I’ll find out what’s gone off from one of you two, I always do”.

Sirius started to snigger at her side, with her back to the group she had no way of knowing if her words had made the mark she wanted or not, but she could hope.

“You tell um prongslet”.

Harmony graced her godfather with a smirk, "yeah well, I couldn't let them believe that I'd fallen for dad's flimsy lies, could I?", Harmony tilted her head back until her nose was dramatically in the air before doing her best imitation of Parkinson, "I have a reputation to uphold you don't you know"

By now they were in the centre of all the dancers and Sirius's loud bark of laughter drew the attention of more than one couple who were close to the pair. A quick glance over he shoulder, showed that the crowd had dispersed from around the refreshments table, and her dad, Severus and Pucey had disappeared with them.

Harmony let out a sigh, what ever had gone off, and she was ninety percent sure that it had been a fight, she hoped it was resolved before the last dance started. Deciding there was nothing she could do about it for the moment, she gave her godfather a considering look.

“I don’t suppose you’ll tell me what the fight was about will you?”

Sirius gave his goddaughter a wry smirk, he'd known that she was playing dumb when she demanded answers despite the main facts clearly being in front of her. Her inquisitive mind was always quick to pick up the facts, particularly when people had been up to no good. In this department she was her mother daughter through and through. You could never get anything like this past lily and her daughter was no different.

“Guess I'll just have to get it out of one of those two”.

Sirius let out a small snort, before giving her a sympathetic look.
“I wouldn’t count your chickens love, getting answers out of those two isn't going to be easy”

"It normally is!" said Harmony

"yeah well, as easy as it normally is, I've got a feeling your dads just going to keep giving you his terrible lies until you either give up or forget about it, and you know better than anyone the way the Snape boy can be if he doesn't want people knowing things".

Sirius could see that his prongslet was still over thinking things and decided to do what any responsible adult would do with a pensive teenager; he twirled her away from him, before dipping her dramatically. Harmony released a cross between a giggle and a squeal at the unexpected action.

She slapped Sirius on the chest for his unexpected actions, but there was a sparkle in her eyes and a smile on her lips and that was all that mattered as far as Sirius was concerned.

“What do you say prongslet, want to give Frank's kid and his date and run for their money?”.

It took her a second to realise that he was talking about Neville and Luna's erratic dancing, with a smile still on her lips she agreed to his offer. As he twirled her away from him again, nearly knocking McGonagall and Karkaroff over in the process. "Sorry Minnie". Harmony came to the conclusion, that it was useless worrying about something that she was unlikely to get answers for tonight and that she might as well enjoy her godfathers company instead.

Even if that meant being glared at by her headmistress for what remained of the evening.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed that folks, we're nearing the end of the story now, only three more chapters to go.

As usual if you see any mistakes let me know, and I hope to see you for the next chapter.

See Y'all soon, Pink (^^)
With Harmony's parting barb still ringing in his ears, Severus had no choice but to follow Potter as he led himself and Pucey through the dispersing crowd, and around the edge of the dancers, before he discreetly took them both through a side door.

The heavy wooden door banged shut behind them, instantly cutting off any noise that attempted to follow them in to the desolate corridor, the bang echoed ominously around the empty space. The corridor they'd found themselves in was badly lit, with only a few lonely torches here and there providing meagre light by which to see.

When Potter rounded on the pair of them, his face was so heavily shadowed that Severus could see very little of the man's face, he could see the fire in man's eyes though. Potter was clearly done waiting for his answers.

"Alright I've had enough of only getting half the information before someone starts spouting off. If one of you doesn't start to sing, neither of you will be seeing light out side of a dungeon class room for a very long time".

Although Potter had started by addressing them as a pair, his next statement was solely for Severus. The man was expecting his answers, and he was expecting them from Severus, his tone brokered no arguments on that front.

"Since I got Harmony out of the way as you requested".

Severus had to restrain himself from saying something along the lines of 'not very bloody well you didn't', but he was in enough hot water as it was and chose not to verbalise his thoughts. However Severus didn't stop the look that he sent Potters way, that conveyed this thought with out the use of speech. Frankly he wasn't even sure that Potter would even pick up on the look, not with how dingy the corridor was.

"I'm expecting you to get a sudden attack of verbal diarrhoea Mister Snape".

Severus felt himself grimace at Potters less than pleasant wording, but he couldn't deny that, (however grudgingly and against his will he'd done so), he'd agreed to tell the man what had happened in the hall. Honestly he felt like he'd been backed in to a corner, but there was nothing he could do about it now, and the quicker he could get this over with.

The words began to flow through his gritted teeth, like water flowing through a hole in a breached dam, once they started to flow there was no stopping them. He despised himself for every second of it.
"He suggested sir that there were certain ‘benefits’, to hanging around a ‘half blood mongrel bitch’, and that when I was done ‘breaking her in’. He might try ‘giving her a go’. He said he could ‘now understand why I hang around the girl. Given that she normally looks like something out of the black lake on a good day’, because she was apparently ‘hiding a bangable bod under her clothes’. sir”.

His mouth felt like it had been filled with compost from one of Sprouts green houses. He felt dirty, just from repeating even the little that he had. Oh, he knew that he’d only repeated the tamer aspects of Pucey’s disgusting speech and that he’d only given Potter the barest bones of the incident. But honestly why should Potter need to know about the rest, it wasn’t likely to make Pucey’s punishment any more severe, just because Severus went in to all the sordid details, so why should he debase himself by repeating things that wouldn’t make a difference any way.

Thankfully, Potter seemed to have no desire to probe further than the little that Severus had given him, Severus felt relief course through him, though his outward appearance showed no sign of it.

After Severus had said his piece, there was no instant verbal smack down for Pucey, instead the corridor resumed its heavy silence. The fact that Potter had moved in to the light from one of the few burning torches meant that Severus now had a clear view of the mans face and the emotions that he was emitting.

Apparently what Severus had said was more than enough for Potter to turn his full ire on Pucey, the man looked seconds away from blowing a gasket (or ten), and Severus idly wondered to himself, what would’ve happened if he’d repeated the incident in all it's detail.

The man truly looked ready to strangle Pucey where he stood and Severus could feel the little snot starting to tremble next to him. However the look was gone as quickly as it had come and Potter’s homicidal longing, was soon replaced with a look of pure restraint.

Severus had never seen Potter restrain his anger before, he was very much a let it all out and worry about the consequences later type person. Professor Evans was usually the one to restrain her husband so to see Potter doing it of his own free will was really rather odd and if he was honest more then a little disappointing. Severus had been hoping for his repeated words to have at least gained Pucey a tongue lashing, if not something a little more substantial. Clearly Severus wasn't going to get his wish.

The silence stretched, and Severus had to angrily resign himself to the likely hood of Pucey getting off with no more than a slap on the wrist, when Potters voice finally shattered the thick silence. It took him a few seconds to comprehend the words he heard.

“You should’ve hit him harder”.

Severus was pretty certain that he couldn't be more shocked than he was by those five words,-words, that coming from Potter of all people, sounded like approval- but tonight was apparently a night for him to be continually proved wrong, because after Potter had looked left and right down the corridor, he suddenly grabbed Pucey by the lapels of his dress robes and slammed him in to the unforgiving stone wall behind them. If Severus had thought that he felt shocked by Potters words it was nothing compared to what he was feeling now.

Warily and from no more than a foot or two away, Severus watched as Potter got right in Pucey's face, making the frightened boy flinch back, his head hitting the wall behind him, as the flames from the torchlight danced over his fear filled features.

Severus had never seen Potter look this angry before and that really was saying something, after all
him and Harmony hadn't had the most.. er . obedient of childhoods.

Although Severus had wanted Pucey to get more than a slap on the wrist, he was still wary that Potter's temper might flare to an uncontrollable height. He'd have no choice but to step in, if it looked like the Potter was going to go to far. He despised Pucey and frankly Severus thought he deserved whatever he got and more besides, but Harmony wouldn't appreciate her dad being sent to Azkaban or at the very least loosing his job, and Severus was terrible at getting blood out of clothing.

But, even though he was wary, he was also eager to hear Pucey get knocked down a few pegs. Whatever Potter was saying to Pucey, it was to low for Severus to hear. Even in the silence of the deserted corridor. So very cautiously and hoping not to gain the irate mans attention, Severus took a few whisper quiet steps towards the pair. Being slightly closer made all the difference and Severus's straining ears were just able to pick up what the man was saying to his terrified student.

Surprisingly it wasn't the words that Severus took in first, but the tone in which the man was saying them. It was so caustic that he was sure that tone alone could burn people from the inside out with no more than a few drops.

Pucey looked absolutely terrified, and as Severus started to understand what Potter was saying, he could understand why.

“. or you Mister Pucey, if I ever find out you’ve made such suggestions or comments about Harmony or any other girl for that matter, again; a possibly broken nose will be the least of your worries. I will have you chained up by your balls in one of the lower dungeons faster than you can blink”.

Potter's hold tightened in Pucey's lapels.

Doubtless, the robes would be nearly cutting in to his flesh, with tightness with which Potter was holding them, but that didn't stop Severus sneering at the pathetic worm when he let out a pained, scared whimper. Undoubtedly if the roles had been reversed Severus would be just as scared, he was sure of it, but that didn't mean he would show it.

Pucey truly was a pathetic example of Slytherins noble house.

“For now I won’t do any more to you than issue three months detention”

_Pity, Thought Severus It was just getting good as well._

“And as many disgusting jobs as I can find to fill them”.

_That’s more like it,_

Severus knew that the smile that crossed his face was far from friendly at Potters declaration, most if they saw it would probably call it evil, but as far as Severus was concerned, there was no one more deserving of that punishment, than the wanker that he had to call a house mate.

Severus would be sure to make as many truly revolting concoctions in the potions lab as possible in the next few months.

It was well known amongst the students that Professor Penman left the most revolting of the used potions equipment specifically for the students that were undergoing punishment in her own house. Apparently it was to teach them a lesson about getting caught, personally Severus thought it was because most of her own snakes loathed her, simply for taking the position as their head of house,
when she was horror of all horrors a muggle born witch.

“.. not risking my position here on the likes of scum like you, just to teach you an adequate lesson”.

*Now that’s a real shame, I could get rid of Pucey and Potter in one fell swoop if he did, my last years a Hogwarts would be bliss.* Thought Severus.

“Know this however; if you put a single toe out of line in regards to my daughter, before you graduate this fine establishment. I promise not even the threat of loosing my job will stop me from hunting you down and making you sorry to have ever been born”.

The Pure unadulterated hatred and loathing that Potter levelled at Pucey was so intense, Severus wouldn't have been surprised if it had set his robes on fire. Suddenly Potter flung Pucey away, like he was suddenly holding a bag of hot coals. Pucey fell away from the wall with a thud, landing on the floor in an ungainly heap.

As Pucey lay on there, the astringent smell of urine reached Severus's nostrils and he suddenly knew why Potter had dropped the disgusting boy.

*Pathetic, truly and wholly pathetic.*

Potter seemed to have similar thoughts, because as they both watched Pucey’s ridiculous scrambling efforts to cover his disgusting shame, Potter sent the boy his own rather spectacular sneer of disgust. One, Severus thought, that would've been worthy of himself.

Not that he’d ever tell Potter that of course.

“Now I suggest you get out of my sight before I hex you. Get that nose dealt with in the hospital wing, I won’t be taking any excuses for you not turning up yo your first detention on boxing day. I would strongly suggest you head straight to your dorm after that. If I find out you haven’t gone straight there, I will be adding several more months to you sentence and I do have ways of knowing if you don’t so I suggest you not test it”.

Severus could see a rather pleased, almost malicious glint enter Potters eyes.

“In the morning, I will also be informing your highly feminist head of house about your disgusting attitude towards the female students”.

Severus could now understand the look in Potters eyes, the thought of what Penwood would do to the creep was undeniably a pleasing one, one that he was quite happy to take the same malicious pleasure in as Potter evidently was. Severus just wished he could be present to see the dressing down Pucey would receive. Penwood was well known for her views on the way woman should be treated, it made her much admired by a good portion of the female students.

“-ect more detentions and a heavy loss of points from her as well, now get out of my sight”.

Pucey quickly nodded his head before hurrying away.

But Pucey didn't get far, before Potter was calling out to the boy, leaving Severus to wonder what more the man could possibly have to add. Having moved out of the torch light all Severus could see of the man was the menacing glint of a sinister smile, and the burning fury of a pair of deep brown eyes, that looked more pupil than iris.

“Just remember mister Pucey it’s my daughter that you’ve commented about tonight, so make sure you keep your guard up. I’ll be watching and waiting for the perfect opportunity to teach you some
Severus had to admit he was just a touch unnerved by Potter while he looked like this, but that didn't stop a very similar look from planting it's self on Severus own features. He imagined that the pair of them made quite the sinister sight in the low lighting.

Pucey had stopped at the call of his name, but he didn't spare them more than a quick glance before he commenced fleeing once more. Not that he was able to do even that much with any amount of dignity, Severus felt the slightest of smirks tilting his mouth, at the sight of Pucey trying and failing to run away from them, while also trying to keep his urine soaked trousers from touching his legs.

As soon as Pucey was out of sight, and it was only himself and Potter left, he let the smirk drop and schooled his features.

It wouldn't do for Potter to see any hint of emotion from him after all. Apparently Potter had no such qualms about keeping his emotions in check, because no sooner was Pucey out of sight he began to laugh, loudly.

Apparently having to scare the living shit out of a student, because they'd made derogatory comments about your daughter was a right laugh.

Severus had wanted to keep his emotions in check, now that Pucey was gone but he couldn't stop the scowl that stole over his face from Potters apparent enjoyment of the situation.

Granted Pucey had looked like an idiot as he'd run away, he'd looked like a duck with two wooden legs, and on a base level even Severus could admit that, that was rather funny, but the overall situation wasn't a funny one, and Severus thought it was in poor taste for Potter to be laughing like this was some sort of comedy show.

Severus decided not to say this to Potter though, instead he grit his teeth and waited, blank faced for Potter to get it out of his system.

After several long minutes, Potter did stop laughing, finally taking notice once more of the boy who remained.

“As for you Mister Snape, hitting another student, no matter how deserving, is still an offence and you must be punished for it”.

Severus should have guessed that Potter wasn't going to give up the chance to punish him, even if it had been in the defence of his daughter.

“Twenty points from Slytherin for muggle duelling in the presence of other schools”.

Severus felt himself wince at the loss of points, with the amount Pucey was sure to loose, it almost sealed their fate of having no chance of winning the cup later in the year. On the other hand Potter could have done much worse to him for his part in the fight, and a paltry loss of twenty points to a house he was starting to care less and less about, really was nothing compared to defending Harmony.

“However, defending a woman’s virtue is a noble endeavour, so I will award you thirty points for defending your date even when she wasn’t there to be personally offended”.

Severus couldn’t quite comprehend what Potter had just said, the man had never given him points. Severus tried to will it away, it wouldn't do for Potter to see that something he'd done had made
Severus happy, but he was unable to stop the thin slip of a smile that curved the edges of his lips.

Potter was heading for the door now, apparently the points loss was the only punishment he was going to issue to Severus, feeling lighter and eager to get back to his date, Severus followed directly behind him.

Obviously he'd followed to closely though because the he collided with Potter when the man unexpectedly stopped and pivoted to face Severus.

Severus thought of a few choice curse words he'd like to send Potters way.

“Of course I shouldn’t need to tell you that this incident remains between us do I?. As well as what that boy said about Harmony”.

I should've guessed. He's worried I might stitch him up with another teacher for the way he manhandled Pucey, or that I might be idiotic enough to mention the incident to his daughter. You're more stupid than I thought you were Potter, if you think for one second that I'm going to talk about this to anyone.

Severus didn’t say any of this to Potter of course. They might be having some sort of truce type thing at the moment, but Severus was under no illusions that, that truce would disappear at the drop of a hat if he was in any way disingenuous towards the man.

Instead he shook his head at Potter, his long clean hair fell in to his eyes as he did so, with out the weight of the grease to hold it to his head, it was going to become rather bothersome if it kept falling in to his face like this. He absentmindedly thought that if he was going to keep it clean for Harmony’s enjoyment, (and his own) he might need to invest in some sort of hair tie.

“No sir, if I told Harmony I’d punched him in her defence, she’d have a go at me for fighting and then punch me for thinking that she can’t stand up for herself. Not to mention I really don’t want to repeat what the wanker said about her, sir and well, I won’t tell any one what you did sir. Pucey deserved it”.

Strangely Severus received an inquiring look for his efforts.

“And do you?”

“Do I what?”

“Do you think she can’t take care of herself”. said Potter.

Though Severus wasn't aware of it, a certain look crossed his face while he mulled over Potters question about his girlfriend, it was a look that Potter knew well.

“No sir, She’s magnificent. She can look after herself more than fine”.

Severus had witnessed Harmony stand up for him, herself and numerous nameless others more times than he could count. It was in her nature to stand up to bullies or people she felt had wronged some one else, she wasn’t in the habit of standing down, even if she was the one who been emotionally or physically hurt.

“It’s just..”.

Severus paused contemplating whether he should add this part, but then he remembered just who he was talking to. As galling as it was to admit to; even in his own head, it was likely that his
thoughts on the matter of Harmony's ability to take care of her self likely echoed Potters.

“Just because she can doesn’t mean she should have too. I won’t stand for people talking about her like that even if it makes her mad at me for defending her when she feels that there’s no need or being over protective or whatever she wants to call it. She precious and she deserved to be treated like she is”.

Potter nodded at him in approval, “Good answer, I’ll not have my daughter going out with any one who doesn’t respect just how brilliant she is. Or know that they still have to stand up for her; even if she can and will fight her own battles”.

Severus was beginning to wonder if Pucey had managed to hit him with some sort of hex during the altercation in the hall, because he could've sworn that what Potter had just said, essentially amounted to Potter approving of him being around Harmony. There was no way this was real, the man had been fighting tooth and nail against his presence in her life for thirteen years!.

There was absolutely no way in hell that, that was going to end just because Severus had punched the git who'd been insulting his daughter.

This was some sort of weird Gryffindor trick, it had to be.

Then Potter did something that in it's own way was even weirder than giving him approval to see his daughter, he patted him on the shoulder in some sort of pseudo fatherly gesture.

Severus was quite sure he’d never been quite this disturbed by anything before, and given that he lived in a dungeon in a magical school that was really saying something.

Severus knew he must have looked like a stunned fish as he watched Potter leave. But when he saw the man begin to smirk as he re-entered the ball room, Severus's stunned expression shifted to one of wariness instead.

That smirk couldn't mean anything good, he was sure that the other shoe would drop eventually and when it did, he was positive he wouldn't like it.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you liked this chapter.
Those of you who've read the other story should have a good idea what the next chapter is going to contain, but for those of you who haven't I won't spoil the surprise.

^_^

see y'all soon, Pink X (^^)
Severus continued to stand in the quite corridor for a minute or two more after Potter had left, just contemplating the madness that the night had presented him with.

Realising that time was slipping away from him just standing there, Severus squared his shoulders and tried to forget about the event's of the last half an hour. He had more important things to worry about at the moment, like finding his date before the last dance of the evening.

Severus pulled the heavy door open and rejoined the cacophony of the ball.

Thankfully, his few minutes contemplation, meant that Potter was now no where in sight, something that Severus was extremely thankful for, he didn't think he could handle it if Potter was still trying to come over all pseudo fatherly.

The noise wasn't as intense as it had been when he'd left the hall with Potter and Pucey.

A quick glance around the room showed Severus that the crowd had thinned dramatically while he'd been away and there was now no more than a few dozen couples left on the floor, as well as a few odd pairs here and there who seemed intent on making the most of the last moments of the ball, by sequestering themselves in various darkened corners.

From what Severus could see the hall now held more staff than students, most of whom were relaxing for the first time that night.

With how few people were left on the dance floor, Harmony and Black were easy enough to spot.

Not that it would've been difficult to spot them even if the hall was still full to capacity. The reason they were so easy to spot, was because Harmony's godfather seemed to be very intent on finding out how flexible her spine was.

Black kept twirling her away from himself before bending her in to the most outrageous of dips, it was giving Longbottom and Lovegood a run for their money. Harmony looked delighted with her godfathers juvenile behaviour.

Severus loved Harmony, he truly did. But for the life of him he could never understand her unending adoration of Black, frankly Severus thought that he was a tit of the highest order.

The man seemed to have reached the age of fourteen and never matured beyond it. Given that the man was the head of the Auror's it made Severus incredibly uneasy about the state of their law enforcement, if Black was the best that magical Britain had to offer, this country really was in the shit.
But back to the point in hand, Severus just couldn't understand Harmony's faith and adoration of someone so immature.

Case in point, as soon as Black saw Severus walking towards the dancing pair, Black deliberately (and unsubtly) danced himself and his goddaughter further away, every time Severus got within a couple of feet of them, Black would change direction again, and Severus would once more have to walk after them.

Severus felt himself getting frustrated with Blacks antics, he was no closer to regaining his date and now he was stood in the middle of the dance floor looking and feeling like a complete lemon.

The current song came to an end, just as a voice announced that the next song would be the last of the night.

Harmony had turned away from her godfather at the announcement of the last dance and perused the floor for her date.

She could see Severus quickly and gingerly making his way between the various couples that were clustered in the middle of the floor.

The look on his face said that he feared he might catch something; if he was to inadvertently touch one of the lovey dovey couples on the floor.

Harmony suppressed her smile as best she could, (though she couldn't stop the slight twitching at the corner of her lips) and patiently waited for her boyfriend to reach them. And didn't that word just send a thrill of pleasure racing through her. Boyfriend, no better word existed in the English language for her at the moment.

“I suppose I'm going to have to give you back to the beaky fucker for the final dance”.

The lowly spoken words in her ear, made her happy thrill vanish, and a scowl appear on her face instead.

She loved her godfather, but sometimes he could be a real dick. She'd been so happy dancing with him, why did he have to go and spoil it by being an arse about her boyfriend?. She took her eye's of Severus, to glance around at Sirius, with her lips pursed and her eyes narrowed, she was unconsciously doing a good impression of Lily Potter.

“Don’t start Sirius!. Sev is my date, of course I want to spend the last dance of the night with him. Also do you have to be such a dick to him all the time, I don’t care whether he’s here to hear it or not. I am and I don’t want you calling him a beaky fucker or anything else derogatory”.

Sirius's face had gained a scowl of it's own by the time she'd finished her mild telling off.

Not that Harmony noticed, her attention was already focused back on Severus, and not whether or not her godfather was about to pull a tantrum that would shame most toddlers.

Sirius on the other hand was feeling very conflicted, he didn't know if he should feel slighted that his darling goddaughter would rather have the company of that beaky nosed brat over that of his fine, handsome self; or if he should just feel bloody fucking relieved that he could finally sit down.

He had no idea what prongs had been doing but they'd been gone ages and he was bloody knackered after all that energetic dancing.
Once Severus reached the pair, he gave Black a tight nod, before gently taking Harmony's hand and leading her away from her godfather, Severus watched Black slink off the dance floor and join the table that was housing both Potters and Lupin, just as the final song of the night started to play.

I found a love, for me

darling just dive right in,

and follow my lead.

Well I found a girl, beautiful and sweet

The song that had started to play was vaguely familiar to Severus, it was a muggle song that he'd heard Harmony humming more than once during the summer. It was a nice slow soothing song, and would be perfect for just holding his girl tight as they slowly moved around the dance floor.

Both his arms found their way around her small waist; pulling her in to his chest and leaving no gap of light between them.

His hands found her lower back, and one of his thumbs began absentely stroking her back where smooth skin, turned in to silky dress. Being so tight together, Harmony had little choice but to put one of her hands on his shoulder, while the other one gently curled around his neck.

In something of a trance, they began swaying gently with the beat.

Severus felt the delicate hand, that had curled around his neck, begin playing with the small hairs at his nape.

A small private smile touched his lips at the action, the thumbs that had been delicately stroking her back, became bolder with their action, and one slipped just beneath the edge of her dress, brushing reverently over those few precious milimeters of forbidden flesh.

As she gazed at him with tired, but otherwise happy eyes, she let out a sigh of pure contentment. It made his heart swell to know he was the cause of that happiness.

“I thought you wouldn’t get back in time”

Her voice was soft, like she didn’t want to accidently break the bubble they’d found themselves in.

“I wasn’t going to miss the last dance Harm, after all I knew I had a gorgeous creature waiting for me”.

Severus's voice was just as soft when he spoke back, he had no more desire than her to break their little bubble.

“Oh, and what gorgeous creature would this be exactly?”.

Her voice remained soft, but the flirty tone from earlier was back and Severus didn't see any reason not to reciprocate.

“Would you like me to introduce you? she’s sure to turn up, any minute now”.
His tone was low but no less playful for it, and he felt Harmony give a small tug on his neck hair in admonishment, before soothing the area with a few lazy strokes of her fingers. Severus wanted to curl in to that feeling like a cat.

“Git”.

Severus gave a soft hum in reply, the soft ministrations on the back of his neck, meant he'd momentarily lost the ability of speech.

“I know that you weren’t taking Pucey to the hospital wing by the way”

All those relaxed feeling suddenly fled and he felt himself tense before he could stop it. He forced himself to relax in to his dates hold again, It wouldn't do to show his hand before she'd even asked a question.

“There’s no need to get tense, I won’t probe. Not right now, any way. I want to enjoy the last dance of the night with my boyfriend and I’ll be damned if Adrian Pucey of all people is going to interfere”.

Harmony's voice was still soft, and it held no hint of accusation. Severus felt pride and reverence surge through him, when she so casually called him her boyfriend and even though the term was juvenile to the extreme, it didn't stop the thrill Severus got from hearing it from this girls lips.

Severus leant forwards so that his face was close to hers and their noses were no more than an inch apart, he heard her breath hitch from the sudden proximity.

“Is that what I am then Miss Potter, your boyfriend?”.

He couldn't stop the slight hopeful note in his voice as he asked his question.

“You better be, Mister perfect Prefect otherwise I’ll be forced to do something drastic”.

Her voice was barely above a whisper, Severus ran his nose along the smoothness of her forehead, inhaling the scent of soap and foundation that clung to her skin.

“And just what would these drastic measures be Miss Potter”. His voice had gotten decidedly husky.

When Harmony spoke again hers wasn’t much better.

“I might just be forced to kiss you”.

This breathy declaration was very nearly Severus's undoing and not for the first time that night he cursed teenage hormones.

He knew that he should feel like he was on display, undoubtedly by virtue of being one of the few couples still on the dance floor, they would be being watched like hawks, and not just by the obvious people either.

But honestly? he couldn't really care less at the moment. He finally had Harmony and Pucey was going to be in hell for at least the next few months, life was good. So just this once he decided to give in to his hormones.

He dipped his head forwards and closed that last inch that separated them in to two separate people, capturing her perfect plump lips in a kiss that pulsed through his entire being like lightning
through a winter storm.

At the first touch of their lips, Harmony all but melted into his arms, the hand on the back of his neck gripped him a little tighter, and her other hand left his shoulder to join it's kin.

This caused their faces to be pressed even more firmly together, and their noses were now pressed tightly in to each others cheeks, but neither of them thought to complain, to the other. They were both lost in sensation, to care.

The music, the dancers, and the inexplicable knowledge that they were being watched, faded in to the back ground. All Severus could focus on was Harmony and he had no desire to focus on anything else ever again.

She was like a drug, inexplicably intoxicating, even in the smallest doses.

Harmony wasn't sure what she expected when she told Severus she'd be forced to kiss him. Perhaps more flirting, perhaps a tender look or may be even a peck on the cheek. But it certainly wasn't this. She'd not expected him to give her a full on, no holds barred kiss, not when they were in front of such a large audience.

She'd thought they'd have to work up to him being willing to kiss her in public, but apparently she was wrong.

She was more than aware that there was likely a table of two very overprotective guardians, one over invested mother and a werewolf, watching their every move on the dance floor.

But if Severus didn't care about them, then she certainly wasn't going to.

She tugged on his hair again, and she heard him give a slight groan of encouragement for the action, she gave one of her own when the thumb that had been lightly daring to dip just under the edge of her dress and no further, suddenly got bolder and dipped further than it had before and dallied in the dip of her spine for a few precious seconds, before withdrawing and settling safely on top of her dress once more.

The action was so brief she was sure that no one would've even seen it, but she could still feel his touch searing in to her skin.

The kiss was a lot briefer than their first had been in the rose garden, though no less intense and as they broke apart, Harmony felt a large smile settle over her face, she didn’t think she’d ever felt so cherished or loved.

She removed one of her hands from the back of Severus's neck, bringing it around to gently caress his face, her fingers catching slightly on the light stubble that was on his cheek, before returning it to the back of his neck.

The hold meant that Severus was stooping at an awkward angle, now that they weren't lip locked, but Severus didn't seem to mind the angle over much. He certainly made no mention of it, as another small secret smile, that was meant just for her, graced his lips.

After brushing a tender kiss to her forehead, he rested his own forehead against hers and they continued to sway to the last strains of the music, lost in their own little world.

There bubble was abruptly popped when then music came to an end, and the applause of the others in the hall broke through their mutual haze.
The ball had come to an end, and so had the night. She’d be forced to leave Severus and head to her tower soon, but she didn't want to let him go just yet.

Severus leaned close to whisper in her ear.

“Don’t look so upset Harm. After all I need to walk my girlfriend home yet and it's only right that I give her the goodnight kiss she's been craving”

Harmony desperately willed herself not to blush, she'd been doing it all night and she had no desire to end the ball the same way.

But against her best efforts, she felt herself turn pink.

The blush caused Severus to smirk, but Harmony was too pleased with the thought of not having to relinquish her date quite yet to really care.

Instead she pressed a kiss to Severus’s cheek, feeling satisfied when his cheeks turned a dusky shade of their own from the contact. As Harmony laced there fingers together Severus took that as his cue, and led them both out of the hall.

Neither of them noticed the four adults that were watching their exit.

Chapter End Notes

Well I hope you liked this chapter,

Before anyone says anything I know that the song they danced too isn't a 2005 song, but I just couldn't picture them dancing to anything else. So I'm sorry if that pisses any one off.

Next chapter is completely new unseen content, and the last for this story.

Hope to see you there.!

See y'all soon, Pink X (^^)
Goodnight kiss, Hello wall!

Chapter Notes

Hello lovelies,

Well here it is, the final chapter -sobs- it's a bit of a stonker (a bit of a big one if you don't know what stonker means ;-)), but I hope you like it none the less.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As they left the hall, Harmony felt the late hour finally catching up with her, feeling suddenly fatigued for no apparent reason.

She would've liked nothing more than to rest her head on Severus's chest, letting him take most of her weight, as they made their way up the horrific amount of steps that lay between them and her tower.

But as it was she couldn't give in to her desire with out wrecking Severus's clothes in the process, so she settled for leaning more heavily against the arm that was holding her hand and nuzzling her cheek just below his shoulder, keeping her hair as far away from his clothes as possible.

She felt him squeeze her fingers in response, and let out a happy hum.

Her next inhale found her surrounded by his warm comforting scent, and she decided there and then that she could quite happily fall asleep surrounded by the warm scent of musk, mint and rich dark chocolate if only she and Severus would be permitted to sleep on the grand staircase for the rest of the night.

She couldn't see McGonagall permitting it though. Pity.

As they rounded the corner and the grand staircase came in to view, so did a couple that were wrapped around each other in a rather intense embrace.

The girl had backed her date against one of the large stone newel posts, and appeared to not give a single fuck that she was making out with her date on what amounted to a public staircase. As they got nearer Harmony felt a sudden jolt of clarity, she recognised that dress and the girl who was wearing it.

It was Hermione.

Harmony blinked a few times, to make sure that what she was seeing wasn't just a product of over tired eyes, but the girl didn't disappear.

Harmony felt a mile tug at her lips.

As she and Severus passed the couple to begin the arduous task of climbing the many stairs up to Gryffindor tower, Harmony had half a mind to call out to her friend and say that she hadn't been able to avoid wandering statues after all.
But at the last second she refrained, it'd be cruel to interrupt them, and besides, Hermione would likely hex her hair pink if she did.

"I see Granger is still enjoying the festivities".

Harmony giggled a little at Severus's dry comment, though it didn't stop her from lightly hitting him the chest for it.

"Be nice".

"I'm never nice".

Harmony snorted, "Yeah, you keep telling yourself that. I know better, you're just a big teddy bear really".

The look of disgust on her boyfriend's face was so comical, that she couldn't stop the giggles from starting anew and attempted to muffle them in the fine fabric of his sleeve.

At her side Severus let out an noise of pure exasperation.

After a little while her giggles began to subside, and by the time the made it to the seventh floor, there was nothing but an easy silence between them and the echo of their shoes on the stone floors.

Finally off the stairs, the pair made their way towards the entrance for Gryffindor tower, their pace unconsciously slowing as the time of parting drew closer.

They came to a stop a few feet away from the fat ladies portrait.

While Harmony pulled herself of his arm so that she could face him, Severus sent a nasty look at the picture, he could see the old bag peering at them in curiosity, no doubt hoping for some sort of juicy gossip.

Sometimes Severus really hated the magical artefacts in this castle.

"I really did have a good time tonight, Sev", Severus was pulled from his glaring by Harmony's voice, tuning in just in time to see a radiant smile take over her face. "I mean, I could've done without the part in the middle, but I finally got my kiss, so it all worked out in the end".

Severus felt his heart tug slightly at her words and pulled her hand to his lips, brushing a tender kiss across the knuckles.

"I'm never going to be able to apologise enough for fucking up like I did, but at the same time I can't really regret it either, I wanted to give you the perfect kiss and although the way I got there was pretty fucked up, I think I managed to deliver in the end"

Harmony leaned up and gave him a slight kiss on his cheek, before dragging her finger tips over the stubbled skin of his jaw.

"You still don't get it do you?. Honestly, you can be a right idiot sometimes, but you're my idiot, so I suppose its ok".

Harmony gave him a wry shake of her head, before holding his chin in her hand and making sure that he couldn't look away.

"I've already said this once, but I'm going to keep saying it until it finally goes in to that thick head of yours. My first kiss was always going to be perfect just as long as it was you that was kissing
Severus felt himself melt just a little from her declaration.

"And, you're not going to do something that stupid again, are you?".

Not quite trusting his voice not to crack, Severus just shook his head mutely in response. Harmony gave him another chaste kiss, finally taking her hand away from his face.

"Good. So that means that the only thing you have to worry about now is where you're going to take me on our first date.. I was thinking that we could go to Madam Puddifoots, Hermione said she serves these really nice pink macaroons with little dancing cherubs on them.. oh and she's supposed to be putting the valentines displays up early as well, so it should be nicely covered in lots of lovey dovey things, can you think of anything more romantic for our first date"

As Harmony continued to extoll the virtues of that thrice damned tea shop for their first date, Severus felt as if his stomach had fallen through his feet and kept going until it met the stone floor seven stories down.

What his girlfriend was describing sounded like his idea of hell, if he was honest he'd have thought that it'd be her idea of hell as well. But she looked so damn earnest, and her eyes had gone all big and pleading, and Severus didn't really have a choice did he?. He'd have to acquiesce to her request and hope that once in the damned place, would be enough to sate her curiosity.

Plastering a smile on his face- it felt more like a grimace than a smile -he reluctantly agreed to her suggestion.

“If that’s what you want to do, I’m sure it’ll be delightful”.

Harmony's dimpled smile, almost made him feel good for agreeing to her suggestion, but then she snorted and the dimpled smile turned in to a playful evil grin.

"God, I can't believe you actually agreed". Harmony started to snigger.

"Sev I can tell you right now that if I ever set foot in that place voluntarily, I want you to put me in a full body bind and drag me to Pompfrey"

The little minx had played on his repentant feelings and he'd fallen for it. He turned a glare on the snickering girl, even as his shoulders slumped in sheer relief at having dodged that particular curse.

"I can't believe I fell for that"

Harmony bit her lip, her eyes sparkling happily all thoughts of her earlier fatigue suddenly forgotten.

"And what are you going to do about it Mister Perfect Prefect?"

Severus eyes took on a sudden predatory gleam.

Harmony knew what that look meant and let out an abnormally girlie shriek, as she attempted to run towards the safety of her common room.

She barely gotten any distance between them when she felt Severus's arms wrap around her waist, pulling her back in to his chest in the process. Almost instantly his hands began to attack her sides in earnest, making Harmony try and squirm away, even as she began to laugh.
That twice damned portrait was watching them with clear disapproval, but he couldn't have cared less. His arms were full of warm, laughing girl and he was happy.

The fingers on her sides slowed to a stop, as his warm breath wafted over her ear.

"It’s not nice to tease people with threats of torture Miss Potter”.

Still breathless from the tickling, she turned in his arms as they found more comfortable purchase on her waist. She settled her own around the back of his neck, pulling his face down so that it was inches from hers.

There was a glint of challenge in the green eyes that suddenly looked more pupil than iris.

"And it's not nice to deny your girlfriend a goodnight kiss either, but that didn't stop y-mph”

Harmony released a huff at being cut off so abruptly, but otherwise didn't protest as Severus's mouth slanted possessively over hers.

Apparently kissing Harmony Potter, was a sure way to make her go quiet with little effort, he’d have to remember that.

He was sure this information would come in handy eventually. She had a habit of going off on tangents about one thing or another. So this new found tool, could be a blessing in disguise, the fact that it would be enjoyable for the both of them was just a bonus.

Harmony didn't like being cut off, but as she melted in to the kiss, she couldn't bring herself to care. Every kiss so far tonight had been different, and this one was no exception.

The first kiss in the garden had been heady, the fact that it followed an intense discussion, after weeks of yearning for what neither had been able to have, meant that, that kiss, as nice as it'd been, had felt like an explosive release of all their pent up emotions.

Their second kiss, that they'd shared on the dance floor, had felt tender and sweet and everything like her books described. It'd felt like an affirmation, an affirmation that this thing they'd chosen to pursue wouldn't back fire on them.

And their third kiss?

The third kiss had started as a cross between intense and tender, but the kiss soon became... heated, hot, they were the best words Harmony could use to describe it, she certainly felt like she was burning from it.

She felt one of Severus's hands creeping up her back and anchoring around one of her shoulders, while his other hand headed south, intent on finding that magical place it had on the dance floor.

Severus's tongue stroked along the seam of her lips, without even thinking about it, she granted him entrance. Instantly she tangled her tongue with his, and he let out a low moan approval, as her fingers scratched at his scalp.

As she got to work mapping his mouth, she could taste slight hints of dark chocolate, and raspberry, and underneath it all something that was wholly Severus, it wasn't something that she could describe, but it was there and it was perfect.

Severus had been a passive participant in the kiss as she took her time mapping every surface of his mouth, but eventually he'd had enough of being passive. With a low groan, he tangled his tongue
around hers, enticing it in to a sensual dance, that had Harmony emitting a low moan of her own.

Harmony was completely unaware of anything that wasn't the kiss, so it came as quite a shock when her back hit something solid.

Apparently Severus had been backing them towards the corridor wall. As her back made contact, the hand that had been on her shoulder released her and she felt it settle on the wall near her head.

The hand on her back was still drawing maddening patterns on her skin (in it's seemingly endless search for that magical spot it'd found on the dance floor), and sending little tingles shooting in all directions, making her toes curl in pleasure.

Her hands had been idly playing with his hair since they'd started kissing, but as the kiss heated even more, she fist his hair harder; causing the boy to let out a moan that was mostly pleasure.

Harmony wanted to stay like this forever, but the need for oxygen was making it's self known, and with a gasp she separated her mouth from Severus's.

She gulped in lungfuls of air, feeling very light headed; whether this was from the oxygen deprivation or the kiss she wasn’t sure. But she promptly forgot to care, Severus had apparently still not had his fill of her, and after nudging her chocker out of the way slightly with his nose, he promptly latched on to the area where her neck met her collar bone.

If any one was to come across them in this position, they'd have no issues accusing him of being the vampire bat that some of the students (and her dad) tried to say he resembled.

With him intently sucking and gently biting at her pulse point, there was little that Harmony could do but continue to clutch at his head tightly and try and hold on to her sanity with both hands. It wasn't an easy task. She was pretty sure, that she'd never been this turned on in her life.

She'd had her fantasies in the privacy of the showers of course, like most teenagers do. But this was something else, that low level arousal she'd managed to find on her own terms was nothing compared to this.

This was so much more, in every sense of the word and she honestly wasn't sure how it could get any better than this.

Harmony felt the hand that had been drawing patterns on her back finally reach the edge of her dress, and having reached it's destination, it tentatively dipped under the edge, testing the waters.

Harmony made a sound of approval, her eyes falling closed, and her head banging in to the wall behind her, as the hand scorched in to her skin.

Apparently emboldened by her approval, it went lower than it ever had before, and she felt his fingers tentatively trace along the edge of her knicker elastic, before it began moving down to grope at her bottom. Harmony moved her head forwards, to try and pull Severus back in to another scorching kiss.

"Ahem!"

Harmony's eyes popped open, and Severus pulled his hand out of her dress so fast she was honestly surprised that he hadn't ripped the seams.

Severus leaned his head against her shoulder, trying to regain his composer and his breath. With his head bent, Harmony had a clear view of who'd interrupted them.
It was a very embarrassed looking Hermione.

Harmony wasn't sure if she should be thankful that her heavy make out session had been interrupted by Hermione and not one of the Professors. Or if she should glare at her friend, for interrupting said make out session in the first place.

After all she'd left her and Krum, alone. Would it really have killed her friend to show her and Sev the same courtesy?

Hermione seemed to be having trouble looking at her, something her date apparently had no such issues with and was staring at Severus and Harmony like they were a zoo exhibit.

Harmony could feel her face tinting, and leaned her head back into the wall behind her, maybe if she closed her eyes and opened them again, her best friend and her gawking date would be gone. *Nope still there.*

Severus heard Harmony release a groan, but this one had nothing to do with the things he'd be quite happily doing to her.

Deciding that one of them had to face the music, Severus made sure that nothing was... showing and gently pushed himself off his date, who promptly slide down the wall a good inch or so now that he was no longer holding her in place.

Harmony's green eyes locked on his as he moved away and after a chaste kiss, he turned to face their accusers.

Granger was looking at them both with the air of a parent who'd caught their precious child in the process of doing something lewd.

Severus grimaced, he could already feel himself flushing under the part consternating, part knowing look.

Severus wanted to say something, but for the time being embarrassment seemed to have caught his tongue and he had nothing to say to Granger or her sycophant date.

An awkward sort of silence settled over the four teenagers, none of them seemed to know what to say.

Harmony wanted to ask her friend why she'd had to interrupt her lovely make out session, but thought that, that question might just make the atmosphere even more awkward. So she kept it to herself.

Surprisingly Krum was the first one to break the silence.

"Herm-own-ninny, I haf seen you to your tower, I shall see you at the breaking of the fast, yes?".

Hermione's attention finally left the embarrassed couple and she turned to give her own date a final kiss goodbye.

"Of course Viktor, I'd be delighted".

Severus watched as the big headed buffoon, clicked his heels together and dipped in a bow before kissing Granger's hand in farewell. He barely resisted the urge to roll his eyes in disgust. The way that idiot was going on, you'd think she was some sort of princess in waiting, not a bookish nerd
who was disliked by at least a quarter of the schools population.

Granger flushed under the over the top attention.

With her suitably occupied, Severus took that as his cue to get out of there while the going was good.

He turned to look at his own date, her eyes closed and looking for all the world like she wanted the wall to swallow her whole.

Her cheeks were still flushed, partly from embarresment and partly from the things they'd been doing, and her lips were a deep bruised swollen red.

Severus didn't think she'd ever looked quite so delectable, and he'd give anything to continue what they'd started; but he had no wish to endure Granger's pseudo parental questioning. So he had to leave her behind for the night.

Severus leaned forwards to quickly press one last kiss to those lovely lips, before mumbling a quick goodnight and billowing off down the corridor as quickly as his legs could carry him, hopefully without it looking like he was running away.

As soon as Severus planted that brief kiss on her lips, her eyes popped open; just in time to see her mumbling boyfriend billowing off down the corridor like the hounds of hell were nipping at his ankles.

"Oi!".

Severus either didn't hear her exclamation, or he chose to ignore it, either way she watched hopelessly as her boyfriend disappeared down a set of stairs and out of sight.

Harmony put her hands over her face and banged her head in to the wall a few times for good measure.

"Can nothing ever go right?!.

She felt more than heard someone approach her, removing her hands from her face she could see Hermione, looking at her with a mix of apology (for interrupting her and scaring off her date) and knowing amusement. The latter meant that Harmony could likely expect to be teased for this incident for weeks to come.

"I'm really sorry for interrupting you Harm, but I was hoping to get to bed sometime tonight".

Harmony couldn't stop the sarcastic retort on the end of her tongue from lashing out at her friend.

"Correct me if I'm wrong Mione' but it doesn't look like me and Sev were in your bed".

Hermione didn't appreciate her friends tone, and crossed her arms over her chest, puffing up with indignation.

"No it isn't my bed, but to get to my bed I have to get in to the tower, and I certainly can't do that when my friend is sucking on her boyfriends tonsils against the entrance to said tower".

Harmony had been about to make another retort when her friends words registered.

Sucking my boyfriends tonsils against the entrance, no please tell me I haven't done that!
Harmony swallowed, and with a sense of dread tilted her head back as far as she could and took a look at the wall behind her head.

But instead of cold grey stone, she found a very aggravated portrait glaring at her from it's frame. Harmony jumped away from the wall as if she'd been burned, promptly moving to stand next to Hermione and looking up at the angry painting.

Apparently portraits of fat ladies, really don't appreciate being used as a flat surface, in order to make out with one's boyfriend better. *Shit.*

Harmony didn't even get a chance to try and apologise to the painting before it began to scold her.

“About time you realised young lady, honestly young people these days absolutely no sense of-”

“Mistletoe”.

The password that had been spoken by Hermione, caused the portrait to suddenly swing open, - revealing the cosy Gryffindor common room behind-, and cutting of the portrait mid flow.

The pair stepped in to the common room and the painting swung shut behind them. If they listened closely they could still hear the fat lady grumbling about Harmony to the deserted corridor beyond her frame.

Harmony had a feeling that that wasn't the last she'd hear on this subject from the nosey old painting.

Thankfully the common room was deserted for the night, so the only people who'd know about Harmony's.. indiscretion, would be the four of them and one strip of aggravated paint.

She dreaded to think what would happen if one of the twins had happened to be around. She shuddered at the mere thought of it.

Wearily she trudged over to one of the loveseats and plopped her self down in front of the merrily crackling fire, this dress might look nice, but it wasn't the warmest garment to wear in a Scottish castle in the middle of winter and she was bloody freezing.

kicking off her shoes, she raised her bare feet up on to a foot stool and started to toast her toes. As her feet started to warm up, she relaxed in to the squishy seat, and she could just feel herself falling in to a doze, when the rustle of fabric reminded her that she hadn't entered the common room alone.

Hermione was in the process of removing her own shoes, apparently readying herself to join her friend.

Ever the creature of habit, Harmony would've thought that Hermione would be heading up to bed for the night, but if her friend wanted to join her she wasn't going to stop her.

She edged over for her and Hermione sank in to a boneless heap of her own on the seat next to her, before she to stretched her bare toes towards the flames.

Harmony wasn't sure how long they sat there just listening to the crackle of the fire, but the silence was more comfortable than Harmony would've thought after what had happened outside, and she was loath to break it.

A little while later keeping her voice quiet, even though the likely hood of any one over hearing them at this time of night was low, Hermione finally broke the silence.
"I am sorry for interrupting you, you know?. I'm glad to see that Severus has gotten over himself"

Harmony shrugged, the warmth of the fire and the softness of the seat had mellowed her temper quite well by now, and she couldn't really hold Hermione's interruption against her.

"Don't worry about it Mione', don't get me wrong, I was pissed that you'd interrupted us, but it's not your fault that we were making out against the fat lady. I'm just glad that it wasn't one of the professors that caught us. I mean could you imagine if McGonagall had found us like that? I wouldn't be able to look her in the face again"

"So, does that display mean you've forgiven him? I know you said in the bathroom that it'd take a while; but not being funny Harm, what I just happened upon, didn't look like the actions of a girl who'd yet forgive her boyfriend".

Harmony sighed, her friend was looking at her with an unwavering stare, her eyes reflecting the light from the fire as she waited for Harmony's response.

"I don't think I have?, I mean his actions still sting, but the thing is I don't really need to forgive him to understand why he did what he did, even if it was stupid. But I feel such a pull to him every time that we're near, I just can't see the point in denying that type of closeness, not when it's something we've both been wanting for so long, you know?. Think about Mione', who's it gonna help by my denying us both that contact)?. It won't make me forgive him any quicker, it'll just make us both miserable in the process.I think It's just better if we just get on with getting what we both want from our relationship. I mean think about it. Both of us know that I'll forgive him eventually and in the mean time I can't see why we can't just be the boyfriend slash girlfriend that the other wants".

Hermione was still giving her that unwavering stare and Harmony was beginning to feel just a little uncomfortable from it, when Hermione suddenly broke the stare and gave a wry shake of her head.

When she looked at Harmony again, the thousand yard stare was gone, and it'd been replaced with fond exasperation. It was a look that clearly said

you're my friend and I love you, but you're also a grade A idiot.

"You're to forgiving sometimes, you know that?. Look, I won't do anything to compromise your relationship, since you've made some sort of weird peace with what ever this issue really was. But I want you to promise me something. I know you said that if he ever did something like this again you'd be through, but if it ever gets to that stage and you don't feel strong enough to end things, I want you to come to me with your worries, alright? we can talk it through and if there really is a problem, I'll kill the idiot for you. It's what best friend are for after all".

Hermione's smile was so supportive, that Harmony felt the long night finally catching up with her, as her eyes misted over slightly and she pulled her in to a bone crushing hug.

“I really don’t no what I did to get a friend like you, but I'll be forever thankful for it”.

She heard a suspiciously wet sounding laugh from Hermione in response.

“Same”.

Hermione was the first to pull back from the hug, her eyes glistening slightly in the fire light.

“Come on, we’d better get ready for bed otherwise we’ll not be up for breakfast, and I promised to meet Viktor”.
Harmony suddenly got a really evil idea when her friend mentioned Krum.

Maybe I haven't quite forgiven her for the interruption afterall.

"Yeah about that, I thought I told you to look out for wandering statues, didn't look like you'd heeded that advice when me and Sev, passed by you two at the bottom of the stairs". She said as innocently as possible.

Hermione let out an indignant squawk, before throwing a pillow at a now cackling Harmony.

"Don't start that again!. It took me bloody ages to explain that to Viktor and even then I'm still not sure he understood properly. And any way, at least I didn't, let my date feel me up in front of a historic talking portrait!".

Harmony rose from her seat with a stretch, still laughing slightly and an amused, but ever so slightly evil smile playing around the corners of her mouth.

"Trust me, you most definitely would if your date had fingers as talented as Sev's".

Harmony didn't think she'd ever see her friend turn such an interesting shade before, she looked in turns like she wanted to smack Harmony and throw up on the carpet.

"For gods sake Harmony!, I didn't need that image in my head before I went to bed thank you very much".

Hermione attempted to throw another pillow at her head, but Harmony ducked out of the way.

"You're just jealous that your boyfriends not as good as mine".

Hermione huffed, "He not my boyfriend".

Harmony was near the stairs, ready to go up to the dorms, when she let out a snort.

"Yeah, whatever. You and Krum are definitely going out".

"He is not my boyfriend!".

Hermione sent a half hearted glare at her friend, but it wasn't enough to dissuade Harmony.

"Hermione and Viktor sitting in a tree K.I.S.S.I.N.G". With a giggle Harmony fled up the stairs, Hermione's voice ringing in her ears.

"HARMONY POTTER! get back here right now".

She was nearly at their dorm room door by the time an indignant, slightly out of breath Hermione had caught up with her.

"I'm so going to get you for that". Whispered Hermione.

"Consider it pay back for the interruption, I'll not mention you and Krum to anyone, if you don't mention me and Sev. Deal?". Said Harmony.

Hermione gave her a considering narrow eyed look, "Fine".

With their secrets secure once more, the two girls cautiously pushed open their dorm door, mindful of the fact that their dorm mates were likely to be asleep already.
Thankfully the door opened on near silent hinges, but apparently they needn't have worried about it anyway. Lavender wasn't even there and Parvati was already snoring so loudly she was almost rattling the windows.

“I wonder where Lavender is?” whispered Harmony.

Surprisingly Hermione seemed to have an answer, though why Harmony was surprised by this she had no idea. Hermione always had an answer.

“She went back to the Durmstrang ship with her date, me and Viktor saw them heading that way when we were coming back from the garden”.

By now Harmony had made her way over to her bed, and was beginning to process of removing her jewellery from her throat and ears. She stopped removing one of her earrings, as she felt her eyebrows go up to her hairline in surprise.

Fair enough she’d had a make out session against the fat ladies portrait so really she supposed that she shouldn’t judge.

But disappearing in to the night with a boy you didn’t really know was a little much, even by Lavenders admittingly low standards, where such proprieties where concerned.

Lavender certainly wasn't shy with her... affections, where the boys were concerned.

When she'd overhead her telling Hermione about Severus's apparent unwillingness to kiss her, Lavender had interrupted them, with the outlandish suggestion that she drag him to the nearest broom closest and give him a surprise hand job. Apparently it "worked wonders" for loosening a boy up, after that she'd said there was no way, that he was going to be to shy to kiss her.

Hermione had been appalled by Lavenders advice and had begun to chock with the outrage of it.

Harmony hadn't known if to turn beet red in embarrassment, or if to laugh at such an absurd suggestion. Turned out she'd done both, and Lavender had flounced off in a huff at the lacklustre response her advice had been met with.

“If Mcgonagall catches her, she’ll be in so much trouble”. said Harmony.

Hermione shrugged, she couldn't care less whether Lavender Brown got in to trouble or not.

Harmony had finally got both earrings out and was just about to remove her choker, when she heard Hermione grunting from the effort of reaching the fastening at the back of her dress.

“Well if she does it not our- thank you Harmony”,

Having removed her chocker, Harmony had wandered over to her and quickly tugged the zip down for her friend, earning her a grateful smile.

Hermione held her dress in place with one arm while she reached for her night shirt, while Harmony went back to her own bed and began rummaging around for a towel.

"Aren't you getting ready for bed?".

"Not yet. I've got to get this gunk out of my hair before I can go to sleep, it's gonna make a right mess otherwise, and I've got a feeling that I might look like a hedgehog if I leave it in over night”.

“Oh right. Anyway, Like I was saying; if Lavender does get in trouble, its not our fault she’s easy
with the boys—”

Harmony was right under her bed now looking for a clean towel, making Hermione's response so muffled she didn't hear what she'd said.

Harmony's search was finally triumphant, having found a towel, she pulled her self from under the bed, just in time to see Hermione finish pulling her nightie on.

Finally free of her dress, Hermione kicked the garment away from her feet, very glad to be rid of it.

_Honestly, they might be pretty but I'd rather have a pair of cords and a T-shirt, over a ball gown any day._

"Sorry, I couldn't hear what you said properly".

Hermione let out a huff, she hated having to repeat her self.

“I said it’s not our fault she’s easy with the boys, besides being caught might do her some good. Maybe it'll get he to focus on her studies more, instead of using her free time studying the mysteries that lurk in the male populations underwear”

Harmony could feel a giggle trying to escape but held it in; Hermione was unlikely to appreciate her tittering at the moment.

Hermione held no love for Lavender, she hadn't liked the girl since she’d made an off hand comment about Harmony looking like an eight year old boy in drag.

In all honesty Harmony hadn't really cared much about it beyond the initial stinging moments. And she'd had learnt over time that just the way Lavender was.

She had a quite caustic personality in many ways, and most of her off hand, seemingly bitchy comments, were made with out her thinking about them. It didn't mean her comments were right of course, but Harmony couldn't hold it against her like Hermione did. She could relate to an inability to sensor your thoughts.

But Lavender had made the grievous mistake of making the nasty comment about Harmony's boyish look, with Hermione present.

She'd taken it rather personally, that some one was slighting her first ever (by her own admission) friend. They'd barely been at Hogwarts more than a few weeks, when the comment had been made, but more than five years later and the animosity was still going strong between the pair.

Herself and Parvati, usually tried to play peace keeper between them, but sometimes the fights could be so epic, that there was little mediating that could be done, and all you could do was wait out the storm.

It made their shared living arrangements quite fraught some days.

“Right. Any way I’m going to head for the shower, hopefully I can get most of this crap out of my hair”.

Hermione was just removing the warming pan from between her sheets, when she snorted.

“Good luck”

It was rather too dark in the dorm to see her friends face clearly, but she could hear the smirk a mile
off. Resisting the urge to flip her friend off, Harmony grabbed her towel and bath things and made for the sanctuary of the showers.

Thankfully, unlike the rest of the tower the communal showers were well lit, even at this time of the night. She was sure this stuff would already be a bitch to get rid of, with out her having to contend with the prospect of near darkness on top of it.

However her hair and the lighting turned out to be the least of her worries, because when she tried to walk in to the shower cubical her dress caught on the door frame, and it didn't seem to matter which way she turned it continued to snag.

"Fucking shit!".

*Nothing for it, I suppose, I'll have to take it off out here and hope no one walks in.*

Before she could talk herself out of it she was pulling the straps of her dress down and letting the dress fall with a soft whump on to the tiled floor, feeling more than a little self conscious, she grabbed for the towel she'd dropped at the cubical entrance, and tightly wrapped it around her self.

Harmony bent down to pick up the dress, and held it in her arms as she wondered what to do with it. Now that she thought about it she should've probably removed it while she was in the dorm, she certainly couldn't take it in to the cubical with her, what if she splashed it?. She hadn't even thought of that when she'd been trying to get in to the cubical while wearing it.

"Where am I going to hang you until I get this crap out of my hair". Harmony wondered out loud.

Apparently someone was listening to her, because a garment bag appeared on the outside of her cubical.

Harmony looked at it a little disquietingly, she wasn’t sure if to be grateful that the elves were always so thoughtful or if she should be a little weirded out that they were apparently always spying on the castle’s inhabitants to see if they needed assistance.

She decided it probably wasn't the best thing to try pondering at one in the morning in a freezing bathroom, and put her dress in to the garment bag with out another thought.

As soon as the dress was secured, the bag and it contents disappeared, leaving her panicking for several long moments, before she gave herself a mental smack and told herself to stop being so bloody stupid.

The house elves had provided her with the garment bag, and the elves were likely the ones who now had her dress. No doubt the dress would be back in her dorm by morning looking pristine once more.

With the dress issue solved she stepped in to the cubical, picked up the bath things she'd dropped and closed the door firmly behind her.

She lent in to the shower and turned on the spray, waiting for the water to get nice and hot. One would think that a magical castle wouldn’t have such mundane problems as waiting for the boiler to kick in, but whatever made the water hot in the tower, it was always tediously slow to respond whenever some one wanted it.

With the cubical beginning to steam up around her, she draped her towel over the cubical door and finally reached up to remove the thrice damned tiara from her hair, she was sure she'd be feeling the phantom pains from the tiaras spikes until the new year. It took her a surprising amount of
effort to wrench the thing free.

Finally removed, her scalp sighed in relief, and she could now see why it had been fighting her
tooth and nail to be removed from her head in the first place.

The thing was completely gunked up with hair potion.

From what she could see the Sleekeazys had all but glued the heirloom in to her hair. It had clumps
of long black gunky hair clinging to it, and the once sparkling heirloom, now looked dull and
tarnished. She felt appalled at the amount of damage one simple potion had done.

“ What the fuck do I do with this!”

The elves were apparently still acting like her own personal stalkers, because as soon as she uttered
the words a purple valour box- exactly the right size for the tiara- appeared near her feet on the
tiled floor.

When she placed the heirloom in the box, it disappeared in the same way that her dress had. The
thing was while she was willing to have almost blind faith in the elves where her dress was
concerned, she was less inclined to have it with her grandmothers tiara, and she started to panic. If
it went missing her parent's would throw a fit.

“Please make sure you don’t loose that”.

No answer was forthcoming to her shouted plea, but not being able to do anything about it in her
current state, she decided her best bet was to take her shower and go to bed, if the tiara wasn't
returned with her dress by the time she woke up, she'd have to go and talk to one of the elves in the
kitchen and see if they knew where it'd gone.

Burying the worry in the recesses of her mind for the moment, she finally stepped under the warm
shower spray, letting in run over her sticky head and chilled muscles.

All the stress she's felt from the ball, the crap with Severus, the worry about her dads reaction to
the dress, even the worry about the nosy portrait, all of it washed away down the drain with the
hot water and the excessive amount of Sleekeazys that was running between her toes like oil slick.

She couldn't remember the last time she felt this relaxed, and if it wasn't for the minor niggle at the
back of her head about loosing a priceless family heirloom to the house elf labour force, she was
sure she would've closed her eyes, and finally given in to the fatigue that was once more breaking
over her in waves.

As it was the warmth left her feeling more than a little loopy, and now that she wasn't being kept
awake by Severus's heady touch, or the once in a blue moon opportunity to tease her bookish
friend, her body was demanding sleep.

Thinking that she best get a move one before her body took the choice out of her hands, she leaned
out of the spray and grabbed the shampoo.

Quickly and methodically she scrubbed what she could of the horrid sticky substance from her hair,
before using the shampoo to quickly scrub the rest of herself down.

As tired as she was feeling, she couldn't have cared less whether or not you were supposed to bathe
in shampoo, the fact that it was a form of soap was good enough for her at the moment.

The potion still wasn't completely gone from her hair, and she resigned herself to having to give it a
more through wash when she woke up. Otherwise she'd spend Christmas day looking like a hedgehog.

*I couldn’t care less if I felt pretty tonight, she thought a little sourly. It’s just to much damn work to achieve it. Give me a tartan shirt and a pair of leggings any day.*

She stepped out of her now distinctly cool feeling shower, and back in to the cubical to get dried. She was surprised to see the purple velour box was already back, innocently sitting on the tiles as if it's disappearance hadn't nearly caused a minor break down.

In all honestly it was a good job she'd seen it on the floor, otherwise it wouldn't be the elves in trouble. It'd be her for stepping on it.

Gingerly stepping over it, she grabbed her towel from the door, before wrapping it tightly around her self and bending over to pick up the box. Cautiously she opened the lid, wondering what state the item would be in.

She couldn't stop the audible sigh of relief that left her lips, when lifting the lid revealed the tiara to be in pristine sparkling condition once more.

If anything it looked in a better state than it had when her mum had fixed it in her hair.

“Thank you!”. Harmony could've sworn she heard a high pitched squeal when she'd said thank you, but I might've just be her weary brain making her hear things.

She really couldn't be bothered trying to dry her hair fully at this time of night, so after a brisk rub to get rid of the worst of the water, she gathered her hair at the nape of her neck and secured it with an elastic she kept in her toiletries.

Making sure that the towel was well secured, she gathered up her toiletries and the purple box, and began making her way silently back through the dorm, her feet leaving wet foot prints on the chilly stone floors.

After what seemed like an eternity, but was really only a few minutes, she was back in her dorm, and she let out a groan of pure relief as her feet came in to contact with the wool runner that ran down the centre of her dorm.

As she quietly padded over to her bed, she realised that the dorm was a lot quieter than she'd expected it to be. As she was pulling her pyjamas on she realised why it was so quiet, she couldn't hear Parvati's snores anymore.

Glancing over she expected the girl to be awake and glaring at her for possibly waking her up. But the gap in the girls curtains proved that she was just as deeply asleep now as she had been earlier. Curious about the lack of noise, Harmony tiptoed over and stuck her head through the gap in the hangings, the girl was most definitely snoring and with Parvati that was always loud. But Harmony couldn't even hear the faintest sounds of breathing from the girl.

Pulling her head out of the hangings, it only took her brain a couple of moments to come up with a reason for the silent snoring and Harmony snorted in amusement.

Hermione could be scariley brilliant sometimes. Clearly Hermione hadn't wanted to spend the remainder of the night awake due to Parvati's snoring and had cast a silencing charm on the sleeping girl.
Shaking her head, Harmony went over to her bed and started to turn it down, she placed the warming pan on the bare floor underneath her bed and hoped she didn't trip over the handle in the morning.

She placed her towel over her pillow so that her damp, and still slightly sticky hair didn't make a mess, before finally clambering up in to her bed and closing the hangings around her.

Though she made sure to leave the side open that face the window open so that she could drift off, while watching the night sky.

As she fell back in to her pillows and pulled the nicely warmed covers up over her she let out a deep contented hum.

She'd feared many things happening that night, her humiliating herself in front of the school, that Sev would reject, her dad making a scene. But none of it had happened in the end; she could readily admit that certain event's from the evening had come close, but still nothing had been quite as bad as her mind had made her fear it might be.

Truth be told it's been a rather brilliant night in the end.

She'd got her chance at playing princess with out looking like an idiot, she done her duty as a champion and hadn’t let the school down and more importantly she finally gotten her kiss from Sev, she’d gotten three of them in fact and they’d all been perfect.

Of course there was still the matter of whatever had gone off between Pucey and Severus while she was in the toilet with Hermione, but that could wait until morning to think about. For now she was going to drift off to pleasant thoughts of long fingers, electrifying touches, onyx eyes and black silky hair.

As her mind began to shut down, she could just make out a few fat flakes of snow beginning to fall in the weak moonlight outside.

*Maybe me and Sev can go sledding in after Christmas dinner.*

With that last stray thought, her eyelids finally gave in to their exhaustion and fluttered shut for the night, the sounds of Hermione’s steady breathing gradually fading as she fell deeply asleep with a happy smile on her lips.

Down in the dungeons, and although Harmony didn't know it, a slytherin prefect was doing the same thing.

The only difference was that he was dreaming of treacle sweet kisses, soft delicate hands, and vibrantly green eyes.

Unbeknownst to them, neither of them would be permitted to dwell in their happy dreams for long; because not long after dawn broke over the castle, their respective dorms would erupt in uproar.

For the slytherins, it would be because they would finally find out all that Pucey (and his thoughtless actions during the ball), had cost them.

Poor Severus would be woken early by the obnoxious banging of his fatuous housemates on his bedroom door. Every single one of them wanting an explanation, though none of them would get more than a fuck off from the surely prefect for their efforts.

And in the Gryffindors case?
It would be because a young woman would wake on Christmas morning to find that she'd been put under a silencing charm by one of her dorm mates and when said young woman is unable to wake her sleeping dorm mates to cancel the spell, she becomes so irate that she ends up throwing an entire vanity case at the stone wall between said dorm mates beds.

Needless to say an entire vanity case being flung at a stone wall, has the tendency to wake more than just those people it’s aimed at.

That Christmas day Harmony Jaqueline Hosta Potter learned three very valuable lessons.

Number one: if you’re going to set a silencing spell on a room mate, *always* make sure you’re awake before they are to remove it.

Number two: if you’re going to wear contacts always. ALWAYS. Remove them before you go to sleep unless you. A) want to wake up completely red eyed and feeling like someone has attempted to tattoo your eyeball while you’re asleep. Or B) you don't want to avoid the continual teasing of your father slash godfather throughout Christmas Day, because they seem to find it endlessly hilarious that you look like a hung over albino rabbit.

Number three: Never. EVER. Under any circumstance should you remove the high neck jumper that's hiding a rather a spectacular love bite from the view of your aforementioned godfather slash father.

It apparently turns Christmas dinner in to a rather awkward affair when you have the boy who gave you the love bite, within glaring distance of said father slash godfather.

This is only made more awkward when your mum and her best friend start drunkenly and loudly congratulating your boyfriend on a job well done.

Her and Sev did go sledding in the end, and even if it had only been to avoid the adults in their life, it was very enjoyable all the same.

And if her and Sev happened to have got a little handsy with each other behind the greenhouses, then no one but them and the greenhouse glass was any the wiser.

Chapter End Notes

Well there we have it folks a monster is finally born. I shall call her Marty ^_^

I hope you've enjoyed this work, and to those of you who've left comments and kudos, I’d like to give a really big thank you.

They really do make my day to see them.

There will be a one shot set directly after this called Boxing Day. Which funnily enough should be up on boxing Day. (^^)

I will also be posting two snippets of two new, Fem!Harry and Severus au's I've been working on, I'm not sure which to make a priority, so I want my readers to help me decide.

A authors note will be posted when these go up, so if you want to be informed,
subscribe to the story or the series.

And for those of you who're worried that the new au's mean the end of this verse, never fear there is much more to be told in the when snakes fall verse. The au that gets precidence will be posted along side it.

So thank you for reading,
and I wish you all a very merry Christmas ^_^

See y'all soon, Pink X (^_^)
New story

New one shot.

who needs birthday wishes now up.

(^^)

End Notes

Hope you enjoyed this chapter, if you see any mistakes with grammar or spelling let me know and I'll correct them asap.

As always if you feel inclined comment s and kudos make my day ^_^

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!