Prince Expectant

by chazpure, Hepatica Whortleberry (chazpure)

Summary

Severus Snape did his best to thwart the Dark Lord's nebulous plans, but he hadn't reckoned on Voldemort trying a sex magic ritual to raise power. He did his best to aid the Boy Who Lived during the final battle, but he hadn't planned on surviving it. He made it through the Order's victory celebration...but he never dreamed he'd find himself in a delicate way, with absolutely no notion of who might have put him there.

Notes

Written for "Calliope Feldwick" AKA Florahart, for Reversathon 2007. Original Author's note:

My Dearest Calliope,

You cannot know with what trepidation and delight I read your Missive, nor the delirious heights of delectable Ecstasy to which my poor mind ascended, once my feeble intellect grasped the full import of your words. I took pen in trembling hand and assayed to scribe a tale that might, au moins aspire to amuse. Herewith I set before you the fruits of my labour, in the hopes of bringing a smile to your lips. I hesitate to say more, but for a brief mention of the Nature and Variety of the Carnal Interactions depicted herein. You may rest assured that the Primary burden of this tale revolves about Dear Harry and Dear Severus, but it does rather meander through some Sordid and Debauched events in which Numerous Others make their appearances in undeniably Indelicate fashion. I trust you will Understand and Forgive the depths of Depravity to which I have stooped, in endeavouring to craft this little Tale.
Dear Severus also wishes me to inform you that he does not, under any circumstances, acknowledge the actions alleged in this "scurrilous drivel," and most particularly, he has never sobbed nor whimpered in his entire adult life. and it was the hormones, damn it!

I remain, yours faithfully,

Hepatica Whortleberry
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

In Which Severus Snape is really, really sorry he ever became a Death Eater.

Prince Expectant - Chapter 1

There were some days Severus Snape really regretted ever having become a Death Eater.

He had come to the conclusion that he'd made a rather poor decision on the first night he watched his cohorts torture and murder a Muggleborn, under the smiling direction of the powerful wizard whose Mark burned black on his own arm. After that, it hadn't taken him long to grasp his courage in both hands and flee to Albus Dumbledore, spilling out his terror and disgust along with his confession at the old wizard's feet. He had expected Azkaban; being ordered back to Voldemort to play spy had been both surprising and terrifying, but he'd had no alternative.

He'd had his nose rubbed in his folly many a time since then, but he wasn't certain even that horrible night on the Astronomy Tower, when he had looked into the bright blue eyes of the one man who had wholly trusted him, as he cast the curse that killed him, was worse than what he faced tonight.

He stared from the scarred, spotty arse of Walden MacNair to the thick, purple cock of Bolius Brackenwright, to the wild tangle of black hair at Bellatrix Lestrange's crotch, swallowed his gorge and wished fervently that he had never even heard the name "Voldemort."

The Dark Lord had summoned all his followers to an underground chamber, where he sat on a stone throne, the air about him crackling with power. Severus had known something was in the offing, as their Lord had been sequestered with his collection of rare grimoires and ancient magical scrolls for days, searching for something no one dared even question.

Severus's best guess was that the Dark Lord was looking for some means of enhancing his personal power, or perhaps for a magical weapon or arcane spell to use against his enemies. It would not have been a potion, as he had not asked Severus to brew anything or even acquire any ingredients, but that was as much as Severus knew.

He'd taken a few precautions of his own, hoping to be able to thwart the Dark Lord's plans, if only slightly. His personal wards were layered seven-fold, with the top three layers masked from magical probing and concealing the layers beneath them. He had brewed a potion that would prevent power-drain and another that would turn any power stolen from him into a painful magical canker, eating away at the thief. When summoned, he drained the potions, readied his mental and magical defenses, and apparated to his Lord's side.

He certainly had not expected this.

"My children," the Dark Lord had intoned, raising his hands to welcome them all, "today, at long last, victory is within our grasp. Today, we shall join together and create a force so powerful that none shall be able to withstand it! Today, you, my faithful ones, shall truly become one with me, one in purpose, one in power! We shall invoke ancient rites and with them we shall wreak magic of such strength, such might as never the world has seen!" He had risen to his feet. "Divest
yourselves of your garments!"

Severus had blinked, but even thus caught off-guard, his hands were faster to his buttons than several of the other bewildered Death Eaters. He had pushed the growing horror in his mind far, far to the back, along with his surge of gratitude that Draco was safely in his grandmother's care, far off in Luxembourg, and then concentrated on filling his thoughts with the glory of the Dark Lord and what honour it was to stand in his presence and be of service to this great work. He had kept his eyes trained on Voldemort's feet - a safe target - and stripped down to his skin.

When they were all nude before him, Voldemort had raised his hands and his eyes to the ceiling and intoned a long spell in some language so obscure Severus could not begin to guess its origin. A reddish mist gathered around the Dark Lord's hands. He had laughed and cast it at his assembled followers. "Now, my children! Join together and we shall raise power!"

They had all gasped, as the mist swirled about them. Severus coughed and felt his cock spring to attention, his senses awash in a haze of sudden lust. He heard panting and groans starting up all around the room, and as he looked from one of his naked, sweating cohorts to the next, he really, really wished he had never become a Death Eater.

MacNair was groaning and stroking his skinny, pale cock as he sank to his knees. On the other side of the room, Wormtail whined as he scuttled along the floor and buried his nose in Gregor Ulevitch's arse. Bellatrix had latched onto Rastaban's mouth and was writhing against him as her long fingers with their red, red nails wrapped around Rodolphus's prick and began jerking at it. She frantically pushed Rastaban down to the stairs before the Dark Lord's throne and sank onto his cock. Rodolphus moaned and knelt behind her, cupping her breasts and frotting his prick along the crack of her arse.

Severus staggered as a surge of revulsion rose from somewhere deep inside him. He gritted his teeth and clenched his fists, but resisting the spell was not only futile, it was likely to be deadly. He gasped and threw his head back, wrapping his hand around his hard cock and starting to stroke it, trying desperately to shut out the writhing, moaning forms all around him. The mist swirled around him, thick and hungry. He eyed Bolius, who had dropped to all fours atop Geoffrey Crabbe and was frotting against his rampant erection, his taut arse waggling back and forth in time with his grunts. Severus felt his own cock throbbing at the sight. His stomach tried to turn over, but he forced it back and made his way over to Bolius.

Crabbe gasped and grunted as Bolius rocked against him. Severus dropped to his knees behind them, gripped Bolius's hips and shoved his cock in without a word. Bolius howled, but didn't stop rutting against Crabbe. Severus thrust deeper, drew back and slammed home again, finding their rhythm and matching it, stroke for stroke. Bolius began keening, whining in need as he bucked back and forth, with Crabbe's thick fingers clenched on his shoulders and Severus gripping his hips. The red mist writhed around them, glowing darker, almost purple as it caressed Brackenwright and Crabbe, but fading back to red as it slid over Severus.

Crabbe gave a strangled shout and came, convulsing beneath them. Bolius whimpered and began thrusting faster. Severus sped up as well, pounding him harder and harder, until he felt the man's arse clenching on his cock. His bollocks drew up as he rammed home once more and spent.

Brackenwright rolled to one side and lay there, panting. Crabbe looked dazed, a trickle of drool oozing from his slack lips.

Severus pulled back and let the mist writhe around him. It pulsed with sullen red light, and as it touched him, he felt his cock lift again, and a desperate, aching emptiness suddenly lanced through him, centered in his arse. He moaned and fell to the floor, fisting his cock again and curling in on himself in a futile attempt to ease the dreadful hunger.
Medrick Woolston stumbled by, then turned and dropped to his knees beside Severus. He groaned and pushed Severus onto his belly, then shoved a finger inside. Severus snarled at the intrusion and started to throw him off, but his outrage dissipated as the pain was eclipsed by the frantic feeling of yes, yes, more! as Woolston fingered him. He bit back another curse and struggled to cast a wordless lubrication spell without whimpering in need.

Woolston grunted as he added another finger and felt the squelchy slickness inside, then drew his hand back and set the blunt head of his prick to Severus's waiting hole. Severus found himself gathering his knees beneath him, panting and waiting for the fullness he so desperately needed. Medrick shoved in without finesse, but Severus nearly wept in joy at the sensation of completeness, wholeness that filled him along with Woolston's thick cock. He wanted to vomit. He wanted to disembowel the man. He wanted to apparate to Antarctica and never set eyes on another human soul.

He wanted Woolston to fuck him harder.

The hungry red mist slid over and around them, flickering to violet and purple as Woolston pounded away. Severus fisted his own aching cock as Woolston hammered him, and the red mist surged forward as he came, but flickered uneasily. Woolston finally spent and pulled out, stumbling to his feet and staggering away.

Severus lay on his back, panting, and saw the Dark Lord seated on his throne once more, head tipped back and arms outstretched as a purple haze built around him. He breathed it in, smiling in hideous ecstasy as it filled him. Severus shuddered, but another tongue of red mist touched him, and he gasped as he was filled with lust yet again. He got to his knees and crawled away from the throne, hoping to find a corner where he could simply ride out the storm of sensation, but he had gone no further than a few feet, when he bumped into a pile of writhing bodies, and the ache in his bollocks and arse would not be denied.

He blinked to clear the red mist from his eyes and managed to discern Narcissa beneath the bulk of Torval Anders, who was in turn being thoroughly rogered by Walden MacNair. Lucius sat beside them, watching with slightly glazed eyes and slowly stroking his long slender cock, as his wife moaned and arched and wrapped her elegant legs tight around Torval's thighs. Severus pushed into the pile and kissed Narcissa deeply, swallowing her moans and pressing his tongue into her mouth. Anders had one of her breasts in his mouth, so Severus cupped the other and toyed with the tightly crinkled nipple. He stretched out beside them and began rubbing his cock against Narcissa's hip, when he felt a hand on his shoulder.

He turned to see Lucius behind him and rolled onto his back. Lucius kissed him messily and fondled his aching cock, then reached lower and slipped two fingers into his arse. Past caring, Severus groaned and pulled his legs up and back, as Lucius managed to align cock to hole and slide home. The mist pulsed around them, red and purple and violet and black, roiling with the power they were feeding it. Lucius thrust into him over and over, biting his neck and shoulders. Severus arched up to meet each stroke, desperate to take Lucius deeper and deeper still, his own cock pressed between their sweaty, come-smeared bellies, hard and pulsing with need.

Lucius came with a gasp and a tensing of his fair patrician face, then toppled forward onto Severus, who kept trying to thrust up against him. A beefy hand rolled Lucius off of him and bent Severus nearly double before he realized who it was. Walden MacNair stuffed his skinny cock up Severus's arse and was grunting away in moments. There was a long moan, followed by breathless panting from beside him, then Narcissa crawled over to him and wrapped her hand around his cock, stroking him in counterpoint to MacNair's thrusts.

The mist settled over them, pulsing hungrily as their passions heightened. Edgar Goyle had joined
them and was sloppily kissing Torval as he struggled to mount him. Severus moaned as Narcissa stroked him, and then sighed in relief when MacNair spent inside him and pulled out, and he could finally drop his legs back to the floor. His cock was red, aching, and nearly as raw as his arse felt; his head was pounding in pain, pulsing in time with his heart. He still wanted to find some place to be quietly and thoroughly sick, but when Lucius crawled over and buried his face in his wife’s lap, Severus pulled away from her, rolled over on top of Lucius and began finger ing him.

Lucius wriggled at the attention, drawing his knees up and presenting his rosy hole, even as he pushed Narcissa back and pressed his face between her legs. Severus didn’t wait for further invitation, but shoved his cock in, finding Lucius already rather well lubricated and stretched. He thrust away, trying to ignore Bellatrix, who was yowling like a banshee, with Theobaldus Nott kneeling before her and Edmund Sprallitch industriously shoving his cock up her arse. "For You, my Lord! For You!" she cried.

Severus focused instead on the feel of Lucius's arse around his cock, clenching and milking him at every stroke, on the sway of the silver-white mane that swung back and forth, and on Narcissa, whose eyes had rolled back in her head at her husband's ministrations.

The mist roiled around them, purpling greedily at every touch. It still seemed dissatisfied with Severus, but he closed his eyes and managed to push his thoughts away, to let his mind drift in the sea of sensation, the pulsing, pounding rhythm of their coupling, the lush, ripe scents of sex and sweat, the gasps and grunts and groans, and the wet, meaty sounds of flesh sliding and slapping against flesh. His pulse pounded; his bollocks tightened; his cock spasmed...

He felt the mist surround him, bathing him, sucking at him. He threw back his head and abandoned himself wholly, shouting out as he came.

After that, all he knew was the hunger of the swirling red mist...

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The final battle did not go according to the Dark Lord's plans.

Severus had done what he could prior to the onslaught, including sending another coded message to the Order and managing to poison Nagini without the Dark Lord detecting his involvement in his precious pet's demise. Now he kept moving, maneuvering, avoiding hexes and casting defensive spells with careful precision, trying to get into the most advantageous position. He quickly scanned the battlefield, trying to locate Harry bloody Potter, desperately hoping the Order had received and understood his warnings - and that the sodding Boy Who Lived had 

heeded

them. He dodged another hex and ducked behind Goyle's bulky form, then darted to the dubious cover of a spindly bush.

Was that--?

Yes, there he was - glasses askew and face blood-streaked, but still on his feet, casting spells and making his way toward the Dark Lord. His usual shadows were beside him - the Granger chit's wild hair unmistakable, even in the battle. Severus shot a tanglefoot hex at a Death Eater who had taken aim at the brats, then kept moving forward, working his way toward the battle's focal point.

The Dark Lord spotted Potter and his group and laughed aloud - a hideous sound. He raised his
hands and cried, "Now, Potter! Now you shall see what real power can do! POTENTIA GENERIS UNITUS!"

All across the battlefield, the Death Eaters stopped in their tracks, gasping as streams of red-violet light burst from them and flowed to their master, forming a scintillating web of power centered on the Dark Lord. It rippled and began tightening around the enemy, forcing some of the Order members to their knees. The Dark Lord continued to laugh as the power flowed to him, but he had failed to notice one crucial point.

There was a flaw in the web.

Where one major line of power should have been, there was only a sullen red mist that surged and ebbed, trying unsuccessfully to attach itself to Severus Snape. He wasn't sure what was blocking it, but he was grateful. He cast a protective shield between Potter and the Dark Lord, watching as it undulated across the battlefield, and forced the contracting red web aside.

Severus focused his mind and screamed with every bit of legilimantic power he possessed, hoping against hope that Potter would hear him, "Now, Potter! Through me! STRIKE!"

He saw Potter's head snap up and almost felt those piercing green eyes searching for him. They were dozens of yards apart, but he knew when Potter had spotted him, felt his disbelief, and - miracle of miracles! - felt Potter's sudden intuitive leap and gathering of power.

Severus drew on his Mark and opened his link to the Dark Lord. As he did, the red mist coalesced, transmuting into a beam of pure white light that leapt from his chest and parted the web of Dark power, shriveling it like a flame sears a spider web. He held his mental and magical connections to the Dark Lord and Potter open wide and heard the Dark Lord scream, "TRAITOR!"

The power mounted on both sides of the connection. He closed his eyes and prepared to die.

Hopefully, it would be enough.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In which the Order's Victory Celebration gets a teensy bit out of hand...

When he opened his eyes again, he was reasonably sure he was not dead.

For one thing, he was lying on a comfortable bed, rather than floating in a pool of fire and brimstone, and although he was in considerable pain, he'd certainly experienced far worse in his time on the corporeal plane. For another, he absolutely refused to believe that Minerva McGonagall was any sort of angelic or infernal being or representation thereof.

"Come along, Severus, there's a good lad. Sit up a bit and sup this," she said, holding a beaker to his mouth and trying to lift his shoulders.

He opened his mouth and let her pour something in - strengthening potion, by the taste of it. He swallowed it, but either the brew was inferior, or he was farther gone than he had thought, as he still felt weak as a newborn kitten.

"Good lad," she murmured.

He heard both weeping and laughter from another room and blinked his eyes. "Where...?" he managed to croak.

"Ye're safe at Grimmauld Place," she soothed him. "He's dead, Severus. Dead and finally gone! Harry managed it, bless him! He's gone, at long last! Whatever you did - and yes, I saw you there, you daft fool! Whatever it was, it let Harry turn the evil back on its maker. We'd found and destroyed the next-to-last of his foul contrivances a week ago, and we knew there were but two splinters of soul left to the man. When you opened the channel between them, Harry let go of the fragment in his scar, and burned it to nothingness before You Know Who could reclaim it. Thanks to you, Harry was able to reflect all the power in that web back to him. When all the anchor points snapped, the web spun in on its maker and destroyed him and the very last bit of his black soul."

Another time, Severus promised himself, he would allow himself to feel the relief that rose up in him at the news.

For now, there were more pressing matters. "Potter?"

"He's alive, and they think he'll be fine. He's at St. Mungo's along with Ron Weasley and several others who were hurt or caught in the collapse of the web. We'd have taken you there as well, but..."

Severus managed an ironic smile. "Minis'ry?"

"Oh, no...heavens no!" she patted his hand. "At least...not for a bit...not until we've had a chance to talk to them about you. There are affidavits, stored memories...well, don't fret about it just yet, my boy. Here, have a bit of this," she said, offering him another potion.

This one was a healing draught with an energy booster, and of considerably better quality, as he
quickly felt his head clearing and the pain receding. He managed to sit up.

Minerva was smiling anxiously at him. "I've a clean dressing gown for you," she said, holding out a dark blue robe. "Your robes were ruined, I'm afraid."

He looked down at himself and coloured slightly to find himself wearing only a pair of thin pyjama bottoms with little sphinxes on them. He shot her a quick glance.

"They're Bill Weasley's, I believe. He was the only one tall and thin enough to have clothes here that would fit you," she explained. "I'll fetch you some proper robes later on."

He shrugged into the robe and pulled the sash tight. Minerva transfigured a pair of pink socks into black leather slippers, which he slipped onto his feet.

There was a loud whoop from beyond the door, followed by a ragged cheer. He raised an eyebrow in inquiry.

"The children need to celebrate...well, we all do, come to that. We were amazingly lucky, Severus. We lost poor Alastor, and Mundungus, the old scamp. Tonks took a bad hex, and they're quite worried Charlie Weasley is going to lose a leg, but all in all...it could have been so very much worse!"

He nodded slowly, relieved when his head didn't fall off into his hands. "...my wand?"

Minerva looked embarrassed. "Well...under the circumstances...Kingsley has it. There were a few people who...er..."

"Thought he should have...killed me where I lay?" Severus asked wryly.

"No...not that, of course not! But a few thought you ought to be in custody. You'll have to stay here until we've settled the Ministry, of course," she added.

He snorted. "Of course."

"Let's go get you a bite to eat, hm? Can you stand?" Minerva rose and offered him an arm. He got to his feet unsteadily and followed her out into the corridor. "It's a bit lively out there, she cautioned. "We've not just the Order, but most of those who fought with us here as well."

At first glance, he thought the house was under attack. People were running and shouting, shimmers of spells were dancing through the air, and half the furniture had been upended. As he stared, though, the scene resolved itself into something much more akin to the Slytherin common room after a Quidditch Cup win. People were drinking and laughing and kissing one another, and he was fairly sure there was at least one couple doing considerably more than kissing behind the heavy velvet draperies.

Minerva led him through to the kitchen, which was even more chaotic, though he could hardly credit that being possible.

"Hey! It's Snape!" someone shouted.

"What's he doing out here! Professor! I thought he was going to be locked up!" Mr. Thomas protested.

"He's a Death Eater!" one of the Patils cried.

"Killer!"
"Greasy git!"

"SILENCE!" Minerva snapped. "Professor Snape enabled Harry to defeat You Know Who! He is under the observation and protection of myself and Auror Shacklebolt, and you will all keep civil tongues in your heads, no matter what your personal opinions of his character!" She looked sternly around the room. "Now then. Miss Lovegood, dish up a bowl of that soup, if you please. Miss Granger, tea, please." She pulled out two chairs and pushed Severus into one, then sat down beside him.

There was some muffled grumbling, but tea, soup and buttered bread appeared before them in short order. Minerva sipped her tea for a bit, then rose. "I'm heading to St. Mungo's, then a brief stop at the Ministry before I return. I expect to find Professor Snape unharmed and the house still standing when I return. Hermione, dear, I'll take your greetings to Harry and Ronald." She pulled her hat out of the air, set it on her head and apparated.

The uneasy silence was broken by a few mutterings. Granger rolled her eyes and put her hands on her hips. "Oh, honestly! Didn't you hear Professor McGonagall? Professor Snape helped us! And not just during the battle! How do you suppose we kept getting all those warnings and messages about the Death Eaters' plans?"

"He could kill us all with a look, Hermione!" one of the Creevey boys bleated.

Hermione drew her wand and pointed it at Severus. He tensed, feeling for his missing wand, but her spells washed over him before he remembered it had been confiscated. He had the distinct impression of a tendril of power intercepting the magic and twisting it into... something. It felt very odd.

"There! I've cast innocuus and custodia libera. He won't be able to harm anyone in this house. Satisfied?" She turned and pulled a tray of chocolate biscuits from the warming shelf and slipped a handful onto his plate. "Now, just go back to what you were doing and let him be!" She marched off with the tray, and as she had probably anticipated, most of them followed her.

Lovegood topped up his teacup. "Would you care for a splash of brandy in that, Professor?" she asked in her soft, dreamy voice.

"Brandy? No, I..." Oh, what the hell, Severus thought. "Thank you," he said, holding out his cup. She poured a generous measure into the steaming tea. Severus drank it gratefully, savouring the warmth that spread throughout him with every sip. He studied Lovegood for a moment, wondering what seemed odd about her. Her eyes were very bright, and her movements somewhat rapid and jerky. "What have you been taking, Miss Lovegood," he asked her suddenly.

"Hm? Oh, Pepper-Up! We've all been on it for days. There wasn't any other way to get everything done, and we knew we hadn't much time."

"That's quite dangerous," he said.

"Yes, I know," she replied, "But we'll step down the dosage over the next week or so. We've quite a bit stored here."

Severus nodded, thoughtfully. Long-term use of Pepper-Up had several nasty side-effects, but a sudden discontinuing of it could be nearly as bad. Gradually reducing the dosage over several days and allowing the body to adapt slowly was a far better approach.

He was about to say something else to her when there was a great shout of joy from the parlour.
"TONKS!"

A chorus of cheers and tearful laughter fairly shook the old house.

Lovegood smiled. "They must have released Tonks from St. Mungo's, then. I'm so glad. I hope they managed to counteract that nipiskatril bite she got. They're quite nasty."

"I thought she was hexed?"

"Oh, yes, I heard that as well, but nipiskatril bites get infected so easily, and they turn your feet yellow with green dots. And they itch!" she added, wrinkling her nose. "Another drop of brandy?"

Severus held out his cup and didn't bother to add tea to the powerful spirit.

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He lost all track of time, but by the time the brandy bottle was half-empty, several more newly-released patients had arrived by Floo, each to be welcomed with more cries of joy and another upswing in the already festive mood. The kitchen was full of people again, but they were all either eating, drinking, snogging, or looking for suitable corners for other forms of celebration, and they all ignored him.

Lovegood had wandered off at some point, but she'd left the bottle, so Severus poured himself another measure of brandy and sipped it as he watched the antics around him. After a while, he noticed Seamus Finnegan and Dean Thomas had sat down on either side of him and were regarding him with rather bemused, boozy smiles.

"Y'know, Perfesser, I always wondered what ye'd be like, pissed off yer arse," Finnegan said conversationally.

"Indeed?" He took another drink.

"Yeah. See, Dean? I told you he'd drink if it were offered. Another touch, Perfesser?" Finnegan poured more brandy without waiting for an answer.

"Yeah, but he's still as sour as ever," Dean commented rather sadly. "Professor, don't you know that's the whole point of drinking, to cheer up?"

"Is it, Mr. Thomas? Then perhaps you will be so good as to tell me why alcohol is classified as a depressant?" Severus asked "Or have you forgotten even basic Muggle biochemistry?"

Finnegan snickered.

"He's hopeless, Seamus," Dean sighed. The dark young man poured himself a measure of brandy and drank it down.

"FRGEORGERED!" came another shout from the parlour.

"Brilliant! The twins are back!" Finnegan said, grinning broadly. "I knew they wouldn't stay put in Mungo's long!"
Another cluster of people pushed into the kitchen, with two lanky redheads at its centre.

"Yes, yes!"

"We're back - "

"- no, half of us is front!"

"Returned from the tender mercies..."

"...of St. Mungo's healers, with news!"

"And treats!"

There was a gabble of delighted questions and comments, mixed with laughter. Bottles of butterbeer and stronger drink were passed back and forth and pressed upon the twins.

"First off..."

"Harry's fine!"

"They say he'll be released later this evening..."

"...or tomorrow! And Ron's going to be fine..."

"As well! He'll be along soon."

"And it looks as though Charlie..."

"...will get to keep his leg!"

"In the meantime..."

"Here's something better than pumpkin juice!"

They pulled several bottles from their jackets and began handing them out.

"Our latest creation!"

"Just in time..."

"...for the Post-Pepper-Plunge!"

"Helps stave off the side effects..."

"...of accumulated Pepper-Up!"

"Eases pain!"

"Warms the cockles!"

"Cheers the heart!"

"Relaxes the mind!"

"No side effects!"

"Well, not many!"
"And absolutely guaranteed!"

"So drink up and let's keep the party rolling!"

Snape snorted into his brandy as the assembled idiots laughed and began drinking down the unknown and doubtless untested potion. The Weasley twins had demonstrated extreme proficiency with potions in his classes, but he had despaired of ever getting them to maintain proper laboratory and testing protocols. They had always been more interested in "What if...?" rather than in studying the possible repercussions of their experiments.

There was a great deal of promiscuous hugging and kissing. Everyone seemed determined to kiss someone, and the Weasley twins appeared determined to snog everyone in sight.

Severus shook his head and drank more brandy, feeling the pleasant muzziness of inebriation cushioning his thoughts and reactions. He hadn't drank so much in years; it had been far too risky. But now...why should anyone care if he got utterly pissed? He certainly didn't!

He slouched back in the chair and regarded the scene. The youngest Weasley was whispering something in Longbottom's ear that had turned the boy's face bright red. Finnegan and Thomas were...hm...well, apparently they were rather more than good chums, as their mouths were fastened on one another's, and Finnegan's hands were working their way under Thomas's jumper. One of the Patil girls was snogging the annoying Creevey boy...well, one of the annoying Creeveys; Severus was rapidly becoming too pie-eyed to distinguish between them. He thought he recognized Terry Boot pulling Lovegood onto his lap, but he couldn't be sure.

Granger came into the kitchen, pushed her way through the crowd and hugged both of the twins, who grinned at each other and kissed her mischievously. She swatted them playfully and asked, "Where's Ron? And how's Harry?"

"Little brother will be along shortly, never fear!"

"And our fearless leader was arguing with the healers..."

"...to let him go, when we last saw him."

One of them picked her up and swung her around. Granger laughed and, once on her feet again, poured herself a butterbeer. The other twin poured a measure of their potion into it. "Drink up, Hermione! You could use a bit of cheer!" They made faces at her until she laughed again and drank up.

The twins beamed at each other, then suddenly embraced and began snogging. Hermione shrieked and started giggling. "You'd better not let your mum see that!"

"Oh, don't be silly! Mum's proud that all her children love each other!"

"Some just a bit more than others!"

"Here, Hermione, we'll be good!" One of them said, plopping down into a chair beside Severus.

The other sat on his opposite side. "Yeah, see? Snape'll be our chaperone, won't you?" he asked, batting his eyes at Severus. They scooted closer, and Severus had the distinct impression he ought to be alarmed, but he really couldn't be arsed. He blinked owlishly from one twin to the other.

"Messers. Weasley?" he inquired with careful precision, "Just what, pray tell, are your intentions?"
"We promised we'd be good," they chorused.

"And we will!"

"Very, very good!"

One twin reached out to touch the other's shoulder. The other mirrored him, until they had Severus trapped between them. They began nuzzling his neck, one on either side.

Severus considered pushing them away, but it seemed a great deal of trouble. He let his head loll back instead and blearily focused on their hot, wet mouths lipping and sucking at the tender skin of his throat.

It felt rather nice, really...

"You see, we're really not supposed to do this...to each other," one murmured in his right ear, as a strong hand stroked him from neck to knee.

"No, and we musn't do this either," said the other, placing a hand over his crotch and rubbing gently.

"Nor this..." Mobile lips fastened to his, and a clever tongue swiped into his mouth. He tasted brandy, butterbeer and something almost like Pepper-Up, and several other elements he couldn't quite recognize...

The other twin kept rubbing his crotch, as he nudged his brother's head aside and claimed Snape's mouth in turn. "No, very, very naughty," he murmured between kisses. "Mustn't play with each other like this," he said.

The other gently brushed his hand away and dug a hand under Severus's thin pyjamas.

From a very dim corner of his mind, Severus heard a small voice saying he really ought to stop them, but the rest of his thoughts were floaty and unconcerned, and his senses seemed heightened, sharpened, and more than adequate to drown out the niggling protest.

He groaned into the mouth of whichever twin was kissing him, and splayed his legs to allow better access.

"Brilliant," the other breathed, and started kissing his neck again.

Long, strong fingers wrapped around his cock and started stroking him.

There was a confused moment that was almost like falling, except that it stopped with a gentle cushioning sensation rather than a sharp jolt. Severus blinked and found he was staring at the underside of the kitchen table, and there were two very determined red-heads kissing him and stripping off his robe and pushing his pyjamas down and fondling him and each other. Two hands were on his cock - neither one of them under his control, and he groaned again and thrust his hips up as they stroked him. The twins snogged each other across his chest as they pulled at his prick, then they broke apart and squirmed around, pushing and pulling his unresisting body until they had him on his side, sandwiched between them.

In short order, there was one cock sliding between his upper thighs, grazing deliciously under his scrotum, while another slid back and forth along his own aching erection. Two hands were playing with his nipples, and another wrapped around his cock and the cock that was nestled against it and stroked them both together.
His eyes rolled back in his head at the overwhelming sensations, and he decided he might just have to re-evaluate his assessment about not being dead...except that if he was in Heaven, it was doubtless a clerical error that would be corrected before long.

No matter. He would enjoy whatever this was, as long as it lasted.

There were lips and tongues everywhere, kissing and licking him, curling around his own tongue and flicking maddeningly against the tender flesh beneath it. He squirmed between the two lean bodies, wanting more, harder, faster! He pressed his arse back into the twin behind him, who stillled for a moment, then shifted a bit, and Severus felt the blunt head of a thick cock poised against his arsehole.

"Get on with it," he growled, pushing back harder.

The twin in front of him paused as well. "Fred?" he asked huskily.

"George," the twin behind breathed. They snuggled tighter against Severus, and kissed each other over his shoulder. There was a shivery tingle of magic washing over all three of them, and Severus felt a squishy fullness in his arse.

George repositioned himself, shifting up until he had Severus's cock nudging his own arsehole. In a single motion, they pressed into him and onto him, and Severus lost himself in the glorious tangle of limbs and cocks and mouths, and the hard, lean bodies wrapped around him, in him, on him; the three of them moving together as a single, sensual entity.

Severus groaned as Fred thrust into him and he in turn thrust into George. There were other moans and pants from nearby, and Severus dimly realized they had acquired company under the table at some point. He couldn't bring himself to care.

Instead, he cupped George's arse and pulled him closer, driving his cock in deeper and watching the young man's eyes roll back. He felt Fred's hand on his hip and pushed back, wanting as much of that long, thick cock in him as he could get. He wrapped his other hand around George's cock and stroked him to the rhythm they had set.

He still had no idea what they had put in that potion, but he felt sure it would be a roaring success.

Some deliriously, deliciously long time later, George gave a strangled shout and bucked against him, his cock jerking in Severus's hand and thick, creamy come spurting out over his fingers and onto their closely-pressed bellies. Fred gasped and sped up his thrusts, driving into Severus harder and deeper. Severus matched his pace, and George threw his head back and groaned loudly. Severus felt his bollocks draw up tight. He stilled, and then he was coming, his cock spasming and filling George's arse with spunk. Fred bit down on his shoulder and slammed in one more time, and Severus felt him spend as well.

They slumped into a boneless pile, sweaty and panting. Oddly, although he still felt rather floaty and unconcerned, Severus had no urge to sleep. Even more strangely, as he looked over at young Finnegan, who was on his knees under the table, industriously sucking someone's dark and rather impressive cock, he felt his own just-spent organ twitch in interest.

Finnegan certainly seemed to know what he was about. Long, dark fingers threaded into his hair, and Severus saw Thomas's - he presumed - feet curl as Finnegan licked and sucked him, swirling his bright pink tongue over the glossy purple head of his cock and then gobbling it back down. There was a gasp, and Finnegan swallowed and slurped noisily.

The twins seemed to have recovered and were fondling each other again. Severus rolled over,
pulled his pyjamas back up and started to crawl out from under the table.

"Perfesser!" Finnegan sat back on his heels, wiping his mouth with an impish grin.

Severus paused.

"I'll have some of that!" the young man declared. Severus noted that his flies were open and his own ruddy cock stood at attention. Finnegan scooted around behind him and put his hands on Severus's hips. "I knew ye'd loosen up, once ye were pissed enough!" he said, chuckling. He pulled the loose-fitting cotton bottoms down over Severus's hips.

Severus was fairly sure he should blast the impertinent little shite across the room, but his arse was pulsing with need and his cock was hitting him in the belly, so he pillowed his face on his arms and pushed his arse up in the air.

"Ye've a fine arse on you, Perfesser!" Finnegan said appreciatively. He squeezed Severus's cheeks briefly, then without further ado, pushed his cock in and began rutting away.

There must have been a reason why it shouldn't have felt so good, but Severus couldn't quite grasp it. He snaked one hand down and frigged his own prick rapidly, as the insufferable young snot pounded into him.

"Oh! Oooh! Yes! Merlin's sac, Perfesser! You're feckin' brilliant!" Finnegan gasped.

"Just. Shut. Up!" Severus bit out between strokes.

Finnegan laughed.

It didn't take much more. He felt Finnegan's hands tighten on his hips, then that snub-nosed cock was pulsing inside him as he spent. Severus jerked at his own cock a few more times and came as well.

"Seamus?"

"Comin' Dean!" Finnegan bent forward and kissed him between the shoulder blades. "That was great, Perfesser!" He pulled out and pinched Severus's arse, then turned back to Thomas.

Severus slumped to the floor and lay there for a few moments, trying to decide if crawling out from under the table was really worthwhile. There was a pleasant tingling in his arse, and his prick was starting to twitch again, but if recent experience was anything to go on, all he had to to was lie there and--

"Harry?"

He turned his head to see Granger duck her head under the table and blink a few times. "Oh, there you are!" she said. She slid unceremoniously onto her arse, giggled, then got to her knees and wobbled over to him.

She was clearly utterly off her tits. She flopped down over his back and snuffled into his hair. "Oh, Harry! Harry, I do love you so!" She kissed his neck and hugged him. "I know it would never have worked for us, but...oh, Harry!"

She was clinging to him, her pert breasts squashed up against his bare back, and he felt himself harden again. He thought perhaps he ought to say something, so he heaved himself over onto his back. Before he could frame a coherent sentence, she had attached herself to his right nipple and was licking and sucking it, mumbling how much she loved him...or Harry...or someone.
He reached for her head, intending to push her away, but she interpreted his action as encouragement and moved her mouth down along his belly. Her hand wrapped around his cock, tentatively at first, then gripped him more confidently. She bent over his hips and licked him, then took him into her mouth. He gasped as she flicked her tongue over his glans and all around under his foreskin with astonishing finesse.

"Haaaaaaryyy," she sighed, letting him slip free for a moment, then wrapping her lips around him again and bobbing her head up and down on his shaft.

The hot, wet suction of her mouth was incredible. He lay back and let her do as she chose, even when her small, insistent fingers rolled his scrotum between them and delved behind it to stroke his perineum and slip into his arse.

She crooked her fingers and pressed them in, and Severus saw blinding white stars as his body convulsed in orgasm. She sucked harder, drinking him down and still pressing insistently on that hypersensitive spot inside his arse, and he came and came, until he thought his bollocks were trying to exit through his cock.

She delicately sipped the last few drops and swirled her tongue over the head, tidying him up, then lay down and put her head on his chest and sighed. "I love Ron, you know...really, I do love him. We won't tell him about this, all right, Harry? And Ginny. We won't tell her, either. I don't want to hurt either of them, and it would just confuse things with Ginny, after all. Oh, Harry! I'm so glad you didn't die. And I love you. And your penis is quite as nice as Ron's, you know. It's all right...everything's going to be just fine, now..." She made a snuffly little sound and patted his belly gently.

There was another ragged cheer from the parlour, and someone called, "Hermione! Hermione, where are you?"

"Oh, drat! I mean - oh, Ron's here! Oh, Harry, I'll always remember this. And I'll always, always love you. And Ron. Ron loves you too, you know. Ron! I'm coming!" She got to her knees and backed out, then staggered upright and hurried away.

Severus lay back and choked back a threatening bout of very undignified giggles.
Chapter 3

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which the celebration continues, Krum demonstrates his experience, and Harry arrives at entirely the wrong conclusion.

He might have dozed off for a bit, and he was fairly sure someone had given him more brandy...and possibly a butterbeer with some of that nameless potion in it...and his head still wasn't working quite the way he thought it was supposed to, but his libido was more than making up for it.

He did manage to make it out from under the table at some point, and he'd staggered all the way across the hall into the parlour without further sexual entanglements, although he never did recover his dressing gown.

Everything was very blurry, but he thought he recalled seeing Lupin snogging Tonks passionately in a wing chair at one point, and Longbottom and the Weasley girl rolling around on the hearthrug. He had the vague impression he'd had his cock up another arse or two, and he distinctly recalled Shacklebolt grinning ferally at him as he wrapped his huge hand around both of their cocks and wanked them to mutual orgasm behind the bust of Andronicus Nigellus in the entryway.

It must be fairly late, he decided, peering at the wall clock as he leaned against the bannister to the front staircase. He couldn't decipher the time, but the parlour and front entry had been deserted for quite a while. No further arrivals had occurred for some time, and people had drifted off to other rooms.

He heard someone coming down the stairs and looked up to see Minerva beaming at him. Her eyes were sparkling and she had apparently a libation or six, judging from her rosy cheeks and the very careful way she was descending the stairs.

"Severus!" she cried, and wrapped her arms around him. "I'm so very glad to see you! Oh, it's just wonderful, isn't it! You Know Who gone and everyone so happy!" She squeezed him tightly, then dropped her hands and grabbed his arse. His cock jumped to attention again, but she merely pulled back and smiled brightly at him. "I've just come from St. Mungo's; I popped in to let everyone know that Harry will be released very soon - no more than another hour or so, they said." She kissed him on both cheeks, almost absently, then said, "Well, I'm off to the school for a bit! There's so much to do! I'll stop by in the morning. Good night, dear!" She blinked a few times, then seemed to focus and suddenly apparated out.

Severus was left slumped against the wall with his mind in a daze and another raging erection tenting out his pyjamas.

"Professor! Oh, dear, are you all right?" It was Lovegood this time, and he had no idea if she was also under the influence, or if that was merely her normal vague expression. She put an arm around him and helped him upright. She didn't seem to find his state of undress peculiar, but she did stare at his erection and gasp in alarm. "Professor! Oh, dear, have you caught them too?" She
clapped one hand over his crotch and gripped his cock none too gently.

He yelped and grabbed at her hand, but nearly fell as a wave of dizziness crashed over him.

"Well, it doesn't feel too bad," she said judiciously, running her hand over him and reaching down to cup his bollocks through the thin cotton. "You'll want to take care of that before it gets any worse, of course. Do you use the classical treatment, or do you ascribe to Pettifogge's theories on the use of salamander blood and fairy wings?"

Severus stared at her, but could make no sense of what she was saying. He heard someone else coming down the hallway, and Luna turned to look, then smiled. "Viktor! You're just in time! I need to go help Terry with that nasty quirkasnarfle infestation he picked up on his penis. I was just heading to the pantry for a tin of syrup; that's the only reliable way to get rid of them, you know - golden syrup and pixie dust."

Severus peered blearily at the brawny Bulgarian, who clearly had no idea what Lovegood was blathering on about, but equally clearly was well accustomed to her rambling.

"You won't mind giving Professor Snape a hand, will you? I think he's got a touch of the same trouble." She gave Severus a slight push that sent him stumbling rubber-kneed into Krum's arms. Strong hands caught and held him upright.

"I vill be happy to take care of him, Luna," Krum said, grinning salaciously at Severus's prominent erection. "You go to help Terry."

"Thank you, Viktor! I'll see you later, Professor!" Lovegood waved cheerily as she headed down toward the kitchen, weaving noticeably from side to side as she walked.

Severus tried to draw himself up to his full height and glare at the upstart from Durmstrang, but for some reason his body refused to obey, and he leaned forward against Krum's broad, solid chest instead.

His cock thought that was a brilliant beginning.

Krum smirked at him. "You haff need of some assistance, Professor?" He asked, raising one bushy eyebrow. "I am thinking this is vanting attention, no?" he said, sliding one hand down between and rubbing Severus's erection gently.

Severus let out a very undignified whimper. "Yes, damn you," he bit out, gasping and trying to thrust into the sturdy hand that held him in its Seeker's grip.

Krum pushed him back against the velvet brocade-draped wall and slid down to his knees, trailing his hands down Severus's chest and thighs. He settled comfortably in front of him, twitched the waistband of Severus's pyjamas down under his bollocks and wrapped one hand around Severus's grateful cock. He stroked him a few times, then gave a firm lick with his broad tongue right across the weeping glans.

His strong hands held Severus's hips firmly pressed back against the wall, keeping him from thrusting as his prick demanded. He took him deeper, sliding his tongue down along the great pulsing vein and rasping it up and down along the shaft.

All too soon, he let Severus's cock bob free of his mouth and licked his lips. "That vill do for a start," he said, turning Severus around to face the wall. He pulled the pyjamas all the way down to the floor and parted Severus's cheeks with blunt, calloused thumbs. He licked a long, slow line
from the base of Severus's spine, all the way down over his arsehole and along his perineum.

Severus gasped at the sensation, then stiffened as Krum retraced the line over and over, shortening the path a little each time, until his tongue was lashing back and forth over Severus's quivering arsehole. Severus gripped the draperies hard and tried to rub his hard, aching prick against them while pushing back onto Krum's tongue at the same time, groaning with need.

Krum took his time teasing his hole, wriggling the tip of his tongue just inside and back out, sucking and nibbling and licking again, before driving it back inside. Despite having come more times than he could remember already, Severus was about to explode.

Krum sat back on his heels and wriggled one finger into Severus's arsehole, sliding it in and out a few times.

Severus growled.

Krum laughed and got to his feet. Severus heard him fumbling with his clothes, and a soft fwhoom! that might have come from the parlour. Krum leaned against him and slid his hot prick along the crack of Severus's arse. "You like that? You vant me to fuck you good, Professor?" he asked, whispering huskily into Severus's ear, his breath hot and redolent of fire whisky and potion. He muttered a spell in a Germanic-sounding tongue, and Severus felt something slippery fill his arse.

"I haff done much fuckings, all over the wortl," Krum panted as he pressed the head of his cock into Severus's arse, "vomen, and men, and vonce even a centaur!"

He felt huge, and Severus gasped and squirmed as the massive cock breached him. He clung to the draperies and tried to accommodate the invader, bearing down in an effort to take it in. His own cock was throbbing and copiously weeping precome, but he could not spare the effort to attend to it. He gritted his teeth and pushed back onto Krum's cock.

"I haff had Bulgarians and English and Russians and an Italian and even Chinese," Krum said as he started to thrust. "And vone time I vas in Patagonia and there vas a vampire that vas a huge Quvidditch fan..."

Krum was rambling on and on, but he had set a good, hard, steady rhythm, and Severus nearly wept in relief as Krum pounded into him. He closed his eyes and thrust his cock hard against the wall on every stroke, and relished the throbbing, burning burst of pleasure in his arse at every forceful thrust.

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Harry was more than ready to get out of St. Mungo's. They'd wanted to keep him "under observation," but it felt much more like detention or protective custody, and he was heartily sick and tired of being stared at in awe or poked, prodded and otherwise pestered by one healer after the other.

Ron and many of his other friends had offered to stay and wait with him, but he'd figured the sooner any of them could get out of this place, the better. Even Professor McGonagall had agreed, when he told her to go ahead and leave without him; he might need them on the outside, if he wound up needing help getting out.
There wasn't anything wrong with him, as far as he could tell. Oh, he could still feel the ripples of wild magic coursing through him, a faint reminder of the raging torrent that had rushed through him when he'd tapped into the channel Snape had provided him, to destroy Voldemort.

It felt distinctly odd to realize that Voldemort was gone, and even stranger to realize that he had linked up with the traitorous murderer of Albus Dumbledore to do it.

Except that he hadn't been a traitor...and it hadn't been murder.

He had worked so hard to sustain his hatred, it had really surprised him when it had melted into sorrow and regret at the touch of Snape's mind on his. He'd been practicing Legilimency and Occlumency at Hermione's suggestion, ever since the Headmaster's death. He'd finally found the proper motivation; he'd been determined not to leave himself vulnerable to Snape's mind magic, and he'd studied and practiced as hard as possible.

So when Snape had called to his mind across the battlefield, he'd been instantly suspicious, but he'd also been able to read more than what was on the surface of the man's message. He'd seen the determination and desperation, but he had also felt Snape's grief and self-loathing and somehow, as he allowed himself to connect to Snape, he had known that whatever he might have done, he had been compelled to do, and he would sooner have died himself....except that he was bound to obey Dumbledore's commands.

Harry had managed to take his own swirling anger, grief, and pain in that moment and forge them into a magical flame hot enough to burn the sliver of Voldemort's soul from his own scar. He had used what was left to sever the anchor points of Voldemort's power web. He'd felt no triumph as the magic spun in and destroyed its master, only relief and a vast weariness.

He'd spent the night and most of the day at St. Mungo's now, and he was getting heartily sick of it.

The door to his room swung open, and the Chief Healer and Diagnostician came in, smiling at him. "Well, Mr. Potter, your last set of tests are in, and they're quite promising. I don't see any lingering spell damage, although there is that ripple effect we discussed earlier. I think we'll have another course of--"

"No."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said, 'no.' I've had enough, and I'm ready to go home. If I feel sick, I'll come back, all right? But for now, I'm done, and I'm leaving."

"I say, you can't just--"

Harry arched an eyebrow at the healer, who was getting rather flustered. "I can't? Doctor, I just destroyed the most powerful Dark wizard in a generation. Granted, I had a lot of help, but I really don't think there's anything holding me here. I can send for some of that help, if necessary, by the way. My friends would be only too happy to come get me out of here, if I called them..." he let his voice trail off and dramatically rolled his eyes up and tipped his head back, as if going into a trance.

"No, no, no! I'm...I'm sure that's not necessary," the healer said. "I'll see that your records are properly annotated. You'll come back for some more tests, in...a week, shall we say?"

Harry opened his eyes and smiled at him. "Sure."

He'd wasted no time heading for the lobby and Flooing to Grimmauld Place.
He stepped out of the fireplace, brushing soot from his clothes. Professor McGonagall had taken pity on him during her visit and had transfigured the pale green hospital robe into a t-shirt and jeans and the flimsy scuffs into a pair of trainers. They weren't quite right, but a respectable simulation of real Muggle clothes.

He was rather surprised to find the parlour empty. There were some empty butterbeer and wine bottles on the floor, and a rather heavy scent of sex in the air. Harry grinned. Well, at least they hadn't wasted any time in starting the celebrations! There was faint laughter from down the hall, and he stepped to the doorway and started to turn that way, but a soft whimper from nearby stopped him in his tracks.

"Yah, you like it, huh? Like this!"

It sounded a little like Krum, who had come over to England and joined the fight against Voldemort a few months previously, but his voice was thicker and a little slurred.

There was a deep grunt and a wet, rhythmic sound. Harry rolled his eyes. Apparently Krum didn't mind doing his celebrating in public.

"Yah! Take it! Take it all!"

There was another whimper and a deep groan of pain.

Harry turned toward the front entry in alarm. What the hell?

"I haff never fucked a Death Eater before--"

Harry ran down the hall and stopped to stare in horror at the scene before him. Krum had Snape pushed up against the wall and was brutally fucking him. Krum's face was red and his eyes a little wild, and Snape...

Snape was naked, clutching the drapes, his knuckles white with strain as he tried to hold himself up. There were red marks and purpling bruises all over his pale skin. His eyes were tightly shut, his teeth clenched, and his cheeks were wet with tears. He groaned again, and bit off something like a sob as Krum thrust into him with punishing force, slamming him up against the wall again and chuckling sadistically.

"I haff heard the Death Eaters vere alvays fucking like animals - is it so, Professor? You like it so? Hard and fast? I fuck you good, eh?"

Harry lunged across the foyer and grabbed Krum by the shoulders, ripping him away from Snape and flinging him across the room on pure momentum. "You fucking bastard! He's on our side! What the fuck were you doing?!" he screamed at him in outrage.

Krum spun across the space and fell over the stairs, clutching at the black velvet drapery covering the portrait of Walburga Black. She shrieked loudly as the fabric tore. "UNCLEAN PERVERTED SCUM! MUDBLOOD VERMIN! DISHONORING THE HOUSE OF MY FATHERS!"

It was enough to distract Krum. "Shut up, vitch! I haff blood more pure than yours, old woman! And real blood, not paint and oil! Enough for this!" Krum yelled back, waggling his huge, red cock in her horrified face. "Yah! You see! This for your house and your stupid pureblood vays!"

He shoved his cock up against her painting and rubbed it back and forth, then began wanking. Walburga's painted face twisted in disgust, then her eyebrows rose and her face purpled as he began coming, spurting all over her canvas.
Harry turned from the ludicrous sight to Snape, who was slumped against the wall, practically hanging by his hands, which still had a death grip on the heavy brocade draperies.

"Snape? Professor? It's...it's all right. It's Harry. Come on...let's get out of here," he said. He drew his wand and cast a quick cleaning and healing spell.

At the tingling touch of the spell, Snape tensed, and then...wailed. Harry winced at the sound, but bent and pulled up the man's pyjamas. That fucking bastard Krum must have pulled Snape right out of his bed! He glared over his shoulder at the Bulgarian, who had finished what he'd been doing and slumped down onto the stairs. He was already snoring.

"I'm sorry, Professor...God, I'm sorry! I...I guess he was drunk. We'll deal with him, I promise! But it's okay, you're going to be all right..." he knew he was babbling, but he'd hardly expected to return to headquarters to find a rape in progress! And he'd never in his wildest nightmares imagined he'd be trying to help Severus Snape through the aftermath of such a trauma. He'd hardly sorted out his own feelings about Snape, but he did know that the man hadn't deserved what Krum had done to him.

"Come on, Professor, let's get you someplace comfortable...and safe." He put an arm around Snape and gently turned him toward the hall. Snape slumped against him and mumbled something. Poor bastard was probably out of his head, Harry thought. He'd have to get someone to send for Madam Pomfrey, but the first priority was to get Snape back into bed and under decent wards, for his own protection and Harry's peace of mind.

Why the hell hadn't someone been watching him? Harry fumed as they made their way toward the sounds of laughter. He thought he'd better see who was supposed to have been watching him, to let them know he was going to move Snape to a safer room - and to tell them to keep an eye on fucking Viktor Krum, the rapist bastard.

He pushed open the door to the kitchen and blinked in surprise.

Well, it was no wonder nobody had come to Snape's rescue. The assembled might of the Order of the Phoenix and Dumbledore's army was currently either utterly blitzed or shagging its arse off, or both!

Dean had Seamus bent over the sink and was happily humping him.

The Creevey brothers were sitting amid a dozen empty bottles, giggling and hiccupping.

Several bare feet stuck out from beneath the table, toes curling and flexing.

Hermione was sitting on Ron's lap, and -- Harry looked away quickly.

Tonks was straddling Remus, who was lying across the door to the pantry with a bottle of brandy in one hand.

Terry Boot was stretched out on the kitchen table, with a broad grin on his face and Luna pouring some amber fluid over his rampant cock. "Hold still, Terry! Do you want to lose this?" She looked up from her task and smiled at Harry. "Harry! How nice to see you!"

"Harry!"

"HARRY!"

"HARRY!"
There was a sudden flurry of activity as people stood up, disengaged, and crawled out from beneath the table. Harry found himself swept into a group hug, and then everyone was kissing him - on the cheek, the nose, and of course, full on the mouth. It was one big blur, as he spun from one friend to another, each hugging and kissing him again, laughing and crying and shouting and holding glasses of wine and spirits and butterbeer to his lips and pounding him on the back...

The joy was infectious, and Harry let himself wallow in it for a while. He tried to keep hold of Snape, but they were pulled apart at some point, and when he finally caught his breath, Harry scanned the room anxiously for him, breathing a sigh of relief to see him leaning against the credenza.

"Hermione...Hermione!" he had to grab her shoulder to get her attention, and when she turned to him, er usually sharp brown eyes seemed slightly unfocused. "Listen, Hermione, I've got to get Snape somewhere...safe. I'm taking him up to my room; I'll ward it so you - and McGonagall, I guess - can get in, but I don't want anyone bothering him. Krum..." Harry paused, suddenly uncertain. Everyone was still beaming, but they were also starting to grope one another again, and it looked like the Weasley twins were pulling Neville back under the table. Something decidedly odd was going on. He felt himself flushing as his own cock twitched. "Well, just be sure to keep Krum away from him, okay? I think he's drunk, so watch yourself around him, too, huh?"

Hermione smiled brightly. "Sure, Harry! And remember what we promised, okay?" She leaned in and kissed him gently on the lips. "It really wouldn't do any good anyway, right? Right! Righty-ho!" She giggled and patted his cheek. "So sweet!" She suddenly looked around, blankly. "Ron? Where are you, Ron?" She stumbled away and launched herself at Ron, who wrapped his arms around her and began kissing her passionately.

Something was not right.

Harry shrugged, chalking it up to an excess of celebration. Best get Snape up to bed - he winced as his cock twitched again and the vision of Krum buggering Snape flitted through his mind. God, he must be sick, to even think of getting off on that! He flushed in shame and spotted a tall, icy bottle of butter-rum punch on the table, its sides beaded with condensation. He snagged a cup from the table, poured himself a splash and took a long drink. The cold, rich drink cooled his flaming cheeks and warmed his belly. He poured another cup and pushed his way through the snogging couples to Snape's side.

"Here, Professor, have a sip of this," he said, holding out the cup. Snape looked blearily at him and sighed, but took the cup and drank. "Come on, then, let's get you to bed." Harry eased an arm around him and Snape and led him from the kitchen, down the hall to the main staircase, and up to the next storey.

Halfway up the stairs, Snape stumbled and fell against him. Harry grabbed him with both arms to keep him from falling. Snape looked at him and gave a tired smile. "Potter. You're alive."

It was the first thing Snape had said to him since their connection on the battlefield.

"Yeah," Harry said, trying to ignore how close Snape's crotch was to his, and how the bare skin of his torso felt under his palms. "Here we are, both alive. Voldemort's dead, and here we are. Who would have guessed?"

Snape snorted and slumped against Harry's shoulder. "Albus," he muttered. "Albus was always so soddin' certain..."

"Yeah," Harry felt his throat tighten. "Well, guess he was right, after all." He started back up the stairs. "Come on. That's right, just a few more steps. Easy, now..."
It seemed an awfully long way to his room, and Snape's skin was really hot...er...warm to the touch, and smooth, where it wasn't marked with scars. And Snape...he was resting his head on Harry's shoulder and crooning softly, too softly for Harry to make out the words.

Harry was getting hard. By the time they reached his room, he was drenched in sweat, and his cock was pulsing and drooling precome. He bit his lip, hard, and managed to get Severus inside and stretched out on the bed.

His heart was pounding as he locked and warded the door, using a few extra protective spells and warnings to alert him if anyone came near the doorway. He paused and tried to calm himself, forcing himself to take slow, deep breaths. It was a big room; he'd make sure Snape was settled, then stretch out on the chaise and sleep there. He sternly told his cock to behave, then turned back to the bed.

Severus had pushed his pyjamas down and was slowly, lazily wanking. He lay on his side, watching Harry, his glittering black eyes never blinking as he stroked himself up and down, up and down.

Harry tried to clear his throat.

Snape swiped his thumb over the purpled head of his cock and licked his lips.

"Potter..."

"Snape...I..."

Snape slid his free hand down and pressed his fingers into his arse as he continued wanking.

"Snape...Severus..."

"Quit your babbling, boy, and get over here," Snape growled at him.

Harry's cock was prodding him in the belly, and his senses were swirling. He tried, tried to turn around and stretch out on the chaise, but Snape closed his eyes and moaned, thrusting his fingers in and out and rubbing his palm over the juicy head of his cock, and Harry was lost.

He stumbled to the bed, stripping out of his transfigured clothes as he went. Snape rolled onto his back and pulled his knees apart and back.

"Yessss..." he hissed, as Harry crawled between his legs and clumsily began rubbing their cocks together.

Snape's scent was intoxicating. Harry leaned down and buried his nose in his former Potions Master's neck, breathing deep. Snape bucked up against him, urging him on. Harry frotted harder against him, gasping as their cocks slid along one another. His senses seemed somehow sharpened; he felt every inch of Snape's skin, heard the pounding of his heart, could almost feel the magic, thrumming just beneath the surface of his skin, about to break free.

"Potter!" Snape's hands were grabbing at him, pushing, pulling - Harry had the vaguely alarming thought that Snape wanted him to stop, but then Snape shifted and Harry found himself with his cock sliding between Snape's arsecheeks.

"Yes...yes, you imbecile! Now!"

Harry's body did not need any more encouragement. He grabbed hold of his prick, lined up and pressed inside, feeling Severus's hot, slippery channel clasping him all the way in. Snape gasped
and threw his head back. Harry paused, but Snape moaned, "Move! Move, damn you!" His hands were on Harry's arse, pulling him deeper.

Harry began thrusting; sliding almost all the way out and snapping his hips to drive back in again. The sense of connection was tripled now; he could almost feel what Snape felt as he fucked him, feel the fullness and friction, the sweet, sensual slide of heated flesh in his own arse, even as he felt his cock sliding in and out of Snape's.

Snape made little gasps and groans as they moved together. Harry wrapped one hand around Snape's stiff shaft and began stroking it in time to his thrusts. Snape threw his head back and thrust his hips up, driving Harry deeper and sliding his prick through Harry's fist.

Harry was panting and dripping with sweat. His bollocks felt tight, almost to bursting, and his cock was hard as steel as he drove it in again and again. He twisted his hips a bit and thrust hard, and Snape gasped, eyes suddenly wide. "Again!" he choked out.

Harry obliged, and Snape's cock suddenly jerked wildly in his grip. Snape gave a hoarse cry and his entire body shook as he came, creamy bursts of come spurting out over Harry's fist and spattering their chests. Harry sped up his thrusts as Snape's cock pulsed out its offering, then felt his bollocks draw up even more, painfully tight, and his own cock spasm as he came, flooding Snape's arse with his come.

They were frozen in place, every muscle taut, until they had both fully spent. Harry pulled out with a groan and flopped onto the bed, panting. Snape eased his legs down to the bed and gave a gusty sigh.

They were both snoring in moments.
Chapter 4

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which the Morning After isn't the only thing that's a bit awkward, and Severus finds a job.

Severus woke feeling sated, sore, and strangely relaxed. He was also slightly disoriented, with the disturbing sensation of not knowing precisely where he was, or what his circumstances were. He closed his eyes again and tried to take stock.

He had several places that hurt. His joints were stiff, and his lower back had a dull ache that wanted muscle salve. His lips felt tender. There was a hot, sore spot on his neck that he couldn't quite account for, and his genitals felt bruised. He frowned, then realized his arse was very sore.

Well.

Apparently he'd had quite a busy evening!

He was lying on a soft bed, but it wasn't a bed he knew...was it? He opened his eyes and tried to remember. He could vaguely recall waking up to find Minerva sitting across from him...yesterday? She didn't seem to be here, now, and this was a much larger room, its rather somber decor unfortunately marred by a large, gaudy quidditch poster and a photograph of a snowy owl.

Owl?

Severus tried to turn his head, but his neck was very stiff. Instead, he took in a deep breath and analyzed the scents: lemon oil, soap, aired linens, butter-rum punch, stale sweat...and spunk.

His nose twitched. The sweat and spunk were not his alone...and there was a heat source not far from his left arm. He winced and turned his head...and found himself nose-to-nose with Harry Bloody Potter!

Oh, bugger!

The Saviour of the Wizarding World was snoring peacefully, his face absurdly young in sleep. The boy must be...twenty, now? Twenty-one, perhaps. It had been a long war, he thought sourly. But it had hardly been long enough to make it in any way logical for him to have wound up in bed with Harry sodding Potter! Suddenly alarmed, he slipped a hand under the sheets and groaned.

Mother-naked at that!

This just could not end well.

Severus covered his eyes with one arm and lay still, hoping that he might wake up again and find it had all been a bizarre dream.
Harry drifted up toward consciousness, slowly and lazily floating in a featureless haze. He gradually became aware of his own body, heavy with sleep and a bit stiff and sore, here and there. Especially there. There was a soft pillow beneath his head, and a warm, fluffy coverlet over him, and his usual morning erection was prodding the bedclothes. He smiled and squirmed comfortably in the bedding, then stretched and yawned. He opened his eyes and saw the usual blur that greeted him when he didn't have his glasses on. The blur was fairly light, so it must be morning, he reasoned. He yawned and stretched again...and his outstretched arm brushed something in bed beside him.

Oh, shite...

Who...?

He racked his brain to remember the previous night, but everything was as blurry as his vision. He remembered leaving St. Mungo's...Flooing to Grimmauld Place...

He grimaced as he remembered that horrid scene in the foyer, with Krum off his head and Snape...but everything else was a blur.

Damn. What had happened afterwards? He'd have to talk to someone about Krum, and he'd better find out what had happened to Snape. After, of course, figuring out who'd spend the night in his bed...and definitely after having a piss. He frowned and felt the nightstand for his glasses, put them on and blinked in the soft morning light, peering across the bed at his companion.

Head turned away from him...longish black hair in a tangle...pale, flat chest sprinkled with more dark hair...all right, it was a man, that much was clear...

The man sighed heavily and turned his head...

Oh, FUCK!

He'd spent the night with Severus Snape!

How the bloody, fucking hell had that happened?! He sat bolt upright in bed, clutching the covers to his naked body, (oh, my God, naked, NAKED! What the fuck was he doing NAKED with Severus Fucking Snape? No, no, he didn't want to know, he didn't, he couldn't have...) and scooting back from Snape as if he'd suddenly discovered a sleeping cobra in his bed.

Snape's eyes were closed, but Harry could see bruises and bite marks all over his pale skin, along with a varied selection of old scars. Harry bit back a groan of shame and guilt as the one clear memory of the previous night flashed indelibly into his mind.

Snape, hanging desperately from the dark velvet draperies, naked and helpless, his eyes tightly shut as Krum battered into him, crushing him against the wall over and over again...

Harry wanted to be sick. God, what had he done? He'd rescued Snape...only to bring him to his own room and treat him to more of the same? What kind of a fucking sick bastard was he?

"I trust you have looked your fill, Mr. Potter," Snape said, his voice rough and still thick with sleep.
"Snape...I...we...what..." Harry stumbled over the words, not knowing what he was trying to say.

"Eloquent as ever, Mr. Potter," Snape said. He passed a hand over his face and sighed, then turned onto one hip, facing Harry. "The circumstances should make the events of last night quite evident, even to you, Mr. Potter."

"I..." Harry stopped and cleared his throat. "I don't suppose we...just...slept?"

Snape snorted. "I take it your memory is as poor as ever, Mr. Potter. But I regret to inform you that both our state of undress and the lamentable condition of the bedding," he sniffed pointedly, "negate your optimistic interpretation of events."

"Oh..."

"Not to mention the physical symptoms," Snape said, arching an eyebrow, "which I trust you share, to some degree."

Harry flushed bright red. "You...don't remember how...er...what happened, exactly?" he asked, hesitantly.

"No. Nor do I care to," Snape said, flatly. He sat up and turned away, swinging his legs out over the edge of the bed. He looked back over his shoulder and grimaced, then pulled a rumpled blanket from the foot of the bed, wrapped it around himself and stood up. "Your room, I take it?"

"Yeah."

"Toilet?"

"Um...door on the right," Harry said.

Snape stalked off to the loo, leaving Harry to slump back against the headboard and wallow in his guilt.

Even if he didn't remember what had happened...even if Snape didn't remember it...

Oh, God, what a mess!

)*(-)*( -)*

A long, hot shower didn't rid him of the guilt, but it did leave him feeling marginally better prepared to face the day.

They walked down to breakfast in silence, to find Hermione, Ron, Ginny, Remus, Tonks, and Luna sitting in the dining room eating eggs and bacon. They looked up and smiled, and gave a ragged chorus of "Good morning's", just as Molly Weasley came bustling in from the kitchen with another steaming dish of fried tomatoes.

"Harry, dear! It's so good to see you out of hospital!" She put the dish down and hugged him, hard.

"Thanks, Mrs. Weasley. How's Charlie?"
"Much better, much better," she said. "Arthur's with him; I'll head back in a bit. The healers say they can save his leg, but he'll have a bit of a limp," she said, trying to smile. She looked past him and seemed to notice Snape for the first time. She stiffened. "Harry--"

He said quickly, "It's all right, Mrs. Weasley; he's been...he's the reason Voldemort's gone. He was the one sending us warnings, and he gave me the channel that let me snap Voldemort's web."

Mrs. Weasley didn't look much reassured. "But...Professor Dumbledore..."

Harry gripped her hand. "Professor McGonagall had a long talk with me at the hospital...and some of it I already knew. It's...complicated. Just...trust me, okay? Everything will come out before long, I promise." He heard Snape snort softly behind him. "So...what's for breakfast?" he asked, forcing a grin.

"Whatever you like, dear!" Mrs. Weasley said, patting his shoulder and urging him to a seat. She cast an uneasy glance at Snape, then turned and went back into the kitchen.

Ron raised his eyebrows as Snape sat down at the table as well, but said nothing.

"Good morning, Harry! Good morning, Professor," Hermione said, passing the platter of bacon to Harry. "How are you feeling this morning, Harry?" she asked solicitously.

Harry cleared his throat. "Uh...fine, fine, Hermione." He looked around the table, but everyone seemed perfectly normal. Tonks had a bandage on one shoulder, but was grinning and snitching bits of bacon from Remus's plate. Remus smiled at her over the teapot, then nodded politely to Snape as he poured two fresh cups and sent them floating over to Harry and Snape.

Ginny was blithely munching toast. Luna had her nose in an old book and her wand stuck behind one ear. Ron was tackling a mound of fried eggs and tomatoes nearly the size of his head.

Harry had the oddest feeling that something ought to be different, but Hermione met his stare with a look of mild enquiry in her clear brown eyes. "Is something wrong?"

"Ah...no. Er...have you seen Viktor, this morning?" he asked.

"Hm. No, I think he's still sleeping." She laughed lightly. "From the number of bottles we had to clear away this morning, I think there was quite a bit of celebrating going on last night!"

Remus shook his head and chuckled. "I suppose I should be grateful I'm too old and stodgy - ow! - for celebrations like that," he said, rubbing his rib cage where Tonks had elbowed him and grinning at her. "I can't say I envy the headaches they're all going to have!"

Ron looked puzzled for a moment. "You know...I remember coming back from Mungo's, and I remember everyone was in the parlour and the kitchen...and then Hermione came running in...it's all a bit cloudy, after that," he said, frowning.

Hermione frowned as well, then shrugged, "Well, it's probably a side-effect of all the Pepper-Up...I don't remember taking any yesterday, and I've read about rebound effects when one cuts off long-term use. We should each take a half-dose today, I expect, and keep cutting it down over the next several days."

Snape frowned and seemed about to speak, then apparently thought better of it and applied himself to his tea and toast.

Tonks drained her tea and announced, "Well, I'm off to the Ministry. We'll have to tell them about Snape eventually," she said, "but I'll check with Minerva and see how that evidence is coming
Snape's head shot up.

"Didn't she tell you?" Tonks asked. "A letter came from Gringott's, yesterday. The Headm...Professor Dumbledore left some documents in a vault there, with instructions for it to be opened on confirmation of You-Know-Who's death. She said there were several stored memories and a stack of parchment, all under *scriptura veritas*. We'll have to go through them, but if his portrait's to be believed...it should be enough to show it wasn't...murder."

Snape's hand shook slightly as he set his teacup back on the table.

"Just thought you'd want to know," Tonks said. "I'm off. I'll catch you all later, then." She dropped a kiss on Remus's forehead and left.

Luna looked up from her book and took a spoonful of porridge, then frowned vaguely and reached for the sugar bowl. "That's much better," she said, sugaring it, "It's a pity, but we seem to be out of golden syrup."

Harry felt himself blush, but he had no idea why. He poured himself a glass of orange juice and focused on his breakfast.

It took three weeks for the Ministry to make up its collective mind what to do with Severus Snape.

The Order pushed to have all charges dropped, but the Ministry insisted on a trial.

The evidence left by Dumbledore, under the incontrovertible protection of the *scriptura veritas*, forced the Wizengamot to concede that Snape had not committed murder, that he had acted under Dumbledore's orders, that he had, at great risk to his life and his very soul, spied on You Know Who, and had provided the information and assistance that ultimately led to Lord Thingy's destruction.

They conceded, but it certainly did not sit well with the Wizengamot, nor did the testimony of those who had fought the final battle, each of them recounting how Snape had made himself a conduit for Harry Potter's power and enabled him to strike the final blow against Voldemort.

The Wizengamot *particularly* did not like to be told, even by The Boy Who Lived, that Severus Snape, Dark Wizard, caster of Unforgivables, and slayer of Albus Dumbledore, was not to be sent to prison. The unspoken "or else" hung heavy in the air, and they bristled at the implicit threat, even as they smiled and assured their quondam saviour that of course Snape would not be imprisoned! Harry left the courtroom warily, but feeling he had done what he could.

The verdict was announced a day later. Snape had been found guilty of "causing the death" of Albus Dumbledore, and of casting Unforgivable curses, but "in view of his role in bringing about the fall of You Know Who," his sentence was commuted to ten years probation, a strict limitation of his Apparition license, a lengthy list of restricted spells and types of employment, weekly examination of his wand, and assessment of hefty reparations, to be paid in monthly installments over the term of his probation, split between Hogwarts fund for deserving students and the Ministry's general operations fund.
Snape, still not quite able to believe he was not going to spend the rest of his miserable life in a stone box in Azkaban, bowed his head as the sentence was read, his fingernails gouging circles out of his palms.

He supposed he should be grateful.

A month later, he wasn't entirely sure he shouldn't have insisted on Azkaban.

He sat scowling at his decimated library at Spinner's End, trying to decide which of his remaining books he could bear to sell. The roof needed patching, the plumbing needed work, the bloody restitution payment needed paying, and his boots needed re-soling.

He'd had little luck finding work, and trying to sell potions - those he was still allowed to brew - by owl post was a very slow means of earning money. He was nearing the bottom of his list of options; he had seen an advert in a discarded copy of the Quibbler for an assistant at Botanical Bailiwycke, a small herbologist's shop on Organyke Alley.

There was nothing in the pantry but the heel of a loaf of bread, a tin of peas, and a rather forlorn, dusty jar of maraschino cherries, left over from some celebration.

He'd been thrown out of the first five places he'd gone looking for a job, and the next five had merely laughed in his face. If he didn't find something soon...

He hadn't eaten maraschino cherries in this house in thirty years.

There were Muggle businesses, of course, but even Muggles were having a hard time finding work these days, if the number of slovenly young toughs and haggard, nearly desperate looking men idling in the streets was any indication. He'd have to be ultra-cautious as well, as many Muggle establishments were on that damned list of restrictions. Also, the exchange rate from Muggle to magical money was ruinous, and he'd be hard-pressed to earn enough to keep a roof over his head and food on the table.

And he was hungry, again, damn it.

He ignored the twisting pain in his gut and the wave of slight nausea that always seemed to accompany it, these days. He pulled a handsome volume entitled Poesey of Magick from its shelf and ran his hands over the beautifully carved and ornamented leather cover. It had once belonged to his great grandmother, so his mother had told him. He remembered sitting on her lap as she read to him from this book, and watching the pages come to life as the poetry spells activated them.

He felt a lump in his throat and his eyes blurred. His nose suddenly felt stuffy, and he was appalled to find himself weeping.

He sank down into the old, worn chair by the fireplace and hugged the old book to him, letting the tears fall and trying to keep from sobbing aloud. What the hell was wrong with him? He'd never even wept for Albus Sodding Dumbledore, dead...dead...at his hands...

Stupid, foolish, trusting, old...

Oh, Albus!--
Severus bent his head over the book and sobbed.

The following day, he ate a meagre breakfast of peas and dried toast, then Flooed to the Department of Magical Corrections and Spell Monitoring for his weekly wand examination. He stood in the long, morose queue of other miscreants, waiting for the inspector, a stringy little witch who looked bored out of her mind, to cast *priori incantatum* on their wands and let them go for another week.

"Next," she called in a dull croak.

By the time he neared the head of the queue, he was considering hexing someone just to break the routine.

"Next." She held out her hand for his wand and cast the spell. "*Aquamenti, lumos, nox, lumos, nox, lumos, aquamenti, finite incantum, wingardium leviosa, petrificus totalis...* Petrificus?" she peered up at him and frowned.

He shrugged. "The neighborhood is teeming with vermin," he said by way of explanation.

She sniffed, then handed his wand back and checked his name off on her roll of parchment.

He didn't bother to add that the vermin in question had been a pair of brats who'd climbed over the back fence looking for a secluded place to smoke or get up to other illicit activities. He'd petrified the little snots and flung them back over the fence before releasing them. They'd nearly soiled themselves, and he hadn't had any more trouble with *any* of the little beasts since.

He put his hood up for anonymity's sake and headed off to his job interview.

Organyke Alley was a narrow lane cutting across Natter Alley, several streets off Diagon. It had a pervasive smell of fresh cut grass, herbs, flowers and a hundred and one different types of manure. Botanical Bailiwycke proved to be a small establishment tucked between a dragon dung merchant's shop and Warden's Self-Wheeling Barrows.

A small bell tinkled as he entered the shop.

There was hardly room to stand between the crowded shelves, and boxes, bags and bales of herbs and potions ingredients filled every available flat surface and hung from the ceiling in improbable clumps.

"Aye? What'd ye want?" a thin, scratchy voice came from somewhere toward the back of the shop.

"I've come regarding the position you advertised," he called out, heading toward the voice.

"Nay, nay, we're all out."

He blinked at that and tried to make out the speaker, who was sitting back in the shadows.

"I beg your pardon?"
"Maybe...have a look under yon bracken leaves. Mought be one or two left."

Severus finally got a decent look at his prospective employer. She looked old enough to have diapered Albus's grandfather, and she was not much taller than Filius. She sat curled up in an old armchair behind a counter, reading a novel and sucking on an intricately carved meerschaum. Faint purple smoke curled around her head. She didn't look up as he came nearer.

"I came to enquire about the job," he said louder.

"Could be, could be...delivery comes on Thursdays, if ye be lucky."

"Did you advertise for an assistant?" he shouted, leaning over the counter to get closer to her.

"If ye can reach it down, ye might find me the schlingenscheren vines. They be right beside the pickled erumpent garlic, atop the shelf there." She waved her pipe vaguely toward the right.

Severus sighed. He turned to leave, but suddenly caught sight of an enormous jar of pickled erumpent garlic bulbs, each one the size of an infant's head. Grumbling under his breath, he made his way carefully to the shelf, drew his wand and gently floated the bales of braided vines down to the floor. There were at least a dozen different varieties, but he quickly spotted the schlingenscheren or loop-cutter vine by its distinctive thorny whorls, freed it carefully, sent the rest back to the shelf and carried the bundle back to the old crone.

"Here's your vine," he said, slapping it down on the counter.

"Aye, good. Five sickles, that." She was puffing vigorously on her pipe and still staring off into space.

He shook his head and started to leave again, then turned back and stared at her. "Five sickles? What, the ounce? Or by the inch?"

"Five sickles the bunch, take it or no."

"You're mad, old woman! Loop-cutter is damned hard to harvest, and that's prime vine you've got."

"Don' like t'prices, take yer business elsewhere, eh?"

"I don't give a damn for loop-cutter, and if you want to give money away, that's your affair. Good day." Severus turned and stalked off toward the door.

"Happen y'see the dried vinga anywhere near the door?" she called after him.

He huffed in annoyance, but paused to check before he left. The shelf nearest the door was filled with hundreds of tiny glass bottles, each holding seeds or dried leaves or petals. Half of them seemed to be missing their labels, and most of the other labels were almost too faded to read. He sighed and stooped down to check the bottom shelf, but as he bent, he caught sight of a jar of vivid yellow triangular petals. He plucked it from the shelf and studied it carefully until he confirmed his find, then took it back to the old witch.

"Vinga," he said, putting it down on the counter.

"That be yellow hornwort," she said.

"It's vinga, you senile old lizard," he said, shaking the bottle under her nose. "It has the distinctive blue specks at the tips of the petals, and the characteristic trigger hairs along the edges. Now, sell it
for hornwort at a knut a pound and see if I give a damn.” He slapped it down on the counter and stormed back down the aisle.

"Two galleons a day and luncheon," she called after him.

"What now?" he fumed, turning back in exasperation. "What are you trying..." he paused as her words penetrated, then slowly walked back and stared down at her. This time, she cocked her head to one side and blinked at him, her blue-grey eyes oddly piercing.

"Had two dozen or more come lookin' for work here," she said. "Nary one knew ecklewort from elbow, nor arse from ashwinder eggs. Ye'll do. We open 'round seven. Get here by six, help open t'shop. Luncheon at one. We close for tea, open again 'til dusk. Tuesdays and Sundays off. Two galleons a day, and if ye'll eat what ah do, ah'll feed ye luncheon. Aye?"

Severus stared in amazement. "Severus Snape," he said slowly, giving her a slight bow.

"Ulgra Hingasdatter," she replied. "Ye'll do, Snape. Get ye t'back and unload stock, eh? Persian crap. Flower o' forgetfulness, everlasting songwort, ten thousand smiles - dam' fool Persians! More po'try than power i' that lot. Still, sells well, it does."

Severus shook his head and headed back to the stockroom.

The job at Botanical Bailiwycke at least assured him of enough to pay the sodding monthly reparations and buy food. He made sure he always wore his hood up going to and from work, and for the most part he managed to slip through the crowds unnoticed.

There were a few incidents, but he always managed to clean the mud and spittle off his clothes before reporting to work, and fortunately, nothing worse had yet been thrown at him.

He still wasn't certain Ulgra's senility was wholly an act, but she had a sharp wit when she bothered to pay attention to anything, and more than once she'd come up with a barbed comment in response to an idiotic customer that made him smile.

Being employed was definitely a relief.

Other aspects of his life were not going so well.

He'd been waking up nauseated every morning for the past two weeks, and there was a very peculiar sensation in his guts. His battered old alarm clock went off at 5:00 every morning; he attempted breakfast at 5:15, and 5:20 inevitably found him leaning over the toilet, retching up bitter fluid and whatever he'd managed to force past his lips.

Skipping breakfast did not alleviate the problem; it merely cut out a step.

He didn't feel feverish, and apart from some odd tenderness here and there, he didn't seem to have any other symptoms. He had cast the simple diagnostic spells he used to use on his malingering Slytherins who insisted they were too sick to go to class, but apart from a vague, formless glow over his abdomen, they showed nothing wrong.

He considered brewing an anti-nausea potion, but he had a very uneasy feeling about it, and every
time he started gathering the ingredients together, his stomach seemed to turn over. It was most unsettling.

Ironically, he also seemed to be putting on a few pounds. He would have attributed it to eating more regularly and accumulating muscle from the heavy work he was doing at the shop every day, except that his shirts still hung loosely from his spare frame, but his trousers were getting tight across his belly. He certainly hadn't been eating to excess, and no one could claim he was sedentary enough to be developing a pot belly from mere inactivity!

He frowned at himself in the mirror while dressing for work. Perhaps he had picked up some sort of intestinal parasite? There were purgatives and cleansing potions to deal with such things...he probably had the ingredients in his meagre potions storage cupboard, and he could always pick up more, now that he had actual income. Somehow the thought made him dizzy and ill. He finished dressing, made himself some dry toast (so far, the only "breakfast" that hadn't made a violent reappearance!), and headed to work.

Later that morning, he took a crate of tikawa fruit from the morning's stacked deliveries and lugged it to the front of the shop, then set it down and rubbed the small of his back to ease the ache.

"Hurt yersel'?" Ulgra inquired as she packed her pipe with some noxious weed.

"No...just a bit of strain." He put both hands to the small of his back and stretched.

"Gettin' a belly on ye, Snape," she commented.

He ignored her as he bent to unpack the fruit and arrange it on the appropriate shelf.

"Summun caught ye up t'duff?" she asked mildly.

He snorted...then froze in sudden horror, hand still outstretched and holding a large, pink tikawa pod.

No.

He couldn't possibly be...

No. No, no, no, no!

It was impossible...balderdash...wasn't it? He'd certainly never run across an authentic example...

But then, he'd never believed in possession or re-corporation until the Dark Lord had proven him wrong, either.

He swallowed hard, fighting another resurgence of nausea.

Oh, God!

He stared at the disorderly pile of sparkling, blinking, and glowing amulets and the mound of little urine-dipped plastic sticks with coloured dots on, all telling him the same impossible thing.
He was... *pregnant.*

He sat down on the toilet lid and buried his face in his hands.

How the hell had *that* happened?

What malign force in the universe was so determined to amuse itself at his expense?
Chapter 5

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which there is a visit to a flower show.

Three weeks later, despite exhaustive research and considerable experimentation with home-brewed abortifacients (which he had immediately and violently sicked up), child-bane charms (which made the little urchins in Diagon Alley steer well clear of him, but had no other effect) and one long, maudlin, self-pitying session with a bottle of fire whisky (which he also sicked up, and which gave him a raging headache), he was still pregnant.

As well as he could reason it out, his carefully wrought spells and potions designed to thwart the Dark Lord's plans had somehow combined with the sex magic ritual Voldemort had used to raise and wring power from his bound followers and had resulted in making him...capable of bearing a child. The torrent of wild magic for which he had served as conduit probably had not helped matters much, either.

As for how he came to be pregnant...he winced every time he thought of it, but there had certainly been every opportunity, from the night of the ritual itself, to the morning he woke up mother-naked in Harry Potter's bed.

He spared a few seconds to wonder if any of the surviving Death Eaters shared his current condition, but as, presumably, they had all been actively cooperating with the Dark Lord's wishes and focusing all their erotic endeavours on raising power for him, Snape decided it was unlikely. He certainly wasn't about to ring Azkaban and enquire!

The list of suspects to have sired his ill-begotten spawn was long and gruesome enough to make him ill just considering it. Lucius...MacNair,- oh, Merlin, please not! - Woolston...Nott? Engblatt? Had there been more? How many more? Who?

Most of that night was shrouded in a queasy fog of lust and shame, and he would have been well content to leave it buried, but for his current predicament.

And then there had been Potter, of course...and God only knew how many others. His memory was murky, but he knew bloody well there had been wholesale shagging going on all through the house, the day after the battle; he'd smelted it, the morning afterwards!

Granger had said something about the after-effects of long-term Pepper-Up use, and he distinctly recalled the Weasley pair offering everyone some concoction to ameliorate the condition. He couldn't be sure someone hadn't dosed him with it, and he did remember drinking quite a lot of brandy. He was also morally certain that he had not sat innocently in a chair, while debauchery reigned about him, until Harry Sodding Potter had arrived and taken him to his bed!

He had cast every paternity charm he knew and followed them up with a dozen more he had found in his research. Not one of them told him more than he already knew: he was parent to the child in his belly. None of the charms could resolve the identity of the other culpable party to more than a vaguely human-shaped outline.
He felt rather like a Maiden Betrayed, some days.

He had taken to wearing robes whenever possible, or loose shirts and transfigured trousers when necessary. Today was one of those "necessary" days, as he had been "loaned out" to Ulgra's grand-niece for four back-breaking - albeit lucrative - days of working her booth at the Chelsea Flower Show.

He had been walking back and forth, carrying plants, bulbs, seeds, plant food, all day long for two days now, and despite discreet cushioning charms, his feet hurt. His back wasn't very happy about the situation, either, but the pay would be worth it. Ulgra's grand-niece Winifred was a Squib who did business in both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds, and she had been delighted to find someone willing to work a Muggle show and knowledgeable enough to sort out which plants were safe for displaying there!

The initial set-up had been hard but rewarding work, which involved getting the booth arranged to best effect and making sure everything was properly labeled and priced. He also had to ensure there were ample stocks of the most popular items ready at hand. It was the upkeep that was going to kill him, Severus decided. Back and forth, back and forth, all day long, fetching and carrying and filling in the display where items had been purchased - and trying not to glare at the maddening old pussies who tugged at his sleeve when his arms were full and asked if he had any dahlias or clematis or some other damned flower, or worse, hex the little beasts who ran wild through the pavilion, knocking over his carefully arranged flowerpots.

He soothed himself by telling himself he was going to get the temperamental plumbing fixed with the extra money he was earning, and treat himself to a long, deep soak at the end of each day. His feet nearly whimpered at the thought of a long, hot soak. Later, he promised them, and went back to straightening out the oncidiums. He had moved on to the paphilopedilums when he heard a familiar voice and froze in place.

Harry Bloody Potter?

What the hell was he doing here?

Harry smiled as Ginny, Hermione, and Neville led the way into the flower show's main pavilion. They wandered from one colourful display to another, admiring the sights, accepting a bewildering assortment of odd little trinkets and samples, and simply enjoying the astonishing circumstance of being able to take a bit of recreation without worrying about Voldemort.

Hermione's parents had given her the tickets, and somehow she and Neville had cajoled the rest of them into coming along. Ginny seemed to be having a good time, he was glad to see, and Neville was in seventh heaven. Hermione looked pleased, which made Ron happy. As for Harry, well, with neither Dark wizards nor reporters anywhere in sight, he was quite content.
And truth be told, the flower show was really very pretty.

They passed a large booth devoted to exotic plants and paused to look at the incredibly beautiful tropical blossoms. Many of them were so strange and vivid they seemed magical.

Neville was having a marvelous time, pointing out all the similarities between Muggle botanicals and their Wizarding cousins. There were quite a few plants that made him stop and stare, then explain to the others that they were also well known in the Wizarding world. This inevitably started a discussion of their uses and history of cultivation.

When they got to a table full of flowering ginger, Hermione started a long discussion on the links between Muggle folk wisdom and Wizarding potions theory. As she and Neville got deeper and deeper into the discussion - with occasional comments from Ginny and very rare additions from himself and Ron - Harry thought he saw one of the booth workers glaring at them. He had the briefest impression of a pale, thin face and stringy black hair...oddly familiar. He frowned and looked again, but the man had gone.

He had no idea why one of the booth workers would be upset with any of them; they had been careful not to touch any of the enormous blossoms, and Neville had bought a selection of bulbs and Muggle plant food, as well! He almost said something to the lady working the till, but Ginny suddenly shrieked in delight, and he turned to see what had happened.

Ginny, Hermione and Neville had practically run around the corner and down the next aisle to a booth done up in a wedding theme. It was filled with white flowers, ivy, orange blossoms, tulle, garden arches, Muggle fairy lights, and every other conceivable decoration one might want for a Muggle wedding.

He gave Ron a sympathetic look. They both shrugged in surrender and followed the others. Hermione and Ginny had stopped in front of a towering display of bridal bouquets, and were giggling like little girls, while Neville made carefully detailed notes.

Harry shook his head and nudged Ron. "Think anyone would believe those two took down a dozen Death Eaters between them, in one day?"

Ron snorted. "Let 'em try getting between them and one of those wedding magazines and they'll believe it," he said. "Scary! Even Mum was impressed."

Harry just chuckled. "It's nice to see them worked up over something really trivial for a change - not that weddings are trivial," he hastened to add.

Ron clapped him on the shoulder and grinned. "Just don't let either one of them hear you say it, mate!"

They wandered back around the corner to a booth they had missed and were watching shimmering koi swimming in an amazingly natural-looking plastic pond, when there was a commotion nearby and they both headed toward the sound. Hermione, Ginny and Neville caught up to them in moments, and they all scanned the crowd for clues to the disturbance.

A booming voice carried above the sound of the crowd. "And the LORD, who giveth and taketh away, the LORD will protect and heal His OWN! And He shall call his sheep unto Him and CHERISH them, and those that will not HEED His WORD, He shall CAST OUT!"

Harry hadn't even realized he had his hand resting over his wand, which was concealed in a special pocket of his jeans, until Hermione put one hand on his arm.

"And I say again unto you, you must ACCEPT the LORD, your SAVIOUR! And REPENT of
your sins, your drinking and your swearing, your VANITIES and your pride, your coveting and your FORNICATING! And the LORD, who is MERCIFUL and GOOD will CHASTEN the SINNERS called to REPENTANCE!"

"It's all right, Harry," Hermione said, "It's only Holy Howard." She sounded halfway between amused and annoyed.

"Holy what?"

"Well, that's what Dad calls him. He shows up at all sorts of public events and makes a fuss. I think he just wants attention. He's been on the telly a few times - parades, football matches, a DIY convention, things like that."

"Someone's collapsed," Neville said quietly, his face concerned.

Ginny managed to worm her way farther into the crowd on a combination of limberness and charm. After a few moments, she came back with details. "One of the workers fainted, they said. I couldn't get close enough to see who it was or if anyone was really hurt; there's an old, bald Muggle praying over everyone and blocking the aisle."

There was a sharp whistle and two men in green jackets came hustling down the aisle with a gurney, medical kit and oxygen tank. The crowd parted reluctantly; Holy Howard seemed rather put out, when the paramedics ordered him away from the area. He retreated a short distance and stood handing out leaflets to anyone who would take them.

Harry shook his head and was about to suggest they all head back to the koi pond, or the wedding display, if they weren't done there. Just then, a familiar voice snapped, "I said, 'I'm fine!' Get that confounded thing away from me!"

Harry pushed forward and stared, as the paramedics insistently pressed an oxygen mask over a dark-haired man's thin, beaky face.

He looked an awful lot like Severus Snape!

Harry watched as the man pulled the mask off and irritably pushed free of the paramedics. He was just getting to his feet, when Holy Howard pounced.

"YEA, VERILY! The LORD is Mighty and Great in MERCY!" he proclaimed loudly, holding his leaflets up in one hand and pushing down on the dark-haired man's head with the other, catching him in a kneeling posture and holding him down.

"Yea, Brother! We are ALL SINNERS! Sinners in a World of EVIL! But even the BLACKEST of SINS the LORD will forgive the TRULY REPENTANT! Are you SAVED, Brother? Have you seen the WAY of the LORD, now that His HAND has TOUCHED you? MIGHTY is His NAME! He stretcheth out His HAND, and the AFFLICTED are HEALED! He SAVETH the Sinner called to REDEMPTION, yea, even as the WICKED are CAST down! AMEN! AMEN! Let us PRAISE HIM!"

"Get off me, you arrogant arse!" the unfortunate man snarled. "You wouldn't know evil if it walked up and asked you the time of day!" He threw Howard's hand off and got to his feet, jerking his clothing straight and shaking his head to toss his longish hair back out of his face.

"Merlin's bollocks," Harry breathed, "It is Snape!" He started forward, but Snape noticed the motion and looked toward him. The expression on his face when their eyes met ought to have qualified as a fourth Unforgivable.
All the guilt Harry had pushed to the back of his mind over the past few weeks came rushing back with a vengeance. He felt himself flushing, as the mute accusation in Snape's eyes pierced him, and he stared at his shoes in shame.

Harry Sodding Potter! Severus fumed as he ducked behind a tall display to watch the unexpected intruders. It was bad enough he couldn't go a day at work in the Wizarding world without hearing someone prattle on about Harry Potter and his glorious victory. He didn't need the brat mucking up his perfectly ordinary Muggle-style employment, nor did he fancy being stared at as he arranged the anthuriums, or seeing the look on Potter's face, be it pity or pleasure, at the degrading depths to which Severus had fallen!

He had a word with his temporary employer and headed off to bring in more stock from the staging area behind the pavilion. With a little luck, the brats would have moved on by the time he got back.

He hadn't reckoned on the wedding display, nor Longbottom's newfound infatuation with Muggle-style herbology. He made four trips out to the trucks and back, lugging heavy crates of plants and cursing every step of the way.

And they were still over by the wedding booth; he could hear the Weasley girl shrieking over some bit of inanity or other.

Merlin, but his back hurt! His feet had quit speaking to him long since. He mopped sweat from his brow and leaned against one of the tables, fighting a wave of dizziness. His head was rather...swimmy...and everything was...tilted...dark...

The next thing he knew, he was on the floor, with Winifred kneeling beside him, her face pale as she patted his cheek.

There were far too many people crowding in. He closed his eyes and let himself drift, only to be jarred nearer to consciousness by an offensively loud voice ranting about sin and salvation.

He rolled his eyes and wished he dared hex the idiot...assuming he could focus enough to cast spells. At the moment, that was hardly a given.

A couple of official-looking young men with medical equipment pushed their way through the crowd and started asking questions he couldn't be bothered to answer.

He heard Winifred babbling, telling them he'd just collapsed; no, she didn't think he had hit his head; yes, she'd seen him eat a sandwich a few hours ago.

They shone a bright light in his eyes and began poking and prodding him. One of them pricked his finger with something very sharp, as the other slipped a mask over his nose and mouth. In a few moments, he felt a bit more clear-headed. When they tried to stick a needle in his arm, he was annoyed enough to sit up and bat it away. He pulled the mask off and said, "I'm fine. Just dizzy a moment." He tried to get up, but they held him down and tried to put the mask back on.

"I said, 'I'm fine!' Get that confounded thing away from me!" he snapped, pushing it away.

"You passed out, mate," one of them said. "Your blood sugar's almost nil. Here, open up," he
added, taking hold of Severus's chin and popping something in his mouth.

It was sweet and tasted of oranges. It melted quickly on his tongue, and in a moment he felt less distant, more centered and focused.

"You need to be careful; you can't go so long without eating, particularly under heavy physical exertion. Are you diabetic? Taking insulin?"

"No, no--" Severus waved them off impatiently and struggled to his knees. Before he could push himself up to his feet, a beefy hand crashed down on his head and the blowhard with the religious fixation began bellowing again.

The paramedics swore and tried to pull him away. Severus snarled "Get off me, you arrogant arse!" He threw the idiot's arm off and got to his feet, glaring. "You wouldn't know evil if it walked up and asked you the time of day!"

The oaf looked injured and offended, but retreated, muttering something about Godless ingrates.

Severus shook himself and pulled his shirt straight. He heard Winifred thanking the paramedics, who were trying to convince him to call his doctor's office and get a blood test for something or other. Severus nodded irritably, just wanting them to let him be. He turned around and found himself staring down the aisle at a crowd of morbidly curious Muggles...and Harry Potter.

His shoulders stiffened, and he glared at the Boy Wonder and his little court of hangers-on, until Potter had the grace to flush and avert his eyes. Rude little beast, Severus thought, First in line to gawk at the public spectacle of Severus Snape, day labourer, fallen arse over tip in the middle of a sodding Muggle flower show.

He scowled and made his way back behind the counter. Winifred was very concerned and kept pressing fizzy drinks and greasy food on him, until he told her he really could do with a rest. She nodded sympathetically and suggested he stretch out in the cab of the lorry, unless he preferred to go home.

He would have much preferred to go home, but he refused to concede to a moment's weakness and the gawking onlookers. "Just a nap," he told her. "I shall return in an hour."

"Take as long as you need," she assured him.

He went back to the lorry, stretched out on the old bench seat and was fast asleep in moments.

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"I still can't believe we saw Snape working at a Muggle flower show!" Ron said, shaking his head.

They were all sitting around the small drawing room in the east wing of Longboteham Hall, where Neville still lived with his grandmother. Augusta Longbottom had presided over dinner, but retired soon afterwards, leaving the younger generation to themselves. House Elves had brought coffee and sweets, and the five of them had settled in for a comfortable evening.

Neville was completely absorbed in studying some brochures from the show, with Ginny leaning over his arm and pointing out her favorites.
"Why do you suppose he was there?" Harry asked. He was reluctant to talk about Snape at all, but ignoring the question would have been worse.

"Dunno. Maybe he's got something dodgy going on, that he doesn't want the Ministry to find out?" Ron speculated.

Hermione shook her head. "He's got to report in for a weekly wand inspection, Ron, don't you remember?"

Harry and Ron both stared at her.

Hermione sighed. "Honestly! Am I the only one who keeps track of these things?"

"Yes, Hermione," they all chorused, including Neville and Ginny, who didn't even look up from their brochures.

Hermione blushed and had to laugh. "Well, really! I would have thought you would at least know what his final sentence was, Harry, after you practically threatened the Wizengamot over it!"

"All I said was they couldn't send him to Azkaban, Hermione," he protested. "And they couldn't. I might not like the...well, I might not like Snape, but I saw into his mind; I heard what Professor McGonagall had to say; I read the warnings he sent; and I viewed Professor Dumbledore's memories. I know that he...obeyed Dumbledore's wishes. He didn't deserve prison, for that." Harry winced at the memory of other things Snape hadn't deserved, but had suffered nonetheless.

He'd had a long talk with Krum, a day or two afterwards, and had found the Bulgarian open, friendly, and completely clueless about what he had done that night. Harry had even tried a careful touch of Legilimency, but Krum's memory of the whole day and night was just...a blur. There were flashes of sight and sound and taste, but nothing definite. It was as if someone had washed away the images and sensations until they had run, like watercolours under a garden hose.

Hermione sighed and brought him back to their conversation. "Well, you may have kept him from prison, but the Wizengamot didn't seem very happy about it. They levied a huge reparations fine; he'll be paying it for the rest of his life, unless he finds a buried treasure or something else incredibly valuable. His apparition license is monitored, and he has to have his wand inspected every week, to prove he hasn't been doing any of the spells on the list of restrictions they gave him." Hermione shook her head. "It must be difficult for him to find work, under all those restrictions. Perhaps he decided it would be easier in the Muggle world."


"Do you suppose he's sick?" Harry asked. "He looked...I don't know...sort of off-colour, don't you think? And passing out like that..." He wondered if Snape had been hurt worse than suspected during the battle...or afterwards. Madam Pomfrey had checked him over a few more times before his trial, and she'd given him some more pain and healing potions, but Harry had no idea if Snape had told her about...well, about anything embarrassing or...intimate. Krum had been brutal, even if Snape didn't remember it, and Harry still didn't know exactly what he had done to Snape.

Hermione nodded slowly. "He might just have been a little light-headed. Some people forget to eat when they ought - unlike others," she said with a pointed look at Ron, who was munching an éclair and grinned unrepentantly back at her. "But he could be ill. I don't think anyone really knows what being a channel for that much wild magic would do to a person," she said. "Madam Pomfrey gave him some tonic for regaining magical balance, but she said she wasn't sure it would do much for him."
Harry nodded thoughtfully. "I wonder..." he let the thought trail off, shaking his head.

"Wonder what, Harry?" Ginny enquired, reaching across Neville's lap to turn the page.

"Nothing...I just...I thought maybe someone should...check on him, see if he's all right, I suppose. Stupid, I guess." He rubbed the back of his neck and told himself it hadn't been his fault, and if Snape was sick, he certainly wouldn't want Harry coming around to bother him.

"That's a great idea, Harry," Hermione enthused.

"Er...it is?"

"Yes! You could go and say..."

"Say what? I just happened to be at the flower show and I was really surprised to see you, especially when you passed out in the middle of the pavilion? Oh, and by the way, you look like hell; are you all right?" Harry rolled his eyes.

"You...you could ask him if he's brewing anything, these days" Neville suggested hesitantly. "If he does need work, maybe he'd be willing to discuss it."

Hermione snapped her fingers. "Wolfsbane! You could ask him to make the wolfsbane potion for Remus, Harry! You know he says the stuff he gets from Moonwalker's Medicaments doesn't work the way it should! And it's expensive stuff; you could offer to pay Snape double!"

By the time Ron and Ginny chimed in, agreeing with Hermione and Neville, Harry reluctantly agreed. He would pay a visit to Snape and see just what was going on with their old Potions professor.
Chapter 6

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which Severus does some research, and Harry pays a visit.

Severus sat in his usual chair, with a stack of ancient books beside him. He had had to do something he particularly disliked, something the Ministry would definitely not have approved, had they known the particulars. He had gone back to Domus Basilicus, the home of his mother's forebears in York, and had very politely and humbly asked his Great-Great Aunt Lavinia for permission to borrow a few texts from the family library.

Unlike the Hogwarts Library, or the great British Wizarding Library near Oxford, the Prince family library was a small, highly selective collection. He happened to know that it contained a number of works on sexual and reproductive magic, dating back to the Roman Empire.

He had finally found some references to male pregnancy, complete with citations and testimonial evidence from attending midwives and healers. There were even genealogies listed, with annotations showing that the practice, although quite rare, had sometimes been used to keep a bloodline from dying out, when the last scion of a house proved incapable of siring sons, or, apparently, was utterly uninterested in the opposite sex.

The documented methods for achieving the conceptio agnatus varied wildly, even within a single record. It was clear that all of them were chancy, at best, and potentially deadly, at worst. Some involved potions that made Severus blanch as he read the formulae; others relied upon intricate rituals and complex combinations of spells. Some texts swore the act of conception must take place at the dark of the moon; others insisted it was only possible on the equinoxes or at the solstices. One particularly gruesome account suggested the wizard desirous of conceiving should bathe in the blood of nine virgins, wear the testicles of a stallion around his neck, and then consume the “entrailles” of a woman who had borne at least three viable children, prior to attempting conception.

On reading that, Severus had dropped the book and run to the toilet, where he vomited violently and repeatedly, until he was clammy and shaking.

He had been tempted to burn that particular volume.

He was rereading the book that described male conception through a combination of sex magic and power-sharing, in the hopes of finding some clue to reversing the spell or terminating the pregnancy, but so far he’d found nothing. It seemed that male pregnancy was so difficult to achieve, no one who managed it had ever dreamed that someone might possibly change his mind, or that it might be desirable - or necessary! - to end it prior to term.

He had just found a barely-legible footnote and was trying to decipher it, when there was a knock on his front door.

It was well past time for his usual Sunday morning missionary, and there was no post today, not that he was expecting a delivery. Frowning, he put his book down and went to the door.
"Yes?"

"Snape? Er...it's Harry Potter. I need to talk to you."

Wonderful.

Just bloody fucking marvelous!

"Snape? Snape, are you there?"

"No, I've charmed the bloody doorknob to talk to idiots! Go away, Potter!"

"Come on, Snape! I need to talk to you."

"The need is not reciprocal, Mr. Potter. Go. Away."

"Snape...look, just let me in, all right? I can open the door myself, if I have to."

Severus snatched the door open and glared at his unwelcome guest. "Indeed, Mr. Potter? I see your sense of entitlement has not diminished. Is there anything else you see fit to simply take? The silver, perhaps? It's worth little, but do help yourself!" He left the door wide open and stalked back to his books.

Potter shut the door and trailed along behind him.

Severus sat back in his chair and reopened his book, pointedly ignoring Potter.

"So, um...how have you been?" Potter stood just inside the doorway, looking around nervously.

Severus snorted. "Spare me the pretense that this is a polite social call, Mr. Potter. Why are you here?"

Potter took his question for invitation and seated himself in the other chair. "Well, I just...er...I wondered how things were going. I...ah...well, of course, I saw you at the flower show, the other day, and...um..."

Severus sighed and set the book aside. "What is it you want, Potter? An account of my comings and goings? I assure you, the Ministry keeps a most detailed record of every apparition and every spell I cast. Apart from that, what I do is my own affair, unless you are here to tell me otherwise."

He arched an eyebrow at the young man, who was fidgeting in the chair.

"No, no, of course not," Potter said hastily. "I...actually, I came to ask if you were...er...brewing anything...ah, for sale, that is."

Severus cocked his head to one side, considering the question. "Have you taken to illicit potions, now that the thrill of battling the Dark Lord is gone? I regret--"

"No! I just wondered, would you brew the wolfsbane potion for Remus?"

Severus stared.

"I'd pay," Potter assured him. "The stuff at the apothecary is crap, apparently. Remus says it just doesn't work the way it should; it's nowhere near as good as yours. I...um...I'll pay you double the commercial price. What do you say?"

Severus rapidly totted up the cost of supplies for brewing wolfsbane, figured in the time it would
take, and compared it to the going price for the finished product at the apothecary in Diagon Alley. It would be a tidy profit...and a guaranteed extra income every month, assuming the flea-bitten werewolf and Potter both stayed alive.

Potter continued fidgeting as he considered the offer. It was tempting. Very, very tempting. He ran down the list of ingredients in his mind, frowning.

"I can get you the ingredients every month - or better yet, I'll have them delivered. You won't have to go buy anything or gather it, or whatever else you have to do to the stuff."

Severus snorted. "'Stuff,' Mr. Potter? How sad that your vaunted talent for potions has so rapidly dissipated, away from Hogwarts and its...resources."

Potter flushed. "Well, you can give me a list of what you'll need, can't you?"

"Hm." Severus continued down his mental list, until he came to the mugwort. Damn. Mugwort, or tansy, as his Muggle grandmother had called it, was definitely not a safe herb for an expectant...well, it wasn't safe for anyone who was carrying a child to handle, particularly not over the lengthy and complicated process of brewing wolfsbane potion. Damn and blast!

"I'm sorry, Mr. Potter," he said, "but I am unable to assist you."

"What?" Potter looked dumbfounded.

"I am unable to agree to your proposition," he said, clearly and precisely. "If that is all--"

"Look, if it's the money, I'll pay you triple! Whatever else you need, just let me know!" He sounded desperate.

Severus frowned. "What's going on, Potter? Lupin has been taking commercial wolfsbane ever since that one pack rebelled against Greyback and came over to your side. That's been more than a year, now. Why does it matter so much to you that I brew it?"

Potter flushed. "It's...yours is just...better, that's all."

Severus narrowed his eyes. "If you are unwilling to be honest with me, under my own roof, get out! Now."

"I--I was worried about you, all right?" Potter got to his feet and began pacing. "I saw you collapse at the flower show, and I just--"

"Ah. Guilt, is it? Afraid I was going to die and make a mockery of your little exhibition of bravado in front of the Wizengamot? Not such a noble thing, is it, to have people say, 'Oh, yes, Harry Potter spoke for Snape before the Wizengamot...of course, the old bastard dropped dead a few weeks later.' No, they'd shake their heads, wouldn't they? They might even wonder if you'd spared me Azkaban so you could watch me starve to death on the streets. Not a very pretty picture of the Boy Who Lived, hm?"

"You're out of your tree, Snape," Potter said. "Damn it, I was just worried that you hadn't recovered completely. You never did go to St. Mungo's, and I didn't know if you talked to Madam Pomfrey about your...um..."

Severus let out a harsh bark of laughter. "Ah, so that's it! Sexual guilt? Afraid Pomfrey would find me dead and reproach you for the damage done by your manly sword?" He snorted again. "Potter, your prick is hardly a deadly weapon, no matter how much you may think of it. And now that we've sorted that, you may leave with a clear conscience."
Potter sighed. "You really won't make the wolfsbane? At any price?"

"As I told you, I am unable to assist you." Severus said, rising. "Good day, Potter."

Potter got to his feet and headed for the door, looking dejected.

Severus was about to open it, when he felt another wave of dizziness and clutched at the bookcase beside the door, to steady himself.

"Snape!" Potter grabbed at him, trying to hold him upright. "Damn! I knew it! You're not all right; you need to see a Healer!"

"Let go of me!" Severus snapped, trying to shake his hands off. That was a mistake, as his vision blurred, and he had to cling harder to the bookcase.

"Like hell I will," Potter retorted. "I'm taking you right to St. Mungo's! Hang on!"

"NO!" Severus shouted in real alarm.

Potter rocked back on his heels and stared incredulously. "You're sick, Snape! You need help!"

"I will not be made a bloody freak show!" Severus snarled. "Every damned healer and snot-nosed newsie from the entire fucking Wizarding World poking their damned noses in, desperate for a peek! I will NOT be put on display, pointed at, giggled over, gawked at, held up for every soddin' shit-stirrer to make a meal of! I REFUSE!" he shouted.

Potter was gawking at him, open-mouthed. Severus took a deep breath and unconsciously cradled his barely-bulging abdomen, as he straightened up. He could see the wheels slowly turning in Potter's head, as those green eyes looked him up and down, then shot from his pale, sweaty face to his belly.

"Snape...are you...?" he asked slowly, staring round-eyed at Snape's hand where it was curved protectively over his belly.

"Yes, Mr. Potter," Severus snapped, "I am pregnant!"

Harry Potter, The Boy Who Lived, Saviour of the Wizarding World, and Defeater of Voldemort, fainted dead away.

Severus left him lying beside the door and went to fix himself a cup of tea. He opened a tin of biscuits - rather dear, but he'd had a maddening craving for the ginger-lemon ones, recently - and put a handful on a plate. He settled back in his old chair and resumed his research, sipping tea and munching biscuits.

Potter came to somewhere during his routine, but Severus ignored him, until the young idiot came back into the study and sat down across from him.

"How..." Potter shook his head. "That's just not possible," he said slowly. I mean...I remember jokes about it, from school, but I always thought they were...just jokes!" He looked pleadingly at Severus. "I've never seen - never even heard of a real pregnant man!"
"Mr. Potter," Severus said coldly. "My disinclination to be gawked at most definitely includes you."

"Sorry!" Potter sat back in the chair and chewed his lip for a moment. "I--" he began, then stopped and shifted in the chair, frowning.

Severus ignored him and returned to studying the cryptic footnote. He picked up another, later volume and flipped through it for a moment, until he found the reference he was looking for, then went back to the original. "Damn. Well, thanks for sod-all, Master Andronicus!" He slapped the book closed and set it aside.

"No help, huh?" Potter asked.

Severus sighed. "Apparently, the one documented time a wizard attempted to terminate a successful male conception - not his own, evidently - the attempt not only killed the host, but the wizard who tried it died when his house collapsed in an earthquake, the following week. The author very helpfully notes that, due to the extreme difficulty of achieving *conceptio agnatus* in the first place, a successful male conception must be considered a mark of the gods' favour, and left in their capricious hands, for good or ill."

"Oh."

"Yes, Mr. Potter. 'Oh,' indeed."

Potter seemed to reach a decision. He let out a gusty breath, then said, "Snape...Severus, I am really sorry about this. I had no intention - I had no idea it was even possible! And I know I'm probably the last person you want around, after...after what happened, but I...I'm going to do right by you. You won't be alone; I'm going to be there, for the baby." He looked rather green around the gills, but gravely determined, nonetheless.

Severus arched an eyebrow. How amusingly quaint, properly Victorian, and positively Gryffindor! It was on his tongue to tell Potter he'd best join the queue of suspects, but something stopped him. The boy had an overdeveloped sense of idealism, but how deep did it go?

"Are you, indeed, Mr. Potter? You intend to flout society and give your name to your bastard child, the child of a murdering, traitorous Death Eater?" He arched an eyebrow and watched the boy's face redden. "And whatever will Miss Weasley say? Do you intend to break her heart and shame her before her parents, her family and all your friends, by admitting your sordid, perverted sexual liaison with a Dark wizard old enough to be your father?"

Potter's hands clenched on the arms of the chair, but he took a deep breath and his voice was very controlled as he said, "First off, I don't really give a crap about society; that baby is a miracle, no matter how it actually got here. Second, it wasn't murder; that was established at the trial. You were a traitor to Voldemort, which balances out the Death Eater part, in my book. And finally, Ginny will probably be as surprised as everyone else, when she finds out, but it's really not her business, as she's engaged to Neville, and they're getting married next year."

He gave a rueful smile at Severus's look of surprise. "They got really close, the first year of the war, and then one day, Ginny walked in on Seamus, Dean and me. It wasn't anything serious, just...tension relief, I suppose, but she decided we'd probably all be happier in the long run if she and Neville tried to make a go of it."

Severus snorted.

"Anyway, I'm not going to be breaking anyone's heart, and I'm not ashamed..." he paused and
cleared his throat. "No, that's wrong. I am ashamed that I...took advantage of you when you weren't in any condition to stop me. I hope...I'd like to think we both wanted it, at the time, but since neither one of us can remember what happened, I can't even be sure of that."

Potter looked miserable, and Severus repressed a sudden impulse to put a comforting arm around him. Instead, he folded his arms and said, "I think there has been enough baring of souls for one day, Mr. Potter. I am tired, and I have a job to get to in the morning. You know the way out, I believe," he added pointedly.

Potter merely nodded and got to his feet. "I meant it; I am sorry. I don't expect you to forgive me, but I will do right by you, and the baby."

When he left, the house suddenly seemed dark and empty. Severus grumbled to himself as he cleared away his tea things and heated some tinned soup for supper. He hardly tasted it.

He hung out clean clothes for work and went to bed.

He lay awake, staring at the ceiling for a long, long time, before sleep finally came.

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Potter was back on Tuesday evening.

He showed up again Thursday morning, waiting on the stoop with the milk and the newspaper.

He knocked on the door five minutes after Severus arrived home from work, Friday night.

Each time, Severus growled at him and shut the door in his face. Potter didn't seem particularly discouraged, but he also didn't seem to have a bloody clue what he actually wanted. It wasn't as if he could pop down to the local pawn shop, come back with a cheap ring and a handful of flowers and offer to make an honest man of him!

The following Sunday, however, he found he had, perhaps, underestimated the brat.

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"He's what?" Hermione's eyes were round as saucers as she stared at Harry across the table at the little cafe.


"But, Harry, that's..." Hermione gazed off for a moment, eyes sparkling, and Harry bit back a groan. "That's amazing! Did he tell you how he managed it?"

"It was an accident, Hermione; he didn't 'manage' anything. I think maybe all that magic on the battlefield...you said Madam Pomfrey didn't know what it would do to someone."

"Well, no, but it could hardly make a man pregnant!" Hermione objected. "How on earth--"
Harry reddened. "Well, how do you suppose!"

"Harry! You mean you -- and Snape?" Her eyes nearly popped out of her head.

Harry groaned and rested his head in his hands. "I don't know how it happened, and neither does he...but we woke up in bed together, that morning at Grimmauld Place. Something weird happened that night, Hermione. Nobody in the place can remember anything from the early evening of that day until the following morning. You said something about all the Pepper-Up we'd been taking?"

Hermione nodded slowly. "Yes...and I think the twins had some new potion they were handing out. It was supposed to help ease the Pepper-Up rebound symptoms. Then, too," she said, looking embarrassed, "we must have been drinking quite a bit that night; I picked up dozens of bottles the next day. The combination probably blanked out the memories."

Harry sighed. "Well, anyway, the point is, Snape's pregnant, and it's my fault. I've got to look after him and the baby, Hermione. It's so strange; when he told me, I completely blacked out, but ever since then...I just keep thinking about the baby. There's going to be a baby in the world that I helped make!"

Hermione looked a bit worried, but she just nodded. "Well, I don't suppose you're going to ask him to marry you," she said, "but what did you have in mind?"

"Will you help me?" Harry asked.

Hermione rolled her eyes. "Don't I always?"

"Here's what I was thinking--"

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Severus stared at the sheaf of parchment Potter had shoved into his hands as he'd pushed his way over the threshold, Sunday morning.

"You bought a what?"

"A house. And I haven't bought it, yet," Potter explained, summoning another cup and helping himself to tea. "It's ready for you to look it over before we sign the papers. The agent will meet us there at eleven."

Severus sank down onto a kitchen chair and read the document again. "Has it escaped your notice that I already own a house?"

Potter shrugged. "So do I, come to that. But do you really think this is a good place to raise a kid? I wouldn't want to raise kids in Number 12," he said, shuddering. "This house is out in the country, where we can have a garden and a greenhouse and dogs and rabbits and maybe horses or even Abraxans. There's an orchard and a wooded area with a stream. There are Wizarding neighbors a mile or two to the west, and a Muggle village about five miles south of the house." He leaned over and turned a page. "See these outbuildings? We could convert one into a lab for you, if you like. It's a nice, big house; lots of rooms. The kitchen needs redoing and so do the baths, but Charlie and Bill went over it before I saw it and said the basic fabric's sound."
Severus sat back and blinked at Potter. "And you expect me to - what? Move in and be your kept man? Your curiosity?"

Potter's smile faltered. "No. I want you to move in and have a decent place to live, a place where you don't have to worry about the roof, or keeping the larder full, or that some Muggle tough is going to break in some night. I want to know that you're getting proper medical care, and eating right...and not fainting in the middle of some Muggle shop."

Severus felt a sudden lump in his throat and angrily swallowed it down. He was about to throw the papers back in Potter's face, but the picture of the handsome old house caught his eye, again, and stopped him.

Well, after all, why not?

If Potter's idealism and zeal were insisting on looking after him, why shouldn't he take advantage of it? His job at Ulgra's paid the bills, but it certainly wasn't enough to raise a child on. He hadn't yet figured out what he was going to tell her about his belly, once it grew too obvious to ignore, let alone how he would explain that he would need "maternity leave" before long.

It was probably unfair to let Potter continue under the delusion that he was to blame, but life was bloody unfair most of the time. It wasn't as if Potter couldn't afford to buy a house and raise a child, after all, and the amount he would spend keeping one worn out old Death Eater fed and clothed would never even be missed.

He could continue working, if he needed a sop to his pride, he told himself. And when his belly got too big, if Ulgra made difficulties about him taking a long vacation, he could simply quit and not have to worry.

He had to admit it would also be nice to know that someone would be on hand to call Pomfrey or another competent healer when they were needed; someone who wouldn't be ignored or turned away from St. Mungo's. Potter's fame had rankled with him since the boy first came to Hogwarts; perhaps it was time to make use of that fame.

And really, it was possible that Potter was the father. Unlikely, but still possible.

He smoothed the parchment out on the table. "Eleven o'clock, you said, Mr. Potter?"

Potter nodded.

"Very well. I will need to change my shirt. Please be aware that it is inadvisable for me to apparate in this condition."

"The Floo's hooked up," Potter said, beginning to smile.

"Indeed. Well, I suppose it will do no harm to look at the place."
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

In which our heroes view a house, and Harry sees more than he expected.

Harry was buzzing with excitement as they went to look at the house. Hermione had helped him navigate the confusing maze of the Wizarding real estate world, with some help from Kingsley and a great deal of research. They'd looked at dozens of adverts for homes to let or sell, until Harry had fallen in love with this one.

It was a large, rambling old house, with a climbing rose on one end and ivy all along the opposite wall. It had not been lived in for some time, the agent told them as they exited the Floo and dusted themselves off. She explained that the current owner had also inherited a house in Morocco, and as he preferred warmer climes, he had moved there some years back, married and was raising his family there.

She gave them a full tour of the house. Severus was his usual surly, snarky self, and was quick to point out every flaw he spotted.

Harry trailed along behind them as the agent tried to keep up with Severus's running commentary on the deplorable state of the wiring, the plumbing, the plaster, the flooring...

Harry just smiled. The house just felt like home, for some reason. When they looked at the living room, he could see himself sitting on the floor, playing with a chubby-cheeked toddler, while Severus sat back and watched, the slight curl of his lip betraying his contentment.

In the kitchen, he saw Severus standing at the stove with his hair tied back, scowling at something in a steaming cauldron, while Harry held a little boy up to the kitchen faucet to wash his grubby hands.

It was the same, all over the house. When they came to one of the larger bedrooms, Harry took one glance, flushed bright red and excused himself. He hurried to the closest toilet and splashed some water on his face to cool it.

He told himself he'd better get a grip. He was taking responsibility for the situation - he had sworn to himself that he would never let Severus know what had happened to him, earlier that night - and all that meant was that he would make sure Severus had a safe place to live and proper medical care. Once the baby came, he would be there to help raise it. Moving in together didn't mean anything beyond that. Pragmatism, that's all it was.

That didn't explain why he had looked into the bedroom and seen Severus, gloriously naked, his head thrown back and his mouth open in silent longing, as Harry bent between his thighs and sucked him to ecstasy.

Divination was all a crock, anyway.
The agent left them alone in the house for a while, as she Flooed back to her office for some records relating to the history of the house. Severus came up the cellar stairs, nodding thoughtfully.

"Haven't you had enough of dungeons?" Harry teased.

To his surprise, Severus rolled his eyes and drawled, "Far more than you will ever know, Mr. Potter."

"Do you think you could manage to call me Harry?"

"Is it important?"

"It's shorter than Mr. Potter," he said, grinning.

"In the interests of efficiency, then, Harry," Severus said, inclining his head. "And speaking of efficiency, the cellar is quite sound, with well-built shelving and bins. It appears quite dry and decently ventilated. And no, I do not propose to put a laboratory there. However, you mentioned a garden and orchard. It would be convenient for storing preserves and root vegetables. Perhaps cider or wine as well."

"The living room is nice, isn't it? I thought we could get a big sofa and a couple of those really big chairs--"

Severus waved a hand dismissively. "As long as the roof, wiring and plumbing are sound, and the space is adequate for its intended use, I have no other concerns."

Harry frowned. "Which of the bedrooms did you like best?" he asked, trying not to flush at the memory of his vision, fantasy or whatever the hell it had been.

Severus shrugged. "It is of no consequence. If there is room for a bed in it, that is sufficient."

Harry sighed, disappointed that Severus seemed so uninterested in the house and planning. He took another look in the kitchen, opening cabinets and playing with the taps for a bit, then had a sudden idea. "Oh, I nearly forgot, how much room will you need for your books?"

He was unprepared for the stricken look that flitted across Severus's face.

"Very little," Severus said bitterly. "The majority of my collection was confiscated by the Ministry. Most of what was left, I had to sell. What you saw in my house is all that is left." He turned away and looked out a window, but not before Harry noticed he had bitten his lip to keep it from quivering.

Harry stood beside him and took his arm. Severus stiffened at the contact, but looked down at him enquiringly.

"Come with me," Harry said.

He led Severus down the hall and opened doors as they went. "Pick a library," he told Severus. "A good, big room with lots of space for shelves and a big desk and maybe a comfy sofa, not too big, for one corner. We can open up the ceiling, if you want, and run the shelving all the way up. I saw a movie, once, where they had a ladder on rails that ran all around this huge library..."
stopped, because Severus was staring at him with an expression Harry had never seen on his face before.

He looked stunned, *grateful*...and as if he were about to burst into tears.

Harry gripped his hand, hard. "Pick a *big* room, Severus. When the baby's old enough, there'll have to be space for picture books and story books, and school books, too."

Severus cleared his throat. "Potter...Harry...I...they're *gone*, Harry."

"The Ministry never throws anything away," Harry told him, "and they're notoriously greedy. If I make an offer for them, I'm pretty sure they'll be able to dig up your books." He wrapped his other hand around their clasped hands. "As for the books you had to sell...what can be sold can be bought, right? We'll find them, Severus. Just pick out a room for them to live in, once they're home."

Severus nodded slowly and walked forward as if in a daze, to pick out the library for their new home.


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"You've done *WHAT*?!!?"

"You knew I was looking at houses," Harry said. "In fact, Bill and Charlie checked this one out for me."

"Yeah, but I didn't know you were moving in with Severus Sodding Snape! You've gone completely round the twist!" Ron stared at him as if he'd sprouted a second head.

"Ron, look, I know you don't like him, but--"

"Don't *like* him? Harry, you're the one who was frothing at the mouth and screaming for his blood, just a few months back, remember? This is *Snape* we're talking about, mate! Death Eater? Killed Dumbledore? Does any of this sound familiar to you at all?"

Harry sighed. "I know, Ron, but--"

"But nothing! You've gone stark raving mad! Either that, or he's got you under Imperius!"

"Oh, Ron, don't be silly," Hermione said, coming into the room. "Professor Snape is still subject to weekly wand inspections. He certainly can't cast an Unforgivable, and he wouldn't be so foolish as to try that one on Harry, anyway!"

"Hermione, don't tell me you approve of this!"

"It's not our place to approve or disapprove, but for your information, I think it's a very good idea."

Ron shook his head. "I've got to get some air. I'll talk to you when you come to your senses, Harry." He got up and left.

Harry sighed.
"Harry, don't worry about it. I'll talk to him," Hermione said. "It'll take a while; you know how Ron is."

"Yeah. I know."

"How are you doing?"

"We signed the deed last week; we're moving in on Tuesday."

"And? Are you worried? Excited? Nervous?"

"Bloody well petrified, Hermione," Harry said ruefully.


Ulgra was amused when Severus told her he needed an extra day off, as he would be moving house.

"Summat wrong wi' t'old house?"

"Not really, but the new house is larger and has much better amenities," he said.

"Aye, like 'ot young toyboy, eh? Comes with t'house, does he?"

Severus stared at her until she cackled madly. "Ye've been goin' round mutt'rin' Potter this an' Potter that, fer weeks now! Caught ye a Potter, have ye, finally? Nice lookin' cove, Potter! Seen 'im in t'Prophet."

"He was my student," Severus began, "and he testified at my trial."

"Aye, an' now 'e's settin' ye up in a fine house, eh?" She puffed on her pipe and chuckled to herself.

"I fail to see what is amusing about that," Severus snapped. "It happens to be convenient for both of us. So, it is understood that I will not be here on Wednesday?"

"Oh, aye!" she nodded, puffing away.

He sniffed in annoyance and finished hanging the garlands of icewort from the hooks in the ceiling. "Well, that's done for the day. I'm off. I will return on Thursday morning."

"Aye, good," she said, nodding.

He headed out the door.

"Fine arse on 'im, has Potter," she called after him, cackling.

Severus groaned.
The plumbing and wiring renovations and all the major magical alterations had all been completed, and the house was ready for occupancy. Harry had refused to let the agent hire a decorator, saying they preferred to do the work themselves. When Severus rolled his eyes at the comment, he added that they could always hire a decorator later on, if they had to.

Severus's possessions were hardly enough to fill a trunk, let alone the spacious bedroom Harry insisted he take. Except for the books, which had been shrunken and were in a box in the new, empty library, he had only his clothing, a small selection of laboratory equipment and potions ingredients, a tea kettle, and a framed photograph of his mother.

Harry pretended not to notice that he hadn't brought the entire contents of his house at Spinner's End. He'd left the place habitable, locked and warded, just as he had done at the start of every school year, while teaching at Hogwarts.

Harry enthusiastically plunged into decorating the house. He brought home catalogues, paint samples, fabric swatches, and all manner of odds and ends that he scattered around the main living areas to make them look "homey."

Severus watched his efforts with amusement, a touch of annoyance, and a tiny dash of guilt. Harry's nesting impulse seemed to be extremely strong, and now that the boy had both leisure and opportunity to indulge it, he frequently lost all sense of perspective. A prime example was the day he came home from a shopping trip with fifteen sheet sets, each a more obnoxiously gaudy pattern than the last, and all sized to fit a single bed.

Neither of their beds was a single.

Severus was about to point this out to the idiot, when Harry beamed at him and said, "I thought we'd put them away until the baby's old enough for a big bed. They're charmed, see?" He held up a pillowcase that had winged ponies flying around amid fluffy clouds and rainbows.

Severus thought he was going to be ill.

The conversion of one of the old barns into a potions lab had been done quite satisfactorily. Severus set up his equipment and supplies, but between his job and Harry's apparent determination to keep him company every waking moment when he was at home, he had little time to brew.

Besides that, he was showing now, and he found it uncomfortable to stand in front of a steaming cauldron for very long. Bending over a worktable was no longer comfortable, either. He still went out to the lab for a while every evening, but for the most part, all he did was walk up and down in it and admire the gleaming counters, the orderly shelves and the beauty of the lab in general. He often sat behind the desk Harry had insisted he order and dozed off while admiring his beautiful workspace.
Their bedrooms were across the hall from each other, each with a door into the room at the end of the hall, the one they had elected as a nursery. It was a sensible layout, Severus admitted. Harry had insisted on adding *en suite* baths to each bedroom, which was definitely convenient, as it seemed Severus was *always* running to the loo, these days. The notion of a baby taking up residence in the nursery was still oddly abstract to him, but once it was there, they would both be within earshot.

He hadn't thought much about their proximity to each other.

He had caught himself more than once looking at Harry with an evaluating and appreciative eye that had no interest whatsoever in his accomplishments or fame. He watched Harry scraping or painting, or better yet, laying paving stones out on the terrace, and he failed to see The Boy Who Lived, or James Potter's son, or even the insufferable brat he had taught for six years.

What he saw was a healthy young man with a lightly bronzed, well-toned physique and an arse one could bounce a galleon on.

It was very unsettling.

Adding to his emotional confusion was that niggling guilt over the paternity issue. Harry was so bloody earnest about his home-making, and so utterly determined to ensure that Severus wanted for nothing...it was enough to turn any self-respecting Slytherin's stomach. Every now and then, he caught Harry looking at him, his face a mask of guilt and regret, and he wanted to admit everything.

He ruthlessly crushed the impulse every time it arose.

It wasn't his fault the idiot was so naive! He was such a bloody Gryffindor, and so determined to take the responsibility...why should Severus try to dissuade him? Harry *might* be the father of the child, Severus reasoned, and that was enough to justify his silence.

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Harry was in a torment of his own making.

He had thought it would be difficult, getting used to living with Severus, but to his surprise, everything had gone fairly smoothly. He tried to stay out of the way when Severus retreated to his lab, but apart from that, he found he just wanted to be somewhere near the man, no matter what either of them was supposed to be doing.

He found himself watching Severus all the time, even when he was just sitting and reading, or dozing in one of the huge chairs they'd put in the living room. He smiled to himself, remembering how he had once thought Snape's face ugly. Now it was merely familiar, and he was learning to read every expression. Severus said volumes with a mere curl of his lip or flaring of his nostrils. His eyes were especially eloquent.

Harry also spent a great deal of time watching Severus and his swelling belly, smiling to himself as Severus absently rubbed or patted it. He was fairly sure the taciturn Slytherin didn't even notice how often he touched it.
It would have been an idyllic example of domesticity, but for two things.

Harry was still consumed with guilt over what he had done to Severus, and worse, he was mortally afraid he might be falling for the man.

As Severus had refused to express a preference, Harry had given him the slightly larger bedroom, the one where he had visualized the two of them in bed together. He supposed he had hoped that the image would fade, once he grew accustomed to seeing Severus actually in the room, or once he got used to his own new bedroom.

He had been wrong. They went up to bed every night and Harry heard Severus behind the closed door of his room, readying himself for bed. He would lie back on his own bed, close his eyes and imagine every detail: the long fingers slipping the buttons of his shirt free, undoing his trousers and pushing them down...

There was only so much he could take.

Tonight, he lay down and listened again, visualizing Severus going about his nightly routine once more. He heard the heavy sigh that always preceded his disrobing. Harry could almost see him, slowly unbuttoning his shirt, draping it over a chair. He heard the bedsprings creak, then two dull thumps as Severus removed his shoes.

Harry slipped his hand into his boxers and took hold of his cock. He imagined Severus's hands on his trousers, unbuttoning them and pushing them down over his hips. His belly would be large, pale and rounded. Did he stroke it, caress it? Harry wondered what it felt like. Could he feel the baby from the outside? Was the skin soft and smooth, or was it hairy?

He began stroking himself as he tried to visualize it. He had only had a brief glimpse, that morning at Grimmauld Place, and it would be so different now...

Harry heard Snape's bedsprings creak as he lay down. He swiped his thumb over his glans and bit down on his lip to keep from crying out. Did Severus wank? He must, surely! Harry tried to visualize Severus's cock, standing up hard against the swell of his pregnant belly, purple with blood and slick with precome.

He stroked himself, imagining it was Severus's cock he was touching, stroking. He reached down to toy with his bollocks for a bit, then rested one hand on his belly and went back to wanking with the other. He closed his eyes and let the image of Severus, naked and needy, fill his mind. He slid his hand up and down, again and again, as he fantasized, imagining he held both their cocks in his hand and stroked them, pressing them against Severus's belly until he gasped and groaned, threw back his head and came, spattering creamy droplets all over the rounded dome of his pregnant belly.

The image was so very wrong and so incredibly erotic! Harry swallowed a whimper as he continued to wank, until his prick jerked in his grip and he came, blood-warm spunk flowing over his hand and decorating his own belly. He gasped as he milked himself and swirled the come into his belly with his free hand.

When his pulse had slowed again, he listened carefully, but there were no audible sounds from Severus's room.

He muttered a cleaning charm, then curled on his side to sleep, both sated and disgusted with himself.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

In which a dinner party has an unexpected outcome, and Madam Pomfrey is Not Amused.

"What do you mean, you haven’t had one yet?" Harry stared at Severus in astonishment.

"I have seen no reason for it," Severus said, glowering. "As I told you before, I will not be made a spectacle of!"

"But Severus, I thought we had agreed that Madam Pomfrey would handle all your prenatal care!"

"You agreed; I did not. I did agree that Pomfrey will be required for the delivery, as I anticipate I will be unable to cast the spells myself," he said.

"I should think not!" Harry cried, scandalized. "But don't you think you should at least consult with her a few times, first? Or do you expect her to show up and try to deliver the baby without any preparation at all? I know she's really good, but is she going to be able to take all this in stride? How many male pregnancies do you suppose she's handled?"

Severus sighed. "Very well. You may schedule an appointment at her office."

"Gee, thanks," Harry said sarcastically. "At least she's in private practice now, so you don't have to worry about going to Hogwarts."

"I could not, in any case," Severus said, frowning. "It's on that damned restricted list."

"Oh. Sorry," Harry said. "So, about this dinner party...I don't want you to be uncomfortable. I thought it would be nice to have some people over, but not if you're going to be miserable about it."

"I told you; have your party if you want it. I am perfectly capable of coping with an evening of social interaction. I did manage it for seventeen years, you know."

"Er...yeah. All right, I thought we'd ask Hermione and Ron, Remus and Tonks, and Neville and Ginny. Hermione has talked to all of them, so they won't be surprised about the baby, and they won't stare."

"So you say," Severus said darkly.

"Who would you like to invite?"

"I do not give parties, nor do I invite people to them."

"Severus, I wanted this to be something we could all enjoy! Isn't there anyone you'd want to have there?"
Severus sighed. "Very well. Draco and his wife, assuming they can be bothered."

"Is that all?"

"Unlike some people, I do not have the entire Wizarding World falling over itself to lick my arse!" Severus snapped.

"I didn't mean it like that!" Harry protested. "I just wondered if you wanted to ask anyone else."

Severus rolled his eyes, then got a rather evil look. "Ulgra Hingasdatter. And guest. She'll probably bring Winifred, if she comes."

Harry smiled and added the name to his list. "Great. That's your boss, right? She sounds nice," he added hopefully.

Severus snorted and walked away, shaking his head.

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The weather was perfect for an *al fresco* dinner party, and Harry had worked hard to get the terrace in shape for it, as well. He hadn't been optimistic or naive enough to try cooking for the party, and he certainly wasn't going to ask Severus to do it. Instead, he ordered all the food from the Ivy Tree, a restaurant in Diagon Alley he particularly liked. It was all ready in the kitchen, with appropriate warming or chilling spells on it.

The long table was spread with a cheerful tablecloth, which was held in place with a sticking charm. The places were set; the wine was chilled; and there were glowing lanterns floating around, casting a cheerful light all around.

Unfortunately, the guests were being right pains in the arse.

Hermione and Ron had arrived first. Hermione was clearly on edge and trying to overcompensate for it by being particularly cheerful and chatty. Ron supposedly had come to grips with Harry's choice of housemate, but his face was sullen and he responded to questions and comments with grimaces and grunts.

Remus and Tonks were next. Remus greeted Harry warmly and was cordial to Severus. Tonks gave Harry a hug, tripped over the rug and nearly wound up in Severus's lap. Considering that that particular space was currently occupied by an enormous pregnant belly, Severus's reaction of shoving her to the floor was probably the best one could reasonably expect.

Harry poured wine and juice and tried to get conversations started, with limited success.

Draco and his new bride, Gabrielle, arrived soon afterwards. Having received an explanatory note from Severus beforehand, Draco managed not to stare at his erstwhile protector. However, he could not refrain from sneering at the furniture, the decor, and the wine, masking it all with witty chatter that set Harry's teeth on edge.

Gabrielle kissed him on both cheeks, kissed Severus on both cheeks and exclaimed over his expectant condition, but in such a way that it was very difficult for anyone to take offense. She moved on to kiss Ron and Remus in the same fashion. They both got sappy grins on their faces and stared after her, clearly caught up in the Veela effect.
Hermione and Tonks were fuming.

Ulgra and Winifred turned up not by Floo or apparition, but in Winifred's delivery van. Ulgra cackled at Severus, who had begun his leave of absence the previous Monday, and gave him a packet of something dried and rather nasty-looking. She patted Harry's cheek and pinched his arse, then pulled out her pipe and began puffing clouds of green smoke into the air. Hermione pointedly cast an air purification charm and moved away from her.

Winifred seemed like a very pleasant woman, but she was definitely a bit intimidated by the assembled company. Fortunately, Neville and Ginny arrived in another few minutes, and Winifred and Neville immediately struck up an herbological conversation. Ginny looked annoyed and went over to join the Hermione and Tonks, so they could all be irritated together.

Harry managed to get them all chivvied out to the terrace and served the food.

"Harry, this is quite a charming location," Draco said with studied insolence, "you should consider building a proper house on it, one day."

"So, Severus, I had meant to ask you, did you ever figure out what confluence of spells caused the...er...condition?" Remus asked.

Hermione chimed in, "Yes! I've been wondering that, myself. I was doing some research in the Oxford Wizarding Library, a few weeks ago, and I ran across this fascinating text, quite ancient, regarding..."

"No, ze weazair is always mild at our home," Gabrielle explained to Ginny. "You an' Neville should come for ze visit, or bettair, for ze 'oneymoon! You ask your brozair, Beel, if I am right! It is so romantique, no?"

"I tried crossing them with venomous tentacula, but it didn't seed true. I've about given up, but if you think the composted wyvern dung is worth trying, I might give it a go," Winifred told Neville.

Harry poured more wine for everyone, and a glass of sparkling cider for Severus. He felt like an arse. Why had he ever thought this would be a good idea?

Ron had his eyes focused on his plate and was eating without a word. Hermione and Remus were discussing more and more uncomfortable theories about Severus's pregnancy, oblivious to the fact that he was glowering at both of them.

Tonks was glaring at Gabrielle and her hair kept running through the hot end of the spectrum, from bright yellow, through orange and red, to violet and back again, creating a startling visual effect that had apparently captivated Ulgra, who sucked on her pipe and stared at Tonks's head.

Gabrielle was going on and on about France, while Draco kept sniping at Harry about the house and everything in it.

Winifred and Neville had moved on from wyvern dung to the even more appetizing subject of the efficacy of grindylow emulsion for dwarf whomping willows.

All in all, Harry thought, it was a collossal mess.

Suddenly, Severus banged his glass down on the table, pushed his chair back and stood up. He stormed back into the house, glaring at no one in particular.

The conversations didn't even pause.
Harry got to his feet. "I'm afraid I must ask you all to leave," he said coldly. "We asked you here tonight to celebrate with us, but as Severus is indisposed, and the majority of you can't seem to manage common decency, I would appreciate it if you would just go."

He didn't bother to see if they left or not. He turned and went looking for Severus.

Severus was trembling with rage as he stormed back into the house. He was furious, and he wasn't sure with whom. He made it as far as the solarium on pure outrage, but then he stumbled, sick and dizzy. He grabbed at one of the ornamental pillars and clung to it as his vision swam.

"Severus?" Harry's voice was full of concern. "I am so sorry! Are you all right? I sent them all packing."

Severus gagged and closed his eyes against another wave of nausea. He felt Harry's arms around him, strong and warm.

He shook his head and bent nearly double, retching.

"Oh, shite! You're definitely not all right. Come on, we've got to get to the Floo."

Severus made a feeble attempt to protest, but his legs would barely hold him up. He slumped against Harry's shoulder and let himself be half-carried to the Floo.

The swirling disorientation of Floo travel was the last straw. As they stumbled out into Poppy's waiting room, to his horror, he vomited uncontrollably, all over the floor and his own robes.

Harry cast a quick cleaning charm on his robes and shouted for help. Severus gasped and clutched his belly, gagging again and trying unsuccessfully not to retch.

Poppy's assistant came running and helped get him to one of the examination rooms. He lurched over against the wall and vomited again, the foul, bitter taste sending him into another paroxysm of retching. Harry put an arm around him and rubbed his back until the spasms eased, then helped him onto the examination bench.

The mediwitch touched his forehead with the tip of her wand, and he felt the horrid nausea retreat. "There we are, sir. Better?"

He nodded, shakily.

She banished the nasty stuff he had sicked up, leaving the scent of fresh lemons in its wake. "Healer Pomfrey will be with you in a moment."

Harry sat on a chair beside him, face white, clutching his hand.

Poppy came bustling in, wearing new, smartly tailored grey robes, but otherwise unchanged from the reassuring figure she had always been.

"Oh, dear. Severus, what have you gotten yourself into this time?" She clicked her tongue and ran her wand over him from head to toe and back up again. Her eyebrows nearly met her hairline as she studied his belly. "Well, well! Congratulations, dear! Now, let's see what's troubling you. Hm.
Yes." She took a vial from her pocket and held it to his lips. "Open up, dear. That's right; drink it down. Excellent."

It fizzed slightly and had a sweet, fruity taste. Severus sipped it gingerly, and, when it did not immediately reappear, he tipped the vial up and swallowed the rest of it. His vision seemed to snap into focus, and he felt much less dizzy.

Poppy frowned and tapped her foot a few times, then touched her wand to his fingertip and brought away a tiny droplet of blood, which she put into another small vial.

"I'll have some tests done on that, Severus, but I think what you have is gestational diabetes. Obviously, I've never seen it in a man before, but you seem to have all the symptoms. If the tests confirm it, I'll give you a potion to take every morning. I'll also give you a diet plan; you'll have to eat plenty of fresh vegetables and lean meat. I want you to limit sugars and starches, and you need to get some exercise every day." She tapped her palm with her wand and made some notes on the parchment that appeared. "I think you'll be fine, dear. This will probably clear up after the baby is born. When are you due?"

"Er..." Severus coloured. "Presumably...in another three months."

Poppy gave him a peculiar look, then nodded. "Naturally, under the circumstances, it's difficult to say what should be considered normal. Who's handling your prenatal care?"

Harry snorted.

"Ah...well..." Severus shrank back against the wall.

"Severus Snape! Do you mean to tell me that you are the first man to successfully conceive in over a hundred years and you have NOT been receiving ANY medical treatment or evaluation whatsoever?! Just WHAT do you think you are playing at?" Poppy fairly quivered with outrage.

Harry snickered, as Severus hung his head and mumbled like a naughty boy getting a dressing-down.

"You will report back to me here in one week, is that understood? And, having been your mediwitch for nigh unto thirty years, and knowing your stubborn, pigheaded propensity for ignoring medical advice, I want you here once a week thereafter, unless I instruct you otherwise! Is that perfectly clear?"

He nodded, still hanging his head. His cheeks were flaming.

"If, after the first few weeks, you are doing well, following your diet and exercise regimen, and have no other apparent problems, we may be able to cut it back to every two weeks. Understood?"

He nodded again, glumly.

"And Harry, I expect you to make sure he follows these instructions. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Madam Pomfrey," Harry said.

"Very well. You may take Severus home now. Be sure he has a light but nourishing meal, and plenty of fluids. I'll fire-call with the test results and send the potion by owl express."
Severus was more than glad to get home. He was trembling with reaction from the evening's events, and having Harry's arms around him wasn't helping, especially when he knew it was no more than concern for his safety and the baby's.

Harry helped him through the Floo and fished a loop of shiny beads and baubles out of his pocket. He slipped it over Severus's left hand before he had a chance to protest. Severus held up his hand and glowered. "What is that?"

"Expectant mother's monitoring charm bracelet," Harry said. "Poppy insisted. It's really clever! Look!" He fingered the strand of pearls and gold beads around Severus's wrist and smiled hopefully at Severus.

"It's charmed to stay put until the mediwitch removes it. This charm," he said, pointing to a little golden cauldron, "glows red if you get a fever. This one turns yellow if there's a problem with the baby," he said, indicating a small silver cradle.

He touched a tiny golden slipper. "This one gets blue if you need to put your feet up, and this one turns green if your blood sugar is getting low and you need to eat," he added, indicating a small silver bowl.

"This is the most important one," he said, pointing out a squat golden cross with a ruby heart at its center. "Emergency Portkey to Poppy's. Just push the ruby until it clicks and you're there!"

Severus sighed in resignation. Harry walked him to the sofa in the living room, helped settle him onto it and put his feet up, then left the room.

Severus slumped over against the sofa back and stared out the window at the terrace, with its abandoned table still covered in plates and half-eaten food.

He hadn't even tasted it. He had been so edgy, so upset at their guests and the situation in general that he hadn't done more than sip juice and toy with his food.

Harry came in with an afghan, and spread it over him, tucking it over his belly and legs, then sitting down by his feet and giving him a small smile. "Better?"

Harry had wanted to have a party. Harry had set everything up, even ordered from that new restaurant - because Merlin knew the boy couldn't cook decent food to save his life - and all Severus had done was find fault and make a scene!

And then, as if being pregnant wasn't bad enough, he'd had to be sick as well! Humiliating himself by vomiting all over everything, right in the middle of Poppy's office, all over his clothes...

He was appalled to find himself weeping. He turned his head to the sofa and buried his face against its soft velvety surface.

"Hey! Severus, it's okay...shhh, shhhh, it's all right, really." Harry sounded distressed.

The boy was such a bloody Gryffindor, trying to shoulder all the blame for this ludicrous situation, when the truth was that Severus had whored himself to the entire company of Death Eaters!

He bit back a sob and clutched at the afghan.
"Severus? Come on, talk to me!"

He sniffled, trying to control his voice, and was horrified to hear himself wail, "I didn't even taste the food! And...and I can't go out to the damned restaurant, because I'm the size of a hippogriff!" Utterly mortified, he burst into tears and wished he were dead.

Harry got up and moved to sit right beside him, wrapping his arms around him and rocking him back and forth.

"Severus, it's okay. It's hormones. It's just hormones. I remember Hermione and Angelina talking about it; pregnant women get these uncontrollable emotions, sometimes, because there are all these hormones in their systems. They can't help it, and neither can you. It's just your body, trying to handle having another person in there," he said, resting one hand gently on Severus's swollen belly.

Severus took deep breaths, trying to stop the damned crying, but his body wouldn't cooperate.

Harry hesitated, then bent his head and rested it against Severus's. "And even if it wasn't hormones...crying's nothing to be ashamed of. It doesn't make you any less of a man; there's no shame in having feelings. Everyone has feelings." He kept rocking back and forth, until Severus's sobs eased and he was able to draw in a long, shaky breath.

Harry pulled back a little and smiled softly at him. "Better?"

Severus nodded, still not trusting his voice.

"Okay." Harry brushed the hair back from Severus's face, then, on impulse bent down and kissed him on the forehead. He got to his feet. "I'm going to get some milk and biscuits. You want tea or milk?"

"Tea," Severus croaked.

Later that night, he lay in bed, imagining strong arms around him and Harry's voice in his ear, telling him there was no shame in feeling...no shame in wanting...in needing...

He curled himself around one of the big pillows and stuffed another between his legs. He rocked back and forth, pushing his hips into the pillows and frotting his aching cock against the soft, yielding surface, but it was Harry's hand he felt on his flesh, and Harry's lips on his, and Harry's prick piercing him, driving deep and filling him, over and over again. And it was Harry's name on his lips when he finally came.

He slept, and did not dream.

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wide and his hands gripping the draperies in desperation, as he was brutally violated.

Harry clenched his eyes tightly shut and whimpered, but he couldn't help it. His mind kept changing the memory, putting himself in Krum's place. He could feel Severus's thin body under his, shaking as he thrust into him, over and over again. He heard Severus gasp and moan in pain as he slammed him against the wall. He bit down on his lip, yanked on his prick again and came, cursing himself. He shuddered through the spasms, then finally slipped into sleep.
Chapter 9

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which there is nurturing, and nesting, and shopping, and sex.

To Severus's mingled amusement and annoyance, Harry took Poppy's scoldings to heart and threw himself into looking after Severus's health, with as much enthusiasm as he had had for the house projects.

He had been worried sick about Severus since the day of the party, and he had actually been quite relieved to have something to do, other than stand by and fret.

He made Severus go for a walk with him every day. They usually wandered around the property, down to the orchard or the woods, and talked about plans for a vegetable garden here, an herb garden there, and possibly a greenhouse for some of the more exotic magical plants Severus might need for his potions. Once in a while they walked down to the road and watched the occasional cars go by, or caught sight of the bus that ran on a very relaxed schedule.

He found himself looking forward to their walks, more and more. He liked listening to Severus expound on one topic after another, or snark about people they both knew, or, rarely, tell anecdotes from his own childhood and his early days of teaching. He liked the times after their walks as well, when they merely sat in companionable quiet. Severus usually lost himself in a book, and Harry would open one, but spend his time watching Severus read, instead. Rarely, he could persuade Severus to read aloud, and although the request was always met with an incredulous stare, those were the best moments of all.

Harry escorted Severus to his weekly wand inspections, and afterwards, to his appointment at Poppy's. When they returned home, he had taken to rubbing Severus's always-aching feet. He liked watching Severus close his eyes in pleasure as he worked on the tired, swollen extremities. If Harry's thumbs hit just the right spots, he could often coax a barely-audible groan from Severus, as well. The sound always went straight to Harry's cock, and he had to fight the urge to rub his aching erection against Severus's long, pale feet until he came, then massage the come into the sensitive skin.

Merlin, but he was a sick bastard, he told himself. He always needed a few minutes after the massage to have a quick toss-off in the loo, before settling Severus with his slippers and a cup of tea.

Mindful of Poppy's instructions regarding diet, Harry made a point of keeping fresh vegetables and fruit on hand. He was good at plain, basic cooking; he could fry eggs and bacon, make bangers and mash and toast bread without burning it, but Aunt Petunia had never let him near
anything "fancy" or "important," so he had never learned the finer points of cookery.

Severus caught him in the kitchen early one afternoon, swearing and near to tears over his latest disaster - a vegetable quiche that might as well have been made of rubber. Expecting a flood of criticism or a scathing commentary on his uselessness, Harry was surprised to see Severus's lips twitch, then curl into a grin. Severus held the failed quiche up by its edge and wiggled it back and forth. Then, to Harry's astonishment, he burst out laughing.

He had never heard Severus laugh, not like this. Harry chuckled as well, and before long, they were both bent over, pounding the counters as they roared with laughter.

When Severus finally caught his breath, he smiled. "Harry, let us have a proper division of labour, shall we?"

Harry quirked an eyebrow.

"I will give you a list; you will procure the groceries; I will cook them. You can do the washing up. Agreed?"

"Agreed."

Severus had a new problem...or an escalation of an old one.

Harry had become extremely solicitous since their first visit to Pomfrey's. That was not the problem. The problem was...Severus liked it.

He was disgusted with himself, but he *enjoyed* being fussed over and made much of. No one had ever done it before, and he liked it. He *liked* being reminded to take his potion, escorted on walks and having his feet rubbed.

He liked the latter far more than was good for either of them, frankly. When Harry knelt at his feet, removed his shoes and socks, and proceeded to rub and knead and caress his hot, aching flesh, Severus could not help thinking of another hot, aching bit of flesh that wanted rubbing and caressing.

It always made him hard.

Harry rubbed firmly at first, easing the tension and soothing the cramps, then he coated his hands with a cool, creamy lotion and rubbed it in gently, with long, firm strokes. Severus always closed his eyes and leaned back, feeling Harry's slippery fingers sliding between his toes, wrapping around his digits and stroking them with a smooth, sliding motion.

It was better than wanking, not that he could really reach his prick, these days. It was a damned sight better than rubbing himself off against his pillows, which is what he had had to settle for, lately.

Harry rolled his hands over and used his knuckles along the ridged soles of Severus's feet, pressing in, hard, and Severus always had to bite back a groan and try not to come in his pants at the exquisite sensation.
Harry always took a few minutes afterwards to put the lotion away, wash his hands and bring Severus his slippers. Severus became adept at using those few minutes to rub his moist, tingling feet together, remembering Harry’s touch, and to squeeze his thighs together repeatedly until he pushed himself over the edge.

Silent cleaning charms were wonderful things, and Harry was never surprised to find him a bit drowsy when he returned with the slippers.

Severus studied himself in the mirror and frowned. He had to admit the glamour was well cast, and he was the one who had insisted he did not want to prance around in drag, but seeing himself as he had been before the pregnancy was rather sobering.

"Ready to go?" Harry asked cheerfully.

"I suppose so," he said. He had thought he wanted, needed to get out of the house, and Harry had suggested a shopping trip to pick out furniture for the nursery, crib bedding and baby clothes. It had sounded...amusing, he supposed, but now he felt awkward and leery of being on display.

Harry came into the room and rubbed his lower back. "Severus? It'll be all right. If anyone looks crosswise at you, I'll hex their feet backwards."

Severus had to laugh at that.

"Seriously, though, don't worry. We're going to the Muggle shops, and no one there is going to recognize you or see through the glamour. We've got a good cushioning charm on you, so no one is going to run into you and hurt you or the baby," Harry assured him.

Harry had arranged for a Portkey to a secluded spot behind a Muggle shopping centre, and Poppy's anti-nausea potion made the trip far more comfortable for Severus than Flooing would have been.

To Severus's surprise, he quite enjoyed the trip. The first thing they did was pick out a crib, dressing table and chest of drawers in a fine, rich cherry wood. He was pleased to find that Harry's taste in such things seemed to match his own. They had gravitated to the same crib and both smiled at the warm glow of the gleaming wood.

They bought bedding and a baby bath and all manner of baby clothes in varying sizes and styles. Harry seemed delighted with everything, and Severus found he had no wish to quash his enthusiasm. Harry had plenty of money; what else was he going to do with it? Therefore, when Harry spotted the enormous, old-fashioned pram with its elaborate scrollwork and embroidered sunshade, Severus only raised an eyebrow.

"You don't want one of those contraptions?" he asked, pointing to a modern Muggle baby carriage with a bewildering number of levers and handles and plastic do-dads extruding from its frame.

"No, this is more like it!" Harry exclaimed, gently pushing the pram out and rolling it back and forth. "We can put a no-tip charm on it, and whatever other charms we like, and it'll be just right for Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade, or anywhere else we want to go!"
Severus shook his head in amusement, but acquiesced.

From the baby shop, they went on to a Muggle bookstore, where Harry was the one who stood back in amusement as Severus filled his arms with books. Books on pregnancy and child development, books on gardening and home repair, novels, histories, travel books, cookbooks, and some frightfully amusing books on Muggle "herbal remedies." Severus didn't even blink when the girl rang up the total, merely waved at Harry to pay the bill.

They had lunch at a pleasant restaurant, where Harry insisted he have a salad and some fruit, as well as the pot-stickers, stuffed pork loin, mashed potatoes, deep-fried artichoke hearts, creamed spinach, shrimp cocktail, and double strawberry sundae with marshmallow sauce that he ordered and devoured with gusto.

"I think we just won't tell Poppy about this," Harry said ruefully, as Severus eyed the dessert cart and called the waiter back for a rhubarb crumble with clotted cream.

Harry bought himself some new hand tools at the DIY centre and looked longingly at some devices that Severus only vaguely recognized. He was fairly sure his Muggle grandfather had owned a precursor to the table saw Harry was admiring, and the nearby drill press looked somewhat familiar as well. The rest could have been musical instruments, torture devices, or car parts, for all he could tell.

It was in the garden centre that they really ran into trouble. Harry picked out a selection of new gardening tools and a new hose. He was about to get a wheelbarrow as well, but Severus nudged him and reminded him they could get a magical one in Organycke Alley.

It was the riding mowers that were the problem. Harry's eyes practically glazed over as he stared at the gleaming red and green machines with their enormous motors and their wickedly sharp blades. He ran his hands over them with all the sensuality of an attentive lover, and the look on his face was pure lust.

Severus put his foot down. "No."

"But--"

"No!"

"But Severus, we need one! All that grass in the front of the house! The lawn's huge! Not to mention the fields in the back!"

"I said no, and I meant no!"

"We can afford it!"

"No!"

"But they're on sale!" Harry whined.

"I don't care. I have no desire to go around the lawn, collecting the bits of your dismembered body, or scraping them out of the teeth of one of those monsters," he said sternly, pointing to the huge red machine Harry was fondling.

"I can put a safety charm on it!" Harry protested.

"No. You can charm the grass short, for that matter," Severus pointed out.
Harry looked hurt, then brightened, "But the Muggles might see! And what about the verge? I can't be using magic out there, with all the cars going by!"

"There," Severus pointed. "Push mowers. Also on sale, and you'll get exercise as well."

"But, Severus, all that acreage! It'll take hours and hours! What if you needed me?"

"Harry, we're leaving."

"But--"

"We'll buy a goat."

They returned home with their plunder, most of it discreetly shrunken and stowed in their pockets, except for the furniture, which was to be delivered by van in a few days.

After canceling the glamour and changing into a loose robe, Severus stepped outside and watched Harry putting their purchases away in the garden shed and the outbuildings, then followed him back inside and into the library, to supervise the shelving of his new books.

As he watched Harry bending and stretching to put the books in their proper places, Severus had to admit Ulgra had been right. The boy...the man had an incredible arse on him. He looked entirely too edible. Severus felt a twinge between his legs, as he remembered waking up beside Harry in bed that morning, with a pleasant ache in his arse and the smell of sweat and spunk all around them.

He swallowed hard. It had been a fluke, something caused by mixed potions, too little discretion and too much wild magic. Harry had no interest in him, apart from his neurotic Gryffindor need to do the "right thing." Even if Harry had wanted him then, he certainly would not want him now, not when Severus was the size of a hippogriff, freakish and revolting.

He sighed and watched Harry stretch up to put a book on the top shelf. His shirt rode up, showing a tantalizing flash of skin. Severus suddenly wished desperately that he could remember what had happened between them that night. His imagination supplied the image of himself on all fours with Harry fucking him like a wild thing. He swallowed a groan and clenched his buttocks. He had probably been wanton, himself, just as he had been during the Dark Lord's sex magic ritual. Spreading his legs, arse in the air, gagging for it--

He pulled himself up off the sofa. Harry turned around in surprise. "Severus?"

He just grunted and gave a vague wave, then waddled off to his room. He pulled his robe up and flopped down on the bed, stuffing the usual pillow between his legs and starting to rock against it.

There was a soft sound from the doorway, and he realized he had neglected to close the door.

After a pause, and some more soft sounds. Harry came in and knelt behind him on the bed. Severus stiffened, silently waiting. His cock was drooling against the soft linen, and his arse throbbed.
"Do you...need a hand?" Harry asked huskily, running one hand down Severus's arm.

"That's not what I need," Severus growled. He turned ponderously and saw that Harry had stripped off. His cock hardened even further at the sight of all that lovely, bare skin over lean, toned muscle. He seized Harry's arms, jerking him down against him and kissing him. Harry moaned and opened his mouth, sucking Severus's tongue in and sliding his own against it.

He swallowed Harry's moan and gave back one of his own. Harry pulled back, gasping, and slid down the bed, pulling Severus's robe open and trailing kisses along his chest and swollen belly.

"God, you're beautiful," he gasped, pressing kisses to the underside of his belly, before moving lower and wrapping his hand around Severus's needy cock. He licked it, a long, slow, wet stroke from root to tip.

Severus groaned and spread his legs as far as he could. Harry swirlled his tongue around his glans and closed his mouth over the engorged purple head, sucking gently.

It was heaven. His touch-starved flesh throbbed as Harry enveloped him in heat and wet friction. Harry took him in deeper, until his cock nudged the back of Harry's throat. Severus nearly wept at the sensation and barely kept himself from driving his aching prick all the way down that wet, willing throat.

Harry cradled his bollocks and toyed with them as he slid his mouth up and down on Severus's cock, tracing the shaft with the tip of his tongue. He slipped a finger back and stroked behind his sac, then pressed it between his buttocks and tickled his arsehole.

Severus let out a hoarse cry and squirmed, wanting more. Harry paused, Severus's prick still in his mouth, and suddenly Severus felt a slick fullness in his arse. Harry slipped a finger in and pressed, as he sucked hard on the head of Severus's prick.

Severus shouted and came. His cock jerked wildly, and his hips pistoned uncontrollably as come spurted from him, filling Harry's mouth. Harry finger-fucked him and kept sucking and swallowing, until Severus gasped and flopped back to the bed, panting. Harry let his prick slip from his mouth and licked his lips, smiling wickedly.

Harry's prick was hard and pressing against his belly, wet with precome. Severus felt a throbbing emptiness in his arse and groaned. He didn't stop to consider or question; he heaved himself over onto his side and got to his hands and knees, pushing his arse up in the air. Let Harry think whatever he liked; right now, Severus didn't give a rat's arse for anything, as long as he got himself stuffed full of cock.

"Wait," Harry said urgently. Severus tried not to whine, as Harry snapped his fingers and his wand flew into his hand. Harry mumbled something, and Severus suddenly found himself suspended and supported with cushioning charms. It took the weight off his knees and elbows and cradled his huge belly, taking the pressure off his aching back, as well.

Harry knelt behind him and fingered his arsehole, which was still slippery and slightly swollen. He slipped a finger all the way in, then added a second. He played with Severus's hole for a while, sliding his fingers in and out and wiggling them around, then finally adding a third finger.

"Get on with it!" Severus growled. His cock was hardening again, and his arse was fairly begging to be filled.

Harry put his hands on Severus's hips and pressed the broad head of his sturdy cock to Severus's waiting hole, then slowly pushed past the tight ring of muscle.
Severus gasped and pressed back. "Yes! Move, damn you!"

Harry groaned as he slid in deeper, then slowly pulled back and pressed in again. He kept thrusting, a little faster, a little deeper each time, until he was ramming in hard and his scrotum was slapping against Severus's arse on every stroke.

It was wonderful.

Severus was rocking back and forth, as much as the cushioning charms would allow, practically keening at the delicious sensation of being filled over and over again. His cock was pulsing in time with his arse, but he couldn't reach it to do anything about it. Harry sensed his predicament and paused, but Severus's belly made it impossible for him to reach around and take matters into his hands.

"Don't stop!" Severus gasped as Harry paused. He nearly wept in relief when Harry began thrusting again, then shifted slightly and nailed Severus's prostate on the next stroke. Severus groaned appreciatively, and Harry sped up again, until he was fucking him with wild abandon, bruising his hips with his fingertips, and slamming the headboard against the wall.

Severus clenched his arse on Harry's prick and heard him shout, then felt his cock spasm and fill his arse with spunk. Harry thrust a few more times, straining to keep coming as long as he could, then gasped and pulled out. He pushed Severus's legs farther apart and buried his face between them, mouthing Severus's scrotum and licking the base of his cock.

He rolled them over on the cushioning charm, then squirmed around and took Severus back into his mouth, sucking hard. Severus bucked and came again with a shout. Harry crawled up beside him and flopped down onto the bed, panting. He threw an arm around Severus and closed his eyes.

They were both asleep in moments.

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Harry woke up in the wee hours, with the smell of sex and Severus in his nostrils, and smiled.

His bollocks were a bit tender, and he needed to piss, but otherwise, he hadn't felt so good in ages. He got up and padded to the toilet to take care of his bladder, then slipped back into the warm bed beside Severus.

Severus mumbled something and tried to turn over. Harry wrapped an arm around him, happily snuggling close. Pleasantly domestic thoughts idly drifted through his mind as his consciousness slowly faded.

"Wonder wha' House he's gonna be sorted," he mumbled. "Prolly be a 'Puff, jus' to show us." He chuckled sleepily, envisioning himself and Severus wrapping a black and yellow scarf around a stringy little boy's neck. "Sev'rus? We shoul' thin' 'bout names...pretty soon, now. Can't go t'Hogwarts 'thout a name, aft'r all..."

There was no reply. Severus must be asleep.

Harry tightened his arm around Severus and let himself drift back to sleep.
Severus lay still as Harry mumbled beside him, his heart sinking.

Could he let this go on until the baby was born and Harry was emotionally bonded to it, before telling him the truth?

It might already be too late. He had thought this was what he wanted - to let Harry's guilt and impetuous Gryffindor folly take the blame, take the responsibility, and take care of himself and the baby. It was only time and money, after all, and Merlin knew Harry had both to spare.

He had not reckoned on Harry falling in love - with the baby, of course - before it was even born.

Guilt twisted his guts and kept him awake, long into the night.
Chapter 10

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which Severus gets some unexpected news, Harry gets a revelation, and Hermione gets to show off her research skills.

Severus waited until Harry had gone grocery shopping, (under strict instructions that would take him to at least three different stores), before activating the Portkey to Poppy's office.

"I haven't an appointment, but--" he began, when the receptionist looked up.

"Severus? It's all right, dear, come right back," Poppy said, sticking her head out of her office and smiling at him. "Is everything all right?"

Severus took a seat in her office and waited until she had warded the door.

"I need you to swear you will not repeat this to anyone," he said.

Poppy rolled her eyes, but nodded.

"I...am unsure about the exact date of conception," he said stiffly. "And I have not told Harry this, but there were other...opportunities for me to have conceived."

"You're unsure of the father's identity, then?" Poppy asked calmly.

Severus nodded, and then began to explain about the Dark Lord's ritual. His face was flaming by the time he finished.

Poppy looked grave. "Well, Severus, as I'm sure you know, paternity charms were never really meant for situations like this. I can try, but I'm sure you've used the exact same charms already. Now, once you've delivered, we'll be able to tell. But now..." she shrugged. "Do you want me to try?"

He nodded briefly.

She drew her wand and cast the same charm he had tried, with the same result - a nebulous glow that separated into two halves. One half looked rather like him, the other was only vaguely human-shaped. Poppy sighed.

"I'm sorry, Severus. As you see, all the charm tells us is that they're yours, which of course we already knew."

He sighed as well. "Yes. Well, tha--wait, what? What did you say?" he demanded, suddenly alarmed.

"I said we already knew that, of course," Poppy said, looking at him in puzzlement.

"You said 'they'! 'They'! As in not 'it' or 'he'! WHAT DID you MEAN!??"
Poppy blinked at him. "Why, Severus, didn't you know? You've more than one baby in there!"

"WHAT?!!" he screamed. "That's impossible!"

Poppy shook her head, "Honestly, Severus, compared to a male pregnancy, it's hardly--"

"WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THIS SOONER?" Severus felt himself spiraling out of control. He gripped the arms of the chair and tried to force himself calmer. It wasn't working.

"Oh, I'm sure I must have said something, Severus. And you must have known before now, surely! After all, you only came to me once the pregnancy was quite well advanced. Your early pre-- Oh, dear. No, you didn't have one, did you?" She tsked briefly, then smiled. "Well, not to worry, dear. The tests have all been good and the baby monitor will alert us if there are any problems. You just be sure to keep up with your diet and exercise. It's very important for you and the babies."

She made some notes on his chart, then patted his hand. "As for the other, I wouldn't fret about it, dear. It's plain as the nose on your face that Harry loves you dearly. Terrible things happen in war; this time a miracle happened. He'll understand."

Severus was reeling as he left.

More than one baby.

Oh, God!

Of all the endeavours in life where he might have achieved more than expected of him, why did it have to be this one?

What the hell was he going to do with twins?

A horrid thought ran through him, and he tried to remember the family trees of all the names on his list of suspects. He thought Lucius's father had been a twin...and hadn't Woolston said something about his mother's twin sister, once?

Then there were the Order members to consider, as well - Merlin alone knew how many of them had fucked him!

He blanched.

What if he'd slept with a Weasley?!

He gulped and started to dig up parchment and make a new list, when he suddenly realized that, in this case, biology had bugger-all to do with it. Magic trumped science.

He curled up on the sofa and pulled the afghan over himself, huddled in misery.

What if he gave birth to twin McNairs?

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and showed no enthusiasm for the blackberry chocolate-chip cheesecake Harry had found at a fancy bakery.

Harry did the washing up, as Severus morosely picked at the lint on the arm of the couch.

"Want a cup of tea? Or cocoa?" Harry asked hopefully.

Severus sighed. "No, thank you," he said. "I believe I will just go to bed." He heaved himself to his feet and shuffled out of the room.

Harry stood in the living room, undecided. Last night had been incredible; his cock twitched just remembering it. But now, Severus seemed so depressed...

It might be hormones, of course. Or it might be regrets over what they had done. Harry swallowed the lump in his throat. He had hoped they would be able to get past that first time, but it always seemed to crop back up again. Even if Severus couldn't remember it, he knew it had happened, and he clearly regretted it.

Harry sighed. For the thousandth time, he wished he had the power to make everything right again.

He tossed the dish towel aside and went upstairs.

Severus's door was pulled closed, but not quite shut. Harry hesitated in the hallway, then took a deep breath and pushed it open.

"Severus?"

"Yes." He sounded tired, defeated.

Harry winced. "I just wanted...to ask if you...wanted anything."

Severus sighed, then turned toward him. His black eyes sparkled in the reflected light from the hallway. He pushed back the coverlet, revealing himself naked beneath it.

"Yes," was all he said.

Harry smiled and went to him. He skinned out of his clothes, crawled in beside Severus and kissed him. Severus groaned against his mouth and kissed him hungrily, almost desperately.

Harry pressed close, rubbing his body all along Severus's long, pale form, and running his hand over the huge, rounded belly.

"Beautiful," he whispered.

Severus made a noise that was almost a sob, and buried his face in Harry's neck as Harry reached lower and wrapped his hand around Severus's rampant cock.

He stroked it a few times, and Severus moaned. "More...please...Harry!" His voice was needy, pleading. Harry gulped and leaned back against the pillows, pulling Severus over on top of him. He was heavy, and the bulk of his belly resting on Harry's stomach was oddly erotic and humbling at the same time.

"Let me try something," Harry whispered. He took his wand and cast a modified featherweight charm and more cushioning charms, then lay back and spread his legs, his cock standing at attention between them. He guided Severus to straddle him, murmuring the preparation spells and
easing Severus down onto his aching cock.

The expression on Severus's face might have been the most beautiful thing Harry had ever seen. He reached out and wrapped his hand around Severus's cock and stroked it.

The modified featherweight charm let him thrust up into Severus without dislodging him, and the cushioning charms helped support Severus as he rode Harry. His hands gripped Harry's shoulders, the nails biting in as he drove the tempo faster and faster.

Harry rubbed and stroked him, swiping his thumb over the glans on the upstroke and twisting his fist around the shaft on the downstroke. Severus's eyes rolled back and his arse clenched tight on Harry's cock. Harry gave a strangled cry and snapped his hips up hard, driving himself in as far as he could before spending.

Severus shouted, and then he was coming as well. Pearly white spurts pulsed out with every stroke of Harry's hand, spattering the underside of Severus's belly and dripping down onto Harry.

When they had both spent, Harry pulled Severus down on top of him and wrapped his arms around him, enjoying the sensual feeling of skin to skin that the featherweight charm enabled.

"Love you," he murmured as he drifted off to sleep.

He didn't hear Severus sigh, or see the tears welling in his eyes.

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The next day was blustery and threatening rain. Severus spent much of the morning in his lab, brewing simple potions that did not require him to stand in one position for long. It felt good to be doing something so familiar, so comfortable. It gave him back at least the illusion of control over his actions and his destiny, he thought ruefully.

Around eleven, his stomach growled, and he noticed the little silver bowl on his charm bracelet was gaining a greenish hue. He was at a good stopping point, so he damped the fires beneath the cauldrons and headed to the house for a snack.

He had begun craving very peculiar foods, and the shopping lists he gave Harry were getting longer and more eclectic every time. Right now, he decided, what he really wanted was some deep, dark chocolate.

...and some peanut butter.

..and a handful of salted plums.

..with lemon, and chili.

And a glass of tomato juice.

He went in through the kitchen door and rummaged in the pantry to find his treats, then poured himself a tall glass of tomato juice and added plenty of pepper. He was happily munching and slurping away, when he thought he heard voices in the living room. Curious, he headed that way. He didn't see anyone, but he heard Harry talking.
"...to hear that. Are you sure?"

Harry must be around the corner, taking a fire call, Severus decided. He was about to leave when he heard a voice that sounded like Lupin, saying "...Death Eaters..."

Severus froze in place, straining to hear.

"...power...party. I'm not...and then...pregnant...worried..."

"...I see...Pomfrey didn't..."

Severus didn't wait to hear more. It felt like his heart crashed to the bottom of his guts and got twisted up in them. He turned and went straight up the stairs to his room, dragged his battered old trunk out of the closet and began throwing things in it. Clothing, books, the handful of knickknacks he had accumulated since he had moved in. He tucked his mother's portrait in a corner, slammed the lid down, and shrunk the whole thing down until he could slip it in his pocket. He rushed downstairs, grabbed his new mac from its peg by the door and shrugged it on, then opened the door and stalked off down the path to the road.

It was just beginning to rain.

He didn't care.

Lupin had told Harry everything, and Severus would not wait around to be called a liar and kicked out of the house. He felt a lump rising in his throat and forced it down. His timing was good, for once. He saw the bus heading toward him and hurried to the stop. He climbed aboard when it pulled up, shoved some Muggle money in the contraption and sat down.

As the bus roared to life and lurched down the road, he thought he heard someone calling his name, but he never looked back to see Harry running down the lane, bareheaded in the rain, with a look of bewilderment on his face.

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It took him most of five hours to get back to Spinner's End. It was too early in the day for him to call the Knight Bus, so he had taken one Muggle bus after another, hitched a ride on a lorry, and finally walked the last mile.

He was soaked to the skin. His feet and his back were throbbing in pain, and he was completely miserable. All the way home, he had cursed himself for a fool, Lupin for an interfering busybody, and Potter for an idealistic idiot.

The house seemed even smaller and more dingy than he remembered. He pulled his trunk from his pocket, put it on the floor and enlarged it, then opened it up to find some dry clothes. He took out trousers and a shirt, then reached back in for some smalls.

What he pulled out was a pair of ridiculous little garments called "onesies," or so the shopgirl had said. One was green, with a cartoonish image of a playful lion on the front; the other was red, with an equally silly cartoon snake. The lump in his throat was back, as he remembered Harry waving the silly things at him and insisting they had to get them for the baby.

His vision was blurring again. He sniffled and blinked at his charm bracelet, but none of the
indicators was lit. He set the stupid little clothes aside and rummaged in the trunk again, but this
time his hands came up with small, soft garments decorated with snitches and cauldrons and
dragons, all charmed to move. Harry had brought them from a shop in Hogsmeade. He stared at
the tiny cauldrons and their streams of rainbow bubbles, and suddenly he began to cry.

There was no one to see him or care, so he threw himself down on the lumpy old sofa, clutched
the baby clothes to him and sobbed as if his heart had broken.

From the aching, sharp pain in his chest, it probably had.

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When he woke up, Harry was sitting in the chair across from him, his face solemn.

"Are you all right, Severus?"

Severus sat up quickly, and snarled, "I see you have not mended your habit of barging in where
you are not wanted, Mr. Potter!"

Harry winced, then held out a brown bottle. "You forgot your medicine," he said quietly.

Severus took it silently and put it down on the end table.

"Severus, I...I'm sorry you felt you had to leave. I--" Harry cleared his throat, then tried again. "I
thought we were...getting used to one another...kind of comfortable. I hadn't realized you were so
miserable." He hung his head and said very softly, "I didn't know you still hated me so much. I
know you'll never be able to forgive me, but I had hoped we could get past that night." He looked
up, bleakly. "I thought we had gotten past it."

Severus had finally had enough. "You idiot boy!" he snarled, "You didn't force me, for Merlin's
sake! We were both under influence of damnable drugs, untried potions and wild magic!"

Harry was about to say something, but Severus cut him off. "And yours was hardly the first cock
I've ever had up my arse! It probably was not even the first that night!"

Harry looked stunned. "Then...you know?"

"I'm sure Lupin gave you an earful! Surely he told you I was begging for it, rutting on the floor
like an animal with anyone who'd have me?" Severus fumed.

Harry said quietly, "No, Remus just called to tell me that Tonks was pregnant. They're worried;
because of her magic and a couple of powerful Death Eater hexes she took during the final battle,
they're afraid she won't be able to carry the baby. Remus wanted to know who you were seeing
for prenatal care."

Severus snorted. "Is that so?"

"Severus...I know what happened to you before I got there," Harry said hesitantly. "I saw
Viktor...pulled him off of you, actually...but that doesn't make what I did to you later any better!
Not if you weren't able to say no!"

begged for it!" He drew his wand. "LEGILIMENS!" He didn't bother trying to see into Harry's mind. He dredged up all the memories he had of the Dark Lord's ritual and thrust them viciously at Harry.

He was on his knees, begging Woolston for more...pulling his legs apart for Lucius...McNair was fucking him...he was fucking Lucius...red mist swirling everywhere and the Dark Lord's laughter floating above them all...

He broke the spell and watched Harry rock back into the chair, mind reeling.

"You see?" he said bitterly. "Now, get out."

Harry stared at him for a moment, then left without a word.

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Harry stared down at his plate of eggs and tomatoes and felt miserable.

Severus had been gone a week, and every day was worse than the last.

He had never really realized just how much he had been looking forward to being a Dad, to having a baby to cherish and play with and teach and love. Every time he passed the door to the useless nursery, he just wanted to cry.

He missed sex, too. His own hand was just not enough any more. He wanted pale skin and wicked lips and the incredible roundure of a belly full of new life. He wanted someone to touch. He wanted to hear something besides his own grunts as he wanked, wanted to make someone else cry out in ecstasy as they came together.

And most of all, he just missed Severus. He found one of Severus's old, worn nightshirts in the dirty laundry, but he couldn't bring himself to wash it. He took it up to bed with him. He told himself it was only sex, that he wanted the smell of someone else with him as he stroked himself to orgasm.

But afterwards, he curled up with the old garment and fell asleep with Severus's scent in his nose, and what he felt was not arousal, but comfort...and a sense of home.

It made waking up alone all the more miserable.

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"Harry, what's wrong?"

Hermione had invited him to lunch in Diagon Alley, and he couldn't come up with a decent excuse, so here they were.

"You look like hell, and you're positively miserable!"

"Gee, thanks, Hermione," he said, giving her a half-hearted smile.
"So, what's wrong?"

"Severus left." Saying it made it seem that much more real, and he cleared his throat and tried not to sniffle.

"Oh, Harry! Why?" Hermione reached out for his hand.

"He said I'm not the baby's father, Hermione," Harry whispered, every word like a shard of glass. Little by little, he told her everything, down to the devastation he felt and how much he missed Severus.

"Well, that's just ridiculous," Hermione said.

"What?" Harry demanded, stung.

"Oh, not you, Harry! Severus. He can't possibly know you aren't the father, not when he admits you had sex with him!"

"But Hermione, the ritual, and the Death Eaters..."

Hermione shook her head impatiently. "It doesn't matter. I told you before, I've been doing some research on male pregnancy, and unless Severus knows for certain that he was already pregnant, and more than a month along, before you had sex for the first time, well, you very well could be the father!"

Hermione stared at her.

"You see, male pregnancy is very, very rare. There hasn't been a documented case in over ninety-five years, Harry. Accidental male conception is almost unheard of. There are dozens of theories, but they all make the same point: the spells, or charms or rituals or potions used to make a man capable of conceiving a child are extremely powerful, delicate and very unstable. Several documented successful attempts warn that the receptive partner must be sure to remain chaste, apart from his chosen partner, because the magic is very easily affected by magical currents and, well, gradients, so to speak. For the first few weeks after the initial conception attempt, the child is not really even a fetus. It's more like a magical construct of potential, and it will try to seize the most magically potent life force available to combine with the host-father's life force and generate a child." Hermione smiled at him. "So, you see, even if Severus had been buggered by the entire Falmouth Falcons Quidditch team--"

"You don't know the half of it," Harry muttered.

"If he'd had also sex with you before that first month was out, you still would stand an excellent chance of being the father, because you're probably the most magically potent of his partners."

Harry began to nod, slowly.

Hermione gripped his hand. "And besides, Harry - you are the only one who chose to be a father to Severus's baby! You love this baby, whether it was your sperm that helped create it or not. That's much more important than whose nose or eyes it winds up with!"

Harry's throat choked up and his eyes were wet, but he managed to croak, "Thanks, Hermione."

"You can always leave the research to me, Harry," she said, smiling.
Chapter 11

Chapter by chazpure

Chapter Summary

In which Severus is depressed, Harry is determined, and we find out how it all ends.

Severus sat at the old, scarred table in the kitchen, looking forlornly at the shards of a broken beaker, his face wet with tears.

It was a stupid, ugly, chipped old beaker that his mother had picked up at a jumble for 5p, when he was a small boy. This morning, it had slipped out of his hand and crashed to pieces in the kitchen sink.

He had picked up the pieces, intending to discard then, when he had suddenly remembered his mother drinking tea from the battered old thing. The tears had started of their own accord, and he sat down and let them flow. Mum would have been so horrified and disappointed to see him now, he thought, as the tears trickled down his cheeks. She had had such hopes for him, once...

He picked up a shard of the old beaker and ran his fingers over it. It might as well be his life, he thought bitterly. It hadn't been much, battered and chipped, ugly and worthless, but serviceable nonetheless. And now-- He sniffled and let the shard fall back into the pile. Shattered. Hardly worth the effort to mend it, all things considered...

There was a knock at the front door. Severus ignored it.

"Severus? May I come in, please?"

Harry Potter. Of course. Why would it be anyone else?

Severus bowed his head over the broken beaker and let Harry keep knocking.

As he had anticipated, Harry's patience had not improved. He heard the lock drop back and the door open and close, then footsteps approached.

"Severus?" Harry stood in the doorway, waiting.

"What is it, Harry?" Severus asked dully. There was no point in getting angry, really. There was no point to much of anything, come to that. He ran his finger through the ceramic chips again and rubbed the marks of his tears from one of the larger pieces.

"Severus, I had a talk with Hermione, and she told me some things," Harry said, making his way around the table and sitting down across from Severus. "And after we talked, I realized some other things, and I had to come and talk to you."

Severus just kept toying with the bits of the broken beaker.

"Severus?" His tiny store of patience was empty. He drew his wand and flicked it at the pile of shards. "Reparo!"
The broken pieces spun around, caught up in a miniature whirlwind. They twisted and shifted, then fused together and came to rest as a whole beaker once more. Severus picked it up and looked over at Harry. "You cannot fix everything with a flick of your wand, Harry," he said quietly. "Some things cannot be mended, and some things...just are not worth mending." He pushed the beaker away and rested his face in his hands.

"Severus, listen to me. Whatever else may have happened, it is still possible that I'm the father," Harry said firmly. "And if I tell everyone I'm the father, no one is going to dare deny it...well, other than you, of course. Hermione had read a lot of theories on male conception...something about grades and potentials; it was pretty complicated. But none of that matters. I've finally realized something a lot more important. I don't care! I want to be the father of our baby, Severus. I'm choosing this. And unless you can show me proof that I'm not, and tell me to go away, then I want to be part of the baby's life."

Severus felt his hormonally driven emotions swinging over into outrage and fury. "You're choosing? How bloody magnanimous of you, Mr. Potter! What about my choices? Oh, no! I'm nothing but the freakish ex-Death Eater whore! Potter's special project! You want a say in raising this child? What the hell do you know about raising any child?" He rocked back in his seat, glaring at Harry.

"Not much," Harry admitted, quietly. "But I know that it's important for any child to be wanted and loved. To have a safe home and be raised by people who love and care for him." He leaned forward and caught Severus's balled fists in his hands. "And if the people raising the child care for each other...love each other...that's the best thing of all." Harry stood up and stepped closer, still holding Severus's hands and staring deep into his eyes. "Severus, let me take you home, you and our baby. Please?"

Severus found himself crying again. He jerked his hands free of Harry's and dashed the tears from his eyes. His sinuses were blocking up again and he sniffled, humiliated and angry, then demanded, "Do you really expect me to believe that you want to raise a child of Death Eaters?"

Harry bent down until they were nose to nose. "Just one particular Death Eater's," he said huskily, and kissed Severus's mouth.

The hormones took that as a cue to switch emotions again, and Severus felt his cock leap to attention.

Harry kissed him gently at first, his lips soft and pliant against Severus's. He smelled of rosemary and mint soap, and Severus breathed his scent in as if it were the first breath of fresh air in months. His lips parted and his tongue ran over Harry's lips, teasing them open. Harry pulled him to his feet and opened his own mouth. Their tongues slid against one another and explored each other's mouths. Harry gave his hand a little tug, and Severus followed him.

They didn't make it as far as the bedroom. In fact, they didn't make it quite as far as the sofa.

Severus felt a wave of pure lust surge up as Harry ran his hands up under his shirt and scratched deliciously along his shoulderblades and down his spine.

Everything happened in a bit of a blur, but Severus soon found himself kneeling on the floor of the living room, arse in the air, desperate for Harry to touch him, take him, fill him. Harry bent over him and kissed a trail along his spine, from the nape of his neck to his tailbone, making him shiver. He spread his legs wider and waited, but Harry had something else in mind.

He knelt behind Severus and kneaded his buttocks, then gently parted them and breathed over the pucker of his anus. Severus let out a tiny whimper.
Harry kissed the base of his spine again, then slowly, torturously, began licking downward, dragging the tip of his tongue along, millimetre by millimetre, until it was poised right over the tightly crinkled ring. Harry pursed his lips and sucked gently, making Severus gasp, then pressed his tongue inside and began rimming him thoroughly.

Severus groaned loudly as Harry's clever tongue slid in and out, flicking over the sensitive tissues and teasing his hole, then pressing in deeper, writhing inside him, driving him right to the edge of endurance.

His cock was pressed hard against his belly, and although he was supported by cushioning charms, he could get no appreciable friction on it. He gave a barely-audible whimper of frustration as he pressed back onto Harry's teasing, tantalizing tongue.

Harry ran his tongue all around Severus's anus again, then switched to slowly licking him. He shifted a bit to the side and slipped one hand between Severus's legs, cradling his swollen bollocks and gently rolling them back and forth with his fingers. He flattened his tongue out and licked more firmly, but still maddeningly slowly, from Severus's scrotum, up along the perineum, over his arsehole and all the way up to the base of his tailbone, over and over again, until Severus was quivering with need and trying desperately to frot against the cushioning charm.

Harry's hand slid forward and - finally! - wrapped around him. He stroked firmly, as he gave short, sharp licks across Severus's engorged and throbbing pucker. His thumb slid over the glans and gently flicked his frenulum.

Severus cried out, shaking, as pleasure jolted wildly through him. Harry pulled back and replaced his tongue with his fingers, thrusting them in and pressing deep to find the pad of Severus's prostate. His other hand kept stroking, the thumb swirling over the weeping glans on every upstroke. Severus moaned as Harry's probing fingers found the right spot, and he bucked, sending his cock sliding through Harry's fingers. Harry stroked the pad of his thumb firmly over his piss slit, as he crooked his fingers inside Severus's passage and pressed.

Severus gave a strangled shout and came, his body convulsing and shaking as his come spurted over Harry's fist and splattered all over the floor. Harry kept stroking and pressing, as if he wanted every last drop of Severus's come, until the spasms slowly eased and Severus slumped bonelessly into the cushioning charm's squishy embrace.

Harry stretched out and pulled Severus over against him, cradling him in his arms. They lay together for a while, chests heaving, until their racing pulses slowed.

Harry brushed the sweat-soaked hair out of Severus's face and pressed a kiss to his forehead. "All right there?"

Severus made a small grumbly sound. "No," he said peevishly, shifting and trying to find a comfortable position for his heavy belly.

"No?" Harry sounded worried. "What's wrong? I thought--"

"The floor is uncomfortable," Severus groused. "I want to be where there's a sofa without lumps...and a whirlpool bath for my aching feet and my sodding back spasms...and a big, comfortable, firm bed, that doesn't creak all night long." He looked at Harry for a moment, then turned his head away and rested it on Harry's chest. "I want to go home," he said, in a very small voice.

Harry swallowed hard, then cleared his throat and managed a tiny laugh. "Well, look what I've got in my pocket," he said, trying to sound playful, though his voice shook with emotion. He held out
a keyring with one large brass key and a tiny replica of their house hanging from it. "Portkey," he explained, as Severus reached up to take hold of it.

Harry held him very tightly. "Let's go home, Severus," he said, and pressed the door of the little toy house.

Harry had been pacing back and forth for hours, it seemed. He had wanted...he had tried to wait at Severus's side through this, but Severus had screamed at him and fired off a couple of wandless spells that fairly singed the air. Poppy had just shaken her head and pointed to the door.

Harry decided discretion was definitely the better part of valour, at least when dealing with a Severus Snape who was about to give birth! He had been pacing back and forth in the nursery ever since.

It was sometime after midnight when he heard a tiny wail from Severus's room. He rushed to the door, but paused when the sound seemed to double...and then there seemed to be an entire chorus of babies crying!

What the hell?

He opened the door and cautiously approached the bed, where Severus lay soaked in sweat, eyelids heavy as he fought against sleep.

Poppy Pomfrey turned from the bedside and smiled at him. "Congratulations, Harry! They're fine, healthy babies, every one, and Severus did wonderfully well."

Harry took Severus's hand in his and gripped it hard, then drew it up and pressed a kiss to his palm.

"Soppy Gryff'dr," Severus mumbled.

"And you're amazing, Severus Snape," Harry said, wonderingly. "I've never known anyone to match your courage and sheer bloody-minded stubbornness."

Poppy smiled at them both. "I don't mind saying it took a fair bit of work to sort everything magically before performing the caesarian, but there were no complications, and the healing charms are working as they ought. I expect Severus will be up and around sometime tomorrow."

She shook her finger at them, waringly. "He's not to overdo, mind! Once everything is healed up, we'll see about getting him back into fighting trim. I'm relying on you, Harry, to keep him under control until he's properly healed."

"I promise," Harry said, looking at Severus, whose eyes were blinking slower and slower as he lost his battle with sleep.

Severus snorted and opened his mouth to say something, but all that emerged was a snore.

Harry smiled, bent and kissed his sweaty brow. He stood by, watching Severus slip deeper into sleep, then something Poppy had said earlier finally registered. He turned back to her in wide-eyed concern.
"Poppy, did you say...babies?" he croaked.

"Certainly, babies!" Poppy laughed at him. "What did you think he would have? Kittens?" She took him by the arm and led him to the crib beside Severus's bed. Three tiny, red-faced, blanket-wrapped sausage rolls lay side-by-side, squirming and squinching their tiny features into horrible grimaces.

Harry's vision swam and he clutched at the rail of the crib for support. "Oh, my God! Triplets? Why didn't Severus tell me?" He stared at them in wonder, feeling something squeeze his heart so tight he thought it would burst. They were perfect and beautiful. He was terrified of touching them, and he knew in that moment that he already loved them, and would love them the rest of his life.

Poppy patted his arm. "He probably thought it would be a bit much for you to handle." She paused, then said in mild puzzlement, "Come to think of it, he seemed rather shocked that there were three, himself. He kept muttering something about twins, poor dear," Poppy chuckled. "I have no idea where he got that notion!"

They moved into the nursery, leaving Severus safely asleep, and warming and warning charms on the crib to keep the babies comfortable that would sound an alert if anything went wrong.

"Now, dear, they're fairly small, but about average for a multiple birth, and they seem quite hearty little ones. You've two sons and a daughter, by the way. I've sent a full report and the Attending Midwife's Record of Birth off to the Ministry; they'll send the formal naming and declaration of parentage documents for you to file in a day or two. You and Severus seem to have everything else ready for them, just as I would expect, although you'll have to get another crib or two, of course!" She smiled as he nodded, feebly.

"Severus showed me all the different types of nutritive potion and Muggle milk replacer, so you're well set there, but if you decide you want to hire a wet nurse, let me know; there are several I can recommend." Poppy hesitated, then pulled a bottle of potion from her satchel and handed it to Harry. "There's also this," she said. "It's lactation formula. It's commonly used by wet nurses and witches who have difficulty nursing, but it's not unheard of for wizards to use it to nurse their own infants, if there are no witches able and available to do it."

Harry stared at it, flushing slightly. "Does it make you...um...grow...?" He cupped his hands as if he were holding two cantaloupes against his chest.

Poppy laughed. "Your breasts will enlarge, yes, but not to the extent you're thinking, young man! The formula causes you to produce milk; it doesn't turn you into a woman!"

Harry blushed further. "Thanks, Poppy. I might give it a try, I suppose. I don't know if Severus will want to, though! We'll let you know about the wet nurse, too."

"Very well, dear. The babies each have their own charm bracelet; I gave Severus three new charms for his, linked to theirs. Here's one for you, too." She slipped a beaded bracelet over his hand. "I'll be alerted to any serious problems, and you can always call me, dear. Now, you get some rest, so you'll be able to look after your family." She patted his cheek and left.

Harry went back into Severus's room and sat down in a chair between the bed and the crib. Before long, the entire family was fast asleep.
Severus woke in the early hours before dawn, feeling groggy and decidedly odd. He pressed a hand to his belly and nearly panicked, then suddenly remembered: he was officially a parent; the babies had been born.

He sat up, wincing at the pain of the barely-healed incision in his abdomen, and looked around the room. Harry was asleep in a chair that was considerably larger than it had been last night, with a baby cradled in each arm and another on his chest.

Severus smirked. Harry and his cushioning charms! He managed to get to his feet and wobble over to inspect his offspring.

They were red and wrinkled, toothless, with sparse hair and eyes that didn't track. He had never seen anything so perfectly lovely in his entire life. He picked one up and held it for a moment.

Harry blinked, then jerked awake, looking around in a panic, before relaxing when he saw Severus holding the baby. "Hey," he said, "I thought you were supposed to be resting and healing."

"Poppy and I have been having that particular argument since before you were born, Harry," Severus said, chuckling. He grimaced as the motion made his belly hurt. "I had to be sure it had not all been a particularly vivid dream," he said softly, staring down at his daughter.

"Nightmare, you mean?" Harry asked ruefully.

Severus bent to place the baby back in the crib. "No...definitely a dream," he said, staring down at her.

Harry rose, still holding the other two babies. He kissed each one, then passed them one at a time to Severus, who put them back in the crib with their sister.

Harry wrapped an arm around his waist, hugging him very cautiously. "They're so beautiful," he breathed.

Severus nodded. He felt his throat tighten as he looked down at their barely-formed faces. He had to know, no matter the cost. His shoulders tensed as he cleared his throat. "So, whose are they?" he asked, quietly.

"Ours, of course," Harry said, confused.

"Idiot!" Severus snapped in annoyance, "What did the paternity spell show?"

Harry pulled back and looked at him. "I didn't cast one, Severus, and I didn't ask Poppy to do it," he said. "I'm not going to, either."

Severus stared at him in disbelief.

"I told you," Harry said softly, "They're ours...and you're mine," he added, drawing Severus into his arms and kissing him.

"Soppy Gryffindor," Severus said, his voice unaccountably hoarse.

"You'd better believe it," Harry said, and silenced any further protests with another kiss.
Two nights later Severus rose from their rumpled bed, careful not to disturb Harry, who was face-down, snoring lustily and drooling onto his pillow. He paused for an appreciative leer at the rounded, very well-shagged arse peeking out from under the coverlet and felt his tired cock twitch in response. Poppy had given him permission to resume having sex, as long as they were careful and didn't attempt anything overly strenuous. Harry had insisted on bottoming in deference to his condition - and had made liberal use of cushioning charms, of course! Severus smirked, then padded next door to the nursery.

Soft fairy lights illuminated the floor enough to prevent him from tripping over anything. They cast a faint glow into the three cribs, where Andrew Perseus Wulfric, Bryan Salazar Orion, and Cassiopaeia Ellen Rose all slumbered peacefully. He stood and watched them for a few moments, then touched each of them lightly with his wand and whispered, "ostendo abbas liberi!"

A glowing mist formed above each of the babies and began shaping itself into faces. In moments, Severus was looking at three ghostly, smiling images of himself and Harry, hovering over their children. He felt a lump form in his throat and there was an annoying dampness at the corners of his eyes that he was unable to blame on pesky hormones.

He heard a sound from their bedroom and quickly banished the spell. The misty images faded away.

Shuffling footsteps approached the door.

"Sev'rus? S'everythin' all righ'?'" Harry mumbled sleepily.

Severus turned back to his drowsy lover. "Yes. Let's go back to bed. Everything is...just as it should be."

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