

Expecto Patronum!

by Moreteadk

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Only Chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

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Written for prompts 55 and 13 at the Potter Place Anything Goes prompt challenge, both included in their entirety below the story. Thanks to XXXXXXXX for the beta.

Crookshanks had lived at Hogwarts for most of his life. For a few years before adopting this particular human, and a few years later, he had lived elsewhere. Crookshanks was quite pleased to have moved back to the castle, as he knew this place like the back of his own paw, and there were great mousing territories here. There were even a number of female cats belonging to the younger humans living here. Most of them were easily impressed, purring invitingly when shown some of his fiercer looking battle scars. Unfortunately, it seemed like at least one of them was always in heat, and although Crookshanks could appreciate the company of the young queens and enjoyed impressing them and inspiring their admiration, he was a very old cat with only a few of his nine lives left. He found their attentions pushy and annoying and would honestly rather have a really fat mouse.

Upon moving back to Hogwarts, Crookshanks' human had moved in with another male human whom Crookshanks had eventually decided to adopt as his own. After a trial period, the male had proved himself to be happy to leave Crookshanks alone unless approached, but it wasn't until the human had procured a foul tasting potion that worked wonders for his tooth ache, that Crookshanks had finally given in, although getting it smeared on his gums had been terribly unpleasant. In time he had found himself becoming nearly as fond of the male as he was of the female. All in all, living with these humans was a nice and peaceful existence to an aging feline.

Crookshanks yawned and stretched lazily in a chair in front of the fireplace. If he remembered correctly, in a couple of days the human kittens would start to arrive for a new year of school, and being a cat of duty, Crookshanks had volunteered to make sure the castle would be as mouse-free as possible when they got there. He had hunted all day and gorged himself on the prey until he couldn't get another bite down. He glanced at the male as he entered, closing the door behind him. There was a smug look on his face as he called for his mate.

"What is it?" she asked as she came in from the adjoining rooms. "My, don't you look pleased with yourself!"

"At last!" the male said, waving a piece of parchment. "At last they are recognising the worth of my superior knowledge of the Dark Arts!"

The female raised an eyebrow. "Modesty is a virtue, Severus," she said dryly, before adding with a smile, "I gather they're letting you teach Defence Against the Dark Arts?"

Crookshanks twitched an ear at the female's use of the word 'Severus'. He would never really understand the human need to call things by words other than those needed to describe them. His own name, Crookshanks, had been a source of slight irritation all his life. He was a cat, and he didn't expect the humans to call him anything other than that.

"Yes, and it's about time too. I've already got the curriculum for each year worked out," he replied.

"Of course you do," the female said with a grin and kissed her mate's cheek. "Are they new plans, or the same ones from before the war?"

The male scowled at her. "That was nearly ten years ago," he said tartly. "Those plans would have been completely outdated. Of course they're new plans. Here, see for yourself!"

The female took the parchment handed to her and unrolled it. "You're teaching the Patronus charm to third-year students?" she asked in wonder. "Are you sure they're ready for that?"

"Of course they are," the male scoffed. "Potter managed it. If he could do it at that age, the difficulty of it is definitely overrated."

"*Harry*," the female said, "was a rather special case. Most children at that age haven't had happy memories of that calibre yet."

"Rubbish. He's not that powerful a wizard when not under extreme pressure or aided by others. If he could learn it *and* teach it to his classmates as well, they're more than ready," the male said, waving her off.

The female just shrugged, letting it pass. Then she smiled teasingly again and asked, "Do you realise that now you have to stop grumping about foolish wand-waving?"

The male glowered at her. Crookshanks shifted on the chair, rolling himself into a ball of fur and tried to find a position where his ears were covered. The humans were beginning to annoy him with their talking and laughing. It was another one of those human things that Crookshanks knew he would never really understand, this strange need to try to humiliate each other. He could see how it would work between rivals, but *his* humans weren't rivals. They were mated, and yet they still carried on arguing and bickering. As far as Crookshanks could tell, such behaviour didn't serve a practical purpose at all.

"The Dark Arts and the defence against them have nothing to do with foolish wand-waving, Hermione," the male said. "It's about precision and power. It's speed and tactics, it's"

"If you say 'manly', Severus Snape, I will demonstrate exactly how well a woman can handle a hex," the female said ominously. "I don't know where you got this ridiculous idea that Charms is a subject primarily for feeble women, but I would really appreciate it if you would at least keep it to yourself."

The male didn't answer that, and Crookshanks thought it was probably a wise move on his part. Perhaps he was learning at last. The female had, after all, been teaching Charms for several years now.

"And when was the last time you even needed to defend yourself against the Dark Arts, anyway?" the female continued. There was a smirk on her face, giving her question away as being sheer provocation. "Do you even remember how to conjure a Patronus?"

"Of course I do," the male scoffed. "Watch. *Expecto Patronum!*"

Silvery mist shot out of the end of the male's wand, quickly taking the shape of a slightly transparent kitten. Crookshanks wasn't a stupid cat, and he had seen the ghosts of Hogwarts many times. They had this exact colour, but he knew there were no ghosts of cats in the castle. That meant that there was only one thing this particular ghost could be. It was one of his own lives! His fur stood on end; he hissed in horror and took off as fast as his legs could carry him. Once hidden safely in the most inaccessible corner under the bed, he yowled angrily as he tried to figure out why his humans would suddenly treat him this way, and whether or not it was the ghost of a life he had already had or one of the lives he had left.

"A kitten!" he heard the female exclaim in delight. "Your Patronus has changed into a kitten! That's so funny. Oh, Severus, you should have seen your face just now."

"It's no laughing matter, Hermione!" the male shouted, sounding horrified. "I can't demonstrate that in front of the students! Why is it a kitten?"

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Hoping that he would be able to change it back to something a little more evil and appropriately manly, the male spent the next several weeks deliberately maintaining as foul a mood as possible, and when the young humans returned to the castle, the male's behaviour only got worse. Crookshanks frequently heard them muttering about intolerable amounts of homework, detentions given out for breathing loudly and other similar offences.

The female didn't seem too bothered by his behaviour. She would admonish him for being a little too harsh with the young ones, but there was never any real reproach behind it. Crookshanks suspected it had something to do with sounds of flesh striking flesh and the girly squeals of delight coming from the bedroom after the male had dragged his mate in there and slammed the door. Every night he would cast that spell again, looking for any difference. Crookshanks was slowly getting used to the appearance of the ghostly kittens. He had decided that with the number of them that had been conjured up so far, at least it couldn't be any of his own lives being sucked out of him. After all he only had nine, most of which were already spent.

Crookshanks decided to steer clear of him after the first time he had come to curl up to sleep in his lap, only to find himself rudely shoved to the floor. Evidently, the male was trying to dissociate himself with anything having to do with cats, and Crookshanks had had about as much as he could tolerate. He wasn't a young cat anymore. Being unceremoniously removed from his favorite napping spots and dumped on the floor was making him begin to feel his age. As a cat, he needed plenty of sleep, especially at his age. It was simply impossible to get a proper nap in this place, and it wasn't even as if the male wanted to sit there in that chair at all.

It took several weeks, but finally the female came to his rescue. All Crookshanks had done was meow at the door, asking to be let out. It was a big castle; it should be possible to find a quiet place for a proper nap somewhere, even if it wouldn't be as warm and comfy as the sofa in front of the fireplace. Perhaps he could sneak into the kitchens and steal some milk. He didn't care that the female kept saying milk was bad for him; at his age he thought he deserved the treat.

At first the male ignored him, then he started scowling, and finally, from out of nowhere, an ink bottle came flying, smashing to bits on the floor close to where Crookshanks was standing, spraying him with red ink.

"What's going on in here?" the female asked, brought to the scene by the sound of breaking glass and outraged yowling. "Severus, what are you doing? Have you lost your mind!" she shrieked, snatching Crookshanks up in her arms. "This had better just be red ink on him!"

Crookshanks was a little concerned about that and squirmed in her arms, trying to lick at one of the red spots on his fur. It tasted absolutely horrible, but it definitely wasn't blood. He should be able to get that cleaned off easily enough, if he just pretended he couldn't taste anything.

Glaring at the male, the female stomped off to the bathroom, closing the door behind her before setting him down on the floor. She muttered angrily to herself while she went about the bathroom preparing water and soap. Crookshanks hid as well as he could behind the toilet as he watched the female viciously preparing his bath, but when she came to drag him out of his hiding place, he found that his claws were useless against the hard, slippery floor tiles.

Squirming desperately, he employed both teeth and claws in his attempt to escape the gruesome fate that was bathing, and he even managed to break free of her grip. His freedom was short-lived, however. In his state of panic, he had failed to take the female's anger into consideration.

"*Petrificus Totalus!*"

Rarely in all of his years, had he found himself in such a humiliating situation as being bathed while completely unable to move a muscle. He couldn't even growl in protest. His outrage at her actions was boundless. It was even more offensive than having ink thrown at him. At least the male had been honest in his wish to avoid anything even remotely cat-shaped for the last several months. The female had, in Crookshanks' mind, committed ultimate treason by taking her anger at the male out on the very cat she was claiming to defend.

As soon as he was released from the spell and the door was opened, Crookshanks sprinted out of the bathroom and into the bedroom, where he hid under the bed. He could hear the raised voices of the male and the female in the other room, arguing about the male's treatment of him. If cats could roll their eyes, he would have. Crookshanks wasn't particularly impressed with the female's defence of him. He could defend himself and would leave a "present" in the male's shoe as punishment for his actions at the first given opportunity. The female would also need to be punished, although he hadn't yet figured out how. The bath, not to mention the jinx, was so much worse than what the male had done, that he needed to think it through properly. Revenge would come to her as well, and it would be merciless.

Licking himself completely dry, Crookshanks ignored their loud voices as best as he could. After a good while of shouting, silence fell over the room. Crookshanks curled up in a ball and dozed off. He didn't get to enjoy the peace and quiet for long, however, and soon was woken by their voices again. They certainly weren't arguing anymore. The noises coming from the other room this time were unmistakably mating calls. How terribly annoying. It was one of the many drawbacks of living with humans, apart from the baths and having ink bottles lobbed at him now and then. Female cats were only in heat during a specific period of time, making it easy for him to avoid them during that time. Female humans appeared to be in heat constantly. The mating calls were getting louder now, Crookshanks noted with some relief. That usually meant that it would be over soon. At least it usually also meant that they were done arguing for the moment.

As the mating calls died down and were replaced by giggles and muffled speech, Crookshanks ventured closer to the door, peeking into the other room. The humans were mostly hidden from his view, with only their feet and the top of the male's head visible behind the back of the sofa. At least they were talking normally to each other now, so he decided it was safe to try and get one of them to let him outside again.

"Is it really such a bad Patronus, Severus?" the female asked. "It represents me and Crookshanks."

That little ghostly runt was supposed to represent him? Crookshanks was appalled. Even as a newborn kitten he would have been able to beat it to a pulp using only his left paw, he thought, snorting derisively.

"I don't mind a Patronus that represents you," the male sighed. "I just don't want a kitten! How can the students respect someone who's got a kitten for a Patronus? I'll look like a weakling."

"Respect you? Fear you, you mean," the female corrected. "And that's rubbish. You'll simply look human, that's all."

The male grumbled something that Crookshanks didn't manage to catch.

"Watch your mouth," the female admonished him gently. "You'll just have accept that you can't change your Patronus just because you want it to be something else."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Just try it," the female said confidently. "You've been an absolute beast lately, and you'll see that it didn't help anything at all."

"*Expecto patronum!*"

"See, I told you it was usele oh my God, send it away!" The first bit had been uttered with not a small amount of smugness. The last bit was shrieked in fear, and the piercing tone of voice did nothing to help Crookshanks get over the shock of another ghostly figure appearing from out of nowhere. He shook his head, trying to get the ringing sound out of his sensitive ears.

"It changed!" the male exclaimed in surprised delight.

"Send it away!"

"Now, that's a Patronus that means business," he continued smugly.

"Send it away!"

"Since when are you afraid of snakes?" he asked his mate curiously.

"Since Nagini. Will you please send it away?" the female said irritably, as if she had just been asked the most stupid question in the world. "And you can stop laughing. It's not funny."

The male flicked his wand at the ghostly snake, and it dissolved into the air from which it had come.

"It's a little funny," the male said, grinning at her.

The female simply glared at him and stomped into the bathroom, slamming the door behind her. The male grinned widely and opened the door for Crookshanks. Making his escape, Crookshanks wondered how he had come to be saddled with such clearly insane humans, and whether or not the Groundskeeper would let him move into his cabin instead.

Fin!

55. It begins with kittens. It ends with snakes. (There's an obvious

SS/HG reference in there, but it really can be anything! As long as

there are kittens. And snakes. I'd like for the kittens not to be fed

to the snakes.)

13. Write a fic from a non-human POV. Some ideas are: Crookshanks,

Hedwig, Hermes, the Squid, Mrs. Norris, or even someone's wand!