

To Carve a Pumpkin

by Stefdarin

To what lengths will the Headmaster of Hogwarts go to do something the Muggle way? A Happy Halloween fic for all my friends here at TPP!

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Chapter 1 of 1

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My forever thanks go to my beta, Sempra. I feel blessed that I found her.

To Carve a Pumpkin

Albus smiled to himself. He had a wonderful idea for the Halloween feast this year, and he could hardly wait to make the announcement to the staff and students. It was something he had always wanted to do. Giddily, he rubbed his hands together and then flipped through the pages of the thin magazine-like book in front of him. An image of happy eyes, and an almost toothless grin, smiled up at him, and his eyes twinkled.

As he turned the page, his brow furrowed, and he studied the next picture of an intricate spider web pattern. 'That looks difficult,' he thought, shrugged and continued through the book. At the back there was a diagram showing how to cut off the top of a pumpkin with a picture of a hand scooping out the insides. His face scrunched at the thought of what that might feel like.

A knock at his door caused him to look up and emerge from his thoughts. "Come in," he called distractedly. As the door opened to reveal his Deputy, his face lit up. "Minerva, my dear. How lovely it is to see you."

Minerva smiled at him, looked down at his desk inquisitively, a frown of worry crossing her face. "What are you up to, Albus Dumbledore? You just saw me less than an hour ago... And you look like the proverbial cat that swallowed the canary." She walked around the desk to kiss his lips lightly. Then, she seated herself in his lap to get a better look at his secret agenda. His arms came around her waist in a caress, and he rested his head on her shoulder to survey his cluttered desktop.

When she looked at him sternly, he looked back with almost a pout. "On the contrary, my love, I am not up to anything. But I have come up with a brilliant idea for the Halloween feast this year." His eyes twinkled, and he saw Minerva's face scowl, her lips forming a thin line.

'Oh, great, I wonder what it is this year,' she thought to herself. 'Last year, I was barely able to talk him out of that scheme involving *Rocky Horror Picture Show* revisited.' "And what is all this?" she questioned as she looked at all the diagrams spread over the desk. Minerva leaned over and picked up one that illustrated a vomiting pumpkin, and a look of disgust crossed her face. However, out of the corner of her eye, she caught a picture of a very jovial face.

"Albus, are these pictures to put on pumpkins?" She looked at him as a little delight crossed her face. 'Perhaps all is going to be well this year.'

"They are," he replied, gazing at her out of the corner of his eye. But Minerva didn't see that look as she surveyed all the drawings, or she would never have fallen so easily into his trap. "I thought we could do our pumpkins with a little variety this year."

"Why, that's a great idea, dear. Some of these are quite intriguing. I'm surprised we haven't done them before. It should be easy for Filius and me to charm the carvings onto the pumpkins we levitate in the Great Hall for Halloween," she went on with interest.

"I'm glad you think it's a good idea, but we won't be using magic," he countered.

"Whawhat do you mean?" she sputtered and leaned back to glare at him.

He smiled nervously. "Well, my dear, I thought we would have a pumpkin-carving contest this year."

"Pumpkin carving?" She looked at him skeptically, her lips thinning again.

"Yes, you know, no magic, carve them the Muggle way? All of these pictures were done by Muggles." He waved his arm over the diagrams in reference.

To say Minerva wasn't pleased was an understatement. However, it soon got worse.

"I thought we could have a contest amongst the students and faculty. Whoever wins will get a year's worth of treats from Honeydukes. I also want to have a costume ball."

"Costume ball?" She looked a bit lost. Her mind was racing; his mind seemed made up already, and she was trying to think of a way to change it.

"Yes, my love. Isn't it wonderful?" he asked with delight.

"Mmmm," was all she said when her brow furrowed with worry as she contemplated what such a ball might entail.

Oblivious, he chattered on. "Yes, we could have the contest on the grounds, and whoever is caught using magic has to wear a Spongebob Squarepants costume to the ball." He smiled devilishly, thinking of a certain Potions master. Yet, he knew Severus would never cheat.

Some of what he said registered in her mind. "Spongebob Squarepants?" She gazed at him curiously.

"Ahhh, yes... He is a cartoon character who is very popular with young children these days. The costume I found, however, looks quite ridiculous, and I felt it would be fitting for anyone who decided to cheat." He leaned forward and looked at her. "Are you alright, darling? You are very quiet." His face formed a frown; Minerva was usually very vocal about his schemes. He was prepared for all her protests this year, but there was one problem: she wasn't voicing any.

Minerva's mind raced. She thought to bring up half a dozen reasons not to continue with this travesty, but it really wasn't as bad as some of the ideas he had come up with over the years. She knew he brought up ideas like these to encourage faculty and student participation and promote Muggle relations. He did seem to have thought things through this year. Maybe she should focus on next year and strike a deal with him. She smiled a little to herself; at least that way she wouldn't have to worry about any schemes next year.

"Yes, yes... I'm fine. I was simply thinking things over."

"And?"

"What you are suggesting sounds like a good way to encourage the staff and students to work together, and to encourage Muggle relations."

He smiled at her elatedly. "I'm so glad you see what I am trying to do, my dear."

"Yes, I do. It looks like you have been working very hard on your idea. I just want to put in that I would like the opportunity to do something next year, so you won't have to worry about it." She looked at him and hoped he wouldn't read too much into it.

Albus gazed at her thoughtfully and smiled. "That sounds good. I am so glad you agree, and I look forward to what you may come up with next year. I know you will have fun with the activities this year though." He clapped with joy. That had been easier than he had anticipated, but Albus wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth.

He turned Minerva to face him and kissed her softly. "Thank you, my love. Shall we go to the Great Hall for dinner and let everyone know about the festivities to take place?" Standing up, he extended his arm to her, and she wound her arm around his. Then, they made their way to the Great Hall. Minerva couldn't wait to see Severus' reaction to the news, and with that thought, a smirk played upon her lips.

That evening, Albus made his announcement to the school, and the reaction was somewhat mixed. The Slytherin table looked around, glowering at both the Headmaster and the children seated at the other tables who were exclaiming with delight. To Minerva's glee, Severus' face also held its characteristic scowl. However, her own face turned into a frown when Albus added a little tidbit to his original idea which he had not mentioned to her before. It seemed the costume ball was to be Muggle as well. They had to come up with a costume without using magic, and it had to be a theme or pertain to the Muggle world in some way. She sighed heavily; it would be worth it if she didn't have to worry about any of this for next year.

Over the next week, all the preparations were made for the pumpkin carving contest and ball. Mr. Filch spent the better part of his time trying to gather the falling leaves from the trees in the courtyard so they would have room to set up stations to carve the pumpkins. No sooner would he gather them in a pile that they would either be blown away by the wind or one of the students would run and jump in them with glee. He already had a roster full of detentions for the following week.

During this time, the children talked excitedly about their costumes and what had inspired them, from Muggle movies to poems to stories. As Albus walked through the halls, he smiled to himself. He was glad the children were enjoying this. However, his faculty was another matter all together. Several of them constantly avoided him when they could, and Severus had hunted him down half a dozen times with reasons why he could not participate. Albus had finally told him it was not a choice but mandatory for the staff. They needed to set an example for the students. He hated to do that to Severus, but he felt that sometimes the Potions master was too stiff; he needed to loosen up. He finally found himself at Minerva's office door.

"Come in," she called from the other side when he knocked. Her face showed a frown briefly then smiled at him. "Hello, Professor Dumbledore."

"Hello, Professor McGonagall," he replied just in case any students were nearby. He walked in and sat in front of her desk, warding the door behind him. "Have you come up with a costume yet?"

Minerva sighed; she knew what Albus had told Severus, and she knew he wouldn't let her out of anything if she told him she didn't have a costume. "I think so, although I have neglected to ask you what your costume is going to be." She watched him with reservation. Because, of all of them, she figured he would have the hardest time thinking up a Muggle costume with all of his facial hair. She leaned over her desk with a flirtatious look in her eye and tugged on his beard playfully. He leaned in to give her a kiss with a bright smile. When their lips separated, he told her, "I am going to be Merlin."

Minerva looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "I thought we weren't allowed to use magic."

"Ahhh, but I'm not. Merlin is a magical person, not a costume that requires magic," he informed with an indulgent smile.

"But I thought it had to be a Muggle theme."

"Haven't you ever heard of the Muggle movie, 'The Sword and the Stone'?"

"I don't think I am familiar with it, no."

"Well, there is a character in the film named Merlin, and he looks just like me." He grinned at her.

Minerva made a snorting sound and covered her mouth. Quickly, she composed herself to let him know what she thought. "Albus, that isn't very original. You wouldn't even really be wearing a costume... Somehow, I don't think the children will buy it, and I wonder what Severus will think." She pointed this last out to him, and he realized his folly. Yes, if he went ahead with his plan, he would forever be placating Severus. His brow furrowed in thought.

"Well, what are you going to be?" he asked her, narrowing his eyes.

"Umm..." she began and looked away. "It's a surprise."

"I knew it! You don't have a costume either!" He exclaimed, pointing a finger at her, and crossed his arms to glare at her, mockingly.

"Well, it isn't that I don't have one, I am just mulling over a few ideas. I'm not sure what I want to be yet, but I have several options." She glared at him for implying she didn't have any ideas, which she didn't, but she would never tell him that. Suddenly, a thought struck her. "Say, where did you get those diagrams for the pumpkins?"

"At a Muggle Halloween store, why?"

"Well, did they sell costumes there?"

His face lit up. "Minerva, have I told you how wonderful you are lately?"

"Yes, but you can always tell me again." She smiled back at him.

"We could go to the store together and see about getting costumes," he exclaimed happily. "You are done for the day, right?"

"Yes, it is early enough that we could go and get back before dinner." She was glad he had practically come up with this idea on his own, with just a little nudging from her. It gave her a reason to go to the Muggle shop since she hadn't wanted to go by herself.

Once they reached the Halloween store, Minerva clutched Albus' arm, and they went inside. She glanced around in trepidation. Muggles did all this? There were fake spider webs strewn along the walls and ugly bodies that looked like Inferi stood at different locations around the shop. When you got close, they would start making jerking movements and scream until you went by. Then, there was this hideous corpse-like thing with only the top half of its body, pulling itself across the floor with its arms. As it approached her, Minerva started to reach for her wand to hex it into oblivion, but Albus stopped her, and she glared at him.

"Ah, ah, ah, my love. Not here. Besides, it won't hurt you." Albus leaned over to turn the monstrosity off, and Minerva sighed with relief and intrigue. She looked at its back where he indicated and saw a button that read on/off, then smiled, a little discomfited.

All around them hung costumes and body parts, hats and masks, and assorted attachments and makeup. Minerva's head almost hurt surveying it all. Slowly, they made their way through the shop looking at all the adult costumes until they came to the section quarantined off for couples. Albus immediately grabbed up a package and studied it, eyes twinkling. Minerva sighed with exasperation, this couldn't be good.

Albus looked at her, beseechingly. "I just had a great idea: let's do a couples' costume!" he exclaimed.

"Let me see it first." She eyed him warily. She had already fallen prey to too many things this Halloween on his behalf. She was going to make him make it up to her in more ways than one.

Albus looked around to make sure no one was looking and leaned in for a cuddle. "I'll make it worth your while," he murmured playfully and was rewarded as Minerva moved, giving him better access to her neck. He nipped, then placed a kiss there.

A growl rolled in her throat; she looked at him with desire and said in her deep Scottish lilt, "Let me see, Albus."

Hopefully, he brought the package from his chest to show her. He grimaced at her gasp. "Albus, what will the students think?"

"Nothing, my dear! Just because you have a perverted mind doesn't mean that they do," he said this last bit with an indignant look. "Besides, I wasn't planning to wear my part like that. It can go up higher, see?" He pointed to a picture.

"But what about the staff," she began with worry.

"You are my right hand, and I think this costume is appropriate and very original. You know they wouldn't dare say anything anyhow." He raised an eyebrow at her. He hoped she would cave; he liked the costume, and he was prepared to go to any lengths for it. Again, he leaned over and distracted her with his mouth below her ear. "Please, Tabby? I promise you won't regret it. It could be fun."

Minerva's breath hitched in her throat, and her eyes dilated. Slowly, she capitulated to his request. He was right. Besides, they wouldn't always be together that evening as they attended their duties. Over the years, it astounded her how he could get her to do things she would never normally do for others. But, with him, it was different - she loved him.

"Oh, okay, but only if you wear it like that." She pointed to the package again and shuddered; what was she getting herself into? Albus whooped with joy and went to pay for the costume as Minerva brought up the rear, shaking her head to clear it.

Halloween finally arrived. Minerva stood looking at herself in the mirror. What was she thinking to let Albus seduce her into this? That was it! She scowled at herself. She wasn't thinking, but she would be damned if she would let him see her defeated by a silly costume. It was only one night after all, and he had to wear the other one, she smiled impishly. But he was right; separately, they were good costumes, and they had decided, if anyone asked, to act as if they hadn't purchased the costumes together.

Albus came out of their bathroom in his costume. Two silver prongs protruded from his waist along with a white, rectangular box, and a long cord was coiled over his shoulder. He had on a black long-sleeved shirt and black Muggle pants. Minerva caught a glimpse of him in the mirror and stifled a giggle. At least her costume didn't have any protruding parts.

His smile radiated joy at her. "Thank you for doing this, my love."

"As you wish, my darling. We need to get going or we'll be late to start things off," she said, glancing at the clock on the wall. "I'll go and get things situated in the courtyard." Giving him a brief kiss, she left him to accomplish her task.

Albus stared at himself in the mirror and chuckled. He did look silly, but he didn't think anyone else would be wearing the same thing. He wondered what everyone had come up with. Even though he had not announced there would be a best costume prize, he hoped there were many good costumes. With a last look over his apparel, he left their suite and made his way to the Great Hall to do the last-minute checks on the feast and decorations for the ball.

Down in the courtyard, Minerva checked that all the stations contained carving utensils, pumpkins, and the pictures everyone would need to accomplish their tasks. Mr. Filch was complaining loudly about the leaves as they were blowing all over again. Minerva took pity on him and charmed them to stay in a gigantic heap in the middle of the courtyard, right in the center of all the pumpkin carving stations.

"That should hold them as long as no one bothers them," she informed him.

"Thank you, Professor McGonagall," Filch replied roughly, studying her with some interest, then shaking his head and walking away, muttering to himself.

Minerva's brow crinkled. 'I wonder what got into him?' she pondered. Shrugging, she made her way to the crowd that was gathering near the entrance doors. Albus appeared on the balcony above and nodded for her to begin. Once in front of everyone, she heard a few giggles and whispers. She glared at all the students and faculty gathered there, and they quieted.

"Thank you. Welcome, everyone, to the Halloween festivities." Her voice carried as she used a *Sonorous* charm. "We would like all of you to break into groups of two to four and choose a station. You will find everything you need to create a pumpkin, and no magic can be used in your creation. You all have one hour to complete your work, then Professor Dumbledore will cast the *Deletrius* spell to ensure no magic was used. Please be aware, if you use magic, you will get to wear a specific costume to the ball in lieu of your own." A small smirk played about her lips as she noticed the Weasley twins duck and whisper to each other. "Afterwards, the Headmaster will choose the best four pumpkins. These pumpkins will be put on display in the Great Hall during the feast and the ball. During this time, all individuals will place their vote in the cauldron at the head table to determine a winner. The group who creates the winning pumpkin will each get a year of sweets from Honeydukes. You may begin." She raised her arms in indication for everyone to start, and everyone rushed to a station to begin.

From the balcony, Albus surveyed the, somewhat, chaos below. Professor Snape, who seemed to be dressed in garb from the 1700s, had teamed up with Professors Flitwick, dressed as Napoleon Bonaparte, and Sprout, who was dressed as Josephine. Every so often, the Potions master sneered at the little Charms teacher, but he didn't take offense and continued to work diligently. Suddenly, they seemed to be having trouble with their carving knife. Flitwick had broken it.

"Oh, for pity's sake, give me that!" Snape practically snarled at him. He took the knife from Flitwick and then turned to ask Minerva for another. Soon, they were pedantically following the instructions again.

The next station held Hermione Granger, dressed as Captain Elizabeth Swann, Neville Longbottom as Julius Caesar and Luna Lovegood, attired as the goddess Aphrodite. Luna looked off into the distance, seemingly unaware of anything going on, but handed Hermione everything she asked for without mishap, while Neville read the directions.

After that, was the very lively station housing Harry Potter, Ronald Weasley, Seamus Finnegan and Dean Thomas, all dressed as *The Ghostbusters*. Harry and Dean carved madly on two sides of their pumpkin at once while Ron looked for the diagram they seemed to have misplaced. Meanwhile, Seamus aimed his water-type gun, extending from the pack on his back, at all the surrounding pumpkins.

"Quit pointing that thing at everyone, Mister Finnegan, or I will be forced to confiscate it and deduct house points," Professor McGonagall told him sternly to which he quickly holstered the intimidating object. Albus chuckled a bit from his vantage point and looked to the right.

The Weasley twins worked meticulously, constantly hunched over their pumpkin. They were dressed as the Joker and the Riddler. Albus thought he saw a flicker by them but hoped it was a play of the light. To the left of the twins was a Slytherin table containing Draco Malfoy, dressed as the Grim Reaper, and Pansy Parkinson as the Angel of Death. Beside them, Crabbe and Goyle were wearing gangster suits and struggling with the carving knife while Draco shouted orders and Pansy stood with her arms crossed.

As the bedlam continued, Albus made his way down to the courtyard. Once there, he walked to each table to watch the teams up close for a while. As he made his way through the crowd, many stopped and looked up at him, then giggled a little or stifled a gasp. Every once in a while, he would stop to assist, but his prongs kept getting in the way. He would just chuckle with the occupants and then move on to the next table.

As the hour drew to a close, everyone was frantically trying to finish. At the end, Professor McGonagall held up her hand. "Stop! Time is up. Everyone, please put down your utensils and wait for the Headmaster to come cast the spell on your pumpkins."

Albus made his way to each table, and everything went well until he got to the Weasley twins. As he cast the spell on their pumpkin, it glowed a fluorescent green. Dumbledore looked at the twins a little sternly, and then his look changed to a smirk. "Well, Messrs Weasley, you will have the delight of wearing a very special costume for the ball tonight."

Fred looked at George, and George looked at Fred, and each grabbed the other by the shirt. "Won't be able to tell? You great git!" they said in unison and began to struggle with each other. Professor Dumbledore ignored their antics and waved his wand. Immediately, the twins' costumes transformed, and they were wearing a Spongebob Squarepants costume each.

Fred and George's eyes goggled as they saw each other, and they stopped their struggle. They stood up and each pointed and laughed at the other. Their faces wore sappy grins, for they looked as if they had been swallowed by Spongebob Squarepants himself. Above their faces were two big bulging blue eyes and a protruding nose. Their arms were yellow, and their legs were clothed in black shoes with white knee socks and brown shorts. They held their stomachs and chuckled heartily, no longer mad at each other. The crowd all laughed as well.

Albus chortled and looked at Minerva, who wore a bit of a smirk and put a hand to her mouth as her stern veneer cracked. Albus was close enough to hear her laughter bubble up from inside, and she put her hands on her stomach. It was such a light-hearted moment, he almost wondered if the twins had done this on purpose. They were always good natured about a prank.

As the laughter died down, Albus chose the four best pumpkins and Levitated them to the Great Hall, followed by everyone as they made their way to the feast and sat at their house tables. The chatter over dinner was about everyone's costumes and the antics of the twins. Also, there was a lot of speculation about Professor McGonagall's and Professor Dumbledore's costumes. Everyone was debating on what they were supposed to be.

Soon, the tables cleared of food and rearranged to a position along the walls to make way for the ball. Eventually, Hermione cornered Professor Snape and asked him what his costume was.

"I presume you know your literature, Miss Granger..." He looked down his nose at her. "Please refer to the poet, Alfred Noyes," he provided and turned on his heel to stalk away.

"Ahh, you're the Highwayman, aren't you?" Hermione shouted after him to which he turned and gave a slight nod. Again, he turned with a flourish and left the room.

Albus and Minerva watched as the faculty and students danced and approached the head table to cast their votes. Under the table, they held hands, and every once in a while, they would steal a glance at each other. Minerva dropped Albus' hand as Harry approached them.

Harry came up to his Head of House cautiously, "Professor McGonagall?"

"Yes, Mister Potter."

"Ummm, the guys and I were wondering, I mean, what exactly is your costume?" He looked down as a slight pink tinge came to his cheeks.

"Well, what do you think it is, Potter?"

Harry looked up quickly, "Er, I think it's an electrical outlet, but Ron said you look like a playing card." His cheeks reddened again.

"Well, you can inform Mister Weasley that he is wrong... and you are right." She looked at him with a slight smile and gleam in her eye. "Five points, Mister Potter, for guessing correctly," she informed, and her smile broadened a little.

Harry brightened, turned around and ran off to tell his classmates what he had found out. "Thank you, Professor McGonagall," he exclaimed over his shoulder as he made

his way back to the group.

"Are you having a good time, my dear?" Albus asked, squeezing her knee.

"I suppose, however, I find I might like a stroll in the air for a little bit." She looked at him. "Care to join me?"

"I'd be delighted."

The night was winding to a close as Minerva and Albus made their way to the entrance doors and the courtyard beyond. On their way out, they saw *The Ghostbusters* jabbering among themselves. Out in the courtyard, the other pumpkins had been charmed by Professor Flitwick. They glowed and Levitated, casting light and creating a lovely Halloween effect. Albus and Minerva wove among the pumpkins, admiring them and shuddering when they came across a misshapen one.

Across the courtyard, they heard a disturbance and raised voices. It seemed that *The Ghostbusters* had made their way outside as well, and Seamus had his water gun out again. "Yeah, it's a pressure washer. Me dad told me it does a wicked thing to pumpkins but didn't explain. He told me I could use it fer me costume though," they heard Seamus talking to the other boys.

Minerva was about to give him a stern lecture about aiming weapons when a strong jet of water forcefully shot out of the tip of the pressure washer and hit the pumpkin right in front of her. Suddenly, the pumpkin exploded, and pieces of shell were flying everywhere.

Albus grabbed Minerva and threw her back, where she landed in the gigantic pile of leaves she had charmed earlier. Then, his heavy body was on top of her as she heard more pumpkins explode, and they were showered with shards of pumpkin shell. It seemed that Mister Finnegan had lost control of his pressure washer, and every pumpkin he hit with the powerful stream of water burst and ripped into dozens of pieces.

"NO! No, it's that one, THAT ONE!" Minerva heard someone shouting and was having trouble breathing but realized it was because Albus was on top of her.

She then heard Harry calling to her and leaves crunching as he tromped through them in his effort to get to her. "Professor McGonagall! Professor McGonagall!"

"Here, Mister Potter!" Minerva tried to put her hand up, but Albus was in the way. She felt him convulsing on top of her and reached for him as fear started to grip her. "Albus? Are you alright?" She pushed at him to shift him so she could see.

She then heard his unmistakable chuckle. He wasn't convulsing, he was laughing, and she was not amused! She shoved him, and he grunted, to which she gave a satisfied smirk. "Albus, get off me, please?"

He shifted and looked at her with a gleeful twinkle, and she glared back at him. They shifted as the boys dug them out of the leaves. Once they were free of their crunchy prison, Minerva noticed that Seamus looked embarrassed and was constantly looking at the ground.

"I'm really sorry, Professor McGonagall and Professor Dumbledore, I didn't realize it would do that, I never would have"

Minerva cut him off. "It's alright, Mister Finnegan, we all make mistakes." Minerva's eyes slid to Albus but he didn't look at her. "However, I would like you to take that off and put it in a safe place, now. Otherwise, I will have to give it to Mr. Filch."

Seamus' eyes widened. He quickly removed the dangerous item and scurried away.

"I think it's about time you all headed back to your dormitories, don't you?" She looked at the rest of them. They all nodded like bobble head dolls and left Minerva and Albus standing in the courtyard alone.

Minerva turned to Albus who suddenly found the night sky fascinating. "Albus?"

"Yes, Minerva?" He looked at her a little nervously. Her costume was no longer white, it had streaks of orange pumpkin smeared on it, and she had leaves stuck willy-nilly in her hair. When she saw herself in the mirror, she was going to kill him.

She glared at him, crossed her arms and said sarcastically, "And to think, this all started just because you wanted to carve a pumpkin."

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A/N: **If you own a pressure washer and a pumpkin, do not attempt.**No characters were harmed during the writing of this fic. Thank you.