

Samhain

by chivalric

It's Halloween, Snape is on holiday in Germany, and what better way to spend the night than spying on a bunch of half-naked witches?

One-shot Story

Chapter 1 of 1

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Many thanks to my betas, shellsnapelover and Arabella Bloodgood.

Special thanks to notsosaintly. I'd be well and truly lost without you, my dear.

And Happy Halloween to all of you!



The word 'holiday' sounded nearly obscene in the ears of Severus Snape, Headmaster of Hogwarts. It reminded him of long hours spent in his childhood bedroom, reading the same copy of a Muggle book over and over again, since his mum had no money for books and it had been all he had been able to find. The word 'holiday' tasted of hunger, too, because in the summers when he'd been home from Hogwarts, Eileen Prince often had forgotten to cook, having been too drunk to even stand on her wobbly legs. The word still gave him the creeps, as back then, during his childhood holidays and summer breaks, he'd been so lonely that it had ached.

Naturally, he had declined to take a break from his duties as Headmaster. "I'm too busy, Poppy," he had sternly objected. "I don't have time to go anywhere."

Unfortunately, Poppy hadn't been interested in his opinion on the matter. "You are exhausted, Severus," she had told him a week ago after he had been forced to undergo his yearly check-up with her. "I don't even have to take out my wand to see your blood pressure is too high. You work too hard. I know you wander the school at night instead of getting some sleep. You are too pale, too thin, and if you don't take the autumn break off, I will write a letter to the Ministry stating that you are unfit to perform your duties."

"But..." he had begun.

"No buts!" Poppy had been really cross. "Look at you, Severus! Your hands are trembling; you didn't give detention to the Kramer girl although she dropped a Dungbomb right in front of you, and the Slytherins have been complaining that you are treating the Gryffindors completely fair. You are not yourself. You will go and pack and leave Hogwarts within the hour. If I see you here before November eighth, I will hex you. Are we clear?"

Admittedly, Poppy could be quite scary at times. Therefore, Snape had nodded, packed, and left.

Now he was on holiday.

Bah!

Frozen to the bones, Snape took to his surroundings. He stood in the middle of a small marketplace, which was in the centre of an even smaller town called Thale. It had only a couple of thousand inhabitants; it was ridiculously picturesque, wonderfully quiet, and the air was washed clean from the rain that had fallen the previous night. It smelled of grass and leaves, of apples and freedom, and maybe it hadn't been that bad an idea to come to Germany.

Not that he would admit it, though. *Why did I choose this godsforsaken place?* Snape thought as he stalked along, back towards his hotel. *I could have stayed in England, close to Hogwarts. But no, I had to come to Germany of all places, to the Harz.* Maybe Poppy had been right considering this mad decision, a break probably wasn't the worst idea.

But then, staying close to Hogwarts would have held too much temptation. Quite possibly, he wouldn't have been able to resist an afternoon walk to the schools' huge gates, checking, just checking, if the students were behaving decently, and then Poppy would have reported him to the Ministry. "She might have managed to put me in St. Mungo's for a fortnight, declaring it as treatment at a health resort. Damn the woman. Damn Germany. Damn all holidays in the world!"

Goodness, he was stressed out! Which was of course the reason he had chosen this little village because it was far away from home, because it was quiet and because it was highly unlikely that he would meet someone who knew him. The Lingua Franca Spell translated each German word into English and vice versa: when he spoke, people understood him without any problems. *Sometimes, I wonder how those Muggles get along,* Snape thought and just managed to suppress a smile. If he wasn't careful, he would begin to enjoy this holiday!

Swiftly, he pushed the door open to the small hotel he was staying in. It was called "Brockenhotel," and it suited him well enough. The room was small, the bed even smaller, and although he was staying in the attic, it felt nearly as cosy as his dungeons. The weather was pleasant it was nearly the end of October, but still warm and sunny. When it did rain, it was only at night.

Seven days, Snape thought and went upstairs, nodding briskly to the family that just came downstairs. *Seven full days, and I haven't touched my wand once. No contact with Hogwarts, no letters from Lupin, no potions brewing I think I might get sick.*

On the other hand, he had slept like a baby. Each night, he fell into bed like a dead man, and woke very refreshed in the mornings. He ate like a wolf, devouring his breakfast every morning in the small Irish Pub he had found. The pub served chips, sausages, and pudding in abundance. The German food was not bad, either he had put on some weight and didn't look like a scarecrow anymore. "If I stayed here, I would grow a football-sized belly," the Potions master muttered and took another of those nasty little cakes they baked. Actually, it was not that little, and it was clearly made of cream, at least most of it. Tasted delicious as well. Maybe, when he was back home, he would continue this habit of having something sweet for his afternoon tea. Sweet, rich cakes instead of cucumber sandwiches.

Hmmm. A thought worth pondering upon.

The cafés here were nice, too. They were completely different from a pub, so cosy and small and quiet, most of all. Snape enjoyed spending his mornings there, after his breakfast. The one around the corner was his favourite it offered the best cakes, and the lady who owned it was capable of brewing a decent tea, too.

Sighing contently, Snape leaned back in his chair and considered the options for the evening. He could go to bed early again. He could finish his book. He could, if he really wanted, stay downstairs and play cards with one of the other guests.

He *could* go for a walk, though. A long one, up to that hill not too far away. Apparently, as he had learned the previous day, it was a famous hill called 'Blocksberg'. In spring, on Beltane, it was said that witches danced around it, stark naked and dangerous. Of course he didn't believe a single word of it. No witch in the history of mankind had been stupid enough to risk a cold for a dance in the darkness, he knew that for sure. In addition, April nights were definitely very cold nights no matter how hot the music might be. Possibly, there were only a few Muggles up there pretending they were witches, shedding their clothes and behaving most stupidly.

Tonight was Halloween. Samhain, as the Celts had called it. Whatever the name, it was an important night, a night when the veil between the world of the living and the world of the dead was thin. Obviously, he couldn't go to bed at eight on a night like this. Additionally, it would be a full moon tonight too bright to sleep anyway, he decided, and headed upstairs to get his jacket and a scarf. It might have been warm during daylight, but as soon as the sun was gone, a cold snap in the air reminded everyone that winter was close.

It was past nine in the evening when Snape went outside. A cool wind blew, and he hunched his shoulders against it. Clouds were being chased across the sky it was a beautiful night, and the Potions master looked forward to his walk up the Blocksberg.

An Apparition spell brought him halfway up it was a big mountain, and he wanted to be at the top before midnight. Naturally, he was alone on the small path that led uphill. Who else would be mad enough to go hiking at night?

The path was steep, but Snape didn't mind. Despite Poppy's fears, he managed to keep himself more or less fit. True, at home he had too much work to do to eat or sleep regularly, but he always found the time for some fencing lessons with Lupin. Thus, this walk was pleasant, to say the least. The trees broke the wind, and he wasn't cold anymore. In the darkness, he could hear a lynx hunting for his dinner, mice hiding in their holes, and owls chasing their prey. It was peaceful up on the mountain, and Snape congratulated himself for coming here.

"On the top, I will make a fire and drink a bottle of champagne," he stated to the darkness and the stars above. "To celebrate that I am alive against all odds and predictions. Maybe I will even make a resolution to go on holiday on a regular basis. They are not as bad as I had expected."

That was the moment when he heard the music and the laughter.

What the bloody hell is that? he thought and went on more quickly, pushing branches aside and trying not to make too much sound on the dry autumn leaves that covered the ground. *Muggles can't be that daft, coming up here tonight to celebrate Halloween!*

On the other hand, Muggles believed that there was no true magic in the world. Nobody knew what they were capable of.

"Possibly just a few drunken youths," Snape muttered under his breath. The moon shone through the branches; he had no trouble finding his way although he had left the path in order to find out the source of the noise. The smell of smoke and cooking food tickled his senses.

More laughter. The music got louder. "I know that song. It's by that idiot, what's-his-name... Ah, yes. Poison Prince. All my students are humming his melodies and..."

Damn. Damn shit! Poison Prince might be an idiot, his songs dreadful, but he was a wizard nevertheless. Which left only one conclusion...

Swush!

Instinctively, Snape threw himself flat on the ground. Leaves rustled; his left hand landed in a molehill, and his hair got caught in a bush. However, he had escaped the broom. By inches only, but he had escaped it. Fencing did pay off its price; his reaction had been fast and efficient, otherwise the witch would have knocked him out just like that.

Witches! Damn, bloody witches, and they were everywhere on the ground, sitting on huge blankets near the gigantic fire frying sausages. They were next to the trees, sipping whatever out of crystal glasses. And they were in the air, of course, on brooms, dancing around the fire in whirling, entrancing circles. Wearing next to nothing.

So much about his theory about the intelligence of witches and coldness.

No, they weren't naked. It was worse they were dressed up. In an extremely sexual way, Snape observed from his position on the ground. Silken bodices, tight skirts, low-cut tops. Sparkling eyes, gleaming lips, heaving bosoms. Short witches, big ones, tall, thin and fat ones, beautiful young witches and witches as wrinkly and ancient as time

itself.

It was the scariest sight Snape had seen in his entire life. There were so many of them, they were so happy and oblivious to the fact that they had been found, they were so... female that Snape decided to get back to his hotel and hide under his bed immediately. Womanpower, witchpower he could not cope with that, would not stand a chance against them, was a lamb amidst a pack of wolves if they saw him. This was for witches only, he realised belatedly. This night was special for them, and he didn't care that it might be considered a cowardly act or not: he stayed flat on his stomach and crawled backwards, totally aware of the fact that an encounter with the Dark Lord when he was in a black mood was nothing compared with facing as much as just one of those witches on a night like this.

Well, the witches hadn't been stupid. They had put wards around their dancing place, wards which would have kept away Muggles, but allowed anyone who owned magic to pass. If this someone was a woman, she was welcome; if it was a man, though, he would be detected.

Two hands landed on Snape's shoulders. Two witches who made sure no one watched who wasn't allowed to watch yanked him up. This night was special to them, and Snape, who was a brave man under any other circumstances, felt his knees shaking. "I..." he began, but the witches just shook him quiet like a terrier might shake a rat he planned to eat in a minute or two.

"A man," the taller witch said, wonder in her voice. "A man, here, tonight. Do you think he is crazy, Sam?"

The other witch, shorter and younger, grinned mischievously. "Crazy or daft. Everyone knows that the Blocksberg is ours tonight. No man dares to come close. What shall we do with him, Helga? Eat him?"

Helga in her sixties, presumably, with steel grey hair and eyes hard as diamonds, snorted. "Let's bring him to the fire. I want to have a closer look before we make a decision." With that, she began dragging him along, and Snape had no other option but to follow. He was certain that had he tried to draw his wand, he would have immediately become a dung beetle. A dead dung beetle.

I've spied for the Dark Lord, I've double-spied for Dumbledore and risked my life on a daily basis for nearly twenty years and now, for the first time ever, I am as scared as a little child, Snape thought, shuddering. He stood in front of the blazing fire, shivering and trembling. The flames cast shadows on his face, his shirt stuck to his sweaty back, and hell, he had not known that a few hundred witches could be such a horrible sight.

They had built a circle around him once Helga and Sam had dragged him out of the woods and into the clearing. In less than a minute, the witches had stopped dancing, eating, and chatting just to see what their sisters had found under the bushes.

I never would have thought that women could be so efficient in their wrath Snape could not hinder the thought crossing his mind. He could not stop his legs from shaking, either.

The witches just stood around him, staring at him as if he were a particularly nasty thing they had found in the darkest corner under their beds. Something that didn't belong amongst them, something they considered worthy of being crunched under their high heels. Snape gulped and tried to free his arms to no avail. The two witches held tight, and now a young, black-haired witch came towards him. She didn't wear a skirt, but tight leather trousers, and her dark red top shone like fresh blood in the light of the fire. Her long hair was plaited in two long braids. Make-up, dark like her hair, made her eyes look huge and hungry. Actually, she resembled a vampire more than anything else, her lipstick making her mouth appear as greedy as her eyes.

"A man," she said, her voice sounding deep, even hoarse. "A man amongst us. Tonight, of all nights. Are you stupid or mad, little man?" Reaching out, she traced a long, red fingernail along his jaw. It was sharp, and a thin line of blood welled up on his pale flesh.

"I am a foreigner," Snape managed after he had cleared his throat. "I did not know that tonight was special for German witches. I apologise for having disturbed you. Forgive me my intrusion."

She laughed, and the others laughed with her. Compared with that unbelievable sound, the hissing laughter of the Dark Lord had resembled a soft chuckle. Snape felt his hair stand up on the back of his neck and a strong urge to run and hide.

"English," the dark-haired witch declared with delight. "And a wizard, obviously, or he would have gone on without noticing us. A stupid, curious wizard who thinks it is a good idea to follow the sound of music and laughter on such a night. Samhain, little wizard what made you think you'd get back home alive after spying on us?" Her fingers, long and cold, caressed his throat and added gentle pressure. A little more and breathing would become hard.

"I had no intention on spying on you, madam," Snape said and managed with an effort not to jerk his head free. "Though I do confess, I had been curious. Or stupid, as you put it. Be assured that I will never make that mistake again."

"But of course not," the witch said and raised a questioning eyebrow towards the other witches.

"Punishment!"

"Beat him!"

"I've got an empty cage at home. He would fit perfectly into it!"

"Silence!" the witch with the black hair shouted. Instantly, the whispers and suggestions of how to treat him ceased. She stepped closer, close enough that the Potions master could smell the sweet scent of her perfume. Her hand moved, went lower; casually, she hooked one finger under his scarf and pulled it off. Next, she opened his jacket and nodded a wordless spell to vanish it. "Black shirt, black trousers, black hair and eyes," she mused and smiled. "I have seen pictures of you, little wizard. You are the Headmaster of that school, Hogwarts. You were in the Evil One's service. You were a spy before you helped defeat him."

"Yes."

"You are powerful," she purred and painted a circle around the top button of his shirt. The thread didn't stand a chance against the razorblade-like fingernail and popped off into the fire, melting in the flames.

Snape felt positively endangered. This here was dangerous; he was certain of it. The two witches who held him seemed to have done this before, as their grip was hard and unyielding as steel. The black-haired witch severing one button after the other until his shirt hung loose on his lean frame was either in a playing or a killing mood. In both cases, it was unlikely that Snape would get out of here unharmed. *I should have done some research,* he mused and tried not to twitch when the witch scratched a perfect circle around the spot where his heart was beating far too fast. *That they dance on Samhain as well as on Beltane I should have known it. Bloody Germans.*

"Nice," said the witch to his left. *Sam, the younger one is Sam,* Snape remembered. She was in her late thirties, her short, brown hair standing up like spikes. Now, she licked her lips and brought her face close to his neck. "And he smells good. Can I have him, Cassandra?"

Kassandra just looked at Sam and shook her head. Then she turned around and raised her hands. "Sisters!" she called through the night, and even the faintest whisper ceased. "Sisters, you demanded punishment for this man, this foreigner, who intruded upon our feast, spied on our dance, ignored the fact that the Blocksberg is only for witches tonight. So tell me how shall I punish him?"

Cold sweat broke on the Potions master's forehead. Getting punished was nothing new to him, of course, having been in the Dark Lord's service for so many years. But seeing those witches those women and realising *how* angry they really were about his intrusion was an entirely different matter. And sure enough, there came the

suggestions. Death was the mildest one.

"Sisters!" Cassandra called, and it became silent once more. "I have made a decision. Let me know if it is suitable for all of you." Reaching out, she placed her long-fingered hand on Snape's chest. Casually, her nails dug into his skin and left five bloody spots. "You know what Muggles believe that the witches worship the devil on a night like this. That we dance naked, and that we make love to Lucifer one by one. Let's prove them right. I say we use him. I say he, who spied on us, now belongs to us. He is ours. All night long. Lust Potions for him; fun for us. Whoever wants him can have him. In the morning, if he is still alive, he may go. Do you..."

Her question if they agreed to her idea was drowned in an ocean of delighted screams. Sam tore his shirt off, Helga wrapped her arms around his waist and Snape was sure she would drag him away like a trophy at any moment when Cassandra once more raised her arms. "Silence!" she said. "Just one more moment, sisters. I have to ask this, it's the rule: is there someone amongst us who owns him and thus claims him as hers?"

The wind blew through the branches. Above, the stars sparkled innocently, and Snape, for the first time in his life, spoke a quick and very clear prayer *Please, gods. Merlin, please let someone...*

"I claim him."

Just three words. Calmly spoken, barely audible over the crackling fire. But spoken nevertheless. Snape craned his neck and ignored the wet kisses Sam was placing on his neck until Cassandra slapped her hand across the face. "Leave him be," the black-haired witch hissed. "He's been claimed."

"Damn," Sam muttered. "Could have done with someone to warm up my bottom for a change."

At the far end of the clearing, witches stepped aside to let someone pass. Someone not massively tall, someone slender, someone not too old, as her movements were swift and steady. "He's mine," this someone called through the night. "And I won't share him, Cassandra. This is the rule if he belongs to someone, you have to release him. He belongs to me. Sam, Helga, take your hands off him."

Her long skirt whirled up dust and leaves. Her curls, cascading down her back, were of a rich, dark brown. And her voice sounded definitely familiar. "Miss Granger?" he said with disbelief. "What the hell are you doing amongst these..."

"Watch your mouth, Professor Snape," Hermione Granger snapped. "My cousin is German. Cassandra, may I introduce you to my former Potions professor? The one who gave me detention more often than I care to remember, the one without whom Harry would have never been able to kill Lord Voldemort, and precisely the one I want in my bed tonight once more."

Laughter answered her words. Cassandra, obviously not at all offended at the turn of events, snapped her fingers and Snape was free. Or at least as free as possible amongst more than a hundred witches. "You are brave, Hermione," she said thoughtfully. "So he is yours, then? Had I known, I wouldn't have hurt him. Take him home, sister. Ride him mercilessly. For him, it will be nothing compared to the adventure of being with the rest of us, but then, he doesn't look too crestfallen at the prospect of leaving us behind." Tentatively, she brushed her fingertips across Snape's cheek one last time. A single drop of blood glittered on one of her nails. "Good bye, little wizard. Come back here anytime. Just not on the nights of May first and November first. Because next time, I won't have mercy."

Snape raised his chin. "I will leave this country and never come back," he promised, and then he felt a hand slip into his. A small hand, a warm hand, and it was slightly sweaty, too. Surprised, he looked down at the young woman standing next to him. She was nearly two heads smaller than him, and some five, six years ago, she had been his student. That made her... about twenty-five?

Whatever her age, for some reason, she was nearly as scared as he was. "Let's go, Severus," she said, and Snape could feel her hand trembling in his. Returning her tight grip, he allowed her to pull him along; together, they stepped under the trees, leaving the fire and the food and the music behind.

"Run!" Hermione hissed once they were out of earshot. "Once she figures out that I have lied, she might decide to come after us. Run, Professor." She let go of his hand, and Snape heard her feet on the soft ground, heading downhill, heading away from the clearing and the mountain and the witches they had just left behind.

"Not a bad idea," he said to an owl that just flew past and ran after her.

Never had the lights of a city been so welcoming, never the noise people made with their cars and their motorcycles and their fabrics so sweet in his ears as tonight. The mountain, the witches, the fire and the threatening black-haired Cassandra were behind them, they were back in town and surely it was time now to go separate ways.

"Where are you staying?" Hermione panted and put both her hands on her knees, lowering her head and audibly trying to get some air in her lungs.

Snape was quite exhausted himself he wasn't used to running, and Hermione had insisted that they shouldn't Disapparate. "Too dangerous," she had said. "We have to get as far away from the Blocksberg as possible without using magic. If we do, they will follow us immediately. Believe me I know the rules. It's not the first time I've spent Samhain in Germany."

Wiping off his sweaty brow, Snape was glad that he wasn't wearing the jacket anymore. "My room is in the Brockenhotel," he said curtly. "Just a few streets away from here. Although I have no idea why you are interested in this information."

"Gods, I didn't know you were such an idiot," Hermione snapped, and before Snape could object or at least realise what was going on, she grabbed his hand once more and pulled him along.

After a few steps, he ripped his hand out of her surprisingly hard grip. "Miss Granger," he growled, annoyed and startled at the same time. "Explain yourself. I am grateful for your intervention, but that is no reason for..."

Her eyes shot daggers when she whirled around to face him. "I lied!" she hissed. "I lied to Cassandra, Professor. That is a bad thing in itself, but at the moment, there is still a small chance to prove my words to be true. I have every intention to do so, because otherwise, you will end up as witch food, and I... Well, I don't care to think what she will do to me if she finds out. So come along. We need to get to your hotel. I stay with my cousin, and naturally, it is impossible to go back there tonight."

Snape frowned. "What are you talking about? Who cares if you lied or not? We got away, that's all that counts." But when she took his hand once more, he followed. He longed for a bath, his bed, and sleep. He longed to forget this night as quickly as possible, and if it meant drowning the memories in a considerably large amount of Scotch, he would get royally pissed very happily.

Hermione shook her head. "You still don't get it, do you?" she asked. "I said you are mine. She asked if someone would claim you, if you belonged to someone. And I said yes. I said I wanted you in my bed tonight *once more*, implying that you've been in my bed before. Only a current or former lover is allowed to claim someone away from a punishment, Professor. My sisters up there think you are my lover. That's why Cassandra let us go."

"Ah," said Snape, quite glad that finally they had found his hotel. "In this case, you'd better get inside with me. It seems we have to find a solution for this problem." He locked up the front door and led the way upstairs, Hermione close behind him. Moments later, they were in his small room under the roof. Both still panting, both sweating, and maybe it hadn't been the best idea that he had invited her in. He needed a shower, and he wanted to get some sleep as soon as possible. "I do not want to appear impolite, Miss Granger," Snape stated and rubbed a tired hand across his face. "But I think we should talk this over tomorrow. I would very much appreciate if you'd be on your way now. Good night."

"In your dreams," Hermione snapped, grabbed his shoulders, pulled him down, and kissed him hard on the mouth.

Hard, cold lips on his own; a thin, shivering body in his arms. Hands on his back, getting lower, grabbing his arse. A tongue, demanding and obviously much more experienced than his own, pushed into his mouth, thus deepening the kiss.

Snape was overwhelmed. This had happened too fast; too unexpected came the change in events. An hour ago, he had been facing death from sexual exhaustion; not too long ago, he had been running through a dark wood, then through empty streets of a Muggle town. Now he was being kissed by a former student, someone he hadn't seen in years and hadn't thought of in such a way ever before.

He was thinking about her right now and here, though. Adrenalin rushed through his veins, accompanied by desire. Instead of pushing her away, as he should have done, he dragged her closer, returned the kiss, and moved until she stood with her back to the wall. In his mind he saw Cassandra's hungry eyes devouring him, heard the delighted laughter of many, many witches looking forward to having him their way all night long. The prospect of being used like that had been horrible at the time; now the fact that he had escaped had escaped narrowly made his blood boil with joy and his cock harden at the close contact with the young witch who had saved him.

"I don't understand," he whispered when he needed to breathe. "So you lied. She has no way to prove you wrong, has she?"

"Not concerning my right of claiming you," she answered and began to open his belt. Quite obviously, her desire was heated, too. "But I said I wanted you in my bed tonight. When she dug her nails in your chest, she marked you as long as you are in Germany, she can find you whenever she wants to, and I wouldn't put it beyond her to come along tomorrow morning to check if you and I have truly shared a bed. In this light, do you really want to sleep alone?"

"Good Merlin, no!" Snape gasped, partly at the frightening prospect of seeing Cassandra again, partly because Hermione had decided that she should continue undressing him.

Hermione placed her hands on his chest and pushed him backwards on the bed. The belt was open, so was the top button of his trousers, but he wasn't naked yet. "You look surprisingly nice with an open shirt, Professor," she stated and straddled him. "When I saw Sam and Helga dragging you along, I couldn't believe my eyes. When Cassandra began playing with you, I decided I wouldn't allow her to have you." Greedily, she began trailing kisses along his collarbone down towards his belly button.

"I appreciate the gesture," Snape murmured and didn't know where first to put his hands: on her hips or on her breasts. In the end, he settled for a combined action. First, he let his hands wander up her thighs towards her waist, then sneak under her jumper and pull it up on his way to find her nipples. This time it was she who gasped, and Snape smiled, relieved that he hadn't forgotten everything about the female body.

Obviously, Hermione was in a rush. She pulled her jumper over her head and tossed it into a corner, along with her undershirt and her bra. Her breasts, like ripe peaches, begged to be touched. So he did, again, only this time without fabric between his palm and her skin. "Sorry for this," she rasped and bit his throat, licking the wound a moment later. "The thought of you lying naked next to the fire... is a bit too much for me, it seems. Do you mind if I fuck you now?"

"Not at all," Snape said and vanished his trousers. He hadn't been this hard in years. He had a half naked, willing witch sitting atop of him, and after all, he was on holiday, wasn't he?

"That was damn good," Hermione murmured sleepily, her head snuggled against his shoulder. "More than good. Fabulous. Who would have thought you had that much stamina in you?"

Snape couldn't suppress a grin. It was near morning; the sky already was lighter, and the stars faded against the light grey of the time right before sunrise. "Let's say I didn't precisely waste my energies in this area in the past years." Yawning widely, he pulled her closer just a little bit. "I live a solitary life. I might have even survived a night with all your lovely friends up on the Blocksberg."

Hermione chuckled sleepily. "Oh, no, you wouldn't have. No chance whatsoever. Half of them; maybe two-thirds. But not all of them."

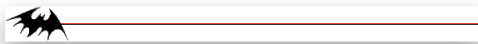
"I am very glad I didn't have to stay and find out." Involuntarily, he shuddered.

Luckily, Hermione slipped a protective hand over his waist. "You are mine, from now on and forever. I claimed you. Anyone who touches you is dead meat."

Snape frowned. "Aren't you married to that Weasley boy?" he asked.

He felt her smile against his chest. "Thought about it. Didn't do it in the end," she replied, and with those mumbled words, she fell asleep.

Snape shifted his shoulders a bit so they both were comfortable. His eyes dropped closed, and even the thought of Cassandra appearing in his rooms right now wasn't that scary anymore. Not with Hermione in his arms. He had a slight feeling that she would fight like a lioness to protect anyone who belonged to her. "I'm claimed," he said, quietly, so as not to wake her up. "How... extraordinarily strange. I bet Poppy didn't have that in mind when she forced me to go on holiday."



Author's Note: This was inspired by "The Little Witch" by Ottfried Preussler. I guess I shouldn't have eavesdropped when my son was listening to the CD.

As everyone who has read children's fairy tales knows, the last sentence is always, "And they lived happily ever after". They do when I write about them, anyway. Therefore, there is no need to write a sequel ;-)