

With Love, Your Little Princess Girl

by snitchette

This is a Yule Challenge response. A woman is telling the story of numerous Christmases spent with her family, beginning when she was a small child and ending with her being a grown woman.

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: When I began writing, after having read so many fan fiction stories, I swore I could and would never write something sad. And here I am. Can you believe it: I managed to cry while writing this and again when checking for mistakes. So maybe you should carefully read the warning and get a tissue handy. Just in case.

I'd also like to thank my two wonderful betas: ladyinthecloak and SeverusLovesUs. They've been very supportive, and I don't think I can thank them enough for all their invaluable help. Ladies, I owe you everything.

Finally, I'd like to add extra thanks to NotSoSaintly for her precious and appreciated administering.

Disclaimer: I own nothing (I wish I could, but I don't).

I love Christmas. It's my favourite time of the year. I think Daddykins likes it too. He is smiling now.

And he would surely kill me were he to know that I called him that in front of strangers. Even if I'm his favourite – and only – daughter. Of course he loves my two older brothers, but I am his little princess, as he likes to call me. And the youngest one of the family. Mum told me numerous times, always with a fond smile, how happy he was with her third pregnancy, but even more so when they learned she was expecting a girl after two boys. She said he smiled every time he looked at her belly and even offered her a pair of soft pink shoes for Christmas. She kept them in her memory box with all of the others gifts and things that meant a great deal in her life.

As long as I can remember, Christmas has always been a happy time in our family, except for the last few years.

When I was five, Daddy, on Mum's insistence and to my greatest pleasure, agreed to put on a Santa's costume. There was some silly tradition instated by Headmistress McGonagall after the end of the Second War. Every year, a professor must play Santa, as it was a figure of both the Muggle and Wizarding worlds. Mum was having a hard time convincing him, but as soon as I overheard one of their conversations on the subject (or argument if you prefer), I jumped on his knees and begged him to "Please do Santa, Daddykins."

Even at that age, I knew there was not a thing he could refuse me when I was smiling like I did. So he just sighed and surrendered. Can you imagine it? With the long, white beard and the red robes. He even charmed a sleigh with reindeers to land in front of the Great Hall. I can still clearly remember the picture. He looked a bit

embarrassed at first in front of all those people, delivering gifts in Santa's outfit. Some were close family, and that was okay with him. Others were friends, and he could deal with that too. But the worst of all were the students. He couldn't bear being laughed at by anyone. Except by me, maybe.

I was beaming while holding his hand the entire evening, and every time I looked at my Daddy, it was with unwavering admiration and love. When we locked eyes and he smiled at me, I knew he forgot where he was and what he was doing and his internal fear of being mocked by those dunderheads. What he never knew was that I had stuck in a corner my oldest brother, Steven, who was currently in his third year at Hogwarts, and I had made him swear he would hex anyone who would dare so much as snicker at my daddy behind his back. I know he did because I can be very scary when I truly want to and where my Daddy is concerned of course.

That is such a sweet memory to me. Like the time when Steven and Sebastian used Dad's private lab to create a perfume for Mum as a Christmas gift. I think I was seven or so. They were strictly forbidden to use his lab without his presence or, more importantly, his rarest and most dangerous ingredients. I told them so, but they wouldn't listen to me.

At first they were doing fine, and it began to smell very nicely. Then they decided to add a Veela's hair. They wanted Mum to be the centre of attention all around. I knew it wouldn't do well with the unicorn hair and would probably cause the poor wearer of such a lotion to see his or her hair grow excessively, which Mum really didn't need. On the other hand, I hadn't anticipated what happened next. It would seem that violet essence should not have been mixed with hair of any sort, as deep purple fumes began to rise out from the cauldron.

Of course, Dad chose that moment to come home. He was already in a bad mood, and seeing his sons ruining his lab angered him even more. He was about to ~~evanesco~~ the contents of said cauldron when it began to bubble maddeningly just in front of him. Due to his old spying years, he managed to shield all of us from the explosion, except for his hair. It grew about fifteen inches long, as I had suspected, and turned purple too.

I can't remember another time when Daddy was so angry he became purple (the same shade as his hair). His wrath was terrible, and he was shouting through the house louder than an elephant who had been hit in the genitals.

Mum rushed into the lab and discovered the mess... and Daddy's hair. She could be so scary sometimes, even more so than Daddy, in fact, whose bark is worse than his bite. Her hair was crackling with anger, and she was about to burst into a fury of expletives until she noticed that not just Daddy's hair had suffered from the explosion. It appeared the fumes had reached every single hair on his body, and he was covered entirely from head to toe with long, purple hair.

Steven Samuel Snape and Sebastian Sean Snape would never hear the end of it. They would also remember this day and their punishment until the end of their life. I think they scrubbed cauldrons and the entire house with toothbrushes for several months.

I know what you're going to say: their names really suck. Mine is no better. Can you imagine that all of our names begin with an S! I'm Sarah Sophia Snape – well, Longbottom now.

Poor Daddykins. He had it hard when I announced, on Christmas Eve no less, that I was dating Frank Junior, Neville and Ginny's son, and that I wouldn't be spending Christmas dinner with the family because I was invited to Frank's home. We had a huge fight over that and the fact that I was dating a combination of Longbottom and Weasley, probably the worst people ever aside from Muggles. Then Mum got in the middle of the argument because she couldn't bear hearing him denigrate Muggles that way. It ended with me shrieking hate words at my father and fleeing to my room, tears running down my face.

I couldn't understand why my beloved Daddy was so obtuse about the whole thing. After all, I had spent the last nineteen Christmas dinners with them. I was so confused, and I couldn't grasp why he would refuse me such a tiny bit of time away from them, from him. It was the worst and only argument we'd ever had, so I didn't know how to deal with it.

Mum came to see me a little while later. She made me understand that my daddy wasn't prepared to let me leave just yet. In his mind, I was still and always would be his little princess girl. Spending Christmas dinner with another family was marking my entry into adulthood for him, and considering our special relationship, he wasn't accepting it well. He just needed time. She then suggested I go downstairs and apologize for my behaviour and my harsh words to him.

I did as I was told, always being the good girl and having realised that I had overreacted. I was shocked to discover him in his office, his head hanging low in his hands, his shoulders slumped. For the first time, I realized he was nearly seventy, as he looked so old. I went up silently behind him and put my arms around his neck, kissing his cheek.

New tears pooled in my eyes as I remembered my earlier words to him. I wanted to say something – to erase those awful three words, "I hate you" – but my throat was too constricted, and I couldn't utter a single sound, much less a word. He just stood up and took me in his arms, sitting me on his lap and rocking me like the little girl I still was until my sobs quieted.

He allowed me another moment before saying that he was sorry about everything, that he shouldn't have yelled at me. That brought fresh tears to my eyes. Dad never apologized for anything. In the middle of my flowing tears, I managed to assure him of my eternal love, that I hadn't believed for one second the words I had thrown at him earlier. I was so sorry about the Christmas dinner, but I loved Frank a lot and would prefer he be willing to try and get to know him. He surprised me once more by admitting that he knew this day would come, that I'd fall in love with some nice guy. He had raised me to choose wisely after all. And the day had come without so much as a warning. He would have difficulties letting me go, but he would do it for my sake and happiness.

Daddykins. I remember the look in your eyes at that moment: pride and admiration laced with sadness. Sharing his baby girl with Frank had been a huge challenge for him. When we announced to him we were engaged, he said nothing, just nodded and wished us a happy life. He wasn't very present during the wedding preparations. We chose Christmas day to set the ceremony, just like my parents. And just like them, I asked the Hogwarts Headmaster to perform the bonding.

At first, Daddykins refused. I kept asking him, and I know Mum had tried to talk him into it. He finally accepted, and it was beautiful. I'll remember every second of it and will cherish the day in my heart forever. I know I had asked so much of him. To give away his beloved daughter was not easy, but to say the words and perform the magic that would link me to another human being, to another wizard, must have been heartbreaking for him. I hadn't realised at that moment what I'd asked of him. He just stood, did what he had to, and watched me go away to live my life.

What I didn't know and learnt only yesterday was that Frank had gone and talked to him. He asked my Daddy to reconsider and do this for me because it was truly what I wanted. Surely I would understand if he couldn't do it, but that it was so important to me. And my future husband wished to make me the happiest girl alive, whatever it took. I think it's what convinced Dad in the end, knowing I had, in fact, chosen wisely.

I could continue on like this for a while because so much happened on Christmas in our family. Some of my nephews and nieces were conceived or born during that period. Even my own daughter, who was to be born in January, decided that Christmas Day would be a better moment to make her entry in the world. Sasha is so much like her granddad in some regards. She has dark eyes and hair and a fierce temper. She worships every step Dad makes and every word he speaks, and he reciprocates equally.

Sometimes things change. For the past couple of years, Christmas has not been so happy a season. My sister-in-law lost her baby three years ago. She and my brother, Sebastian, were inconsolable for months, and no one was in a festive mood. The year after, Steven and his family lost their house in a freak act of nature. They lived in Florida, and a cyclone had destroyed everything in its path. Fortunately, none of them were injured, but they lost precious belongings, and all were very sad.

This year I was going to announce my second pregnancy, wishing it would cheer the family up a bit. But here I am at a funeral. My beloved mother passed away eight months ago from cancer. Something even magic can't heal when it's discovered too late. Dad tried everything, but he couldn't save her and was completely devastated when she died in his arms, whispering his name: *Severus*...

I have seen him declining since her death, and I regret so much I couldn't do anything about it. He wouldn't even talk to me or play with Sasha as he used to do.

Yesterday he joined her in the Afterlife, on Christmas Eve, from desperation, with her name on his lips *Hermione*...

As if he couldn't spend another holiday without her. My brothers and I agreed that he would have loved to be buried on Christmas Day, so we made all the necessary arrangements. Uncle Harry was very helpful with the formalities and dealing with the Ministry.

So here I am, in front of my father. He is smiling. I think Mum has come to pick him up and take him with her. I can feel her presence, as well as his. They are now reunited forever. I think that, deep down, I've always known they could not live without one another.

My beloved Daddykins. I simply hope you'll be happy, forever surrounded by your own Christmas magic and by Mum's love. I must say goodbye to you, my Daddykins. May your Afterlife be as fulfilling as your living one was.

I'll miss you so much, Daddy.

With Love,

Your Little Princess Girl.

A/N: Here is the prompt I chose: 1. For the Children: Use a child to show us how some of our favourite characters celebrate Yule.

I'm still surprised to have come up with something like this. I hope you liked it and maybe enough to leave a review.