

A Christmas Thought

by tulaksam

Challenge: Some meddling puts two folks under the mistletoe.

(The Only)

Chapter 1 of 1

Challenge: Some meddling puts two folks under the mistletoe.

I don't normally post. I'm a reader, a rather avid reader, but never a writer. This challenge nestled into my mind, and during an incredibly slow night in the emergency room (during the snow and cold), I pounded this one out. Yes, it's horrid, and Merry Christmas. And although I almost never read anything rated this low, it's only PG. There's kissing, you see.

Thank you to Laura, who is ashamed to read any fanfic at all and could only be coaxed because she proofreads all my writing. I don't know what I'd do without you.

None of the following belongs to me. Even the premise isn't *really* mine. I would gladly take in any characters that JKR didn't feel she could support anymore, but they'd still have to do their own laundry and unload the dishwasher.

The Yule Challenge: Dumbledore/McGonagall type meddling to get an unsuspecting couple to stand under the mistletoe.

It wasn't as if he is obtuse, really. I mean, face it, the boy has the social graces of a slack-jawed yeti. He just never had the chance to work on them, I suppose. His family wasn't wealthy, he wasn't an athlete. Most of his fame was really just boiled down animosity and fear.

Oh no; he glances at me. He could know what I'm thinking if I let my guard down. He crosses the room to stand too far away from me for casual conversation. He has this intense fear of being surprised, you see. Not entirely his fault, but I was so hoping that he would make this easier.

"You sent for me?" He looks most uncomfortable in this less than formal setting. His coworkers are laughing and drinking while hanging decorations.

"You see, I often wonder why I am so short. If I had only eaten more vegetables, I suppose, I'd be able to hang this garland all on my own. However, the vegetable blessing settled quite comfortably into your frame. Perhaps you'd deign to assist this remarkably short little man?"

"Honestly, Flitwick, you could do any of this on your own. You don't need any of the rest of us for your 'assistants'."

"Yes, Severus, but it brings them all so much joy, you see. Here, hold this, if you would please."

It was a pleasure to be allowed back into my alma mater, again. I think I spent the first three days fondling the library books again rather than unpacking my things. As a professor, you see, even the Restricted Section was opened to me. I couldn't help myself.

This was my first opportunity to spend this much "quality" time with the professors. I think it's odd, even in my head, they are still professors. Sure, my mouth says Minerva or Filius or Aurora, but my brain can't seem to refile them accordingly. The worst is, yes, Severus.

Even the name is like a blueberry chili pie in my mouth. The combination of sounds could not even begin to... Oh no, he's looking at me. I must keep my thoughts to myself.

"Professor." I cross to him and nod slightly. He nods back and remains still. I notice he is holding up a string of garland. "What are earth are you doing?"

"Decorating, obviously, Ms Granger. I thought that's why Professor Flitwick invited us around the castle in the dead of night."

"I, um, yes. Thank you." I turn to hurry away before he can see the blush creep into my hairline.

They, obviously, aren't the most unusual couple we could have arranged, Albus. I wish you were here. He glances at her, and she back at him, both just missing the longing in each other's face. His is so guarded, so... you have to watch for it, or you miss the fraction of a second he truly allows himself to *feel*. I wish he could be more open, to express to her what he would like from her.

Yes, there is more chance of you kissing Lucius Malfoy on the lips and agreeing to bear his lovechild. Or myself, for that matter. That's why Filius and I have decided that we needed to push them along.

No, nothing horrible, just a nudge.

Don't look at me like that. You would have done worse.

Or course, I fail to notice the plants hanging from the garland as she crosses under my arm to escape. She finds herself unable to flee or retreat. James Bond, I would never be.

"Professor, sir, I hate to alarm you but I cannot move."

"What do you mean that you cannot...." I glance up and swear. And then, swear again. Albus' mother has never had such a colorful expression of her character before. "I believe that we are testing the latest Weasley Holiday invention, Ms. Granger."

"What do you mean..." Her voice withers as she glances upwards. "Oh no. They couldn't. They wouldn't."

"Please just get this over with while no one is looking, and we'll be fine. Calm yourself, please. I shan't catch you if you should pass out."

She appears to gather herself together. Must be that renown Gryffindor courage that I'm always hearing so much about. Myself, well, a large part of me wishes to run. A small, almost never heard from part of me is very glad for this chance. It believes this is a moment to replay over and over again in memory, as if I believed in such useless woolgathering.

She looks at me expectantly. "Shall we?" I lean forward and peck her forehead. She still can't budge. "I didn't think it'd be that easy."

"Perhaps it needs lips to lips kissing to release." She presses her lips into mine. I feel the tingle of her lip gloss. "Nope, not good enough."

"Oh, forget it." I drop my garland and wrap my arms around her, tipping her down and passionately kissing her. To my surprise, she responds by wrapping her arms around my neck, pressing me further into the kiss. Applause breaks out around us.

"About time, young man!" I think I might break that man's picture frame. Nothing to seriously harm the image, mind you, but something so that he has the splinters to remind him of meddling.

"Not him, this time, Severus." Minerva's eyes are dancing. When did her eyes learn to dance, for goodness' sake? That was simply unfair.

A small noise draws me back to the bundle in my embrace. She's looking at me expectantly. If I didn't know better, I'd wager she knew exactly what I was thinking. With the smile that slithers across her face, I know she knows my every thought, down to what I'd like to eat for breakfast with her.

I find myself strangely all right with that.