

Bronzing Lucius

by sunny33

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Where on earth have you been, Severus?" Hermione asked as her husband threw a Boots bag on his desk.

"Don't you think that is a somewhat superfluous question, my dear?"

"But... Boots? A *chemist*? A *Muggle* chemist?" She stared at the bag in shock.

"Yes. A Muggle chemist. What of it?"

"Well, last time I looked you were a Potions master. You know. Quite adept with a cauldron or two. What would you ever need from a chemist that you cannot brew yourself?" She laughed at his scowl and patted his cheek. "You realise you look about ten when you make a face like that?"

Severus rolled his eyes and opened the bag.

"Three varieties of self-tanning lotion. Are you planning on trying dark and swarthy for a new look? I don't think it would suit you, dear. Besides, I'm rather fond of pale and vampiric, myself."

"Thank you. I think. No, I want to analyse them to find out their active components. I'm sure someone as *adept* with cauldrons as this Potions master should be able to brew a superior product," Severus asserted firmly.

"Oh, I have no doubt about that. But, why? What do you want self-tanning lotion for?" Hermione was still having trouble envisaging her husband with a bronze glow.

"Lucius has a serious problem. Well, *he* thinks it is serious. Narcissa has taken over their estate in the South of France as part of the divorce settlement. You know how he loved that place. Well, just between you and me, it was only because the estate was where he would go to obtain his tan. He is more devastated at the thought of losing the tan than the property itself." He sighed at his friend's foibles.

"Can't he just buy another estate? Or use a charm?"

"His funds are frozen while the divorce settlement is being thrashed out, and he was never that good at maintaining those cosmetic charms." With that, Severus left for the lab, after ensuring his wife was too busy melting to ask any more questions.

Three days, five hours, several attempts, and twice as many house-elves in varying shades of orange later, the perfect self-tanning lotion was bottled and labelled.

"Hermione, dearest. Why are you gift-wrapping the bottles in gold and red?"

She smirked. Lucius deserved some payback for causing her husband to be so distracted for the last few days. She turned to him and simply said, "Just go and deliver them... and come *straight* home. I'll have something special gift-wrapped for you when you return." At his bemused frown, she shooed him off and smiled as she went into the bedroom to change into her favourite gold and red underwear.
