

The Wizarding Lottery

by ancientgirl

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Chapter 1

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MagicAlly had left me a lovely review in a previous fic, and in my response to her, I gave myself an idea I decided to go with. I thought a little humor was in store.

All canon characters belong to JKR. This is not HBP compliant.

Thanks as always to June for all of her help and suggestions.

The Wizarding Lottery

Severus sat at his desk, marking away at what seemed to be the hundredth idiotic report he'd read that evening. He sighed heavily.

"Why do I do this to myself?" he said as he turned and looked at his reflection in the mirror. "I was a war hero. I helped defeat Voldemort years ago and now look at me, look at me." He spat as he threw the quill down on his desk. "I won't continue to go out there and teach those dunderheads potions anymore, when they can't even understand the difference between a dragon's tooth and its scale."

He pushed himself away from his desk and walked to the sideboard next to the fireplace. He opened it and took out a brand new bottle of firewhiskey. He looked at the bottle and put it back in disgust. Getting drunk wasn't going to make him feel any better. Well, it would, but only for a little while. He needed to find a way to get himself out of there.

There was a time when teaching potions was something that he actually enjoyed. It seemed, however, that in the last four years the children coming through his classroom were getting worse and worse. It was to the point that at the beginning of the year he actually wished to have a roomful of Neville Longbottoms. Now THAT was bad.

How he longed to take a holiday. Maybe take a trip around the world like the Muggles did, and travel via train or one of those automobile things. Severus wanted to enjoy nature, enjoy the history around him. He needed to take in the fresh air, breathe in the spices the world had to offer, he needed...oh hell, he needed to get the fuck away from that crazy old man, Albus Dumbledore.

While Severus did have a hefty number of galleons in his vault at Gringotts, it wasn't nearly enough for the life of luxury and adventure he longed for. He needed to figure out a way to make more money, but how? Short of robbing Gringotts itself, how was he going to get his hands on... "That's it!" he yelled.

He ran to his desk and began looking through some parchments he'd set to one side. Remus Lupin had come to visit Minerva that morning, and had given her some blank Wizarding lottery scrolls. Minerva said she had no need for indulgences and gave them to Severus, who had never before seen lottery scrolls.

All Severus needed to do was pick four numbers and two animals that people used as familiars. Whoever got the numbers in the right sequence and familiars correct, including the color of the animals, would win the lottery. This week's pot was up to seventy-five million galleons. Not one person had gotten any of the numbers or animals correct so far in the last three months. Wizards and witches from all over the world were playing several scrolls at once.

It seemed easy enough, but with any combination of numbers and several hundred or so animals that could be used as familiars, getting the right combination would be difficult.

Severus sat back in his chair. *'Who am I kidding?'* he thought to himself. He picked up his rather frazzled looking quill and started marking the students' reports once again.

"How many times must I tell these nimrods, that Norwegian razorback scales cannot replace Komodo dragon nails in hair-growth tonic." He marked the paper with a red check. "Hmm...Komodo dragons." Severus remembered reading an account several years back of a wizard from the Galapagos who kept a Komodo as a familiar. He shook his head and kept to his task.

After another hour, the clock chimed. It was ten o'clock. He looked down at his last report and snorted. "Oh yes, please, Mr. Alderson, do add armadillo liver to wart concealing balm." He made an elaborate mark on the paper. "Do us all a favor and blow your head right from your shoulders," he mumbled. He gave the paper a failing grade and threw it on top of his now finished pile. "Any idiot knows you add peacock kidneys."

Severus stood and took the papers in his hand and began to place them in order by year. As he came to the end of the pile once again, he saw the lottery scrolls. He took them in hand and looked at the clock, which had stopped, for whatever reason, at ten o'clock. His clock never failed to work. Several minutes had passed, yet there it was holding steady at ten. Severus picked up his quill once more and wrote one, zero, zero, and zero on one scroll, as his four numbers. Then, in the blank spaces for the two familiars, he wrote Black Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*, adult) and Indian Peacock (*Pavo cristatus*, adult), which did not require him to select colors. He signed the scroll. It was a long shot, but he had nothing to lose, except a Knut.

After placing the Knut, as payment for playing, in the small slot cut into the lottery scroll, he took Floo powder and threw the scroll and the powder into the fire. "Wizarding lottery headquarters." With that, he went to bed. It was Wednesday; the winner would not be notified until the following Monday. He went to bed and thought no further about the lottery.

The rest of the week and weekend flew by in the blink of an eye, as it always seemed to do these days. Severus dressed and dragged himself to the Great Hall early Monday morning.

"Another bloody week," he mumbled as he entered through the Great Hall doors. He walked up the aisle in his usual manner, albeit a bit less dramatic today. He looked at the staff table with all of the professors and cringed. The only person he even remotely had any interest in talking to was Professor Hermione Granger. She'd been teaching Arithmancy for six months, and was the only person he felt he could have a decent conversation with. In fact, he had enjoyed their conversations so much that he had taken her to dinner several times. However, as luck would have it, Severus had to sit between Hagrid and Madam Sprout. Hermione sat near the other end of the table, where Professor Vector used to sit. As he neared the table, she smiled sympathetically at him, almost as though she knew how miserable he was.

"Hermione," he said as he inclined his head slightly.

She smiled and said hello as he walked past her. Within minutes the room was abuzz with students gossiping, taunting, and laughing with each other. Severus kept his eyes on his plate, not wanting to be drawn into a conversation about either griffin feces or Abyssinian shrivelfigs. He briefly looked up to search out his coffee cup, and noticed the owls beginning to come in with the morning mail. Focusing again on his eggs, he jumped when a letter was dropped on top of his plate.

"Ah, Severus, a letter for you," said Madam Sprout.

"How astute, Madam Sprout. Can you tell me what I have in my hand now?" he asked, holding up his fork. She huffed and turned to her own breakfast, leaving him and his nasty mood to himself. He placed his fork down and opened his envelope. As he sat back and read the contents of the letter, his eyes grew wider and wider.

Congratulations!

Professor Severus Snape, you have won the Wizarding Lottery's largest payout in its history. Your seventy-five million galleons are now being stored in three vaults at Gringotts Wizarding Bank. Your keys are enclosed, and an extra combination is being held at the bank. Upon your arrival, please identify yourself to the managing goblin, and you will be able to access your winnings.

Again, allow me to congratulate you!

Walter Nooney

Coordinator and Administrator

Prize Division

Wizarding Lottery

Severus stared at the letter for several minutes. He'd won. He actually won the damned thing! He felt almost giddy. It was over; he was done. His dream to have the means to leave the thirteenth level of Hades had finally come true. He smiled and folded the letter calmly. He took the small keys that were inside the envelope, and placed them and the letter inside the front pocket of his frock coat. Slowly, he pushed himself back from the table and stood.

"Oi there, Snape!" called out Madam Hooch. "What was in that letter? I didn't know you knew how to smile. Be careful, you might scare the students back to their dormitories." Several of the professors on that side of the table giggled.

Severus merely continued smiling.

"Severus, are you ill? Perhaps I can get you some herbs for your stomach," said Madam Sprout.

"I, Madam Sprout, have never felt better. As a matter of fact, just being able to breathe the air has suddenly become a wondrous joy. I would like to give you a bit of advice, if I may. In the future, if I were you, I would cease and desist bathing myself in that atrocious scent you wear day in and day out. Just because it is called Eau de Toilette, does not mean it has to come from an actual toilet."

Madam Sprout's mouth dropped open. Was her perfume that bad? She wondered.

"Professor, that weren't very nice of ya," said Hagrid.

Severus turned and now faced Hagrid.

"No, it was not, Hagrid; however, it was the truth. Truth, which I shall also grace you with. The children of this school walk all over you, which is quite a feat, seeing your stature. Grow some balls, man! Stand up for yourself and learn to say no!"

Severus looked at Madam Hooch. "No, actually, you need not grow any, Hagrid. Perhaps Madam Hooch will allow you the use of hers."

After hearing the commotion at the far end of the table, not only did the professors at the staff table stop eating, but so did the students. Professor Severus Snape had seemingly lost his marbles, and nobody wanted to miss this.

Severus held himself high and walked toward the other end of the table.

"Severus, what has gotten into you? Have you gone mad?" asked Minerva.

"Mad? No, quite the opposite, I have become sane." He stopped and looked down at the seated Head of Gryffindor.

"Severus, you are a professor at this school, and you are to set a good example for these students," insisted the older witch.

"Minerva, really, do take that stick out of your arse. Instead of spending your every waking hour trying to figure out how to take the fun out of every imaginable thing, why don't you get shagged and loosen up."

Minerva's eyebrows almost disappeared from the shocked expression on her face. She began to hyperventilate, and had it not been for the paper bag Albus transfigured from her napkin she might have passed out.

"Breathe, Minerva, breathe," ordered Albus as he held the bag over the woman's mouth. He then looked toward Severus. "Severus, what in the name of Merlin is wrong with you today?"

"Albus," Severus leaned down. His hand was now several inches from Albus's face forming an obscene gesture, using his middle finger. "This is what I and everyone else think of your lemon drops, you barmy old coot!" Albus' jaw dropped, as did the rest of the staff's jaws.

Severus jumped on the staff table and surveyed the entire room.

"It is my wish, that you all grow up and have stupid children that you will be forced to teach yourselves." He then jumped down and turned to the staff. "I bid you all, have a nice life. I will be leaving, post haste. Burn my things, give them away; I don't care, there is nothing here that I want." He turned and began to walk away, then stopped. He quickly turned back around and walked towards Hermione. "Actually, there is one thing I am taking with me." He then grabbed Hermione and threw her over his shoulder.

"Oh!" she yelped.

Severus now resumed his walk. He exited the Great Hall and walked across the grounds to the gates of Hogwarts. Hermione was still over Severus' shoulders when she recovered from her shock and decided to speak.

"Severus, where are you taking me?"

"Anywhere, everywhere; it doesn't matter. We," he now placed her on the ground, "are going to live life to the fullest."

"We?" She placed her hands on her hips. "And just what makes you think I'm going anywhere with you? Just the other night in the library, you said some very nasty things to me." She pouted.

"And I am very sorry, but you know I get cranky after I give exams." He took a lock of her hair and twirled it around his fingers. "Please, I promise I won't be cranky anymore." Hermione rolled her eyes, "Well, fine, I promise to be cranky only two or three times a week."

"I can't believe you quit Hogwarts," she stated.

"Believe it, my dear," he said.

"I guess a letter of resignation was too much to ask for?" She smiled at him. She had learned months ago of his reasons for personal frustration; a low-paying teaching job was a poor reward for a war hero and ex-spy.

"I have wanted to do that for years, Hermione. Listen, you won't believe what has happened. I've won the Wizarding lottery," he said, as her eyes grew wide. "I can leave here. We can leave here. We can do anything our hearts desire. Travel, explore, do research."

"Well, then, what are we waiting for?" She smiled and wrapped her arm around his. As they stepped outside the gates of Hogwarts, they turned and looked at the castle one last time. Hermione briefly wondered if she should tell Severus that she was such a good Arithmancy professor that it had been child's play for her to formulate just about any long shot into a sure shot. She wondered if she should tell him that her own vaults at Gringotts were as empty as his were full, because she happened to have a friend at the Wizarding lottery office. A friend who owed her a life debt, who notified her of every ticket sold including Severus', allowing her to fix the results in his favor. It was money well spent on her part, as the look on Severus' face when he found out he had won, was the most wonderful thing she had seen in a long time.

Hermione smiled as she and Severus Apparated. No, there were just some things that Severus didn't need to know. As for Hermione, she knew that she was the one that won the real lottery prize: she won Severus Snape.

The End

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There you have it. Severus is a pretty rich man, in more ways than one now. I took a cue from Galaxy Quest in the second paragraph and used Alexander Danes rant at the beginning of the movie as inspiration for Severus' rant.

I hope you enjoyed this. Thank you for reading it.