

Christmas Magic

by cocoachristy

Hermione's Christmas cheer falters when she sees a melancholy Snape. No one should spend such a happy holiday alone. My take on the How It Could Be Christmas Challenge issued by Southern Witch 69 over at her Yahoo!Group, Potter Place.

Fancy Meeting You Here

Chapter 1 of 5

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Disclaimer: All things Harry Potter belong to JKR.

A/N: Many thanks to my beta, the one and only, Southern_Witch_69.

This is a response to Potter Place's How Could It Be Christmas Challenge. For challenge rules, see the end of this chapter.

Chapter 1

Fancy Meeting You Here

Smiling, Hermione threw her arms out and starting spinning in a circle. *I love the snow! Christmas! My favorite time of the year!*

She grinned as she walked through Diagon Alley. She was almost finished with her Christmas shopping, only had a couple gifts left to buy. *Why does Harry have to be so difficult to buy for? I should have gotten him and Ginny a gift together!*

Noticing the bookstore, Hermione decided to stop in. She decided she needed a break from shopping. She was hoping the new Charms book was in and was headed straight for the Charms section when she heard a low voice mumble, "What the bloody hell was this dunderhead thinking? *Potions for the Powerful*, indeed. Lockhart's twin must've written this book!"

She peeked around the corner and saw him. Her heart began to beat a little faster. He looked so sad and alone to her. Tentatively, she walked towards him. "Good afternoon, Professor Snape. Fancy meeting you here!"

He eyed her warily as he nodded his greeting. "Miss Granger. If you'll remember, I am no longer a professor at Hogwarts. Please refrain from using that title whilst addressing me."

"Oh," she said, slightly embarrassed. "I apologize. I hadn't thought. I admit that it's difficult to see you as anything but Professor Snape." Frowning she asked, "How should I refer to you then? Mr. Snape?"

Sighing, he told her, "As I doubt we shall be seeing much of each other in the future, there is no need for you to worry on it. Good day, Miss Granger." Her ex-Potions professor dismissed her as he turned back to the books he had been perusing. He knew what people thought of him. Oh, he had been exonerated of his past crimes, even of killing Albus Dumbledore, but in the eye of the public, he was still guilty.

Severus thought of the potions lab he had installed in the basement of his childhood home on Spinner's End and was happy he'd had the foresight to do so, as he was making his living these days by selling potions. He was comfortable, though he did get lonely.

As Hermione watched him, her good mood vanished as a thought occurred to her. *Nobody should be alone on Christmas...especially someone who risked and did so much for the safety of our world.*

"Prof...er...Mr. Snape, would you care to have Christmas dinner with me?" Hermione blurted out the spur of the moment idea.

Raising one eyebrow, he told her, "I think not. I could do without Potter or Weasley during the holidays and at any other time for that matter. *What is she on about, asking me to have Christmas dinner? I know how everyone feels about me! Especially the golden trio! She must be... up to something.*

"Well, I do usually go to the Burrow for Christmas, but if you'd prefer, I could make us something at my flat for just the two of us. No Potters or Weasleys in sight, I promise! You can even choose between goose or turkey."

Looking at her suspiciously, he asked, "Why? Why would you want to prepare dinner *fome*?"

"Well, why not? Do you have a better offer?" she asked, smirking slightly. Suddenly, it was very important to her that he would come.

It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her that having no offer at all was a better offer, but for some reason, he thought better of it. He stood, studying her, trying to figure out any ulterior motives. She didn't seem to have any. *Why not? I have nothing better to do.* Minerva had invited him to Hogwarts, but he couldn't stomach the disapproving looks of the staff. "All right, I'll come. Where is your flat located, and what time should I be there?"

Hermione beamed at him as she gave him directions. "Would seven be too late? I could still go to the Weasleys' that morning then."

"Seven is just fine. I shall see you then. Oh, and Miss Granger? I prefer goose."

She simply smiled and nodded before hurrying away. As she walked out of the store, Severus kept thinking, *Why did I agree to go?*

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It was snowing when Hermione awoke on Christmas morning. Smiling, she got out of bed and went to shower.

After getting ready and putting the goose in the oven, Hermione gathered her gifts and Apparated to the Burrow.

"Oi, Hermione! What are you doing here so early? It's barely nine; dinner is not until six," Ron told her.

"I know, but I won't be coming to dinner, Ronald. I have made other arrangements. I wanted to stop by and see everyone and leave the gifts. Is that okay with you?"

Narrowing his eyes, Ron wanted to know, "What other arrangements? Got some bloke coming to see you?" Even though Ron and Hermione had stopped dating before they'd even finished Hogwarts, he was still jealous when he thought of her and another man.

"Honestly, Ronald! I just happened to see Prof...um...Severus Snape in the bookstore while I was shopping in Diagon Alley and asked him to dinner. He was not comfortable coming here, so I told him I would prepare dinner for us at my flat."

"In your flat? Alone?" he asked incredulously. "Good Lord, Hermione! You still fancy that git, don't you? Well, he is not some misunderstood hero!"

"Please! I am not some schoolgirl anymore. That was merely a crush I had a long time ago. I wish I had never told you and Harry about it! I just happen to hate to see *anyone* alone during Christmas. That's all. How would *you* like to be alone?"

"He deserves it, he does! Especially after killing Dumbledore and all. You just can't seem to stop fraternizing with the enemy, can you?"

"What are you on about, Ronald?" Laughing, she asked, "When did I *ever* fraternize with the enemy?"

"When you went to the ball with Viktor Krum, for starters. You knew he was going against Harry in that tournament! And look at him now, rotting in Azkaban with the rest of the Death Eaters. He's right where his buddy Snape ought to be!"

"How dare you?" she asked, barely able to control her fury. "That was *oufourth* year! Jesus! And as for Snape, he is no more a Death Eater than you! As a matter of fact, it's because of ignorant people such as *yourself* that he is alone on Christmas!"

"What is all this yelling in here?" Molly asked. "I can hear you all the way in the kitchen! Oh, Hermione, dear!" Molly said as she noticed Hermione standing there. "What brings you by so early? Care for a cuppa?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Weasley. I can't stay. I just wanted to drop these gifts by and wish you a Happy Christmas. I have made plans this evening and won't be coming to dinner after all."

At that statement, Ron snorted. "Right. Made plans with Snape, she has. She's going to cook dinner for him in her flat."

"Mind your business, Ronald Bilius Weasley!" Hermione seethed. Turning to Mrs. Weasley, she said, "I left the gifts under the tree. I hope you don't mind. Please give everyone my regards tonight."

"Yes, dear, I will. I had Dobby deliver your things already. Are you sure you and Severus wouldn't like to eat here? I have more than enough."

"Yes, I'm sure. He said he wouldn't feel comfortable." Hermione hugged Mrs. Weasley, glared at Ron once more for good measure, and Disapparated back to her flat. She wanted the dinner to be perfect.

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Severus had been pacing all morning. *Why did I agree to dine with Miss Granger this evening? And why does she want me to for that matter? I really should cancel. I have no business dining with her!* He went to his desk for a parchment and quill to write to her that something had come up, but he thought better of it. *She's likely started the meal already. She has also probably told the Weasleys that she'd not be attending their dinner. I would cause her to be alone, should I back out.*

"Fire and damnation!" he bellowed. *If only I knew what she was up to. Well, I will see when I get there* He sighed resignedly and went to work on some potions.

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At precisely seven, Hermione heard someone knocking on her door. She was very nervous, though she couldn't say why. Going to the door, she opened it and stared, gobsmacked. There stood the greasy git of the dungeons, looking wonderful.

He had on his usual black robes, but she could tell he had taken special care with his appearance and hygiene. He'd even tied his hair back with a leather strap. *Makes me want to pull it out of that strap and run my fingers through it!*

Shaking her head, she noticed him smirking at her. *Arrogant git!* "Come in, Mr. Snape, and make yourself at home. May I get you something to drink? Some sherry, perhaps?"

"You may call me Severus. *Mr. Snape* was my father," he said with obvious disgust as he handed her a bottle of wine that he'd brought to drink with their meal. "And, yes, I would enjoy a glass of sherry, *Hermione*," he told her, emphasizing her name in a way that made her shiver.

As she handed him his drink, she sat beside him on the sofa. "What sort of work are you doing now, Severus? Nobody seems to know when your name is mentioned."

Severus thought before answering her. The name he used selling his potions was a secret one. He had not wanted to hurt his chances of selling any potions by using his real name. "Oh, this and that. You? I heard you started an orphanage for the children left of the war casualties. Two separate ones for wizard and Muggle alike. Admirable."

"Yes, I did," she said, smiling faintly. "There were just so many of them! They had nowhere to go. *Somebody* had to do something."

"You needn't defend yourself to me. I think it's a good thing, what you're doing." Not quite grinning, but almost, he said, "Always beating a Bludger for a lost cause."

"These are hardly house-elves. These children were so lost and broken when we took them in. You wouldn't believe the changes in most of them. I believe Harry and Ginny are going to adopt one of each."

"One of each? A boy and a girl?"

"No," she said, smiling. "A wizard and a Muggle."

"Oh, I see. That is admirable, as well," he admitted grudgingly. "Are you having luck adopting them out?"

Hermione smiled. "It's getting much better. It was slow at first, but as things are settling down and getting back to order, more people are coming forward to take one or even two if they happen to be siblings."

The timer went off just then, signaling dinner was ready. "Shall we continue this discussion in the dining room? I'm famished!" Hermione told him as she started walking towards the kitchen to get the dishes on the table.

"Yes, I am a bit hungry myself." *I can't believe I am actually enjoying her company. But she is without the daring duo tonight. And just where did she get that dress? How long has the little wench had those curves?*

They sat and ate, continuing their talk. Expectantly, the talk turned to potions. "I have noticed a new line of potions on the market, Prince's Potions," Hermione started. "I looked up the manufacturer, and his name is I. M. A. Prince, but there isn't much background information on him. Do you know much about this new line?"

Slightly irritated that she seemed to know more than she was letting on, he replied, "Why would know anything about it? What are you implying?"

Hermione widened her eyes innocently and said, "I am not implying anything. *You are* the Potions master sitting here. It's just that I have been using a few of them, and they are very good. I was just wondering who this Prince person was, that's all."

Damn right they're good! "If you like the potions, then what does it matter? He lists the ingredients on the bottle, does he not?"

"I suppose you're right. Would you care for a cuppa? I have chocolate cake."

"I wouldn't mind a small piece," he admitted. "I have a weakness for chocolate."

I will definitely keep that in mind. "Let's eat it in the sitting room."

After cake and tea, Severus stood to leave. "I thank you for the dinner, Hermione. It was very delicious."

"You're not leaving yet?" She didn't want him to go. Hermione was surprised at how much she really enjoyed his company.

"I must. I have some things that need attending." He hated to leave, but he really needed to get out of there. She was stirring up too many unwanted feelings.

"Before you go home, how would you like to take a walk with me?" Hermione blurted out. "I usually like to take a walk after dinner." Understanding his weary expression, she assured him, "We can go to Muggle London. We needn't run into anyone we know." *Anything to be around you a little longer!*

"That would be acceptable. As a matter of fact, I think I would enjoy it," he told her, surprising himself by actually accepting her offer.

He helped her with her coat and then put his cloak on. Holding his hand in hers, Hermione Apparated them to a busy part of Muggle London that she often went to when she wanted to get lost for awhile.

Taking his proffered arm, Hermione smiled up at him as they began walking. *I could get used to many evenings like this one,* she thought.

Christy's Notes: I couldn't pass up a Christmas Challenge! It's my favorite time of the year! Leave me a line, and let me know what you think!

Southern's Notes: I love little Christmas tales. Thanks for responding to this challenge!

Here are the rule for the Potter Place's How Could It Be Christmas Challenge:

It's preferred if the story takes place after sometime after HBP where Snape has been exonerated of his crimes, but people still shun him no matter that he helped Potter in the end.

The pairing is S. Snape and H. Granger.

A happy Hermione is in Diagon Alley buying last minute Christmas gifts when she notices Professor Snape entering a shop. That one action ruins her festive mood because she feels that everyone should have someone to spend Christmas with.

Hermione decides to ask Snape to accompany her to Christmas dinner.

1. He must refuse her invitation initially.
2. How she persuades him is up to you.
3. He must end up obliging her request.
4. Dinner can be at any number of places:

a private dinner for two at her flat

dinner at her parents' home

dinner at the Burrow

dinner at Grimmauld Place

dinner at the castle

The dinner can be detailed or glossed over.

After dinner, Snape and Hermione must go for a walk either in Muggle London or Diagon Alley.

Diagon Alley Visit:

1. They enter a shop where a twinkling-eyed shopkeeper invites them to view a painting in the back room.
2. He locks them in, and they have no choice but to look at the odd, blank portrait.
3. This portrait must suddenly light up as if they were watching a scene from a film; it must show them how life could be if they continue a relationship and how it will be if they don't. What they see is up to you.
4. The door unlocks when it's over. They walk out to find that the shop is gone, replaced by an old, closed down building.
5. What they decide to do is up to you...be it friendship or trying a relationship.

Or

Muggle London Visit:

1. A twinkling-eyed man bids them to enter a theatre to witness a short Christmas film.
2. They take their seats, and the film starts, showing them scenes from how life could be if they continue a relationship and if they don't. What they see is up to you.
3. When they leave, the man is gone, and they find that the building has been shut down for a long time.
4. What they decide to do is up to you...be it friendship or trying a relationship.

Your story can be a one-shot story or have up to five chapters.

The word count for the chapters must be 1000 5000 (unless you do it as a one-shot story...no maximum limit then).

No rating or genre restrictions. (Well, no angst please...)

Post it at your favorite archives and email the group to let us know that you've uploaded it.

It must be completely posted (all chapters) by Christmas.

Act I: Starring Hermione Granger

Chapter 2 of 5

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Chapter 2

Act I: Starring Hermione Granger

As Severus and Hermione walked the busy streets of London, Hermione was glad to notice that he was becoming more relaxed. Suddenly, an idea occurred to her. "Severus, I was wondering. I don't know what you are doing for a living these days, but I could use someone with your skill and knowledge to brew Medicinal Potions for both of the orphanages."

"Is that so? I would have thought you would be brewing these potions yourself. As I recall, you have a... knack for brewing." He smirked at the surprised expression on her

face. He was quite enjoying himself, which was something he had not done in quite sometime.

Gathering her composure, she replied, "I would if I had access to a Potions lab. As it is, all donations go for immediate needs. You know, food and clothing? Heat? Eventually, I hope to install one. Until then, what do you say to helping out?" At his raised eyebrow, she hurriedly continued, "Oh, not for free of course, but maybe at a discounted rate?" she asked hopefully.

"I will help you by brewing the potions you need. No charge." Again, he smirked at her gobsmacked expression. "Don't look so surprised, Hermione. This will be my contribution."

"Thank you. You don't know how much I appreciate your kindness. This has been a rather hard winter for us with the flu and such going around. You wouldn't believe the amount we have to spend on medicine alone."

"What will you do about the Muggle children?"

"Oh," she told him, "no worries there. I will just pour their dose in a spoon. They will never know the difference."

"I see. Well, I shall get started on them tomorrow for you. Will that be acceptable?"

"Yes, and again, thank you so much."

Smiling, he told her, "You're welcome." It made him feel good to know that he put that look of happiness on her face.

Suddenly, Hermione noticed a movie theater she had never seen on that street before. *How did this get here? I suppose they could have built it since my last visit, but I don't think it's been all that long since I've been here!*

Looking up at the marquee, she noticed *It's A Wonderful Life* was playing. That happened to be one of her favorite Christmas movies. "Look, Severus! *It's A Wonderful Life* is showing! Let's go watch it! Please? The theater is just like magical pictures, only..."

"I know very well what Muggle theater is, having a Muggle father!"

"Er, right. Sorry, I tend to forget that about you! Well, what say you? Shall we go in?"

Severus sighed. He wanted to spend more time with Hermione, but he never really enjoyed the theater much. Besides, he was enjoying their conversation. "I don't have any Muggle money with me."

"Well, I happen to have some." At his stern look, she said, "Don't look at me that way! I really don't mind paying, but if you are that worried about it, you can pay me back in Wizarding money."

He looked at her hopeful expression and just couldn't tell her no. "Very well. Let's go in. *What is wrong with me? Why am I going in this blasted theater just to please her?* Severus looked at Hermione just then and saw the beautiful smile on her face and thought, *It's worth it just to see that smile. I suppose I will quite enjoy getting to know this witch much better.*

When Hermione paid, she noticed the tickets were a shimmering gold color. *Odd.* Handing Severus his ticket, they went to enter the theater handing the man at the door their tickets.

Hermione started at the sight of him. His long hair, beard, and mustache were of a deep auburn shade. But the thing that really got her attention was the bright blue, twinkling eyes. *He looks like a cross between Albus Dumbledore and Kris Kringle!*

"So glad you could make it, Hermione and Severus. We have been expecting you! Please, enjoy the show. Pay close attention, as this is a very important film!"

"What do you mean by saying you have been expecting us? Just who are you?" Severus demanded.

Smiling, the twinkling-eyed man told him, "Possibly, the best friend either of you will ever have." Then, he pointed to the door they were to enter and gently pushed them inside.

"That was rather odd," Hermione needlessly said as they took their seats.

"Quite," he agreed. "He knew our names. I don't like that, although he could have just recognized us from all the photos that have been published of us. He seemed harmless enough, but I have learnt the hard way that looks are often deceiving."

Hermione never got the chance to reply, as the lights dimmed and the music started, indicating the show was about to begin. But, instead of Jimmy Stewart, Hermione was looking at her own face. She looked around to see if anyone else noticed, but only she and Severus seemed to be aware. *What is going on here?*

"What in the world?" Severus asked. "Now, I know something is wrong!"

The words *Your Life With No Companions* showed in big letters on the screen. Hermione and Severus continued to watch as the first scene started. She was in a hospital room at St. Mungo's that was full of Weasleys. Ginny Potter was lying in a hospital bed with Harry at her side holding her hand while lovingly taking turns rubbing her forehead with a cloth and massaging her back. Hermione watched as Harry whispered words of love and comfort to his wife. She suddenly realized that she was at the birth of Harry and Ginny Potter's firstborn.

Weird, Hermione thought. *She is not even pregnant yet!* Family and friends surrounded them as she was asked to be godmother of Lillian Molly Potter, a beautiful baby girl with red hair and green eyes. The sight of such love and happiness brought tears to Hermione's eyes. It seemed to be such an intimate moment, and suddenly, Hermione felt uncomfortable, like she didn't belong there. She felt a little better as Harry reassured her, promising her she would always be family to him. The sister he'd never had.

The next scene showed her sitting in a small chapel as she watched Ron Weasley marry Luna Lovegood. They stood in a circle and vowed their love to one another for all eternity. Hermione marveled at the love that shown in Ronald Weasley's eyes. She had never seen him look at anyone or anything like that before, not even his precious Chudley Cannons. Luna seemed to be on top of the world. It was obvious she was marrying the wizard of her dreams.

After the wedding, it showed Hermione sitting at her table alone while most of the people were dancing or chatting in circles. She watched as Ron and Luna held tightly onto one another and barely swayed to the music. As she looked around the room, she saw Arthur and Molly slowly dancing while looking deeply into each other's eyes. It was quite obvious that they were still deeply in love. *Oh, to have that sort of love and affection for someone, especially after being married that long!* She had only danced twice, once with George and once with Ron during the entire scene.

Then, she was at the hospital once again. And, once again, she was surrounded by Weasleys. Hermione watched as Harry and Ginny played with Lillian, making their daughter squeal and giggle. Her heart lurched as she watched Harry lovingly caress Ginny's slightly bulging belly. Suddenly, Ron opened the door as he yelled with joy. Luna had just given birth to his daughter, Charlotte Ginevra Weasley, Charlie for short...named after the only Weasley to lose his life in the fight against Voldemort. Ron was positively bursting with joy. Again, she was asked to be godmother.

She watched scene after scene. There were Christmases at the Burrow, all filled with love and families and babies. Even Fred and George had taken wives and started

families. That alone had really started to depress her.

She sighed when she realized that the birthday parties playing for them were being given for everyone's children but her own, as she didn't have any just yet. Hermione knew she would hate all of the functions she'd be forced to attend, going by herself no less. It was almost humiliating to have to dance with either Harry or one of the Weasleys because she noticed she never had a date.

But the one thing that remained the same during all these scenes was that she was utterly alone, though completely surrounded by friends and family who were all coupled off. As she sat and watched, she began to realize just how lonely she was and how that loneliness would never leave her over the years.

The next scene caused her to gasp loudly. It showed her naked, getting into a tub of bubbles. She watched herself relax and lay her head against the back of the tub while bringing her knees up. Quickly, Hermione did another look around the theater, but nobody else seemed to notice. She didn't dare look at Severus.

She started to cringe and deeply blush as her left hand traveled down to one of her breasts and began to fondle it, lightly tugging a hardened, pink nipple. Then, as she knew it would, her right hand traveled down below the bubbles as she spread her knees and eventually began to moan loudly.

Severus Snape smirked at her mortified face. Although he refused to admit it, he was becoming highly aroused. There was only a glimpse of her naked body, but it was enough to let him know that he wouldn't mind seeing more of it. Soon. He couldn't wait to see what Hermione Granger looked like in the throes of passion.

Cursing the bubbles that blocked the view of what he really wanted to see, he paid close attention to what she was doing to herself, learning how to pleasure her as best as he could. *Not that I will need to know that anytime soon!* Suddenly, it was important to see if she called out a name as she climaxed. To his dismay, the scene changed.

Hermione watched herself on the screen as a much older version of herself seemed to be living at the orphanage for wizards. *Where is my home? Why do I not have a family?* She noticed that her hair was pulled in a severe bun and a scowl remained on her face as she sat behind a desk going over papers while two cats lazed about at her feet. *My God! I look like Minerva McGonagall!* As she looked at the many pictures on her future desk, she noticed they were of her friends and their spouses. They were of her friends' children, as she obviously never had any of her own. The only pictures that seemed specifically personal to her were of her parents and one of Crookshanks.

The last scene of the movie showed her lying in a hospital bed. The only other occupants in the room were Harry and Ginny. Ginny started sobbing loudly as Hermione closed her eyes and drifted away.

That cannot be what my life will be! I can't bear it! I don't want to be alone!

Sensing her distress, Severus grabbed Hermione's hand and squeezed. He did not want her to be upset. Wanting to calm her and ease her discomfort, he gently started rubbing the back of her hand with his thumb. *Perhaps it is time for us to leave.* "Hermione? I'm sure this is just some... trick."

She was still too embarrassed about the bathtub scene to look at him. *What must he be thinking of me right now?* Hermione hung her head and looked at the floor, doing her best to keep the tears in her eyes from falling.

Just as he started to speak again, the words *Your Life Alone* showed in big letters on the screen. *What the bloody hell is going on NOW?*

Suddenly, Severus Snape was looking at his own face on the wide movie screen.

Christy's Notes: Oh no! What will they see now?

Southern's Notes: How embarrassing! But I must admit that I think this is very, very cute. I can feel her disappointment. Poor thing! I can't wait to see what Snape's life will be like.

Act II: Enter Severus Snape

Chapter 3 of 5

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Chapter 3

Act II: Enter Severus Snape

Severus watched in horror as his face appeared on the movie screen. *Damnit! This cannot be happening! It was bad enough to watch Hermione's life, but I don't know if I can sit through this. I don't want her to see this!*

The first thing Severus saw was himself working in his lab at home. Scattered bottles were lying about with Prince Potions written on the label. *Bloody hell! She will definitely know it's me now!* He thoroughly checked each potion several times and bottled the finished product with pride. He was proud of the business he had started for himself, as it had done very well indeed. *Okay, so far this is not too bad. Even though I could have done without Hermione knowing, I don't believe she is one to spread gossip. I can deal with this...*

Hermione smirked slightly. *I knew he was I. M. A. Prince.* She chanced a glance at her former professor, some of her earlier embarrassment waning. He was scowling at the screen. *Right. Better not to mention that just yet, I think.*

Severus watched the screen as he worked on his potions. It seemed he was continuously mumbling to himself. He watched as trays of food were brought to him and

ignored.

After what seemed like hours, but was really only minutes, the screen Severus went to his study and poured a firewhisky while he reached for a Potions text. He started as a sandwich appeared next to him, causing him to shrug before absently eating it as he read.

Not bad, so far. That is how I live. I prefer to be alone at any rate. I don't have time for nonsense conversations and can tolerate only the company of the Malfoys. Except... I have rather enjoyed this evening with Hermione. Our conversation has been anything but dull.

He and Hermione watched the screen change. He was at a gathering at Malfoy Manor, standing outside a bedroom door with a pacing Draco and a calm Lucius. "Maybe she should have gone to St. Mungo's, Father. Gabrielle is the fragile sort."

"Nonsense, Draco. All Malfoy heirs have been born in this home and shall continue to do so. Your wife will be just fine." Noticing his son biting his nails, he said, "Your mother is the fragile sort as well, but she did just fine. What say you, Severus?"

"I agree. All will be well, Draco," Severus said as he clamped a hand on Draco's shoulder.

Suddenly, the three men heard a wail from behind the door and just when it seemed that Draco could stand the suspense no longer and went to rush in, Fleur Weasley, his sister-in-law, came out holding an absolutely beautiful baby boy.

As Severus watched, he saw the way his screen counterpart backed away from the family, staring wistfully at the scene. *That will never be me. I will never have those things, and I don't really want them.* However, he looked at Hermione just then and knew he was only fooling himself. Every man eventually wanted those things, even him.

Suddenly, Severus noticed Hermione's hand tightening on his. He hadn't even realized they were still holding hands. He quickly looked up at the screen and winced. He was entering a brothel in Muggle London.

He watched, helpless, as the Severus on the screen paid and went upstairs with a woman who had long, red hair and bright green eyes. *Damn, she looks like Lily Evans.* He refused to think of her as Lily Potter. *Well, I refuse to allow this to embarrass me. I am a man. I have needs.* He cringed as the Severus on screen didn't even fully disrobe, only pulling down his pants and taking his penis out. Not bothering to prepare her, he thrust roughly into the paid woman. *Good Lord! What must Hermione be thinking right now? I do have some finesse! I could do so much better, but why bother with a woman who has countless lovers every day?*

Hermione was silently smirking to herself. She did not have the full view of his body that he'd had of hers, but she was definitely enjoying the nice view of his well-rounded arse and the tops of his thighs. *I have no idea who that woman is, but she reminds me of Harry's mum. I wonder if...*

Her thoughts were interrupted as she heard a deep moan. She watched the scene before her as Severus threw his head back, eyes closed, during his orgasm and thought that he was absolutely beautiful. *Beautiful? Snape?* But as she looked at him sitting beside her, she knew he was very appealing to her.

What is she thinking? Does she think that is the only way I could have a lover? Is she repulsed by me now? He chanced a look at her and saw that she had not taken her eyes off the screen. He sighed. *She will never want to see me again after this. Why did it have to show me with a bloody woman?*

When the scene changed again, Severus was back at Malfoy Manor. It looked to be Christmas dinner. It was only himself, Narcissa, Lucius, Draco, Gabrielle, and the newest addition, Serpens. He rolled his eyes and hoped the boy made it into Slytherin. It would be hard having a name that meant serpent otherwise. *What is it with the Malfoys and their need for constellation names?*

The screen Severus seemed to detach himself from the family. He held discourse, but he only spoke when someone directly asked him something. He kept watching the two couples with nothing short of envy. How did love come so easily to some and not at all to others? He sighed. Both the screen and real Severus were becoming depressed. He wanted to leave this theater and go home.

Instead, he continued to watch. It seemed as if several years had passed. He was in his lab once more, but something seemed amiss. *Good Lord! I would never attempt to brew anything whilst intoxicated! What is wrong here?* The screen version was haphazardly throwing things into cauldrons as he stopped every so often to drink from a flask in his pocket. *It looks as if I have channeled Moody!*

Hermione started to feel uneasy. She could see that the screen Severus was doing what the screen Hermione had done...distancing herself from her friends. In a way, this was more embarrassing to watch than the intimate scenes. *I know what it's like to be alone and feel unloved. This brilliant, uniquely wonderful man should not have to worry about this happening to him.*

Severus noticed several unopened invitations to various things: Ministry functions, Malfoy gatherings and such. He wondered why the Severus on the screen decided not to go, at least to the Malfoy gatherings, and then, he realized that he knew why. *It is easier to be alone than to be surrounded by people and still be alone.* He hated the fact that Hermione was watching his misery. *Oh, well, what should it matter? I saw hers as well. If things don't change, she will end as a bitter old maid.* Looking up at the screen, he wondered, *How will I end?*

As they watched, it seemed that several months passed. Screen Severus was sitting in his study staring into the fire. There were several empty firewhisky bottles on the floor around his chair and plates of food left untouched and moldy. It seemed the house-elves were terrified of him now. They wouldn't go near him unless he called, which it seemed he was too drunk to do.

Suddenly, a very irate Lucius Malfoy and his son came storming into Severus' home without knocking. "This has gone on long enough, Severus. What, the Dark Lord didn't finish you off so you are going to do that yourself?"

"Go away, and leave me in peace, Lucius."

"Professor, please stop this! We miss you, Mother especially. Have a shower, and come back to the Manor with us." Draco was practically pleading.

"I am no longer your, or anyone's, professor, and I will do no such thing! Go back to your loving wives and adoring son, and leave me to my misery!"

"For God's sake, man! Look at yourself! When is the last time you have eaten? Bathed? Made potions? I will not let you kill yourself. You are my oldest and dearest friend. Please, come to the Manor with me."

"How touching. You almost convinced me, but no, I still have my wits. Even in my current drunken state, I can still say no, but I thank you. Now, leave me be. I do not want you or yours here, Lucius."

"Fine! You want to kill yourself? Have at it then, mate! However, I will not stand by and watch you! Draco, let's go."

"Father!" Draco was desperate. "We can't leave him this way! We have to help him; we are all he has."

And that was the point. Severus had nobody. The only conversations he seemed to have were with the portraits hanging about his home. He had removed the one of Albus because it was always giving him lectures and disapproving looks. It hurt him to know he had let Albus down so completely.

The next scene gave Severus chills. He watched in horror as his screen counterpart, in his highly intoxicated state, walked into the potions lab.

He heard Hermione murmur, "No, Severus, don't do it! Please go back!"

He watched himself randomly throwing things into a cauldron. Suddenly, it exploded in such a fashion that would have made Neville Longbottom's past explosions pale in comparison. They both watched as the screen Severus was thrown back by the blast, knocking his head on the corner of a table and hitting the floor with a thud.

Surely a house-elf will come and see what the noise was, Hermione thought frantically. But, soon, it was all too apparent that nobody was coming.

He stayed on that floor for three days and bled to death before Draco could sneak out of the Manor to check on him. His father had wanted to wait a little longer, but Draco had a bad feeling that something was not right.

It rained the day of his funeral. Only the distraught Malfoys were present. The screen then faded to black.

Severus sat very still until he heard the sniffling coming from Hermione. *That is it! I am leaving this place...with or without her!*

As he stood, he felt her tugging him back to his seat. "Hermione, we have both had enough. I say we leave this theater! I want to find out the identity of the man that took our tickets. This has the feel of some kind of Dark magic."

"Not quite yet, Severus. Look," she shakily told him, pointing to the screen. "It seems there is still more to see."

Severus looked up and saw the words *What You Could Have Together* in big letters.

They both had the same thought. *How much worse can this get?*

Christy's Notes: Well, let's hope that together they are better than alone!

Southern's Notes: I feel so sorry for him. That's a sad way to die. I hope the next section will be much better for our pair.

Act III: The Grand Finale

Chapter 4 of 5

Hermione's Christmas cheer falters when she sees a melancholy Snape. No one should spend such a happy holiday alone. My take on the How It Could Be Christmas Challenge issued by Southern Witch 69 over at her Yahoo!Group, Potter Place.

Disclaimer: All things from the Harry Potter world belong to JKR. Nothing belongs to Cocomochristy, unfortunately.

A/N Many thanks to my wonderful beta, the one and only, Southern_Witch_69!

Chapter 4

Act III: The Grand Finale

Severus was afraid to watch anymore. He had no idea what was going on, but he intended to find out. He desperately wanted to leave, but Hermione seemed very interested in what was going to happen next. "Hermione, are you sure you wish to stay?" he asked uneasily.

"Yes, I really do, Severus. For some reason, I feel it's important we finish this."

Severus sighed. "Very well, but when this is over, I aim to speak to that man."

Before Hermione could answer him, the movie began. They both watched as their faces appeared on the screen. This time they were together.

They were in Severus' laboratory in his home. She was helping him brew his potions as she told him of her day at the orphanages. Things were finally looking up there, and most of the children were being adopted.

Harry and Ginny, she told him, had decided against adopting a Muggle child, as it would be rather awkward, but instead, they had decided to help her find homes for the Muggle children. It seemed that they were harder to find homes for.

After finishing the potions, they decided to have a quiet meal at home. *We look so cozy and content sitting there,* Hermione thought wistfully. *Could life really be that way for us?* She looked at her former professor, and he seemed to be intently watching the screen.

Severus was watching the scene with bated breath. *I actually look happy and content there. Could it be possible that there could actually be a witch--that could make me happy?*

Suddenly, the scene changed, and they were in Malfoy Manor. As before, Draco was pacing the floor. Severus was standing with Lucius, helping to reassure the boy. This time, however, when Fleur Weasley came out holding the newest heir, Hermione was close behind her. She walked up to Severus and wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek.

Hermione whispered in his ear, "They are going to name that poor boy Serpens."

He chuckled and whispered back, "Better hope he makes Slytherin then." As he looked at her, he bent down to lightly kiss her lips. "I think the time has come to start working on a Snape heir. What say you?"

"I say yes!" she happily exclaimed.

Severus took his eyes off the screen to see how Hermione was reacting to this. Her eyes seemed transfixed on the screen, as if she didn't want to miss one thing *am*

starting to wonder what life would really be like with her. Dare I hope she is wondering as well?

Hermione felt herself yearning for that life with this man. *I would have never thought that Severus Snape could ever look at me without contempt, but seeing this makes me... want to think I was wrong. The soft expression on his face as he looks at me now leads me to think that perhaps he could someday feel something for me.* She chanced a glance at him and caught him staring at her. He quickly looked back at the screen. *Was that a blush I saw? Surely not!*

Suddenly, their screen selves were back at their home. They had started kissing in the kitchen and worked their way to the bedroom, pulling off robes and clothes as they went. Once they got to their destination, Severus cupped her face with his hands.

"You are very beautiful to me, Hermione Snape."

"You are very biased, my love. I know I am not beautiful, but as long as I am beautiful to you, I am very happy indeed."

"I can make you much, much happier," he purred in that voice he knew she loved.

"Prove it," she challenged, eager for him to love her.

He started slowly, kissing every inch of her face as he backed her to the bed and laid her down gently. When they had first arrived home, he thought they would have a frantic coupling, but as he looked at her now, he only wanted to make love to his wife. Slowly.

As Hermione watched the couple on the screen, she felt an ache. Severus had let go of her hand earlier when he started to leave, and she found herself reaching for it once again. He didn't seem to mind as he linked his fingers with hers.

Hermione watched as her counterpart whimpered on the screen. Severus started trailing kisses down her neck, nibbling just behind her ear in that tender spot that makes her moan. "You like that, do you?" he asked, knowing his voice was as much of a turn on to her as anything else.

"Yes! Severus, please!" she begged.

He chuckled as he nibbled at a lower spot on her neck to her collarbone, kissing all the way across and then lower still to her right breast. He laved her nipple with his tongue before he nibbled the sensitive underside.

Hermione arched up, trying to ease the ache between her thighs. He took pity on her and lifted his knee between her legs. She started grinding herself against his knee, searching for release, as he attacked her left breast in much the way as he had done her right one, determined to take his time.

Moving slowly down her body, Severus started kissing her belly. Because as he went lower, he had to move his knee, so he started to work her nub with his fingers and thumb. He knew it was a slow torture for her, and he reveled in the fact that he could make her as crazy with desire as she did him. She cried out as his mouth suddenly found her mons.

As Severus watched himself on screen, he couldn't help but be a little smug. *This certainly makes up for the brothel scene! But damn, I truly want to taste her now. I wonder if this is disgusting to her?* He looked at the witch beside him and smiled. She was breathing heavily and looked flush. *That's right, my dear. Watch and see what I can do to you!* The only problem was, he was becoming aroused as well. As he heard his wanton witch crying his name out on screen, he quickly looked up.

Hermione's head was thrown back in ecstasy as she was pulling his hair and grinding herself in his face. "Ohh, Sev...er...us! Love you, want you, need you...NOW!"

He moved back up her body, placing his hardened cock at her entrance. "Open your eyes, and look at me whilst I take you!" he commanded.

Her eyes snapped open as he slid into her moist, welcoming heat. "Oh, yes, Hermione! God, woman, you feel so good."

She lifted her legs and wrapped them around his waist, meeting him thrust for thrust. He wanted her to have pleasure once more before he found his release, so he moved his fingers down and stroked her clit in time with his thrusts. Soon, she was calling out to him again. "GODS... YES! Oh, Severus! Love you!"

Feeling her tighten around him as she climaxed again, he let himself go and came long and hard inside of her. "Hermione," he purred and felt satisfaction when she shivered in response.

After they caught their breaths, she cheekily said, "Well, I say that's a fine start on making our Snape heir, eh?"

"Damn straight," he agreed, pulling her close to hold her while they slept. "Night, love."

Hermione watched the scene unfold and was surprised that she was not embarrassed. Right now all she could feel was longing. Longing for the man beside her and the life she was watching. *Could he ever feel anything for me? Does it sicken him to think of loving the resident know-it-all that way?*

The scene changed again. This time, they were at St. Mungo's. Harry and the whole Weasley clan were pacing the floors. Authur came and patted Severus on the back. "It isn't every day your baby girl gives birth," he said, bursting with pride.

"Too right," Severus agreed, watching Hermione rub her growing belly. Soon, they would be back for her to give birth.

A squealing child caught everyone's attention. "Daddy! Daddy! Is the baby here yet?" Phillip Potter, adopted son of Harry and Ginny, came running down the hall with his uncle Ron and his fiancée, Luna.

Harry laughed and lifted his son high in the air. "Soon."

When the wail of a baby surprised everyone, Harry took off for the room with his son. As he cracked the door open, the Healer said, "Come in, Mr. Potter, and meet your daughter."

He went in for a few moments and then asked everyone to come in and take a look at Lillian Molly Potter.

Severus looked at the baby on the screen and felt his chest tighten. *Good Lord, but that baby looks just like Lily with her red hair and green eyes. She would be so proud. Wherever she is, I hope she has found peace.*

He looked at Hermione and found her watching him. She smiled beautifully at him, and the tightening in his chest lightened as he smiled back. *Why have I not noticed her beauty before?*

For the next scene, they were in the chapel at Ron and Luna's wedding. Hermione was very round with child. After the wedding, everyone headed to the reception hall. It was difficult, but Severus held Hermione tightly to him as they swayed to the music. She tired easily, so he was careful not to keep her on her feet too long.

As the scene changed, they were in St. Mungo's once more. This time it was Severus' turn to pace the floor while surrounded by Malfoys and Weasleys. "Calm down, old chap," Lucius said. "Your wee one will be here before you know it. All will be well."

"Too right," Authur reluctantly agreed with Lucius. He still hated that man, but he wanted to put Severus at ease.

After a few hours of pacing and nail biting, the Healer called for Severus to enter the room. He cautiously went in and relaxed as he saw a beaming Hermione. "Well?" he anxiously asked.

"Come and meet your daughter, love," she excitedly told him.

As Severus and Hermione watched themselves, they were both getting choked up. Severus suddenly put his arm around her and squeezed. In return, she laid her head on his shoulder. Without thought, he kissed the top of her head as they continued watching.

"Are you still determined to name her Tabitha?" he teased.

"Yes," she said. "Tabitha Jane Snape. Tabby for short... after Minerva."

"I don't think everyone will understand Tabby is after Minerva, love."

"Those who know her well will," she argued. "Her Animagus form is a tabby cat, and those who are close to us will know. That is all I really care about anyway."

Severus faked thinking on it. He would not deny her this or anything else. "All right...if you insist, that is."

"Yes, I do. Now, invite the lot in so we can show off our daughter."

They sat watching scene after scene: Christmas breakfasts at the Burrow, Christmas dinners at Malfoy Manor, birthday parties, Sunday gatherings, and even the birth of Ron and Luna's daughter, Charlotte Ginevra.

I see another trio in the making, Hermione thought with pride. A trio with happier times ahead than we had!

When the screen faded to black, they noticed they were alone in the theater. They sat quietly a few moments when Severus turned to her. "Hermione, I hardly know what to say."

"Don't say anything... except how that made you feel." She turned to him shyly. "Did it repulse you?"

"No. In fact, it had quite the opposite affect on me, truth be told. What about you?" he asked, wanting to know her feelings.

"It made me feel... a longing that I have never known before. Would you care to come back to my flat and discuss things?"

He sighed with relief. "Yes, I would like that very much."

They got up to leave the theater, hurriedly walking out the door. About halfway down the block, Severus stopped. "Hold on. I want to talk to that ticket man. Despite the last act, I want to know how this happened."

"Yes, I agree. How was so much of our private lives known? Like the name Tabby? I have wanted to use that name for a long time!"

Severus grinned slightly. *Tabby indeed!*

They turned to go back and speak to the man. When they got back to the theater, it was gone, replaced by an old, abandoned building. "What in the world?" Hermione asked. "Where is the theater?"

Severus walked all around the building, finding nothing. "This is strange. Do you feel okay, Hermione?" He was starting to wonder if some spell had been placed on them.

When she didn't answer, he looked to see what was troubling her. She was holding her ticket, looking surprised. "What is it?" he demanded, becoming worried.

Saying nothing, she handed him her ticket. On it were the words, *Somebody had to meddle! Look where you would have ended up otherwise!*

"If I didn't know any better..." she started.

"I would say that is the work of Albus Dumbledore," he finished.

"Impossible, right?" She looked in his eyes.

"It would seem, but how else could this have happened?"

"Does it matter, Severus? We're here now, and I would really like to go talk about this. Do you still feel the same?" she asked uncertainly.

"Yes, I do. More than anything. I think you are exactly what I have been missing in my life," he admitted to her.

Taking his hand, she said, "Let's go then." Instead of walking back, they Disapparated, impatient to get on with the rest of their lives. Together.

Christy's Notes: Well, only the epilogue left. I should have that ready before Christmas! (Hey, I like the name Tabby! LOL)

Southern's Notes: Lovely! I adore this. I can't wait to see how they end up. Poor kid. (Tabby! Snicker... Here kitty, kitty.)

The Final Curtain Call

Chapter 5 of 5

Hermione's Christmas cheer falters when she sees a melancholy Snape. No one should spend such a happy holiday alone. My take on the How It Could Be Christmas Challenge issued by Southern Witch 69 over at her Yahoo!Group, Potter Place.

Disclaimer: All things Harry Potter belong to JKR. I make no money from this.

A/N: Many thanks to my wonderful beta, the one and only, Southern_Witch_69.

Chapter 4

The Final Curtain Call

As Hermione sat reading the *Daily Prophet*, a familiar owl swept in the window. She smiled because she knew what was in the letter from her daughter.

"Severus, we have an owl from Tabby!" she called. "You know what she will ask."

Coming into the sitting room from his lab, Severus told her, "Yes, I do, and the answer still remains no. I will not have my daughter spend the Christmas holidays away from home. I want her here with us."

"Yes," she agreed. "As do I. Besides, I know that Draco, Harry, and Ron will insist their children go home as well." Hermione still could not believe that Tabby had been sorted into Slytherin with Serpens, although he was in his seventh year while Tabby was in her fifth. Hermione knew, as Severus had not a clue, that Tabby and Serpens were a couple. Lily and Charlie had both been sorted into Gryffindor and were both sixth years. Phillip Potter was currently in Auror training.

"They shall see each other enough during the holiday. It will not kill her to spend time with her parents." Severus hated the fact that his baby girl was no longer a baby. As of late, he had been wishing for another child. He doubted Hermione would have another, as their daughter was fifteen now.

"I agree, love." Hermione smiled at her husband. "How about a trip to Muggle London before she returns?"

Severus sighed. "Hermione, you have gone back to that place every year since that year we saw our futures. Neither the building nor the ticket man have ever reappeared. What makes you think either will do so now?"

"I just don't want to miss it if it does! Besides, there was that one year I found the photograph."

"Ah, yes, the year you were contemplating my marriage proposal. I had given you a ring a year to the day that we were at that blasted theater, and you said *you needed time*. Broke my heart, you did."

Rolling her eyes, she said, "Oh, please! You were so smug! 'Take all the time you need, my dear. I shall be here when you return.' You knew exactly what my answer would be. But had I not gone to think, I would not have found that photograph. I treasure it." She'd had the picture framed and put up in their bedroom. It was of the two of them, after many Decembers had passed, sitting on their porch in matching rockers. Her shockingly long, white hair was worn loose, as she suspected Severus preferred, and his salt and pepper locks were still about the same length and style as he wore them now. They held hands as they rocked, still looking at each other every so often with obvious love in their eyes.

"I treasure it also," he admitted. "More so, because I believe it helped you to make your mind up fast and quell any doubts you might have had."

"Quite," she admitted. "Not that I had many," she quickly said. He chuckled. "So," she asked again, "are you coming with me?"

"No, I have not in the past seventeen years, and I won't start now. Besides, I think you like the time alone." He raised an inquisitive eyebrow.

"I suppose I do," she allowed. She walked over to him and kissed him goodbye. "I won't be long. I may do a bit of shopping while out."

"Okay, I want to finish up my potion. I shall have dinner ready when you return."

"Thank you, Severus."

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As Hermione walked the path she knew the theater to be, she sighed. Severus was right. She would never see that theater again. The only other time she'd seen anything after that night when they'd viewed their futures was when she'd had been mulling over whether to accept his proposal or not. She had nothing on her mind now. *Except the fact that you know Severus wants to have another baby.*

Hermione had been thinking about that for a while. Fifteen years was a long time to wait to have another baby. *Well, I am not dead set against it. I just need to weigh all the pros and cons. My age would not matter. I am barely forty, not even close to middle aged. Even Muggles have babies at this age.*

As she was pondering, she suddenly spotted another photograph on the ground. This one had her in a hospital bed in St. Mungo's, holding an infant son. Tabby and Severus were on either side of her, both grinning like fools. *Oh! A son! I wonder if having a son is important to Severus. He never mentioned a son specifically before* she mused. *Of course it is! Most wizards would like a son.* Smiling, she decided to Apparate home and give her husband the good news: She did want one more child.

** * * * *

Tabby grinned at her parents when she spotted them waiting for her on the platform. Her father stood so stiff and proud while her mother was grinning and waving madly. She spotted Draco and Gabrielle Malfoy, Serpens' parents, standing by her parents. She didn't immediately see Charlie or Lily's parents.

She turned to her boyfriend. "Serpens, promise you will owl me everyday! I will miss you so much!"

With his grey eyes smiling down into her dark chocolate ones, he promised, "Everyday. I will miss you, too. Thank God you will be over tomorrow!" he said, laughing as he kissed the tip of her slightly large nose.

She smacked his chest lightly. "Don't tease me, or I shall not give you your Christmas gift!"

This time, he kissed her lips softly. "I am not teasing. I am very happy you will be at the manor tomorrow."

When the train stopped, they got off to greet their parents. "Hi, Mum! Hi, Dad!" she called as she walked towards her parents.

Raising an eyebrow, Severus said, "Is that the best greeting you have for your father?"

Laughing, Tabby stood on her toes and kissed her father's cheek. "Is that better?"

"Much," he confirmed, turning to the platinum-haired boy at his daughters side. "Hello, Mr. Malfoy."

"Hello." Turning to Tabby, he lightly kissed her lips and told her, "Until tomorrow." Then, he walked off with his parents after they had said their goodbyes to Tabby and her parents.

After she watched him walk away, she turned towards her parents to see her dad eyeing her speculatively. "What?" she asked.

"Is there something you wish to inform me of, my daughter?"

"Oh, you mean that kiss Serpens gave me? Well, he is my boyfriend!"

"I see," was the only answer she got. Tabby smiled because she could tell he was not upset by the news, just surprised.

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Hermione was happy to be back home from the Burrow and Malfoy Manor. She just wanted to spend time alone with her family.

She remembered how happy Severus was when she told him she wanted to have another baby. He suggested they start right away, to which she agreed.

As they sat in front of the fire, each perusing their own thing, Hermione looked to Severus. He was reading the newest *Potions Today* magazine while having a brandy. Suddenly, he looked up and into her eyes. She smiled. He'd felt her eyes on him.

I am so happy I ran into him all those years ago in Diagon Alley. My life could have been so empty now but for him and Tabby. Thank you, Albus Dumbledore, wherever you are, for I know it was you who showed us the way.

As Severus looked to his wife and then his daughter, he thought of his life and how fulfilling it was now. Not a day went by that he did not thank whatever deity there was for this gift. Instead of ending up bitter, he was now blissfully happy. He often wondered about Albus and his part in things. The old, meddling fool still pointed him in the right direction... even in death! Severus chuckled. *Well done, Albus. Well done.*

Christy's Notes: Well, there you have it! The end to my little tale! Happy Christmas, belatedly, to all and Happy New Year! Thanks for the reviews!

Southern's Notes: What a very sweet ending! I suppose it could have been worse for Snape. His little girl could have gone home and announced that in a couple of years she'd be Mrs. Phillip Potter...or a future Weasley! HaHaHa!