

Afterwards

by Titania Snape

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Il Postino

Chapter 1 of 1

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Prologue

Il Postino

He had been watching her for a week now, always in secret always after night had fallen, concealed beneath a well-woven charm. She was a Muggle woman, in her late thirties, who lived in a small townhouse in a small town in America. Why she fascinated him, he knew not; he only knew that she had captured his attention the moment he laid his eyes upon her.

Perhaps, it was the loneliness that washed off of her, like the waves on an ocean. Perhaps, it was her ordinary appearance, for there was nothing about her that was anything but ordinary. Her eyes were hazel, her nose a bit short for her face, but not so much so as to make it disproportionate, her hair was brown with reddish highlights. Her lips were the only really extraordinary feature on her face. They were perfect. The bottom lip as full as the top, naturally pink, and vaguely pouty.

She worried her lips with her teeth when she was vexed or in a contemplative mood. She was doing so tonight, he noted, as she tried to make her fingers work on the neck of her violin. He cringed at a scratchy note. She would never play the instrument as well as a professional would; she had taken it up too late in life to master it. However, she would become a passable player, if she stuck to her lessons, he thought as he listened to her halting attempt at some sort of mournful tune.

He regarded her, teeth nibbling away at her lower lip, as her eyes scanned the notes in the book that was perched on the music stand before her. She had been playing for nearly an hour, and she would soon stop so that she could prepare for bed. His short observance of her taught him that she only practiced for an hour, and it was the last thing she did before preparing for rest. The activity seemed, for all of the tension that stiffened her body, to relax her. Then again, he mused, perhaps it was merely a routine that she adhered to.

He heard her sigh, as she lowered the bow, and arched her neck. He was expecting her to stand and bend down to retrieve the case she kept the violin in, to loosen the bowstrings, to place the instrument into its slot, followed by the bow, and to finally close the lid. But she did not do that this evening. Instead, she stood and walked over to her desk. His eyes followed her, as she bent down, and inserted a shiny disk into her computer.

With a few clicks of the mouse, she smiled and turned her eyes upward. Then, raising the instrument to her shoulder, she positioned her bow above the strings and took a deep breath.

His eyes widened at the notes, low and mournful, and then after four beats of silence... Il Postino, albeit a scratchy version of the opening notes, flew from the violin. Behind it floated the strains of piano accompaniment, the music of the violin interspersing as it should.

It was her face, not her playing, that enthralled him. It was a look of pure bliss, of sorrow, of heartache. All of these emotions flickered across her features as she played. To him, the music suddenly sounded like it was being played by a virtuoso, so wrapped up was he in her face. The song seemed to pass to quickly, for it was ending now on a high, crying note. He watched as a single tear traced its way down her cheek. She stood there for a few moments, more tears following the first.

Finally, she lowered her instrument and wept in full. She fell to her knees, although she still remembered her instrument, holding it out before her so that it would not hit the floor. It was the keening of her tears that echoed off of the walls of her rooms now, and he found himself resisting the sudden urge to fly through the window to comfort her. She was a Muggle woman, after all, and would have been frightened at his sudden intrusion.

So, he watched her weep, listened to her keening, until she finally exhausted herself and arose. Her tearstained face was pale, and he held his breath as she looked straight at the window he stood outside of. Had his charm slipped away without his realizing it? He sighed in relief as she looked through him and beyond to the dark of the night. He turned, knowing that she would prepare for bed now, she looked tired enough for it. He never watched her prepare for bed. It would be too intimate, too intrusive. Instead, he walked away, safe in his charm, knowing that he would return again at tomorrow's sunset.

AN: I have been wanting to write a SS/OFC fic for a while now. I have held back, for the fear of creating a Mary Sue, the bane of every good fan fiction writers', and readers', existence. Then one night, as I lay trying to sleep, I thought about Severus Snape and his Muggle parentage. I thought about what he would do after the defeat of Voldemort, for surely the evil will be defeated. What would he do afterward? What if he survives the war? What if he survives Harry's wrath? What if he were vindicated? What would he do? Surely, he wouldn't stay on at Hogwarts. There would always be the spectre of Albus Dumbledore there to haunt him. Severus Snape's life is too complicated to stay. No, he must away. Where would he go? What would he do? What if he happened across a Muggle woman?