

A Momentary Madness

by MMADfan

Minerva has one foolish moment. Where will it lead? Short, fluffy fic. Rating rises.

Chapter One: The Moment

Chapter 1 of 5

Minerva has one foolish moment. Where will it lead? Short, fluffy fic. Rating rises.

Author's Note: Written for Hogwarts Duo, who wanted some fluffy ADMM for Christmas. Lemony fluff, to be precise. I thought I'd play Santa.

Set at Hogwarts in April 1961 over the Easter holiday.

Not set in the "RaMverse."



Chapter One: The Moment

Albus blinked. The face above him came into focus. "Oh, Minerva, how long have I been asleep?"

"Not long. A half hour or so."

They had played a game of chess after dinner, then settled down in companionable silence, Albus with a book he'd been trying to read since he'd received it for Christmas a few months before, and Minerva with a stack of essays. It was a comfortable habit they'd fallen into over the past couple of years, meeting in his office or sitting room, discussing the events of the day, playing some chess, if they had the time and desire, and then settling down to some task, solitary but more pleasant for the company. This was a rare evening, in that Albus had picked up *Lucky Jim* rather than work for the Ministry or Hogwarts. But it was the Easter holiday, so Albus had fewer pressures on his time, and he'd hoped to read his book. He'd apparently only read three pages before he fell asleep.

"I wouldn't have woken you, but I thought I'd call for some tea, and then I thought that if you slept too long this evening, you might have a restless night," Minerva said. She was sitting on the edge of the sofa that he had stretched out on, and Albus was acutely aware of her nearness and her warmth.

"Thank you, my dear," he said, thinking that he'd likely have a restless night, anyway, although not for any reasons that she might guess. "A cup of tea might be just the thing."

"It seemed a pity to wake you," Minerva continued, reaching out and touching his cheek lightly. "I was enjoying watching you sleep."

Albus chuckled. "The fourth-year essays must be particularly dull this evening."

"I finished them a while ago. I'd only had a few remaining and I hadn't brought any others."

Albus contemplated sitting up, and pondered how he could do that to effectively move further away from Minerva without it seeming as though he was uncomfortable with her physical proximity. Lying there on his sitting room sofa with Minerva so close, he was both comfortable and ill at ease. He wondered how it was possible to be both so relaxed and so tense at the same time. He could sit up in preparation for calling for tea, he decided, and then Minerva would move, either down to the other end of the sofa or to the chair across from him, which she had vacated to join him on the couch. But just as he made that decision, Minerva touched his cheek again, this time her fingers lingering longer.

"It is the holiday," she said softly, "a time for us to relax a bit, too, after all. Be ourselves for a little while, not merely . . . duty-bound Hogwarts staff."

Albus's lips parted to respond, but Minerva bent swiftly and kissed them, although kissing them less swiftly. Her lips lingered on his lips longer than her fingertips had lingered upon his cheek, then she slowly drew back and opened her eyes, looking down into Albus's startled blue ones. He had not reacted to her sudden kiss but to allow his lips to respond to hers, more from surprised reflex than from any conscious desire, and now he found no words to say, if any ever could have been found to express his current confused state. Minerva leaned towards him again, this time merely brushing her lips against his briefly, then kissing his cheek. Albus could feel her warm, moist breath, soft against his cheek, as she remained still a moment, her eyes closed, her weight on her left arm, which held her poised above him as her right hand rested lightly on the back of the sofa beside his left shoulder. She seemed to sigh as she opened her eyes and straightened.

"I'm sorry, Albus. I just . . . chalk it down to momentary madness. Just a moment of madness, now past." Minerva stood. "I think I'll go check on Gryffindor. I'm a little concerned about Jack Fudge, as you know—"

"Minerva—" Albus sat up.

"—there alone with only a handful of much older students to keep him company. I could wring Cornelius's neck for not having him home over the half-term holiday. Elizabeth would have been furious with him, I'm sure. Then I'll get a start on the fifth-year essays. With OWLs coming up soon, I need to spend particular time on those."

"Minerva . . . are you, will you, are you going to bring them back up here with you?"

"Not this evening, I think not. Tomorrow evening, although I'll probably be on to the NEWTs-level essays by then, with any luck and some diligence. The holiday can't be all rest and relaxation for those of us with responsibilities, after all," Minerva said briskly.

"And our walk tomorrow—"

"Yes, we'll plan on that, if the weather remains fine, as it has been, although Pomona said she thought it might rain. She's often right about such things," Minerva replied. "Unless, of course, you have something come up in the meantime. But I'll be in my office, in all probability, or possibly the study in my suite. If the weather is good and you are still available, come down and find me. Late afternoon, we'd agreed?"

"Yes, that's right," Albus said with a nod, standing.

"Good," Minerva said, gathering up her student essays. "I'll see you tomorrow, then, Albus. I'll likely be at breakfast, but I'm going to lunch in Hogsmeade with Poppy, remember. Pomona said she'd look after Gryffindor for me, although with as few as there are remaining over the holiday, it shouldn't require anything of her."

"Minerva, I . . ."

"Yes?" Minerva waited, her hand on the door handle, but looking back, somewhat expectantly, yet also somewhat apprehensively.

"I had a nice evening," Albus said lamely.

Minerva nodded. "Good night, Albus. Sweet dreams," she said, as she had on so many nights before.

"Sleep well."

~ to be continued ~

Author's Note: Lucky Jim is a novel by Kingsley Amis.

DH disregarded.

Chapter Two: April Showers

Chapter 2 of 5

A walk turns wet.



Chapter Two: April Showers

Back from lunch with Poppy, Minerva hung her cloak on the rack in her office. If Dumbledore came down to find her for their walk, it would be handy, and it saved her the trip up to her suite. Her work was all here in her office, anyway, although her study was a bit cosier.

She hadn't seen Dumbledore yet that day, since she had taken a light breakfast of tea and toast in her rooms, still in bed, which was a bit of a luxury that she couldn't indulge during term time. It wouldn't do for all of the staff to decide to lounge in bed late, even during a holiday, since there were always at least a few students staying in residence, but that never happened, as far as Minerva was aware. She laughed softly to herself, wondering what the students would do if none of the staff appeared for breakfast one morning. They'd probably sort themselves out just fine, she thought, although if it became a regular occurrence, she was certain they'd eventually get up to something they shouldn't.

She thought she'd managed to avoid that moment the prior evening in Dumbledore's sitting room from becoming more awkward than it already was. Kissing a wizard and having him lie there as though he'd been simultaneously been hit by a Stunner and a Body Bind was not conducive to a comfortable evening, and it certainly did nothing for a witch's self-confidence. But it had been one moment of foolishness, one moment of madness, as she had told Albus, and as awkward as it had been, it wasn't fatal, neither to her nor to their friendship. She could certainly carry on. And that meant behaving as though nothing was different, as though that moment had never happened, and behaving that way whether she was planning her day and her evening, carving out a small slice of it to spend with him, just as usual, or whether she was all alone and merely reflecting upon the incident to herself. And, of course, behaving normally when she was with him, as well.

It wasn't the end of the world, she thought as she sat down behind her desk and pulled the fifth-year essays toward her. She and Dumbledore had an excellent working relationship and a close friendship. There was an easy warmth between them, and she knew that he felt more relaxed in her company than in that of anyone else...he had told her that much, in fact. She hoped that Albus could put the moment behind them, as well, and retain that sense of ease he had with her. It would be a positive sign if he came down and fetched her for their walk, but if he didn't, she would simply continue reading student essays and then go up to his office after dinner as she always did.

Despite the rational talk Minerva had with herself, she still felt a sinking sensation in her stomach as the afternoon grew later and the time for Albus to fetch her came and went. It didn't matter, she told herself. But when she heard the door to her classroom open and then Albus's swift tread cross the room to her office, she breathed a sigh of relief.

As was his wont, Albus rapped once sharply on her door, then turned the handle to let himself in.

"I'm sorry I'm late. I had a Floo conversation with Minister Quigley, and it was becoming tiresome to squat there and argue with him, so I popped down to London to speak with him in person. I thought I'd be back sooner. I hope I'm not too late for our walk?"

"No, no, not at all," Minerva said brightly. "Although the dinner hour is approaching..."

"Not a problem. I've let Filius know that we would likely be out of the castle. He can look after everyone in our absence, and I know that Horace will be at dinner. I ran into him just now as he returned from his sister's."

"Only a day later than he said he'd be," Minerva said drily. "Not bad, for him."

"He apparently reacquainted himself with an old flame whilst he was visiting," Albus replied with some amusement. "Madam Bourgain."

"Bourgain? As in..."

"Yes, Bernard Bourgain's aunt. Interesting timing, wouldn't you say, my dear?" Albus asked as he helped Minerva on with her cloak.

"Just as Bernard has become Minister Quigley's aide, yes, I'd say that was interesting timing," Minerva replied with a smirk. "Didn't have two minutes for the boy when he was a student, if I remember correctly. Said he had a humdrum mind, wouldn't amount to much."

Albus laughed. "I think there is a lot going on inside that 'humdrum mind' of his that he keeps to himself."

"He should do well for Quigley, I think," Minerva remarked as she closed up the classroom behind them. "I don't think the boy ever forgot a word he read."

"I believe he has an eidetic memory," Albus said, "and what's more, he could always pull up relevant facts as he needed them. Horace never appreciated his talents, as the lad never advertised them. I think that perhaps this might be a little lesson to him."

"For all his . . . quirks, though, Slughorn usually has an appreciation for intelligence, doesn't go just for the flashy ones...although they are his favourites. I suppose he assumes they'll make a splash once they leave Hogwarts, and then make all of the right connections," Minerva said.

"I do believe that young Bernard wasn't very impressed by our Head of Slytherin," Albus said softly as they headed down the stairs to the ground floor. "Probably did his best to remain beneath his notice."

"Good on him," Minerva replied with a low chuckle. "I believe he might go far in the Ministry."

Albus laughed.

As was their way, they talked as they walked, speaking of Hogwarts, students, mutual acquaintances, of a loose stone, a lovely tree, a happy memory, and of nothing at all. Their walk took them around the lake, as it so often did, then through a hidden gate in the wall surrounding the Hogwarts grounds, and then along the edge of the forest, across the railway tracks, and from there, up the slope of the mountain across from the castle. They didn't climb far, though, before they found one of their favourite paths, which led them around the side of the mountain, Ben Beithir, as it was called, and thence into a dale whose rushing burn was one of several that fed the Hogwarts loch.

It was already becoming dark when they reached Glen Beithir, and Minerva suggested that they turn around and head back to the castle for dinner.

"It will be almost dark by the time we reach the wall, as it is," Minerva said, "and I don't like the look of those clouds."

"Indeed," Albus replied. "I thought that, if you liked, you might join me for a light supper when we return."

"As long as it isn't too light," Minerva said. "I'm rather hungry. My lunch seems very long ago and far away at the moment."

"I am sure that the house-elves can arrange a good, satisfying supper for us. I'd like something warming, myself, perhaps a nice hot soup. It's still quite brisk out."

Several times on the walk back to the castle, Albus reached out and gently touched Minerva's elbow in order to indicate direction, or took her hand briefly to assist her over a rocky spot. Minerva didn't really need any help, having been an avid hill-walker since childhood, but she didn't point that out, enjoying the warmth of Albus's hand around hers. The final time that he took her hand, just before they reached the little gate in the wall, he squeezed it gently before he released it, smiling at her.

"It's been a lovely walk, my dear. A wonderful way to end an otherwise rather vexatious afternoon. Your company is so often the cure for all of the weary burdens of this old wizard."

Minerva blushed and lowered her gaze. "I've enjoyed it as well, Albus, although my day was not as tiresome as yours sounded."

"I feel rejuvenated after our walk," Albus said, flicking a finger to make the gate appear, then waving his hand to open it to them. "Pleasantly tired, but rejuvenated at the same time."

"The exercise in the fresh air is good for that," Minerva replied sensibly.

"Ah, but the exercise alone would have been as nothing without your companionship," Albus said. "It is that to which I look forward every day, you know."

"I do, too, Albus."

By the time they began to round the lake, the dark clouds overhead opened up, and it began to pour. Albus cast two quick Imperviuses, first on Minerva and then on himself, but although they remained dry, the rain still beat down on them as they ran toward the castle.

"You go on in your Animagus form," Albus called to her over the pounding rain. "I'll catch up."

"I shouldn't...can't you..."

"My form doesn't like flying in the rain, you know that. No arguments! I'll recast the Impervius as soon as you transform. Now go on!"

Minerva transformed with a quick pop, and although Albus was fast with his spell, the rain still dampened her fur, much to her feline distress. She raced off toward the castle, waiting for Albus in the minimal cover provided by the doorway at the base of the North Tower, which was the closest entrance, aside from the one down by the docks, but that one would have taken longer to reach, and it would have been a very treacherous, slippery path down.

Albus caught up with her in little time, still fairly dry, though he seemed to be steaming as the Impervius strained to keep him from becoming soaked in the downpour.

"Mrrrrrrrrw!" Minerva complained, dancing about at Albus's feet.

"I know, my dear, just a moment!" He drew his wand and opened the scarred old door. "There we are!"

Minerva leapt in, shook herself, and then smoothly returned to her ordinary form. "Pomona was right about the rain!" she said somewhat crossly.

"April showers, you know, Minerva!" Albus said brightly.

"I'll take the May flowers *without* getting caught in the April showers, though, thank you very much! Now I really am ravenous."

"Your Animagus transformation probably helped your appetite along," Albus said as he waved his wand to light the torches ahead of them.

"Lead on, Headmaster," Minerva said. She disliked the narrow, closed stairwell of the North Tower, but it was a convenient shortcut on occasion. Still, she preferred to have Albus go first; it didn't seem quite as claustrophobic that way.

~ *to be continued* ~

Author's Note: DH disregarded.

Chapter Three: A Stormy Moment

Chapter 3 of 5

Albus creates a moment of his own.



Chapter Three: A Stormy Moment

Albus led Minerva through the castle, taking dark, obscure stairways up until they finally reached the fourth floor, where the gargoyle and the entrance to the Headmaster's Tower were that year.

"Candy floss," Albus said, and the gargoyle sprang aside. Albus made a slight bow. "After you, my dear!"

Minerva stepped onto the bottom step, and the stairs began to corkscrew upward.

"When did you charm the stairs to move, Albus?" They hadn't been that way when she'd been a student, and she'd often wondered, though never asked, when and why they had been charmed.

"Around . . . nineteen forty-eight. Yes, in the summer of forty-eight. It was becoming increasingly difficult for Headmaster Dippet to climb all the way from the Headmaster's lofty office down to the ground floor. There were days when he simply didn't descend. We moved the entrance to the Tower down to the first floor, I charmed the stairs as they are now, and then he only had to walk the one flight from the first floor down to the ground floor. When that became difficult during the final two years, we set a Charmed sedan chair at the base of the stairway, just beside the gargoyle, and he would ride down to the Great Hall in that."

"I don't know why he didn't simply retire, enjoy his few remaining years in a peaceful cottage somewhere, waited upon by a few devoted Hogwarts house-elves," Minerva said.

"Ah, well, I believe that was his plan until Clarissa died so suddenly back in forty-eight. They were both going to retire to the Isle of Man, I believe, where Clarissa grew up. Once she was gone, that idea no longer appealed to Armando."

"But they had grandchildren, great-grandchildren. He could have lived near them. He wouldn't have been alone, I'm sure."

"Probably not, but as long as we could make accommodation for him here, there seemed no point in having him leave all that he had loved, and the vitality of the school

kept him going, he said."

"I suppose you're right. But it must have been a burden for you," Minerva said. "You essentially had to do both his job and yours for those last few years, from what I've heard."

"I didn't think of it as a burden," Albus replied. "I considered it both a privilege and a responsibility."

"I never believed that you and Headmaster Dippet were very close, though."

"Not as friends, no, not precisely. But we had gone through a lot together over the years. That creates a bond between people...even between people who don't particularly like each other and who, if it weren't for the circumstances of their work, would never spend any time together. But Armando and I did like each other. We simply hadn't much in common, other than Hogwarts. And in our case, that was more important than any differences we might have had. He had devoted many decades of his life to the school. It was the least I could do to see that he was happy here during his final days."

They reached the top of the stairs and Albus opened the door to his office, which was gradually becoming filled with various peculiar whirring and spinning magical devices. Minerva had found them distracting, and even unnerving, at first, but she was becoming used to them. She still preferred meeting with him in the quiet of his sitting room, where he only had a foe glass sitting on his sideboard. Albus admitted that many of the devices were quite imperfect in design and function, although the foe glass was fairly reliable, but he merely chuckled when Minerva suggested he was beginning to appear paranoid, or at least as though he was developing a peculiar fetish. She did hope that he stopped collecting them before he ran out of room for guests to sit down.

"Let me just check my Owl Post," Albus said, "then we can go up to the suite and call for some supper."

Minerva nodded as Albus went to the window and opened the Charmed Owl Post box, which conveniently collected his letters when he wasn't in the castle, keeping him from being constantly hectorated by birds as he went through his day. Minerva did hope, though, that there was nothing urgent that would require his immediate attention.

Albus quickly flipped through the envelopes and parchment scrolls, whistling softly to himself as he crossed the room. He deposited the collection on his desk and turned and smiled at her. "Ready, my dear?"

Minerva returned his smile, glad that all of the post was going to be left in the office. "I'm famished."

"I admit to having a healthy appetite this evening, myself."

Twenty minutes later, they were both happily eating a hearty cassoulet and partaking of crusty bread and cheese.

"More wine, Minerva?" Albus asked, raising the bottle of Merlot.

Minerva shook her head, her mouth full. Albus refilled his own glass.

"I'll have more after I've finished this, though," Minerva said.

"This is a most satisfying meal," Albus said as he sliced off a bit more of the soft and tangy white cheese.

"Mmm, and I love the cheese," Minerva agreed, helping herself to more.

"I'll have to tell Aberforth. It's some of his, from his goats. It's one of my own favourites, too."

Minerva smiled at him as he attentively refilled her wine glass. "This was a wonderful idea, Albus. Thank you."

"A nice, steaming bowl of cassoulet, some homely cheese and fresh bread, a glass or two of wine, and it all makes getting caught in the cold rain seem a good thing," Albus said with a twinkle.

Minerva chuckled softly. "Getting caught in the rain certainly did whet my appetite, that's certain, but so did our walk. I still think I could have done without getting wet."

"You were barely damp," Albus pointed out.

"Hmmpf."

"A pity, actually," Albus continued.

Minerva, her mouth full, raised an eyebrow.

"I could have dried your fur," Albus said, suppressing a grin. "Conjured a nice, warm, fluffy towel for you."

"I particularly dislike getting wet in my Animagus form, and you know that, Albus," Minerva said, although she thought it might have been nice if he had dried her off.

"What do you say to waiting to have any dessert?" Albus asked, putting aside his teasing for the moment.

"I'd prefer that. I always enjoy my sweet more when I'm not already full from a meal," Minerva said.

After they had finished their cassoulet, Albus waved his hand and the dishes all disappeared, leaving only the wineglasses and the bottle of wine. A second wave of his hand, and the lamps and candles were all dimmed.

"Ah, now this is better," he said, stretching slightly as he rose, wineglass in hand. "Come, let's look out at the rain." He held out his other hand to Minerva, and she took it and stood.

"I do think I've had my fill of the rain today, Albus," Minerva said.

"But not from the view from my window," Albus replied.

"I have a similar view from mine," Minerva said, but she followed him to the window.

Albus drew back the heavy curtains and dimmed the lamps further. "A magnificent storm," he said softly, putting his wineglass down on the window's broad sill.

The rain was pounding down as hard as it had when they had returned to the castle, and the winds stirred the lake. Minerva jumped slightly when a sudden flash of lightning was accompanied by an almost simultaneous roar of thunder and the lightning hit the lake. The thunder reverberated as a second bolt of lightning hit the lake with a loud crack. Minerva felt Albus standing close to her, close and warm slightly behind her, and she felt his hand settle on her waist. She began to turn her head toward him, but then she felt his breath on the back of her neck, and his lips followed, whispering kisses against her skin. Her pulse raced, but before she could respond in any way, his lips were by her ear.

"A momentary madness, Minerva," he murmured. "After yours, I thought perhaps . . . perhaps I might be allowed one tonight. One moment of madness." He kissed the side of her neck, soft, delicate kisses, like the brush of a rose petal over her pulse point, and then he slipped his arms around her, embracing her from behind, and rested his head against hers. "I do wish this moment to last a bit longer, though, with your permission, Minerva, and not be so quickly past."

Minerva had brought her arms up to hold his embrace close around her, and she leaned back, relaxing. "A moment . . . is a relative concept," she whispered.

"You do know that I love you, don't you?" Albus asked softly.

Minerva nodded slightly, knowing that he did, but hoping he wasn't merely teasing her with his embrace and his gentle kisses, hoping they meant what she had intended the previous evening when she had kissed him.

"You surprised me last night," Albus continued in a whisper. "Not your . . . affection. But its expression."

Minerva felt him nuzzle her hair, and he took in a long, slow, deep breath.

"I was unsettled by your reaction, or your lack of reaction," Minerva replied quietly.

Albus turned her in his arms, bringing them to stand face to face. He said nothing, merely caressing her cheek briefly, almost tentatively, but then any hesitation was gone, and his lips met hers as he pulled her closer. His kiss was sensual, seductive, and Minerva now had no doubts about his intentions or his meaning. Her own grip on him tightened as his embrace became more intimate, one hand traversing her back until it met her buttocks, squeezing and massaging. He pressed against her, stepping forward, and Minerva backed into the long curtain at the side of the window, the backs of her knees hitting the edge of the window sill.

Albus's kiss grew more passionate, and Minerva moaned. Her fists bunched his robes where she grasped at him eagerly. He pressed hard against her, and she felt his desire and arousal before he broke their kiss, though not their embrace. His breathing was ragged, warm gasps by her ear as his lips continued to move over her hair.

"This is madness, Minerva," he said hoarsely. "*This* is madness."

She let out a mew of appreciation and desire as his lips travelled down to her throat, gently kissing and sucking at her soft skin. Gradually, his kisses slowed as his lips returned to hers. He kissed her twice, very softly, then he drew back slightly and looked down into her face. Her eyes opened and she blinked, trying to focus.

"Albus," she breathed.

He brought his hand up and caressed her face. "A moment, now past?" he asked in a whisper.

She shook her head. "No. No, Albus."

"You're sure? I could find some Hogwarts business to occupy me, as you did yesterday evening. A momentary madness, now over, you said." But Albus made no move to let her go. His hand now cradled the back of her head and he pulled her closer, bringing her head to rest against his chest.

Minerva could hear the pounding of the rain, but the pounding of his heart was closer. She relaxed her grip on his robes and moved her arms into a comfortable embrace.

The two stood there a moment longer, the rain still lashing the window beside them, then Albus stepped back, releasing Minerva gently.

"This is madness, and it is also wrong," Albus said.

Minerva opened her mouth to protest, but Albus took her hand and tugged her toward him, raising his other hand to her lips.

"It may be wrong for many reasons," he continued in a low voice, "but primarily because I believe such moments of madness should take place somewhere more comfortable, such as a sofa, as yours did last night. I believe I must start over."

Minerva had no time to say anything before his lips were on hers again and he pulled her along with him to the sofa. The weight of his body and his hand on the back of her thigh were sufficient to urge her to lie beneath him as he continued to kiss her, first her mouth, then her cheeks, then back down her throat until he returned to her lips again. One hand had found her breast, caressing and squeezing, as the other was inching her skirts higher until his fingers could touch the soft skin of her thigh. Minerva could feel his arousal pressed against her, firm and large with his desire.

Albus turned his head and gave a shuddering sigh. He removed his hand from her leg and gently smoothed her skirts. His other hand moved to her side and remained there. He shifted his weight and rested more of it on the couch.

Albus took in a breath. "Gods, Minerva, I didn't mean the moment to . . . to be quite like that. If I overstepped . . ."

"No," Minerva said softly. "It was, um, fine. Just as a momentary madness should be."

Albus raised his head and looked down into her face. "It is up to you, Minerva, but I would not be unhappy if it weren't a moment only."

Minerva nodded slightly and pulled him back down to rest upon her again. "I would be very glad if it went beyond this moment."

"Whenever we . . . whenever we can be just Albus and Minerva together?" Albus asked. "A bit of holiday madness?"

Minerva shook her head. "*Whenever* we are together. I love you, Albus."

Albus was quiet. Finally he said, "It will not be easy. And there was some truth to it when I said there were many ways in which this could be wrong."

"We do the right thing, as far as we are able, all of the time, Albus. It sometimes seems to me that you are on call to the wizarding world every waking moment, and your sleeping ones, too, whether from Hogwarts or the Ministry or just someone who needs your help. I think that we should do what's right for us in this."

"And to know what that is . . . it is not a simple thing, Minerva."

"It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter," she repeated, caressing his back. "This is good. You can feel that it's good. We can talk about the rest . . . when it comes up. Not now."

Albus kissed her cheek. "Then I believe that it is time for our dessert, my dear." He pushed up on one arm and looked down at her again. "And we can continue this moment later."

~ *to be continued* ~

Author's Note: DH disregarded.

Chapter Four: Open Cautiously

Chapter 4 of 5

Minerva receives a package.



Chapter Four: Open Cautiously

The next morning, Minerva had a hard time waking up, feeling groggy and tired even after a house-elf had brought her a cup of strong coffee. The rest of the evening with Albus had been warm and wonderful, but other than embracing her and giving her a delightfully sensual kiss good night before she Flooed back to her rooms from his office, he hadn't repeated any of his physical gestures of affection and desire. It disappointed her more than a little, but somehow he had managed to engineer their dessert, their conversation, and their game of chess to flow so naturally and seamlessly together that no opportunity arose for her to miss any further "moments of madness" until she was already back in her own suite, readying for bed.

She hoped that Albus's sleep had been more restful than her own, she thought as she made her way down to the Great Hall where the handful of students and staff would soon be gathering for breakfast. He would be gone from the castle all day, he had said, and he wouldn't even be at breakfast, since he had to leave early for a meeting at the Ministry. The rest of his day was equally full, as she knew, since she would be in charge of the school during his absence, though she was unsure precisely where he would be, just that for most of the day, he would be in London.

Minerva made her way through more student essays, wondering again why she had assigned so many just before the holiday, and why she had assigned another long essay to each of her classes for the students to write over the Easter break. She knew it was good for the students, but at that moment, she really wished she weren't so diligent. Finally after lunch, Minerva gave in and took a nap. She awoke a half hour later feeling refreshed, but restless. Nonetheless, she settled down in her study with the remaining essays and made it through another dozen before she decided she deserved a break.

She checked with the portrait network and learned that Albus still hadn't returned. She hadn't expected him back that afternoon anyway, but she did hope he would be back for dinner. Until then, she would have to amuse herself. It shouldn't be difficult. After all, she did so every day, and this day should be like no other.

The grounds were wet, as it had continued to rain off and on all day, and she didn't feel like slogging around taking a walk, and Poppy was away at her sister's for the next few days, so she couldn't go down and see if she wanted to do something. She was still annoyed with Pomona about the witch's remark that she was "complacent" about a couple of Gryffindor boys who had caused two of the Hufflepuff's students some annoyance and who she thought were bullies, and then Filius, who agreed with Minerva but didn't want to ruffle Pomona, had failed to take her side in the argument until after Pomona had left the room, so Minerva was irked with him, as well. Ravensclaws could be worse than Slytherins, she thought, when it came down to it...not wanting to ruffle feathers or take sides. Merlin knew that she hated taking sides, as well, but sometimes it was simply necessary. And as for Slughorn, one never could make a mere social call on the Head of Slytherin. Every meeting had to be an occasion for something, and if it wasn't naturally an occasion, he'd create one, and always as a way of eventually gaining something for himself. Minerva was not in the mood for political games that afternoon.

Finally, she sighed and decided that since she didn't want to visit Kettleburn, Pince, or Hagrid, and her rift with Pomona was bothering her, she would go down to Hufflepuff. If Pomona wasn't in or wasn't amenable to a visit, she could always stop by the kitchens and ask them about the dessert for that evening, make it something she and Albus would both enjoy. If, of course, he returned from London in time to enjoy it.

Just as she was about to leave her suite, however, a loud thumping caught her attention. A large Tawny Owl was banging at the window of her study most persistently. Minerva went over and opened the window and the owl fluttered in, landing on her desk and getting her parchments damp. It was still a misty, grey day out, and the poor bird seemed pleased to be indoors out of the weather.

"Ah, you're a good bird, you are," Minerva said. "I'll fetch you a treat or two, then." She gave the hungry owl more than two treats, then turned to look at the small parcel he had brought her. It was wrapped in plain brown paper and had her name printed on it, beneath which it said, "open cautiously."

Minerva shrugged, placed the little package on her desk, and waved her wand to break the Sticking Charms.

The owl let out a loud screech as his meal was disturbed by the sudden rapid expansion of the tiny package into a much larger one, a shiny, deep blue cube with a glassy appearance. When the owl was certain that the package wasn't going to explode on him, he settled back down to finish his treats.

Minerva raised an eyebrow, but approached the blue cube and pressed the small indentation in its smooth upper surface. The mild sound of flutes and piccolos emerged as the top of the cube gently levered itself open, then a swirl of colour rose slowly from it. Gradually, the colours coalesced, surrounded by a shiny globe of transparent magic, looking almost like a crystal ball. Minerva smiled in delight. A grey mackerel tabby was dancing to the music, batting at multicoloured butterflies that swirled about her like a storm of confetti. Minerva laughed out loud when the tabby caught a red and black butterfly but then let it go and it settled on her nose.

As the cat continued her happy dance with the butterflies, Minerva saw the edge of a small off-white parchment beneath the Charmed box. Without disturbing the globe, she pulled it out and unfolded it.

Dear Minerva,

I saw this as I was passing Krebbin's Jewellers in Diagon Alley this morning, so this afternoon after lunch, I nipped over and bought it for you. The tabby cat looks very happy playing in her shower of butterflies, which I am certain another tabby would agree is far preferable to being caught in an April shower.

I hope to see you this evening, but I have to pop over to Stockholm later, so do not be concerned if I do not return until tomorrow.

I look forward to continuing our discussion of yesterday evening.

Yours,

Albus

Minerva smiled, though somewhat wistfully. She was used to Albus having to be gone on outside business, but she wished that it had been some other day that was so filled with meetings and not the day after their shared moment of madness. She supposed it was just as well that their madness hadn't extended any further than it had, given that they wouldn't have been able to spend time together that day to become comfortable with the new dimension to their relationship, but she still wished he had done more than just kiss her. They had known each other for years, after all, and she had loved him for almost the same length of time...and she'd been *in* love with him for almost as long as she had worked beside him at Hogwarts.

But perhaps, although Albus loved her and his desire for her was certainly clear, it might still be the case that his feelings for her were not as strong as hers for him, or were complicated in other ways. It was best for them both, she thought, if they were clear about things before they embarked on a romantic relationship. She was fairly certain that was what Albus wanted, as well, a relationship between them that extended beyond their current friendship. She also supposed that despite the fact that they had been friends for so long...or perhaps because of it...Albus didn't want to jump immediately into a physical relationship. It could be difficult, and even ruin their close friendship, if things went badly between them. She didn't think they would, but she could understand if Albus wished to be somewhat cautious.

She encouraged the now-dozing owl to take himself to the Owlery for a nap rather than remain on her desk, but she left the box where it was after carefully closing the lid and folding away the Charmed kitty and her butterfly companions.

Pomona was glad to see Minerva at her door, so much so that she put her arms around Minerva and gave her a hug. Minerva was not a hugger, but she patted Pomona's back and tried not to stiffen up too much. The two witches apologized to each other, each agreeing to have serious talks with the involved students, and Pomona took out a heavy, fruited cake and a bottle of sherry, and the two witches were in a very good mood by the time they had to walk over to the Great Hall for dinner, although neither of them was very hungry.

Minerva's good mood dimmed some when it was apparent that Albus was still not back, although after his note, she shouldn't have held out much expectation for his early return.

It was more disappointing, however, when at ten o'clock, she checked with the portrait network and learned that Albus hadn't returned to his office. At eleven, after taking her bath and getting ready for bed, she checked once more, but he still wasn't back. She crawled into bed, resigned to him having to spend the night in Stockholm or wherever he was. Hopefully he was at least having a good time, though she did hope that he missed her at least a little.

~ *to be continued* ~

Author's Note: DH disregarded.

Chapter Five: Perfect Moments are Few

Chapter 5 of 5

Albus returns.



Chapter Five: Perfect Moments are Few

She started in the dark, unsure what had woken her. She groped for her wand to cast *aLumos* or light a candle when it came again, a light knock. On her partially open bedroom door. She blinked. Almost no one had free access to her suite. Only two people besides herself, and neither of them were in the castle that night. Or neither of them was supposed to be.

"Yes," she called out just as her wand slid into her hand.

The door opened a bit wider. "Minerva? It's me."

"Albus?" She waved her wand and lit her bedside lamp as she sat up and Albus stepped into her bedroom. "You're back."

"Yes. It is late, but I'm back."

"What time is it?" She sat up further.

"Almost two. I was in Copenhagen. I did not want to be in Copenhagen."

"Your meetings went very late?"

"Until almost ten. There were drinks after. You know the sort of thing."

Minerva nodded as she folded her covers back. "You shouldn't Apparate after drinking. Or did you Portkey?"

"I Apparated, but I'd only had one Gillywater just after the meeting. Hours ago." He stepped closer to the bed. "You got my note? And the package?"

"Yes. I loved the Charmed globe. It was beautiful. In your note, you said you were going to Stockholm. When you weren't back in the evening, I didn't expect you until morning." She Summoned her robe from where it lay across her vanity bench. Albus caught it and held it up for her to put on.

"We were in Stockholm, but we had to meet with Sørensen, and he isn't well and can't travel, so we all went to Copenhagen. Olsen's Portkey was one of the worst I've had in a while. I was almost ill afterward. I should have Apparated, but I thought it might be rude of me."

"Did you need to see me about something urgent?" Minerva asked as she tied the sash of her robe loosely around her. She was glad he was there, but at two in the morning, she presumed he needed to see her for some reason other than her company.

"I could wait until the moment were perfect. I could bring you two dozen roses and a box of the finest chocolate truffles with a diamond necklace hidden amongst the sweets. I could woo you and court you for a year, and then finally, in candlelight and surrounded by the sweet scent of fresh flowers, finally then make love to you. I would

do that. And I would wait that long or longer. But I have learned that perfect moments are few, and I have no roses, no chocolate truffles, no diamond jewellery: I have only myself to present you tonight." He reached out and caressed her face. "I promise you many roses, many moonlit strolls, many chocolate truffles, and many little trinkets to delight the eye or to adorn the wearer, but tonight, if you wish it, could still be the perfect night for us. The perfect night for madness." He stepped closer. "I would like to continue our madness, Minerva," he said softly. He kissed her lips, then drew back and looked down into her eyes.

Minerva made no reply but to return his kiss with one of her own, and when his hands slipped beneath her robe, she shrugged it off, letting it fall to the floor.

Albus continued kissing her, embracing her and caressing her through her nightgown. Minerva's hands went to the front of his cloak and undid the clasp at his neck. It hadn't yet slid to the floor before she began to unhook the fastenings of his over-robe. Albus paused a moment to step back and touch the hidden hook at his upper left shoulder. With that, the rest of the hooks on the robe unfastened, and Minerva slipped her hands beneath it to push it off as Albus returned to his kisses.

Albus stepped forward, urging Minerva toward the bed, and when they reached it, he pushed her down to lie beneath him as one hand groped for the edge of her nightgown, pulling it up. He rolled off of her and bent to remove his short boots before kneeling in front of her dangling legs and beginning to kiss his way up them, pushing her nightgown back as he did so. Minerva let out a low moan as his fingertips began to tease her inner thighs and his lips followed. His head almost reached her crux, and Minerva waited for his touch there, but he stood before he reached her. Minerva opened her eyes and propped herself on one elbow, any questions evaporating before they reached her lips, as she watched Albus stripping off the remainder of his clothing.

His erection was full, and his gaze was intense as he reached for her. He pulled off her nightgown and moved her further onto the bed. Minerva embraced him as he came to lie fully on top of her, and they resumed their kisses, passionate, needy kisses. Albus's fingers began to dance lightly over her skin, and he moved slightly off of her so that they could reach her crux and begin their teasing touches there.

Albus's touch ignited her desire, and Minerva gasped. His lips found her nipple, and he alternated between her breasts, kissing, licking, sucking, as he continued to pleasure her with his fingers, never pausing until he felt her spasm and pulse, crying out as she came. His mouth returned to hers in a passionate kiss, and Minerva clutched at him, whimpering in her desire for him. He shifted, and the head of his cock replaced his fingers at her clitoris.

"Oh, oh, oh, Albus, yes, yes!"

Albus hovered above her, the head of his cock placing only the lightest pressure upon her clitoris.

"Do you have passion for me, Minerva? You have passion, do you have passion for me?" he asked urgently.

"Yes, yes, I do! I need you," she moaned. Her fingers grasped his buttocks as she raised her hips, trying in vain to bring her closer, as close as they could become, to make them one, but Albus was stronger than she.

"Show me, Minerva. Show me," Albus growled. He thrust, sliding down over her clitoris and entering her warmth.

"Ah! Ah, yes!"

Minerva rocked her hips, but Albus buried himself in her, held her tightly, and rolled over, bringing her on top of him.

"Show me your passion, Minerva! Show me! Show me your passion!"

Minerva needed no more encouragement, and she rose up, sliding, rocking, and rubbing herself against him. Her gasps and moans quickened, and Albus's arousal grew as she approached her climax.

"Yes, Minerva, yes, yes, Minerva!"

"Ah, ah, ah, ah, aaaaah!" Minerva shuddered as she came, and as she peaked, pulsing around his cock, Albus rolled her over onto her back.

Albus began to thrust, extending Minerva's orgasm as she bucked against him. He drove in one final time and climaxed, and Minerva's gasping cries became soft, sweet whimpers of pleasure.

Minerva held onto him, not letting him go even when he made a move to roll off of her. He acquiesced and relaxed, allowing himself to melt into her embrace, and letting out a long, soft sigh.

"I love you, Albus," Minerva whispered.

Albus let out a low, satisfied hum, then he roused himself sufficiently to turn his head and kiss the side of her jaw. "Mmmm. Love you, too. Love you very much." He sighed again, content to let her run her hands over his back and through his hair, and assumed she would let him know if he became too heavy for her or she couldn't breathe.

"I'm glad you're here," Minerva finally whispered, giving him a squeeze.

"Much better than Copenhagen."

Minerva laughed. "That's reassuring to know."

"The hotel room was cold and the artwork on the walls was hideous."

Minerva laughed again.

"I would have had nightmares, I'm sure," Albus said, raising up on one arm to look down into her smiling face. "If I could have fallen asleep for thinking of you."

He kissed her gently, then equally gently moved off of her, though he stayed close, skin to skin.

"I'm chilly now," Minerva said.

"Can't have that." Albus raised his free hand and Summoned the bedclothes to cover them both. He snuggled closer and nuzzled her hair.

"I should get you another pillow," Minerva said, beginning to sit up.

"No need. Don't go anywhere. I'm quite cosy as I am. Unless you aren't."

Minerva turned toward him and put her arm around him. "As long as you are. I know you're not used to sleeping with someone." She felt herself blush. "Well, that is, I presume..."

"Not for a long time, but I'm very comfortable right here, right now, with you, my dearest," Albus said. He yawned and Summoned his watch from the pile of robes on the floor. "Mmm. It is, however, almost three in the morning. Shall I stay?"

"Of course you will stay. Unless you have some very good reason not to," Minerva replied, holding him a bit more tightly, "I would like you to stay."

Albus shook his head. "My deputy knows where to find me if she needs to. She's a very clever witch, you know. And quite attractive, too. She's probably got several wizards pining for her at any given moment."

Minerva smiled and shook her head.

"I know for a certain fact, however," Albus continued, looking quite innocent, "that there is one wizard who is no longer pining. He's recently become the very fortunate recipient of the lady's favours."

"Hush, Albus. Silly wizard!"

"Yes, a silly wizard was he. Didn't think she was interested in him, and he probably could have been a fortunate wizard much sooner if he hadn't been so silly. But, of course, he's a very modest wizard..."

Minerva slapped his arm playfully. "Don't make fun, Albus," she said, though her eyes sparkled. "I happen to know the wizard in question, and I won't have it."

Albus chuckled. "Very well, my dear. But truly, you must leave many a suitor weeping in your wake."

Now Minerva laughed. "Never."

"And what of Madoc?"

Minerva was quiet for a moment. "What of Madoc?" she asked him.

"I am sure he was weeping in your wake."

"I don't think this is the best time to be speaking of Madoc," Minerva said.

"You never speak of him. There would be no good time to speak of him, if you had your way, Minerva. You wouldn't talk about it at the time, and even when I asked you something innocuous about him a few months ago, you changed the subject very adroitly."

"What is there to say?"

"You never said why you broke off your engagement to him, other than something about his 'suitability.' And from what I have gathered from Evander, you never really even explained it to his brother. He seemed a good man."

"Of course he is," Minerva said softly. "I didn't wish to hurt him. There was nothing I could tell him that wouldn't have made it all worse. His heart was already broken. Nothing I could have said would have helped that."

"So . . . will you break my heart?"

Minerva shook her head. "You may break mine, though," she whispered. "And that is why there was nothing I could tell him. How do you tell a man that whenever you are with him, no matter what it is you are doing, there is another with whom you would prefer to be? I wasn't in love with you then . . . not yet. But I could not marry a wizard when I would rather play chess with another man than make love to the one whom I was engaged to. To prefer to sit in the company of another, to rather do nothing with another than to do anything with him . . ." Minerva sighed. "And that realisation is what brought me to my moment of madness the other night."

Albus looked at her, trying to comprehend what she had said. "But . . . that was more than three years ago."

Minerva shrugged. "Moments of madness have their own time, you know. You can't schedule them, more's the pity."

"Oh, I think we could learn to schedule them quite well, now that the first one is taken care of. It is true you cannot rush them, but once in play . . . one simply must take them in hand, rather like . . . this." Albus moved his hand to her breast and squeezed gently, then caressed her nipple with the side of his thumb. "I did manage my own moments of madness rather well, I thought," he said softly as his lips approached hers.

His kiss lingered, but then he drew his hand back down her side to rest on her hip. "What do you say to some sleep, hmm, my dear?"

"Yes," she said with a sigh. "Sleep." She smiled. "And tomorrow, you can teach me how to engineer more moments like this."

Albus waved his hand and the lamp went out. "What are you doing on Sunday afternoon?" He asked a few minutes later.

"Hmm?" Minerva asked drowsily. "Sunday?"

"I am visiting my mother for tea in the afternoon. I thought perhaps you might like to meet her," Albus said, trying not to sound hesitant, but not succeeding.

"Of course I would! Yes, that sounds lovely. If, of course, she wants to meet me."

"She will be glad to. Every time I've visited recently, she asks when I'm going to finally bring you to tea. It will make her very happy."

"She sounds delightful."

Albus hesitated. "Not really. I love her, and I find her delightful, but she's a bit . . . crusty sometimes. Just a little gruff. But she'll like you, so that will put her in a very good mood."

"Why did she ask when you were going to bring me to tea?"

Minerva could almost feel Albus's blush.

"Oh, just . . . I've just mentioned you a few times," he said.

"Ah."

"Actually, last month, she told me I had better bring you soon, as she would rather talk to you than hear about you."

Minerva chuckled. "Well, let's make her happy, then. Tea on Sunday with Madam Dumbledore. I shall put it in my calendar."

Albus kissed her cheek. "Good night, my dear."

"Good night, Albus. I do hope that you don't evaporate as I'm sleeping and I awake to find it's been a dream."

"No, not a dream, my love, merely madness."

~ *The End* ~

Author's Note: Dh disregarded.

If you enjoyed this little fic, you might enjoy ["A Light at Dusk,"](#) an unrelated ADMM one-shot.