

Just a Happy Little Thought

by Lady Whitehart

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Chapter 1 of 1

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James Potter's Patronus is a stag! Or is it? Well, it's been pointed out to me that it really isn't a stag. Rowling said so in an interview once. Seriously! Unfortunately, I just can't find the quote now. Anyway, I really love to pick up unlikely, stray theories, shampoo them, feed them, and turn them into crackfic, so me being me and all, I just couldn't resist exploring the possibility of James Potter having something a little more 'unusual' for his Patronus.

The obligatory yadda-yadda-yadda:

1. As always, this is a work of fan fiction written solely for shits and giggles. I own nothing, and no money is being made.
2. This is meant to be humorous. If you happen to be the person who provided the fodder for this plot bunny, please try not to be offended. If you are offended, then that's your problem; not mine. And yes, I do know the basics of what can and can't be a Patronus.
3. James, Sirius, Severus, and any other character that's unfortunate enough to be stuck in this fic are meant to reflect fandom parodies. Read it with a sarcastic tone and you'll get the perfect effect.

Just a Happy Little Thought

As always, Charms class was a bore. James Potter and his brilliant abilities were even far ahead of the N.E.W.T. level work Flitwick was giving them, so he and his best mate Sirius Black decided to spend the class working out the next prank they were going to pull on old Severus Snape.

"Full moon's in twenty days," Sirius muttered out of the corner of his mouth. "Bet we could convince Snivvy to poke the knot on the Whomping Willow?"

James scratched the side of his nose with his quill and shot a side-ways glance past Peter and Sirius to Remus, who looked strained and pale and still had shadows of cuts from his last transformation on his face. Maybe Lupin would... No, Remus wouldn't want to take that kind of a risk.

Two seats in front of him was gorgeous, talented, perfect Lily Evans. James knew she wouldn't be thrilled with him for pulling off such a stunt. Still.... maybe he could put a stop to things at the last minute and be seen as a hero! He indulged in the daydream of Lily swooning into his arms, while Snape groveled and thanked him and promised to drown himself in the lake.

Speaking of Severus Snape, the little wanker was watching Lily as well, no doubt trying to figure out a way to win her back, which, after the O.W.L. incident last year, would probably never happen. If calling Lily a Mudblood in front of the whole school wasn't enough, there was always the fact it had been revealed Snape was hung like a Bowtruckle and not a mountain troll.

"Mr. Potter!"

James started. "Yes, Professor Flitwick!"

"Good, now that I finally have your attention, could you kindly tell me what a Patronus is and the incantation for conjuring one?" Flitwick shifted his weight on the wobbly pile of books and smiled at him expectantly.

James glanced around the room, taking a moment to collect his thoughts. Lily rolled her eyes, but the ghost of a smile made her lips twitch. He flashed a grin in her direction. Across the aisle, Snape glared triumphantly until he saw Lily's discreet flirtations. James snickered at the smudge of ink on Snape's giant conk.

"We're waiting, Mr. Potter."

"Er... Patronuses..."

"It's Patroni." Flitwick shook his head and sighed. "Merlin's beard, I told Headmaster Dippet it was a terrible idea to stop teaching Latin. Pity Headmaster Dumbledore couldn't see the point in re-instating the class."

James stood up and cleared his throat. "A Patronus...plural being Patroni...acts as a guardian for the wizard or witch who casts it using the incantation *Expecto Patronum*. The Patronus is a manifestation of the caster's happiest thought and can be used to repel both Dementors and Lethifolds." James had a flash of comedic inspiration. "Usually takes on the form of an animal, but I suppose, in very rare instances, it could take on the form of an inanimate object."

Snape's hand shot into the air, yanking his scrawny buttocks from the bench.

"Yes, Mr. Snape?" squeaked Flitwick.

"Even a complete ignoramus knows a corporeal Patronus ALWAYS takes an animal form, and that animal form is linked with the caster's potential Animagus form," Snape said, scowling at James. "I think Potter's just trying to get attention."

Sirius leaned back in his seat. "I bet if the caster's thought was happy enough, it could, theoretically, take on the shape of whatever makes that person happy." There was a smattering of laughter. "Seriously, if my happiest thought was eating a triple-scoop, choco-loganberry sundae with caramel, whipped cream, and walnuts, I really think my Patronus could be a triple-scoop, choco-loganberry sundae with caramel, whipped cream, and walnuts!" The class laughed louder. "If such things make up my happiest memories, then why not?"

"Well then, Mr. Black," began a beaming Flitwick, "we will get to test that theory. It's time to practice the wand movement for the *Expecto Patronum* incantation. To your feet, ladies and gentlemen, and wands out, please!"

Peter leaned over to Sirius and James, saying with a snicker, "Just a little happy thought, now, boys and girls!"

"What's yours, Wormtail?" asked Sirius, grinning. "Free cheese day at the Three Broomsticks?"

"And yours is a bitch in heat," countered Peter with a wink. "At least we know what form our Patronuses will take."

James nodded at the lanky Slytherin. "D'you want to place bets on Snivellus' Patronus?"

"Bat," Sirius and Peter replied in unison.

"And his happy thought?"

His chums both winced, and Peter replied, "I bet it has something to do with two hands and slug slime."

"A-hem!" Flitwick was watching them. "Now, let's practice the wiggle-slash movement a few times."

That night in their dorm the Marauders practiced casting Patroni. Sirius had no trouble casting one that resembled a huge shaggy dog. After a few dozen tries, Peter finally had a long-tailed rat scurrying around the room. James had been unsurprised to find a stag erupting from his wand. Remus, unfortunately, had only been able to coax a little silvery mist out of the tip of his wand.

"C'mon Remus, after all of our adventures, you've got to have one really happy memory to use," James said, wracking his brain to come up with a suitable memory. "What about..."

"It's no use!" wailed Remus, dropping his wand to the floor. "Nothing's ever going to be good enough because of my furry little problem! I just can't do it!"

"Pecker up, mate," Sirius said, handing Remus back his wand. "I'll come up with something that will be the best memory ever."

The pale boy shrugged. "But what if my Patronus is a wolf? Then everyone will know. Maybe that's why I can't do it."

"Maybe," James agreed. "But isn't that why we should test the inanimate-object-Patronus theory? That way your secret would be safe and we can keep having our adventures."

"But what can we use?" asked Peter as he untied the string around a parcel and opened the box. "Look at this!"

The three boys gathered around the box. Grinning, Peter held up a delicate-looking, blue teacup embellished with lilies and violets.

"Your mum sent you a bloody teacup?" Sirius snorted.

Peter glared at him. "Not just any old teacup. This, my friends, is the proto-type for my uncle's latest invention in the practical joke industry. It's a Nose-biting teacup!"

Remus nodded to Sirius. "Take a sip. Who knows, maybe the sight of you with a teacup hanging off your muzzle will be my happiest memory."

"Oh, very funny!" snapped Sirius. "It's Peter's, so I think he should try it out. If it even works, that is."

"Well," began Peter, clearly losing enthusiasm for the novelty, "they do work, but so far he's only gotten them to bite once."

A light bulb went on in James' head. "I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The perfect happy memory for Remus, that's what!" When the other three boys looked at James like he'd finally gone 'round the twist, he hinted, "It's a nose-biting teacup, right? So shouldn't its maiden...and possibly only...bite should be on the most obvious, gigantic, and spectacularly enormous nose in all of Hogwarts?"

"Snape!"

"Can you think of anyone else more deserving of the honor?"

"Nope," said Peter, relieved that he wouldn't have to be the test subject.

"No one," Sirius agreed.

Remus smiled uncomfortably. "But how are we going to get him to drink out of it?"

James gave them a devilish grin as he traced the lilies on the teacup. "Leave that to me."

Friday morning at breakfast, the four friends sat at the Gryffindor table, talking about the upcoming Quidditch match between Gryffindor and Slytherin.

"Should be an easy win for us," said James, as a knot of Slytherins passed their table.

The group halted and glared at them, and Evan Rosier smacked James in the back of the head. "Kiss my arse, Potty."

"Only if you get Snape to drown himself in the lake."

Snape fumbled for his wand, dropping it in the process. "You filthy bas..."

"You seem to be the filthy one, Snivellus," said Sirius, standing up to tower over the scraggly teen, his wand casually concealed beneath his sleeve. "Don't the showers work in the Slytherin bathrooms? Or are you afraid someone might see the Mighty Slytherin Serpent in all of its dinky glory?"

Everyone in earshot burst into raucous laughter. Snape's face turned Gryffindor scarlet and his chin trembled in fury. "I'll see you in Hell for that Black! And you too Potter!"

"Is there a problem?" asked Lily Evans.

Her voice sounded bored, but James could see the faintest twinkle in her eyes. Snape gave her an anguished look before he let his cronies pull him over to the Slytherin table.

"Have any plans after the match tomorrow, Evans?" James asked in his most mature tone, gallantly gesturing to the empty space beside him. "I know this great spot by the..."

"Sorry, but I've got plans." She flipped her hair over her shoulder and flounced to her seat. To James' utter irritation, her seat was directly across the aisle for Snape and she gave Snape the briefest glance before she sat down with a group of giggling girlfriends.

"I'll get to go out with me yet," James declared, staring after her.

Remus looked doubtful. "I dunno, James, she might patch things up with Snape. Rumor has it he sent her flowers on Valentine's Day."

Before James could reply, there was a commotion at the Slytherin table.

"Get it off me! Get it off me!" shrieked Snape, leaping to his feet and clutching his face. His house mates clustered around him, and Snape started swearing in an increasingly vulgar manner. He spun around with a dainty teacup clinging to his huge nose. "Get this effing thing off me!"

Everyone erupted into laughter as much at the sight of Snape with a teacup hanging off his conk as the fact that the scrawny boy's voice jumped an octave on the word *effing*. The lanky teen danced around, swiping at the teacup, but it wasn't letting go. He tripped over his own robes and fell, sprawling across Lily Evans. The students from all four houses roared even louder.

She shoved Snape off her and drew her wand. "*Finite!*"

The teacup released its hold, fell to the floor, and shattered. The end of Snape's nose was bright red and the swelling had made it look even larger than before. James nearly fell off the bench from laughing. Peter did fall off the bench from laughing. Sirius had his head on the tabletop and was shaking with silent laughter. Remus had his face buried in his hands and looked like he was making a concerted effort not to laugh.

"Mr. Snape, what is all this commotion about?" demanded Headmaster Dumbledore, striding up the aisle.

"It's not my fault!" Snape protested. "It was Potter and Black! I know it was!"

Later that day in Charms class, James had to make an effort not to even glance in Snape's direction, because every time he did, all he could see was Snape flapping around the Great Hall with a dainty teacup on his nose.

"Now before we begin today, ladies and gentlemen, is there anything you learned about Patroni from your reading?" asked Flitwick from his pile of books.

No one answered. James hadn't felt it necessary to worry about the reading since he could already manage the incantation. What potentially important detail had he missed?

"Miss Evans?"

"It reveals a lot of a person's inner personality." Lily blushed. "It can be used to help soul mates find each other."

"Very good!" a beaming Flitwick gushed. "So all of you little love birds pay attention. If your current fancy has an owl for a Patronus and you have a mouse, it may be a good time to rethink the relationship."

There was a good deal of nervous giggling scattered about the room, and Peter shot Sirius a sarcastic grin. James elbowed Sirius and snickered. Dog and wolf... definitely compatible.

"Let's try out our spell work! Any volunteers?" Flitwick pointed at a surly-looking Ravenclaw at the back of the room. "Mr. Huffington?"

Not more than a faint silver spark was produced.

"Who else has a happy thought?" At this point, Flitwick started going around the room, and the students dutifully showed their progress or lack thereof. Finally he got to Snape.

"Ah. Mr. Snape, let's see what you can produce."

"An enormous grease spot on the floor," muttered Sirius out of the corner of his mouth.

James snickered. "Can you imagine the screams once there's a giant bat flapping around?"

But Snape shook his head, his greasy locks swinging around his shoulders.

"Well after this morning's incident I dare say you would have difficulty." Flitwick moved on. "Miss Evans?"

Lily rose gracefully to her feet, a vision of an angel in James' opinion if one ignored the black robes and lack of wings. She closed her eyes and smiled. The happiness of the thought made her whole face shine like the sun on a summer day. "*Expecto Patronum!*"

A delicate doe of silver mist erupted from her wand and pranced around the room before leaping over a desk and escaping through a window.

James felt his jaw drop. Hers was a doe! His was a stag! You didn't get much more compatible than that! It was nearly impossible to wait for his turn. Finally Flitwick called on him. James confidently stood up and raised his wand. This was his chance to show her how incredibly, utterly right they were for each other, and if that didn't work, there was always Amortentia.

Unfortunately his concentration was broken by the slightest sigh. He caught sight of Snape staring at Lily with a sappy sentimental look. And then the worst happened. All James could think about was Snape jumping about with that stupid little teacup hanging from his enormous nose. He shook his head trying to dislodge the image while he focused on Lily and her delicate silver doe.

"*Expecto Patronum!*" But the split second before he uttered the incantation, there was Snape and the teacup and James burst into laughter. Out of the end of James' wand spurted a grotesque shape. A shape that eventually formed into a giant fanged teacup.

"I knew it!" screamed Snape, his eyes bulging with fury. "I told Dumbledore you were behind it! You had the house-elves give me that cup! I knew it! I knew it!"

As James clutched his side positively howling at the memory, the teacup lunged for Snape. The skinny Slytherin shrieked like a little girl and sprinted from the classroom with the teacup hot on his heels.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Flitwick, as he and his stack of books toppled to the floor. "That's enough for today. Class dismissed!"

That evening as the four friends rolled with laughter in the relative privacy of their dorm, Sirius wiped his eyes and exclaimed, "It works it really works! Who'd of thought a person could really produce something like that for a Patronus?"

"YOU DID!" James, Remus, and Peter chorused.

"Bad luck about Lily though," Remus said when he gained his composure.

James shrugged. "She'll come around. It's just a matter of time really."

"Snape's mad as a Hippogriff with hemorrhoids," Sirius said. "He'll be itching to get you in trouble, but I've got a great idea for a prank. You'll love this, Moony." And he drew them in closer.

A/N: Alrighty, there you have it, folks, James Potter's real Patronus is a Nose-biting Teacup, the embodiment of his greatest source of happiness...picking on Severus Snape and his giant honker. How could it be any more appropriate? Feel free to leave a little love for me on the way out.