

Stewed, Screwed and Tattooed

by Merrymoll

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All poor Cat wants to do is get a mocha and go home, now she's got two drunk wizards on her hands. Fortunately, Cat knows about wizards as the student Snape took the card from is her little brother. Unfortunately, something has begun to block all forms of magical transport, and it's up to Cat to try and get Snape and Malfoy back to Hogwarts as quickly and secretly as possible, without Voldemort finding out...

Chapter One

Chapter 1 of 1

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Prologue: In Which There Is Tedious Exposition

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, 1995

"I believe I am having a mid life crisis."

Severus Snape paused with glass halfway to lips. Lucius Malfoy was off with his normally impeccable timing he usually waited until Severus had taken a mouthful to choke on or spray before saying something outrageous. Severus prided himself in maintaining his dignity at all times, and Lucius, as his self appointed unofficial big brother, took great delight in ruffling his feathers. The fact that he hadn't here could probably mean that he was serious.

They were getting rat-arsed drunk in his rooms at Hogwarts, a tradition set up shortly after he and Lucius had spectacularly made themselves *persona non grata* with the Dark Lord roughly a year before. After the horrific fiasco of the final Tri-Wizard Task that left Cedric Diggory dead and Potter near catatonic with grief and horror, Severus had followed Dumbledore's order to return to the Death Eater fold. And on arriving, had found that whilst impersonating Mad Eye Moody, young Barty Crouch Junior had been nosing around Moody's personal Ministry files, and had found one in particular.

The Janus file.

Severus had been passing on information to Moody a good few months before he'd mistakenly landed Lily Potter in the shit with that bloody prophesy. It had become painfully clear, shortly after taking the Dark Mark, that Voldemort was more interested in personal aggrandisement than in changing the wizarding world for the better. Severus didn't see the value of blood and mayhem; it would have been tactically better to present themselves as a political presence, seeking change through the Wizengamot. The Artist Formerly Known as Tom Riddle was damn convincing when he wanted to be, and with help from influential purebloods like Lucius Malfoy, he could've been a force to be reckoned with in the Ministry.

But no. Voldemort wanted the pain and death of Muggles, Mudbloods, blood traitors and any other bugger stupid enough to challenge him. This soon had the Death Eaters labelled as a terrorist group qualifying for Unforgivables from Aurors and imprisonment with barely a trial. Severus had finally had enough one night, standing outside a burning Muggle house beneath a Morsmordre. The poor buggers hadn't even known about the wizarding world; what possible threat could they have been? What was the bloody *point*? And thanks to that blasted brand on his arm, he couldn't walk away. Several badly mangled corpses were all that was left of those who'd tried; Reggie Black had never even been *found*.

So he'd begun to send information to Moody, signing himself as Janus, the Patron deity of his birthday. He'd felt some personal satisfaction seeing Voldemort seething after several of his plans were thwarted, relief that some lives were being saved and above all, the impression he was getting *some* control back over his life again. Moody hadn't figured out who Janus was until Severus' trial after Voldemort's disappearance. Moody had been sitting next to Dumbledore, and Severus saw the metaphorical light bulb going on over the grizzled old sod's head when he'd given his date of birth. The old sod had later approached him, saying that he didn't like him and never would, but was grateful for his help.

The old sod had also noted his discovery in the Janus file. Which Crouch Jr had read.

Needless to say, the Dark Lord hadn't been impressed. Already enraged by the escape of Potter (putting a dampener in his triumphant return) and the reluctance of his "loyal" followers to find and help him during his hiatus as a disembodied wraith, Voldemort had been pushed into spitting incoherence at the news of Barty Crouch being kissed by a Dementor. Add that to the galling fact that the bearer of this news was Snape, the one Barty had uncovered as a traitor and you got one *very* unhappy megalomaniac.

It had been when Voldemort had been about to deliver the *coup de grace* after half an hour of Crucio and beatings from his erstwhile colleagues that Lucius had made his move. Muttering "I've had *quite* enough of this," he'd blasted Voldemort back, grabbed Snape and activated his personal emergency portkey before any of the others had time to blink. Appearing in his bedroom at Malfoy Manor, he'd laid the twitching, battered Severus on the floor with a "Just a tick, old chum", roused Narcissa and then apparated the lot of them to the outskirts of Hogwarts and into the arms of a flabbergasted Albus Dumbledore.

For Severus, the days that followed were a blur of potions, pain and the fussing of Poppy Pomfrey and Narcissa Malfoy, who were soon joined by Molly Weasley. Severus, never a good patient at the best of times, had found his sarcasm and surliness had little to no effect on the three women. He'd given up after Molly had silenced a rant by shoving a spoonful of porridge into his mouth, and amused himself instead by watching Molly and Narcissa entering, despite themselves, into a tentative friendship. The thought of Arthur's and Lucius' reactions once they found this out gave him a happy buzz on top of the extra strength painkillers Poppy shoved down his throat.

Once Severus had recovered, Lucius had come to him to provide a long overdue explanation of his actions. Like Severus, Lucius had quickly become disenchanted with the Dark Lord, but had concentrated on looking after his own interests and that of his family; keeping his head down and doing the bare minimum in raids to pass as a heartless Death Eater, waiting it out for Voldemort to come a cropper. The man had no finesse, no refinement, barely the meanest cunning and in Lucius' opinion could hardly pass himself off as the Heir of Slytherin. Not to mention he was an uppity halfblood (no offence to Severus) with a chip on his shoulder. Lucius had been quite enjoying the Dark-Lord-free years by manipulating the Ministry (a far better occupation for a Slytherin; it didn't involve crawling around like a common criminal in mucky Muggle neighbourhoods) and was deeply miffed to find himself back at the beck and call of the bloody idiot once more. After seeing that Severus had been pulling the wool over Voldemort's eyes and would have continued to do so if it weren't for sheer bad luck, Lucius had finally decided to bloody well do something about it.

It did mean being on the Dark Lord's shit list, not to mention having to be civil to Albus Dumbledore and his merry band of Gryffindors, but sacrifices had to be made for a good cause.

Dumbledore, for his part, now had an unemployed spy and a barely reformed Death Eater on his hands. Fortunately Severus was still retained as Potions master and Head of Slytherin, now free to try and turn his students away from the Dark Lord openly; one question and answer session with both he and Lucius describing *just* what was involved in serving Voldemort had the vast majority of the House of Slytherin deciding to remain Dark Mark free. Lucius had made himself useful by bringing his charm and influence to bear on Cornelius Fudge and getting the idiot to admit Voldemort had returned. The Ministry was now on high alert and quite a few plots had been thwarted.

The downside to all this was that Severus and Lucius, as well as Narcissa and Draco, were stuck at Hogwarts. Severus' house at Spinner's End had been demolished by Voldemort himself. Malfoy Manor had centuries of wards on it and had fared somewhat better; only the outhouses, gardens and a few unlucky peacocks had suffered the Dark Lord's wrath, but it was still risky to return there in case it was being watched. Unable to venture beyond the gates of the school, the two Slytherins had found apart from teaching, manipulation, irritating Order Members (especially Gryffindors) and providing information, they had bugger all to do.

Which led to the Friday Night Bender, now a tradition after twelve months. They'd grab as much alcohol from the kitchen elves as humanly possible, barricade themselves in Severus' rooms and discuss Life, the Universe and Everything. And bitch about things. And in Lucius' case, bring up the subject of Mid Life Crises.

Severus laid down his firewhisky (the fifth so far) and attempted to focus on Lucius. The blond wizard had rolled up his left sleeve and was staring glumly at the Dark Mark. Now inactive; Voldemort had severed magical ties to both of them to prevent them figuring out when a meeting was called; the mark was still black and would remain so until the little bastard got himself killed again.

Severus spitefully hoped the Dark Lord's demise would be even more embarrassing than being shafted by a toddler.

'I find myself wondering what my life would have been like if I hadn't taken this bloody thing. And now Draco's about to come of age, he'll not need Narcissa or I any more, soon. I'm stuck here surrounded by children...'

'There's the others in the Order.'

'I was including them *in* my definition of children''.

'Ah.' Severus really couldn't argue with *that*-especially with the prime examples of Black and Lupin to consider.

'As I was saying, I'm here surrounded by children, and that makes me feel, well, somewhat old. Redundant. What have I got to show for my life?'

Severus held up a wavering finger, 'Apart from a gorgeous wife, an heir, a bloody great big house and shitloads of money?'

Lucius blinked, 'Well, yes...'

'And looking half your age, and having Fudge wrapped around your finger and...'

'Yes, Severus.' Lucius was feeling a bit sulky, his best chum wasn't being nearly as sympathetic to his dilemma as he'd wanted. 'Apart from all that, I feel dissatisfied. I want something more in my life. Something, something,' he waved his hand vaguely. Severus leaned back to avoid the whisky sloshing from the glass. 'Well, just *something*. Else.'

Severus was about to tell Lucius he was being bloody maudlin and that *was* his job, thankyouverymuch, when Lucius continued, 'And I really want to get rid of this bloody mark.' He glared down at his forearm again.

Now that was something Severus *could* sympathise with. 'So do I.' He peeled back his own sleeve.

They shared a look, then glanced down at the physical reminder of the mistake they'd made, then looked glumly at the floor.

And then Severus had a brainwave. It wasn't a very good one, but he was drunk, and bored and now, thanks to Lucius, feeling rather depressed, but it offered a possible solution to at least *one* of their problems.

'A cover up!'

Lucius was jolted out of his reverie as Severus leapt up, staggered over to his discarded teaching robes and rummaged through the pockets.

'What?'

Severus stood up triumphantly, grasping a card. 'Confiscated this from one of the brats today.'

Lucius took it from him and tried to focus on it as Severus continued, 'The little bugger was passing this about my class rather than concentrating on the assignment. He's a Muggleborn who's sister is a tattooist.'

Light began to dawn as Lucius took in the bright artwork on the small calling card, 'So she could..?'

'Give us new tattoos to cover the marks, yes. We can't get a wizarding tattooist to do it; we can't go out in the wizarding world in case the Dark Arse catches us. But I hardly think any of our former associates would think to look for us in the Muggle World, especially not,' Severus reached out to tap the address on the card, and succeeded on the second attempt, 'Muggle Glasgow.'

o0o

Chapter One: In which our Heroine gets some rather odd

customers.

Glasgow, Scotland, 1995, the same evening.

Cat Duncan finished tidying up the shop, and looked around. Sweeping done: check. Floor mopped: checked. Surfaces wiped: check. Needles and instruments in the autoclave for sterilisation: check. Now all she had to do was lock up and she could head for a nice mocha at Cafe Nero and then home. It had been a slow day in the parlour, and Big Johnno had buggered off early for an urgent appointment in the pub, his prerogative as the owner and Head Tattooist, trusting Cat to deal with closing up.

She was just grabbing her jacket and the shop keys when two loud cracks sounded outside, then the door opened. She looked up and beheld:

A tall, beaky fella who looked like a refugee from a Hammer Horror movie, accompanied by the Timotae Girl. That is, if the Timotae Girl had undergone a sex change and gone Goth. And by the looks of it, they were both bloated.

She blinked.

Hammer Horror Man staggered forward and thrust his arm under her nose. 'I demand you obliterate this abomination!'

Cat took a step back; that arm had nearly bopped her on the nose. 'Y'whit?'

'You are a tattooist, are you not?'

'Aye.'

'And you specialise in...?' He fished around inside the voluminous black robes he wore, produced one of the parlour's business cards and peered at it. "'Cover ups.'"

'Aye.'

'Then I demand you cover this abomination up!' A long pale finger tapped the arm again, which Cat now saw sported a black mass on the forearm.

'I'd be happy to.' Cat began, which got the scowl on Hammer Horror Man's face looking a bit happier and a drawled "Splendid!" from Timotae Man. 'But not today.'

Timotae stepped wobbily between her and the darker man as he angrily drew in breath. 'Might I ask why?'

'The shop's closed for the day. And you're pished. We don't do tattoos on anyone on drink or drugs.' Cat pointed out the rather forthright sign Johnno had put over the counter confirming this, in rather more ribald language, culminating in a very final, "Get tae fuck!"

Hammer Horror Man's scowl dissolved into a look of triumph, 'Ah! Can sort *that* out!' He produced two vials, bullied Timotae Man into drinking one despite his protests that it "tasted like troll piss!" and then took some himself. Both men straightened up, shivering, and started to look more alert.

The nasty seed of suspicion that had been in Cat's mind since these two had entered the shop now blossomed into certainty. She leaned back against the shop counter and rubbed her eyes tiredly. And sighed.

'Aw shite. You're *wizards*, aren't you?'

o0o

An hour later, Lucius Malfoy found himself sitting on a squashy sofa in a Muggle coffee shop, nursing a rather good espresso. In fact, the cafe itself was rather good; tasteful décor, comfortable chairs (he'd have to see about transfiguring something similar for his den when he eventually got back to Malfoy Manor) and the music was unobtrusive and soothing. Not bad at all, even if it was

full of, and run by, Muggles.

The petite woman, Catriona Duncan, sitting across from he and Severus, was sipping something called a "Mocha" from a mug approximately the size of a small bucket and listening to the explanation of their presence under the cover of a Mufflatio. Lucius wasn't too sure what to make of her. She barely reached five foot and was somewhat on the buxom side, with dark hair and a slightly sharp featured face. She was wearing a lurid yellow top advising "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols" in

mismatching script that looked as though it had been torn from the *Daily Prophet*, and a pair of those trousers he'd heard *Mud erMuggleborns* (he really *must* remember he was on the side of fluffy bunnies now) refer to as "jeans". They were black, as far as he could tell; they were so worn and torn he'd have consigned them to a house-elf for use as a duster by now. And if her trousers weren't alarming enough, then there were her boots: flat heeled, purple, with a dozen laceholes done up with tartan ribbon, thick soled and utterly lethal looking.

And then there were the tattoos. Of course she was a tattooist; but he'd never seen a woman with so many, and that was on the parts of her that he could see. A delicate vine started on her left collar bone and snaked under her top to reappear and continue down her arm like a gladiator's armour. Stars and hearts and birds were dotted about her arms, not covering them fully, but rather seeming to serve as punctuation.

Lucius couldn't decide if he was scandalised or intrigued. He wondered where else this odd little Muggle was tattooed, then felt guilty when he realised he was speculating about the body of a woman other than Narcissa. Then he wondered how he'd react if Narcissa got a tattoo. Then he wondered where Narcissa would *get* a tattoo. He felt a smirk growing; of course, tattoos did sting somewhat, so *of course* he'd attempt to soothe his lady's discomfort by offering to kiss it better. Lucius' smirk grew into a full blown grin as his mind happily travelled down the obvious routes of that little scenario. And then...

And then... he'd better get his mind back on the job, as the bizarre Muggle was starting to speak.

'So.' Duncan set her mug down on the table between them and looked at Severus. 'You're Professor Severus Snape. Potions master, Head of Slytherin House and a torn faced bastard with the personality of a rottweiler with paint stripper on its nipples.'

Lucius sniggered into his espresso as he saw Severus glare. As much as he liked Severus, he had to admit the dear chap should try to lighten up occasionally.

Duncan turned her attention to him. 'And you're Lucius Malfoy, head of a pureblood family, on the Hogwarts Board of Governors and a stuck up, bigoted ponce with a chip on your shoulder about Muggles and Muggleborns.' The amused smirk on Lucius' face was wiped off as Snape took his turn to snort.

'And you're here because...?'

'Lucius decided he was having a mid-life crisis,' Severus drawled, smirking as Malfoy glowered at him. The cheeky little bastard.

'And this is why you got pissed and apparated here from Aberdeenshire, while your raving nutjob of a Dark Lord is out looking for you.' Duncan leaned back with a sigh, rubbing her forehead. 'Isn't Slytherin supposed to be the house of *cunning*? Are youse two completely aff yer heads?'

Both wizards looked down and fiddled with their coffees, embarrassed. Lucius cleared his throat. 'I will admit it was a rather poorly thought out move on our part.'

'It wasn't thought out at *all*, poorly or not.' Snape glared at Malfoy. The blond wizard spluttered.

'Don't you look at me in that tone of voice, Severus! *You* bloody suggested coming here!'

'Lads, *lads*,' Duncan interrupted, before the two could get really started. 'Look, it was daft, but there's no harm done. Just you head back to Hogwarts before anyone realises you've gone. And get back in touch with me for an appointment. When yer not pished.'

Severus raised his eyebrows, 'You're willing to help us, even after...?'

She shrugged, 'Why not? You're both over eighteen, you've got money and I've never tattooed a wizard before, should be interesting. As long as you don't turn me intae a newt if the needle hits a nippy bit.' To Lucius' surprise, the dour wizard smiled, a lopsided curl of the mouth that seemed to change his whole demeanour.

'But you'll get better,' he drawled, quirking an eyebrow. Lucius saw Duncan's face light up.

'D'ye weigh the same as a duck, Prof?' she asked, grinning.

Lucius watched the two grin at each other, somewhat confused. *What the bloody hell?* 'What? Ducks? What in Merlin's name is she talking about?' he demanded.

'Oh, it's a Muggle thing, Mr Malfoy,' the bloody smart arsed Muggle said airily. 'You wouldn't *possibly* understand.'

Severus picked up his coffee, raised it to his lips, looked over at her and muttered, 'Ni!' She burst out laughing. Lucius narrowed his eyes, suspecting that they were having a laugh at his expense.

'I must say, Miss Duncan, that you're taking all this rather well,' he said, trying to get things back on track, and away from them taking the piss out of him.

Duncan's face was still lit up in mirth. 'I've had worse Friday nights than having two pieces of eye candy appear out of nowhere and come for a coffee with me.'

Lucius started to preen before he realised she'd said "two". And that she wasn't looking at him, but at...

Severus, who was staring back at the woman, looking as if he was under petrificus totalus. And was that a blush?

It was! Fantastic! Oh, he'd be ribbing Severus about this for *weeks*!

o0o

Severus nearly choked on his coffee. Eye candy? Well he could see it of Mr Lucius "I spend two hours in the bathroom each morning and scream like a girl if my hair is ruffled" Malfoy. But Duncan had said "two". And she was looking at him. Not at Lucius. *Him*. And smiling in an appreciative way.

He wasn't used to this sort of thing. Before they'd fallen afoul of the Dark Lord and been able to have drunken Friday nights in public, Lucius was the one who attracted attention from the fairer sex. Severus was either ignored, looked at fearfully or in disgust. In the small wizarding community, everyone knew both he and Lucius' shady past, but Lucius got away with it because he was filthy rich and handsome. That homely, halfblooded, working class Severus Snape didn't get away with it only gave fuel to his misanthropic view of people being shallow bastards.

But Miss Catriona Duncan was looking at *him*. And including *him* in her definition of...

'Eye candy?' he croaked. Perhaps the sobering solution wasn't fully effective. Maybe he'd misheard or something. And, oh, blast, he was blushing. He glanced over at Lucius, who was slyly watching him and grinning like a piranha. Damn. The bastard was going to be insufferable.

'Aye,' she was nodding; bloody hell, it looked like *hehadn't* misheard. 'Well, Pretty Boy here goes without saying.' She gave Lucius a dismissive nod. Ha! That wiped the smirk off the bastard's face. He wasn't used to women dismissing him as just a pretty face.

Duncan continued, *still smiling at him*, 'I like a bit more substance in a man, Prof.'

Then again, *he* wasn't used to women *not* dismissing *him*. He swallowed.

'Oh, Severus is *very* substantial, aren't you old chap?' Lucius drawled. Severus saw Miss Duncan's eyes widen and looked over at Lucius. He was holding his hands about a foot apart, as if measuring...

'You know what they say about men with big noses?' the swine continued. Severus was saved from bellowing in outrage at the blond bastard by Miss Duncan, who narrowed her eyes at Lucius.

'Aye, and judging by *your* nose, Mr M, I'd say there'd be disappointment all round.'

Severus sniggered as Lucius spluttered, 'What? I'll have you know I've had no complaints about oh sod it!' He laughed even harder when Lucius glared at him. Duncan was rolling in her chair, holding her stomach.

'Ye should see yer face, big man!' she hooted. Lucius took a final sip of coffee and set the cup down sulkily.

'Yes, yes, alright,' he huffed. 'As charming as this little tete-a-tete has been, I believe we should get back..'

'So soon?' Severus purred, 'But it's just getting interesting.' He heard Duncan snigger. It was rather nice to have an ally in taking the piss out of Lucius.

Lucius rolled his eyes. 'Be that as it may, Severus, the longer we linger the higher the chance one of our *ahex colleagues* may see us.'

Damn. But Lucius was right. 'Very well. We'll find somewhere to Apparate.' He inclined his head to Miss Duncan. 'Thank you for your patience, Miss Duncan. And for the coffee.' She'd ended up paying for it as neither he or Lucius had Muggle money. Yet another flaw in their drunken plan; he was pretty sure Muggle tattooists didn't take Galleons.

Duncan stood up with them, 'Nae bother, Prof. There's an alley next to here, I'll show you.'

Indeed there was, and conveniently empty. They said their goodbyes to Miss Duncan, and prepared to Apparate. Severus closed his eyes and concentrated; it'd be just his luck to splinch while sober when he'd managed the previous trip rat arsed.

Destination, Determination and Deliberation. He turned and waited.

And waited.

And waited.

'Um, I'm no' an expert, but something tells me this isnae supposed to happen?' came Duncan's voice. Severus opened his eyes. He was still in an alleyway, and still in Glasgow. Lucius was still beside him, looking confused. Duncan was still standing in front of him. Severus jammed his eyes shut and tried again.

Still nothing.

Duncan was looking at them, confusion and a hint of worry in her eyes. 'You can't Apparate?'

Severus looked at Lucius, and Lucius looked at Severus.

'We can't Apparate,' they chorused.

Bugger.