

Excuses

by sunny33

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I don't own them. I make no money off them, and I promise to dust them down when I'm finished.

"Of all the pea-brained, asinine, ridiculous schemes that sugar-addled old man has come up with, this has to be the single most insane idea of them all. The very idea of allowing forty boisterous, twelve-year-old witches and wizards to mingle with hordes of Muggles at a site which potentially could enhance their powers is patently irresponsible. And at this time of year, when they're all looking for some evidence of magic! Who knows how many Obliviates we'll be required to perform before the end of the day? Field trip! Where did the old goat get that from? And how does he think we'll get them there? Pack them all onto the Knight Bus? For Merlin's sake, Minerva, talk some sense into him!" Severus Snape's rant ceased as he slumped into his favourite staffroom chair and poured a much-needed cup of tea.

"You know as well as I do, Severus, once Albus has made up his mind it's impossible to sway him. If he wants the second years to visit Stonehenge, then so they shall. He told me he felt it was time they learned more about their heritage." Minerva was not exactly impressed with the idea of chaperoning such a trip herself, but as Headmaster Dumbledore's deputy, she had to be seen to support him.

"Well, tell their parents to take them in the summer, then," Severus growled. "Just leave me out of it!" He stood and stalked off to his dungeons, leaving the tight-lipped witch alone with her thoughts.

Two weeks later, on the day of the proposed Stonehenge visit, a loud crack woke Severus from a deep sleep.

"What do you want at this hour of the morning?" he snarled at the unfortunate house-elf standing in his bedroom, wringing her skinny hands.

"Begging the master's pardon, sir, but Madam Pomfrey is sending Ditsy to fetch you. She needs you in the hospital wing urgently." The house-elf bowed and, before Severus could respond, popped out of the room.

"Can't those wretched children keep themselves out of harm even at six in the morning?" he grumbled as he threw on his robes and stomped out of the room.

However, on arrival at the infirmary, there were no students to be seen. Not even any Gryffindors. Frowning, he sat on the nearest bed in a partly curtained-off cubicle and began muttering to himself.

"Oh, there you are, Severus. Exactly where I want you," chirped Poppy as she entered the room, using her wand to cast a Rubber Glove Charm.

He eyed her hands suspiciously. "Just what *do* you want?" he asked.

"It's time for your annual physical. And as you have conveniently managed to elude the *full* physical for the last two years..." She smiled benignly at the wizard, whose knees had snapped together at her words.

"Not this again. I told you, Poppy, there is absolutely *nothing* wrong with me. My health is superb, and if I had any concerns, I would be sure to bring them to your attention."

The nurse appeared to soften. "Are you certain, Severus? I would hate to miss any developing ailments. Prevention is better than cure, you know."

"One hundred percent. I've never felt better," he asserted, standing to leave. A soft swish from behind the cubicle curtain warned too late of another's presence. He turned to find the Transfiguration Mistress looking alarmingly smug.

"That is excellent, Severus. You will need all your fitness to assist with the field trip today. Entrance Hall, ten o'clock sharp. Don't be late!"

Before he had a chance to protest, she was gone.

"Now, I really have a headache," Snape complained, rubbing his temples.

"Never mind, dear. I just happen to have some of that wonderful headache potion you brewed last week. Works every time, I believe you said."

"Et tu, Poppy?" he groaned.

Poppy simply smiled and handed him a vial. For a Slytherin, Severus was notoriously uninventive when it came to finding excuses to avoid unpleasant, student-related assignments. He tended to forget in his cleverness that some of his colleagues had seen it all before.

Saturday Night Drabble Prompt for lyn_f: Severus is in a rather sarky mood. (When is he not?) What is his latest irritation?

Thanks go to lyn for the beta.