

# A Moment's Impression

*by laurielove*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

A young Severus Snape is annoyed to find his his usual breaktime meeting place has been taken by somebody else.

This is a little something which was dancing around in my head, inspired mainly by the brief canon reference to Lucius Malfoy patting Severus on the back when he is sorted into Slytherin, and Narcissa making the Unbreakable Vow with him in HBP. It is, notably, the first non-NC-17 story I've ever written!

It takes place in Severus' First Year, Narcissa and Lucius' final year.

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The pale black-haired boy picked his way deliberately up the slope, his feet placed carefully on the narrow path forged over the years by generations of schoolchildren. In his hands he held his snack box and the book he was currently reading. He hoped to finish it while he was waiting.

He reached the brow of the hill, expecting to find the solitary bench he usually ate his snack on empty as usual.

The boy stopped abruptly. There was a girl sitting on the bench. But on careful observation, once his initial annoyance had dulled, he realised that she was certainly not a young girl. She was still in uniform, but had the fully formed body and mature face of a woman approaching twenty. She must have been in her final year. On closer inspection he realised that he recognised her vaguely from dinner times. She was in his House.

The boy stopped, his feet shifting uncomfortably beneath him. This was his bench; he ate his fruit and biscuit here every day. Lily knew he came here. She would normally join him when she had finished writing to her parents. He expected her to today. This person had no right to be here.

But his feet did not bear him back down the hill. He stood his ground, staring at the seated figure on the bench. She was reading, her legs crossed neatly at the ankles. She had white blonde hair, pale smooth skin. He thought she was pretty. He could imagine Lily looking a bit like that when she was older.

But still he resented her presence. He would confront her. He would approach her and tell her to move.

The boy's lower lip twinged and his fist clenched. He stepped forward and marched the remaining feet up the path to the bench.

He was there. He stopped before the bench. Words formed in his head. He just had to open his mouth and speak. The girl on the bench glanced up at him, her eyebrows raised in surprise at the slight young boy standing awkwardly before her. He looked uncomfortable, ill-at-ease. She tried to catch his eye, but he kept his gaze on the ground. She thought he would move off, but suddenly he spun around and sat on the bench beside her.

Narcissa Black waited for the curious boy with the dark hair to speak. He looked as if he wanted to, but instead of his mouth opening for words to emerge, it opened and he placed an apple in it. He took a bite and chewed quickly. She smiled at his adolescent awkwardness.

"Hello."

The boy did not respond and stared determinedly ahead, chewing relentlessly on his apple. Narcissa smiled to herself. What an odd child he was. His hair was as black as a raven's wing and hung long and heavy around his head. She suspected its rather lank appearance resulted from an aversion to shampoo. His eyes were large and dark, the irises as black as the pupils. They held a deep intelligence, remarkable in such a young child. He was certainly intriguing.

She tried again.

"That looks like a good apple."

The boy shrugged almost imperceptibly. His stubborn embarrassment gently amused her.

"My name is Narcissa. And who are you?"

After some time the word came, surprisingly clearly. "Snape."

"Snape? What an odd name for a mother to call her child."

"It's my last name."

"Oh, I see." She smirked again, knowing how she was teasing his given name out of him. "And what is your first name, Master Snape?"

The boy swallowed the piece of apple he had been chewing on and answered only after his mouth was clear. "Severus."

"Well, it's very good to meet you, Severus Snape." She held her hand out to him. At first, he looked at it with a frown of surprise, then slowly reached out his own hand and allowed her to shake it.

They sat silently for some time, looking out over the mountains. Narcissa waited. She felt that if she granted him time, he may relax enough to talk. She was interested in what he had to say. In due course she was rewarded, although she could sense the resentment in his voice.

"I always come to this bench to eat my snack."

"Do you? I haven't seen you here before."

"I'm meeting a friend. And anyway, I haven't seen *you* here before either."

She smiled at his audacity. "I suppose I usually come at a slightly later time. I often have a free period after most of the school goes back to lessons. What year are you in, Severus?"

"First Year."

"You look very mature and clever for a First Year. *Are* you very clever, Severus?"

He shrugged again.

She studied him carefully. He resolutely refused to turn his head to look at her but stared straight ahead.

"You have very intense eyes."

At last he spun his head with surprise and fixed her with what could only be described as a glare. "What's wrong with my eyes?"

"Nothing." She was taken aback at his sudden anger. "I meant it as a compliment."

"It didn't sound like a compliment."

"Very well. You have lovely eyes."

His cheeks flushed rapidly and he looked away. Narcissa glanced down at the book he had placed on the bench.

"What are you reading?"

"*The Evolution of Potions in Medieval Britain*."

"Goodness!" Narcissa threw back her head and laughed. "At your age you should be trying to blow up the Potions dungeon, not aiming to become the Potions Master!"

Severus glared again with displeasure. "I would never want that! I don't even like Potions!"

Narcissa glanced down at him in silent amusement. "Really? So what is your favourite subject then, Severus?"

"Defence Against the Dark Arts."

"Goodness! A very mature preference. And what House are you in?"

"Slytherin."

She smiled. "I knew it. Good for you. All the best people are in Slytherin."

Severus turned to her at last. He tensed his lips which then curled into a slight smile. "Are you in Hufflepuff then?"

She gasped in, pretending to be insulted, and widened her eyes at him. "You cheeky monkey! You know I'm in Slytherin too!"

Severus maintained his odd little smile for a moment longer, enjoying the fact that she had appreciated his humour.

"You're expecting a friend then?"

"Yes. We normally both come up here during morning break."

"Break will be over soon. He'd better get a move on."

"She."

Narcissa glanced at him. His pale skin had developed a red tinge on the high cheekbones. She smiled. "What's her name?"

"Lily."

"Is she pretty?"

He shrugged once again.

"What does she look like?"

"It doesn't matter!" He spun to her, his black eyes flashing with embarrassed anger. "She's not my girlfriend or anything silly like that! She's my friend. That's all. What's wrong with that?!"

"Nothing. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to pry. I just think it's nice that you meet here every day. I meet my friend here too sometimes."

Severus did not answer. He was staring down the hill at some figures which had appeared in the grounds below them. The sound of their laughter drifted up the hill. The boy's face suddenly became tight and anxious, his brows furrowed. Narcissa turned, following his eyes. She could make out a young girl with long hair tied back in pigtails. She was with two boys, one of whom Narcissa recognised all too well.

She turned back to Severus. He was still staring fixedly at the small group of children, his whole body tensed. She looked down the hill again.

The girl with pigtails had moved away from the other two boys and seemed about to walk up the hill to the bench, but then the wind shifted and voices floated on the wind towards them.

"Come on, Lily! We're going to go and find the others. Why can't you spend some time with us for a change?"

The girl seemed to hesitate, but then turned back again towards the other boys, eventually following them and walking out of sight around a corner.

Severus stared at the last spot she had been visible in, not blinking, not moving. Then his head moved down suddenly to his apple again, and he took another bite.

Narcissa could sense his deep disappointment. "Perhaps she didn't know you were up here."

"I don't care."

It was clear he cared very much indeed.

"Do you know the children she was with?"

"Hm."

"One of them is my cousin, Sirius."

He didn't respond.

"I didn't recognise the other one, the one with glasses. Are they friends of yours too?"

"No." There was a pause. "They're in Gryffindor."

"Well, yes, I know Sirius is. That hasn't gone down well with the family, believe me. Is she in Gryffindor too?"

"Yes." He wasn't entirely sure why he gave the next thing away. "She's Muggle-born."

"Is she?!"

"Yes."

"Oh well, Severus, in that case you're much better off staying up here talking to me. A boy like you doesn't want to be held back by lesser witches and wizards."

The boy darted his head and fixed her with such a poisonous stare, her blood ran cold. She swallowed hard. Her feelings on blood purity had been ingrained in her for as long as she could remember. She had never questioned it, and had never been questioned on it. This boy's sudden clear antagonism towards her statement unsettled her. She lowered her head and muttered, "I'm sure she's very sweet."

Severus' face twisted again, and he turned away.

She thought he would go, although was actually a little disappointed that he might. She felt oddly guilty for having upset him. Picking up her book, she turned through the pages again to find her place.

"What are *you* reading then?" The silence between them was suddenly broken by the boy's abrupt and direct question.

Narcissa looked up in surprise and made an inconsequential gesture with the book in an attempt to dismiss its worth.

"It's nothing really." She suddenly found herself slightly ashamed. "It's just a trashy love-story type thing, set in Victorian wizarding Paris. It's just a bit of escapism. I have to work hard for my NEWTs. I need a diversion sometimes."

He looked at her steadily. "I've never read anything like that before."

Narcissa threw her head back and laughed. "No, I don't suppose you have!"

Severus glanced over her shoulder. A tall young man was walking silently up towards the bench, approaching it from behind. Narcissa hadn't noticed him; she was flicking through her book again. It was the blond-haired prefect who had congratulated Severus when he had been sorted into Slytherin. Severus knew who he was, who his family were.

As he got closer to the bench, Lucius Malfoy glanced across at Severus and smirked, placing his finger on his lips to indicate to the boy to keep his silence.

Severus was flattered by the little conspiracy which passed between him and the older boy and turned back to look down the hill. Lucius crept silently up behind Narcissa and suddenly placed his hands over her eyes.

She screamed in shock and her book dropped from her hands with a thud. Severus smirked at the joke he had been involved in.

Narcissa jumped up and spun around, thumping Lucius with mock severity on his chest. The older boy was laughing at her reaction, his elegant face graced with a smooth smile. Severus looked up at him in wonder. He thought he looked like some sort of Norse god, his features finely hewn, his long blonde hair thick and lustrous, waving in the light breeze. He was tall and broad and held Narcissa in large strong hands. A strange combination of admiration and jealousy was flooding through Severus. He did not know whether to adore him or despise him. He just stared.

"Gods, Lucius! You nearly gave me a heart attack. Don't do that!" Narcissa tried to sound as indignant as possible. She failed miserably and let herself instead be pulled into a tight embrace by Malfoy.

"Thought I'd find you here. Didn't realise I'd have a rival though." Lucius smirked down at Severus. "Interested in older women, are you?"

Severus blushed puce with embarrassment and turned away. Narcissa nudged Lucius in the ribs. He chuckled and came and sat on the bench next to the young boy. "I'm only joking. I recognise you. You're in Slytherin, aren't you?" Severus nodded. "Snape, isn't it?" Lucius queried. Severus turned to look at him, surprised he knew his name. He nodded again.

"I remember when you were sorted. And I know your teachers are very impressed with you." Severus looked at him, trying not to appear too delighted. "Oh, yes, young Mister Snape; you've made quite an impact already. I heard old Bloxham talking about you just the other day. He said you had an 'instinctive grasp for the complexities of even the most obscure elements of magic'. Talent like that must be put to good use, believe me." Severus was not sure he liked the low drawl Lucius was employing, but could not help a warm feeling of satisfied pride seeping through him nonetheless.

Lucius turned back to Narcissa. "Now, woman, I'd hoped we might be able to find a quiet spot alone. I thought we could ..." He leaned into her and whispered the rest of his words against her ear, audible only to her. Severus noticed his hand travelling higher and higher up her leg. He could not take his eyes away from it.

Narcissa threw her head back and giggled, playfully admonishing him once again. "Lucius! Not out here, for Gods' sake!" She cleared her throat and pushed him off her a bit, looking over at Severus. "I apologise for my boyfriend, Severus. He forgets his manners sometimes." Lucius raised his eyebrows with unconvinced disapproval. "But, honestly, Lucius, I have to get back to class now anyway. You should have come earlier. I've been up here for half an hour."

He huffed. "I had a bloody owl from father, some business at the Manor which I had to deal with. It took me a damn age to sort it out. I did try to get here sooner. You're right though. I've got to go anyway. I've pushed my luck with Broadwood too often recently. If I'm late again he'll take it to Dumbledore and that bastard won't give me any leeway."

Severus flinched. He objected to the Headmaster being referred to in that way.

Lucius leaned into Narcissa and whispered into her ear again. Severus was once more unable to discern the words. Lucius pulled back, finishing with a drawled, " ... Promise?"

Narcissa smirked and blushed, muttering, "I promise."

The blond man leaned in again and kissed her. Severus tried to look away, but found himself unable. He had never seen anyone kissing like that before. Lucius had pushed her mouth open with his and was moving it hard over her. Severus thought it looked disgusting, but Narcissa seemed to be rather enjoying it.

Then Lucius pulled back and raised himself up, glancing down at Severus. "Goodbye then, Snape. Keep up the good work. I expect great things for Slytherin. I'll be keeping my eye on you ... as long as you keep your hands off my girlfriend." He smirked down and winked at him.

Narcissa giggled and pursed her lips at Lucius to indicate a kiss. He smirked again before turning and glided elegantly down the hill. Severus stared after him, envious of all he was, all he had. At that moment, he wanted to be him.

"Has he been your boyfriend for a long time?"

"Since last year. He's rather wonderful, isn't he?"

Severus didn't answer, but watched Lucius as his figure disappeared behind the wall of the path leading back to the castle.

"Are you going to marry him?"

Narcissa threw her head back and laughed again. "Don't be silly! I haven't got a clue! I'm far too young to think about marriage."

"He's very rich, isn't he?"

Narcissa stared at him with barely disguised annoyance. "That's not why I like him, if that's what you think! Watch out, little boy there's a difference between being charmingly cheeky and insulting!"

Severus was ashamed he had annoyed her. He didn't want to. He liked her. And she was pretty. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. But he is, isn't he? He's a Malfoy."

She had quickly calmed down again. She couldn't stay angry with the articulate boy for long. "That's right. I met his father last month. I was terrified."

"Why?" Severus asked with direct curiosity.

"Well ... his father's quite an ... intimidating man, and he clearly has very high expectations of his son in everything he does, including his choice of girlfriend."

"But you come from a really old pureblood family."

"Yes. I suppose we're considered ... a good match."

"I bet your family want you to marry him."

Narcissa crossed her arms and rolled her eyes. "Really, you little snake, you are the limit! Some things you just don't say out loud, even though you're thinking them!" She tried to glare at him but found it impossible. He was such an intelligent, intriguing but still entirely innocent little boy. She liked him a lot.

Narcissa looked out over the hills, then spoke again, almost to herself. "If and when I marry, it will be entirely my decision, because I love and want the man I choose. Not because my family expect it of me."

"A big house and a lot of money make that decision easier though, I should think."

She looked down at him again, trying to muster further indignation. The dark eyes of the boy were twinkling at her, and a little smirk danced around his thin red lips.

"Severus Snape! If you weren't in Slytherin I would use my prefectorial privileges and take ten points off this instant!" His smile deepened. She returned it. With a sigh, and a last look out over the mountains, she retrieved her book from the floor and stood up.

"Come on then, you'd better be going back. I don't want to be responsible for you being late."

Severus stood up, carefully gathering his snack box and his book. He turned to her and managed a small smile. He wanted to tell her how much he had enjoyed talking to her, how much she had made him feel better after Lily had chosen to be with Black and Potter over him. He opened his mouth, but nothing came out.

"I've enjoyed talking to you, Severus. If you ever need anything, just come and ask me. That's what Houses are for. We stick together, especially Slytherins. You're going to be a great wizard one day, I know it. If I can do anything to help, you only have to ask."

"I can manage on my own."

She smiled ruefully. "Maybe. Still, it's nice to know there's someone there for you. And what goes around, comes around. You never know, you may be able to repay me one day do something to help me."

He looked at her quizzically. She smiled her smile again. He liked her smile. It made him feel warm.

"Bye bye, Severus. Don't be late now."

With that she turned and walked down the hill. He followed shortly afterwards and made it to his next lesson with a few moments to spare.

The class was having a written transfiguration test. Severus finished with half an hour to spare and knew he had answered every question perfectly. Perhaps he could tell Narcissa Black and Lucius Malfoy.

He hoped they would be impressed with him.

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I know this is only a slight little tale, but I would be interested to know what you thought. LL x