

Pay Back

by h_vic

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Written for nic911 for the hp_spring_fling on LJ. I had a lot of fun writing this, even if it is fairly short I'm afraid Bella was rather keen to get on with matters and there was a limit to how long Severus was willing to be toyed with. A huge thank you goes out to Snape's Talon for beta'ing this so very rapidly and for all the many ways she's influenced how I write Severus.

The dull thudding of someone pounding on his front door broke Severus Snape's concentration for the second time that evening, and he slammed shut the book resting in his lap. With a sigh of aggravation, he left the neglected volume balanced on the arm of his chair and rose. Not that he could, in good conscience, resent the intrusion as much as he usually would since he had failed to turn a single page since the departure of his previous uninvited guests, but then again Severus tried to ignore his conscience whenever possible regardless it tended to prove troublesome. He couldn't even resent the interruption to his thoughts, though, as they were getting him nowhere.

Deliberately, he cast a stinging hex up the stairs as he passed, waited for the yelp from Wormtail, and drew the door closed to prevent the pitiful creature from eavesdropping. Whoever his visitor might prove to be, he intended to greet them without fear of reprisal from anyone his unwelcome lodger might see fit to inform of his actions.

The knocking came again; his visitor was impatient. The sound was claustrophobic as it echoed between the close-set walls of the small room. Severus' fist tightened around his wand as he unlatched the door.

"Bella," he greeted the black-robed figure, surprise carefully excised from his tone and fingers not quite relaxing their hold. "What a ... surprise to see you twice in one day."

'Pleasant' was a simple word to omit; its absence and Severus' pause where it should belong were so fleeting as to be barely noticeable, but the insult found its mark nonetheless. Bellatrix Lestrange's lips tightened, drawing back over her teeth in what might on others be a smile, but she made it a snarl.

"Snape," she said curtly, even less courtesy observed as she pushed past him.

"Do come in," he muttered to himself. Bellatrix cast him a sharp look over her shoulder as she settled herself into the armchair Severus had so recently vacated. He resisted the urge to reach for the book that she had tipped onto the floor and instead poured two glasses of Bordeaux from a decanter on the sideboard. She looked irritated that he had not offered and merely assumed, but took the proffered glass none the less.

They sipped in silence for a moment. "Why?" she demanded suddenly, drawing a finger, languorously at odds with her staccato tone, along the rim of the glass and licking a stray ruby droplet from its tip.

"Nineteen-Ninety was a good vintage," he answered blandly, his eyes unwillingly tracing the path of the glass as she moved it towards red lips that pursed in irritation at his answer.

"I'm not here to play games with you, Severus," she countered sharply, taking a sip of the wine as her eyes swept the room seeking anything that might provide her an edge over him. There was nothing; Severus was not a stupid man, nor careless. There were no personal touches to betray the things he might not say.

"No," Severus agreed, licking lips suddenly and inexplicably dry. Games were a long time past for them, and it would be deeply unproductive to draw up old memories now, although it was hard not to as Bellatrix mirrored his action, all too consciously he was sure, her tongue flicking lithely over glistening lips. He'd made his choice, and that was nearly two decades ago. It was better left in the past. She hadn't been Lily, and that hadn't been enough.

"So why are you here?" he asked instead in an attempt to distract himself.

"I want to know why you agreed to help Cissy."

Severus watched her for a long moment, sitting so blithely unconcerned in his living room, untroubled by the world, and concluded finally that she really didn't understand. How could she though? She had lost nothing in the service of the Dark Lord; she had nothing to lose.

"I felt sorry for her," he explained. "And for Draco."

Bellatrix watched him with unfathomable eyes. It was as if he had given her no answer at all, and perhaps he may as well have not for all she could understand compassion.

"They aren't like us; they've made no choices." Severus wondered as he said it whether this was true. Had he, or even Bellatrix, ever really made a choice either? Sometimes it felt as if he had no choices, and unsurprisingly, Severus loathed that. He hated being the pawn in others' plans even if he agreed with the goal.

"Cissy wants to serve the Dark Lord; she's taken her oath." Bellatrix's temper was quick, although whether in defence of master or family was unclear.

"No," Severus corrected her. "You wanted her to serve, so did Lucius. Narcissa is malleable. She would do anything to placate the both of you, even at the cost of her own will."

"Why would you care?" There was something more than simple curiosity in her voice, something bitter. Severus laughed. Bellatrix's eyes narrowed, and she crossed her legs, a pointed barrier between them. The defensive pose was so unlike her that Severus was surprised to realise that the past their past was not as dead to Bellatrix as he had presumed.

"I fail to see what's funny." Her tone was glacial, her eyes even more so.

"You're jealous," Severus accused her, dark eyes dancing with a mocking light. He felt he might even begin to enjoy her visit.

"Don't flatter yourself." Bellatrix spat the words at him.

"Don't worry I'm not after your sister."

"She wouldn't have you." Her lips twisted into a cruel smile, and she placed her wineglass on the floor, rising from the chair to cross the room towards him.

"We are agreed then. She is worth far more than I, than any of the rest of us." Severus tone was quietly bitter. He knew the truth of his own worth.

"You wouldn't have said that once," Bellatrix countered. "There was a time when you thought I outshone anyone." She stood before him now, too close. He could see the small, discoloured smudge at the corner of her lips from the wine and smell its tannic weight, warm on her breath.

"You saw what you wished, Bella. Life is not that simple."

"Are you trying to suggest that you didn't want me at all? You made a pretty good show of it." She stepped closer. Severus thought perhaps he could feel the heat of her body; he was certainly more than aware of the heat of his own. He knew he should step back, but his body wouldn't respond, at least not to that command, although it did seem to be responding in other ways.

"No, I wanted you; I just never loved you," he countered. She splayed a hand suddenly on his chest, and Severus twitched at the contact. The moment's inattention was all Bellatrix needed; she pushed him backwards, and his knees buckled as they caught the edge of the chair behind. Before he could gather his thoughts and decide whether he ought to reach for his wand, Bellatrix was on his lap, straddling him and pinning him to the chair.

"Where did love come into the equation?" she demanded breathily, her hands beginning to work the line of buttons securing his robes. Seemingly finding the process too tedious, she ripped at the robes instead. Buttons scattered, bouncing on the wooden floor with dissonant pings. Her mouth replaced her hands on his bared chest whilst her hands slid lower. Severus groaned.

"Perhaps it shouldn't have," he admitted, struggling to focus on the words. It had been too long, and she was damn good at what she was doing to him.

She slid off his lap to rest on her knees before him. She freed him completely from his robes, although she was still fully clothed, and her red lips replaced her hands once again. As she took him into her mouth, Severus threw his head back and closed his eyes.

Suddenly, Severus felt something tighten around his wrists where they lay along the arms of the chair, and Bellatrix's ministrations ceased abruptly.

He opened his eyes to find his arms bound to the chair and Bellatrix stood over him smirking, wand in hand.

"What the hell are you doing?" Severus demanded, slight panic beginning to buzz in his veins. He cursed himself for his stupidity in letting his guard down, especially around a woman as unhunged as Bellatrix.

Bellatrix cackled. "So you admit you were wrong to turn me down?" she asked with a smug grin.

Severus stared at her. So this was all this was then pay back for the past? He relaxed a little, although he was acutely aware of the ridiculousness of his situation bound, naked and erect in the middle of his own living room. "Yes," he said slowly. "Now do you intend to untie me?"

"Oh, I think not," Bellatrix said with a vicious smile. She leant in, kissing him cruelly with bruising pressure, then turned and strode towards the front door, her departing heels clicking loudly in the silence.