

Reactions to Cameras

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Chapter 1 of 1

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With a scowl that had made even the Bloody Baron shrink back into a dark corner, Severus Snape was stalking through the corridors of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. His goal: the staff room.

Just why Headmaster Dumbledore had called everyone there merely two hours before the students were scheduled to arrive was beyond the Potions master. He suspected, however, that it would involve pastries, sugary tea and him being forced to be social.

Snape's scowl darkened. He had no interest whatsoever in being social. He did not want to hear about colleagues' summer adventures while sipping on Madam Pomfrey's herbal tea. And he sure as hell did not want to taste Hagrid's rock cakes. He wanted to be in his quarters, in the dungeons, enjoying a last glass of Odgen's in peace and quiet before the dunderheads arrived and demanded his attention.

But no such luck for Severus Snape. The Headmaster had called, and the Headmaster's word was the law. Not showing would just not do. Trust Dumbledore to take the entire staff on a field trip to the dungeons, if the Potions master refused to make an appearance.

And so Snape gritted his teeth, said his prayers and opened the door to the staff room. What he saw, however, made him almost turn and run.

His colleagues were seriously getting battier by the year. The students would be arriving in less than two hours, and here they were, the teachers, the nurse, the librarian, the caretaker and the grounds keeper, chatting merrily and smiling inanely. And apart from the smiles, each and everyone seemed to be wearing their best robes. What was going on? Had they all been smitten by Lockhartian Fever? The twit had only been in the castle for thirty-six hours, and already he had everyone dressing up and smiling? Surely, there must be a cure against that.

Snape's eyes searched for the matron. Hopefully, she had a secret stash of Silly-Be-Gone Draught somewhere. But once he had found the matron, Snape wished he hadn't. What the hell was Pomfrey wearing? A bonnet? And had she curled her eyelashes? Snape blinked fiercely to clear his vision, but the bonnet stayed, and so did the curled eyelashes. Hell, she was even wearing mascara!

Beside the matron stood a little woman with grey hair. Snape frowned. Was that Sprout? Really? Where was her patched hat? He had seriously believed that this hat was permanently attached to her head. And was she wearing clean robes? And her fingernails, were they really dirt free? What was this? A parallel universe?

'Severus, dear boy, welcome. We have been waiting for you.'

Snape whirled around and came face to face with Dumbledore. His jaw dropped. The Headmaster had to be joking. Not even the gayest of wizards could pull off three shades of purple in one outfit! What was the old loon on?

'Everyone, Severus is here. We can start now.'

Start with what?

'Let me introduce Debora Lims, a dear friend of Gilderoy.'

Lockhart had friends? Snape had to fight hard not to laugh. Human friends? Surely, Lockhart's only friend was his mirror. There must be a catch. This so-called friend must be Confunded or something.

Confunded and holding a camera. Snape's blood froze to ice. Not a staff photograph. Anything but a staff photograph!

'Headmaster, there is a potion that needs my immediate attention,' he tried and was already half-way to the door when he heard the lock click. He shot Dumbledore a dirty look, but the Headmaster just smiled.

'You and I both know that there is no potion, Severus,' he said quietly, so no one else could hear. 'I sent an elf to check.'

Damn it! Snape felt his jaw tighten. Dumbledore had not bought his bluff, and now the door was locked. There was no way he was going to be able to get out of this ordeal now.

'Let us get into position, shall we?' Dumbledore exclaimed merrily. 'Hagrid, you and I should stand in the back row, I think. Right in the middle, as we are rather tall. Minerva, would you be as kind as to stand beside me? You are my deputy, after all. Filius, we brought a stool for you. Yes, Argus, you are supposed to be in the shot as well. And you, Poppy ...'

Everyone took their places. Everyone except Snape. He stood where he had stopped, half-way to the door, folded his arms in front of his chest and glowered.

'Severus, come on, now,' Dumbledore urged. 'Your spot is right here, in front of Gilderoy, between Poppy and Sybill.'

Front row? Seriously? Between those two bats? The old geezer had to be joking! They looked ridiculous, Pomfrey with her bonnet and Trelawney with her ... A shudder went down Snape's spine. Trelawney might be the worst Seer ever, but even she should have been able to predict that she was going to look horrid with that much rouge on.

'Severus!'

Had Dumbledore just used his teacher's voice on him? Snape cocked an eyebrow. That alone deserved a good curse. Sectumsempra, maybe. Surely, crimson would go just perfectly with those three shades of purple.

'Now, everyone, try to look relaxed,' the photographer said as Snape, very reluctantly, had taken his place between the matron and the Divination teacher.

He sneered. Relaxed? Did dear Miss Lims even realise what she was demanding?

'You're all too stiff. I'd like a more friendly atmosphere. Headmaster, could you put your arm around your deputy's shoulders? Yes, exactly like this. Lovely.'

Had McGonagall just giggled?

'Gilderoy, dear. Put your hand on the Potion master's shoulder, will you?'

Snape stiffened. He hated being touched by people. And this wasn't even people. This was Lockhart! Bathing in a tub full of Flobberworms would be more agreeable!

'And you two lovely ladies beside the Potions master ...'

Lovely ladies? Lovely? Snape started to doubt Miss Lims' eyesight.

'... could you move in a little bit? I am sure some female attention from two sides is going to make that scowl of his disappear in a heartbeat.'

Bloody hell! Snape's breath caught in his throat. What to do? Where to go? Pomfrey and Trelawney were only inches away, and it seemed as if Trelawney was about to crook her arm into his. No effing way! Once more, the tub of Flobberworms seemed rather tempting.

Before he knew what he was doing, Snape took a step backwards, bumped against Lockhart and ... What the bloody hell was that?

Please, Merlin, let this be Lockhart's wand that is poking into my lower back! Snape sent a silent prayer to the heavens. *Please, please, PLEASE!*

'And now smile, everyone.'

Click.

Lockhart inched forwards, and Snape was trapped in a hellish triangle.

'Lovely. Let's take another one.'

Click.

'One more.'

Click. Click.

Woman, stop it! Snape pleaded silently. Lockhart's, um, wand seemed to be growing harder with every effing click of the camera. He was pressing himself against Snape's back now. His grip around Snape's shoulder was tightening. And the poor Potions master had nowhere to run, since Pomfrey and Trelawney had now decided to hold hands right in front of his stomach.

'One more.'

Click.

Lims put down her camera. 'All d...'

There was a bang, the door flew off its hinges, Pomfrey and Trelawney landed on their bums, and the Potions master was gone.

'He left his cauldron on the fire,' Dumbledore said apologetically to the photographer and then helped the two women to get up. He had expected Snape to hate having his picture taken, but even he thought that his exit had been a little bit too vehement. The picture was taken. No need to be grumpy now. He could have stayed for some tea and cake.

Little did he know that Snape was already in his private bathroom, scowling and retching and desperately trying to get rid of the wet spot that Gilderoy Lockhart had left on

the back of his robes.

A/N: This is all my beta's fault. She told me to draw on my inner Gilderoy Lockhart and flash a Witch Weekly-winning smile for the staff picture.