

# Inevitable

*by sunny33*

Headmaster Snape contemplates his future at what is to be his last meal.

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Disclaimer: The characters do not belong to me. I only borrowed them for a few minutes.

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He looks around the Great Hall, studying the faces of children he has sworn to protect. Children who avert hate-filled eyes and spit his name through thinned lips. Children who live. He has noticed their numbers dwindling by the day and hopes those members of the aptly named Dumbledore's Army are faring well in the Room of Requirement. They think they are hidden, but the castle holds no secrets for the headmaster. His staff – wary, disappointed, and hostile – sit in silence at the head table. Only the brutal and dull-witted Carrows toast each other as the food appears.

He tastes acid defeat at the back of his throat. If only he could have told someone... anyone.

Magnificent food delivered by the house-elves fails to lift the weight of duty from his weary shoulders. The end of the war approaches; he can feel it in throb of the Dark Mark and the sudden, chill draught seeping in from beyond the main castle doors.

Still, he savours every bite. The greasy warmth of the roast beef, buttery potatoes, and baked carrots melts on his palate. Swallowing each mouthful, he mourns its passing as the meal progresses. The salt and savour of the main course relinquishes its place to the rich fruit pudding and sweet sauce, rolling over his tongue as he chews. If this is to be his last meal, he will pay attention to every nuance, noting the thyme and sage, the cinnamon and nutmeg, and the sweet, lingering fragrance of vanilla.

All too soon, the Beltane Feast is over, and he dismisses the children to their common rooms, his final dregs of coffee as bitter as the winter of his future.

It is time.

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A/N: This was written for Challenge Two of Round Two of the Snape-LDWS on LiveJournal. The prompts were the sense of taste and a feast.

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