

Chanson de Severus

by Squibstress

Severus watches. He reflects on how things went so far so fast. Not a true*chanson de geste*, since it follows none of the prescribed meters. But it is a romance of deeds, though some not as heroic as tradition would have it.

Chapter 1

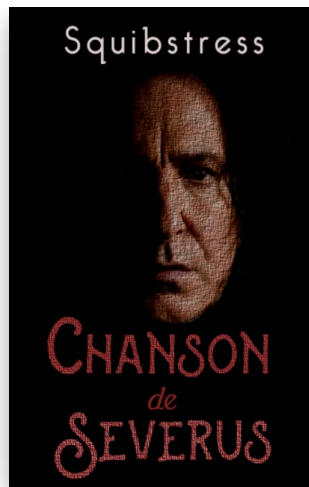
Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimers: Nope. I don't own the characters. Y'all know who does. (J.K. Rowling and her assignees.) I don't own the song, either. Belongs to Elvis Costello.

A/N: Oh, dear. I seem to have written a songfic. I didn't mean it, I swear, but I heard Elvis Costello's super-creepy "I Want You" for the first time in forever recently, and a nasty little plot bunny was born. Not even plot, really; just... well, you'll see, if you read it.

Elvis Costello wrote the song and holds the copyright (unless he's sold it). It appears on the album *Blood and Chocolate* (1986-Rhino). Maybe the copyright holders will forbear suing me if I provide a link to purchase the song/album: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B00005Y1Y0/theelviscostelloh>



I want you.

You've had your fun, you don't get well no more.

I want you.

Your fingernails go dragging down the wall.

Be careful, darling, you might fall.

The man who sits on the edge of the bed might be Petrified, except for the steady rise-and-fall of shoulders that is the only sign of animation in the room.

Wait, scratch that. The photograph on the bedside table...that's moving, too.

Rewind.

The man who sits on the edge of the bed,*etc.*

The long, white beard of the man in the picture is blowing in time with an unseen breeze, and the gnarled hand that sticks out from the absurd robes waves obscenely. The old man's sea-blue eyes twinkle, damn him.

Respiring or not, Severus Snape is a dead man.

Dead, for all intents and purposes, as the woman whose unblinking eyes hold his gaze to the corner of the small but elegant bedroom she so recently occupied. If the eyes, which she also occupied until precisely 10:24 p.m. GMT, no longer hold any terror for him, neither do they hold the promise of amusement, nor desire, nor denial, nor any of the other nouns in the mute lexicon he and she shared. Still, they command his attention.

Merlin-like, he lives backwards in time.

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I want you.

I woke up, and one of us was crying.

I want you.

You said, "Young man, I do believe you're dying."

The first time it happened, they could pretend it was an accident. He came to her broken in body and bloody in mind, and she took him in and healed his wounds and soothed his soul (he had one; he was sure of it), first with her wand and her hands, then with her body. She had wounds, too, he discovered, though none so visible as his.

He wept afterwards.

The next day he retreated into the dark double-life he had inhabited for 16 years, and she stepped out into the first blinding-bright morning of hers.

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I want you.

If you need a second opinion, as you seem to do these days:

I want you.

You can look in my eyes and you can count the ways.

It was love. He knew that as surely and suddenly as he knew that that the Dark Lord was a madman and that Albus Dumbledore was a bastard. She was the first woman who had looked at him and said to herself, "This will do."

For him it was forever. For her it was for now.

He knew that, didn't he?

She came to him with her doubts about Harry Potter and the war and, finally, about Dumbledore. The Headmaster hid things from her, she told him; she knew that, and she was mostly content to leave the *whats* and the *wheres* and the *hows* to Albus. She came to Severus for the *why*.

It was several weeks before he realized that he was a reagent of sorts. She needed him only to test the boundaries of her love for the man whose ring she wore.

He didn't care. Did he?

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I want you.

Did you mean to tell me, but seem to forget?

I want you.

Since when were you so generous and inarticulate?

He cared.

He had never been loved, so perhaps he didn't recognize it, but he needed to know. His Slytherin subtlety failed him, so he played Gryffindor for once and asked her outright.

She huffed and puffed around the question, then evaded it altogether by dropping to her knees and sucking his cock for the first time as he clawed his way through her raven hair.

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I want you.

It's the stupid details that my heart is breaking for.

It's the way your shoulders shake and what they're shaking for.

He watched. He was good at that, being a spy. He was not so much bat...as the snout-nosed scholars of Potions would have it...as spider, of the family *Araneidae*: he of the excellent vision and lying-in-wait.

It was there in the way their hands brushed behind the chair as she passed him to take her seat at his right in the Great Hall. But it was her eloquent shoulders that ultimately gave her away; the way they relaxed, imperceptibly to everyone but him, when the tall, elderly wizard reappeared after one or the other of his mysterious absences.

One night, after Dumbledore returned, hand crisp with the nameless curse running inexorably through his blood and magic, Severus tended him with care then left him to her. She came immediately from Albus' bedside to Severus' bed, and then she came again and again, as his pale, long-fingered hands tended her with care.

This time it was she who wept.

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I want you.

It's knowing that he knows you now after only guessing.

I want you.

It's the thought of him undressing you, or you undressing.

"I think he knows."

"Why?"

"He said something."

"What?"

"That I should take care of you. When he's gone."

"And will you?"

"How do you know he'll be gone before you?"

"Your compassion is staggering."

"As is yours."

"Come here."

"Be careful. You left a mark last time."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Did he remark on the mark?"

"He did not."

"But he saw it."

"We must assume that he did."

"Get up. Get out."

"Yes, Professor."

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I want you.

He tossed some tatty compliment your way

I want you.

And you were fool enough to love it when he said,

"I want you."

He didn't see her again for weeks.

Correction: He saw her. He just didn't see her alone. But he saw her. He saw her and he watched and he listened.

The old man was wooing her. It didn't take a master spy to notice it, either. Even that masturbatory marvel of a Potions professor, Slughorn, sussed it out. Made unsubtle (for a Slytherin) and unfunny (for anyone) jokes about it to Severus, of all people, thinking him, perhaps, a fellow traveler.

She was lapping it up, the bitch. Or rather, the queen, to coin a term more appropriate to her alter-species.

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I want you.

The truth can't hurt you; it's just like the dark.

It scares you witless,

But in time you see things clear and stark.

He sought her out in the high tower. The light hurt his spider-eyes, but he didn't care anymore.

He made her see stars, then they scuttled back down to the dungeons where they were both more comfortable; he out of custom, she out of a need for obscurity.

Touching her, he saw more clearly in the dark, and in time, she would see, too. Need could be love. He believed this.

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I want you.

Go on and hurt me then we'll let it drop.

I want you.

I'm afraid I won't know where to stop.

The first time he hit her, she hit him back. Not the next time, though.

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I want you.

I'm not ashamed to say I cried for you.

I want you.

I want to know the things you did that we do, too.

One night, when she cried out unexpectedly, he magicked the lights on. The dusky lividity on the patch of flesh he had not yet touched told a story he could not ignore because it did not include him.

He interrogated her until she wept, and refused to fuck her until she told him what he wanted to know. When she left, shaking and sated, he cried into his greasy pillow like a girl.

He told her about it the next time, and she told him not to waste his tears. He thought she said it to make him strike her, so he didn't do it. Instead he licked her like a cat until she purred.

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I want you.

I want to hear he pleases you more than I do.

I want you.

I might as well be useless for all it means to you.

The days grew longer and the time shorter, and the shorter it grew, the more he thought about the old man and the woman.

She still shared the Headmaster's bed, and although it no longer infuriated him, it obsessed him. The quizzes became routine.*What? When? Where? How?*

She had learned to answer his every inquiry; as soon as his questions no longer tortured her, they began to torment him. She answered forthrightly, as she did everything else...well, almost everything...and still he was drowning in interrogatories. They rushed in like the ocean to fill the void left by each answer.

Exempli gratia:

1. Why, when she had use of the old man's heart and body and mind, did she keep coming down to the dungeons from on high to avail herself of Severus' meager-by-comparison gifts?

2. Which would she choose, if she had to choose?

He broke down and asked her, and she laughed, saying, "Just take care that I dinna have tae choose, Severus."

For the first time since forever he wanted to live. He had questions.

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I want you.

Did you call his name out as he held you down?

I want you.

Oh, no, my darling, not with that clown.

Legitimacy provided no relief, except that it left her as breathless and glassy-eyed as it left him panting and granite-hard. That was a comfort, anyway.

He watched. He watched them in moments banal as budgeting. He watched them eating and sleeping and pissing. He watched them fuck and he watched them make love, and thus he discovered the difference.

He watched them argue and saw how the old man never hit her, even when she was cruel. He watched them reconcile and saw how the old man always made her scream with pleasure when he pressed her to the bed or the desk or the floor...wherever they happened to be when the argument hissed its last. At least, he thought it was pleasure; she never said.

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I want you.

You've had your fun, you don't get well no more.

I want you.

No one who wants you could want you more.

Dumbledore was to die; he knew it and the old man knew it. The only one who didn't know it was the woman they shared. No, not shared. Sharing implies complicity and harmony. Only Dumbledore was complicit and harmonious; Severus was a contrapuntal party to the triad, and she? She was the melody that ran through them both.

In the end it would be him. It was predestined; the old man had spoken, and nothing she could say or do would alter it by a single note, even if she had been in on the joke. They both danced to the Headmaster's tune, but Severus no longer wanted to change it.

He wanted to live and he wanted her to live with him.

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I want you.

Every night when I go off to bed, and when I wake up.

At day's end and upon waking, he spun plans. And in between he scowled. He skulked. He billowed. In short, he was himself, but to this glossary of Snape-verbs he added "plotted."

When the deed was done he would sweep her away; take both of them out of the reach of his two masters. Correction: one master. By that point he would be in the service of only one, his duty to the old man being fulfilled.

No longer would he watch. He would live, and he would live with her. Correction: for her.

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I want you.

I'm going to say it again 'til I instill it.

I know I'm going to feel this way until you kill it.

I want you.

I want you.

She didn't believe him.

He only discovered his mistake when he went to her after (but before the Potter brat had raised the general alarm), and she laughed.

When he dragged her to the window to see the Dark Mark floating high above the castle, though, then she believed.

But it stung like a hex, her initial refusal to understand what he had done and why. Time was short, and she had to see that her way was clear. He was her way, and always would be.

She could be cruel, he knew that, but he never expected this. Not this willful, hurtful blindness. She closed her eyes and would not look at him. He tried again and again to make her, until he was so close he could feel her breath coming in short, moist puffs against his neck.

She didn't open her eyes until his long-fingered hands closed around her throat. Then she looked at him, her irises boring green fury into his brown. He was patient, and waited until the fury turned to terror, and still he waited, squeezing, but the eyes never held what he craved. He followed them down as her own hands lost their force and dropped from his forearms...one desperate, futile clawing for her wand their final act...until the irises rested at knee-level, unseeing.

He moved away until his the backs of his knees hit the bed and he sat.

And he watched, still as death.

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Oh, my baby, baby. I love you more than I can tell.

I don't think I can live without you.

And I know that I never will.

Oh, my baby, baby. I want you so it scares me to death.

I can't say anymore than "I love you;"

Everything else is a waste of breath.

~FIN~