

Arithmantic Moment

by Rose of the West

Written for Cecelle during the 2010 Snape_LDWS secret santa exchange. Vector visits the Headmaster with some holiday cheer and a question.

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He peered at her, looking as though he would slam the door in her face, so she held the gift bag up and stammered, "It's just a little Christmas cheer, Headmaster."

He seemed to like the shape of the bag. "Some swill, I assume, Septima?"

It got her into the room. "No, actually it's from France. They use the *saccaromyces bayanus* instead of the *cerevisiae* for fermentation. There's a different tang to it. I thought you might..."

He removed the cork and held a glass to her lips. "You'll join me... to prove it's not poisoned."

"But Se—" She had to stop talking to keep from choking.

She already knew she loved this wine, and when her face showed that, he drank his glass. He looked at her, surprised. "This is excellent! Why?"

"The numbers tell me that there's more to the story."

He frowned. "Leave the numbers alone."

"But Se—" It wasn't wine but his lips that stopped her this time. His tongue explored her mouth, searching for another taste of the wine, perhaps. She recalled similar moments and went limp. His arms went around her, pulling her close against him. Her arms went around his neck, and her knee was starting to rub up around his when it stopped suddenly.

"Calculate something else for now, Septima," he whispered. "Maybe later..."

She was suddenly outside the closed door again, with his quiet "Happy Christmas" in her ears.

A/N: Merry Christmas to Cecelle, whose requests included Snape/Vector and the word saccaromyces.

Thanks to beta reader Trickie Woo for keeping an eye on things.