

Open-minded

by Pyttan

The Dark Lord is curious about a rumour ...

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Many thanks to my fantastic beta, Diabólica.

I also want to thank Valkyriekat. She came up with the prompt at the Dark Art's LDWS. The prompt was Severus Snape/Legilimens.

Open-minded

He watched Severus sitting opposite him on the other side of the desk.

The information Lucius had provided him was not all that remarkable, but he still wanted to know the details: how Severus's supposed change in circumstance had come about.

"Rumours are flying, Severus."

"Rumours, my Lord?"

"They say you have inherited a house."

"I'm afraid not, my Lord. That's a misunderstanding on their part."

Severus had revealed his emotions readily when he had joined the ranks of the Death Eaters, but not anymore. It was disturbing the way Severus had changed: always so polite, yet so self-contained.

Bellatrix never kept her emotions to herself. She gave him everything. Lucius tried, at times, to contain his, but his success was limited. Narcissa had been like an open book, but the pregnancy had changed her – she was wary now. Annoying but inconsequential.

"So, how has this rumour started then?"

"My father has disappeared. No one seems to know where he is. I assume he will resurface eventually."

He looked into Severus's steady gaze and tried once more. He prodded hard at Severus's mind, letting the spell engulf them. He had sneaked into it so many times, only to find mundane situations and thoughts. Nothing useful. Nothing significant.

But this time was different. The push was hard enough for him to fall into Severus's memories with unexpected force. And images assaulted him.

A tall man with greying hair and a large, hooked nose.

The man screaming in agony, clawing at himself.

The man turning inside out.

Flesh falling off bones.

A beating heart on a pile of quivering flesh.

Bones.

Blood everywhere.

So much blood.

The pictures were gone again, and he was gathering his scattered wits, trying to control his breathing, not showing his state of mind.

Acidic jealousy rose.

His own parricide had been dispassionate by comparison. The end of a man who was essentially a stranger. A symbolic gesture. Nothing more.

What Severus had done was inspired.

Personal.

He made sure he kept his voice under control when he replied.

"I wouldn't worry, Severus. I'm sure we can pick up bits and pieces that will form a picture of your father's whereabouts."

"Yes, my Lord. I'm sure we will."

"You may leave."

He was watching Severus as he rose from his chair, when he decided.

"Severus, send me Bellatrix."

"Of course, my Lord."

Severus opened the door and then, when he bowed, he also did something unusual: Severus looked up – meeting his gaze – and smiled.

And for the shortest part of a moment, he wondered if Severus's smile had looked smug.