

# Minerva's Mistletoe

*by MMADfan*

Minerva has some fun the first Christmas after the war.

## Christmas 1998

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Minerva watched as Severus untied the festive green and gold bow that encircled the flat, green-wrapped box. She allowed herself a small smile of anticipation as he carefully unstuck the charms holding the green foil wrapping. In typical Severus fashion, he folded the foil paper and put it to one side before lifting the lid on the long, flat box. He blinked.

"It's a necktie," Minerva said helpfully as he gazed in apparent bewilderment at his gift. "A Christmas cravat. I thought you could wear it to the party tomorrow."

Severus slipped a finger beneath the green silk, lifted it, and draped the cravat over his other hand. "I'm not certain, Minerva. It's a lovely thing, of course," he added quickly, trying to show some appreciation for the early Christmas present. "Very . . . elegant," he ventured, "but I am not certain whether it is something . . . whether it would complement my robes. Or my colouring." Although he occasionally charmed his robes green for a Quidditch match, his robes were predominately black...all were black, in fact...and, other than the one green-and-silver striped Muggle tie that he wore with his black Muggle suit, his ties ranged from silvery grey to charcoal to inky black. And none of them looked anything like this broad, scarf-like bit of neckwear.

"Nonsense, Severus," Minerva said, taking the cravat and holding it up to his face. "It will look quite fine on you! And it will go well with any of your robes, I am sure."

He fingered the fabric again and frowned thoughtfully. "It's silk?"

"Aye, and a fine one. Christmas tree green, as well. Be a little festive, Severus!" she said as she draped the cravat back in its box.

"Hmph. I am not a festive person, Headmistress." He eyed the ascot dubiously.

Minerva gave him a crooked smile as her eyes crinkled. "We'll see about that...meet me tomorrow afternoon at two in the old Defence hall, and we'll decorate it together as we discussed. You'll feel more festive after that, I'm sure. Nothing like a bit of holly, ivy, and fairy lights to get a person in the Christmas spirit!"

Severus affected to give a deep, long-suffering sigh. "As you wish, Headmistress."

Minerva laughed.

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"How was your afternoon, my dear?" Albus asked as Minerva entered their sitting room in the Headmistress's Tower. "Decorating go well?"

"Quite," Minerva replied, sending a basket sailing over to the sideboard. "I can't say that Severus has completely entered into the spirit of the holiday yet, but I think that he actually enjoyed the decorating...though I doubt he'd ever admit it. He did some lovely garlands along the edges of the tables. Very . . . well constructed and symmetrical. Pleasing to the eye."

Albus chuckled. "Well, I'm glad the two of you had fun."

"We did. I also introduced him to my Charmed mistletoe," Minerva added as she sat down in her favourite chair and put her feet up on the stool that scooted over to her. "Not quite as warm an introduction as you received, but a quite friendly one!"

Albus laughed out loud at that. "No wonder you had fun! But I do wish I had been there to see Severus's expression!"

Minerva grinned. "He was a wee bit startled, I believe. And disapproving. Thought it was frivolous and beneath me, I think he said."

"Hmph! I do believe you only want to play with that mistletoe so that you can kiss all the good-looking wizards on staff!" Albus said with a teasing grin.

"Oh, you do, do you? Hmph! We'll just see about that!" Minerva got a glint in her eye...and if Albus had seen it, he might have become just a little nervous about what she had in mind.

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Albus heard a ting-a-ling and felt a slight tickle; he and Sharon Carter, the Muggle Studies teacher, both looked up at the mistletoe dangling above them, and she laughed. Albus smiled good-naturedly as Sharon reached up and put her arms around his neck for a kiss.

After he had given her a gentle kiss on the lips, Sharon pulled Albus down and whispered in his ear, "I was hoping for an eligible wizard, but I'll settle for my favourite one!"

He chuckled at that as Helena Benetti, appearing to flee from one of Ezra Cahill's long-winded discourses, scooted up beside Sharon, leaving David Manning behind to suffer under the History teacher's unwanted tutelage. Manning was nodding, glassy-eyed, as Cahill held forth on Yuletide traditions. Cahill, unfortunately, had the ability to make the most fascinating topic boring, and the most boring topic, excruciatingly so.

There was a faint ring from the other side of the room, and Caspar Lloyd was now standing, solitary, beneath the Charmed mistletoe. He looked around for someone to come free him. Albus twitched a smile as he saw Olivia Ouellette, who'd been at school with Caspar, go over to him, ruffle his hair, and give him a peck on the lips. Everyone chuckled at Caspar's somewhat disappointed expression, especially the Slytherin Transfiguration teacher who had freed him.

Just as Albus turned to Helena, the mistletoe reappeared, this time, floating between him and the Quidditch coach. Her bright blue eyes twinkling up at him, the petite witch reached up and stood on tip-toe to accept a kiss from him. Albus was quite certain that the very pretty, very young, internationally famous Canadian Seeker would also prefer a kiss from an eligible wizard...and a much younger one than he...but he obligingly bent and kissed the young witch's lips, placing one gentle hand on her shoulder. It took a moment for the mistletoe to pop away and free them, and Albus was certain that Minerva, no doubt watching from across the room, was suppressing a smirk as he kissed the attractive young witch. As he drew back from Helena after the mistletoe finally vanished with a pop, Albus wondered whether Minerva were going to have him kiss every hapless witch who stood anywhere near him that evening, while not kissing a single wizard herself.

Part of his question was answered a moment later when he heard the ting-a-ling, and turned in time to see Minerva accepting a kiss from Stan Shunpike. The young caretaker was grinning now, and blushing as Minerva gave his arm a pat. Albus smiled. Poor boy. It was good to see Shunpike looking happy...he so often looked haunted as he walked the castle's corridors. A bit of fun would certainly be good for him. But then the mistletoe chimed lightly again, and this time, Minerva had trapped herself beneath it with Hagrid. She gave Hagrid a fond embrace as Hagrid put one arm around her and lifted her slightly as he gave her the required kiss on the lips. The half-giant had clearly overcome his earlier reticence when he'd been caught under the mistletoe with Pomona...perhaps the rum punch in his free hand was the reason for his new appreciation of the mistletoe game...but Minerva, always fond of Hagrid, just hung on and let him give her an enthusiastic smack on the lips before she made the mistletoe sprig pop away again.

Not long after, Minerva had slipped beside Ezra Cahill, freeing David Manning from the History instructor's drone, and the mistletoe reappeared above her. Albus thought Cahill looked inordinately pleased to be kissing the Headmistress, but Albus could hardly begrudge the poor wizard a kiss, as it had likely been many years since he'd received one, especially from an attractive witch.

The party continued, Minerva popping the mistletoe around at intervals, catching various couples beneath it, including himself and Sarah Duffy, who had giggled for ten minutes after he'd kissed her. Hoping to have a moment's peace from the mistletoe, Albus found himself a seat on one of the small sofas, settling down to have a little nibble of a mince pie. Pomona came over, flopping down beside him.

"The food is fabulous," she said. "I can tell I'll need to go on a diet after this holiday!"

"Nonsense," Albus said, "you appear in the bloom of rugged good health!"

Pomona laughed heartily at that. "Well, a little extra labour in the greenhouses won't be amiss." She eyed the last bite of mince pie as Albus popped it into his mouth. "You're enjoying the holiday fare, as well, I see."

Albus nodded, flicking his finger and ridding his beard of the few crumbs that had fallen from the crust. He finished chewing and said, "But I'll be on a diet after, whether I decide to or not."

"Minerva be after you?" Pomona asked, her gaze straying to the food buffet.

"Or Wilspy." Albus gave a sigh. "They do tend to want to look after me, which means filling me up with fruit and veg."

Pomona chuckled. "We should enjoy the pies while we can, then, Albus!"

"Does Filius feed you fruit?" Albus asked.

Pomona got a naughty twinkle in her eye. "Oh, yes, he feeds me fruit . . . though I don't think it's my *diet* he's thinking of at those times!"

Albus blushed and chuckled.

"Flirting with Pomona again, Albus?" Filius teased, coming up beside him. He handed Pomona a small plate with a piece of chocolate cheesecake on it.

Albus shook his head. "I know I couldn't compete with you and your chocolate cheesecake, Filius," he said with a smile.

Pomona moved over and patted the sofa, and Filius sat down between the two just as the tell-tale tingle chimed overhead and the mistletoe appeared. Filius looked up in

consternation to see that the mistletoe was between himself and Albus.

Albus grinned. "Well, Filius, time for a kiss...we're both stuck here, otherwise!" Albus bent and gave the little wizard a quick peck on the mouth before the other wizard could blink, and the mistletoe popped away immediately.

Pomona laughed at the expression on Filius's face. "Come here, love, and I'll give you another, better one!"

Filius, scooting closer to Pomona and further from Albus, obligingly turned his face up for a kiss. Albus chuckled and stood. He was sure now that Minerva was going to pester him with the mistletoe all evening...perhaps until he was caught under it with her. He wandered over to the drinks table and got a cup of creamy hot chocolate from the steaming fountain in the centre of the array of drinks. Best to get his kiss from her now and then be able to enjoy the rest of the party without having to kiss anyone who happened to be within arm's reach of him.

He crossed over to where Minerva was standing with Poppy and Carleton Rath, the somewhat gangly assistant groundskeeper, chatting about Charmed sleds...it seemed that Poppy had bought one for each of her nieces and nephews over the age of three, and she was concerned because there'd been no snow in their area yet that season, and she feared they'd be disappointed with her gifts.

Albus put an arm around Minerva and gave her a squeeze. She smiled up at him.

"Enjoying the party, Albus?"

"Oh, quite, my dear! It's lovely!"

"You have cocoa in your mustache," she whispered.

"Ah!" He flicked a finger and his mustache was clean again. "Mustn't have that...the next lucky witch to be kissed by me might not be as fond of hot chocolate as I am."

"I wouldn't know," Minerva said innocently. "How did you enjoy your last kiss?"

"Unexpected," Albus replied.

Minerva smirked. "Yes, it was, I'm sure."

Poppy laughed. "I saw that. Filius looked rather stunned."

"Pomona seemed amused, though," Rath said, glancing over at the couple.

"She has a good sense of fun," Minerva said. She turned to look at the two. Pomona was just getting up and starting toward the buffet of sweets.

The Hufflepuff paused when she heard a ringing behind her. Filius was now sitting alone on the couch, trapped under the mistletoe. Pomona grinned as Vector pretended to dive at Filius. As Verity gave the Ravenclaw a pseudo-passionate kiss, the little wizard's blue and silver cap fell off, and she ran her fingers through his fluffy white hair. The mistletoe popped away, and the two separated, Filius fanning his face with his hat and Verity standing up and laughing.

"I think I'll go try a piece of that chocolate cheesecake that Pomona raves about," Minerva said, stepping away from Albus.

"Perhaps I could fetch it for you, my dear," Albus began, thinking to offer a slice to Poppy, as well.

"No, no, that's fine. You have fun...I'll just mingle a bit, myself."

Albus watched as Minerva examined the chocolate cheesecake, seeming to pay no attention to him. Hmm, no kiss from her yet.

"Anyway," Rath said to Poppy as he stepped back from her, "I do suggest the area near Pembrey for snow. It's not far from where you say you'll be, and there's a small wizarding ski area there...your sister or brother-in-law likely know of it. They have a small hillside set aside for children's sledding, and they always have very good snow...they've weather charms that help with that even in a mild winter."

"Thanks, Carleton," Poppy said. "I think I've heard of it, myself, but I've never been there."

"You could probably arrange a Portkey or two," Albus interjected helpfully. A light chiming interrupted his suggestion, and he looked up to see the mistletoe hovering above Poppy. Perhaps Rath could free her; but no, the Charmed sprig was closer to him. He'd been caught again. "Well, Poppy?"

Poppy smiled and placed her hands on his upper arms as he embraced her lightly and brought his lips to touch hers. The mistletoe didn't pop away immediately, though, and his kiss continued as he waited for Minerva to decide she'd had sufficient fun with him...and with Poppy, since he was fairly sure that she was taking the opportunity to tease Poppy just a bit, too. Reminding her, no doubt, of her discomfort kissing him the previous spring when he'd been "Robbie." As Poppy returned his kiss, it occurred to Albus that perhaps Poppy had enjoyed kissing Robbie a bit more than she'd thought she should . . . The mistletoe finally vanished with a small pop, and Albus broke the kiss, but gave Poppy a quick hug.

"Better than kissing Robbie?" Albus asked with a smile.

Poppy laughed. "Oh, just a bit, perhaps! Though I did like his shy little smile!"

The two were laughing at the memory when Minerva returned with a piece of chocolate cheesecake, only a small corner of it gone. She handed it to Albus. "It's a bit rich for me at the moment, but I thought you might enjoy it. I brought an extra fork in case you'd care to share it with Poppy."

"Oh, I don't think so, Min. I've had enough sweets for the evening, I think," Poppy said with a smile. She looked over at the corner where Severus sat alone. Her eyebrows drew together. "Perhaps you might bring Severus something, though. I don't know if he's having a good time, sitting all alone over there."

"You could bring him something, my dear," Albus suggested to her, "though he's not alone now." Verity Vector had come over and sat down on the arm of the Potions master's chair. "Verity will keep him company for a while, I'm sure."

"Huh, yes . . ." Poppy looked at the cheesecake. "Well, maybe I'll have one bite of that, after all, Albus."

Albus continued to kiss witches all evening, Minerva always adroitly leaving his side whenever he came up to her hoping for a kiss, and immediately having him kiss someone new. He was certain that she had deliberately popped the mistletoe over him and Caspar Lloyd when the two were in the middle of discussing the Holyhead Harpies. Caspar had been much more relaxed about it than Flitwick had been, though, even throwing his arms around the former Headmaster's neck, then laughing when the mistletoe disappeared.

"I'd say that someone thinks you don't get enough loving," Caspar said. "Who haven't you kissed yet?"

"Just Minerva and Olivia...of the witches, anyway," Albus said.

"I got one from Liv," Caspar said with a sigh. "I'd been hoping for one from Helena, or maybe Sharon, and there she sprang in to give me a chummy kiss. You've all the luck, Professor."

Albus chuckled. "I suppose so." Luck had little to do with it, but he wouldn't tell Caspar that.

"What are you two talking about?" Olivia asked. "Did I hear my name?"

"Just said to Professor Dumbledore how you and he are the only ones I've kissed under the mistletoe tonight," Caspar said with an exaggerated sigh and sad shake of his head.

Olivia grinned and opened her mouth to say something, but then the mistletoe reappeared. She looked up at it. "Well, Albus, what do you say? I had one from this boy here already," she said with a smirk.

"Happy to oblige," Albus said with a nod. He bent slightly and gave the tall witch a light kiss, and the mistletoe popped away.

"My father sends his greetings, by the way, and wishes you a happy Christmas," Olivia said.

"What's he up to these days?" Albus asked curiously.

"He's helping a group of Healers and Potions masters who have formed a committee to petition the Ministry to ease their restrictions on blood use in Potions work. He's having a good time with it," Olivia said, taking a sip from her glass of mulled wine. "Mum likes it because it gets him out of the house more, but he does tend to go on a bit too long about it at inappropriate times."

"Inappropriate times?" Caspar asked, nodding at David Manning, who had come up beside him.

"Well, Mum thinks that when they're having a formal dinner, discussing blood-letting is not the best topic over the meat course."

David chuckled. "Blood-letting? Sounds appetising!"

Albus filled the Astronomy teacher in on the topic of conversation, and soon, a few others joined them in a lively discussion of the ethics of blood-use in Potions work. He was happy to see Severus approaching...he might have something of interest to add and, as a result, feel more like a part of the group. Rather to Albus's surprise, though, Severus was caught by the mistletoe before he reached them. He'd thought that Minerva had said that Severus was averse to being a part of the mistletoe game. Perhaps Severus had changed his mind. It seemed as though he didn't mind kissing Hogwarts librarian Laura Walker Manning, however, and she seemed pleased enough. Personally, if he were in charge of the mistletoe, Albus thought, he'd have Severus kiss a few of the unattached witches. Pretty young ones, like Sharon and Helena...or perhaps Verity. Verity seemed to appreciate Severus.

Much to Albus's pleasure, Severus did come over, and he even joined the conversation...but then he was caught beneath the mistletoe again, this time with Pomona. Not a good choice, in Albus's opinion, though Severus was gentlemanly about it...if a bit stiff. Minerva should match him up with a nice eligible witch. Helena would be a lovely choice for him, with her long black hair and high cheekbones, or Sharon, with her lovely blond hair and dark eyes . . . Albus saw Poppy gazing at them from across the room, and he smiled at her, encouraging her to come over and join them, but she didn't seem to see him. Probably dazed from whatever it was Cahill was going on about. Beside her, Hagrid was just swigging something straight from a bottle and smiling down genially at the pretentious waffler.

"Something funny, Severus?" Sharon Carter asked. She had come up soon after Severus had kissed Pomona.

"Not really. . . . Well, yes, but not very nice," Severus replied with a fleeting smile.

"What?" Sharon persisted.

"I was just imagining a never-ending party, where the guests never change, the food and drink are always the same, and the music always repeats, on and on unceasingly."

"That sounds like hell," Olivia Ouellette exclaimed.

The corners of Severus's mouth turned up. "Exactly my thought."

Albus laughed with everyone else.

Minerva came up to the little group and put her arm around Albus's. "I missed something?"

"Ah, my dear, Severus just told us that a party with us is hell!" Albus replied with a twinkle.

"What?" Minerva laughed, though she looked taken aback.

Olivia broke in. "Dumbledore is refining the punch line to its minimum, but leaving out the essential details!" The Slytherin Transfiguration teacher related Severus's "joke," and Minerva laughed.

"Well, this party won't be unending, and Filius has changed the music, so I think we're safe from being trapped in Severus's nightmare. In fact," she said, looking up at Albus and giving his arm a squeeze, "I think that this music is actually danceable."

"I can take a hint," Albus said, and the two moved away from the group, dancing to the music Filius had selected, soft, but with a Latin beat.

Albus pulled Minerva a little closer, bending his head to murmur in her ear. "I didn't think I'd get you in my arms this evening, my dear Headmistress."

He felt her shrug slightly. "I can't imagine what gave you that idea," she replied.

"Oh . . . just the number of other witches you've had me embracing this evening." He lowered his hand just a few inches. After all, there were no students present to notice if his hand strayed a bit below her waist.

"I think they were all quite happy to have the most handsome wizard in the room give them a holiday kiss...good luck in the coming year for them, after all."

"Then Poppy's luck will be very good, indeed, if the length of time under your mistletoe is any measure of it."

Minerva just chuckled.

Albus's lips grazed Minerva's hair, and she pulled back a bit and smiled up at him. "Ah-ah-ah! No mistletoe, no kiss! That's the rule this evening for you!"

"Yes, Headmistress. As you wish! Always as you wish!"

"That's the spirit!" Minerva said with a grin. "I do enjoy it when you're so cooperative!"

"Was it really necessary for you to have me kiss Filius and Caspar, though?"

"Filius was a mistake. I didn't realise he was about to sit there. Caspar, on the other hand, well, he did express to Olivia his disappointment that you kissed Helena right after Olivia had kissed him. I thought I might perhaps alleviate that disappointment!" She smirked.

Albus chuckled. "You know very well that wasn't what Caspar meant."

"Really? That makes me think . . ."

Albus could feel Minerva slip her hand from his shoulder. A moment later, there was a little ting-a-ling, and Albus looked around. Carleton Rath was bending to give Caspar a kiss. "Oh, my dear! Poor Caspar!"

Minerva chuckled. "Oh, he's a good sport. Always has been since he was a boy. And I didn't want to leave Rath out of the game entirely, but he's a shy one and I didn't think he'd be happy kissing his former Headmaster."

"Unlike all of the witches in the room."

"Not all," Minerva pointed out.

"All but you."

"As you say."

They danced a while longer. "You know, the least you could do for Caspar is give him a mistletoe kiss with one of the younger witches...and one who's not, um, of the other persuasion as Olivia is."

"Oh, he and Liv are old friends, Albus. He's had his mistletoe kisses for the evening, I think. He is perfectly capable of getting another kiss on his own...or trying to, at any rate."

"Then why don't you give him a kiss, hmm? He used to have quite the crush on you when he was a lad."

Minerva laughed, remembering. "Alroy used to become quite impatient with him, I remember. Thought Caspar was completely cracked."

"He gave you a rather sweet Valentine one year, I remember. His second year?"

"Third, I think. Alroy was so embarrassed on his friend's behalf, he couldn't speak to me for a week after," Minerva replied with a chuckle.

"So give the boy a kiss so he's not stuck only with a couple of wizards and, um, Olivia," Albus said awkwardly.

"I don't think so," Minerva said, shaking her head. "You claimed I was only going to use the mistletoe to let me kiss all the good-looking young wizards at the party, and although Caspar's certainly not a boy any longer, he's certainly good-looking." She grinned up at him. "Of course, if you'd like another kiss with the good-looking young wizard, yourself...or with any of the pretty witches...just say the word!"

Albus shook his head. "No, no, there's only one witch I wish to kiss this evening, so no others, please."

"Very well, but you may have to wait a bit longer."

"I am a patient man."

"Good." Minerva leaned into him a bit more. "It's been a nice party, I think."

"It has been," Albus agreed.

"I think even Severus managed to enjoy himself a little bit. I was glad to see him join in more than he often does."

"That was good to see, I agree. Speaking of Severus, I was surprised he was caught under the mistletoe at all. I'd been under the impression he'd requested not to be subject to your game," Albus said softly.

"Ah. Apparently after conversing with Verity, he changed his mind. I think he didn't want to stand out from the crowd."

"You should have had him kiss someone appropriate for him...someone like Helena."

Minerva snorted. "Dancing with her at the Halloween party was painful enough for him. Kissing her in public would have been just a bit too much, I think. His only request was that it not be Sarah and not be a wizard. I thought Laura and Pomona would be sweet and safe for him, quite appropriate for the circumstances."

"What about Verity, then?"

"She might have done, if he'd been near her," Minerva agreed. She looked across the room, and with a nod and a slight press of her hand, indicated to Albus that he should look in that direction, as well. She slipped her hand into her pocket again.

There was a ringing, and the mistletoe was now dangling over Filius and Poppy, who were sitting together on a small loveseat. Poppy glanced around at Pomona, who was merely smiling, then the mediwitch shrugged and leaned over to kiss the Charms master. She almost immediately stood, however, and headed away toward the corner where Severus was again sitting alone.

"That was almost the last of the evening," Minerva said.

"But not the last," Albus replied questioningly.

"No, not the last. I believe that the very last one will be reserved for the most handsome wizard and one particular lucky witch," Minerva said with a smile.

"You know what Severus said to me earlier?" Albus asked, an impish glint in his eyes.

"That he's not the festive sort?"

"No. He said that you were becoming almost as manipulative as I am."

Minerva chuckled. "Ah, that sounds like Severus. But if it were you, you'd have some grand scheme behind the game...trying to set him up with some bonnie witch, for example. I'm looking only to this evening's fun and helping people relax a wee bit more in a holiday atmosphere."

Albus shook his head. "I thought your aim was to teach me a lesson."

"If that's one result, I shan't complain! And it's to your benefit, after all."

"Hmpf." Albus suppressed a smile and tried to look disbelieving.

"One is never too old to learn something new, Albus!"

He laughed. "Whatever you say, my dear! Would you care for something to drink?"

"Oh, perhaps another glass of mulled wine might not be amiss," Minerva replied.

The two stepped over to the drinks table, and Albus ladled some mulled wine into a cut-glass cup for her.

"A slice of orange in it," Minerva requested as he was about to hand the cup to her.

Albus inclined his head and fished out a slice of orange and added it to her cup.

"It's very good this year," Minerva said, taking a sip. "A couple years ago...the Christmas before everything...remember Filius and Pomona's party? The mulled wine had entirely too much cinnamon in it, and some other spice I couldn't recognise. It was far too sweet, too. Then they floated apple slices in it. It was as though they'd confused hot spiced cider with mulled wine."

"I rather liked it, myself," Albus said. "I think it had honey in it."

"Well, I prefer this. A touch of cinnamon, a wee bit of ginger root, a little anise, a modicum of sugar, and some nice citrus fruits floating in it. That's the way mulled wine should be. But don't tell Pomona...I think it was her recipe," Minerva added in a whisper.

"Never a word, Headmistress!" Albus said with a grin.

"Never a word about what?" Poppy asked, coming up to them. "The identity of the Crazyed Mistletoe Madam?"

Albus laughed, and Minerva gave her friend a smile. "Why would you think that Albus knows anything about that?" she asked, a twinkle in her eye. "And no, it was about something entirely different."

Poppy shook her head. "Well, despite the shenanigans of a particular witch, this was a very enjoyable party. Thank you, Minerva. It was a lovely idea."

"I'm glad you decided to stay for it," Minerva said.

"I am, too," Poppy said. "It was good to have everyone together."

"Wish Violet, Dylan, and everyone a Merry Christmas for us," Minerva said.

"I will, and a Merry Christmas to you two, as well!"

"Happy Christmas, Poppy." Albus bent and kissed her cheek.

"Good night!"

After that, the staff began trickling by to say their good-nights and thank the Headmistress for the party. It seemed everyone had enjoyed themselves.

Severus stood from his chair in the corner and walked around the edge of the room until he reached them.

"The party is breaking up," Severus remarked, looking out at the emptying room.

"Yes, sadly," Albus said. He still hadn't had a mistletoe kiss with Minerva yet.

"It was a success, I believe, Headmistress," Severus said.

"Yes," Albus agreed. "Except in one respect."

Severus raised an eyebrow.

"I have kissed every witch but one...and even two wizards," Albus said with a rueful chuckle, "but the one witch I have wanted to kiss has not met me under the mistletoe!"

Minerva smirked. "That," she said softly, "is what you get for accusing me of only wanting an excuse to kiss all the good-looking wizards on staff!"

Severus snorted a laugh at that. "It didn't look to me as though you suffered at all, Albus."

"No," Albus agreed with a twinkle, "I didn't suffer! Though I do think that Filius will be keeping a wide berth for a while!"

Minerva laughed. "I had actually meant to have you kiss Pomona, and they moved at just the wrong moment! Caspar didn't seem to mind, though."

"We're both Gryffindors, my dear, ready to try almost anything once, just throw caution to the winds!" Albus chuckled, but Severus only winced slightly and shook his head.

After Hagrid had come up and said good-night, giving Minerva a kiss on the cheek without benefit of mistletoe, she said, "That was what gave me the idea for Rath, actually...Caspar being so good-natured about it with you."

"And Carleton didn't mind," Albus said.

"No, it was for his benefit. Caspar quite likes the ladies, himself, I believe."

"Did Lloyd ever get to kiss Helena?" Severus asked.

"No." Minerva chuckled and her eyes gleamed. "Actually, Olivia told me what Caspar had said about being jealous of Albus's kiss with Helena..."

"So you had him kiss me, yes, I know, very amusing, my dear." Albus shook his head. "Do you see what I have to put up with, Severus? I'm just a toy to be played with to her!"

Severus barked a laugh. "I think you enjoy it, too."

"He's got your number, Albus," Minerva said. She looked around. Only Filius and Pomona remained, cuddled together on a sofa, looking very comfortable and rather drowsy.

"Can we leave now?" Severus asked.

Minerva and Albus both laughed. "If you wish, but I still owe Albus his one special witch...but only after this, I think." She reached into her pocket, and before Severus knew what had happened, the mistletoe was hovering over his head. He grimaced and moaned.

"Well, make a witch feel unloved and unappreciated!" Minerva said, acting put out, though she had a twinkle in her eyes.

Severus rolled his eyes, but cooperated when Minerva pulled him down and gave him a kiss.

"Good night, Severus dear. Thank you for humouring me and for helping with the party. Everyone enjoyed it." She squeezed his arm, smiling, but with tears welling in her

eyes, remembering the way things had been for them all just a year before, and how they'd almost lost Severus that spring and again in the autumn. "I'm very glad you're still with us. We both love you, you know."

"Yes, thank you. It was a nice party."

Severus never really knew how to react to expressions of affection, poor boy, Albus thought, but Minerva was right to remind him that they both did love him. He hoped that Severus wouldn't feel alone and lonely during the Christmas holiday.

"And don't forget Christmas Eve in our suite," Albus reminded him. "Presents!"

Severus nodded. "Good night, Albus, Minerva. See you in the morning, I am sure."

Minerva smiled as she watched him walk away, then she turned to Albus. "One last mistletoe charm for you, Albus, if you can take it."

"Oh, I think I could."

Minerva reached into her pocket and stroked the little matching twig she kept there, and the mistletoe popped over their heads with a little ring.

"May I have the pleasure of a kiss, Headmistress?"

"Indeed," Minerva replied, reaching up and putting her arms around Albus's neck. He embraced her, pulled her close, and kissed her.

As their kiss continued, Albus could hear Severus, Pomona, and Filius leave the room, and then he felt a tingle of magic coming from the door. He kissed Minerva once more gently, tugging her lips between his, then looked down into her eyes and whispered, "Best kiss of the evening. A pity to have had to wait so long for it."

"I preferred it now," Minerva said, "when we can have our own private party. Besides, you might not have appreciated it as much until after you'd had a few others to compare it to."

"A few others to compare it to?"

"Well, a few more than a few. But I thought it might not be unpleasant for you to kiss a few pretty young witches, and it might be instructive at the same time."

"Oh, you do think you're amusing, don't you?"

"Very."

"It seems we've been given our privacy," Albus said. "Someone cast a charm on the door, I believe."

"Yes, Severus, if I'm not mistaken."

"It felt like him," Albus agreed. He kissed Minerva's cheek, lingering a moment and brushing his lips over her skin again. "Sad to think of him returning alone to the dungeons."

"Yes, it is, but let's not invite him back up here with us," Minerva said.

Albus chuckled. "I think not."

Minerva leaned against Albus, her arms well around him, savouring his solidity and warmth. "I love you."

"And I you, my sweet one." His hands travelled her back, caressing and cherishing her.

"I suppose we ought to leave, too," Minerva said with a sigh. "Let the house-elves get on with the cleaning up."

"I don't see why." Albus's lips met Minerva's again. "After all . . ." He kissed her once again. "We still have the mistletoe." He reached out with his right hand and Summoned one of the sofas, a camel-backed couch upholstered in deep blue velvet, several soft, down-filled pillows scattered on it.

Albus gently urged Minerva to lie back on the sofa, his arms still around her, his lips on hers, his tongue gently teasing hers, and his growing arousal pressing into her. "You excite me, Minerva, you and your games and your teasing," he whispered into her ear as he loosened her robes and slipped one hand beneath them to caress her breast. "With every kiss under the mistletoe, my desire to kiss you grew...did you know it would? Did you know that I would want to kiss you beneath the mistletoe, kiss you and then make love to you here beneath the mistletoe?"

"Ah, well, it was a hope of mine," Minerva whispered. "I was certainly ready for your kisses, for your kisses and more."

Albus's kisses continued, and they trailed down her throat to her chest. A whispered spell, and her robes opened to him and to his seeking lips, which teased their way over her breasts, finally pausing at a nipple. His breath was warm on her skin as the tip of his tongue circled her nipple then began to stroke and flick it. Albus's hands continued their task, opening Minerva's robes all of the way and then splitting her long, sheer underskirt with a wordless, wandless spell so that they could caress her thighs and tease her through her soft lacy panties.

Minerva wound her hands through Albus's hair, and now his mouth completely surrounded her nipple, lips, tongue, and teeth all sucking and teasing. She felt another tingle of magic, one that aroused her as it split her knickers open and allowed a finger to touch her directly. Albus's mouth moved to her other breast as one of his fingers played with her clitoris. His other hand had moved from caressing her inner thighs to massaging her buttocks, but now that hand was gone, busy at the front of his own robes, freeing his erection, which he pressed hard against Minerva's leg.

Minerva felt her climax approaching, and she reached down to urge Albus to move up. She found his penis and stroked two fingertips along its length, and she felt Albus shudder in response. He raised his head and slid up to kiss her lips, then he removed his fingers from her crux and grasped his cock. Albus raised up on his left hand to watch Minerva's face as he rubbed the head of his erect cock against her wetness, stimulating them both. Minerva held onto his buttocks, squeezing tightly and rocking her hips, increasing their pleasure, then she came, gasping, tingling ripples and waves of pleasure rushing through her, and she reached out through their bond and shared her pleasure with him. Albus groaned and thrust into her, pushing in deeply as her vagina pulsed around him. He stroked swiftly, rapidly bringing Minerva a second, gasping, whimpering climax on top of her first, and as that one, too, reached him through their bond, he felt the tension in his groin grow unbearable until it released a split second later, flooding him with pleasure as he came, thrusting once, twice, three times more, coming hard and deep inside her.

"Minerva! Oh, gods, Minerva!" Albus pushed in further as Minerva's hips rose up to meet him, and then finally, he relaxed, letting go, collapsing with Minerva's arms around him. A moment later, he opened his eyes. "Can you breathe?"

"Mmhm," Minerva murmured.

He relaxed again and let his eyes close. His head was resting beside hers, and he turned to kiss the side of her head, his lips finding her temple.

"That was rather nice," Minerva said after a bit.

"Rather nice?" Albus asked, raising his head.

One corner of Minerva's mouth turned up. "A bit better than nice." She gave him a squeeze.

"Hmph." He rested his head beside hers again.

Minerva laughed lightly. "All right. Very good. You know it, too."

"You were very ready for me," Albus said.

"Mmm. And you took good advantage of that," Minerva said with a smile.

He raised up again and looked down into her face. "Never would have thought you'd find having me caught under the mistletoe with other witches to be an alternative to foreplay," he said with a grin.

Minerva laughed at that. "Hadn't considered it that way," she said, her eyes sparkling, "but even if it was a rather interesting . . . *alternative*, as you say, don't become used to it! No warming up with other witches first! This was a holiday special, you might call it."

"No worries on that score...you're the witch who warms me up, the one I desire, and you know that." He kissed the tip of her nose. "What do you say to opening the Floo here and Flooing back to our bedroom and continuing this holiday celebration there? Perhaps with a bit of a charm this time...the *Apsterrere* perhaps?"

"You aren't tired yet?"

"The night is young...and we can sleep in in the morning. I'm sure that Severus will take care of everything in the Great Hall at breakfast if we aren't there."

"That, my dear Professor Dumbledore, is an excellent suggestion."

He nuzzled her hair. "I have a few more . . . including a rather nice one for New Year's Eve, if you're available, Headmistress."

"Mmm, the way I feel now," she said, "I think I will work to make sure I'm available!"

"Good." Albus kissed her lips sensuously a few times, lips moving against hers, pulling back and releasing, then returning again.

"Mmm . . ." Minerva stroked some of his hair back from his face as he kissed her once more then looked down into her eyes. "I would say that this mistletoe kiss was perfect," she said, "and perfectly timed."

"I agree. I don't regret the wait at all."

"I'll bring it with us," Minerva said as they sat up and rearranged their clothes slightly. "I think I'd enjoy trapping you beneath it a few more times."

"As long as it's with the Hogwarts Headmistress," Albus said, standing and holding out his hand to her.

"Of course. That is the most enjoyable way to trap you." She put one arm around him and kissed him, the other hand reaching into her pocket, and the mistletoe popped away, though not for the last time that night.

~*The End*~

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**Note:** Written for Hogwarts Duo for the Charming Roots Secret Santa Exchange.

A companion story to ["Twas the Night Before the Night Before Christmas."](#) Chapter 27 of *A Long Vernal Season*, a Severus Snape fic which is here on the Petulant Poetess.

**Bit of trivia:** If you've read *Resolving a Misunderstanding*, you may remember Olivia Ouellette's father, Oliver Ouellette, the Minister for Magic who, with Winston Churchill, meets with Minerva when Dumbledore's missing.