

It's Good to Have House-Elves

by Owlbait

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Lucius poured the last of the current bottle of elf-made wine into Severus's goblet and slightly onto Severus's lap and not-so-slightly onto the floor.

He stared blearily into the bottom of the bottle, then tossed it onto the growing pile in the corner and opened a new one. It was a good thing they had house-elves; it made for a much more satisfactory debauch if one didn't have to contemplate cleaning up later with a hangover.

Severus tipped his goblet back and took a deep swallow, then held it slackly in his hand and tipped his head back to watch the ceiling rotate.

"Valentine's day again," Lucius remarked.

"So it is," Severus answered, closing his eyes.

"Here we are again. Still no women. Witches."

"Alcohol has not dulled your powers of observation, I see."

"What happened to the women?" Lucius asked.

"Which women? Narcissa? She left you and took Draco, remember? Something about screwing up, getting them in trouble with the Dark Lord. Making you the laughingstock of the Death Eaters. Blahblahblah." Severus trailed off. Draco had been a dead bore, and he was still annoyed with Narcissa over that Unbreakable Vow incident.

"Don't remind me. Now the women on our side won't have me, and the Order women don't trust me. Sod them all anyway. What about you, Severus? You are all in good with the Order, vindicated at last, nearly got yourself killed by that damn snake. Headmaster again. There have to be women after you. Why are you here drinking with me?"

"The wine is better. The conversation is better. At least it was till now. You, at least, aren't trying to get into my robes just for bragging rights."

"Are they now?"

"Are they what?"

"Trying to get into your robes. Bragging about it."

Severus heard a touch of envy in Lucius's voice.

"They aren't bragging because they aren't getting there. Not a witch among them is worth talking to."

"What has talking got to do with it?" Lucius inquired.

"Eventually, there is breakfast. One must talk."

"Not really. What do you think silencing hexes were invented for, anyway?"

"Oh? Do tell me about all the beautiful witches you've seduced and then silenced over scones, hmm?" Severus lifted an expectant eyebrow.

"Narcissa would have hexed my bollocks off." Lucius promptly changed the subject back to Severus's love life and away from his own. "There was that Granger piece; you like smart women."

"Besotted with the youngest Weasley boy. Execrable taste. Pity. She might have become tolerable in time. Didn't Madam Malkin send you those silk boxers along with Draco's last set of robes?" Severus could change the subject too.

"She did. Green, with silver 'M's intertwined all over." Lucius shuddered and poured another glass of wine. "Don't even suggest such a thing. What about the youngest Weasley girl? You always liked redheads, Severus."

"I'll admit she is attractive, and she has a talent for hexes that is endearing."

The wizards paused when two house-elves stepped in obsequiously to clean up the mess in the room. One, dressed in a pink pillowcase, knelt and mopped the spilled wine from the parquet floor. The other, in a loincloth that might once have been a table runner before it became too spotted for use, picked up the empty bottles.

After a happy moment contemplating Ginny's charms, Severus sighed and concluded it would not do. "She's living with Potter. The idea puts me entirely off."

"I heard that isn't going well," Lucius said speculatively, "rumor has it she threw him out."

"Charming as that picture is and I assure you, it is very charming indeed. I can't imagine it will help me any."

"What about that Lovegood girl? She's pretty, of course I do like blondes. I don't think she despised you as much as the others did, Severus. Smart, without being a know-it-all. Not a Gryffindor, which is certainly an advantage."

Severus considered a moment. Luna was very pretty indeed, and the considering was pleasant. Alas, his conclusion was unsatisfactory. "I'm not certain how long I could fake a belief in Snorkacks of any horn shape. And I'm not certain she's available, McGonagall mentioned something over breakfast the other day. Thinks she's seeing someone, but wasn't clear on who."

"It's true then," Lucius said at last. "There aren't any women for either of us. How pathetic is that?"

"Not nearly as pathetic as my own state. I don't need Narcissa to hex my bollocks; they are quite uncomfortable enough on their own," Severus remarked with a wry expression and shifted uncomfortably in his chair.

Lucius looked down contemplatively into his own lap and threw back his current goblet of wine. "Enough. This is absurd. We don't need to be suffering like this, Severus." He pushed himself unsteadily to his feet, tossed his hair to his back with a decisive flick of his head, and walked over to stand in front of Severus's chair.

"We don't?" Severus looked up at him, confused.

"We could, maybe help each other?" Lucius looked suggestively at Severus.

The house-elves, having been completely forgotten, completed their cleaning and popped discreetly back to the kitchens.

Lucius put his hands on the arms of Severus's chair and leaned forward, drowning in the fathomless dark eyes. "Would you consider trying out for the other team?"

Severus looked shocked. "You know I loathe Quidditch, Lucius."

"Miffy is so happy for master and master's friend," the first house-elf said to her companion as they rinsed out the used bottles.

"Miffy doesn't know what she is talking about," the second elf told her.

"Topey doesn't think wizards should be together?" Miffy asked coldly. "Miffy thinks master and master's friend have loved each other for many years. Miffy thinks Master Malfoy and Master Snape have been very lonely. Miffy thinks sharing physical expression of their affection for each other will make them both happy, and Topey has no business thinking it is wrong."

"Topey thinks Miffy should let Topey get a word in edgewise."

Miffy, angrily washing bottles as hard as she could, gave Topey an indignant glare. "Go on, then."

"Topey does not think wizards having sex together is wrong. Topey thinks master and master's friend together is not going to work out well."

"Why not?" Miffy asked, her curiosity engaged.

"Topey has seen this before. Master and master's friend are not gay, they only try this when they are very very drunk. Too drunk to remember they are not gay," Topey told her sadly.

"This has happened before? They do not speak like it..."

"They do not remember. Topey had to erase both their memories. Then Topey had to iron Topey's ears."

Miffy looked horrified. She reached up and touched one ear tip with her fingers and shuddered. "We must not let this happen. What can we do?"

"Let me see what they are doing." Topey appeared silently back in the library behind the sofa.

Lucius had apparently, finally managed to make his meaning clear.

At first Severus looked repelled at the notion, but then apparently thought again. He looked speculatively back at his old friend. At least Lucius was pretty. And, really, it had been so long since he'd shagged anyone that he wasn't prepared to be picky about anatomy.

"I know you would be the soul of discretion," Lucius was just saying as he leaned down, moving slowly to be sure Severus wouldn't decide to hex him after all.

"OW!" both men exclaimed simultaneously, backed off and rubbed their respective noses.

"You were supposed to lean to the left."

"No, you were supposed to lean to the right."

"I did."

"Not your right, my right."

They glared at each other for a moment; Severus stood and said, "Hold still, for Merlin's sake." He stepped closer and slid his hand through that flaxen hair and behind Lucius's head.

Topey appeared back in the kitchen looking frantic. "Things is desperate! Miffy must go to library and stall for time."

"How much time? What will Topey do?" But she was speaking to empty air. Ears drooping sadly, Miffy took a towel and fresh wine bottles. She straightened her little shoulders and headed in to the library.

Ginny and Hermione were sitting in Hermione's library, putting paid to a second bottle of firewhisky. At least Ginny was. Hermione, good friend that she was, had forgone Valentine's day with Ron and had matched Ginny drink for drink. Not having Ginny's tolerance, she had passed out and slid sideways in her chair, head down on her arm. Ginny hadn't quite noticed yet.

"And then I told him ... I told him ... get out I told him," Ginny slurred to Hermione's hair.

POP

Topey appeared in the room between the girls. Hermione did not wake up. Ginny looked at the house-elf blearily. "Are you here to bring food?"

"Topey needs Mistress Ginny to come with Topey. Topey needs her help."

"Topey should look elsewhere." Ginny growled. "I can't help anyone else. I can't even keep my squid-be-damned boyfriend from running around."

"Mistress Ginny must come with Topey before Master Malfoy and Master Snape kills each other."

Ginny looked a little startled at the question. "Why should I want to stop them?"

Topey thought fast. The situation at the manor would degenerate very quickly if he did not intervene.

"Mistress Ginny would like to make Harry Potter very very upset?" Topey suggested slyly.

That got Ginny's attention and also cleared the fog somewhat. She had no idea what was going on, but the idea of pissing off Harry had tremendous appeal just now.

"Yes, Topey, Mistress Ginny would like this very much. Let's go."

Topey pulled Ginny by the arm into the Malfoy library. It looked like they were just in time. Lucius and Severus were standing at opposite sides of the fire and wands were out. It appeared as if they would be hexing each other, just as soon as either could resolve the other into a single image.

Ginny stood silent for a moment, contemplating the scene. Why should Harry be the only one with a pet blond, hmmm? Then there was Snape. She had not been so convinced he was a git as Ron and the others at school had been, although it had been fashionable to say so. He did know how to cast a mean hex. Best of all, Harry would want to curl up in a Lethifold and die if he heard. *Oh yes. Must make sure he hears, then.* Ginny's eyes brightened and with a grin that verged on a smirk, she announced herself:

"Good evening, gentlemen. Your house-elf said I was needed?"

Both men jumped, and for a second, two powerful Dark Arts wizards had wands trained on Ginny. She felt a sudden jolt of arousal at the notion, and her wand hand twitched.

Lucius was the first to grasp the essentials of the new situation. He lowered his wand and staggered elegantly to take her hand and kiss it. He looked significantly past her shoulder. "Thank you, Topey, you have done very well. You may go."

Topey stroked his ears happily and vanished.

Severus, only a moment behind his friend in the uptake, also lowered his wand and walked around to Ginny and Lucius.

Lucius welcomed Ginevra graciously to his home. He suggested that he was well supplied with fireplaces and clothes would really not be necessary. He did not make this suggestion with words so much as he implied it by kneeling before her and unbuttoning her robes with maddening deliberation.

Severus, meanwhile, stood behind Ginny and distracted her from Lucius's argument by placing both hands on her shoulders and kisses on the side of her neck, just where it reached her shoulder.

Ginny's head tipped aside to make room for Severus's, and she leaned back against his chest. Standing was starting to become a problem. She'd forgotten where she'd left her knees. And her robes. Oh, gods, this was wonderful. Ginny purred blissfully and melted into Severus's arms.

Ginny cracked an eye open on the mid-afternoon sun and squinted. Ugh. Want to die. Revenge was sweet. Sweet, salty and somewhat sticky, but it came with a ghastly headache.

Someone put a goblet of something cool and herbal to her lips. Not considering whether accepting random beverages in Malfoy Manor was a good idea, she drank. Apparently it had been a good idea because she felt better immediately. Her eyes opened. Severus. Right. Potions master. Very much so.

"Thank you; that stuff is amazing." Ginny lay back and smiled at him. Revenge also apparently came with down pillows and silk bedsheets. "A girl could get used to having you around."

Severus smirked and handed a second goblet to Lucius, who was beginning to exhibit signs of consciousness, and sat back on the bed next to Ginny.

"Now you know what I see in him," Lucius remarked. He tipped his goblet to her and drank it down.

A memory nudged at Ginny, vying with satiety and two sexy wizards for her attention. Something Harry had said a few days ago. Something about Snape. Snape and Auror training. Occlumency, was it?

"Severus?" Ginny said.

"Mmmm, yes?" Severus paused stroking her leg and looked at her questioningly.

"Do you still have that appointment with Harry at the Auror office?"

"I daresay. I haven't heard it is cancelled." Severus looked as if his own headache might be returning. "Must we talk about Harry right now?"

"I was just thinking that you'll want to put this memory someplace safe if you are teaching Occlumency to the latest batch of Aurors." Ginny leaned back into Lucius's arms and ran a finger casually through the line of hair down Severus's chest. "It would be just awful, Severus, if Harry found out about tonight," Ginny told him with wide-eyed sincerity.

Severus leaned on an elbow and put his free hand over the small one on his chest. He brought the hand to his lips and kissed the tips gently.

"I believe there is a Pensieve next to Harry's office you could use," Ginny remarked.

"Ah yes, I see your point," Severus responded silkily. "I shall certainly take every precaution," he told her, turning the hand over and kissing the palm.

Prompt:

Severus and Lucius are working their way through the Malfoy wine cellar as they drunkenly bemoan the miserable state of their love lives. The Malfoy house-elves have finally had enough and decide to take matters into their own little hands.

With thanks to Muse Amusant for the help last night. Wishing you an endless supply of Sev's hangover remedy.