

Fortune and Men's Eyes

by kellychambliss

Severus upon waking . . .

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Heat. He is first aware of heat on his face, then a reddish prickle across his eyes.

He knows the red is not blood — he's a connoisseur of blood, and this is not wet enough to be fresh or sticky enough to be old — but otherwise, he cannot immediately place it.

He lies still, keeping his breathing even, his eyes closed. Severus Snape has long since learnt never to open his eyes as soon as he awakens. Far too often, he comes to consciousness with no clear memory of when or where he'd gone unconscious; he could be waking to anyone or anything. So he waits until he's sure of what he'll be seeing, and only then does he risk looking upon the world.

Just now, he knows beyond a doubt that he is not in his quarters in the Hogwarts dungeons. The light against his eyelids is too bright, the pillow too soft.

Pillow. Well, at least now he also knows that he isn't lying at the Dark Lord's feet or in one of *his* dungeons: Voldemort's amenities tend not to run to pillows. The absence of blinding pain is another clue to Snape that he has emerged safely from his most recent encounter with his Master's displeasure. Instead of the sickening, stabbing aftermath of the *Cruciatus* or worse, he feels only the mild aches of newly-healed wounds.

He cautiously sniffs the air — if he's going to be Albus Dumbledore's lapdog, he may as well act the part — and catches a hint of citrus and spice.

Ah. He knows now where he is.

Minerva's bed.

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He opens his eyes.

The heat is sunlight; the reddish glow is the effect of the sun streaming through a gap in the curtains. It is morning, and he is in Minerva's bed, and she is sleeping beside him.

He is surprised, for he never spends the night here. They share her bed only for sex, and when they finish, he leaves, before any comforting post-coital languor can tempt him to lose himself in shadows and her arms. Until now, he's never even been in Minerva's rooms in daylight.

He comes here only in darkness, after he meets the Dark Lord, after he reports (if he is able) to Albus. He comes to Minerva, and she heals him.

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The first time he came was by accident. He had been on his way to the hospital wing when his curse-weakened legs had given way outside her chambers, and she had tended to him. She had been unexpectedly good at it: efficient and unfussy, with no trace of judgement in her voice.

He returned to her after the Dark Lord's next summons; it seemed less official than going to the hospital wing, and Pomfrey was given to hovering. He returned the time after that as well — and finally every time.

It was several months after his first visit that the touch of Minerva's calm hands lifted his nerves from pain into searing pleasure, and he had kissed her.

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Severus is not adventurous about sex. He wants the bed-curtains closed, he wants the candles snuffed, he wants to be on top. He wants to feel Minerva firmly beneath him as he thrusts; he wants her long hair loose in his hands. He wants, for the brief time that she yields to him, the illusion that he is keeping someone safe.

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He raises himself on an elbow and looks down at the sleeping woman, letting his eyes follow the still-lovely curves of her breasts. He likes that her body is not young and that she doesn't care; he knows that she will ask no perfection of his.

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He knows what he wants from her; what he does not know is why she is willing to give it.

When she had readily returned his first kiss, he'd found himself angry. He'd thought she was offering sex the way she would offer a potion, as another healing medicine, and he had pushed her away, hard.

"Charity for the wounded, Minerva, like the Muggle Red Cross?" he'd snarled. "You've already bandaged my arm; I don't need you to wrap my cock, too."

She'd looked him in the eye, always one of the few who would. "You have rather an exalted idea of the sort of charity you might be due," she'd said dryly and then had shaken her head. "Don't worry, Severus; I'm not feeling sorry for you. I don't offer pity for choices freely made."

She'd stood and waited, letting him know that the choice was his once more. So he'd made it, had pulled her to him, had kissed her again, and then had led her into her own bedroom.

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He doesn't know why, but she does seem to want him, even on his strict terms: he thinks he can read real desire in the way her body arches to receive him, in the way her legs curl round him, drawing him into her, in the way she holds him when she comes, crying out softly against his neck.

They never speak of other lovers, of their pasts, of themselves. And they certainly never speak of any future. He assumes she knows, as he does, that each coupling may be their last.

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He does not wake her, does not touch her as he leaves her bed and steps into the sunlit room. He will be back, he hopes, but in the darkness.

He will have no part of Minerva's morning.

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