

Threshold

by kellychambliss

Minerva and Severus at Hogmanay.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This series of four drabbles was written for the LJ community "Snape100," which each week offers a prompt for Snape-related drabbles. The prompt for this set was "First Footer," from the Scottish New Year's/Hogmanay tradition.

"Threshold"

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Minerva isn't surprised that Severus Snape does his First Footing the wrong way round. That's how he serves the cause of righteousness, after all: he comes to the light through the back by-ways of the dark. And though he is the first to cross her threshold every year, he does it by going out, not coming in.

So, if she is to be precise about it (and Minerva thinks it important always to be precise), Severus should not be called her First Foot, even though he brings gifts: whisky to her cupboard, wit to her fireside, warmth to her bed.

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Severus had been teaching only a few months when Minerva first invited him to visit her on Hogmanay night. She asked on impulse: he seemed adrift, lingering in the staff room aimlessly enough to suggest that he did not yet fully appreciate the enticements of solitude.

Still, his acceptance was unexpected and, initially, disappointing, for in truth, Minerva preferred to spend Hogmanay alone. She found, however, that her "alone" was not much compromised by the addition of Severus.

Over the years, they develop a routine: he arrives; they sit, sip, sometimes talk, and then, at midnight, move to her bedroom.

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It was on their second Hogmanay together that they became lovers, and now welcoming Severus to her bed is as much a part of the celebration for Minerva as the memory of the fireworks her father would magick into the air at the stroke of twelve.

Most often, they take each other slowly, comfortably; the passionate fires of Minerva's youth have cooled, and Severus, she thinks, was never

young. If their age difference ever gave her pause, that pause was brief – years of war and loss have taught her the folly of sacrificing too much present pleasure to propriety.

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After Severus spends himself inside her and brings her to completion with his delicate, sure touch, they lie beneath her grandmother's rune-stitched quilt and doze, his arm warm across her.

But it's never long – perhaps an hour – before Severus is awake and astir, dressing quietly. Only if he thinks her still asleep does he stop to smooth her hair or caress her cheek.

Minerva takes care always to be still asleep.

She leaves her bed only after she hears him leave her rooms, a dark man setting first foot out of the old year into the uncertain new.

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