

A Day And A Half In The Life

by Dementor Delta

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The arms of his chair were easily wide enough to accommodate a plateful of the savories laid out to welcome the returning staff if Severus Snape had so wished. This chair, its faded flower design popular in the decade before he'd been born, had been in the staff room as long as he could remember. It was heavy and old, the arms unfashionably broad now that sleeker furniture had caught up to even wizard fashion.

He was only here because he always came to the so-called festivities before school started every year. He'd tried to get out of them exactly once, when he'd first started teaching, and Albus Dumbledore had simply adjourned the staff party to the dungeons. Snape had got the point and had attended every year since. To not be here this year, the year that Harry Potter was to begin teaching, would have been admitting he didn't want to see the boy.

Seeing him, however, had been a bit anticlimactic, even by Snape's reclusive standards. Potter had swept in, amidst much back slapping and pleased smiles. And though he'd made several circuits of the staff room, he'd never been close enough to the snug corner where Snape had closeted himself to even acknowledge his former teacher's presence. Instead of the crackle of mutual antipathy they'd shared during Potter's school years, there was barely a ripple of awareness. For the best, he supposed, since they'd be working together.

A burst of laughter came from just behind the overstuffed armchair. Potter was not the only new teacher this year, only the most celebrated. Longbottom, long the scourge of Snape's dungeons, had signed on as Sprout's assistant, and the two boys were catching up loudly, as though anyone else in the room was interested.

Young men, Snape corrected himself absently. Men who'd joined forces with many of the teachers in this room, including Snape himself, to defeat the Dark Lord before Potter had even finished his education at Hogwarts.

Professor Flitwick had joined the knot of revelers, inching closer to Snape's chair-bound retreat. The little man pumped first Longbottom's hand, then Potter's, shifting the group closer to where Snape had tucked himself away. Snape glared at the small group, but the normally lethal eye-narrowing went unnoticed. Potter's back was to the chair; Longbottom beside him, and Flitwick, though facing him, was too short to see over the side of the chair.

Potter's back, Snape noticed, and his arse, were only a few centimeters from the wide arm of the chair. Snape draped the trailing edge of his robe over his lap as though it was an Invisibility Cloak. Neither Potter nor Longbottom were in their teaching robes yet. Potter was in plain khaki slacks. Khaki, that was, unbelievably, perching, without the slightest apologetic look backward to see if the chair was occupied, on the broad ledge of his armchair.

"I got Archimedes," Potter was saying, hiking up one leg for balance, "that huge old school owl. He always bullied Hedwig, but you'd have thought they were long lost nest-mates by the way he fussed over her when he dropped my letter off." Potter's bottom adjusted again on the arm of the chair, one leg dangling off the edge, hitting the side.

Snape, purely for the sake of making sure he remained unobserved, eyed the compact fundament covertly.

Before he could slide his eyes away, a house-elf popped in, just beside Potter's unanchored leg. With a jolt and a word Potter probably had never used in front of any of his

teachers, save Snape, he tumbled over backwards, straight into Snape's lap.

Startled silence overtook the staff room, as though every pair of lungs in the room was holding its breath. Even the house-elf, used to being treated kindly, cowered close to Longbottom's leg. Snape instinctively tried to move backward, but, caught up short by the unyielding back of the chair, found his fingers digging into the cheerful rose pattern of the arms.

Potter squirmed, trying to right himself, then blinked as he caught sight of Snape. His legs, still hooked over the wide arm, flailed until he realized he was just making things worse. Then his eyes, behind the round glasses he still wore, drooped languidly, and a half smile touched his mouth.

"Oh, hello, Snape," he said, "I was wondering when you'd turn up."

Relieved titters sounded someplace beyond the tiny encapsulated world of the armchair. Using one of his legs, Potter angled up a bit, then slid the glasses more surely on his nose. It was a gesture he'd seen countless others make in the years since Potter had left school, but Snape found himself watching it as if fascinated.

Angrily, he shook himself out of the reverie. "Professor Snape, Potter," he said waspishly.

Potter's eyes flinched, but he betrayed it in no other way. "Professor Potter, sir," he said softly, sliding his legs slowly off the chair ledge onto the floor. "We are colleagues now, after all." With what seemed like much unnecessary wiggling, Potter got to his feet, one arm pushing against Snape's chest for leverage.

Without even looking backward, Potter leaned down to take a glass from the tray the house-elf still held. Snape looked away from the arse that was now pointed in his direction.

The line between them, which had grown faint in the years since Potter had been away, seemed to have been drawn again.

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Snape expected to be ignored, as he had been at the staff party, once school began. Potter, ever contrary, seemed to go out of his way to find excuses to use his full title.

At the dinner table it was invariably, "Please pass the pumpkin juice, Professor Snape." Or in the halls, it was, "Good morning, Professor Snape," always with the slight emphasis on the word 'professor', his too-innocent eyes glinting with amusement.

In staff meetings, he always found a way to sit beside his former teacher. "I don't know," he'd say, then half-turn to Snape, who by now knew to expect the mocking deference, "What do you think, Professor Snape?"

Finally he burst out, "Don't be daft, Potter, it's a simple question."

The young man's eyes had glittered almost dangerously, though with enough underlying amusement to go unnoticed to everyone save Snape. Longbottom, on the other side of Potter, fairly wrung his hands before Potter broke away and gave his former classmate a reassuring smile.

Snape half expected some confrontation after that staff meeting with Potter. Instead he and Longbottom, looking over the notes they'd taken in the meeting, ambled out without a backward glance.

It wasn't until the next day that he saw Potter again, but since Snape was by Dumbledore's side, leaning over the heavy wooden table in the staff room, he didn't think Potter would be anxious for a confrontation. The headmaster was chuckling over some item in the Daily Prophet, and Snape leaned over to pretend some interest, when he felt a hand in his hair.

Snape stiffened, trapped, leaning over the table, just beside Dumbledore. A Potter-sized hand. In his hair.

"There you are, Harry," Dumbledore said from his chair, but since Snape was nearly blocking the young man, the older wizard couldn't see what Harry was doing in his hair.

He'd tugged the longest strand in the back around his finger, swirling it softly.

"Afternoon, sir," Potter said. "Lovely day, isn't it?"

Snape wanted to pull away, to stop the blatant invasion of his personal space, but to do so he'd have to yank his own hair free and call attention to his own predicament. He'd forgot that simple gesture, forgot the simple pleasure it had given Potter, as he'd tried to forget so many things.

So he said something he otherwise could never imagine himself saying. "Yes, lovely day, Professor Potter." He tugged his hair out of the now-unresisting fingers, and made his exit as gracefully as he could.

Once outside the staff room, he leaned against the comforting stone wall until he got his breath. He half-expected Potter to have followed him out, to force him to remember more things. After a moment he realized he was still alone in the corridor leading to the Great Hall. Gathering his robes, and as much of his dignity as he could muster, he strode away.

If he thought Potter would be relentless in his pursuit, reminding him of things he'd rather forget, he was, again, mistaken. Potter didn't sit beside him during the next staff meeting, didn't call attention to their respective titles, and merely nodded in the hallways should they happen to meet.

It wasn't until the first Quidditch match of the season, Gryffindor vs. Ravenclaw, that he came anywhere near Potter again, and then not by his own choice. He'd already settled in one of the staff boxes, gathering up his heavy robes against the invariable chill, when the seat next to him was filled. He glanced over. Despite the abundance of empty seats, Potter had settled into the seat next to him.

Snape glared at him, but Potter only smiled. The young man leaned back on the seat, also settling his own heavy robes over his lap as though he'd watched Snape just do the very same thing. One arm stretched out along the back of their seats, as though Potter was about to fiddle with his hair again. Snape stiffened away from the imagined contact, but Potter's arm never came close enough to touch him.

"You know," Potter began, looking down toward the field, where equipment was being dragged out. "Everyone on the staff calls me Harry."

Snape looked over questioningly, but Potter was still looking down toward the pitch. "You made such a point of--" he began, but Potter cut him off.

"You called me Harry once."

Snape realized the exquisite trap he'd sprung. He was stuck here in the stands, trapped beside Potter who seemed intent on tripping down Bad Memory Lane.

"For two days straight," Potter went on, watching the players, now mounted, fly past slowly. "It was my name on your lips."

"It was thirty-six hours," Snape clarified, "and it was a long time ago." He could be as impassive about this, he decided mentally, as Potter was being. Then, as now, he'd expected a row, but Potter had quietly accepted his decision.

Around them a roar went up from the crowd as Ravenclaw blocked the first try at the goal. Neither man had seen the play. Then, when the noise died down, Potter said, "I wasn't sure you remembered."

Speechless, Snape turned his head to see if Potter was actually serious. The green eyes, just visible behind the thick glasses, seemed to have turned back to the match. Just as Snape was about to turn back, certain that Potter was ignoring him, Potter spoke up again. "You could do it again, call me Harry, I mean," the young man said, meeting Snape's gaze for the first time since he'd sat down.

Snape was the first to look away. "Why pretend amicability?"

"Okay."

They watched the game in silence until the Ravenclaw seeker whizzed by their box so fast it ruffled the hair of the professors in the first three rows. Their heads were all facing the direction of the fast broomstick, and Snape got a prickle of awareness that Potter was not staring at the pitch, but at Snape himself.

"Only," Potter said, when Snape slowly turned back to discover he was right, "You were hard when I fell into your lap in the staff room. You were hard because you'd been staring at my arse all evening."

Snape looked around quickly, to see if anyone was listening. But they were near the back of the stand and fairly isolated. The other teachers were paying attention to the game. "You flatter yourself," he hissed.

Harry's gaze was following some player out on the field. But his words were directed at Snape. "No. No, I don't think I do." He darted a glance at Snape before resuming his posture of studied nonchalance. "I learned more about you in those thirty-six hours than anyone else has. Ever." The gaze was more focused now, as if daring Snape to refute it.

Before Snape could, the crowd roared again, louder this time. Potter looked toward the score board and smiled. "Ah. Gryffindor's first point."

Snape sat in stony silence during the rest of the game, taking macabre pleasure that Gryffindor lost. Potter merely shrugged with resignation and filed out of the stands with the rest of his colleagues. Snape hung back, watching the young man accept with equanimity his former team's loss. So Potter thought he knew Snape, did he?

At the next staff meeting Snape took the empty seat beside Potter, ignoring the young man's surprise. He was careful, when occasion called for it, to call him Professor Potter. He didn't ignore him at mealtimes or in the halls, being as civil as he would to any of his more established colleagues. He was sure that at first Potter thought he was up to something, but, as their truce continued unbroken, even Potter stopped eyeing him with suspicion.

So, it was that he was the first to notice the young man's absence at the Halloween Feast. As usual the new third years had been allowed their first Hogsmeade weekend, and as usual, had horribly overindulged in sweets and excitement. Snape had brewed an extra batch of Pepper-Up for the invariable upset stomachs that would follow.

He was running late to the feast, and schooled his features for his usual mask of civility toward Potter. Only, when he arrived, the young man was nowhere in sight. Snape's sights narrowed in on Potter's young friend, Longbottom. He angled down the table, despite Longbottom's increasing nervousness at his approach.

"Where is Professor Potter?" he asked without bothering with ordinary greetings. They were lost on Longbottom who had still to utter a coherent sentence in Snape's presence.

"I don't know, sir," Longbottom said, then his eyes widened as if surprised he'd gotten the words out.

"When was the last time you saw him?" Snape went on, looking toward the door where the teachers entered the Great Hall, as if expecting Potter to appear. But Potter did not appear, and Snape looked back at Longbottom.

"Noon, it was. At lunch." Snape himself had seen Potter then, and though he'd been quiet, he hadn't seemed ill. He looked again toward the door to see if Potter was simply running late as Snape himself had been.

"Is something wrong, sir?" Longbottom was saying, but Snape was already moving away. On his way out, he leaned down and told McGonagall where he was going. Her starchy expression softened slightly, and she nodded, excusing him.

Snape made his way up Gryffindor tower. Gradually the noise from the Great Hall died away. Hogwarts was never silent, but there was no sound from the short corridor of teachers' rooms just below the dorms. Snape knew which room McGonagall had lived in for all her years at Hogwarts. Longbottom had quarters down in the Hufflepuff wing, near Sprout's rooms and their greenhouses. One room was empty. That left only the smallish one that had been, until Potter moved in, usually a visitor's room.

He knocked. There was no answer. Snape did an unlocking spell. There were wards in place. Which could mean Potter was simply away and had left his rooms protected. Even in these relatively peaceful times, many of them that had lived through the last war were a bit over-protective.

Snape knocked again. "I know you're in there, Potter, and I've no objection to hexing this door off its hinges--"

The door opened. Potter stood looking up blearily, a slight smile on his face. "Of course I'm here, Professor. Where else would I be?" He listed slightly to the right, using the door frame to support himself.

"Have you been drinking?"

The smile widened. "Of course I've been drinking!" Potter turned away, as if inviting Snape in, and ambled back into the room. Snape pursed his lips and followed him inside. This room was loads smaller than any of the other teachers' quarters. A single room and bathroom, rather than a suite like most of the teachers had. It spoke much about Potter's intentions to make his home at Hogwarts, despite coming back to teach.

"I always drink on Ha--" Potter began, but his eyes widened as though someone had said a naughty word. He pulled off his glasses and ran the back of his hand over his eyes.

"How much have you had?" Snape asked, closing the door behind him. All they needed was a student, late from the Infirmary or from Hogsmeade, to catch their professor like this.

Potter had ignored the question, in fact had ignored Snape, wandering over to the room's single chair, an uncomfortable looking armchair of the modern variety. Beside the chair, on the floor, was a three-quarters empty bottle of--something. It smelled horrible and probably tasted like Hippogriff piss.

The bleary green gaze looked up, as if not remembering letting the other man in the room. "What are you doing here?" Harry picked up the bottle and swirled around the remaining contents, eyeing them before upending the bottle and taking a drink. Snape and Potter grimaced at the same time.

Snape folded his arms across his chest. "You're late for the Feast."

Potter mouthed the last word silently as if he'd never heard it before. "Not going," he said at last. "Drinking." His face convulsed with silent laughter, as though he'd said something amusing. Then, as if he'd taken a shot of Sobering Up Potion, he repeated, "What are you doing here?"

"Because I learned quite a bit about you too, in those ill-fated thirty-six hours."

The bottle clunked to the floor, but thankfully didn't spill. "I didn't think you remembered," Potter said, repeating something he'd said during the Quidditch game.

Snape ignored the statement. "Do you want Pepper-Up or Sober-Up?" he asked.

Only Potter laughed. "Potions don't fix everything." He fumbled around for the bottle, and when his grasping fingers missed it, he leaned over and almost fell out of the

chair. Snape crossed the small room quickly. He propped Potter back up and set the bottle safely out of reach. Potter looked up at him beseechingly. "Let me drink this one night, Severus," he pleaded. "You know why."

Snape squatted beside the chair, so that Potter would have to look down at him. "Drinking won't bring them back."

"I know," Potter said. "No one ever comes back." Then he stroked his fingers down Snape's face.

It was just a moment, and Snape could have moved away, but he didn't. "Let's get you to bed," he said, slipping his arm under Potter's and lifting them both off the chair. It was just a few steps to the bed, but Potter underwent a change. He turned in Snape's arms, lifting his face as if for a kiss. His body, instead of being dead-weight, suddenly seemed full of energy.

Snape pulled the other man's arms away. "Don't do this, Potter," he admonished, and Potter went rigid. He jerked his arms away, nearly connecting with Snape's jaw. Then he shoved away, coming up short against the edge of the bed frame.

"Get out," Potter hissed, sitting down hard on the bed.

"Don't be idiotic."

The green eyes were bleak behind the glasses when he looked up. "Just go. Get out." He slumped again, and for a moment Snape thought he'd passed out or fallen asleep. "I'm sorry, Snape," he murmured then, and pitched over onto the bed. "I told myself I wouldn't--" He dragged his legs up onto the bed, still wearing his scuffed loafers. "I won't--" One hand fumbled for the duvet, but his own weight pinned it beneath him.

Snape took out his wand and cast a Leviosa spell. Potter seemed oblivious, hand still swatting through thin air, searching for the covers. Keeping Potter aloft, Snape reached over with his non-wand hand and pulled the duvet down, then gently lowered Potter back down. As soon as he felt the sheets, Potter was scrambling to get underneath, heedless of his shoes or glasses.

"I won't," he said again. Snape listened for a few short breaths, undecided about whether to go to the Infirmary for a Sobering Up potion or leave the other wizard to his fate.

Then Potter turned around in the uncomfortable looking bed. "I didn't want you to see me like this." He looked about fifteen again with his glasses still on, and his body at the awkward angles a fifteen year old gets into.

Snape sat down on the edge of the bed and removed the glasses, setting them on the nightstand. His own nightstand was cluttered with things--a lamp, several periodicals he wanted to read, a battered novel that had been there so long the pages were starting to brown. Potter's was empty, with only a small lamp.

"I've seen you worse," he said, not sure the young man was awake. Potter shifted under the duvet, drawing it up as if cold, uncovering his feet.

Snape stood up and removed the loafers, and then Potter's socks. Then he pulled the covers back over the cold feet. When he looked back Potter's eyes were open. And he didn't look a bit like he'd been on a bender.

"I'll leave you--" Snape began, suddenly unsure what to do with his hands. Potter held one of his out as if expecting Snape to take it. Snape did, surprising them both.

"I left you," Potter said, his voice almost too soft for Snape to hear. He let Potter's hand guide him back to the edge of the bed. "I'd have stayed if you asked me."

His fingers threaded through the young man's, both very pale but otherwise nothing alike. "I would never have asked you to."

Potter's fingers squeezed his, as if confirming Snape's words. "I wanted you to. I spent all the rest of that year thinking you would."

Snape didn't let himself wince. Potter's last year, from the thirty-six hours they'd spent together that Halloween, as no student and teacher should, had been difficult. More than once he'd wanted to lay out a detention for the boy, but hadn't trusted himself to keep his hands off Potter, once he'd cast him out after he'd come to his senses the day after Halloween. And more than once Potter's eyes had been full of whatever it was that was in them right now. Anger, lust, something like longing perhaps. Snape had never let his own eyes reflect anything similar.

"Don't you think I know that?" He drew his fingers back through Potter's, separating them. "You'd hate me now if I'd asked you to stay then."

Potter accepted his hand's defection with a sigh. "I did for a long time." He turned his head away, facing the bare stone wall of the small room. "I wish I did now."

"We can work together. It needn't be difficult. We aren't the only ones who've ever done something they regret and have to face the other person day after day." He wasn't sure Potter was still awake, or had heard him. Then he heard another sigh.

"I think I could if I knew exactly which part you regretted." Potter turned his head back, and he didn't look as though he'd been drinking at all.

Snape wanted to tell him he regretted all of it, that he never should have let happen what happened, but he knew he couldn't get away with the lie. Potter had not been exaggerating when he'd said he'd learned some things about Snape too.

"I regret what we did, what I did to you. I'd never done anything remotely like it before or since. I don't even know why..." But he did know why, and looking at Potter, it wasn't hard to remember. He wasn't that far aged from the boy he'd been. The boy who'd broken into the Potions classroom in search of a Sober-Up potion, been caught, but not left the dungeons for thirty-six hours.

A harsh laugh came from the young man's throat. "You could have asked me if I regretted any of it."

Snape suddenly felt about a hundred years old, looking back on the indiscretion. "It wouldn't have made any difference if you hadn't. If it had come out, if you'd been discovered, you'd have been humiliated."

The green eyes slitted thoughtfully, as though Snape had said something revealing. Snape slid the blanket up over the thin shoulders. "Get some rest. I'll go and fetch some--"

A hand on his arm stopped him. "Don't leave me."

"I'm just--"

"Please." Potter tried to weave his fingers into his until Snape yanked his hand back. "Please," Potter said again. "You can stay in the chair until I wake up."

As if Snape would stay anywhere else. "Very well," he said, but Potter's eyes were already closed.

And despite Snape's intentions otherwise, after a few moments watching as if to reassure himself that Potter wasn't faking, so, soon, did Snape's.

Snape found himself in Honeydukes, surrounded by more candy than he'd ever seen in one place. Despite he and his housemates' disdain of the Gryffindors' excitement over their first trip to the legendary sweet shop, Snape found himself wandering through the displays, just as transfixed as any of the throng of children. In the dream he stopped in front of one--his fingers, shouldn't they have potion stains? Oh, then he must be, what, thirteen? And unmarked. His unstained fingers smudged the glass. Inside the case were endless rows of lollies, not the ordinary swirled rainbow-colored kind, but sleek silver ones, shaped like lightning bolts. Snape leaned forward, until his nose left a smear on the glass, wanting to know what silver lollies tasted like.

Someone was speaking in his ear, voice low, though Snape couldn't understand them. Perhaps it was one of the older boys, come to taunt him about wanting such an odd sweet, when there were so many more colorful ones. But when he turned, there was no one there. Just his own reflection, marred by the smeared glass, the lightning lollies gleaming softly behind his own reflection in the glass.

Snape woke, wondering if he'd fallen asleep in his own armchair again. Only it felt like he had a whole pile of heavy books in his lap. Something sighed against his ear again. Not books. Potter, who'd settled himself over Snape's lap, legs dangling over the opposite arm. His untidy head was lopsided on Snape's shoulder, looking strangely younger and less Potter-ish without his glasses, still on the nightstand by the bed. The messy fringe had parted, the lightning bolt scar very faint.

Snape's left arm had gone to sleep. He'd woken up this way once before, and though it had been a long time ago, the memory of it was doing horribly pleasant things to his cock.

Potter's eyes fluttered, as if he were reliving the same memory, and the smile that brushed his lips did nothing to help the tightness swelling under Potter's bum. It was probably too late to throw the irrepressible brat off his lap like an outraged maiden, but when that line had been crossed, Snape couldn't say. He lifted his hand, just enough to brush the hair back over the scar the way Harry preferred it when he realized the boy's eyes were open.

"We did this before, if you remember?" Harry's voice was rough from sleep, languid enough that his dreams must have been more interesting than Snape's.

Would it do any good to lie? He supposed Harry would make some joke about refreshing his memory. "Yes," he said, his own voice scratchy and deep.

"Your armchair was bigger though," Harry said, stretching a little. There was no hope that he wasn't aware of the erection pressing into him, the little tease.

"No, you were smaller," Snape corrected, hand dropping to one of Harry's thighs. "You shot up that year."

"You watched me."

"Every moment."

Honesty always took Harry aback. "You could've--"

"No," Snape said again, "I couldn't." Harry curled his fingers around Snape's, pulling both their hands up toward his own lap.

"Who started it that time?" Harry asked, draping Snape's hand over the bulge in his trousers, guiding it. "I don't remember."

"Liar," Snape said. Harry's smile said he didn't mind being caught out. Harry's feigned regret at being caught in the lie was more interesting without his schoolboy smirk. Snape's fingers outlined the shape of Harry's cock. This was more interesting without any traces of the schoolboy he'd been as well.

"You've grown a bit since," he said, amazed at the softly teasing tone his own voice had taken on.

"Nice of you to notice," Harry replied, shifting on Snape's lap as if certain he wouldn't be allowed to tumble to the floor. The movement sent Snape's fingers harder into the firm length. Doubtless that had been the intention.

There was a moment when Snape debated whether to lift his hand, to try to reason with Harry, but it was the briefest sort of moment, not even tinged with regret when he dropped his fingers into the spread of Harry's thighs, reacquainting himself with the nuances of another's arousal.

He thought too that Harry might be luring him into whatever erotic prelude, only to toss him out--belated revenge for what Snape had done those years ago. A finger slipped between two of his buttons; he looked down just as Harry looked up, granting his approval with a kiss. No treachery lay in that kiss, Snape decided, as Harry took his time with the coat buttons, undoing two, then kissing him again, then exploring the niches he'd created, fingers sliding over the linen shirt.

Snape let the heel of his hand smudge along Harry's thighs, not undressing any part of him, not yet, acquiescing to Harry's pace. He didn't know if Harry was trying to show him that he'd gained some measure of control in the years between their time together and now. Or simply not as aroused as he'd been as a boy when every heated glance during those brief hours had led to near frantic tumbles.

When Snape's coat parted, so did his good intentions. Harry's mouth looked swollen already, gleaming damply where Snape had licked it. Harry began to shift, legs folding then spreading so that he was straddling Snape's lap. Snape reached to brace him, conscious of the unforgiving brevity of the armchair, but Harry only smirked, pushing Snape back into the thick cushions.

Snape's mouth went dry as Harry began unbuttoning his own shirt, much faster than he'd done with Snape's coat. In a moment he'd shrugged out of his shirt, then lifted the undershirt over his head, mussing his hair more. He'd filled out here too, though Snape didn't say so.

"If you're going to throw me out," Harry said, fingers hovering over the buttons of Snape's shirt, "you'd better do it now."

"Harry," Snape said, lifting his chin with the crook of one finger, "this is your room."

"You know what I mean," Harry replied, running a hand down the front of Snape's shirt, bumping the buttons one by one on the way down. "If this isn't what you want--"

"I'd have stopped you a long time ago." He cleared his throat. "Actually I was thinking the same about you, that you might--"

"Toss you out?" Harry said, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, pretending to think it over. "When you came all this way, and missed the Halloween Feast, to check on me?"

"Nice--" Snape said, speaking softly between kisses, though he had to keep his mouth very close to Harry's to be heard, "nice of you to notice." His shirt buttons slid open, hands digging beneath his undershirt, teasing and touching, as though Harry were reacquainting himself with the feel just as much as Snape was adjusting to being felt.

Harry was flushed, cheeks touched with high color. Their gazes met, held, though Harry wasn't asking permission, not when that had passed silently from mouth to mouth already. He guided Snape forward, tugging off his coat, lifting the undershirt away. Hands splayed across his chest, larger now than they'd been then, but no less rapt to touch.

"You're so--" Harry began, and Snape felt his breath pool in his lungs waiting for the rest. But the rest never came. Harry lowered his mouth to one nipple. It was difficult to fill in any of his own depressing answers--old, thin, ugly--when Harry was devoting such lavish attention to that--now the other nipple. Snape speared his hand into Harry's hair, just letting the messy strands pull through his fingers.

Harry's hand skittered over the bulge in his trousers, and Snape heard a sharp intake of breath. "You really--" Harry lifted his face, eyes cloudy with unspent arousal.

"For god's sake, boy, finish your sentences," Snape said, trying to decide whether to slap Harry's too-tentative hand away, or leave it in case he hadn't actually been found wanting. Harry had probably seen many more cocks than Snape's rather ordinary one, and first times tended to...intensify the memory.

Harry's smile was lazy, and indulgent. "You really want me." Snape didn't bother to point out that no one had touched him, kissed him, like this since he'd tossed Harry out, but he didn't want the impertinent brat to read too much into his self-enforced celibacy.

"You could show your appreciation by hurrying up a little," Snape said, bumping his hips suggestively into the touch.

Maddeningly enough, Harry shook his head. Seated like this, Harry's head was higher than his own, though not by much. "I'm not rushing this," he said, fingers outlining Snape's cock, "in case I don't get another shot at it."

"Another--" Snape sat back, taken aback by being wanted. Harry's focus, however, had moved down, tugging at the row of buttons covering the placket of Snape's trousers.

"Why on earth hasn't anyone invented an undressing spell?" Harry said, finally freeing the top button before moving down to the next.

"Because no matter how much we tried to keep it secret, the children would learn it, and Hogwarts would turn into a nudist colony."

Harry's chuckle was deep, even though he was backing off his perch, stockinged feet scuffing across the floor as he pulled Snape's legs out in front of the chair. From this position, the buttons slipped open as though greased. Harry got them both undressed, though Snape suspected there was quite a bit more arse wiggling than strictly necessary. He started to straddle the chair again, then paused, and strolled over to the nightstand, bending over slowly enough to confirm Snape's theory about the excess of wiggling.

Harry pulled out a tube of lotion, turning, mouth open as though to speak. Only his jaw was open but no sound came out until Snape shifted uncomfortably, seeking to hide whatever flaw had caught Harry's attention.

"You look good like that," Harry said, crossing the room.

"What? Naked?"

"Hard." Harry set the lotion on the wide arm of the chair and climbed back over Snape's legs. "Hard for me." He curled his fingers around the shaft like his fingers needed to confirm what his eyes had told him.

Snape ran his hands up the backs of Harry's thighs, cupping the pert backside proprietarily, lifting his face as Harry read his desire, and covered his mouth with his own.

Snape had not been accomplished then, but Harry hadn't known any better. He was probably not as accomplished in love-making as Harry was now, and that saddened him a little, that someone else had taught Harry that exquisite thing with his tongue, but really, he had no one but himself to blame.

"I thought I remembered everything," Harry said, fingers digging into the hair at the back of Snape's skull, pulling their foreheads together. "I'd forgotten how--" He sighed and a chagrined smile turned up the corners of his mouth. Snape watched, not sure even how to take his eyes away. "Complete sentences, right," Harry went on, bumping Snape's forehead softly with his own before sitting back.

"You told me to ask for what I wanted," Harry said, "but you know, don't you?" He bounced lightly on Snape's hands. "Even though you let me do it the other way, I still like this way best." The chagrined smile was back. "Especially with you."

Snape had shown him everything, all the things he'd learnt or been taught, though it hadn't been until he'd sacrificed his own arse to the boy's education that the import of what he'd done had made him recoil.

Harry kept bouncing lightly while Snape coated his fingers, slicking up the heated crease before letting the natural slope of Harry's arse guide him deeper between his legs. The hot little noises Harry made hadn't changed at all, at least so Snape remembered, but were no less arousing coming from Harry's very adult mouth.

"Yes," Harry moaned softly, sliding down Snape's finger, then lifting himself back up. "More, please." His knees dug into the sides of the chair while he waited for Snape to squeeze out more of the slippery lotion. "Yes," Harry said, as though Snape had applied salve to a wound instead of adding another finger to his arse.

The lotion passed between them, and Harry lingered nearly overlong applying it to Snape's cock, nearly ending both their plans for the evening in a too skilled dedication to his task. "Enough," Snape panted, willfully pulling himself from Harry's slippery fingers.

Holding onto Harry's arse, he let Harry guide them together, pinned into the cushions of the chair. His cock, though slippery, slid unerringly inside, and Harry let out another of those moans that Snape wished he could bottle for when the real thing wasn't available.

"More than enough," Harry said, with a grin no less impish for his advanced age as it had been as an errant schoolboy. Snape clung to him, neither guiding nor setting the pace, as Harry rocked on his lap. Harry stole a kiss, his mouth as dry as Snape's own after their brief respite in kissing, his mouth staying close enough for more needy breaths to pass between them.

And when Snape's head dug into the back of the armchair, Harry's mouth slid down his neck, sucking, licking, tongue flickering over flesh as though they were kissing still. "Yes, oh, yes," Harry panted, movements more frantic now, lifting higher, slamming down harder. Snape's thighs felt bruised, though his cock was telling the rest of his body not to worry, that the pleasure would soon be worth it. And then it was, pouring out of him into Harry, who whimpered as Snape's fingers dug in tighter, unwilling to lose even a moment of this.

Harry watched him through every moment as well, green eyes vivid with intimacy and arousal. He'd watched too, back then, Snape remembered suddenly, though that had been one detail he'd striven to forget, how avidly he'd been watched. At the time, he'd just thought the newness of it must be compelling to Potter, but he watched now with the same intensity, rocking slowly as the last of the shudders rippled through Snape's body.

One of Snape's hands slid away, but Harry tugged it back, his own hand wrapping around his cock, nestled in the lee between their bodies. It took a scant few pulls before heat and wet spilled between them, lush spatters coating Snape's belly.

Harry rocked forward, still held secure by Snape's anchoring hands. Rocked into Snape's chest, heedless of the mess between them, heedless of Snape's cock softening within him and nearly slipping out. Snape's hands slid up the thin back, damp with sweat, feeling the rise and fall of his chest as Harry caught his breath.

Finally Harry turned his head, resting his cheek on Snape's shoulder, wiggling just enough to free Snape's cock from his body. But he made no other move to get off Snape's lap or to move far away enough to let Snape off the chair.

"Some things do improve with age," Harry said at last, one finger swirling a strand of Snape's hair.

"Potter, if you are injudicious enough to refer to my age, at a time like this, you'd better get off my--"

Harry let the hair drop from his fingers. "Not you, you prat, me." He slid to the side, but didn't lift up, preferring, Snape supposed, his sticky perch. "You're almost exactly the same." The hair-twirling finger shifted downward, swirling the hair around Snape's nipple. "Unless you're getting ready to tell me this is improper, and toss me out on my arse, in which case, you'd be exactly the same."

Potter's voice was relaxed enough to make even the thought of tossing him out sound absurd. "There's something about you that's inherently improper, but that probably has more to do with the shape of your mouth than your age." He lifted his own hand, smudging around the mouth in question.

"Like that, do you?" Harry said, sucking very briefly on the tip of Snape's finger.

"Very much," Snape said, proving it by tracing the shape of it with his own lips.

Harry's gaze was gratifyingly unfocused when Snape looked down at him again. "Er, don't suppose you'd like to try this again?" Harry said, shifting so that he could look up at Snape, then pulling a face. "Not right away, of course--"

"If you're implying that I can't--"

Harry laughed softly. "If you think I can do that again soon, or anyplace but a bed--"

"Bed?" Snape said, trying not to sound as interested as his abused thighs wanted.

"You remember those?" Harry said, his grin lopsided. "Soft? Good for sleeping in?" He inched his way backward, careful to bump up over Snape's collapsed erection carefully. "We made it to the bed a few times." He held out a hand which Snape took, letting Harry help him to his feet.

"Once even to sleep."

They settled under the rumpled covers as if they'd been doing it since Harry's seventh year, Harry tucked under Snape's arm, swirling a strand of Snape's hair. "Why did you come looking for me?" Harry asked.

It was easier to admit in the dark, with Harry's face just a soft gleam beside him. "No one should have to face bad memories alone."

Harry was quiet for a long moment, seemingly intent on the bit of black hair between his fingers. "Think we'll make it past thirty-six hours?"

"I suppose I deserved that," Snape said, sliding his fingers into Harry's. The bit of Snape's hair fell loose.

"I must admit it might--" Harry leaned in closer, rubbing his lips along Snape's jaw, "might mind you, not have been the worst thing you've ever done." The admission was accompanied by a kiss that was, in its own way, just as extraordinary.

"Thirty six hours, thirty six days," Snape said, lying back on one of Harry's pillows, fingers still entwined.

"Thirty six years?" Harry said, his smile light. But there was something in it that Snape had seen before, something determined.

"That's very short in wizarding terms," Snape said, "you're short-changing yourself."

"No, I don't think so," Harry said, his voice slurring softly, as though something had been settled, "I don't think so at all."