

Death for Elevenes

by Ladymage Samiko

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus scritchd his pen across the page, working out the ratios for a new potion. Deep in calculations, he barely heard the strident greeting.

"Cheers, old boy!"

Severus dropped his pen.

"You." He infused the syllable with all the venom he possessed, though at first glance, it was difficult to understand why his visitor merited it. The young man, with a guileless face occupied by a motley collection of mismatched features, looked as inoffensive as an (extraordinarily) homely puppy.

"Yes, quite," the fellow grinned, sweeping an elaborate bow. "Death, Angel of, at your service."

"Bugger. Off," was Snape's cordial reply.

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Death tossed himself into an armchair with a theatrical sigh. "Nobody appreciates me."

Snape retrieved his pen. "Haven't the faintest idea why," he sniped. "And don't even *think* of running off with anybody in this house, or I'll castrate you— or whatever the angelic equivalent."

Death lifted an eyebrow. "A bit testy today, are we?"

"You," and Snape pointed a long, accusing finger, "swore I wouldn't be seeing you 'for ages'."

Pale hands lifted in a placating gesture. "Purely a social call, old thing." Death reached over to shift the rook on a board nearby. "Checkmate."

"You're fucking kidding me."

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Death was too bloody *cheerful* by half.

And he nattered. Incessantly.

Snape was two seconds away from hexing him on sheer principle.

His wife always did have excellent timing. "Severus, have you—" She stopped short. "I didn't realize we had company." Her eyes snapped to his face; pleased at her caution, Severus flicked a minute 'all's well' sign.

"Pleasure to meet you, madam." Death had risen politely, and doffed his bowler. "Death, Angel of, at your service. I'm an old friend of Severus."

Hermione looked dubious. "In a literal or figurative sense, sir?"

"Severus, is there something I should know?"

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"More tea, Mr. Bredon?"

"I'd be delighted, dear lady." Death, having assumed a *nom du jour*, had settled in properly and was being plied with Darjeeling and strawberry tarts.

The scene was almost disturbingly normal.

No, scratch the 'almost.' They were discussing *gardening*, for fuck's sake.

Hermione had accepted both story and guest with remarkable aplomb, such that Severus was on tenterhooks, waiting for the cauldron to boil over.

So the only surprise for *him* was that, when the time came, the cauldron... melted (metaphorically speaking) rather than boiled.

Perhaps he'd been a trifle *too* influential on his wife's character?

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When all was said and done, Death was a surprisingly forgiving being. Most humans, etc. Severus knew would've objected— strenuously —to being slipped Veritaserum in their tea.

Death, Angel of, seemed to take it in stride.

It wasn't as though they'd asked anything *truly* sensitive about the nature of the universe. Just about a few important details. For that matter, they hadn't even asked about their deaths.

Severus certainly wasn't feeling guilty about it. A little nervous about Divine Retribution, perhaps, but not guilty.

Actually, he was rather proud of his wife; she'd learned duplicity from the best, after all.

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If Death continued about his usual business without whistling, it was due only to the nature of his work; a great many people didn't appreciate light-heartedness when they passed on. They preferred a somber, *grave* approach.

A visit to the Granger-Snapes was decidedly refreshing.

How many people would even *consider* hexing an *angel*? Not to mention actually, intentionally poisoning one.

Oh, they were great fun. He hadn't even seen the Veritaserum coming— not from the lady, anyway. Though perhaps he should have— mother lionesses, etc..

And it wasn't as though he'd told them anything they didn't need to know.

AN: The original fic that preceded this was [Death for Afternoon Tea](#), which I enjoyed writing immensely, though I had no thoughts to add to it. But GS100 introduced an 'Angel of Death' challenge, and my Death, Angel of, immediately began waving his hands to and fro to get my attention. His assumed name is, of course, a tribute to one of the original inspirations for his character: Lord Peter D. B. Wimsey as written by the magnificent Dorothy Sayers.

Positive and negative tokens are very much welcome in the box below.