

Coffee?

by scaranda

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus sighed in anticipation of dissatisfaction, wondering why he had subjected himself to this purgatory, wondering why he had ever enlisted the female staff members' help, let alone confided his life's greatest disappointment to them. Every one of the women, Merlin forbid, he thought savagely, had treated the quest for his perfect brew as though it were a date with him.

He shuddered at the thought of Minerva's viscous attempt, so thick and tarry she could have danced a ruddy Highland fling on it. He'd flinched almost as much at the taste as he had when she simpered at him in some hellish version of coquetry.

Sybill had been as bad, watching him as he tried to swallow her attempt, and urging him to 'Drink, drink,' in a voice he supposed she thought was sultry and mysterious, but just sounded like a troll with a head cold. Then she'd snatched his cup away, and turned it upside-down, peering inside it to read his future with a Divination Professor, in whatever grinds weren't still sticking valiantly to his teeth.

Septima's offering was harsh and bitter, tasting like a Potions experiment gone awry, and set his teeth on edge, along with his nerves, which jangled alarmingly until dinner time, something he suspected had more to do with her assertion that seven cups would do the trick, and that she would bring him a cup each night, than the actual coffee itself.

Pomona's was somewhat weak and lacking in spirit, once he found it below the whipped cream, and a skewered maraschino cherry, and a paper umbrella. He'd legged it rather quickly from Greenhouse Three when she explained her coffee was soft, round and warm, like a mature woman.

He watched the newest member of Hogwarts's staff cross to his table, pretending that at least he didn't have to worry if the coffee were not to his taste, as the company was at least pleasing.

She sat, not across from him as he had expected, as indeed everyone else had done, but so close to him that, had she been any closer, she would have landed on his knee, a notion not entirely disagreeable.

He failed to notice the aroma of the steam wafting invitingly from the cup she placed in front of him, so invaded were his senses by the scent of violets and something he couldn't quite place. He hardly glanced at the cup as he raised it to his lips, so engrossed was he by the blue of her eyes, and he didn't really take time to identify the flavour that softly wakened his taste buds: something gently undemanding, yet fresh and invigorating, he thought, pretending he wasn't really thinking of the young woman at his side.

'Perfect,' he murmured in pleasure, taking another longer sip. 'What is it?'

He watched her bite her lip, wondering if it too would taste as pleasing as the brew.

'It's tea actually, Severus,' Luna replied. 'I don't think you like coffee.'

Prompt: A determined search for the perfect cup of coffee leads to an even more satisfying discovery.