

# Over the Counter

*by teshara*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Coffee should tease the senses, awaken the being, curl itself around one's soul. Not assault one's mouth.

He eyed up another café.

"Some weather we've been having." The woman behind the counter was squat and cheerful.

"Indeed." He took a deep breath of the aroma filling the air. "Coffee."

The woman chuckled. "You've come to the right place! Some people like this place and that place, but I'll bet this will be the greatest cup of coffee you've ever had!"

"Oh, really?" Severus said politely, but suspiciously. He took a sip and closed his eyes. His mouth wanted to moan.

The woman slapped the counter, waking Severus out of his reverie. "Told you, didn't I?"

"You certainly did!" Severus rolled the coffee over his tongue and savored it. "Some secret recipe?"

"Hired a new girl. Best coffee in town, and someone who knew how to brew real tea! Cherry, come out and meet another one of your fans!"

An Asian girl came bustling through the door carrying two pies, her dark hair tied up and under a paper hat.

He arched an eyebrow as the girl spotted him and froze. "You make a wonderful cup of coffee," he said, his tones of sarcasm lost on the proprietor. "You've quite the talent for brewing."

A 'ding' went off, and the squat woman left the pair at the counter as she retreated into the kitchen.

"I should. I had a decent teacher." The girl snickered.

"Miss Chang, what are you doing in Canada of all places?"

"Vacationing and I got bored. Got a hobby so I could get away from my family."

"Lacing Muggle coffee with potions?"

"Listen, she needed the money. By next week she'll be carrying a brand that does this without any tampering." Cho's cheeks turned pink.

"Are you interested in a Potions assistant position, Cherry?" he asked sarcastically. "Three weeks of lectures. Starting tomorrow."

"There was a pie on the counter when she asked my name," Cho muttered. "And I'll take it. Morning shifts are killing me, anyway."

They spoke for a few moments before the owner came back out with a loaf of bread in a towel. Severus took a warm slice as he finished his coffee, praising the owner's recipe.

When he left, he took a moment outside to adjust his dark coat. The door behind him opened and closed gently. He turned to see Cho Chang.

"Modified her memory and laced the rest of the coffee she had. I figured I needed a day to get acquainted with your theories."

It might have been the potion in the coffee, but Snape felt good. He was about to show the world how brilliant he was, and he had the only decent coffee brewer in the country by his side.

The world was his.