

# Guilty Pleasures

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What is there left to live for, when everything is gone?

## One

*Chapter 1 of 1*

What is there left to live for, when everything is gone?

Disclaimer: Nothing you recognize is mine.

A/N: This is my response to the Guilty Pleasures Challenge on grangersnape100 at LJ. It was also an exercise in letting the reader draw their own conclusions about things. What those things are, is again, up to you... Enjoy!

~\*~\*~\*~

What is there left to live for, when everything is gone?

Severus Snape often found himself contemplating this in the coherent moments of his life, wondering why he bothered to stick around at all.

A hot, moist pressure on his cock pulled him from his reverie.

*Ah, yes... that's why...*

He raised his head just enough to see the swaying auburn hair of the woman who was so greedily sucking him off. She didn't look up at him... he had ordered her not to. All he wanted was the sweet illusion.

Since, after all, the dead cannot serve the living.

~\*~\*~\*~

His head fell back heavily against the silk pillows, their jewel tones dark and rich in the light from the fat saffron candles sitting randomly about the room. The sheer curtains trembled and swayed in the warm breeze, raising goose-bumps on his overheated flesh.

He was no longer pale and sallow; the Moroccan sun had brought out the rich olive tones of his skin, making him look exotic instead of ill. His body was lean, if not highly muscled. His black hair had been allowed to grow unchecked and now fell like a ribbon of oil between his shoulder blades.

~\*~\*~\*~

More often than not, he used the dark curtain to hide himself, to cover the livid scar bisecting his left carotid. Ugly puckered lines ran white where the flesh had been knit together haphazardly, his faceless savior worried more for his life than for aesthetics. Most people noticed it eventually, but not before they noticed his eyes: one black as midnight, the other a pale, ghostly blue.

It was ironic that the only feature he did not loathe had been the one taken from him. He had always been able to speak volumes with his eyes.

Now, they were silent.

~\*~\*~\*~

Perhaps once he would have been called a striking man. Not handsome, but most definitely striking. He had been harsh featured and severely dressed; a dark specter, full of vitriol and fire, all forced to a low burn for the sake of propriety.

*For the greater good.*

He would have sneered at the thought, but his mind was otherwise occupied by the long, deft fingers kneading his scrotum. He groaned, his hands moving to the fiery red hair of his tormentor, grasping tightly as she worked him with her mouth.

No... it was better this way, in this self-made fantasy.

~\*~\*~\*~

No longer did he wear the high, tight collars and precisely buttoned robes. No longer were his emotions held in check, his desires unfulfilled, his wishes ungranted. He spent most days in a fog of sex, hookah smoke, rich wine, and spiced food.

He rarely dressed, choosing to lounge either in the nude or in a pair light, cotton pants. He never wore a shirt or a pair of shoes.

He worried about no other person but himself, took orders from no master, and bowed to no one... unless it was to bury his face in a warm, wet cunt.

~\*~\*~\*~

He often wondered if the loss of his eye was worth the half-life he now lived, this existence built around ghosts and lies. He told himself it was penance for his sins to be left alive, scarred and broken, desperately trying to attain that which was unattainable...

The woman nipped him lightly, her sharp incisors on the base of his cock. He thrust his hips, and she engulfed him once more. Three long strokes of her tongue, and he was spending himself against the back of her throat. She swallowed greedily even as another woman's name fell from his lips.

~\*~\*~\*~

He felt her move away, leaving him limp and sated, but alone. He wanted it that way, just as he wanted to never see their faces, or hear their voices, other than grunts and cries of pleasure.

He wiped a weary hand over his face and stood, not bothering with clothing himself. He walked naked to the balcony and stood looking out over the sea, where the sun had just started to creep below the horizon.

A breeze blew in, full of jasmine and vanilla. It was familiar... different from the smoke and spice he was normally surrounded by.

*Better.*

~\*~\*~\*~

His eyes drifted shut as he stood there trying to place the familiar scent. His mind drifted back over the significant events of his life there hadn't been many but was unable to place the smell. Perhaps it...

*"Severus..."*

He started, his eyes flying open at the unfamiliar sound of a female voice calling out his name.

*"Severus..."* it came again. It was whispered... far away and yet oh so close... a breath of jasmine tickling his nose.

Panicked now, he barreled back into the room and was greeted with the familiar bowed heads of a harem of flame-haired women.

~\*~\*~\*~

He walked through the room, agitated, hands grabbing randomly at their faces, twisting them to meet his gaze. Green eyes stared back at him, some passive, some full of emerald fire, some not seeing at all.

*"Severus..."* the voice whispered again.

He snatched the next woman by the hair, forcing her head back violently. It was the same face, the same red hair and lightly freckled skin... but the eyes... the eyes had changed.

He stared in horror as they bleed from green to amber, and when she opened her mouth and whispered, *"Severus,"* he backed away in abject terror.

~\*~\*~\*~

The next one was the same: amber eyes where there should have been green, a beseeching voice where there should have been silence.

When the hair changed, he thought he would lose his mind. He had reached for a handful of auburn waves, but had found a mare's nest of brown ringlets *"Severus... please."*

"No!" he hissed, shoving the woman away. "No!"

*"Please... please come back."*

He fell to his knees as the voice became a cacophony of whispers. The women rose to their feet their hair no longer flame, their eyes no longer shining emeralds and descended upon him.

~\*~\*~\*~

When his eyes snapped opened, it was not to the deep jewel tones of the Moroccan sunset, but to the white walls of a familiar room. Someone was calling his name. He turned his head, and a wave of jasmine and vanilla washed over him.

"Severus," he heard again and looked up to find the source of the cloying scent.

Hermione.

"What happened?" he rasped.

"You just had another episode; nothing unusual this time." She reached out to grasp his left hand in hers, and he saw the twin silver bands on their ring fingers.

Hermione.

His wife.

*Oh God...*

~\*~\*~\*~

"Are you alright?" she asked as she pressed his hand to her cheek.

He could only stare in bewilderment as the past few years of his life rushed back in a flash of memory. Surviving the snake; seeing Hermione behind the counter of Flourish and Blott's around two years after the war; another chance meeting at Schrivenshaft's; a dinner invitation; a stolen kiss; lips, hands, skin, and cries of abandon.

Standing barefoot on a hilltop

Robes of white against the setting sun.

A velvet rope entwined about their joined hands in the symbol of infinity.

Vows.

Devotion.

Love.

*Oh God...*

~\*~\*~\*~

"I'm fine... as always." He forced a smile, knowing that he was most definitely not fine.

She kissed the back of his hand. "What do you dream of when you drift off like that? It always frightens me."

He looked into her innocent, trusting face and remembered the debauched place his dreams had taken him to. Was it a fantasy or a nightmare?

Should he tell her about the room full of fiery-haired sirens, each conjured to fulfill a particular guilty pleasure?

Should he tell her that it was becoming harder for him to tell fantasy from reality of late?

~\*~\*~\*~

Should he tell her about the ones that dominated him until he screamed with pleasure?

Should he tell her about the ones who simply laid there and accepted whatever sick act he chose to use their bodies for?

That with every episode, every new foray into that dream world, he wanted more?

Should he tell his wife that he loved her as much as one man could ever love a living woman?

*A living woman...*

Should he tell her that every time he awoke it took him just a little bit longer to remember who she was?

To remember *them*?

~\*~\*~\*~

Her kind, trusting, loving face looked up at him expectantly, knowing that he loved her and would never betray her; she had faith in him.

He was a good man. It was why she had married him, after all.

So it was that a sick feeling overcame him as he reached out to touch his wife's face. An image of emerald and flame flashed before his eyes, blocking out the brown and the amber, beckoning him to the fulfillment of his darkest fantasies. He knew his fate his damnation was sealed with the next words he spoke.

"I don't remember."

~FIN