

Seeing Stars

by PMmistress

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Chapter 1 of 1

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When it rains, look for rainbows ...

When it's dark, look for STARS'

The day began much the same as any other, and the weather remained its same Scottish stoic and dour self: a thin, soft, rather weary and insignificant drizzle. The kind of day, and the kind of weather, I'd become so used to in my years at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry first spent as seven years as a student, and now, later, as a member of teaching staff of eighteen months duration. Both the life and the weather had almost become part of me it seemed; absorbed into my very soul, you could say.

But, on this occasion, the night was to be something else. That night definitely turned out to be as unique as the many others were similar and it was one I'd simply never forget ...

It was the night of the Celestial Ball an event that only took place every nine or ten years when the heavens were supposedly at their clearest. It was an evening of stargazing and fun. The enchanted ceiling of the Great Hall a charmed replica of the real night sky literally became the "star of the show", and astronomers and astrologers alike could sigh in collective wonder.

It had only ever taken place once before in my own time at Hogwarts during my third year when I was a mere young, innocent schoolgirl of barely fourteen years. Now, ten years on, and with my return to the ancient castle that had been my home for so long, I was no longer a schoolgirl, did not feel especially young (in fact "world weary" would be a better description), and was most certainly no longer an innocent not in many senses anyway!

So it was an exciting event that was about to take place and was met with much glee and anticipation by both students and staff alike. Everyone knew that "Star Gazing" or "The Celestial Ball", just like the Annual Yule and Halloween Balls later in the year, were really just an excuse to let the hair down and forget the trials and tribulations of school life.

The whole school had been a-buzz with it all for weeks now.

For my own part, I had taken great care in choosing a suitable dress for the occasion: something that I hoped was going to be both uniquely gorgeous and ultimately stunning. But then, I had an agenda: that of seducing one rather staid and uptight currently deputized School Head and long-term Potions master.

After the war, and the Dark Lord's defeat, most staff had decided to return to their old positions within the school those that had survived of course, for the list of casualties was as long as it was sad. Severus Snape was one of those who had made his way back, like a homing-pigeon returning to the safety of its coop. Despite earning the title of "War Hero", once his true colours had come to light and been reinforced by his acquittal by the Wizengamot, he chose to carry on with the life he knew best. Perhaps it

was no surprise really. Probably there had been little choice for him in truth what other life did he know after all? And surviving the fangs of a giant snake could only be a knock to one's self-confidence/esteem, I supposed, with him having one of the most delicate of those traits, despite his efforts to cover the fact during his years as a double-agent.

He had taken up his old post pretty much where he'd left off, like getting back up on a patiently waiting steed and taking hold of the reins as if they'd never been put down in the first place. However, it had to be said that these days his persona was somewhat milder to his pre-war self. The sarcastic, biting intolerance was still there, but somehow it seemed to be translated into much more dry, humorous wit these days. Then again, perhaps that had always been the case, but I, like many others, had been too pre-occupied, young or distrusting to notice it. He was certainly more even-tempered, though not necessarily more forgiving not with his students still, at least.

However, more than that, was the fact that, somewhere along the line, Professor Snape or Severus, as my new status as fellow-teaching staff member and colleague permitted me to think of him had also become attractive to me at least that was. Although, if I'd had to be totally honest, I'd actually had a crush on him since fifth year.

Witty, humorous, intelligent, and attractive but still maddeningly unobtainable it seemed. The fact really frustrated me. We had never progressed much beyond polite "hellos" and "good morning/afternoons", though I sometimes caught him watching me, when he thought I wasn't looking, with something like wonder etched deep into his fathomless eyes. Perhaps he was questioning where the know-it-all schoolgirl of old had gone? And, perhaps also for the first time, realising that I could be disassociated from my two fellow "Golden Trio" members, both of whom had gone on to become Aurors and were still in the last stages of training.

But, as time went on, the attraction towards my ex-teacher became something of an almost-obsession. I began to go to the places where I thought he would show up: the library, staff common room, his own office the latter always finding me armed with some stupid potions question or another as an excuse to simply talk to him. On rare occasions, a short, rather stilted conversation would flare up between us. But it was usually disturbed by another member of staff interrupting with something trivial that I wished with all my heart could have waited for a later time.

Now the Celestial Ball had provided me with the perfect excuse. I knew Snape could dance I'd seen him at other School Balls and social events over the years. He was quite good actually: graceful and lithe, moving with practised ease and sophistication; a sort of "false confidence" that had no doubt come about with his years of spying. I would ask him to dance then! Surely it would be impolite of him to refuse a fellow-teacher and colleague?

Standing in front of my mirror, my confidence began to wane somewhat though. I had no doubts whatsoever of my feelings for this man who, above all else, I respected and admired. But just what did he feel for me? We all knew of his deep, unrequited love for Harry's mother, Lily, of course. Indeed it had been Snape's own memories, as viewed by Harry in the Pensieve, that had been used in evidence in his Wizengamot trial. Surely a man in his mid-forties was not still carrying a torch for his lost love?

The soft green material of the beautiful ballgown I was now wearing (chosen with such care to ensure it was in Slytherin colours) fell around my ankles in a seductive, shimmering heap. My reflection told me this dress was everything I wanted it to be the neckline not so low as to show off too much cleavage in a cheap "melons for sale" way, but enough to give a tantalising glimpse of what might be, and the cut of the tight-fitting bodice just perfect for showing off my fortunately slim-but-not-too-boyish figure. Surely this was enough to catch the attention of any red-blooded male even those who still possibly fantasied over a ghost who, even when alive, never cared enough to reciprocate their love? I was ready and willing to give my love to this man who'd given so much of himself to save others. Surely he'd want that too? Above all else, I was *alive* and *breathing*.

I looked at my watch just then and suddenly realised that it was time. I turned away from the mirror in order to make my way down to the Great Hall, casting a last reflective glance at the young woman I had become. *Severus Snape*, I thought to myself, *it's time to move on. The past is the past*.

Although I'm not one normally given to narcissism and vanity, I knew, from the moment I set foot in the Great Hall, that almost all eyes were on me. Were his amongst them I wondered? Clearly I must look good. The last time I had made an entrance like this had been at the Yule Ball, again when I was fourteen, on the arm of Durmstrang "play boy", Viktor Krum.

It took a while for the actual dancing to start, delayed it seemed by too much easy student talk and rather stilted staff conversations, which took place alongside the free-flowing butter beers and wine. But when the rather hesitant and nervous first couples finally took to the floor, Minerva McGonagall made a beeline for Snape, as was expected in their respective roles as re-instated Headmistress and Deputy Head.

He was standing alone on the edge of the activity, quietly observing, and looking more than a little attractive in his black velvet robes. His dark hair, now longer than it had ever been, was tied back in a matching black velvet ribbon. This only served to emphasise the sharpness of his proud, almost-aristocratic features. The gaunt, rather haggard look of old seemed to be gone, replaced by a less pinched expression and a fuller-faced softness. Always a striking figure tall, upright and graceful he could now pretty much pass as handsome, I decided. I shivered inside, and my heart hammered, as the rather trite mental image of Prince Charming surfaced in my mind.

After a few seconds, the heart-pounding and uncontrollable shaking transcended into fits of giggles at the thought of Snape being my "Prince Charming" the comparison had no doubt been heavily aided by the evening's second glass of wine that I was already starting to sip in order to assist my "Dutch courage".

'What's so amusing?' came a female voice to the side of me. It belonged to Rolanda Hooch.

'Oh, nothing,' I said, trying desperately to wipe the smile off my face.

'Well the night is young,' the Quidditch mistress professed, and somehow this seemingly random statement appeared to follow my own thoughts on the evening.

'Shouldn't you be finding yourself a dance partner?' she enquired.

'Don't worry, Rolanda. I intend to!' But my words died instantly as I ducked out of the way quickly and found myself walking in the direction of the buffet table, in order to avoid Professor Angus Devine a newly-recruited Arithmancy teacher and replacement for the now retired Professor Vector who was eagerly bounding over in my direction.

My actions left Professor Hooch with a somewhat bemused, and rather comical, look on her face.

It wasn't until much later that my chance came.

I saw that Professor Snape was talking to little Professor Flitwick, the latter replying animatedly to whatever had been said.

Having by then consumed a fair bit more of the extremely palatable wine I'd started on earlier, and with the resulting buoyant feeling it had no doubt given me flitting around the perimeters of my inhibitions, I made my way over to the pair.

'Good evening, professors,' I said, in what I trusted was a steady, not-too-slurred voice.

'Good evening, my dear,' replied Professor Flitwick. 'May I say how utterly delectable you look this evening? My, my, indeed if I was a good few years younger, and a fair few feet taller, I'd be asking you to dance for sure!'

I muttered my thanks and smiled, somewhat coyly at least I hoped it was coyly rather than drunkenly avoiding looking directly at Snape. When I did look across at him, I saw that he had what appeared to be a smirk on his face, but he had the decency to remain silent.

Looking from one to the other of us, Professor Flitwick suddenly said: 'Ah, well, I'm sure Severus here will be only too pleased to offer you that pleasure.' With which the diminutive Head of Ravenclaw house seemed to magically disappear like the proverbial fairy-tale pixie, albeit without the seemingly obligatory puff of smoke.

It left Professor Snape and I standing rather self-consciously alone, neither one of us quite sure how to react.

But, after only a few slightly disconcerting seconds, Snape suddenly said: 'Well, shall we? Would you like to dance?'

Looking around for somewhere to deposit my wineglass, and deciding in favour of a quick *Evanescio!* to rid of it completely, I needed no further incentive to take up his offer.

What started off as a quite stiff and awkward placement of hands on shoulders and waists, accompanied by a heart-rate (mine) so fast and hard I thought he would hear and feel it, soon became a more relaxed affair.

As I suspected, Snape really was a good dancer, and he more than made up for my inadequacies and nervousness. Soon we were gliding round the dance floor like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers or it may have been Fred Flintstone and Buck Rogers but at least we appeared to be getting admiring glances from onlookers. Then again, the looks could have been out of either sympathy or surprise (or a combination of both) whether that would have been for me being with him, or for him being with me, I couldn't say; nor did I actually care. People could think what they liked I concluded.

And, just like Cinderella at the ball, the evening seemed to go by all too quickly. Aside from a few short periods, Severus and I danced together most of the rest of the evening. With each dance, we became more and more comfortable and confident with each other, and with each dance, I knew I was falling more and more in love with him (although of course I'd been doing that for a long while.)

When we stopped, along with everyone else, to gaze heavenwards at the beautiful, enchanted ceiling, Snape whispered provocatively in my ear.

He said: 'How would you like to stargaze for real? I'm sure I could make you see stars in the nicest possible way. You seem to be giving me all the right signals to tell me that's what you want I've been reading you for a while, Miss Granger.'

I didn't miss the twinkle in his eye, accompanied by the seemingly obligatory raised eyebrow.

As the night wore on, our dancing proved to be some kind of slow seduction, with his hands initially slipping from my waist to rub slow, gentle circles across the exposed skin of my back at some point bare from where the dress dipped daringly. It was done with such subtleness as to go almost unnoticed at first, until I felt the echoing jolt of electricity shoot through me at his deliberately erotic touch, and knew it wasn't just my imagination.

After that, he became bolder slipping both hands down to rub across the tight material of my dress where it elegantly emphasised my pert bottom, or sliding them into the nape of my neck to flick against the sensitive, soft, downy hairs there, exposed owing to my unruly hair being swept into a sophisticated French pleat (assisted in its staying power with a little well-placed magic).

Towards the end of the evening, when the traditional slower dances started, he pulled me closer still, and I could feel his hard, hot body up against mine, his heart beating wildly in his chest. It was then that I knew he must feel something for me too. Maybe I had at last ceased to be the annoying question-asking student, and he was finally seeing me as a colleague, and, more especially, a friend and desirable young woman.

By the time the Ball was coming to a close, and the last weary vestiges of couples were weaving and staggering their way gingerly across, or away from, the dance floor, most of our inhibitions had long been forgotten. I was aware that, at some point, Severus had cast a concealing spell on us meaning that, although we could still be seen "dancing", not everything we were doing was being seen by onlookers. His breath and his words, both hot and heady against the shell of my ear, began slowly to confirm that ours was indeed a mutual attraction.

'Just when did you grow up, Miss Granger?' he asked at one stage. 'And, more to the point, when did you become so beautiful?'

I had no answer for either question and resigned to just simply sigh and snuggle even closer into the warmth of his body and his equally warm embrace. How I could ever have thought of this man as cold and unfeeling was a mystery. Right at that moment he was positively scalding me with his heat.

His gentle, softly wet tongue lapped at the edge of my ear, and he nuzzled his over-sized nose against my hair as we continued to sway to the rhythm of the music, and my body melted and responded with barely suppressed moans.

Eventually, our mouths found each other, and if I'd thought his embrace was hot, then his kiss when it finally melded from the gentle butterfly touch of lips on lips to a firm and insistent command was scorching: it was everything a kiss should be and everything I had been dreaming his would be.

Our closeness meant that almost every part of our bodies were touching, and gradually I found myself instinctively, and unashamedly, rubbing and grinding my hips against his. He responded in kind, and we found ourselves performing some sort of erotic, unconscious dance that had nothing whatsoever to do with the music we were hearing.

His whispered, 'Why don't you show me the secrets of the magic that's holding this adorable little dress up and stop by my chambers in a little while?' came as an unexpected but welcome invitation.

As it was, we didn't actually get as far as his chambers.

Leaving Severus to his Deputy Headmaster chaperoning duties, I slipped out of the Great Hall as unnoticed as it was possible to be well, actually not a difficult accomplishment, as most potential witnesses had left by then. Those who remained (mainly students) were either too besotted with their own dance partners (like me with Snape) to notice their surroundings, too busy guiding those who lingered away to their beds (McGonagall and a handful of other senior staff), or too inebriated to care (definitely not me - much.)

Walking rather haphazardly along the corridor away from the Great Hall, with the soft sting of Severus' kisses still tingling erotically on my lips and the fresh memory of his seductive, sultry voice and words still filling my ears, I made my way in the direction of the dungeons. So, when an arm suddenly shot out of seemingly nowhere, and grabbed me tight and hard around the waist, I screamed loud enough in fact for another hand to join the first and be firmly clamped across my mouth.

Quite how the darkly dangerous (in more ways than one) professor had managed to sneak ahead of me and jump out from the shadows would have to remain a pretty amazing feat as it wasn't a thought that I dwelt on for long. In fact, nothing much concerned me particularly right then, as, once again, a very warm, hot mouth found mine and proceeded to kiss me senseless.

And, once again, he pulled me up tight against the hard planes of his chest making it indistinguishable to tell one hammering heartbeat from the other: both mine and his seemed to be beating out in a strange kind of primitive, age-old unison.

I responded to his kiss eagerly, feeling a romance-novel-style swoon threatening to overcome me - not attempting to fight the sensation, but relishing in it instead.

Coming up for air, we stared into each other's eyes for what must have been several minutes neither of us was counting and I wanted to laugh at the absurdity of it all, yet leap with sheer joy at the same time.

His head dipped again, and I lifted mine in response, and when he ran the tip of his tongue across my closed lips, as if seeking permission, I opened them to find the full force of that same tongue as he thrust it into the hot cavern of my mouth.

Time seemed to stand still then as Severus pushed me up against the firm, rough stones of the castle wall and continued what he had begun. Once again, I knew he had cast a *Muffliato!*, but I was still glad that we were in a quiet part of the castle, away from activity not that there was any activity taking place anymore: most residents had collapsed into their beds, if they'd managed to make it that far in the first place.

After several minutes of heated kissing, Severus' wandering hands found their way to the underside swell of my breasts, where he rubbed stimulating, firm circles. Not for the first time I became aware of his very impressive arousal pressing against my stomach another firm confirmation that these feelings were not all one-sided. I really

wasn't sure where we went from here: if things progressed between us, would he regret it? More to the point, would it change the polite colleague relationship between us, or would we simply go back to just that? We still had to work together whatever happened.

However, it seemed the time for questions was over, as my mind gave into my body's urges, and like a speeding roller coaster, we went from slow, exaggerated dips to rushing highs in a matter of minutes. His clever lips, tongue, hands and voice continued to assault me. And there I had been previously thinking I was the one who was going to seduce him.

Severus slowly worked his way down the column of my neck, gently nipping and sucking as he went, drawing unrestrained groans from the depths of me, sometimes so loud that I couldn't believe the noises were my own.

'I want you, Hermione,' he said. 'Let me make you mine.'

'Severus,' I answered, in as strong a voice as I could manage to find at that moment.

'Have you any idea what you do to me?' he asked, in a deep, breathy voice, simultaneously grabbing my hand and placing it on his rock-hard, burning-hot erection.

That certainly gave me a good idea of the effects I was having on him.

So I took him up on his subtle offer and gently rubbed up and down the clothed full, firm length of him, not quite believing that I had suddenly been given permission to perform this intimate act. I became amazed too that I could evoke the animalistic growls, from somewhere deep in his throat, that came as response to my actions.

After a while, he suddenly shouted: 'Enough! If you carry on like that, I simply won't last as it is, this is not the way I planned it.' (He'd planned it!)

Pushing his knee between my thighs and grabbing both my hands in just one of his, he then raised them up over my head, placing them against the same stone wall that I'd been pressed up against for the last ten or so minutes.

Without warning, my delightful (not to mention expensive) cocktail dress was gone (just when did he learn to do such wordless magic!), and I was left rather scantily clad in lacy cream-coloured bra and briefs (*at least they match*, I thought.)

'I really liked that dress,' he said, 'but I like you in these even better.'

'Although I rather thought the Slytherin colour-scheme may have extended further,' he added slyly.

In no mood for jest, I quickly sought his mouth again, and his thrusting tongue lost me all train of thought, as did his questing hand which somehow found its way into my knickers already soaked through from our recent activities. But then they too were gone, along with the bra, and I became aware for the first time of the cool surrounding air and the effect it was having on my newly exposed body.

Never one to miss an opportunity, it seemed, Severus carefully took one of my throbbing, pebble-hard nipples into the depths of his talented mouth and sucked gently and rhythmically. He then continued by rubbing and twisting its twin almost to the point of pain - with his other hand, before returning to my already kiss-swollen lips.

'You're still dressed!' I managed to choke out between savage kisses, just before he complied and rendered himself to the same status of nakedness as me. I vaguely registered the fine sprinkling of downy black hair sparsely scattered on his chest and the fact that it rapidly disappeared into a thin line from his navel to his groin, but then an almost hyperventilating stupor overtook me, and I seemed to flick into an autopilot-mode of pure sensation and pleasure.

From then on, everything became a blur, as fast, hot and furious seemed to be the order of the day (or rather night.) There seemed to be no way that we could slow down, and I vaguely wondered where all of this had come from. Had he been harbouring feelings of lust and attraction for me for some while, as I had for him?

His hands and mouth seemed to be everywhere at once, as he grabbed my hips and hoisted me higher up the wall, while I instinctively wrapped my legs around his waist, digging my ankles into his sides like a sex-starved limpet.

His long, slim, amazing fingers (the same ones I'd watched in admiration over the years as he'd methodically prepared potions ingredients) worked their magic over, on and in me culminating in thrusting in just the right place, finding just the right spot like he'd been doing it forever.

'I have to have you now!', he whispered urgently, 'I can't stop -can't hold back!', and the next second his scorching-hot, diamond-hard cock was inside me. I barely had time to adjust to his size - he filled me so wonderfully - and the gasp that escaped me couldn't have been held back even if I'd wanted to. I instantly felt alive and complete and perfect.

'Fuck! So tight!,' he said. 'Fucking Merlin, you're beautiful, Hermione!'

Never did I think I'd hear such things from the formidable, stern Potions master my former teacher and mentor. The thought made me even more dizzy and light-headed than I already was.

Throwing my head back in ecstasy, I simply couldn't believe the sensations this man was creating whilst I was no virgin, I was not sexually experienced either, but knew enough to know that this was pure magic coming from this purely magical man.

His hard thrusts were dragging me further and further up the wall, scrapping the thin skin on my exposed back, but I didn't care. Within seconds, I could feel myself falling, falling almost there. And I could feel that he wasn't far behind me; it had simply never been like this before. Surely this was the stuff of soppy, over-the-top romantic novels? Was he using some kind of spell?

'Come for me, my love!' he cried, hoarsely, and I couldn't believe I was hearing his words like this it was the stuff of fantasies, the stuff of dreams.

But I duly obliged and came so hard that I nearly passed out I literally saw stars at the peripheral of my vision, the little white flecks of light shooting against the over-flow of blackness threatening to engulf me. It must have taken all his strength to keep me pinned there, against the wall, as his own desire overcame him. Feeling his hot seed spurting deep inside me, while he too threw his head back and called my name at the height of his passion, was not only the most erotic moment of my life, but also possibly the most humbling. I felt as if I had just been given the most precious gift on earth.

Coming back down from our mutual highs, we stared into each other's eyes again, mesmerised by the truth of what we found there. My own limbs were as limp as a ragdoll's, but I felt myself slowly returning to my body, and to the reality of this seemingly bizarre situation.

Severus' warm, sensual smile told me it wasn't a dream though this was real, and the two of us had not only created, but also shared, this most amazing experience together. Surely that wasn't just sex? It couldn't be this good, could it? I didn't think life would ever be the same again.

'Thank you, that was amazing,' he said earnestly, whilst tenderly and slowly lowering me down to stand again albeit on decidedly wobbly and weak legs. I wasn't convinced they would actually keep me upright.

'I'm not sure exactly where that came from tonight, but I know I've wanted to do that for some time.'

'Oh,' I said, shakily. 'Really?'

He smiled again such a rare and beautiful smile and exclusively for me.

I decided then and there that I would be forever grateful to The Celestial Ball and to the heavens in general. Stargazing wasn't just for astronomers and astrologers after all, it seemed. Indeed, with the perfect combination, and with the heavenly bodies in place at the exact right time, seeing stars was most definitely not out of the reach of mere mortals.

I had just been given a glimpse of heaven, and I certainly didn't ever want to come back down to earth again.

A/N: I'm just adding a note on here as I've noticed I've been getting a lot of hits for this story. I am not a new author to this site - just one writing under a different name this time. As an author, it is very satisfying to know that your own story is being read by so many, but incredibly disappointing to see that it is being reviewed by so few. So please, do me just one small favour - even if you don't normally do such a thing (in fact especially if you don't normally do such thing!) - please just let me know what you thought! Reviews are the only payment us authors receive and we can only learn whether we are getting it right or providing what readers want if you, the reader, tell us!

Thank you so much.