

Warm Beds and Ginger Heads

by HBAR

There's an unlikely bedfellow in the dungeons.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N—A huge thank you goes to Keppiehed for her wonderful beta skills and for putting up with my nonsense.

Severus Snape sat on the edge of his bed and gently stroked the head of ginger hair currently resting on his spare pillow. "I think I love you," he said, though his companion was asleep. "Yes, I am well aware of the absurdity of that statement. I certainly did not intend for it to happen, and I would deny it until the end of time if anyone asked."

He looked down at the face of one comfortable enough to sleep soundly in his presence. "It pains me to think that in one week's time, another school year will be gone, as will you." He sighed, embracing the inevitable. "This time last year, if someone had told me I would be sharing a bed with you, I would have had them committed."

Severus leaned over and placed a kiss on the top of his head. "I know in reality you belong with her, but here in my room, in the dark of night, I can imagine that you are mine. Does she know you come here when you aren't with her, or is it our little secret?" He studied his companion. "She is better for you, anyway. You have been her friend since she was a mere child. Our relationship—whatever this is between you and I—is in its infancy. It will be much easier for us to sever ties than it would be for you and the girl."

Severus climbed into bed and, with a flick of his wrist, the lights went out. "This is going to be difficult for me, but do not worry. I have done all right on my own for years. You will go live at the Burrow, and you will be very happy there. Eventually, you will have a house of your own. It will be fine, mark my words."

He rolled over and snuggled into the warm body beside him. "After the wedding, I wonder if you will somehow still find your way to my bed on occasion. It will not be easy, but then deep down, I think you like a challenge. You may have lived in that tower all these years, but you were always meant for these dungeons. Am I the only one who knows that?"

Severus threw his arm around his friend's waist and pulled him a little closer before drifting into sleep.

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Severus awoke to knocking on his sitting room door. He threw on a shirt, then opened the door to find Ron Weasley standing there.

"It is eight o'clock in the morning. To what do I owe the pleasure?" Severus sneered.

"Oh, um, sorry about that." Ron fidgeted with the lint in his pocket. "Well, see ... Hermione wants her cat back," he blurted.

"And you are telling me this because ...?"

"She seems to think that I would find him here."

"Well, she would be mistaken."

Ron did not reply but stood there staring at his professor's pants, grinning madly.

"What?" Severus demanded.

"Oh, it's just ... you've got a little something just there."

Severus looked down, noticing the slight bulge in his pants. "For God's sake, Weasley, grow up."

Ron noticed what Severus' fussing was about, and his cheeks heated until they matched his hair. "No, eww! I was looking a bit lower."

Severus leaned down to inspect his clothing.

"You can't have a cat and wear black," Ron said, smirking.

"Stay here," Severus growled, then slammed the door in his student's face.

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Crookshanks opened one eye as Severus entered the room. "Get up, furball. You *dad* is here."

The cat let out an annoyed mewl, and then went back to sleep.

"I understand, my friend, but it is time for you to go." He scooped up the cat and walked toward the door. "Remember, a double agent always plays the part." He leaned down and Crookshanks butted foreheads with him. "That's my boy," he said before opening the door.

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Severus thrust the cat into Ron's arms. "And stay out, you mangy beast. If I catch you in my rooms again, you will end up in a jar on a shelf in my supply closet."

Crookshanks hissed and swiped at him.

"Crooks!" Ron hollered. "Sorry, sir," he mumbled as he started toward the stairs.

They had just disappeared around the corner when the shouting began. "Ow! You miserable bastard, I'm bleeding."

Severus walked back in to his rooms and shut the door. "That's my boy."