

The Filius Files, Part 1: Christmas Celebration

by Pyttan

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This story was originally published at my favorite LJ Community [One_Bad_Man](#).

It is also dedicated to Diabólica's baby, Sprout. The story comes packaged with my fondest wishes that Sprout will find good friends that are honest, loyal, kind and have a sense of humor.

Diabólica has beta read it, and I also had a helping hand, beta wise, from AmyLouise65.

The Filius Files, Part 1: Christmas Celebration

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It had been a lovely Christmas dinner, and Filius was so very pleased with the evening.

The house-elves had outdone themselves, the dears. The turkey had been a big, hulking, succulent one, and the cranberry jelly had been good enough to eat straight out of the gilded bowl it was served in. And he had managed to finish off the remains in that bowl all by himself. As a dessert of sorts. Before the real dessert. Filius snickered just thinking about it. He'd got to the bowl before Pomona had this year.

And the crackers had been fantastic. He would have liked to get the one with the white mice in it. But the top hat was nice too, he had to admit, as he tried to place it at a better, and jauntier, angle on his head.

To top it off, the eggnog had been divine! It had carried a nasty punch ... especially after he'd spiked it. Even Minerva, well able to down a couple...or even a couple of couples...of Firewhiskeys without getting slurry when speaking, had been giggling at the end of dinner. Filius snickered again and started humming to himself.

The new Kids-Away Repellent Charm he had put on the bowl of eggnog had worked like, well, the brilliant charm that it was. No one wanted a bunch of hung-over children and adolescents to take care of on Boxing Day. The mere thought was horrifying enough, but since most of the staff would be nursing their own hangovers, it would be even worse.

Merlin, he was good. Almost a genius, in fact. Not even almost a genius; he was indeed a genius.

He snickered yet again. His own hangover would be a crashing, thumping, brutal one tomorrow. He checked his pocket watch, squinting to see the time.

Ha! He'd known it: It would be a crashing, thumping one *later today*.

There was one thing left to do before bed, though.

Christmas spirit should extend to everyone, and that included grumpy, nasty-tempered young men hiding in their dungeon offices filled with disgusting things floating in big jars of nauseating liquid. Truly odd taste in Christmas ornaments he had, that one.

Filius turned and weaved his way back towards the dungeon stairs. He stopped and enjoyed the sight of one of the Christmas trees he'd decorated. It was beautiful. Hagrid was so conscientious when choosing the trees, making it so very easy to decorate them.

His colleagues really were fantastic.

"You really shouldn't drink so much."

The voice came from somewhere over Filius's head, and he looked up, squinting again, trying to find the source. If it hadn't been for the tinkling lilt to the voice, he would have looked for little Miss Granger. The wording was just that bossy.

"Did you forget your glasses? Surely you aren't that much in your cups. *It's Christmas!*"

The voice came from the pious little fairy-angel that Albus had forced him to place atop one of the trees. Filius had been trying to lose that particular fairy among the boxes where the Christmas ornaments were kept when Albus had intervened.

He should have known that it would be the self-appointed little saint of drudgery and boredom that would be chastising him. The horrid little thing always complained incessantly about ... everything.

"I'll have you know, I didn't forget my glasses at all. I left them in my rooms on purpose, since I knew I would be drunk at the end of the evening, and I didn't want to search for them on the morrow when I'm hung over." He pushed the hat back on his head and overbalanced just a tad in the process. The hat fell off and Filius giggled. How very clumsy of him.

"*Planning to get drunk?* How disgraceful! What kind of example are you setting for the students? How can they learn about Christmas from someone who has so little respect for the true values of the season?"

That was it!

He was on his way to cheer up the Master of the Dungeons, and nothing would stand in his way...one should always keep one's goals firmly in sight...and he wasn't going to stand here arguing with a snippy little Christmas ornament any longer. But how to shut it up?

"Why are you smiling like that? It doesn't look like *anice* smile at all."

Filius waved his wand.

"*Wingardium Leviosa.*"

The top hat lifted from his head and floated towards the ceiling.

"Why are you doing that? Peeves already has a hat, and it's much nicer than yours, since it's got bells on top of it. Yours is just black."

The fairy had bent her head backwards, her curly, glittering hair falling down her back, mouth gaping as she stared at the hat hovering above her. She wasn't the brightest light in the tree, obviously. Filius snickered.

"But you don't," he said. "And in the true Christmas spirit, I'm lending you mine."

Filius flicked his wand and the hat dropped over her. She let out an unholy shriek...muffled, thank Merlin for small mercies...and then the hat moved, moved again, quivered and fell off the treetop.

The hat landed at the base of the tree with a thump and then lay still on the floor. Filius stepped closer, listening hard to work out whether the annoying little thing was all right. He didn't want her hurt, after all. Quiet, yes, but not hurt. He could hear muffled sounds ... was that cursing? He bent over the hat, listening closer. It was! The swearing would have been creative even if she hadn't been fairy impersonating an angel. He would go so far as to say the invectives would be creative even for a Death Eater. He managed to make out a couple of words and felt his cheeks starting to blush.

My word, the little thing had a foul mouth.

He picked up the hat, put it on his head again and skipped down the stairs, with his sights set on the office door at the end of the corridor. All the way down the stairs he felt tiny taps on his head. Strange, he had never felt anything like it. Not even last Christmas. There were some more muffled swearing underneath the hat, and the taps intensified. Filius laughed so hard he almost fell down the stairs; she was stomping on his head, the little dear.

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Filius knocked at the door and, as expected, no one answered. He knocked again ... much harder this time.

Nothing.

Filius felt miffed. It wasn't at all *right* to hide in one's office at Christmas.

"Maybe something has happened," Filius said, as loud as he could without shouting. "Maybe I should go and fetch Albus and Minerva just in case ..." He slurred on the s's, but the message would get through anyway, he was sure.

Behind the door stomping ensued, and Filius lurked beside the door preparing himself to make a dash for it, stifling his giggles in the meantime.

The door was yanked wide open, and Severus Snape loomed over Filius in an altogether threatening way.

"What do you want?" he asked, in a tone of voice promising doom and mayhem.

Filius snickered and darted past Severus and his knees into the office behind. The boy was just so easy when riled.

"To wish you a Merry Christmas, Severus." Filius stopped in his tracks. There were even more jars of morbidity on the shelves now, compared to the last time he had visited. He set a course for Severus's office chair and climbed up. Standing on his tiptoes on the seat, he managed to get a good look at the contents of one of the new ones.

"Severus, this is just disgusting! Horrible!"

It was a blob. A big, crimson ... thing. It looked bloated, in a rotting kind of way, and it had tentacles floating about it. Very thin, whirly ones. And six eyes. No, seven eyes, all of them greyish-white and murky. Something that gave the eerie impression of a nose and a mouth lent an almost human quality to the thing, and Filius shuddered in revulsion.

He squinted to get a closer look. It didn't improve the impression. Jellyfish-like and scaly at the same time was not a good look for anything.

"But why would you keep a thing like this? Why? What does it do? Please say it helps Wizardkind somehow."

He looked up and found Severus standing behind him, looking down at Filius and using his nose to full effect while doing it.

"Of course it has uses." Severus reached over Filius and ran a finger over the bulging form of the jar. "It's a Red Medusa. Lovely specimen, isn't she?"

"No, she isn't. Blech." Filius deliberately hung his tongue out of his mouth to illustrate and emphasise his disgust for the jar and its contents.

Severus blinked, narrowed his eyes and sniffed the air. Severus's nostrils were clean. Not one single strand of hair or the smallest of bogeys could be seen. But Filius supposed it was necessary for the boy to be fastidious that way, since they were huge.

Severus made a disgusted moue, and the haughty look Filius received rivalled the ones Lucius Malfoy was in the habit of dealing out at meetings when things didn't go his way.

"You're drunk, Filius."

Filius laughed. Severus Snape was such a prim person. Who would expect to find a personality trait like that in a former Death Eater? No one would, that's who.

"I think you and the annoying angel of Christmas would be a good match," Filius said.

"Annoying angel of Christmas? What have you been drinking?"

"Eggnog." Filius snickered. "Just ordinary, run of the mill eggnog."

"You spiked it, didn't you?" Severus closed his eyes and pinched the ridge of his nose. "Are you aware that Albus spikes it every year too?"

It was very unfair that Filius ... thus far ... was the only one to suffer the fairy, and after saying something that smug Severus just needed to be introduced to her. Such luck he had brought her along.

"Of course, I'm aware. He just doesn't do the job well enough." Filius stifled another giggle and Severus gave him a suspicious look.

"Severus, I would like you to meet the fairy of Christmas," Filius said and lifted his hat.

And out she burst, a fluttering, shrieking, dishevelled heap of silk, glitter, curls and mussed silvery wings.

Filius ducked, barely avoiding the stunner Severus sent at the little critter. It was overkill at its grandest, it really was; the stunner would have felled a Hippogriff. It did fell two of Severus's shelves and a large chunk of the wall behind.

"Did you just try to stun me? You *meanie!* It's Christmas!"

It was hilarious! It was brilliant! Severus would make him pay so, so much for this, but it would be worth it.

The fairy was zooming around Severus's head, her voice sounding more like an out-of-tune peal than tinkling bells. Severus, obviously not wanting to finish her off completely, realising what she was, was trying to protect his head as she hit him over it, repeatedly and at regular intervals, with the small book she was carrying. It was probably supposed to be a hymnal or maybe a prayer book. Or a Bible. Filius laughed even more.

"You came out of that hat screaming like a banshee. I thought..."

"I'm an *angel*, you brute. You'd have to be a very bad man indeed to hex an angel." Her shrieks were so high-pitched Filius felt like his eardrums were being pierced with about a million tiny needles.

And, oh dear! Now she'd done it. Severus's head tipped forward in that distinctive way that was his and his alone, lending him an eerie resemblance to a vulture. Severus sporting a vulture-neck was not at all a good sign.

He had to do something.

"Severus, consider her ..."

Severus's arm shot out, and he caught her in midair.

"... fragility."

The fairy tried to take a bite out of Severus's thumb. Severus didn't react to the bite at all, if staring at the critter didn't count, and Filius didn't think it did. Not really. Looks couldn't kill, after all. Even if Severus's stare had what Filius imagined was a very distinct basilisk-esque quality. And frankly, Severus was beginning to be entitled to some kind of defence because now the beastly little thing was trying to gnaw her way through his thumb.

It didn't work very well though, thankfully.

Severus lifted her up and held her close to his face, and for a horrific moment Filius's mind conjured up a picture of Severus gobbling her up, finishing the meal by picking his teeth with her bones. All he did, though, was draw a deep breath and then let it out in a hard puff, aiming straight at the fairy's face. She stopped mid-gnaw and looked at Severus with big round eyes, her teeth still embedded in his skin.

"Listen, insect." Severus was growling the words rather than saying them. "I am, as you so astutely noted, a bad, bad man. In fact, I'm notorious for it. I hate Christmas. I dislike angels, and I detest fairies pretending to be angels, especially when they can't even manage the part with any semblance of style or dignity. The only fairy I have any use for is a pickled one."

Filius had missed the wand in Severus's other hand, and the hex was so swift and nimble that Filius had no time to react. A lidded jar containing the livid fairy floated towards one of the upper shelves at the far end of the office and settled there.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Filius.

"I'll send her to Albus. He deserves her."

Filius snorted with laughter while Severus shook his head at him. "Sit down, Filius, before you fall off the chair."

Severus, who had seated himself in an armchair by the fire, flicked his wand in a lazy movement, and summoned the office chair with Filius in it. Filius, who had only just seated himself when his chair skated across the room, watched as Severus ordered a house-elf to bring them coffee.

"I always fall off my pile ..." he began.

Filius looked down in his lap. His stomach still churned at the very thought of what he had done the first time he'd had Harry Potter in class. He had miscalculated that performance.

"Pardon," Severus said. "I don't follow."

A cracking sound announced that the elf was back. In a few short seconds it managed to set the table and serve two cups of black coffee. The coffee tasted divine, but not even the coffee was distracting enough. Young Potter kept haunting him.

"You know how you always do your little act with the firsties: The brewing glory speech thing?"

"Yes ..." Severus's answer was reluctant.

"Well, I fall off the pile of books I stand on."

Severus smirked, looking amused for once. "Yes, I remember."

"I always do that, since it relaxes the students. I find the results are better, and I have fewer accidents. I'm small. If I get caught in a misdirected spell ... Anyway, the first time I had young Potter in class..."

Filius stopped. He could have sworn he'd heard a hissing sound, not unlike a teapot on the boil. He looked at Severus, who was now scowling and curling his upper lip in a singularly unattractive way.

"Young Potter. He looked so forlorn, I suppose, and tense, so when I got to his name, well, that's when I fell off the pile of books, you know, pretending to be all surprised and excited."

"He must have loved that," said Severus with a sneer.

Filius looked up.

"No. Not at all. He was terribly embarrassed. For a moment, I thought he would leave the classroom altogether. All the other children were staring at him, and ... I miscalculated. I wanted him to feel welcome. To be honest, I wanted him to like me a bit, but I made him feel uneasy instead."

"He's a Potter. He'll get over it."

Filius shook his head starting to get annoyed. Severus could be so terribly pig headed and obtuse at at times.

"It took me weeks to get him to relax and smile a little. I'm sure his performance suffered because of me."

Severus rolled his eyes. "Then he needs to toughen up."

"No, I don't think that's it at all. I don't know what to say about him, but he isn't at all soft. Not in mind or body. He's all bones and angles, the little mite. And his mindset is just the same. He reminds me of someone but I can't seem to..."

"You're drunk. He reminds you of James Potter. He's the spitting image of that arrogant..."

"No. He might look like James, but..."

"Lily Evans, then. He's got her eyes."

"No, he hasn't."

"Yes, he has. They are exactly..."

"Maybe the colour and the shape, but not the expression. Lily's eyes were open and happy. Harry Potter's eyes are melancholy and ... suspicious. And he reminds me of someone. And it bothers me that I can't figure out who. I was so very disappointed when he was placed in Gryffindor. He could have been placed anywhere ... Well, almost anywhere. Not in Hufflepuff, obviously."

It wasn't fair at all that the Sorting Hat had placed the boy in Gryffindor! He was smart enough for Ravenclaw, for the most part anyway. At least when he made an effort. Which he did ... sometimes. He was shrewd enough for Slytherin, though, and the hat had placed half-bloods there before.

"Are you suggesting Potter could have been a Slytherin? You must be joking. He wouldn't survive one. Single. Day."

Severus was such a prat at times. An arrogant, prattish, Death-Eater-Wannabe ... prat!

"Yes, he could! And he would have been a good one too! He's sly! And you were disappointed you didn't get him! I saw it!"

"No, I wasn't." Severus made an obvious show of casual condescension as he took a dainty sip from his cup. He was being prattish again, and this was it, really! One did have to set some boundaries.

Severus was going to admit to it. As fast as he was able, Filius got out of his chair. And he was still fast, he was pleased to discover, as he pushed his wand at the end of Severus's nose so hard he forced his head against the back of chair he was sitting in.

"Admit it."

"I have nothing to admit. And you are so drunk you'll fall on your face at any moment..."

"I could give you antlers. Or..."

"Do you have even the smallest idea what I'm able to do with a wand when annoyed?" Severus asked with that low, slow voice the boy excelled at using to scare people into hiding. The hard look Severus gave Filius, obviously meant to go with the statement, promised dismemberment at the very least. But he wouldn't do that, would he? No, he wouldn't, not to him. Filius chuckled: In his own way Severus was so very adorable.

"Have you got any idea what I can do with a wand when I'm having fun?" Filius answered and tried to remember why on earth he was pressing his wand against Severus's nose. After all, he didn't want to cause a nose bleed. It would be an effing bloodbath if he slipped with the wand and poked Severus in that nose of his.

Filius jumped down and returned to his chair and his coffee, smiling at Severus.

Severus was shaking his head.

"I seem to have lost the thread of conversation. Where were we?" asked Filius, and Severus's head fell forward.

"Potter. Houses. Sorting Hat," Severus said, looking up at Filius again. He was massaging his left temple.

Filius got annoyed just thinking about the annual sorting debacle.

"You surely can't agree with it?" asked Filius. It would be unbelievable if he did. And why was Severus moaning?

"Agree with what?"

Filius couldn't help rolling his eyes. Severus was really slow on the uptake today. Not like his usual self at all. He worked too hard.

"You should have come to the Christmas dinner. We missed you."

This time Severus got to his feet and started pacing.

"No ... No." He made a slashing movement with his hand. "That was not what we were talking about. You need to ... need to concentrate. You were saying something nonsensical about me not agreeing to something, and then you changed the subject."

Filius thought about it. Yes, yes, they had been discussing that. And it was important, and maybe he could get Severus to see sense. He did, after all, use empirical methods in his work, and he used quantitative research too. And then, he and Severus could take on Albus, and then Severus and Filius could create a new truly scientific method of sorting! And they would use quantitative data to make sure it really worked.

"The sorting procedure. The stupid hat is not at all reliable."

"The Founders..."

"I don't care. The hat is ancient. I'm sure their spells started to wear off ages ago. The thing is biased against Ravenclaw, for Merlin's sake!"

If Filius hadn't known better he would have said that Severus had a stagger to his step in returning to his chair. He definitely slumped down in it. And then he sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose again.

"Every single student that has even a remote characteristic from one of the other houses gets sent there instead, and I can prove it."

"Are you claiming that you have empirical evidence?"

"Indeed I have. I have written it down." Filius searched his robes and found the note. "I can name students, one or more, in every single year that should have been sent to my house." He squinted at the note and realised he couldn't read it on account of not wearing his glasses.

"Here, read it," he said and handed Severus the note.

"Year one: Hermione Granger, Harry Potter, Blaise Zabini. You're welcome to them. Zabini is a spoilt Mama's boy and the other two ..." Severus made a face. "Year two: Katie Bell, Carl Urquhart. Year three: Fred Weasley, George Weasley, Lee Jordan, Cedric Diggory!" Severus eyes widened as he read. "Are you insane? I can see your point as far as the Diggory boy goes, but the rest? Everything they touch turns to chaos."

"They are smart, creative-smart. You of all people should appreciate that! The Weasley boys would have made smashing Slytherins too, and you know it"

Severus huffed and read on.

When he'd finished reading, he put the note down and poured himself some more coffee. Filius yawned. He was tired. Severus's office chair was surprisingly comfortable.

"You may have a point," Severus said.

"Of course I do." Filius yawned again and snuggled deeper into the lovely chair. "You know, you should have ..."

"Pardon?" asked Severus.

Filius cracked an eyelid open.

"You should have been a Ravenclaw. I was so miffed when I discovered ... never understood why the hat did that to you. Stupid hat. You would have been so much happier in with me. Instead you ... Slughorn ... Slug Club ... not good for you at all." It felt like the chair was embracing him. He let his eyelids drop shut and sighed with pleasure. Then he remembered and made a last effort.

"We need to get rid of the hat, Severus, we really do. And we need to find a valid way of doing the sorting, something that takes into account what the child needs." Filius yawned. "You'll help?"

Severus barked a laugh. "If you like."

Filius smiled. He was so very comfortable ...

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The nausea woke him. He forced his eyes open and closed them again. The crisp, hard light of the winter morning cut straight into his brain and made him moan from the pain of it.

He managed to squint hard enough to survive the sunlight and looked at around. He was in his bedroom. That was good. Last year he had woken up in the owlery for some reason he had yet to discover.

But how on earth had he got to his rooms and into bed? And what was the top hat doing on his bedside table? And why did his brain conjure up pictures of white mice? Christmas crackers: that was it. He'd got the hat at dinner last evening. And he had indeed spiked the eggnog, for which he was being punished at the moment. Then the angel had been pious and obnoxious, and then he had gone to wish Severus a happy Christmas.

Severus would never let him forget this, and he would eventually punish Filius for it.

He looked at the hat again. Beside it was a small vial with a note attached. He reached for the vial and his glasses and read the label. 'The-Gruesome-Day-After-Yesterday-Potion' it said, and Filius wanted to squeal with happiness. He would be sensible and not squeal yet though. He would squeal after he had drunk the potion and his

headache was gone.

Severus was so much nicer than people realised.

Filius uncorked the vial and drained it in one gulp. Five minutes later the headache was gone, and after another three the nausea was no more. He sighed as a pleasant warmth spread through him. Severus was good at his trade, one had to say.

Curious about the contents of the note, in which Severus would chastise him one way or another, he was sure, he unfolded it and started reading.

Filius,

Considering the state you were in when you visited my office last night, I assumed that you might need to be medicated this morning.

Since you are, despite appearances yesterday, more intelligent than the average Wizard, I'm sure you will have already understood what the vial contains.

The potion takes care of the unsavoury after-effects one might experience from overindulging, and that includes setting the vomiting reflex out of working order. That condition is temporary and only intended to last an hour. The reason for this would be to help the 'patient' (I use the word 'patient' loosely, and because I lack a better term, even if words like 'dunderhead' or perhaps 'idiot' come to mind and feel more apt in the circumstances) keep the potion down long enough for it to spread through the 'patient's' system.

Sincerely,

Severus Snape

Filius read the note again. True to style, obviously. Amusing in its own way, certainly. Surprisingly benign, which was odd. And why would Severus go into such detail about the vomiting reflex? How very strange. And worrying.

He read the note for the third time, and this time he noticed a small arrow pointing at the side of the parchment. Filius turned the note over with a feeling of uneasiness niggling at the pit of his stomach. Niggling was never good.

P.S. I'm not sure if you remember asking me about the Red Medusa or not.

He remembered. He shivered just thinking of the horrid thing staring at him from within the jar.

You asked what it was good for. Now you know, by firsthand experience, how it serves Wizardkind.

Filius dropped the note, moaned and pulled the duvet over his head.