

Meeting Eileen

by Snapefan520

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Anything you recognise belongs to the talented J K Rowling. I make nothing from this endeavor.

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I walked in through the nondescript door and immediately noticed the thick layer of dust covering the furniture, drapes, and bookshelves. It was quite obvious that he spent very little time here despite it being his home. Well, his home for about three months of the year.

"When was the last time you were here, Severus?" I asked casually, giving him what was hopefully a reassuring smile.

"Two weeks ago, but just briefly; I did not have enough time to—" He stopped as I gently pushed my fingers against his mouth in a hushing motion.

"That is okay. I know you wouldn't have had time since you administered end of year exams. We can work on it together; I don't mind." And I really didn't mind, since this would now be our home, not just his anymore.

We had been married just a week ago, only a few days after end of term. I couldn't help but smile when I thought about everything over the past two years that had brought us together.

It had all started with me visiting Severus at St. Mungo's following the final battle, though at first I had only visited him due to the guilt that hung over me. I had not realised he was still alive after Nagini's attack, and I tried to do anything for atonement. As our visits continued, a tentative friendship began to grow. With our many shared interests, we never found it difficult to find a course of discussion. Then as I began my apprenticeship with Minerva, we moved on to spirited arguments in the library over potions texts and articles. Our discussions in the library were moved to his quarters so that we could share tea, which gradually led to him courting me. He was so old fashioned, and I had to be the bold one and take it to the next level. But never let it be said that Severus Snape is not a fast learner. I blushed slightly as I thought about how wonderful our honeymoon had been.

Pulled back into the present by the not so subtle clearing of his throat, I heard him say, "If you don't mind, there is something I would like for you to do before we work on the house." His voice had gotten much softer and more hesitant. After two years of really getting to know him, I realised he was anxious about what he needed to ask me.

"Yes?" I gave him a curious look, wondering what could possibly make him so nervous.

"I-I would like you to meet my mother."

I'm sure my mouth was open so wide that a bludger could have gone through it. "Your mother? I thought that your mother... Well, I had assumed that..."

"My mother's portrait, that is," he quickly added. Thank goodness he had interrupted me before I put my foot in my mouth.

"Of course, Severus." I smiled at him, trying desperately to hide the nervousness that I was actually feeling. *His mother!* Honestly, I was quite terrified to meet her as visions of a stern woman with a temper that rivaled his crept into my thoughts.

I slowly followed him up the rickety steps into the larger of the two bedrooms. This room was even more dust-covered than the downstairs, the air stale. A large bed that looked like it had not been slept on in years sat in the center of the room, and I had a feeling that this had been his parents' room. Slowly following him to a large portrait hung near the wardrobe, I gasped as the woman in the frame smiled at me.

"You must be Hermione." Her eyes twinkled slightly as she spoke to me in a much kinder voice than I was expecting.

"Yes," I answered her nervously. Despite living in the wizarding world for a little over ten years, I still was uncomfortable talking with portraits.

Severus touched my shoulder and then walked slowly towards the bedroom door. "I will start dinner and give you a few moments to talk."

"Severus has told me so much about you." She spoke softly. "I'm glad he has finally met someone that can make him happy."

"He makes me very happy as well." My voice was almost a whisper as I spoke. "I love him very much."

The radiance of Eileen's smile washed over me, and instantly I knew that if she could have reached out of the portrait and embraced me, she would have. Realistically, I understood that she was only oil and canvas, enchanted with the essence of the real Eileen's soul. However, at this moment, she seemed much, much more.

"You do know that you are the reason he survived?"

"What? No. That's not true. I left him after the attack. I thought he had died... We all did. I still feel guilty for not checking." I felt a tear slowly sliding down my cheek.

Eileen paused for a moment and then started smiling again at me before she spoke. "He does not blame you for that. He thought he was dying as well. No one expected Dumbledore's phoenix to come back and save him. No, I am talking about while he was recovering at St. Mungo's. Did you know that the first few weeks he was recovering he only had one visitor? She visited every day and read to him. She... or I guess I should say you, were the reason he worked so hard to recover and embrace life."

"I-I..." I stuttered, trying to find words to speak, not really knowing how to reply to what she just told me.

"He's had such a rough life, and I'm sure I'm as much to blame for that as anyone. I never protected him the way I should have. His father was..." She paused for a moment as she collected her thoughts. "He was not a kind man. And he took out his anger and frustration on the both of us. I'm afraid Severus's home life, along with meeting the wrong type of friends, led to him becoming a Death Eater." She started to smile once again before speaking. "I'm sure you know most of this already, but because of everything he had to do as both a Death Eater and spy, he had long ago accepted his fate would be death. You brought light back to his life after years of darkness, freedom after years of serving two masters. He did not have a reason to live until you."

I couldn't help the tears that were now freely falling down my face. I think in my heart I had known this, but to be told by the only person who truly knew him and loved him was earth shattering.

I wiped the tears from my eyes and tried to control my emotions before I spoke, failing miserably. "Thank you, Mrs. Snape."

"Please, call me Eileen." The smile stayed on her face as I slowly left the bedroom and headed downstairs.

I walked into the kitchen as Severus was preparing our meal. I put my arms around his waist and rested my head on his back. He stiffened briefly, surprised by my touch. He turned around and gave me a questioning look.

I slowly pulled his head down and kissed him as passionately and ferociously as I could. He returned my enthusiasm, twining his fingers in my hair as we kissed.

"What was this for?" A look of amusement danced in his eyes.

"A thank you," I replied breathlessly.

"A thank you? For what?"

"Letting me meet your mother."

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