

Bushy-Hair's Mate and the Very Good Day

by linlawless

Severus gets a lot of very welcome news.

A One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Written as an Early Round Exchange Bingo prize for Cybrokat. The prompt was "Severus finally gets what he wants." I've incorporated two of her favourite characters, as you'll see...

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The mighty lion stalks his helpless prey across the nighttime Savannah... He moves silently, unseen in the moonlight peeping through the clouds... His prey, perhaps sensing his peril, turns, and the lion freezes...

"Humph," the black-draped figure of Bushy-Hair's Mate mutters, sounding grumpy to my twitchy ears. "Spent too long skulking about all those years; now I'm jumping at shadows." I must say, the muttering is rather rude, really. Doesn't he know it would be easier for me to hear him if he'd speak up? The way he does when the short, loud ones annoy him? Except, of course, *I* could never annoy him, could I? I am, after all, King of the Castle...and the grounds, too.

He turns on his heel and continues down the corridor, the fabric of his clothing billowing enticingly behind him. (Naturally, he wears it for the purpose of entertaining me... Oh, don't get me wrong: he protests sometimes; he even tried to kick me once, but Bushy-Hair scolded him and then he had to bring her some sort of interesting-smelling gift to get her to forgive him. I don't know why she was so excited about it, really; it's not like he brought her a nice juicy mouse or anything. Anyway, whenever he fails to show me the proper worship, I get extra treats and cuddles from Bushy-Hair, so I don't complain too much.)

Up ahead, I hear that annoying voice – the one of the flat guy on the wall wearing the shiny clothes. "What villain dares to trespass— oh, it's just you, Professor. I am most pleased to report, good sir, that all is quiet in the west corridor." I don't like Shiny Flat Man (though I suppose I don't mind that he's respectful to Bushy-Hair's Mate). Shiny Flat Man always challenges me to duels – never wants to let me pass. (As if he could stop *me*! I am, as I just said, *King*, and nowhere is off-limits to me. Bushy-Hair has stopped trying, mostly. She used to say things like, "No, Crookshanks!" when I'd get up high to sniff more closely at what treats she might be making for me. But now she just rolls her eyes and mutters something like, "Stubborn half-Kneazle! I should've left you in that shop." She smiles and scratches under my chin when she says it, so I assume this is her way of saying she adores me.)

Bushy-Hair's Mate is talking with Shiny Flat Man, whom I could shred with one swipe of my mighty lion's paw (*which should*, in my considered opinion, have the ability to open tins the way Bushy-Hair's paws do). "Any word on what Potter is up to? Why does he suddenly want to leave his cushy position and take *my* job?"

Shiny Flat Man puffs up – quite a feat, considering he's flat – and says, "I, Sir Cadogan, do not engage in idle ~~gossip~~!"

"Of course you don't," Bushy-Hair's Mate agrees, but I suspect from his tone that he doesn't really mean it. (Or perhaps he does. He uses that exact tone when Bushy-Hair says things like, "Look at Crookshanks! Isn't he *adorable*?" and he replies, "Oh, yes, *adorable*." So I suppose that's just how he talks.)

Shiny Flat Man must think he's sincere, because he doesn't flounce away or anything. (Really, doesn't anyone around here know how to make an exit? Besides me, I mean, and maybe Not-Really-a-Cat Woman... Well, I suppose Bushy-Hair does it pretty well sometimes: her Mate *always* follows her when she does it just so...)

Bushy-Hair's Mate is using that smooth tone he has (the one he uses when he wants to persuade me to swallow the icky-tasting stuff or get into that box they use to take me places I don't want to go. /know better, of course – I hide whenever he uses that tone. Fool me once, and all that.). But Shiny Flat Man is soaking it all in; he's practically preening (a bit like that sparrow did last week, right before I pounced). When Bushy-Hair's Mate stops talking, Shiny Flat Man says, "Well, you didn't hear it from *me*, sir, but I have it on good authority – no, no, I won't say who – that the young man's fiancée caught him *in flagrante delicto*—" His voice lowers to a whisper (really, all this straining to hear things is getting annoying) "—with another *man*! I'm told she broke the engagement, and her mother decreed that no one in the entire family is to have anything more to do with him. Apparently, one of them was his partner at work, but it got really uncomfortable when he began enlisting others to communicate on his behalf. I imagine constantly hearing 'tell Potter this-or-that' when Potter is sitting right there would get a bit tiresome..."

"Never mind all that!" Bushy-Hair's Mate says, but he's smiling. I shrink further back; the smile is a little scary. (Not that I'm scared, of course, just cautious. I am *King*, after all, not *stupid*.) Not-Really-a-Cat Woman pads up beside me as he continues. "What do you hear about the *job*, man? Is Potter going to be the latest in a long line to snatch it from my grasp?"

Stepping out of the shadows, Not-Really-a-Cat Woman changes into her inferior form. "I can answer that, Severus, dear. If you were worried, I don't know why you didn't just ask me."

Bushy Hair's Mate turns the colour of a mouse's nose and says, "I didn't think you'd tell me, Minerva, until it's official one way or the other."

"Let me ease your mind now, then, Severus. Mr Potter *did* apply for the DADA position, but I told him you were being offered the post. He's decided to apply to be Flying instructor instead, though Rolanda seems to be re-thinking her decision to retire." Not-Really-a-Cat Woman peers closely at him, shaking her head. "In any event, we can discuss all that later. The reason I came looking for you is to tell you Hermione's gone into labour."

Bushy-Hair's Mate smiles wider, then laughs. He seems truly delighted now. He sweeps past us, pausing to soundly smack his lips on Not-Really-a-Cat Woman's cheek. "Oh, Minerva, this is turning into a very good day. Maybe even the very *best* day!"

He disappears down the corridor so fast I don't even manage a single swipe at the billow.