

The Severus Sonnets

by Lighthouse

The tumultuous tale of Severus Snape's tragic love. Told through a series of vignettes interspersed within the lines of Shakespeare's Sonnets 91-94. Cannon Compliant.

A Joy Above the Rest

Chapter 1 of 1

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Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,

Some in their wealth, some in their body's force.

Two men sat sipping brandy in a private lounge at La Vipère Vert in Diagon Alley. The room exuded a comfortable and classic elegance, with a chess table standing between two tall-backed antique leather chairs. The scene was bathed in the softly flickering light of a quiet fire.

"All I'm saying is that there need to be some proper boundaries between the properly established pure-blood Families and all these ill-bred Mudblood interlopers." The speaker was tall and impeccably dressed, his long blond hair tied neatly back with a green ribbon. "To be a true wizard takes more than the ability to wave a wand. One must think of the old traditions and the strength of the magical line. My own family, as you well know, traces its magical roots back to Nimue, in the time of Merlin." Scrutinizing the board carefully, he added, "Bishop to C4."

His companion, a shorter, dark-haired man, nodded. "I agree. Bishop to F5. There is no respect for the old traditions, the deeper powers. It's all been whitewashed by the Muggle lovers for these uncouth Mudbloods who haven't an inkling of true magic. They speak of the 'dark' arts as though they were the gateway to Hell itself. Never mind that the great Merlin himself practiced them openly and encouraged his pupils to study them closely. It's not only the so-called 'Unforgivables' anymore, either, Abraxas. That meddling fool Dumbledore has persuaded those spineless sycophants on the school board to remove Rituals and Blood Magic from the curriculum entirely!"

"As if it wasn't enough that the classes were combined and switched to an elective decades ago, all to make magic more palatable to these Mudblood barbarians. They should get down on their hands and knees and give thanks to their stars that they can even see into our world. But no, instead we're required to abandon our proud heritage to crawl down into the gutter with them. Hang on a minute," he paused and narrowed his eyes at his knight, who was gesticulating wildly towards the opposing bishop. "Knight to E5. I'll have to hire a private tutor for Lucius this summer to compensate for what he ought to be learning at Hogwarts. Your boys are welcome to join him for his lessons at the manor. I'm sure my wife would enjoy having Walburga spend the afternoons in her new conservatory."

"That's very kind of you, and perhaps it is time to introduce young Sirius to his birthright. Regulus is barely nine, though, and Aunt Cassie would have a fit if I let him begin blood rituals before he's even attended Hogwarts." Orion Black took a sip of brandy and shook his head. "Pawn to E6. Witches have such silly notions about children. I was only five years old when I participated in my first ritual and it has done me no harm at all."

"Well, better not to ruffle their pretty little feathers too often, my friend. Pawn to G4." Grimacing slightly he added, "Once a witch gets a notion in her head, there's precious little you can do to get it out again. But what they don't know can't hurt them, now, can it?"

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*Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill;*

*Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse:*

"Walburga, so lovely of you to join me for tea this afternoon." Despina Malfoy swept into the ornate drawing room and kissed her friend upon both cheeks. "And this must be Sirius, but he's grown so tall I'd scarce have recognized him without you!" It took a substantial nudge and a veiled glare from Mrs. Black before Sirius reluctantly stuck out his hand. Mrs. Malfoy, ever the proper hostess, accepted it graciously. "Mitsy will take you down to the second basement, where Lucius and Professor Killian are working today."

A small creature with bright eyes and long ears, popped into existence next to Sirius. She was wearing a tea towel wrapped about her waist, embroidered with delicate pink and yellow roses. After a quick bow to her mistress, she beckoned Sirius to follow her. His mother's heavy hand on his shoulder made him pause and after a sullen glance in her direction he turned back to the lady of the house and chanted in a voice that clearly indicated the words had been drilled into his head by his mother prior to their arrival. "Thank you, Mrs. Malfoy, for inviting me here for this marvelous opportunity. Bye, Mum."

"Enjoy your time, dear, and for the love of Merlin, mind your manners with Professor Killian. Tell the good professor that I will want to leave by five o'clock, and not to hold you later."

"Yes, Ma'am." Sirius muttered over his shoulder as he followed the house elf down the hall.

"I apologize for his recalcitrance, Despina" Said Mrs. Black, pursing her lips in annoyance. "I swear, that child will be the death of me. He's made friends with the Potters' boy, and while I'm loath to say anything against the most noble and ancient house of Potter," she added in voice that belied her words and practically dripped with the saccharine sarcasm of an accomplished gossip, "I'm afraid that they have disgraced their blood in the most shameful fashion. They stood behind Dumbledore in his latest attempt to remove all traces of ancient ritual from Hogwarts. We tried at first to reason with them, but it is no use. They really seem determined to watch the decay of our whole civilization. We've had no choice, of course, but to declare them blood traitors and Sirius is taking it particularly hard. This is the perfect thing to get his mind off of the sorry affair. I can only hope that he'll learn to follow dear Lucius' example this summer. You must be so proud of your son."

"Of course we are." Despina Malfoy smiled at the praise of her son, and said magnanimously, "Don't fret over Sirius. He's a Black and that will ensure his entrance into Slytherin, where he will make new and more proper friends. I'm sure Lucius will look after him as well." The lady of the manor took her friend's hands and spoke reassuringly, "We've come to a sorry state if pureblood families cannot come together to look after one of their own." Releasing both her friend's hand and her grave demeanor, she laughed airily. "Enough of such silly worries! You have yet to see the new stables and you'll never believe what Abraxas brought back from his trip to the continent. It's a black unicorn filly, a fine specimen! And there's a new litter of crups in the kennel. One in particular is going to be a spectacular tracker for our hunting parties next spring..."

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And every humor hath his adjunct pleasure,

Wherein it finds a joy above the rest;

"Please Dad! Just ten minutes, and then we can go to the bookstore." Charlus Potter sighed at the small figure tugging insistently at his hand toward the Quidditch Supply Store. The boy redoubled his efforts of persuasion. "They've just come out with the Nimbus 1500! It goes up to 125 miles per hour and can U-turn at up to 70 miles per hour."

"James, we have brooms at home. What we do not have at home are your school supplies. We've got a lot of shopping to do today and I have never gotten you out of that store in less than an hour."

"Our brooms are ancient!" James whined in exasperation. "Dad, you ride a Swiftstick from before I was born! At least Aunt Cassie has a Nimbus 1000."

"I'll have you know that the Swiftstick was the fastest broom of the 50s, and it's a great broom for you to practice with when you start flying. As for what Cassiopeia Black flies, that's none of your concern." Charlus looked into the dejected eyes of his son and relented a little. "Perhaps if we finish gathering all of your supplies by tea time, we can stop into the Quidditch shop afterwards." In a flash, the confident smile was back on the boy's face and he practically skipped towards the bookshop. Charlus felt the corners of his mouth tug upward at the child's enthusiasm. Circe only knew what Dorea would say if her son came home with a brand new broom...

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*But these particulars are not my measure,*

*All these I better in one general best.*

The small child was crouching forlornly behind a bush on the far edge of the school yard, watching the other children play. He flinched as a hand brushed gently against his shoulder. He looked up quickly. The hand was attached to an arm, and the arm was attached to a girl with flaming red hair and bright green eyes. She noticed his reaction to her touch, but she didn't remove her hand. Instead she sat down next to him and extended her arm around his shoulders. They sat in silence for a moment and then the girl spoke. "I was hoping I'd find you here, Sev. Tuney has been an absolute pest ever since that letter came, and you're the only one I can talk to about it. I still can't believe that we're going to be witches!"

"You're going to be a witch," said Severus, brightening. "I'm going to be a wizard. We'll learn all kinds of magic and no one will ever bully us again. We'll be with our own people, you'll see. You've never felt like you entirely fit with your family, and now you know why. You belong in the magical world. You belong with m--," Severus broke off quickly, ducking his head to let lank strands of dark hair hide the rosy blush creeping into his sallow cheeks.

"It sounds like a wonderful place. I'm sure my family will come 'round once they see all the amazing things I'll be learning. They're just a little nervous now because they don't understand what magic really is. Once I can show them that it's all safe, then they'll know that I still fit." Lily smiled and stood up, gesturing him to join her. "Come on, I'll race you to the tree house, last one there is a dozy duffer!"

Melancholy forgotten, Severus Snape stood and chased Lily Evans all the way to their favorite spot. He could have overtaken her, but he liked to see the triumphant smile she would give when she looked down at him from her perch in the upper branches.

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Thy love is better than high birth to me,

Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,

"Lily, come down here now!" Mrs. Evans bellowed up the stairs. "It's time to leave for the station. What can you possibly be doing up there? Your trunk is loaded and your father is already in the car. Heaven's sake, child, you're going to miss the train!" Emily Evans gave a long-suffering sigh of resignation. "Petunia, do go up and see what is keeping your sister. There's a dear."

Petunia didn't bother to knock on the door marked with an elaborate pink "L". She pushed it open with enough force to smack it into the wall. "Does magic make you deaf?" she asked sullenly. "It's time to go to your stupid school with your creepy friend. Good riddance, the both of you. It's just not natural."

"Don't say that, Petunia! I'll miss you terribly. We won't see one another again until winter hols, and that's ages away." Lily reached out to hug her sister, but thought better

of it and ended up with her hands settled awkwardly on her sister's shoulders. "Don't forget to write once in awhile, Tuney, to let me know how you're getting on without me. I'll be sure to write back, once I figure out the quills and parchment."

"Don't bother. I don't want to know anything about that wretched school! It's not like they'd let any decent people in," Petunia shrugged Lily's hands off of her shoulders. "The fact that they invited you is even more proof that you're off your onion! They only let freaks in, and that's what you are now, a freak! I'm glad you're leaving."

Lily rushed down the stairs, passed her mother without a glance, climbed into the back seat of the Evans family's old Trabant, and tried valiantly not to cry. She would have one more chance at the station to try to reason with her sister. For the moment she simply played over and over in her mind the last words Severus had spoken to her the night before when she told him how much she would miss her home. "Don't worry, Lily," he had whispered. "We're going to your true home; a place where nothing will ever make you cry."

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*Of more delight than hawks and horses be;*

*And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast.*

"Sirius, what is up with your owl?" James Potter guffawed loudly and pointed to the enormous bird cage on the shelves above the spacious train compartment. "It's nearly as big as a thestral! Does your Mum think you're going to send her letters home carved in ancient runes on stone tablets?"

"I know, I know," said Sirius, rolling his eyes dramatically and smirking. "Always be as showy as possible: that's my mother's motto. His name, Urien, was not my choice! I figure I can call him either Uri or Ian. He could come in handy, too. Before I left home, I trained him to drop buckets of mud on Reg's head every time he went into the back garden! You should have seen his face. Well, at least the parts that were visible through the mud."

"That'll be splendid for pulling pranks at school!" James' answering grin was as wide as his face. "Imagine all the other things we can teach him to do. Rum luck about the name though. Wasn't Urien supposed to be Morgan le Fay's husband?"

"Yeah, it means 'privileged birth', or some such rot." Sirius made a rather rude gesture of distaste before his mind slid gleefully back to hijinks and mayhem. "I bet we could train him to help out with some getaways, too. No need to buy a broom when you can hitch a ride by owl!"

"You wouldn't say that if you had a Nimbus 1500!" Potter replied wistfully. "I heard that someone donated an entire set to the Chudley Cannons' starting line-up. Not that it will help much, but I would give just about anything to chase down a real Snitch at 150 miles per hour!"

So caught up were they in their own conversation that neither of the boys noticed the girl curled up by the window, gazing out at the passing countryside. They were so engrossed in their dreams of flight, that they unconsciously ignored the pale, dark-haired boy who slipped into the compartment and sat across from her. In fact, the pairs might have passed the entirety of the trip without exchanging two words between the four of them. But those words were spoken. The pale boy, in the midst of an effort to cheer the forlorn girl, told his companion: "You'd better be in Slytherin."

"Slytherin?" In his haze of Quidditch-induced euphoria, that one word had reached into James Potter's consciousness and made him aware of the other inhabitants of their compartment. He did not bother to address the other passengers, but instead turned his question on Sirius. "Who wants to be in Slytherin? I think I'd leave, wouldn't you?"

Severus tensed as his private moment with Lily was shattered by their obnoxious neighbors. He clenched his jaw and his lips curled into a scowl when the rowdy boys began mocking his mother's house. He couldn't help a small snort of derision when they proved to be Gryffindor brats.

"If you'd rather be brawny than brainy..." He muttered with a sneer. The returning insult from Black was neither clever nor particularly cutting, but Severus felt a thrill of belonging when he saw the fire light in Lily's eyes. When her hand slid into his and pulled him from the compartment, he could have faced down an entire army of wannabe Gryffindors.

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Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take

All this away, and me most wretched make.

"Gryffindor!"

Severus felt his eyes go wide and he wondered absently if the crushing of his heart had made any audible noise to those around him. He watched numbly as Lily gave him a sad little smile and hurried to join her housemates. One by one the names passed by and he counted every name added to Gryffindor as one more person who might replace him as Lily's best friend. It was no surprise when he was sorted into Slytherin. And though much of his former joy and excitement had drained away from the prospect, he couldn't help feeling encouraged by the cheering Slytherins welcoming him to his new house. He sat down next to a tall, blond, sophisticated and obviously wealthy wizard with a prefect badge pinned to his robes. It was a picture of everything he wanted to be, everything he deserved as scion of the Prince family. He sat a little straighter and held his head a little higher as a strong hand patted him on the back encouragingly.

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