

The Glare

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How It All Began

Chapter 1 of 1

Have you ever wondered how Professor Snape did it, keeping a class silent without effort? Well, let me tell you a story.

"He spoke in barely a whisper, but they caught every word — like Professor McGonagall, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort."

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, The Potions Master

Have you ever wondered how Professor Snape did it? Well, let me tell you a story.

Believe it or not, Severus Snape's very first day of teaching was ... a disaster. His standards were too high, the students too childish and his patience virtually non-existent. By the time the last students fled the dungeon that day, Severus had mentally cast about a hundred Unforgivables and his throat was sore from yelling. He certainly wasn't looking forward to the next day. Neither were his students.

Instead of going to the Great Hall for dinner, Severus remained in his study that evening. He just wasn't cut out for teaching, he concluded. He couldn't be trusted around students! Sooner or later, there would certainly be casualties and seeing that he was skilled in the Dark Arts, none of the little dunderheads would stand a chance. Dumbledore would have to come up with something else for him. Severus had made up his mind. He would hand in his resignation that very night.

He was just about to march up to the Headmaster's office when there came a knock on his door. To his surprise, the one doing the knocking was none other than Minerva McGonagall.

'Rough first day?' the Deputy Headmistress asked, sweeping past Severus and entering his study without being invited.

He cocked an eyebrow. Rough day? Minerva couldn't seriously be asking that! Or could she?

She produced a bottle of Firewhisky and two glasses, filled them up and handed one to her younger colleague.

'I heard you yelling all the way up to my classroom,' she pointed out. 'I am convinced that some of the students deserved being told off, but you'll wear your voice out, laddie. You need to change your approach.'

'Any pointers, Deputy Headmistress?' Severus asked sardonically. He was keeping his voice low. Minerva didn't need to know that he had shouted himself hoarse already.

'Well, that's a start. I find that keeping my voice low will keep the students on edge.'

Minerva was walking around in the study now, seemingly inspecting the jars on Severus' shelves.

'Also, you might want to avoid smiling for the first two months,' she said casually.

Severus almost choked on his drink. As if he would smile! He coughed, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand ... and almost dropped the glass when Minerva whirled around and fixed him with a stare that made the blood in his veins turn to ice. Oh, how he remembered that look! Professor McGonagall had never needed to use it on him when he had been her student, but whoever she had used it on would have fallen silent in a matter of nanoseconds and had never spoken out of turn in her class again.

'A correct glare, dear boy, is only done once,' Minerva explained. 'Practice.'

She downed her whisky without flinching, turned her glass into a mirror and then left the dungeon, leaving Severus standing in awe. She had just given him a lesson he would never forget.

When the door fell shut, Severus, stepped up to the mirror, scowling at his reflection. He could do that, he told himself. He just needed to practice.

By the time the clock struck midnight, the mirror had cracked.

And thus, dear reader, it all began.