

# The Binding

by Saltfish

Severus has an unexpected visitor. Have they really been cursed?

## one-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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At this time of night, the only noises likely to have accompanied his Apparition were the rats that hunted near the towpath. He paused at the lane half a dozen doors from his house and retched against the row wall, a steaming puddle of the fragrant remains of the whisky and coffee he'd been drinking.

He waited until he reached the door before allowing himself to breathe normally. Before then it'd been all staccato and arrhythmic; he wasn't sure if his heart might've stopped beating at any given moment.

He knew there was someone there before he even approached the door. He didn't need wards and charms to alert him to an intruder; he felt the presence of another living being in that tomb. His father hated this house and always called it a tomb. And now here he was, returning to the tomb of his family. It was the place he would now gladly bury himself within.

~~ \* ~~

She was curled into the sofa as if trying to disappear in the uneven terrain of bulging wadding and springs jutting out at odd angles. Her fingers pried away the flaky threads of the matelasse from the frayed arm-roll until the spray of color came loose in her hand.

She heard the footsteps on cobblestones and the pause at door. She felt the moment he realized he wasn't alone. She wished that the curtain hadn't been partially open, and the moon hadn't been beaming a spotlight right near where she was sitting. Before he arrived, the soft glow had kept her company and allowed her to peruse those dark spines on the shelves of the bookcase. But it now felt like a treasonous friend, pointing him in her direction like a beacon.

But she could see him now as well. That face, which was always pale, appeared gray and lifeless: a walking cadaver waiting for the flesh to erode before becoming a ghost. His wand was tight within his grip, like rigor mortis setting in, but she doubted he would use it. Resignation, that's what he exuded.

"What are *you* doing here?"

"I came looking for you."

Colored jets streamed from two wand tips simultaneously, and then it all went black.

~~ \* ~~

She woke in his arms and turned to face him with a warm smile, as though this was the most natural place in the world for her to be.

She reached a hand up and caressed his cheek, then stretched and placed her lips on his, allowing them to linger for a few moments.

He froze beneath her, but she needed him to know that it was all right, that she knew what she was doing and, more importantly, who she was doing it with.

“Severus.”

At that one word, he closed his eyes and seemed to relax, and she covered his body with hers and stroked his chest

~~ \* ~~

She must have felt the pounding in his chest as she slid her hand over it, but it didn't seem to stop her. Then she moved lower and lower, and before long she was picking apart the fastenings of his trousers.

Reaching through the fabric, her hand grasped him, held him, the strong shaft shifting under her touch.

He opened his eyes and looked at her. He'd had an expectation of seeing loathing, anger, or at the very least, the blankness that accompanied an Imperius curse, but instead her eyes glowed with desperation and need.

He could do nothing but watch as her shirt and bra fell to the floor. He was stunned when she raised herself up and removed her knickers before sinking down, sheathing him in her warm wetness. It was happening all too fast, but he couldn't stop it. And just this once, he didn't want it to end, not just yet.

He thrust into her before taking one of her young, pointed breasts into his mouth. If he had ever allowed himself to dream of this, the reality far outstripped any imaginings he may have had. She smiled at him again, that beatific smile, that allowed him to believe that all was really well.

It wasn't long before he felt her shudder atop him and drop to his chest. He thrust more forcefully and allowed himself a luxury that had not been his to have for many years. As his body tightened, all his remaining life force was spent. With a groan, it ended.

~~ \* ~~

He sat up, the timber boards cold beneath him. He was in the bedroom, yes, but the bed was tidy, a smooth surface undisturbed by rutting bodies.

It must have been a dream. He traced a path down his chest, remembering.

The disappointment surprised him.

She poked her head around the door at that moment, the moment when he realized that she didn't want him, and he hadn't been needed.

Perhaps it had been a nightmare.

*What are you doing here? Can't you leave me to die in peace?*

She swallowed and cleared her throat. “I've made tea.”

~~ \* ~~

Hermione moved around the kitchen, finding all that she needed from the sparse ingredients: tea, pot, kettle, milk that seemed all right. She ticked them off as she went. She found a sugar basin and left it on the table in between the two mugs. It looked a little like a standoff—his position and hers.

She tried not to blush as she remembered the feeling of their coarse pubic hair meshing or of his filling her in a way she could never have dreamed. But it had been a dream—she'd never felt those things, not really, and that made it all the worse. She'd wanted to see his face contorted as he came, and that made it even worse still. Although the way he'd looked at her when she went into the room... It was enough to make her wonder.

She'd practiced what she wanted to say to him, rehearsed it for hours beforehand, but now it was grunts and groans that filled her head and all sense was gone. She heard the creak of the step, but didn't look up when he entered the room.

“What on earth do you think you're doing? We're not playing house.”

The hoarseness of his words caught her off guard; his voice had always been so smooth, but now he sounded worn.

She stirred some sugar into her tea and met his eyes with hers. “I came because I believe in you. I think I know the truth.”

“You know nothing.”

“It was there, on the tower. The evidence was there all along. Residual magic from Dumbledore. He left the clue, and no one noticed!”

“Except you?”

“How could you just leave like that?”

“How could I not, Miss Granger.”

“By the way, *Sir*, what happened last night? Was that 'playing house,' too?”

He froze, and then she knew the truth—he'd felt it too.

“Was it a dream? There was a curse of some sort...”

*This house is cursed. All who live in it die in it. So go, go back to Hogwarts and live.*

~~ \* ~~

But she couldn't leave, and he couldn't let her. It had been six months, and they both knew she wasn't going anywhere.

She watched over him as he slept, his chest barely moving under the thin coverings on the bed that was now theirs. She could no longer concentrate on the book in her hand. She slid under the blanket next to him and once again placed her palm on his chest.

The curse of the house had changed, transmuted. But was it a curse or a blessing? She didn't know. But whatever it was bound them. Only time would tell.