

Impression

by SS Lupin

When James goes to Spinner's End over the Christmas holidays, he sees more than he had expected.

One-shot.

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter and the other characters and places created by JKR.

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Sirius had it easy finding the files in Slughorn's office, but James found that he was the one doing the dirty work on this dare. He wrapped his cloak tighter around himself, hating that he should be the one going to the bat's lair during the Christmas holidays while his friends were warm and enjoying food nicked from the kitchens at Hogwarts.

As he flew to the old house on his broomstick, he remembered the conversation they'd had that morning. Sirius thought Snape had the rotting corpses of Muggles in his basement, Remus made a mild guess at some books, and Peter had nodded eagerly when James had joked about the spiders that would crawl around in Snivellus' hovel of a home.

Muttering one of the spells Sirius and he had invented for spying purposes, James stood on his toes so that he could get a better view of the house's ground floor window. The spell helped him hear what was going on inside better, and James immediately wished that he hadn't cast it.

"You weak, pathetic bitch! How did I ever manage to fuck you and make this little shit?" A gaunt man with a hooked nose yelled at a woman cowering in a corner of the room while pointing to a boy James' age. *Snivellus*. He was almost unrecognizable in the dim light of the few candles scattered throughout the room, blood oozing from a gash on his forehead and other cuts on his cheeks, jaw, and lower lip.

Snape staggered over to the woman – his *mother?* – and pulled out his wand, pointing it at the man. "Don't you talk to Mum that way!"

"What are you going to do about it? Use your *magic wand*? I've beaten you before with my fists, and I'll do it again."

Snape's wand hand shook. "*Sectumsemptra!*" he shouted, and a crimson line spread along the man's chest. Snape inched closer to the man. "Get out of here, and don't come back."

The man clutched the front of his shirt, cursing as he slowly made his way out of the house. Once he had gone, James crouching so that the man hadn't seen him, Snape helped his mother up the stairs into what James guessed was her room, as he could not see from his position on the ground.

Mounting his broomstick, James flew up to the next floor. Hovering near the edge of the window, he saw Snape help his mother into bed, ignoring her protests that she should tend to his wounds. He said goodnight and walked out of the room, James following him along the brick wall and rounding the corner of the house. James approached the next window and through it saw the interior of what had to be Snape's room. A figure was already standing there, looking out the window and meeting James' eyes with his amber ones in a silent challenge.

Snape entered the room and addressed the boy in there.

"Lupin, what are you doing here?"

"I wanted to visit you. For Christmas."

"Is this some kind of prank for your stupid friends?" Snape tried to hide his face under the thin hood of his robes.

"No."

"Then why are you really here? Seeing me like this?"

"I just wanted to see you, damn it! Why do you have to make everything so difficult?"

Snape didn't back down. "Why did you bother coming?"

The other boy walked up to Snape and pulled off his hood. "To give you a present."

James stared as his friend wrapped his arms around Snape, kissing him on the lips.

- end.

Author's Note: This story began as a prompt from the Severus Snape Random Drabble Inspirations Generator created by Tempest Of Dreams (Severus Snape, James Potter, and Spinner's End) and was finished when BB wanted a Marauder-era fic. Thanks to Southern_Witch_69 and her beta skills.