

A Fickle Heart

by Nimue of the Lake

Professor Severus Snape is well known for his cold, hateful nature and when Harry Potter begins his first year at Hogwarts, Snape's temperment only becomes worse. However, he has strict orders from Dumbledore to keep from harassing The Boy Who Lived, so someone else has to take the fall and become the focus of his building rage. A young woman becomes the reciever of his abusive personality, but when tragedy strikes, it becomes apparent his cruelty had an unforeseen consequence.

Chapter 01: Malicious Intent

Chapter 1 of 2

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He could safely say that everything began the day that Harry Potter began school at Hogwarts.

He was tired, angry and late for class that day. A shipment of Pepper-up Potion had broken all over the floor of the infirmary, and because Poppy was one of the reasons he rarely had parents complain to the Headmaster about accidents that occurred in his classroom, he had decided to help her clean up the glass and smoking liquid. That meant he would arrive late to the class he had been dreading all summer. Potter would be there, the son of the man whom he loathed. And on a lesser note, Malfoy's brat would be in the class as well. He wanted to throttle the Potter child, but Dumbledore had already spoken to him about his feelings towards Harry and sinisterly suggested to Severus that he keep the berating to a minimum. That meant someone else would have to take the fall, and today he was in an especially foul mood.

All the tension from the class with Potter accumulated on the following class, Studies of Healing Potions. Severus had watched all the students file into the room, fifteen seventh years and a sixth year, a mixture of all the different houses. He knew it would be an even-tempered class because all the students were intending to become Healers, and Healers were gentle people as a rule. But today he needed to take out his pent up rage, and these soft natured children were easy targets. He locked on to one of the seventh-year girls, a Gryffindor named Eleanor Weatherhorn. She smelt of spearmint and radishes, and he knew instantly she had been eating Hiccupping Giggles, a new candy that that Zonko's had produced. All the consumer needed to do was eat one of the gummy tablets, and they would soon be giggling sporadically. He knew that the work had been done for him, and all he had to do was wait until she began to laugh.

He began to speak of the upcoming year and the extra books that they would need to purchase because once again, the Ministry had changed the curriculum requirements. He was waiting patiently for his opportunity, like a viper waiting to strike. He always loved the feeling he got when a student slipped up for a moment, leaving themselves vulnerable to his wrath. About ten minutes into his lecture, he heard the noise he had been waiting for. He spun around to face the students. He scanned through the rows as though he was searching for the disruptive student, but he of course knew who it was. He stopped when his eyes reached Weatherhorn, and he could see the fear in her face. His lips curled into a vicious smile, and he walked over to her table.

"Was there something I said to humor you, Miss Weatherhorn?" he said nastily, glaring down at her.

"Not at all, sir," she stuttered, and another wave of giggles issued from her mouth. His smile broadened further, and he leaned close to her as her hands covered her mouth

in horror.

"Ah, so you are laughing at me, I suppose?"

"No, sir!" she protested, but she began to giggle hysterically, and her eyes begged him for mercy; he had none to spare.

He let the smile disappear and growled, "So you find me funny? Is it my appearance, Miss Weatherhorn?"

The other students were deathly quiet, watching the events transpire with a morbid curiosity. They would obviously hear everything he said, so he decided that when he spoke again, it would be quieter.

"No, sir!" she said, tears beginning to form in her eyes.

He lowered his voice and murmured, "And yet you've laughed twice at my face."

"I--" she started but began to laugh again.

He leered at her and watched her cringing in humiliation. The girl sitting next to her was watching him in fear as well, but he had no intentions of intimidating this girl as well -- that was of no concern to him.

"Well, I find it hard that someone looking like you do today would laugh about my appearance." He felt the sleeve of her robes with a finger and thumb and commented, "Tell me, Miss Weatherhorn, do you enjoy wearing these threadbare clothes year after year? I recognize these from your fifth year. You still have the stains from the oil of chamomile on the Hogwarts crest. Even the Weasleys managed to get new robes this year. And yet you couldn't be bothered to get something that fits? I know you have the money to buy new robes, so obviously you aren't using your mental abilities to their full extent. Or do you like spending money on the cheap perfume I can smell? Or perhaps a book on quick glamours? Oh, yes, Miss Weatherhorn, I can see through the glamour you've made to hide those acne scars that are on your chin. Obviously you couldn't be bothered to stop picking at them while they were trying to heal."

He paused to look at the other students, who looked horrified. He didn't feel quite ready to stop and opted for another round of insults. Unfortunately for her though, she let out a muffled giggle again, and this time he could see the tears beginning to streak down her cheeks.

"Stop your crying, you pitiful child. It makes your complexion mottle, and I'm sure I'm not the only person here who finds your performance entirely unappealing. You are obviously trying to obtain the attention of your peers, but I can assure you they are not impressed--"

She let out another wild laugh, and he shouted, "Miss Weatherhorn, I suggest you quit laughing before I send you to your head of house!!!"

"I can't!" she sobbed.

He tapped the table with his wand, and a goblet appeared, filled with a blue liquid. "Drink," he commanded, his eyes narrowed, and he knew everyone in the room was wondering what he gave her. It was a potion he had created when the Weasley twins had first started attending his classes; it inhibited the ability to laugh for about twenty-four hours, and he believed it to be a godsend. The girl quickly gulped it down, amid her tears, and set the goblet back down on the desk with a clatter.

"Now," he said leaning forward, his hands on the desk and face just inches away from hers, "Get. OUT."

She jumped up, the tears still flowing. She grabbed her side bag and parchment, and Severus felt a smug satisfaction that he had finally been able to say what he had been longing to say to Potter. Weatherhorn ran out the classroom door, and he went back to the front of the room to continue his talk as though nothing had happened.

Dinnertime arrived a few hours later, and as he sat at the head table, he could see her sitting next to two of her friends who were obviously still trying to comfort her over the incident. They kept sending him nasty looks, and finally when they decided to glare at him for what felt like the hundredth time that night, he mouthed, "Twenty points from Gryffindor." They looked taken aback and he smirked. They didn't look at him again during the meal.

Severus retired to his office after dinner to stock the classroom storeroom with the recent harvest of Flatworm Weed that Sprout had presented him with after dinner. He felt little remorse for how he had treated the Weatherhorn girl; honestly, what kind of fool would come into his class after eating one of those candies? He pondered where she had gotten them (a friend obviously), why she had eaten one before his class, and what kind of performance he could expect from her in the following weeks and months. He heard someone knock on the heavy door that led to the hallway, and he recognized the pattern of the knocking.

"Come in, Headmaster," he called out. He would have opened the door himself, but his hands were quite busy, and he didn't want to lose track of his actions. He glanced over his shoulder and saw Dumbledore walking towards him, the usually cheery smile on his face.

Severus quickly finished his task and then went to the Headmaster, who was scanning over papers on his desk. He brushed away a few of the plant's small leaves that were sprinkled across his sleeves. He offered the older man a chair in front of his desk, who happily accepted it. Dumbledore picked up the parchment he had been writing supplies on and nodded silently to himself before turning to look at Severus.

"I trust today went better than expected?" he asked and Severus bristled, thinking about Potter, Malfoy and Weatherhorn.

"As well as it could," he replied darkly, sitting down in his chair.

Dumbledore still held the supply list in his hand, waving it slightly. "And you've updated your supply list?"

"Yes," he said, waving his wand so that the parchment was rollup and tied with a ribbon for the Headmaster's convenience.

Dumbledore gave him a saintly smile before prodding, "Is something troubling you, Severus?"

He sighed. "I've had a long day and..."

"Let us have a drink." Dumbledore winked and conjured them small goblets filled with firewhisky. The Headmaster raised his goblet in a toast and said, "Here's to the noble endeavor of teaching."

Chapter 02: Introducing Miss Eleanor Weatherhorn

Professor Severus Snape is well known for his cold, hateful nature and when Harry Potter begins his first year at Hogwarts, Snape's temperment only becomes worse. However, he has strict orders from Dumbledore to keep from harassing The Boy Who Lived, so someone else has to take the fall and become the focus of his building rage. A young woman becomes the receiver of his abusive personality, but when tragedy strikes, it becomes apparent his cruelty had an unforeseen consequence.

Chapter 02: Introducing Miss Eleanor Weatherhorn

Eleanor Weatherhorn had believed from the start that her first day as a seventh-year would be the beginning of something special. When she started the morning, everything seemed to be going just right, much to her surprise. She looked quite nice, especially for a rushed job of quick glamours and no cosmetics. Her long brown hair still had a slightly ginger shimmer from the henna her mum had given her, and the nicely bronzed tan she had acquired at her aunt's in Egypt during the summer holiday made her look absolutely stunning. At least, that's what her friends told her. She practiced the flirtatious look her cousin had taught her and then decided it was time to head to the Great Hall for breakfast.

Much to her delight, her class schedule was entirely composed of courses she needed to qualify for the Assistant Healer position that Madam Pomfrey was offering the following year. Her friends Julie, Sandra, and Marta were also planning on becoming Healers, so the four would all be attending many of the same classes. The morning seemed to gather momentum towards perfection when Professor McGonagall came by to congratulate the four of them on the outstanding scores they had received in order to take the training course that St. Mungo's was offering on all the Saturdays during the fall term. Brandon DeLuc gave her a half smile over breakfast and looked away with red cheeks. Yes, today would indeed be a wonderful day.

A two and a half hour class in DADA was slightly boring, but at least this professor didn't seem terribly arrogant. At least he understood the material he was teaching. His turban was quite entertaining too.

Lunch came after DADA, and the Weasley twins were passing around a bag of confiscated candy they had pinched from Filch's office already. Eleanor grabbed out a few light blue cello-wrapped packets that had a flat disk-like tablet candy. She tried one and it tasted fairly good. Suddenly she began to giggle.

"The Hiccupping Giggles! Give those back to us, Ellie! We're going to Trelawney's next and those would be perfect!"

She giggled stupidly and handed them back to George, who grinned as he and his twin popped a couple in their mouths. Everyone at the table who was within listening range was laughing at her and she smiled sheepishly. At least they would wear off in the hour.

Flitwick seemed thrilled that a candy company was using a charm that he himself had come up with, so her sporadic laughter throughout the medicinal charms class after lunch only made him smile more. By the end of the class, the candies had seemed to lose their effect and she was glad because she was headed to Snape's lair. Study of Healing Potions would be the last class of the day, followed by an hour in the library to study and then dinner. As much as she hated being in the dungeons, she was practically jumping with excitement that she would finally be taking the study of healing potions course that she had been dying to attend for almost two years. This class alone guaranteed her position as an assistant Healer at Hogwarts.

Snape was giving some boring lecture, waving his hand at a blackboard with writing on it when she felt something odd in the back of her throat. It felt almost like a cough, but more pleasant. Much to her surprise she let out a quick giggle.

The class went dead silent and she, along with the rest of the class, looked up at Snape, who was scanning everyone's face. She held deathly still, slightly because she still believed that rumour that Snape could sense fear. His eyes landed on hers, and she felt a certain dread as his lips curled into a vicious smile and he walked over to her table.

"Was there something I said to humor you, Miss Weatherhorn?" he said nastily, glaring down at her.

"Not at all, sir," she stuttered and another wave of giggles issued from her mouth. His smile broadened further, and he leaned close to her as her hands covered her mouth in horror. She could smell that he had eaten breaded chicken and an apple tart at lunch, and she almost began trembling at the realization he was far closer to her than he had ever been before.

"Ah, so you are laughing at me, I suppose?"

"No, sir!" she protested, but she began to giggle hysterically. Oh Merlin, why was this happening to her?!

His horrible smile was gone now, and he growled, "So you find me funny? Is it my appearance, Miss Weatherhorn?"

The other students were deathly quiet, and she was praying silently for help, even though she knew there was nothing they could do for her now.

"No, sir!" she said, tears beginning to form in her eyes. She felt like an idiot for giving the bastard one more reason to mock her, but she couldn't help it.

Though he was quiet when he spoke next, she was sure everyone in the class could hear it. "And yet you've laughed twice at my face."

"I--" she started but began to laugh again.

He leered at her and she cringed. She had never been this afraid before! Why the hell didn't he let her go already? He could just get it over with and dock the points, then get on with the class.

"Well, I find it hard that someone looking like you do today would laugh about my appearance." He felt the sleeve of her robes with a finger and thumb and commented, "Tell me, Miss Weatherhorn, do you enjoy wearing these threadbare clothes year after year? I recognize these from your fifth year. You still have the stains from the oil of chamomile on the Hogwarts crest. Even the Weasleys managed to get new robes this. And yet you couldn't be bothered to get something that fits? I know you have the money to buy new robes, so obviously you aren't using your mental abilities to their full extent. Or do you like spending money of the cheap perfume I can smell? Or perhaps a book on quick glamours? Oh, yes, Miss Weatherhorn I can see through the glamour you've made to hide those acne scars that are on your chin. Obviously you couldn't be bothered to stop picking at them while they were trying to heal."

He paused to look around the room, and she glanced over at Julie, who was sitting next to her. She wished that there was something her friend would do or say to save her. Unfortunately for her though, she let out a muffled giggle again, and this time, as his predatory eyes turned back on her, she began to cry.

"Stop your crying you, pitiful child. It makes your complexion mottle, and I'm sure I'm not the only person here who finds your performance entirely unappealing. You are obviously trying to obtain the attention of your peers, but I can assure you they are not impressed--"

She let out another wild laugh and he shouted, "Miss Weatherhorn, I suggest you quit laughing before I send you to your head of house!!!"

"I can't!" she sobbed, hiding her face in her hands.

A goblet appeared on the table, filled with a blue liquid. "Drink," he commanded.

She contemplated for a moment if he had poisoned it, but now was not the time to further anger him. She gulped it down quickly, amid her tears, and set the goblet back down on the desk with a clatter.

"Now," he said, leaning forward, his hands on the desk and face just inches away from hers. "Get. OUT."

She jumped up, the tears still flowing. She grabbed her side bag and parchment and ran out the classroom door.

Her feet echoed through the dungeon corridors as she sprinted up stone stairs, trying to get away from that horrible bastard. Fuck Snape! How dare he! Her thought ran amuck as she brushed hair and tears out of her eyes, finally reaching the girl's bathroom in the main halls.

She was still sobbing miserably as she hid in one of the empty stalls. She couldn't believe that she had laughed like a complete idiot, suicidal idiot, to Snape like that. At least she wasn't laughing anymore; she privately wondered if she would ever want to laugh again.

Dinner wasn't much better. She sat at the table eating the black forest cake Sandra had convinced the house-elves to give her. Her friends sympathized with her humiliation, and many of her fellow Gryffindor did too, but when Marta and Julie continued with their glaring at Snape, he docked them twenty points, which put them at negative 7.

"We'll get that bastard back; we promise," her friends vowed. She gave them a weak smile. They had a point; after all, how bad could having a class with him be?