

Like Father, Like Daughter

by Kailin

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Chapter 1 of 1

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- This vignette from Snape's point of view takes place about two and a half years after "Snape, A History". It is dedicated to all parents who believe their own children to be above reproach (in short, everybody).

Fatherhood is not something to which I ever aspired. Why should I? My own father was a hideous example of the role: icy and unapproachable. And given my experience with students, there was little to attract me to the notion of reproduction. Why contribute to the world's pool of abysmally stupid children? At any rate, I was an unlovable reprobate; no woman in her right mind would find me desirable.

The fact that I emerged from Voldemort War Two relatively unscathed seemed like a cruel joke. After all, I was supposed to die, not be belatedly declared a hero. I spent so many years convinced that the Dark Lord would learn of my actual allegiance that an *Avada Kedavra* seemed a foregone conclusion. Then I was forced to commit the ultimate horror and kill the only man in the world to show any concern for my well-being. It was assured that my end would now come not from Voldemort's wand, but the reeking, frigid caress of a Dementor.

You can imagine my surprise at being declared a free man and making my own way in the world a way which did not include teaching a herd of dunderheads. And later, most surprising of all, I became a man in love, and with a Muggle-born, no less.

A Muggle-born who wanted a child.

By the time Hermione experienced her epiphany about motherhood, I was already certain that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with this incredible woman. Her abrupt declaration that she wanted to have a child a child with *me* was the impetus leading to my rather graceless proposal of marriage. It was the perfect opening, the chance to advance my desires while foregoing the sappily romantic route. The popular image of a suitor, beseeching his beloved on bended knee, is definitely not my style, although - given enough time even I might have come up with a more stylish proposal.

Within six months of our marriage, Hermione was pregnant. I confess that I swaggered a bit upon learning this. It's the male animal within, I suppose, proud of propagating his species. Besides, the actual birth was months away. I had ample time to adjust to the notion of being a father.

I like to think that I was reasonably supportive during Hermione's pregnancy. I dutifully told my wife that she was quite beautiful in this state she *did* glow a bit, to be truthful and avoided any major verbal blunders in regards to her ever-expanding girth. Meanwhile, Hermione amassed a roomful of baby items ranging from clothing to toys to furniture, and although I couldn't quite imagine why in the world one tiny creature needed so many things, I kept my mouth shut. Her parents were the primary source of all gifts. Infant, as the prospect of grandparenthood had completely seized them with a vengeance. Not that Lawrence and Julia needed to provide us with anything; the now-vast number of Weasleys and Potters were more than willing to donate enough second-hand baby goodies to fill a warehouse. Hermione found her parents' enthusiasm to

be utterly charming, however ("How many times do you have a first grandchild?"), and waved off all donations as unnecessary. As a result, most of the baby clutter in our house bore tags from what Hermione admitted were rather expensive Muggle shops.

I like to think that very little impresses me. I'm far too jaded, have seen too much in my life. But the actual birth, the simple thing that has allowed the human race to continue to exist, was amazing. Of course, when I mentioned as much to Hermione several days after Mairin's birth, I discovered that our definitions of 'simple' in regards to the birthing process were poles apart. She didn't appear to appreciate my observations in the least.

Another surprise, being as how I have had years of experience dealing with adolescents and absolutely none involving infants, was that babies were not the formless blobs I always took them to be. I assumed that babies were more or less identical save for the hair or skin coloring, and that the parents' roles were to mold their offspring into civilized beings. The fact that my daughter had her own distinct personality from the beginning took me completely unawares. It also laid waste to my pet theories of why children turn out as they do. I no longer blamed Lucius and Narcissa for producing the likes of Draco Malfoy; the boy was evidently a poncey brat from the start, with no help whatsoever from his parents.

When my daughter grew older, walking and talking up a storm (I'm quite certain where she acquired *that* trait), she reached entirely new levels of charm. Mairin was utterly precocious and entirely adorable. Since her birth, I had overheard more than one murmured aside of *How could such a delightful child come from Severus Snape?* and I rather prided myself on my child's combination of beauty and intelligence. By the time she was three, I knew beyond a doubt that Mairin would find Hogwarts to be child's play. She'd doubtless be sitting her N.E.W.T.s by the end of first year.

Mairin had just turned three when an unexpected appointment forced Hermione to drop her off at my old house on Spinner's End for a brief time while she attended to her affairs. I still keep my business there, although I have not lived in the house since our marriage. This was my daughter's first opportunity to 'see Daddy's work', although it amounted to nothing more than Nora prancing her around the laboratory for five minutes until I shoed them upstairs. Things in the lab were not going particularly well that day. Besides, any potions laboratory, much less one which is used for the preparation of explosives, is not a place for children. Thankfully, Hermione returned barely fifteen minutes later. Nora assured her that Mairin had behaved perfectly, and my wife and child departed.

I thought nothing more of that brief visit until a week later, when I chanced upon Mairin in her playroom. She had taken every toy cup and cauldron she possessed, along with her toothbrushing glass from the bathroom, and lined them up on her little table. After filling a few of the cups with water, Mairin then transferred the water from one cup to another. She also waved her toy wand here and there, all the while muttering what was apparently supposed to be an incantation. Suddenly, it occurred to me: my daughter was 'playing potions', and I was ready to burst with pride. Mairin had spent only five minutes in my laboratory and was moved to recreate what she had seen. At once, I called Hermione to watch. No wonder people wanted children, I thought; this was one of those rare, poignant moments when one can truly understand the allure of parenthood.

Hermione peeked over my shoulder, her eyes alight at the scene unfolding in front of us. "Oh, Severus, this is so sweet," she whispered in my ear.

Sweet? It wasn't *sweet*, it was a sign of great things to come. My daughter, Mairin Julia Snape, was a Potions Mistress in the making, and this was the very first evidence of her golden future. Was it too early to begin making inquiries into apprenticeships?

And then it happened.

My darling three-year-old daughter hurled an empty cup across the room with one hand, waved her tiny toy wand with the other, and bellowed, "Bloody hell! Merlin's hairy balls!" And with that, she recommenced calmly pouring water from one container to another.

I was frozen to the spot, the blood draining from my face. How was it that it took a good half-year of coaxing and wheedling to convince Mairin that using the toilet was a wonderful thing, yet in the space of five minutes, she'd managed to pick up my worst habits?

A gasping noise over my shoulder reminded me that Hermione had just witnessed the whole thing. I turned to find my wife slumped against the doorframe and shaking with silent laughter, hand clapped over her mouth, tears of mirth already streaming down her cheeks. I tried to mumble apologies. I *had* done a bit of cursing the day Nora had Mairin in the lab, but Nora had immediately become affronted and pointed out that Little Pitchers Have Big Ears. At that point, I was more concerned for the physical well-being of the Little Pitcher, and suggested that a Potions lab was not a proper place to baby-sit a toddler. It had never occurred to me that Mairin would remember anything of what she had seen, let alone what she had heard.

"I'll... have a word with her," I mumbled now.

Still unable to speak for laughing, Hermione waved me helplessly on.

"Hello, Mairin," I said, kneeling down by my daughter's 'workbench'.

"Hello, Daddy. I'm making potions just like you!" Mairin turned to bestow a brilliant smile on me.

Cut to shreds by a child. Perhaps the Order of the Phoenix should have tried using a three-year-old against Voldemort. I was certain that the Dark Lord would have been utterly stymied. All I could do was nod and stagger away while Hermione was still whimpering with laughter.

At some point in the next few days, I will point out to my child that 'bloody hell' and 'Merlin's hairy balls' are not appropriate language for a three-year-old. I'm sure that Mairin will smile and nod and say "Yes, Daddy."

And I'm equally certain that Hermione will never let me forget this.