

The Room

by Doomspark

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Chapter 1 of 1

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It's not the Room of Requirement, but it does well enough for their purposes. Argus found it, or rather, his cat did. Even if you know the room is there, you have to look twice to see it. It's guarded not by portraits or suits of armor, but by disuse and lack of interest. The only other rooms on this corridor are also long empty except for dust and a faint trace of mildew.

It's no luxurious suite of rooms; it's a long, narrow rectangle with a fireplace at the end opposite the door. Bookcases full of old musty tomes line one of the long walls, and a series of slitted windows parade across the upper part of the other wall. The only other furniture is a large sofa facing the fireplace, upholstered in garish purple velvet and an end-table on either side. The sofa is soft and squishy – and quite, quite comfortable despite its looks.

Argus comes in at night, after his rounds, and lights the torches in their sconces on the walls. He lays the fire and lights it also with practiced motions. He looks around, satisfied that all is ready.

Severus comes in a few minutes later. He carries an ornately carved box with him, the sort of box that might contain precious gems or jewelry. The corners of his mouth stretch into a smile as he sees the other man there. He sets his box down on the nearest end-table and opens it with a flourish. No precious gems here, nor jewelry. Just a vial of a pale blue liquid. He hands the vial to Argus, who drains it in one gulp. Then they sit down. A silence falls between them.

They have been meeting here for six months now. No one knows and they prefer it that way for various reasons. Severus does not want to be the laughingstock of the whole school. Argus, while not exactly ashamed, is not at all comfortable with his status.

"So." The caretaker's voice is soft.

"So tonight is the last of it. Either way, we'll know."

"What did you decide on?"

Severus pulls a wand from his sleeve and twirls it idly. "Maple and a hair from the tail of a pooka." He rises, and hands it to Argus. "Your wand, sir."

Argus takes the wand with trembling hands. His hopes and dreams ride on the next moment.