

The Chair

by stefanie

James Potter has to serve a detention for Professor Slughorn, and it's more than he bargained for. Rated M for dark slashy sexuality.

short story, complete

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: Many thanks to my beta, *ghostwritten2*.

"Potter, it's the first day back. How did you manage to wind up with a detention?"

The tall, chestnut-haired boy pushed back a stray lock, embarrassed. He tried to ignore the girl splayed on the worn, overstuffed armchair. She stared at him as if she expected an answer. He grumbled, "You were there in Potions this morning, Evans. Didn't you see?"

"You think I follow you around with my eyes all day in class, just to keep track of what you're doing?" Lily retorted.

James shrugged, trying not to look at the long slender legs stretched out from under her school robes. She had taken off her garters, and her stockings hung about her ankles. She wiggled her toes as if that would make them warmer. Her knees shone with a faint golden sheen cast by the low fire sputtering in the Gryffindor Common Room grate. Dark red highlights flickered in her hair in time with the flames. James wanted to run his fingers through the auburn strands, but didn't dare.

Instead, he pushed aside the velvet drape and looked out the mullioned window. A thick snow fell over the Hogwarts grounds, and it iced the roofs and gables with a glaze gone blue in the moonlight. It was quite late, almost eleven. The fire had almost sputtered out completely, but none of the three students gathered in front of it flicked their wands to make it blaze up again.

It was the end of a long, hard day, the first of the second term. Beset with homework, Lily, James, and Sirius had cadged a late dinner from the kitchen elves. The roast-goose pie left over from Christmas had made her sleepy, after all those days of Mum's lentil and bean casseroles. She half-closed her eyes, not caring if James answered or not. He was always in trouble, really, and why should she bother with boys and their stupid problems?

Sirius occupied himself with a strange Muggle artifact, turning it over in his hands. He said to James without looking up, "You've gone and done it now, haven't you? You promised to help me take this gadget apart."

Lily half-opened her eyes, curious to see what Sirius had, but not wanting to look too interested.

"What is that piece of junk?" James asked, avoiding Lily's lazy glance.

"Don't know. I pulled it off some Muggle's motorbike on the last day of the hols, when you and I were out and about in London. A real beauty, that bike was, and just sitting there on the pavement. He'll never miss this thing. He probably has a drawer full of them."

"What?" Lily exclaimed, fully awake now. "You did what? Besides, I thought you weren't allowed to just go visit them just like that, I mean, us ... oh bother. You know what I mean, Muggles." After five and a half years at Hogwarts, the word still had a strange taste in her mouth, and with a flash of guilt she thought of Petunia.

"Aren't you proud of me, that I didn't just take that motorbike out for a spin?"

"You couldn't, you didn't have a key."

"Key, what key?"

"Don't be stupid, Sirius. Anyway, you shouldn't have nicked it. One of these days they'll toss you in chokey."

Sirius rolled his eyes. "There she goes with the Muggle talk again."

Lily flounced in her chair and stared at the fire, pretending to ignore them.

James came over to Sirius. "Sounds like fun, but I haven't time. Sluggy gave me double homework for that stunt in Potions, plus detention tonight. At least he said I could come serve it after I finished homework." He came down for a closer look. "Hey, that thing you've got there's really weird. What's it for?"

"Oh, right, Sluggy's a good egg," Sirius said absently, turning the object over in his hands several times. Its protruding black rubber tubes flipped about like tentacles. "But this, I dunno."

Lily leaned forward to inspect it, then reclined back in her chair, bored. "It's only a distributor cap."

"I suppose you know all about it, Miss Raised-by-Muggles," Sirius said, somewhat insulted that she knew, and that James's attention wandered back to Lily once more.

"That makes me the expert, for once. Dad had to replace ours last summer, after some joy-boy just like you thought it would be fun to swipe. It looked like yours, only bigger."

"Well, of course your dad's would be bigger, wouldn't it?" He snickered, hoping and failing to break her steely glance. "Here, want to take it apart for me?"

"Stolen property, do you think I want that? And it's greasy, so don't get it on me!" He tossed the distributor cap at her but she ducked. The cap hit the floor behind her chair and skidded past. With a flick of his wand, Sirius made it twitch. It crawled around on the worn paisley carpet like a demented crab, and Lily pulled her feet up onto her chair.

"Have fun with your new toy," James said, kicking it a bit, then shaking it off as it tried to climb up the skirt of his robe. "What d'you think Sluggy will give me? Anything but lines. I hate lines."

"I think he'll beat you like they used to do in the days of our forefathers," Sirius intoned, enjoying Lily's disgusted expression. "He's likely to turn you over and warm your bare little backside."

"We never had to do lines in my old school," Lily remarked to James, pointedly refusing to acknowledge Sirius. "We had to write out apologies."

"Sucks to that," Sirius said. "I don't apologize to anyone."

"No one asked you to, Mister Conceited," Lily said.

"Great for you," James remarked, "but you weren't the one who encouraged his Flibbertigibbet to crawl down the back of Moira Dranghammer's robe."

"That was a good one. She deserved it, making those big cow eyes at you, you could almost hear her moo. Sluggo wasn't amused, though, not when she spilled her whole stinking crucible onto that new Muggle outfit he was bragging about." He turned to Lily. "What'd you call that thing again?"

"A suit," she said, sounding bored. "He wanted to show off his new suit."

"Your lot wears laughable clothing."

"My lot? What d'you mean, 'my lot'? My father would never wear one of those."

"Your dad wears robes?" James had seen wild-haired Muggles in robes before, when he and Sirius went on their illicit strolls through the by-ways of London.

"You two are insufferable." There was a hint of laughter in her voice.

"Who'd want those tight tubes around his legs, what's the point of that? Sirius said. "Give me robes any day."

"Slughorn's suit with those broad black and white stripes made me laugh. He looked like a great fat humbug."

"A what?" James said to her.

"Don't you remember? The sweets I brought back with me in September, minty, with black stripes? You ate enough of them, as I recall."

Sirius puffed up his cheeks, and James chuckled, then softly sighed. "It won't do to be late, would it? Maybe it'll be something quick." When he looked down at Lily again, this time their eyes caught and held until she looked away first.

"Bye, then," he said, rejoicing in an odd little sense of victory.

She picked up her Charms textbook and started to read, waving her hand in his general direction without looking at him. James's exultant mood evaporated as quickly as it had appeared. Sirius fetched his distributor cap before it started to climb the draperies, and proceeded to tear it apart as James left the Common Room.

Outside in the corridor, he was just about to leap onto the shifting staircase when a rich contralto echoed behind him. "It's a little late to be out tonight, isn't it, sweetheart?"

Oh, bother. Not her again. He turned to see the Fat Lady perched precariously on a delicate lady's chair, her plump bottom in its clinging Empire-waist gown sloping off either side. "You wouldn't tell, would you?"

"Not only might I shriek like any affronted member of my sex, but I might not let you back in. Then you'll get a detention for being out after hours."

"Not if I'm going to see a professor," he retorted.

"Somehow I doubt your veracity."

"Doubt all you like. As if I have all night to stand around arguing with a painting."

"Perhaps I won't let you back in anyway."

"You have to if I say the password."

"I'll change it, you snippy boy."

James paused. She could, and he didn't want to have to explain to some teacher why he was sitting outside his dormitory in the middle of the night. Best to apologize. He fixed on his most charming smile, smoothed back his unruly dark hair, and sweet words tumbled from his lips.

The gesture wasn't lost on the Fat Lady. "Well, that's a start. Take off your spectacles and come over here. We'll see if you can redeem yourself. I may be paint, but I have feelings too, you know."

James came so close to the canvas that the spiky poplars painted in the background blurred into a green puddled mass. He almost pulled back, startled, for he smelled perfume. The blood began to rush in his ears. She came into view, huge and pink, and faintly he heard, "Just one kiss, and I'll let you go." Then not only did he smell her rosewater scent, he felt the warmth of her approaching skin.

Lips brushed his cheek, and her breath smelled a little like cloves. In a panic he put out his hand to push himself away, and instead of painted canvas, he connected momentarily with a large soft breast. Flesh under silk slid beneath his hand. When he didn't retreat at once, she pushed towards him a little, and the warm softness spilled over his fingers.

This isn't a picture. This is real. Shocked, he backed up. The Fat Lady smiled and winked at him. He spun on his heel and fled down the cold empty stone hall. Behind him, her light laughter echoed off the walls, and her words faded as he beat his hasty retreat. "Don't worry, darling, I'll let you back in, no matter how late ..."

It was a long walk to the small side tower almost on the other side of the school, where the Potions master had his rooms. James didn't like this wing, not one bit. More students had gone to Hogwarts in years past than today, and declining numbers had made it necessary to close off old classrooms and laboratories. Even locked and empty, their doors rattled in the winter night air, and it was easy to imagine creeping things moving around behind those impassive doors.

Professor Slughorn hadn't found James's prank entertaining at all. The students were supposed to squeeze out a few drops of venom from the underside of their Flibbertigibbet. The tail end was a nasty messy place on the best of days, and far worse when you were trying to express the thick oily poison. The creatures' eyes bugged out, and they tried to nip you with their little teeth when they weren't thrashing about like rabid ferrets. So when Moira's robe slipped a bit below her fat bare neck, James couldn't resist the chance to let the squirming vermin go, just to not have to hold onto it any longer. It had been really amusing to watch the girl scratch and claw at the thing as it scabbled just out of reach, until Professor Slughorn helped her shake it out of her robe.

Then Slughorn dogged him the rest of the Potions lesson, always over his shoulder murmuring encouragements. That was the trouble with Sluggo. He never shouted or embarrassed you, hardly ever took points from your House. He just hummed tunelessly, fluffing his moustache up like a feather-duster, but you knew without looking that his eyes were on you. A few times Slughorn came so close up behind James that the boy's head rested on the big soft stomach in its striped waistcoat, so that he felt its warmth under the slick satiny cloth.

Just his luck, to draw a detention on the first day. A portrait of a witch dressed in red and black leered down at him. She was old enough to be his mother, but her robes were open and her dress fell off her shoulders, revealing a wide swath of white bosom. She laughed as he passed, and he turned away, flushed and a little angry, reminded of his mishap with the Fat Lady. The door to the stairwell stuck, and as he pulled on it, he heard her mocking tones again. Angrily, he pulled harder, and finally the door came open with a loud crack.

The stone spiral stairs wound upwards, coiled tight as a spring. *How does that big blob of tallow make it up these? He must use a levitation charm or something.* This was an old tower, he could tell. Cold January air blew in through narrow slits unimpeded by glass. James pulled his thin robes closer and swore under his breath. But when he finally reached the top, half-frozen, out of breath, and deeply annoyed, he composed his face into a charming half-smile. No need to make the old boy unnecessarily mad.

He hesitated before the ancient oak door bordered with strips of iron. There was no knocker and no handle. Should he just bang on it? It might be half a foot thick; how would anyone hear him inside? Wind whistled through the narrow slits of the tower, playing a faint cold tune to which he was expected to dance.

Get a grip on yourself, Potter. His nerves started to twitch again. Others had gotten Slughorn's detentions, but they didn't say anything about them, just looked away and changed the subject if you asked. One fourth-year girl giggled nervously when James broached the subject. Stammering, she said that all Professor Slughorn had asked her to do was "dust his collection of china animals, as he didn't trust the house-elves to do it. He just sat and watched." But she would say nothing more.

James swallowed hard and raised his fist to knock on the door. Before his knuckles could connect to the gnarled surface, the door swung open of its own accord. He smelled the room before he saw it, wrinkling his nose at the fragrance of sweet burning wood. It reminded him of that stuff Lily had brought back from summer holiday along with the bag of mint humbugs, something from home called incense. Her parents always burned it, she'd said. It had been made of sandalwood from India. She had lit it up in the Common Room every evening until the other Gryffindors complained. Then Professor McGonagall set a sprinkling charm, so that water would squirt from the ceiling and put it out. He breathed deeply; this was almost like that, but not as sweet or cloying. As the door opened wider, a blast of light and warmth practically drew him inside, and then the heavy door shut behind with a dull thud.

After the dark stairwell, even the dim golden light of the fire and a few small lamps seemed bright, and James winced. He moved forward, partially blinded, and almost tripped on a thick cushioned rug. The Professor's room was large and round, with small windows so heavily leaded they divided up the deep blue night into tiny sections. Next to a purple couch that curved right along with the wall sat a tea service that hadn't yet been cleaned up. Lazy house-elves, no doubt. There was still a large slice of cake on the tray, lemon, it looked like, and James was tempted, but he didn't want Slughorn to catch him lifting his last piece of cake.

And where was Slughorn, anyway? "Professor?" he called. "It's me, James Potter. Reporting for detention." He expected to hear Slughorn's slow tenor draw out, "Dear boy, how many times must I tell you? 'It is I, James Potter.' But you boys never seem to learn, do you?" However, no answer came.

James walked around the room, trying not to bump into the tables or piles of cushions strewn about the floor of the crowded room. Although the fire wasn't bright, it made the room suffocatingly hot, and trickles of sweat slid down James's neck.

He collided with the corner of a shelf, and Quidditch-honed reflexes helped him catch the ceramic figurine before it hit the floor. No doubt it was one of those animals the fourth-year girl had mentioned. Squat and ugly, the pottery creature's squinting bird eye slyly winked at him over a grinning beak. As he put it back, he noticed on the shelf six or seven more figurines: one was a feathered monkey, another was a fat and squat pot with flippers and an idiotic baby's face. In the flickering firelight they appeared to move. As soon as he safely could, he yanked his hand away, fighting the mad idea that one would leap out at him or grab his hand.

There might have been another room concealed by the thick crimson velvet curtain. Was he in there? "Professor?" he called again, but the tower apartment was clearly empty. Anyway, if that was Slughorn's bedroom, James certainly had no intention of going in there. So should he leave, or stay? It wasn't fair, to make him report and then not be here. As if he had nothing better to do than wait on the old walrus. Might as well find somewhere to sit and hang about, for a little while longer at least.

He looked around. In the middle of the room, square in the center of the thick rug, sat a large armchair so overstuffed that its upholstery threatened to burst. The fire burned hotter still, and the sweet woody smell hung thick in the air. *Look at that enormous thing, it's got the same stripes as that odd Muggle outfit Slughorn had on earlier. Probably had it cut from the same cloth,* and laughter bubbled up through him. The room throbbed with warmth, and the odd pottery creatures no longer seemed threatening, but funny. The seal-flipped baby's face grinned wider, and James grinned back without thinking.

Then, on the table next to the unwashed tea things, he saw the note.

"My dear Master Potter," it said.

"Urgent business calls me, and I may be delayed for your detention. Please make yourself comfortable and wait for my return. Under no circumstances will I keep you past

midnight, as I know that growing boys need their rest. While you are waiting, you might find it instructive to start with Chapter One in the small volume of Burgensill's Anatomy of Beauty which I've placed under this note.

Sincerely," etc.

Well, there were worse ways to spend detention, and he'd done more than his share by the halfway mark of his sixth year. *Sluggy's a good egg, as Padfoot said. He wouldn't mind if I took off my school robes, would he? You could roast a joint in here, it's so hot.* Off came the rusty black school gown. James smoothed out his long brown robe, the one with two stags embroidered in delicate stitchery on either side of the neck placket. His legs were really heavy now, and he almost collapsed onto the purple couch.

It wasn't anywhere near as comfortable as it looked. In fact, no matter which way he squirmed, he seemed to rest on a large spring or two, and besides, the dark purple fabric itched. He was really light-headed now from the heat and incense, and leaned over onto the couch's hard carved wooden armrest, hoping to rest his sleep-heavy head.

Suddenly a spring pressed under his buttocks so hard that it practically launched him onto his feet. With clumsy, leaden steps he staggered towards the chair, then stopped stock-still. The smell of lemon cake wafting up from the little tea table captivated him. He grabbed the slice and stuffed it into his mouth in several large bites, not wanting to be caught. *Anyway, he doesn't need it. Old git probably ate the whole cake on his own, it wouldn't surprise me. He's fat enough as it is.*

The lemon icing stung his tongue with sharp sweetness. He felt so tired. What was the hour? If Slughorn planned to end his detention at midnight, maybe he could wait for him, and then just go. He looked around, and the effort roiled his head with dizziness. Slughorn didn't seem to have a clock about anywhere.

He licked the icing off his fingers, then sank into the large, overstuffed armchair with its garish stripes. The chair rocked a bit underneath him and it made him even more light-headed. He froze. Was that a sigh? Was someone here? When the dizziness passed and no more sound came, he relaxed fully, sinking into the great stuffed cushiony mound until his knees were almost level with his chest. Struggling, he reached across the massive bulk of armrest for Slughorn's volume.

It was a Muggle book; he could tell that because the one illustration right before the title page didn't move. There stood a youth, tall and long in the limbs, with curly hair tumbling over his shoulders and a faraway look on his beautifully-sculpted face. Not surprising, for he was a sculpture, and almost fully naked besides. James sniggered a little at the tiny carved leaf that was his only garment. Inside, though, the book was almost incomprehensible, with passages like, "Line begets form, and the perfection of form expresses itself in the economic spareness of line which confines, and yet infinitely expands, the space around it..." That rubbish went on and on for pages. As James's eyes grew heavier and finally closed, the little book slid unnoticed to the carpet.

Slughorn's chair was like none he'd ever sat in before. It was quite wide, far wider than James's narrow hips, but he could almost swear that it molded itself to him. He sunk deeply in it, and the chair enfolded him as he stroked the fabric, softer than silk and very smooth, surprisingly warm. *Feels like the Fat Lady when I gave her a grab. Would Lily feel like that?* He giggled softly to himself again, and the chair rippled a little in return, like a belly full of laughter. He found a little upholstery button and twiddled it, pulling it out until it protruded from the plump satin surface. Around and around his fingers went in a circle over it, and he thought of Lily's small high breasts; don't think he hadn't noticed them before. There was that glorious evening back in fall term, when during a cold, rain-soaked Quidditch practice Lily's robes stuck to her chest, and those perfect round swellings thrust out with their pointy hard tips.

Those he could see but never touch, and probably never would if things kept going as they were. But this, ah, this was good, and as he rubbed the little button round and round, he felt a thick familiar stirring in his groin. The whole chair seemed to glow with warmth, as if heated up from the inside.

He stretched out his legs, and across the backs of his thighs and buttocks passed a small rippling movement, just a tremor, as if the deep soft cushion could feel his weight and respond to it. Deep down, a little nagging voice of obligation tried to get his attention, telling him to try Slughorn's book again, even if it was bollocksy rubbish, but he couldn't bring himself to open his eyes. The little upholstery button was swollen and peaked now as he ran the palm of his hand over it, and he almost wanted to put it in his mouth, but was too tired to even lift his head.

Why should I be? I haven't even played Quidditch today. He rested his face on the soft plump swelling with the little button sticking out tense and hard. He could feel the front of his thin robe peak up like a tent pole, but it wasn't urgent yet, just a sensual thickening and lengthening. It made him want to squirm, though, so he threw his leg over the other arm, completely relaxed now. Eyes half-closed, he absently started to caress the upholstered folds and rolls. He pushed a little harder, feeling for the wood underneath the armrest, but there was none, only softness and more softness as he pressed.

He slid himself around again. Part of him was drowsy, but one part was thoroughly awake now, as the chair moved and rippled under him. His buttocks grew warm, and then hot as he squirmed into the cushiony depths. The chair's arms puffed up and grew around him, holding him closer.

James was trapped in a soft cocoon, and he pressed the plump yielding skin of the chair blindly, like a kitten milks its mother. Resilient jelly encased in silk pushed up his robes, baring his slender knees and lightly-muscled thighs, but he didn't care. He rolled over onto his other side and a great flabby wave of the chair rose up to embrace him from behind. Absently, as if on their own, his hips gently rocked forward and back, pushing into what felt like a mountain of soft flesh.

Deep down a little fear wanted to know where Slughorn was, and shouldn't he get up, and what was going on here? Keeping his eyes closed, he pushed the stray thoughts down, and the chair began to quiver just a bit, with little trembles under his thighs. It rocked subtly to match his own movements, and he let himself sink into it further, thoroughly enspelled now. Little ripples moved over the silky surface.

It didn't occur to him anymore to wonder what Professor Slughorn would think, were he to walk in the door at that moment. Now underneath him the chair breathed in and out in long slow undulating waves. James pressed into great silky folds with first one slow shove, then another, and the chair met his movements with subtle shudders. His thrusts took on a harder urgency now, one that would ultimately demand a conclusion if it went on much longer. Then all at once the chair quivered more strongly, then shook in one fluid quake which sent ripples over its upholstered frame. Another quake came, then another, until the rhythmic pulses ceased, and the chair was entirely still.

For a moment James had the mad idea that instead of soft padded arms, he was being held by doughy human ones, and that instead of a cushion, his buttocks rested on a soft wide expanse of belly. His eyes flew open. *What is this? What's going on here?* The chair clung to him with clammy moistness, and the stiffness in his groin collapsed, horrified at the sticky touch. But the more he struggled to get up or the harder he fought, the deeper he sank. The chair seemed to suck him back in, not wanting to break the contact. Finally, with a mighty surge he pushed himself to his feet, half-tumbling onto the rug.

The sense of someone else in the room overwhelmed him. He staggered to his feet, ready to flee. Despite the heat of the room, he shivered as he fumbled with his school robes, cursing under his breath as he tried to straighten out a sleeve. The robe subdued, he turned and to his horror saw a large wet stain in the middle of the chair's cushion where he'd sat. Panicked, he grabbed at his garments, feeling both behind and front, but there was no obvious wetness. His brown robe felt damp, though, and when he put a handful to his face and sniffed, he smelled a fresh musky scent not his own.

He wanted to flee, but couldn't take his eyes off that dark wet circle. The moisture on the seat dried quickly as he watched, the stain evaporating as if it were left out in summer sun. It was that uncanny stain on the bright white and black silk of the chair's upholstery which sent him towards the door. It opened for him without being touched. He hurried down the steep stairs as quickly as possible, afraid that he might see Slughorn float up like a balloon to block his path, forcing him back into that room, into that chair.

Down in the corridor, he stopped for a moment in his flight, breathing heavily. His pounding heart slowed as the panic leaked out of him. Out of there, out of that room, it seemed stupid to have run. *You sat in a chair. It moved a little, yes, but there was probably some kind of charm on it to make it more comfortable. Of course it was wet, weren't you sweating buckets in there? He had some weird pottery. What kind of gormless coward are you? And what's old Sluggy going to say tomorrow?*

The witch in her portrait had been joined by another one. As James made his way down the corridor more slowly now, they started to whisper and point towards the other end of the long hall, in the direction he was headed.

James peered into the gloom and saw a dark figure approaching. It couldn't be Slughorn; it was too thin, too smooth in its movements. When the shadowed shape pushed its black hair back with a bone-white hand, James groaned inwardly. It was that snivelling git Snape, that wormy excuse for a wizard. What was he doing up here in one of the remotest corners of the school? James felt for his wand, a little afraid of a dust-up, but looking forward to one too.

The two youths glided towards one other without speaking, their eyes fixed on each other, Severus's glaring, James's still a bit glazed. James had almost passed the pale, dark-haired figure when Severus turned and said, "Been to Slughorn's rooms, have you?"

"What's it to you?"

"I take it he wasn't there."

"My business, not yours, you wart."

"Did you sit in the chair?" Severus asked with just enough knowing delight in his voice to make James stop his progress down the hall. James pulled his wand out from his breast pocket and held it at the ready, wanting to run away with shame, wanting to hit out at the same time.

He knew. The warty toad, he knew what had gone on in there. What had happened.

"Put that thing away." Severus studied James a moment longer, coolly registering the flushed face, the skewed robes. James looked as if he had just escaped from a cage.

"Sat in a chair?" he blustered. "What chair?"

"Obviously you did." Severus resumed his steady pace, almost skating on the stone floor and making practically no sound. The faint echoes of his soft laughter hit James like tiny blows.

"You said so yourself," James blurted out. "He wasn't there."

Severus chuckled again. He pulled the staircase door open with no effort at all. Turning to face James, he glanced at him as if James were an afterthought. "Wasn't he, then?"

He closed the staircase door behind him, leaving James alone in the darkened corridor.

The End