

Concocting the Best Laid Plans: The Dumbledore Edition

by Lady Strange

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One-shot, Completely OOC, Completely AU.

A dotty old goat schemes...

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: A humorous take on Dumbledore's meddlesome streak and what Severus has to suffer through. Not meant to be taken seriously. Completely irreverent, completely OOC, completely AU. Just for laughs. One-shot

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Two months before the venerable school for wizardry opened for the new academic year, all its staff was obliged to return to make the necessary preparations. What these preparations were no one really knew no even the staff. For everyone spent his or her time mainly closeted in his or her office and/or chambers and remained there until the opening feast demanded their presence. Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts, was no exception.

It was not until the fourth day of his return to Hogwarts that Albus Dumbledore emerged from his office with the *Daily Prophet's* entertainment section in hand. However, his lack of interaction with anyone in four days meant that he was like a horse with blinkers. As such, he tripped over the unfortunate Severus Snape in the doorway.

"What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be lurking in the dungeons? I did not pluck you out of obscurity so that you could trip me up. What if I had hurt myself? My nose would be hideous if it broke again," he pointed out in the rambling tone favoured by those enamoured of their own voice.

"Oh great and noble Headmaster..." Severus hauled himself to his feet, wincing somewhat as he straightened his back. Sitting perfectly still while attending staff meetings and pretending to be listening in rapt attention to Dumbledore while his mind wondered to more amusing things like the feeding the Headmaster a potion to render him mute for a day was one thing. Camping outside the Great Leader's office was an entirely different matter altogether. For one thing, daydreaming was out of the question, since one would very likely not even notice when the old goat left his rooms. Anyhow, Severus managed to pull himself up to his full height, and he made his announcement, "I wish to report that the world as we know it will shortly be destroyed."

"What? How can that be? *Wait* a moment." He gestured meaningfully with his rolled-up newspaper, and tapping Severus's shoulder. "Weren't my annoying nephew Knightley and his friends supposed to be sorting that out by being the heroes of the wizarding world and all that rubbish?"

"Well... in reference to that, Headmaster..." Severus choked back the instinct to spit the truth at his employer which was *Why do you think I've been sitting out here for the past few years?* and substituted it for, "...There have been a few minor little tangles in the threads of your projected plan."

"What do you mean?" Dumbledore crunched into a sweet and stared at his Potions Master's impassive face.

"It seems that you have lost the tapestry of this intrigue," coughed the dark-haired wizard in his imitation of a polite voice.

Dumbledore sighed, and stretched; his beard quivering in the process. "Very well. It seems I'll have to sort my nephew's life out for him again. If Sybill Trelawney had not predicted that he would be saviour of the Wizarding World against Tom, I wouldn't bother to bail the fellow out. So what mischief has he landed himself in this time?"

"It might be a little late, Headmaster," Severus pointed out patiently with folded arms as he waited for the news to take its desired effects.

"Bah!" Dumbledore flicked a dismissive wrist at the younger wizard. "Nothing is too late for Dumbledore, for I am celebrated for my mercy and compassion!"

"Well, Headmaster, I don't see what you can do if your nephew and his two friends are dead," came the smooth, toneless answer. "According to reports, they have been dead for the past nine months, which may explain why we never heard from them after their expedition to Iceland."

"Dead, you say? I confess that would make things a tad more difficult," commented the wizard touted to be the wisest wizard in Europe. However, as soon as those words left his lips, he frowned. "I do hate doing this. The paperwork for the Wizengamot is going to be torture. Still," he paused and cast a smile upon Severus that made the younger man squirm internally. "Still, that's what I have you for!"

They were about to leave the sacred grounds of Hogwarts when Dumbledore paused in his steps. Severus, it seemed, remained where he was, still scowling at his employer.

"What are we waiting for, my boy? Do you have good news to add to this tragedy?"

"I'm not *your boy*," snarled Severus at last. "And yes, I have more news to convey."

"The news being?"

"Trelawney has made another two prophecies. I have taken the liberty of writing them down. She has, for once, given complete details of what we can expect and what should happen in the Dark Lord is to be defeated. She also tells us what to expect now that Knightly and his sidekicks are dead," said Severus, his scowl still heavy on his brow.

Dumbledore declined to accept the parchment proffered to him by his potions master. "Now that you mention it, my super-sensitive all-seeing, Über omniscient senses are vibrating. Oh good! They have been reincarnated! We can still turn the tide of the war! You will tell Tom the original prophecy and since it will still be relevant! Let's go, my boy!"

Severus counted to twenty, slowly released his breath and gritted his teeth. Was this why he came to the side of light? If he knew he would have to suffer in this manner, he would have stayed at the Dark Lord and allowed him to have his dark way with him as he was wont to do with the members of the Death Eater Ladies' Corp and the Unadorned Death Eater Youth Division. Still, Severus was not one to abandon his decision when he had made it. So, he gritted his teeth as the two of them vanished in a soft pop.

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They Apparated in a nursery much like any other nursery. An infant gurgled in his crib near a curtained window in a very well furnished room. His head was already covered with black down, and his green eyes were piercingly friendly. Severus immediately recoiled. He never liked children, especially young ones. They were such smelly little things, rather like birds with no control over their bladders or bowel movements. As he stepped away from the child, he noted another cradle nearby and saw a sleeping babe with silky locks of pale platinum. Instinctively, he backed away until he came to the window and looked out. The shock on seeing the two cradles was too much for him. The scenery outside with a babbling river winding through lush green fields towards the more fields and the village of Codric's Hollow many, many, many reasons down. "Could it be?" thought Severus as he unrolled the parchment and stared at it. He gulped, paled and sat down. Surely, this cannot be true!

Dumbledore, oblivious to the disbelief that had fallen on poor Severus, tickled the black haired baby's tummy. "That's a good Knightley! How's my Monty? Who's a pretty little baby? Who's a pretty little, teensy..."

Deciding that enough was enough, and frankly, he was disturbed his employer making cooing baby noises to a child, he coughed and checked his parchment again. "According to the karmic plan outlined by Trelawney, your nephew, Montague Knightley was due to be reincarnated, found and brought up by James and Lily Potter, who plucked him from the rapids of the river. The Dark Lord apparently has something against James Potter who bought the last collector's edition Han Solo figurine and has declared that he will wipe up the said gentleman's entire family. This coupled with the prophecy of your nephew and the Dark Lord killing each other in 1997 would provide the impetus for the Dark Lord to *avada kedavra* the whole family, leaving the child to be brought up by his cruel Muggle relatives. This would in turn ensure that child grows up angry enough to defeat the Dark Lord, assuming we can keep him from doing stupid things and preventing him from being killed." He paused to inhale. "Unfortunately, it appears that the baby floated past this cottage first. This cottage is the Malfoy summer cottage. It would appear that the Malfoys, being the kindly people that they are, picked him up and took him home to raise alongside their son as their own child. They will go off the deep end of course on losing their other 'son' and turn to the Dark Lord's cause. If the child is here, it means no adoption by James and Lily Potter, no Montague Knightley alias Harry Potter in this reincarnation to defeat the Dark Lord, no angry Potter desirous of offing the Dark Lord, no..."

Dumbledore smiled, picked the crib and tossed it out of the window. It sailed gracefully through the air, and landed with a splash in the river, gently rocking from side to side. "No problem," he said cheerfully. "Remind me to arrange a patronus message to James to stroll by river."

"Perhaps you should do so now," Severus humbly suggested as the baby started wailing loudly in the distance. Momentarily, his conscience pricked him. "Headmaster, what if the child sinks before he gets there?"

"Don't be such a worrywart! The screaming and crying will stop if that happens. What's next on Sybill's list?"

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One patronus to James and Lily Potter later, Severus revealed to Dumbledore their next destination. They Apparated once again in another nursery. This was rather shabby compared to the previous nursery. This second baby had flaming red hair and had just managed to crawl out of his blankets. He was, interestingly enough, making a concerted effort to reach the wizarding chess set and Quidditch magazine with the Chudley Cannons on the front cover on a nearby table.

"Woah!" exclaimed Dumbledore. "This must be the reincarnation of Apollyon Pringle! He was a bit of a chess player. I could never beat him, you know." The baby then made another determined attempt at the magazine. Dumbledore, who was a softie, handed the babe the magazine and he gurgled his thanks as he poked at the figures on the front cover zooming here and there with claps and laughs of approval. "Yup, *definitely* Pringle! Only he would gravitate towards a miserable Quidditch team like the Cannons! Always was a staunch supporter of them. Never understood why my nephew and he were so besotted with the team. So what's the situation with him?"

Now used to his duties as peon on top of spy, Severus checked his notes. "Apollyon Pringle, former caretaker of Hogwarts reborn as... My, my, this is interesting." The potions master chuckled. "It seems that his father, one Arthur Weasley is doing very well in the Ministry as an Unspeakable. Unfortunately, he and his wife, one Molly

"Hmm..." Dumbledore tapped the side of his nose thoughtfully. "As much as I dislike interference..." Severus sniggered at that point, much to the older wizard's chagrin, leading him to begin again in his statement. "As much as I dislike interfering in matters that are none of my business could you please not try to choke and snort like that, Severus? It is most ill-mannered of you. Thank you, my boy. As I was saying as much as I dislike interfering in familial relationships, I think we would have to do something about this one. Something will happen to stop this family from being so happy and getting along so astonishingly well..."

Dumbledore snapped his fingers as a twinkle came into his eyes. "Nothing serious, so don't give me that look! I shall exert my power in the Wizengamot and secretly arrange for this Arthur Weasley to be transferred to a useless division in the Ministry of Magic, one that is looked down upon. One of the boys is bound to be driven by ambition and will be resentful of this when mummy lets slips that Daddy was demoted to another more useless division at work. This ambitious son will then become an overachiever more so than the rest of his siblings and alienate himself from the family, leading young Pringle here to feel like shit, and enter the self-doubt and poor self-esteem stage left. He will immediately gravitate towards Knightley as Potter because the latter will be so fucked up and angst that he will initially have esteem problems. And they will become bosom friends, as they should be."

"Oh yes, it is, isn't it? Yes, if Arthur Weasley gets transferred, things will not be as comfortable, and Pringle or Young Weasley as he is in this life will leave home for the wilderness of Hogwarts and meet up with his old friends Montague Knightley, now a Potter, and Xanthippe Lovegood, whoever she has been reborn as. Yes, that will do. An excellent plan! Things will sort themselves out after that!" Dumbledore clapped his hands together, evidently very pleased with himself. "So, who's next?"

After making a Floo call to the ministry to transfer Arthur Weasley to the most useless division on the Ministry, viz., the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office and the Office for the Detection and Confiscation of Counterfeit Defensive Spells and Protective Objects, our duo Apparated to a house of what appeared to be a Muggle family in Chelsea.

Severus unrolled the parchment and searched for the relevant section. "This is the home of Xanthippe Lovegood's reincarnation. She lives here with her parents, who are Muggles dentists, apparently. By the name of Granger" His lips curled when his eyes scanned the rest of the parchment.

"I can't say I approve," Severus scoffed disapprovingly. "I rather liked Xanthippe. She had a quiet elegance and the only one who could keep up with me academically. She actually read books on the Dark Arts with me *without* judging me. If she wasn't a friend of your stupid nephew with his bloody hero complex, I would have made her an offer instead of Lily Evans. At least she would have rejected me kindly!"

Keeping his seething anger in check by clenching his fists tightly over the parchment, Severus continued, "Xanthippe's cousin in this reincarnation – a Muggle by the name of Sappho Delafontaine is supposed to marry the son of the house of Black, one surprise, surprise – Regulus Black. This marriage will turn impressionable Regulus away from the Dark Lord, and will result in the Blacks coming to an understanding of Muggle ways. Xanthippe, as Miss Granger – as she will be known in this life, will learn more about the Wizarding World from her new cousins by marriage, and her parents will in turn allow her to attend Hogwarts. Throughout her education there and after graduation, she would call for Muggle and Wizard support against the Dark Lord thereby acting as a voice of reason advocating understanding and pacifism between Muggles and Wizards. She will be aided in this by Knightley/Potter and Pringle/Weasley after she saves them from something stemming from their arrant propensity to attract trouble. There is one problem however..."

Severus met his employer's gaze levelly. "Unfortunately, Regulus and Miss Delafontaine just don't seem to have met. Their paths don't seem to cross. Which means her parents don't believe in the Wizarding World and will not countenance the idea of sending her to some hocus pocus magic school."

Severus nodded in visible admiration at Albus Dumbledore. Although he generally held Dumbledore in low esteem, every now and then in a long, long, long while, the Headmaster would contrive something so smartly that he was reminded of Wizarding Britain's just praise for his employer's benignity and majesty. "Of course, sir. It seems we have the slightest problem..."

"We must get some Brighton rock sweets!" clattered he happily like the senile old fool that he was. "And oh, win a soft-toy dragon a tartan one that tartan one, for Minerva. She will be so pleased. Ooh! Look Severus, a stall seeing pinwheels, let's buy one for Flitwick! He could use it in Charms class!"

"Phoenix," explained Severus briskly as he dragged the old man away to the area near Brighton Pavilion favoured by the corpulent George IV whilst Regent. "Absence of said phoenix. You are supposed to have a phoenix who will swoop in at convenient moments to rouse the morale of the staff and students at Hogwarts, and save Knightley/Potter whenever he gets in too deep and does not have Xanthippe/Miss Granger or you to save him."

"Do we need such a *deus ex machina*?" Dumbledore enquire, his eyes trained on the sweet stall in the distance.

"Trelawney says so. She even told me she consulted a fellow Seer named Rowling who concurred that it was essential to bringing down the Dark Lord because the presence of the phoenix apparently builds the character of Knightley/Potter, allowing him to be more prepared when he finally has his face off with the Dark Lord. However, the phoenix, one Fawkes by name because it was supposed owned by Guy Fawkes..."

"Oh! So the phoenix isn't here." Dumbledore's voice deflated in gravity.

"It would seem that the last time it burst into flames and had to be reborn, it did so outdoors in the snow in minus twenty degrees Celsius. Its regeneration process was put into stasis and it has been an egg ever since," Severus coughed, reading off the parchment and trying his best to keep a straight face at the absurdity of it all. "We need an Alchemist's fire to bring it back to life again."

"What am I supposed to do?"

Severus raised his wand and pointed to the tiny egg the size of a robin egg amongst the pebbles in the lawn of the Pavilion. "That," he said, still pointing at the egg with its strangely glittering opalescent gleam, "has thankfully not been plucked by some Muggle rock collector. You are an alchemist, I believe, in addition to being a transfiguration expert."

Dumbledore shrugged and picked up the egg. "Oh yes!" His eyes brightened. "And I will have a pet! How very grand. I will call him George, and love him, and pet him and never let him go!"

"His name is Fawkes, according to the records," reminded the potions master.

"Whatever!" Dumbledore flicked his wrist and pocketed the egg carefully. "Anything else?"

Severus shook his head firmly. "That's it, Headmaster."

"Good!" exclaimed Dumbledore. "Let's buy some sweets before heading back to the Castle to see if it's all sorted out now."

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Severus was making his way to the Headmaster's office. He could not help but notice a group of Unspeakables from the Ministry's Secret Auror Division hovering about the office carrying reams of parchment. Something must be wrong if they were invading Hogwarts in that manner. To confirm this, the potions master grabbed the papers from those nearest him and skimmed through them. None of them seem to have any good news. Hauling the reports with him into the Headmaster's office, he plonked all the papers on the desk and stood before Dumbledore with folded arms and a mighty glower.

"Yes?" Dumbledore asked, choosing to exercise his sanity for once as he put down the entertainment section of the *Daily Prophet*.

"Headmaster," Severus began in a slow and deliberate voice. "Potter and his friends are launching another wave of plans to deal with the Dark Lord situation and its attendant problems."

"Good." Dumbledore interrupted him briskly. "I will read these reports and assess how they are getting on *after* I finish the newspaper."

Severus rolled his eyes and coughed deliberately. "There are a few minor problems. The reports for the fiscal year of 1995 listed the problems of the mounting situation of Ministry debt in clearing up their messes, especially since they nearly obliterated the lobby of the Ministry while facing off the Dark Lord and his minions. The school's finances are also into arrears because of the bills for repairs. They have caused so much trouble that parts of the school have to be rebuilt and refurbished. There are even reports that they are encouraging the other students to follow suit. There are accused of organising opposition to bring down Wizarding society, and there are citations for conduct unworthy of Potter who risks not only his own life but that of the Unspeakables tailing him and his friends."

"Uh-huh," muttered Dumbledore as he gently nudged Severus to the door of his office. "Compile the reports for me, and answer them for me, will you? Everything is going according to plan like clockwork," he added, firmly shutting and warding the door behind him.