

A Holiday with the Headmaster

by MMADfan

Albus and Minerva take a holiday before the onset of the school year. Set in late August 1957. A restful retreat of a story, romantic and lemony. Take a little holiday!
Part of the *Resolving a Misunderstanding* universe, but it's not necessary to be familiar with that story to enjoy this one. Not DH-compliant.

Chapter One

Chapter 1 of 12

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This story is set in the same HP fanfic universe as *Resolving a Misunderstanding*, but it may be read without being familiar with that story. It is set in the last days of August 1957. The first paragraphs are an adaptation of a drabble that is a part of the "Circadian Rhythm" set of mixed HP drabbles.

There is a modified T-rated version of this story on *ffnet*, if you prefer to read it with the sexual content altered or omitted. It is titled *A Little Holiday*, and retains all the romance, magic, and fluff of the original, but without the explicit content.

These events take place between the chapters "The Silent Knight's Tale" and "Back to Hogwarts" in *Resolving a Misunderstanding*.

I hope you enjoy the story!



Chapter One

Albus turned in the darkness, waking when he encountered an unexpected fragrance, like jasmine and rose with a hint of spice. Reaching out, he found another surprise. Soft hair, soft cheek, bare neck, bare shoulder. Slowly, memory seeped into his sleepy brain; he smiled. He touched Minerva's cheek again, reassuring himself of her reality, her continued presence. Rousing to his touch, she breathed deeply, letting it out with a content sigh, and moved closer to his warmth.

Her arm around him, Minerva whispered, "You're really here."

"For as long as you will have me, my dear."

"Forever," she replied. "Forever."

The next morning, Albus stretched and smiled. Minerva was already awake, watching him, and when he turned toward her, she kissed his cheek. What a wonderful way to wake up, although he wished he had been awake first and able to wake her with loving touches.

"One of your special good-morning kisses, Albus?" Minerva asked.

He raised a hand and drew her closer. As his lips touched hers, his minty-fresh charm passed from his mouth to hers and Minerva deepened the kiss, moving to lie on top of him. She kissed him a few more times, then smiled down at him, rocking her hips.

"I like the feel of this," she said, shifting her weight.

His eyebrows rose. "More than my good-morning kiss?"

"It is difficult to say . . . but I do believe that this," she said, pressing her pelvis against his morning erection, "holds more promise for longer lasting pleasure."

"Let's see if I can live up to that promise, then," Albus said, rolling her over onto her back and kissing her. "Mmm, you are so warm and lovely."

He moved further beneath the sheet and began kissing her chest and breasts as one hand sought and found her warm crux. His tongue teased one nipple as his fingers lightly played with the other and he began to stroke against her clitoris. He began to suckle as his tongue still tickled her nipple. His fingers slipped inside her, and he moaned in appreciation. Minerva gave an answering moan and spread her legs further as his arm began to move energetically, thrusting his fingers within her. Albus moved to the other breast, licking and teasing the nipple, before bringing his hand to his mouth and licking his fingers clean. He moved his other hand down to her warmth, where he began to rub her clitoris again. He sucked and kissed one breast as he flicked his thumb over the other nipple.

Minerva wriggled and moaned, clutching at his hair. His mouth and fingers were stimulating her and causing her throbbing warmth to grow, his beard was brushing against her skin, and his large, firm erection was pressed against one leg. Electric thrills passed through her, from her nipple to her crux and back again.

"Oh, gods, Albus . . . more, more," she moaned.

Grinning, Albus moved down her body, kissing, nipping, and licking as he still stroked her clit. Then he slid his fingers inside her and nosed her folds, then his tongue found her clitoris, and with rapid strokes of his tongue and thrusts of his hand, he increased her stimulation, causing her to moan and rock. He licked from her opening to her clit, circling her nub, then licking it first up and down then back and forth, all the while thrusting his fingers within her.

Minerva's legs were around him now, urging him closer as she arched her back. Her breath was coming in gasps and she gripped the sheet spasmodically as she began to come, calling out his name. Albus didn't pause, but continued pleasuring her, flicking his tongue over her clit and fingering her vagina, carrying her through her orgasm.

As Minerva relaxed back onto the bed, catching her breath, Albus began to kiss his way back up her body as he slowly withdrew his fingers from her. He kissed each breast, then his head emerged from beneath the sheet, and he kissed Minerva's lips. Minerva deepened the kiss, urging his tongue into her mouth then gently sucking on it, causing him to groan with desire. He put his arms on either side of her, slipping his hands beneath her shoulders. Her hands were on his buttocks as the head of his cock found her crux and Albus deliberately slid against her, rubbing his length over her clit, sliding over it again and again as Minerva gasped and rocked, until he finally rose up and pressed the head of his penis against her vagina and slowly, slowly entered her. When he was half-way in, he pulled all of the way out again and repeated his action, this time entering just a bit further. On his fourth entry, Minerva was moaning as she pulled him toward her, and he buried himself completely within her. He withdrew and thrust four more times, fast and hard. The fourth time, he remained deep inside of her, and with his legs, he urged hers together. He pushed himself up so that he could look down at Minerva's face and into her unfocused eyes as he thrust and pumped, again and again. Albus shifted as she arched her back, and he could tell by the intake of breath and the change in her expression that he was stimulating her in all of the right spots, inside and out, as he rubbed her clit with each downward thrust, pounding within her, and then she was coming again, calling out to him, and he could feel the warm, rushing flow as her vagina contracted in waves around him, and he continued to pump, prolonging her orgasm, until finally he could hold back no longer, and he thrust once more deep inside her and came as he pushed against her, unable to breathe as he spent himself within her.

Minerva tightened her arms around him, holding him on her and in her, relishing the feel of his weight on her, the thrum of his pounding heart, and the sensation of his magic flowing through him in rhythm with his pulse.

"I love you, Albus . . . I love you so . . ." The words seemed inadequate as she whispered them, but there were none others that she could find, and she emphasised them with a squeeze of her arms around him and combing her fingers through the long hair flowing over his shoulders.

Albus turned his head and kissed her ear lightly, then whispered, "And you, my dear Minerva, you are my breath, my light, and my sweet, sweet delight." He kissed her once more, sighing with contentment. How in his life he had come to have Minerva's love was almost incomprehensible to him, and he would never take it for granted, not for one moment, not as long as she wished to be with him, and if she ever left him, he would remain grateful for every moment.

"I am so very lucky," Minerva said as she ran her hand over his back and shoulders. "So very incredibly lucky."

"I had wanted to awaken you like that, my dear, but you woke first," Albus said, raising his head and looking down at her with a smile. "Not quite fair to my idea of a perfect first morning together, but I don't suppose I will complain."

Minerva slapped his back playfully and grinned up at him. "You definitely shouldn't complain! That was marvellous! Although if you ever want to wake me that way, I don't suppose you will hear any objections from me."

"It was a nice way to begin our holiday, wasn't it?" Albus said, kissing her nose. He rolled over onto his back beside her and cast a few cleaning and freshening charms on them both.

Minerva's stomach growled and Albus laughed. "Did the activity whet your appetite, my dear?"

"Well, I was also lying here awake, watching you sleep for an hour," Minerva said, wishing her stomach would stop gurgling. It wasn't particularly romantic or attractive.

"Why don't you use the bathroom first, if you like, and I could find my dressing gown and call your house-elf to bring us something to eat?" Albus suggested.

Minerva thought a moment, then nodded. "I won't take long, though. I think your charms were sufficient, and I want to leave as soon as possible."

It hadn't taken very much to convince Albus that it would be nice if they were to take a brief holiday before the school year began, although the suggestion had initially surprised him, but deciding on their destination had proven more difficult.

"Your cottage," Minerva had said, pleased with her sudden inspiration. To her mind, it would be perfect: quiet, isolated, remote. "Perhaps we might go to your cottage, Albus. We could be alone and undisturbed, and just be Albus and Minerva together."

Albus shook his head. "I don't know, Minerva . . . What about Brighton? A little sea air? Some sun? The Muggle arcades can be quite amusing. It would be warmer in Brighton, too," he said as a particularly sharp gust of wind rocked the glider they sat in.

"Brighton? There would be crowds of people there. And I have nothing against Muggles, but I would like us to be able to relax, be ourselves. I can't do that if I have to constantly remember not to do any magic and try to figure out Muggle gadgets," Minerva replied. "I think your cottage would be perfect."

"No . . . no, I don't think so. What about Paris, then? It's a beautiful, romantic city. I know a sweet little wizarding pension where we could stay. There are wonderful Muggle museums, and the museum of magical history there is quite fascinating. It has exhibits from around the world. And we could visit Perenelle and Nicolas. I don't believe you have met them."

Minerva sighed. "That would be nice, some other time. I would like that and it does sound lovely. Perhaps next summer. But for these few days . . . I just would like to be alone with you. Your cottage sounds ideal."

"It's not. Not at all," Albus replied.

Minerva furrowed her brow. "Is it because of Valerianna? Memories of her there?" Minerva asked, thinking of the nasty witch who had treated Albus so poorly.

"No, no, it's not that," Albus said, shaking his head.

"Because it wouldn't be at all the same with us "

"No, it isn't that. It is not even the same cottage," Albus explained. "I gave my cottage to Aberforth for his birthday that year. He insisted I take his. So it's not that."

"Are you sure?" Minerva asked, looking at him sceptically.

Albus laughed. "Of course I'm sure my old cottage in the Dales is perfect for Aberforth and his sheep and goats. And the other cottage suits me. But it isn't suitable for our holiday."

"Why ever not?" Minerva asked, baffled.

"Oh, it simply isn't suitable, my dear," Albus replied.

Minerva's eyebrows raised in surprise. "Not suitable? Why?"

"You deserve a nice, romantic holiday. Something special and perfect. What about Greece?"

And so the conversations continued, on and off, over the next few days, Minerva suggesting Albus's cottage, which seemed more and more ideal to her, and Albus thinking up alternatives, many of which seemed romantic, indeed including Nepal, Egypt, and the French Pyrenees but none sounded right to Minerva. She almost was ready to give up on the idea of a holiday altogether; the more that Albus insisted that the cottage was unsuitable, the more she wanted to spend their holiday there. It was perverse, really, and Minerva recognised that she was being somewhat unreasonable, but she couldn't understand why Albus didn't want to go to his cottage. She even wondered at one point whether he just didn't want to have her in his home.

"I know it's silly of me, Albus, but . . . I just would love to be alone with you, no one else around, just the two of us, and other than your cottage, I can't think of anywhere else. If Mother and Dad were going to be away, I would suggest the Cliffs, but even there, the family always feels free to drop in whenever they wish as they should but they aren't going to Amsterdam again until the thirtieth, and I can't very well ask them to leave just so that we can be alone together. And we could stay at Melina's, as she and Brennan will still be on their honeymoon and she has a room fixed for me, but that doesn't seem right, to be in their home before they've even had a chance to live in it together as a couple. Not to mention that Edinburgh, as much as I like the city, is not precisely the sort of setting I had in mind. Although I suppose we could Apparate and spend our days elsewhere . . . but in that case, we might as well just stay here," she ended dispiritedly.

"No, my dear, we will find a suitable destination, I am sure," Albus replied, taking her hand.

A few days later, after Albus had once again suggested Andorra, Minerva didn't even mention the cottage, having almost given up on persuading him, and feeling slightly rude that she had continued to harp on it when he had offered so many romantic alternatives.

"I suppose we could still go camping, the way that Malcolm and Gertrude did." Minerva hated that idea, but slightly less than the prospect of completely abandoning any plans to get away from Hogwarts.

"No, definitely not," Albus said with a shake of his head.

The next day, Albus was suggesting that they go to Heidelberg, where she had done her apprenticeship, and Minerva pushed out of his embrace. "No. Not Heidelberg. I loved Heidelberg. I still love Heidelberg. But we both know people there. And we'd still be surrounded by other people, even if they were all strangers. Let's just . . . let's just stay here. Or we could borrow Malcolm's flat, I suppose. If he stays here at the castle for those days with Gertrude, I think he wouldn't mind."

Minerva was disappointed, but she didn't want to make Albus miserable about it, too. Malcolm's little flat in a wizarding cul-de-sac in the heart of Aberdeen was not precisely the retreat Minerva had been looking forward to, but they wouldn't have to go out. Or they could Apparate from there, take walks and picnics by her beloved cliffs . . .

Albus was quiet for a moment. "If I still had the other cottage, Minerva, I wouldn't have been so hesitant. I lived there for decades, made it a home. It was large and comfortable. And at the time that I gave it to Aberforth, I was happy I had and I still am. He is able to keep his goats and sheep there much more easily than he had, since the grazing is much better, and I rarely used it any longer, not since coming to teach at Hogwarts. It was a waste, really, to keep it for the few weeks a year that I spent there. And I do like the little cottage that he gave me in exchange. It seems well-suited for the occasional use I make of it. But it is much more rustic, and far less spacious, than the other one, although I have made a few changes to it. Since I have never spent more than a few weeks at a time there, though, it isn't . . . it isn't what it would be if I had made it my home, you see. I am afraid you wouldn't be very comfortable there."

"Albus Dumbledore! Please don't tell me that you are worried what I will think of your cottage! I never thought it would be like the Gamp family mansion, or even like our place. You don't think the McGonagall home is . . . is unsuitable, do you, just because it's modest and a little run-down?"

"No, not at all! I find the McGonagall house most charming! But it is quite large and rambling, and it has many conveniences that my little cottage doesn't possess," Albus said.

"Such as?"

"Well, other than the very obvious difference in their sizes . . . the McGonagalls have multiple bathrooms. The cottage has one small loo and one bath. And the plumbing is almost completely Charmed, and there's no shower which I don't miss, since I rarely ever used a shower until a few years after I began teaching at Hogwarts, always preferring baths as that's what I was used to. So there's only a tub."

"Are these facilities indoors?" Minerva asked.

"Oh, of course they are!"

"Well, as long as they aren't outdoors like some primitive Muggle farms I've seen, I don't see what you are apologising for. There's only the two of us, after all. And even if they *were* outside, I am certain I could manage for a few days. And I suppose that next, you'll wish to apologise for the inadequate nature of the kitchen, but I will stop you before you get that far. My culinary skills are barely adequate, and I doubt I would notice any deficiencies in your cooking facilities, let alone notice that they weren't up to the most modern wizarding standards."

"Very well, then! We shall go to the cottage. I am glad I did some maintenance tasks on it earlier this summer. And you needn't worry about cooking. I cooked for myself for a long time, until Wilsby returned from Canada, in fact, and quite enjoyed it. I don't cook very often anymore, obviously, but it will be fun!" Albus smiled brightly, now looking forward to the holiday at the cottage and for a moment seeming to have forgotten any of his reservations. "But you will tell me, my dear, if you are at all uncomfortable? We can always go somewhere else if you don't like it once we are there."

"I doubt that will happen, but yes, I will tell you if I would rather be somewhere else," Minerva promised, being unable to imagine that herself.

So that morning they were to leave for his cottage. Minerva was still unclear exactly where it lay, knowing only that it was the sole habitation on a small island, and she was eager to see it.

Minerva emerged from the bathroom, dressed and ready to start the day, and joined Albus in the sitting room. He had not only put on a dressing gown, she noticed, but also his nightshirt and slippers.

"Planning on returning to bed?" she asked with a smile.

"No, no, my dear, I simply thought that Blampa might be more comfortable if I were in something more than just a dressing gown."

"Of course. Blampa would be more comfortable." Minerva couldn't hide her amusement.

"And so am I," Albus admitted with a self-deprecating shrug and a smile. "Breakfast will be here shortly. I just asked her to bring whatever you usually eat."

"I don't know as I have a usual breakfast," Minerva said. "I will be interested to see what she decides to bring."

A few minutes later, the two sat down to an enormous breakfast. Apparently, Blampa had interpreted the instructions to mean, "bring anything you've ever served her for breakfast." There was porridge, eggs, both boiled and fried, toast, scones, apricot preserves and lemon curd, fruit, haggis, potato cakes with butter, and grilled tomatoes and mushrooms and, of course, a large pot of tea. Minerva chose fried eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms, haggis, and toast. Albus muttered something about bacon, and Minerva called Blampa and asked that she bring bacon for the Headmaster.

"I should have asked for fried bread, too," Albus said after the cheerful house-elf delivered the bacon, taking a piece of toast, instead.

"Apparently, that's not considered part of a usual breakfast for me though believe me, I don't normally ask for all of this at once!" Minerva said, thinking that Albus really didn't need the fried bread with his fried eggs and fried bacon, for all he seemed healthy enough. She was trying very hard not to fuss too much over him, as he seemed to appreciate a little fussing but a little went a very long way. Instead, she tried a more subtle approach. "Would you care for some fruit, Albus?"

He quirked a grin at her, seeing through her attempt at subtlety. "Yes, Mother McGonagall, though I thought I would finish this first."

As they ate, Minerva said, "So, you never said where this little island is, or what it's like, other than that it's rocky."

Albus shrugged. "It's to the west of Muck and north of Tiree and Coll. As I said, it's fairly small, rocky, mountainous. There is some wildlife, and you can see seals on one end of the island. It has been a wizarding island, I suppose you might say, since about the eleventh century, and is uncharted by Muggles. But it is a small bit of rock, anyway. It's also unplotable, and I added to the wards, so it would be very difficult, nigh on impossible, for anyone to gain entry but myself or Aberforth, unless we were to bring the person by Side-Along or Portkey."

"It sounds something like the island where Grandmother Siofre's family all comes from, Tiree Beag. That's just to the north of Muggle Tiree."

Albus nodded. "It isn't far from there, I suppose. But it has never had more than one family living on it at a time, not for several centuries, unlike Tiree Beag."

Minerva finished packing as Albus dressed in the bathroom. He had left the door slightly ajar, and she could hear him singing to himself. It sounded a bit like nonsense to her, but he had a nice voice, and she wished she could hear him better. She didn't want to make him self-conscious, though, so she didn't open the door further.

"What was that you were singing, Albus?" she asked when he emerged, brushed, washed, and dressed in his copper and turquoise robes.

"Singing?" He paused and thought. "It was just an old tune, something my mother used to sing to us when we were boys."

"It was nice, very pretty. I would like to hear it sometime if you would care to sing it for me, of course."

"It's just a silly little nursery tune, Minerva," Albus said.

"Still, I liked it, and I'm unfamiliar with it." Minerva didn't want to press Albus about it. He did have a beautiful voice, though. "You have a very nice voice."

Albus chuckled. "It's nothing special, though I do enjoy singing in the bath."

"Yes, well, I can carry a tune, and that's about it, so I appreciate it when someone has a good voice, and you do," Minerva replied.

Albus came over and kissed her softly, putting his arms around her. "You sing very nicely, Minerva. Your rendition of 'Happy Birthday' was the nicest I ever heard."

Minerva returned his kiss, then said, "That's because you were surprised, that's all. And you don't usually celebrate. But that's neither here nor there. I'm all packed, and if you're ready, we can leave now. Are we Apparating?"

"No, my dear. I thought I would make us a Portkey rather than have everyone in the castle know within five minutes of our departure that the Headmaster and his new Head of Gryffindor House were seen leaving the grounds together, complete with luggage," Albus explained. "I doubt anyone will notice our simultaneous absence, as there are others coming and going over the next few days, but I would just as soon not have people speculating about the fact that we both left at the same time. And someone with sharp eyes might notice if I give you a Side-Along, which would be necessary, as neither are you acquainted with the island nor are the wards set to recognise you. We can Apparate on our return, however, and I will set the wards for you so that you may come and go as you please."

Minerva nodded. They had already agreed that it would be wise to remain discreet about their relationship, something that had bothered Minerva initially, but now that a few close friends and family members knew though by no means all of them she actually could appreciate the value of discretion, especially as she was now Head of Gryffindor, the new Head of Gryffindor. Best not to have people speculating about the extent of their personal relationship and how it might have affected her selection as Gryffindor's Head of House despite the fact that their relationship had little to do with it, and they had only been friends at the time she had agreed to serve as the next Head of House.

"That sounds fine. Have you made the Portkey already?" Minerva asked.

"No, and there's one last thing that I need to do before I leave," Albus replied. "If I might make use of your study? Or I could Floo to my office "

"No, don't do that. Of course you may use my study!" Minerva was certain that if he went to his office, he would become distracted or someone would find him, and their departure could be delayed by hours.

"I just need to write Gertrude a little note; I told her I would let her know where we'll be, confirm that we'll be back sometime Wednesday morning, and let her know that if there's an urgent message for either of us, she can send Wilsby with it, as Post Owls won't be able to reach us," Albus explained. "Johannes is expecting me to transfer the care of the wards to him, but I needn't see him for that. I also thought I could have her tell your brother that I will prepare his rooms as soon as I can after the staff meeting

on Wednesday."

"Yes, well, I don't think he or Gertrude object to sharing," Minerva said with a smirk.

"We gave him a set of guest rooms yesterday afternoon, just for the sake of appearances with more of the staff present now, although I won't inquire as to whether he spends any time in them at all," Albus said with an answering grin.

Fifteen minutes later, Albus had written his note to Gertrude and called on Wilsby to see that it was delivered. When he finished, he took the quill he had been using and charmed it with the *Portus* spell, then he, Minerva, and their luggage Portkeyed away to spend a few days in peace before the beginning of the school year was upon them.

Note: Please be aware that some of the locations mentioned in the story are actual places, but many are fictional. In addition, lest anyone mistake this story for a treatise on the flora and fauna of Scotland, do not take it as an infallible source for information about the real world, whether botanical, zoological, geological, geographical, cultural, social, literary, or otherwise! I strive for verisimilitude and borrow from the real world, but verisimilitude is different from strict accuracy. ;D Thanks for reading!

Chapter Two

Chapter 2 of 12

Albus and Minerva arrive at their destination and Albus begins to show her around.



Chapter Two

Minerva looked around her. "It's beautiful, Albus!" From what he had said about it being rocky, she had thought there would be no vegetation, but that was far from the case.

Albus smiled. "I am glad you liked it. I brought us to the highest point on the island so that you can get a sense of the place, and we can Apparate down to the cottage from here."

"It's quite a bit bigger than I'd anticipated, too," Minerva said.

"It's only about a mile or so wide at its widest point, but it's almost three miles long. In theory, it wouldn't take very long to walk around its perimeter, but because of these cliffs here on the west side of the northern-most point, I have never attempted it," Albus explained. He pointed to the south. "Along there is where the seals come up on the beach. There's a somewhat sheltered cove there, as you can see, but you can also see the seals and porpoises playing in the water from almost anywhere that you can see the sea."

Looking out to the west across the water, Minerva smiled to see sea eagles soar and dive, and she could just make out a pod of porpoises playing near the standing waves of a whirlpool. "And you said it was rocky, Albus, and I suppose it is, by some people's standards, but the way you talked, I had thought that it was some barren rock in the middle of the sea with nothing growing on it at all." She looked south down the length of the island. "It is hardly very different from the area around the McGonagall Cliffs, though there seem to be fewer trees."

"Oh, well, I suppose I was comparing it with the green, lush, rolling hills of the Dales, where my other cottage was," Albus said. "There's a lot of gorse you can see there," he said pointing at a long patch of bright yellow flowers against the darker green foliage, "and there's heather, as you can see, and a large stand of yew on the slope behind us. There are small red deer that forage on the tender tips of the plants. Since Aberforth removed his goats from the island, the deer population has doubled." He frowned. "I am concerned about how the island will support so many deer, especially through the winter."

Minerva pointed south to a small dark patch. "Is that the cottage?"

Albus nodded. "I replaced the roof with slate when I took it. I hope you will be comfortable enough," he said, seeming uneasy again after his pleasure at her obvious appreciation of the small island.

"I'm sure I will be," Minerva said, not a doubt in her own mind as she looked south along the length of the island. "Let's go for a walk first off. And before we leave, I want to circumambulate the entire island at once. Perhaps tomorrow?" She looked over at Albus eagerly.

He grinned at her. "Perhaps tomorrow. We do get rain here, though it tends to blow over very quickly, so you may find that we have to Apparate back to the cottage at intervals and do the walk in stages."

Minerva nodded. "I'd prefer not to, though, if we don't have to. I don't mind getting a little wet, or using an *Impervius* Charm."

"The rock can get slippery, though, so we would have to take our time. Aberforth says that there is no place along the coast that is impassable, so in theory, we should be able to walk around it in just a few hours, but I think it will take longer than that," Albus replied.

"We can bring a picnic," Minerva suggested. "If we leave early, right after breakfast, we can stop and have our picnic whenever we choose."

"Very well, my dear! A picnic and a walk tomorrow, weather permitting," Albus said with a smile. "Now, you can see the cottage and you could Apparate there on your own, since the wards only prevent others from Apparating to the island, not from place to place on it nor off of it altogether, but this first time, I would prefer to bring you by Side-Along, since you are unfamiliar with the island. I will add you to the wards before we leave, as I promised, and you will be able to come here whenever you like."

"That's fine, Albus," Minerva replied. She enjoyed having him bring her by Side-Along Apparition, and she was more comfortable with that idea, anyway, even though, as he said, she could see the cottage from where they stood.

"I'll bring the luggage first, then return for you, if that is all right with you," Albus said.

"As long as you give me a kiss first!" Minerva said, pulling him around to face her.

"Ah, the burdens you place upon me!" he said with a dramatic sigh, his eyes twinkling.

Albus bent his head and his lips brushed hers for a moment, then he kissed her lower lip, drawing it between his own, before deepening the kiss as his arms tightened their embrace. A few minutes later, he looked down with a smile at Minerva as her eyes opened and she blinked at him.

"Is it safe to let you go now?" Albus whispered. "Or will you fall over?"

Minerva blinked again and stepped back, still holding on to him. "I, um, I'm fine." She swallowed. "That was quite adequate to sustain me, I believe."

"Adequate to ! The cheek of this witch!" Albus said with a laugh. "You just wait I will show you 'adequate!'"

Still laughing, he grabbed up all their luggage but the smallest carpet bag and Disappeared with a light pop. Less than a minute later, he was back and picked up the little carpet bag.

"So . . . are you ready, Minerva?"

"Of course! I am eager to see it," she replied.

"Well, I hope you haven't very high expectations," he said. "It may be less adequate than my kiss was."

Minerva chuckled. "Well, considering the general quality of your kisses, it would be difficult for any abode to be quite that adequate."

Minerva closed her eyes as Albus put his arms around her, and she smiled to feel the humming vibration of his magic. He was one of the very few people with whom she could Side-Along without becoming sick to her stomach; she actually looked forward to it with him, enjoying the sensation of his arms around her, the thrumming of his heartbeat, and the tingle of his magic. Before they were together, she would often find an excuse to have him bring her by Side-Along as it was the only way that she could be that close to him, and the feel of his magic flowing through hers was so delicious.

With barely a whisper of a pop, Albus Apparated them several yards in front of the cottage. Minerva smiled happily when she opened her eyes and turned to see the little house.

"Oh, Albus! It is utterly charming! It's salt-and-pepper!"

Albus grinned at her appreciation of the little cottage and its walls of white and dark, almost black, stone blocks set with bright white mortar, which created a pleasing patchwork design. "I am glad you like it so far, my dear."

Minerva just shook her head at that.

"So, are you going to show me the inside?" she asked after they had stood there a minute.

"Of course. Um, this is the front door, rather obviously," Albus said unnecessarily as he walked forward and opened it for her.

Minerva started toward the cottage, but Albus shouted, "Wait!"

Startled, Minerva said, "What is it?"

"Well, it's old-fashioned, and really rather a barbaric practise, if you think about it very long, and hardly even appropriate under these particular circumstances, but "

"What are you trying to say, Albus?" He almost never rambled, usually only doing so when personally embarrassed. As Poppy liked to say, the wizard meandered a bit, but he wasn't a rambler, so when Albus began to ramble, Minerva felt it best to cut right to the heart of the matter.

He opened his mouth, blushed, then said nothing.

Minerva raised her eyebrows. "Yes?"

"Never mind. It was a silly idea . . ."

"Now you *must* tell me, even if it was a silly idea," Minerva insisted, though gently.

"It's just . . . it suddenly came into my head that . . . that I should carry you in. You see, I told you it was a silly idea," he said, not waiting for her reaction, but bending to pick up one of the bags by hand in order to avoid her gaze.

Minerva didn't move, and when she didn't say anything, Albus looked over at her, wondering if he had offended her with his foolish notion.

"Are you carrying the bags in first, then?" she asked softly. She had a slight lump in her throat, though she wasn't sure why. She stepped closer to him.

"It's not as though you are my possession, or that I feel you are," Albus said.

"I know that."

"It's just . . . just that I cherish you, my dearest one."

Tears did come to her eyes then as she smiled up at him. "Please do cherish me, Albus."

Minerva put her arms around his neck and kissed him. "Mmm. I love you," she said softly. "I love you forever."

Albus kept one arm around her as he slipped the other under her knees, bending slightly and lifting her easily. She rested her head on his shoulder.

"I do adore you, Albus. Absolutely." She carded her fingers through his long hair as he turned and carried her into the little cottage.

Albus set her on her feet, but left his arm around her. "Welcome to my very humble abode, Professor McGonagall."

Minerva looked around her in delight. The fireplace and chimney were of the same black and white stone blocks of which the rest of the cottage was built; the walls were plastered and limed, except for the back wall and the partial wall beneath the staircase leading up, both of which were panelled with a pale wood, only slightly darkened with age. There was a large, overstuffed sofa at a convenient spot in front of the fireplace, an old rocking chair nearby, a faded cushion on its seat, and a low table of the same wood as the panelling there by the couch. Across the room, there was a good-sized table, plain, but well-crafted, and two matched wooden ladder-back chairs. Where Minerva was standing, the surface was slate, but the rest of the room was floored with wide, close-fitting planks, and there were a few colourful hooked rugs adding warmth to the room.

"It's wonderful, Albus!" She walked over to the old, scarred table by the far wall, and ran an appreciative hand over its surface. "I have no idea why you were apologising!"

Albus looked pleased, but he said, "You haven't seen the rest of it yet. Remember, it hasn't had much done to it in years. But let me know if there are changes you would like made, and I'll get a start on them while we're here."

"No, you won't, Albus Dumbledore! We are here on holiday! No work! If there are any improvements or changes I think of, I'll make a note of them, and we can talk about them when we get back to Hogwarts. And I hope that's the last mention of the school until Wednesday!"

"Yes, my dear," Albus said with a smile. "Although Gertie didn't know precisely where we were going on holiday the last time I spoke with her, she said she wouldn't contact us except in dire emergency, so there should be no need for us to think about Hogwarts business at all."

"I don't mind mention of the outside world at all, of course," Minerva amended quickly. "I just want this to be a relaxing time for us, especially for you. You have worked very hard this summer, and you have had more difficulties to contend with than one would normally expect during the summer months." She walked over to him and placed her hands on his chest. "I hope that I can help you relax, too."

Albus kissed her lips lightly. "I am sure that you will." He kissed her again, then, before he could become too distracted, he said, "Let me get the luggage and we'll go upstairs. I'll show you . . . I'll show you where we'll sleep." He couldn't understand why he was blushing, but he could again feel warmth rising in his face. The thought that lovely Minerva wanted to be with him, that she would love him, want to touch him, to make love to him, to sleep with him . . . it all still seemed incredible at times.

Minerva smiled brightly up at him. "Wonderful! And then we can take our walk!"

Albus couldn't help but return Minerva's smile, and he waved his hand to Summon their luggage from outside the door. He took her hand and, their bags following along smoothly, he led her up the stairs.

"You do need to be careful here, my dear, if you should get up in the dark. There is no rail at this side, as you can see, and you might take a nasty tumble if you weren't careful," Albus said, talking more just to talk than to inform Minerva of what was right before her eyes.

They reached the landing at the top of the stair, and Albus gestured at a very small door behind them. "There's a small storage area there, a sort of attic, actually. And here," he said, opening the larger door in front of them, "is the bedroom."

The room was large, and there was no ceiling but the roof itself; four gabled windows looked out east and west, and a large, low bed rested between the two east-facing windows. It was covered with a patchwork quilt of many bright colours, and four downy pillows in sunny yellow covers lay at the head of the bed. One low, two-drawer stand was beside the bed. There was a large, old wardrobe on the north wall beside a small fireplace, and a tall chest of drawers stood against the south wall. There was another door almost directly across from them, next to the fireplace.

"You may unpack and use whatever space you find convenient, my dear," Albus said, overcoming his nervousness. He Levitated their bags over to the foot of the bed. "And the bathroom and loo are combined upstairs, although there is a small loo, only a toilet, actually, off the kitchen downstairs." He walked over to the other door and opened it. "It is primitive, compared with what you are used to, I am afraid, but "

"Really, Albus! I am not a hothouse flower!" Minerva stuck her head into the bathroom. There was a very large claw-foot bathtub along the wall as soon as one entered the room; the toilet was in the far corner, and there was a washstand with separate hot and cold taps on the inside wall. A small bench stood along the wall beside the basin. "This looks fine. Quite civilised. Not primitive. Just not luxurious. Which is certainly not a requirement in a bathroom. But," she added, "I do love the tub. It's huge!" She turned to him with a grin. "We may just have to see if it fits two!"

Albus, despite his endeavours to keep his blushing to a minimum, did blush at that, but it was a blush of pleasure, and he replied, "We might do that, then. Perhaps tonight?"

"Mmm, something to look forward to!" Minerva put her arms around him, kissed him, then leaned against his chest with a sigh. "I couldn't be any happier at this moment than I am now, if that makes any sense at all." She looked up at him. "Thank you, Albus. Thank you very much."

"For what?"

"For indulging me and not becoming impatient with me these last few days every time I mentioned coming here. I shouldn't have invited myself like this. But it seemed as though it would be perfect, and it is!" She sighed again and relaxed against him.

"I just wasn't sure . . . I like the cottage very much myself, and I don't know whether I feared you wouldn't because I do like it and I would have been disappointed if you didn't like it too, or whether I feared you would dislike it and . . . well, and that it would reflect badly on me and my ability to please you," Albus said hesitantly. "I can also think of more romantic and luxurious surroundings, and I do want our first holiday together to be perfect and romantic."

Minerva didn't take any offense at his words; after all, she did want him to be honest with her, but she would be honest in return. "Well, I like the cottage, as well, although I haven't seen all of it yet. And it is unlike you to worry so about what others think and how something that you have or that you like might reflect on you. You should know that I love you; even if I thought the cottage was hideous, that wouldn't change. After all, if those horrible grey robes you wore a few weeks ago didn't affect my feelings for you except to make me want to take care of you nothing you owned could do that!"

"Mmm, yes, but they were fairly horrific, weren't they? And I did disintegrate them, once you'd pointed that out," Albus said with a low chuckle.

"Yes, that's true, but I haven't finished yet," Minerva said. "Being alone with you for three days will make our first holiday together perfect and romantic, and I can't imagine more romantic surroundings, either. Other kinds of romantic surroundings, perhaps, but nothing *more* romantic. You know how I love the hills and braes and cliffs by my home, so I can't imagine why you didn't realise how much I would like your island." She gave him a squeeze. "My goodness, Albus, *your* island! Uncharted, unplotable, warded, beautiful, with a cozy cottage . . . what more could a witch ask for?"

Albus could think of a few things that some witches would certainly ask for and definitely expect, but he didn't mention them, choosing instead to caress Minerva's cheek, tilt her head towards him, and kiss her lips. As his ardour mounted, he bent and lifted Minerva as he had outside the cottage, and she slipped her arms around his neck. He kissed her forehead, her eyelids, her cheeks, and her lips.

"I love you, Minerva," he breathed before he kissed her again and carried her to the bed.

Albus gently lay Minerva on the bed, then he looked down at her, his lips parted, his breathing heavy. He reached out and briefly caressed her from her shoulder, down over her breast, across her stomach to her hip. He placed his palm where her crux was hidden beneath her robes, and Minerva began to part her legs, but he removed his hand and began to undress, beginning with his short boots and socks, then his over-robe of copper and turquoise, and then finally letting his pale turquoise under-robe fall to the floor beside the bed.

Minerva stretched out her hand toward him, taking hold of his erection, pulling and stroking, urging him closer.

Albus swallowed then wet his lips. "You see what you do to me, Minerva, you see my desire."

Albus sat on the edge of the bed and removed Minerva's soft shoes, then he rolled down her Charmed stockings, his fingertips grazing her skin as he reached up beneath her skirts to find where they began. He dropped her stockings to the floor on top of his robes. Minerva closed her eyes and relished the sensations he brought her as he reached up beneath her skirts again and caressed her skin. She parted her legs further, and his touches teased the soft skin of her inner thighs.

Albus smiled to see Minerva's breathing grow faster, and he explored further, finding her knickers and pulling them down and off as she arched up from the bed. They

joined her stockings without another thought paid them. Albus reached up under her robes once more, gently caressing her inner thighs then bringing one hand higher and finding her warmth. He parted her folds, and with one finger, he circled her clitoris, then he drew his finger down over her nub to her entrance. He teased the soft opening, barely entering her with his finger, and Minerva shifted her hips and moaned. Albus's smile grew, and he slid one finger into her, then sought her clitoris with his thumb. He began to stroke his finger in and out, in and out, his thumb pressing her clitoris with each thrust, and he watched as Minerva's flush grew and her breathing became panting.

Minerva arched her back again. "Oh, gods, Albus, more . . . more . . . so good, so good," she gasped.

He added a second finger and angled his thrusts upward, and Minerva's moans deepened. As much as Albus enjoyed watching Minerva in her arousal, and as much as he would have loved to watch her face as she came, there was something else he wanted more. He lifted her skirts up, but did not push them off. Instead, he ducked his head beneath them and slowly began to lick and kiss his way up her legs as his hand found her clitoris again, and he began to rub and press it. He grinned to himself when he reached her inner thighs, which seemed quite sensitive, and Minerva let out a loud gasp and grabbed at his head beneath her robes.

His mouth travelled from her thighs to her crux, finding her clitoris, and he replaced his fingers with his tongue, lapping at Minerva's nub as his fingers slipped inside of her again. Minerva moaned his name, but his attention to his task didn't waver, though he did press his erection into the mattress and grip her leg harder with his left hand.

As Albus pleased her, first with his fingers then with his lips and tongue, Minerva barely restrained herself from pulling his head closer. Her heels, though, pressed into his back and her buttocks rose up from the bed as she panted and gasped, the warmth and throbbing almost unbearably pleasurable, then she began to come, waves of orgasm coursing through her, beginning in her crux and rushing outward. She shouted Albus's name as she gripped the quilt with one hand and his head beneath her robes with the other; she couldn't see or hear, only feel her orgasm pulsing through her body, seeming even to reach into her magic as she came.

Finally, as her orgasm began to wane, Albus, leaving his fingers within her, pushed the skirts up and off, raising his head to look down on Minerva as she lay panting on the bed. Kneeling between her legs, a slight smile on his lips, he withdrew his hand and, after whispering a mild cleaning spell, he sought the fastenings of her robes, opening her bodice then her chemise and baring her breasts.

Minerva opened her eyes and watched as, with warm hands, he pushed aside her robes and gazed down at her breasts.

"That was wonderful, Albus, wonderful," she whispered.

"And you are wonderful, my dear Minerva, the way that you react, your passion, your pleasure in my touch . . . and these are wonderful, so beautiful," he said softly, cupping her breasts and brushing her nipples with his thumbs. His lips parted as he contemplated her rosy, peaked nipples, and how he would like to kiss, lick, and suck them, bringing them both pleasure.

Albus moistened his lips, then his eyes met Minerva's and he smiled. "I hope you never grow tired of what I am about to do, because I enjoy it immensely."

He moved his left hand to the bed and lowered himself down onto her, his mouth seeking her right breast as he continued to fondle her left one with his other hand. His mouth closed over her breast, taking in as much of it as he could before drawing his lips and tongue up to her nipple. He flicked his tongue over her nipple and then began to suck, rapidly but gently, the tip of his tongue occasionally brushing it as he suckled, all the while, his other hand caressing and teasing her other side. Pleasure pulsed from her breasts to her crux and back as he rubbed her clitoris and sucked her nipples, and she gasped and hummed with pleasure.

Albus shifted to press his erection against Minerva's leg, then he brought his head to her other breast and began to lick, flick, and suckle as his left hand played with her damp right nipple. He moaned as one of Minerva's groping hands found his erection and she began to confidently stroke his penis, her thumb grazing its crowned head. Unable to wait any longer, Albus rose up, kissed Minerva's lips, then lowered his hips as his cock sought her crux. She lifted her own hips slightly, and she felt the head of his penis at her entrance.

"Oh, Minerva, Minerva, my love," Albus murmured, his voice low and hoarse with desire.

He pushed into her with a sighing gasp, then his hips began to rise and fall as Minerva moved and rocked in rhythm with him, her arms and legs embracing him. He looked down and their eyes met as he thrust, and he could see the love and devotion in her eyes: her love, one with her passion for him, and his passion becoming one with hers as he stroked within her.

"Minerva, Minerva, my love, my darling, Minerva, my light, my delight, my sweet, sweet delight," Albus murmured over and over again as he brought her to the peak of her pleasure. As he did, he let go, surrendering himself entirely to his passion and his passion to Minerva, and he began to come, pulsing his life and essence within her. "My joy! My love! Oh, Minerva . . . Minerva!"

Albus gasped as he thrust twice more, the last of his orgasm spent within her, and her arms pulled him closer, bringing him to rest on top of her. Minerva combed her fingers through his hair and down the rivulets of sweat on his back, murmuring to him, words of love and warmth, as she held him there and felt the pounding of his heart against her own ribs. She would hold him forever, forever.

Note: Thank you for your reviews! I am glad you're enjoying the story.

Chapter Three

Chapter 3 of 12

Their first afternoon on the island is quiet, relaxed, and romantic.

Note: Not DH compliant. Disregards DH entirely.



Chapter Three

Minerva let Albus doze beside her, though she was wide awake. He had been running on too little sleep lately well, habitually and after making love to her as he had, he certainly deserved some rest, anyway. She watched his face as he slept, and smiled in wonder and happiness that she was actually looking at Albus, lying beside her in bed, and not at a little framed photograph that she had kept on her night stand for years. Now his face really could be the last thing she saw before she slept and the first she encountered on waking. Then she sighed. But the school year was beginning in a week, and their lives and their nights would not truly be their own.

She pushed that thought from her mind. For these three days, she would enjoy every single minute, savouring every one, and when the school year came and she saw less of Albus, she would be able to close her eyes, even if just for a moment, and transport herself back to their time on this island.

How peculiar, she still thought, that Albus hadn't understood that she would like his island, that she would appreciate his cottage and its rustic hominess. He knew her well enough . . . but then, Minerva knew how much he liked to make things "special" for her, and how well he succeeded. He was quite a romantic, and his repeated insistence to her that he wished to court her properly and not rush things had had her worried that they wouldn't make love for months. Fortunately, both their passions and their long suppressed love for each other were stronger than his desire to wait and to court her "properly." Within days, less than a week, after revealing their feelings to one another and after a torturous summer filled with tension and misunderstandings Albus had acceded to her desires, and she had expressed her passions for him on the sofa in her sitting room. Minerva grinned, remembering how she had been so aroused, neither of them had completely undressed. She had only uncovered him enough so that she could reach his erection and lower herself onto him once she had banished her knickers. Her grin grew as she remembered how, two days later, when she had seduced him in a dark stone stairwell, Albus had likewise banished her knickers, but with so little thought that he hadn't known where he had banished them to. The silly wizard had found them that night under his pillow, no doubt where he had desired them to be.

Minerva couldn't restrain herself any longer, and she reached out and touched his cheek with a gentle fingertip, then she followed it with an equally gentle kiss. She felt him take a long breath and let it out with a sigh, and she settled her head back down on the pillow beside his. He would awaken soon enough. She would just enjoy feeling his warm solidity there next to her in the bed. When he awoke, it would likely be time for lunch. Minerva didn't know precisely what they were doing about meals or what sort of kitchen the cottage possessed, but Albus had reassured her that he would take care of all of that and she needn't expend a single thought on it. She would like to at least do breakfast for him once while they were there, though. She was no great cook, unlike her mother, who, despite their having family house-elves, enjoyed cooking and baking and had fun working with Fwisky in the large McGonagall kitchen. Still, she could manage breakfast, and a simple supper. And sandwiches. But cooking had never really interested her, and when she had lived in London, she usually took her main meal at noon at the Ministry and just had something quick and simple when she got home from work. And when she had lived with Rudolf, the Potions master had loved to cook and had barely trusted her near his kitchen without him there to supervise her. Which was probably wise, she thought with a smile.

Minerva sat up slightly and took a moment to look around the room. In addition to the larger pieces of furniture, there was a rush bench beneath one of the west-facing window, and in the far corner near the dresser, there was a small, armless rocker, with a seat of rush like the bench, which she hadn't seen when she first entered the room. A very large, old braided rug covered most of the floor between the bed and the west wall, and she had noticed that there was a smaller braided rug on either side of the bed, nice for the feet to land on before they found their slippers in the morning. Minerva did notice that there were no curtains on the windows, nor any window shades, though all of the windows that she had seen did have outside shutters. Minerva wondered whether Albus closed the shutters every night, or if he used a charm to keep out the morning light. Especially in the middle of the summer, when the sun rose very early and set very late, he must do something. She had noted that at Hogwarts he had heavy curtains over his windows, which he kept closed when he napped, so she doubted he simply allowed the morning light to wake him. He didn't seem to be a very early riser by nature, either, though he often did burn the candle at both ends of the day and sometimes, she suspected, through the entire night, as well.

Albus stirred beside her, and she looked over at him. She smiled as his eyes opened, and she saw him smile as he saw her face and remembered where they were.

He reached up and pulled her to him for a kiss, then he stretched slightly.

"You should have woken me," he said, looking toward the windows and noting the change in light.

"I was enjoying lying here next to you, and if you could sleep, you probably needed it," Minerva answered.

"It must be almost time for lunch," Albus stated as he pushed down the covers. Minerva had removed her robes before they had climbed between the sheets, and he grinned as he saw her breasts. "Of course, lunch could wait . . ." He reached for her and caressed her breast, then his blue eyes met hers, and he said, "but I don't want to be a selfish host. I promised you a walk, and we haven't had one yet, and we should eat before we go."

Albus leaned forward and kissed each rosy nipple before kissing Minerva's lips.

"We don't need to eat right away," Minerva began.

"I need to clean up, as well. And you might like to freshen up, too not that you need it!" he added hastily. Albus had once again cast gentlemanly freshening and cleaning charms after they had made love. "Perhaps I could use the bathroom and then while I see about getting us some lunch, you could dress and unpack."

"If I could use the loo first, though, I would appreciate that," Minerva said.

"I will sort out some clothes for myself while you do that," Albus replied, swinging out of bed.

Minerva smiled to watch him pad about the room, gathering their discarded clothes together with a wave of his hand as he raised one of his carpet bags to the foot of the bed with a flick of his wand. He had become much more comfortable around her, she thought, though she wouldn't be in the least surprised to discover that he had put on a dressing gown while she was in the loo.

A few minutes later, after having used the loo then puzzled over the separate hot and cold taps, one of which didn't seem to work and Albus having to explain that he had altered the Charmed plumbing so that the water mixed, and so she only needed to use one of the faucets, Minerva began to unpack as Albus hummed to himself in the bathroom.

"Do you have a preference for drawer space?" Minerva called out to him.

"Not at all," came his reply. "However you wish, my dear!"

The wardrobe was very basic, with no drawers or shelves, she noted, so she simply hung her robes in it, placed her shoes in the bottom, and put the rest of her things away in the dresser drawers. It would be nice to have a dressing table, she thought, and a mirror in the bedroom. There was a small one over the washstand in the bathroom, but none at all in the bedroom. Without a vanity, Minerva placed her hairbrush and other items on top of the dresser, leaving half of it free for Albus. She had put the little jewellery she had brought with her in the musical box that Albus had given her the night before they left Hogwarts, and she left that and her hairpins in it, as it seemed a sensible place to keep the small items while they were there at the cottage, and she placed that at the back of the dresser.

Her books and the few toiletries she had brought with her, and her one small vial of perfume, she left in her small carpet bag, placing it beside the wardrobe for lack of a better place for it. When Albus was through in the bathroom, she could perhaps find a spot for them on one of the shelves on the wall beside the washbasin. She had noted

that there was soap and shampoo of some sort there, but not much else, so there should be room for her toiletries.

Albus emerged from the bathroom, pink-cheeked and bright-eyed, his hair and beard brushed and fluffy, dressed in robes of earth tones, sandy colours mixed with dusty greens and muted blues, the same ones he had worn on the breakfast picnic he had brought her on early in the summer, before they had realised that they both felt the same way about each other. Minerva loved the robes on him, particularly the way that they emphasised his long legs and broad chest. The skirts of the robes looked narrow, but there were deep pleats on either side that allowed Albus to walk and move freely.

"You look wonderful," Minerva said with appreciation, placing her hands on his chest and running them up over his shoulders.

She hadn't dressed, merely tossed a dressing gown loosely around her, and Albus echoed her gesture by placing his palms over her breasts and rubbing them gently, then taking her by the shoulders, pulling her closer, and bending and kissing her mouth. He deepened his kiss and brought one hand to her buttocks, squeezing and pressing her against him.

"You feel that," Albus said in a low voice, "do you feel that?" He bumped against her. "That is what you do to me." He kissed her again, massaging her buttocks with one hand, his other arm around her beneath her dressing gown.

Minerva brought both hands to his buttocks and pulled him toward her. She pressed herself against him rhythmically, and Albus gasped and gripped her harder.

"Mmm, you do feel nice," she murmured before his lips met hers again.

She rolled her hips, and Albus moaned into her mouth. He drew back with a gasp and looked down at her, trying to control his breathing.

"Are you ready again? So soon?" he asked. Albus stepped forward, forcing Minerva to back up until she was against the wall by the door. He moved his hand from her buttocks to her clit and let out a soft moan. "Oh, so wet again . . ." He put his finger into her. "So wet, inside and out."

He kissed her mouth as he fondled her, then he pulled back. "Do you want it again?" he whispered, pressing himself against her, and she could feel his erection through his robes. "Do you?"

"Yes, yes . . ." Minerva tried to find the fastenings to his robe, but they had Charmed seams, and he chuckled as she tried to find where they began.

"You are a little vixen, you know that, don't you, Professor McGonagall?"

"Yes, yes, I am," Minerva said, ready to agree with him on anything. Where were the blasted fastenings?

Albus touched the centre seam below his waist, and his robes opened. His cock, firm and erect, peeked out, and he took Minerva's hand in his.

"Is this what you want?" he asked, bringing her hand to his erection, where she grasped him. "Is this what you want, my naughty little vixen?"

"That is what I want, yes," Minerva said, looking up into his smiling eyes.

"Then you shall have it."

Albus began to kiss her again, and he brought both hands behind her buttocks and lifted. He broke his kiss for just a moment, and asked very softly, "A bit of a charm, too, my dear?"

Minerva nodded in response, and she could feel herself lifted by magic as Albus brought his hands around, placed them on her breasts, and pressed her against the wall. He kissed her lips, then her jaw, then her throat, and as he kissed and nipped at her throat and shoulders, Minerva stroked his erection. Albus reached down and took her hand away.

"No, no, no, my naughty one," he whispered, moving her hand to her side.

The charm raised her further, and Albus began to tease her breasts with his tongue, first one, then the other, as he touched her clitoris with tantalising caresses. Minerva tried to wriggle against his finger, but discovered that she was held too firmly to the wall, so she simply let go and allowed herself to enjoy his light, teasing touches.

A few moments later, and she slid back down the wall, though her feet still weren't touching the floor, and the head of Albus's cock replaced his finger as he rubbed it against her clitoris. Now her breath was coming in gasps, and as he teased her with the head of his cock, he watched her face, her parted lips, her unfocussed eyes. She began to come, and she tried to move with him, but still to no avail, but he pressed against her harder, providing all the stimulation she needed. She had barely peaked when Albus drew back then thrust hard, entering her.

As he stroked and thrust within her, his hands at play on her breasts, he murmured to her, "Minerva, come, Minerva, Minerva, my love, come, come again, come again, my love, my darling, my dearest, come, come, my sweet little vixen."

As he murmured and thrust, Minerva was carried from one orgasm into another, and she grasped his shoulders tightly, and finally, hardly knowing where she was or what she was saying, she cried out, "Fuck me, fuck me, Albus, gods, yes, yes, Albus, now, now, now!" And she came again, contracting in waves around his cock as he orgasmed and ejaculated within her.

He rested his forehead against her head as he thrust one final time, letting out a long, moaning breath as he emptied himself in her warmth.

"Gods, Minerva, I love you . . . I love you."

They slowly caught their breath, and Albus put one arm under her buttocks and the other around behind her, then he slipped out of her as he set her on her feet. He held onto her a while longer, then Minerva sighed and pulled away.

She looked up at him, smiling, "I think we just may have undone all the 'freshening' you did in the bathroom."

"A charm or two will take care of that, although it never feels quite the same as a good wash." He grinned down at her. "You really are a little vixen, though, Professor."

"Mmm, well, if that's so, you have a bit of a naughty streak, yourself, Dumbledore! You didn't have to do that, you know though I must admit that I am glad you did!" Minerva was pleased that Albus was becoming so free to express himself sexually with her. After all of their misunderstandings, and after the difficulties he had in overcoming his reservations about the differences in their ages, and then the other insecurities that had been brought on by a particularly nasty witch, it was very good to see him shed his doubts and discomforts and let himself go with her. "And," she added, "I rather liked that charm, but it was somewhat frustrating not to be able to move very much."

Albus quirked a mischievous grin. "A little dose of frustration can be a good thing when it is relieved and I do believe that I . . . relieved you of that frustration, didn't I?"

"You certainly did, but I do think I may have to explore this naughty Dumbledore," Minerva replied as she ran her hands over his chest, "and see what else he can get up to."

"I think I would enjoy that," Albus said, his breath warm in her ear as he pulled her close for one more embrace.

Albus tucked himself away, closed up his robes, cast a few charms, then pecked Minerva on the forehead.

"I'll just see about getting us some lunch, my dear. Something fast and simple, I think, since we do want to take a walk this afternoon," he said. "You just take your time."

"All right, Albus. I'll make myself beautiful for you then join you in a bit," Minerva replied.

"You couldn't do that: you are already the most beautiful creature in the world." He looked at her appreciatively. "I suppose you might be more comfortable in something more than your dressing gown, though, especially when we take our walk."

Minerva laughed at that. "Yes, I do believe some clothes and shoes might be in order. For at least part of the walk, anyway."

A sudden smile lit Albus's face, and Minerva knew that some idea, likely to do with her shedding her clothes, had entered his head. She had undressed for him when they were on a picnic a couple days before that, and he had enjoyed watching her very much. Perhaps he had some similar notion in mind.

Fifteen minutes later, Minerva, freshly washed and wearing her walking robes of Wedgewood blue, came downstairs to find Albus in the kitchen. It wasn't large, but there was room for a slate-topped work table, and there were a few cupboards and an old cooker that looked like an old-fashioned Muggle coal stove, though she was fairly certain it had never seen life as such a thing. Albus was stirring something in a pot, then he raised the spoon to his lips and tasted.

He held out the spoon to her. "I think it needs a little salt, what do you think?"

Minerva took a taste. "I think it's fine, actually, but a little more salt would be all right."

"Please, have a seat. It will all be ready in just a minute!" Albus said. "You can wait in the other room if you prefer, though I would enjoy your company."

Minerva sat on a square stool, one of three in the kitchen. "Can I do anything to help?"

"When everything's ready, you can help me Levitate it into the other room, if you like. There's also lemonade in the cool cupboard that's the one with the blue handle, my dear and you could pour us each a glass, if you like."

Albus had set out two plates, two sets of cutlery, and two tall glasses. Minerva opened the small cool cupboard, the walls of which glowed so that she could easily find the jug of lemonade, and was surprised to see how well-stocked it was. She hadn't been aware that Albus had brought so many provisions.

"Did you bring this all today?" she asked as she poured their glasses.

"No, only a few things. Most of it I had Wilspy bring yesterday afternoon so that we would be well-prepared and I wouldn't have to think about it today," Albus replied.

He waved his hand to open one of the doors in the cooker; with another gesture, a pan emerged from the oven and settled on the cook top.

"I hope this will be satisfactory, my dear," he said, as he arranged the food on the plates and poured Hollandaise sauce over them. He had made some kind of open-faced sandwich, and melted cheese bubbled on top of them. Albus looked at them critically. "They could use a garnish, but I didn't think of that." He shrugged and turned to Minerva with a smile. "If you could get the lemonade, I'll bring the rest."

Albus Levitated their lunch into the main room and settled it onto the table, placing their silverware properly on either side, and including a napkin by each plate. Minerva brought the entire jug of lemonade with her and set a glass of it by each place.

"I will do something nicer for you for dinner, I promise," Albus said.

"This is perfect, Albus. And it looks very good," Minerva said, her appetite whetted. "We want to enjoy the rest of the afternoon, too."

They ate fairly quickly, although Minerva emphasised to Albus how much she enjoyed it. His Hollandaise was particularly nice, she thought.

"Just a pinch of nutmeg," Albus said, pleased that Minerva had enjoyed his simple meal. Cooking a nice sauce was a bit like brewing a potion, he had always found, and the right sauce with the right dish could work magic on an otherwise plain meal.

The two left the cottage, and Albus led her toward the southern tip of the island, in the opposite direction of the small mountain they had arrived on earlier that day.

"I thought you might like to watch the seals and porpoises for a while, and then walk along the beach," Albus explained. "The beach where the seals like to gather to sun themselves is in a nice little cove, and the sand is soft and fine there. The other beaches, such as they are, are quite rocky. There's another one to the north, just northeast of where we arrived, that has some lovely smooth, flat rocks, though, and there are some nice quiet pools of water, as well."

Albus took her hand as they walked, and he pointed out various plants and animals to her, though often they didn't see the animal, only the trace it had left behind it, which Albus's sharp eyes caught. When they reached the sand where a few seals lay, warming themselves in the afternoon sun and ignoring their visitors, Albus let go of Minerva's hand then bent and pulled off the light shoes he had put on in anticipation of their gentle afternoon stroll.

As he took off his socks, he looked up at Minerva and said, "You should take off your shoes and socks, Minerva. The sand really is very nice, and if you don't, you'll just get sand in your shoes, which can be uncomfortable."

Minerva shrugged, then, holding onto him with one hand, she removed first one shoe and stocking then the other. She saw Albus watch as she rolled down her stockings to remove them, and she smirked.

"Want to help, Albus?"

"No, no, my dear! Just enjoying the view! I don't want to become too distracted," he said with a laugh. "And you don't want to tire me out too much, or I may simply fall asleep as soon as we go to bed tonight."

Minerva grinned. "Don't forget our bath! You did promise you would help me test the bathtub and see how well it accommodates two!"

"Of course, my dear, of course! I do try to keep my promises," Albus replied.

They spent the rest of the afternoon strolling along the beach, sitting on rocks and watching the porpoises and seals out in the water, and then, after putting their shoes back on, walking through some fields of mixed grasses and heather. They spoke of everything and nothing, and when Albus said that he was feeling like it was time for tea and they returned to the cottage, Minerva insisted on making it. After all, as long as she had the tea, the pot, and the water, her wand did the rest and she didn't need to know how his cooker functioned. She believed that Albus would wait on her hand and foot if she wanted him to or let him but she wanted to be able to do things for him, as well.

She emerged from the kitchen, the tray levitated in front of her, to find Albus sitting on the sofa, his feet up on a small stool, his eyes closed. They snapped open as she approached, however, and he smiled.

"I see you found the biscuits, too," he said as she lowered the tray to the table in front of him.

"Yes, and you included ginger newts. That was very thoughtful."

"If I had forgotten them, I am sure that Wilspy would have remembered," Albus replied.

The two sat and drank their tea and munched on their biscuits, and when Minerva arose to find her shawl, Albus asked if she were cold.

"Just a bit chilly. After all the exercise in the sun, it feels a little cool now," she said.

Albus nodded, and when she returned from fetching her tartan shawl of blues, greens, and greys, she found that Albus was standing and he had started a fire, which was already blazing beautifully, thanks no doubt to his magic and to his skill with fire, and the room was much warmer. The flames reflected orange and red against his face as he turned to her with a smile.

"I supplemented the fire with a Warming Charm on the room. I don't know if you will still need the shawl though it is a very pretty one," Albus said.

"Thank you, I don't believe I do need it," Minerva replied, placing her shawl on the back of the sofa. She walked over to him and put her arms around him, looking up into his face. "You are quite wonderful, Albus."

"You bring out the best in me, my dear, that is all," Albus said softly, but he bent his head and kissed her, returning her embrace. "You are my love," he whispered, "my love and my life."

Chapter Four

Chapter 4 of 12

Albus brings Minerva to look for something unusual, then they have more fun.

Note: Not DH compliant. Disregards DH entirely.



Chapter Four

That evening after a lovely dinner of broiled cod with herbs and lemon, fresh sweet peas cooked with dill, and creamy, buttery mashed potatoes, Albus showed her the one little bit of the cottage she hadn't seen before.

He opened the door under the stairs, which Minerva had presumed was simply a cupboard, and beckoned her to follow him. The space had, indeed, once been a cupboard, and the low end still had a space where a few old cloaks hung, but now it led into another room, a small room, to be sure, but when Albus waved his hand and lit the lamps in the corners of the room and candles in the simple wrought-iron chandelier blazed, Minerva smiled in delight.

There were bookshelves on all four walls, and only the rear wall contained a window, which was set into a door opening out to the back of the cottage. There were two chairs, one a relatively small upholstered armchair and the other a large, but low old rocker of unusual design, and between them stood a narrow library table, just the right height for setting a heavy book on and perusing it while standing up.

Albus smiled at Minerva's reaction. "This is the largest change I made to the cottage. Aberforth had a bookcase in the main room when he lived here, and that was sufficient to his needs, but I thought it might be pleasant to keep a small library here, books I don't need at Hogwarts, some old novels, pleasant for reading when on holiday, and a few books that I prefer to have in a more secure location than even Hogwarts provides. The more . . . difficult of those are on the lower shelf of that bookcase," he said, indicating the only stand-alone bookcase in the room, each shelf protected by glass doors that swung up and slid back to provide access. "If you choose to look at them, please do so with care, and only if I am in the cottage there are a few that may be . . . troublesome, depending on how they are handled."

Minerva was happy that he would trust her to look at them on her own, only having him nearby in case something went wrong; nonetheless, she thought she would wait and have him show them to her. But she nodded and said, "It's a lovely little library, Albus. And quite a surprise!"

Albus was visibly pleased. "It was difficult to get the stonework pattern to look right outside, and I hadn't done any wizarding building or architecture in decades, so although it wasn't an intricate job other than that, it took longer than I had anticipated when I began. Above, I only expanded the storage area, rather than make the bedroom larger, as I thought it sufficient as it is. But if you would like to make use of that space in some other way, we can make plans to make alterations next summer."

Minerva smiled and put her arms around him. He was already thinking about next summer and assuming that they would spend it together. Given how many times Albus had voiced the notion either that she might tire of him or that she would find she needed something other than what he could offer her, it warmed her heart to hear him plan ahead.

"I can't think of anything at the moment, but we can consider it together," she replied.

"The only thing the room is really missing is a fireplace, although another window might have been nice, but I didn't want to sacrifice the limited wall space, and when it is cool, I either cast a Warming Charm in here, where it is effective for quite a long time, since the room is small, or I bring my book into the main room." He opened the back door. "And I did want this additional exit, as well," he said, leading her out onto a small slate terrace.

Albus drew his wand and waved it, conjuring two garden chairs with colourful padded cushions and a small round table.

"Now, my dear, you may find yourself something to read, if you like, and I will fetch us our pudding."

Albus left her sitting in one of the chairs and returned to the kitchen to get their dessert. Minerva considered getting a book, but she was enjoying just relaxing there in the ell formed between the kitchen and the back of the main part of the cottage, looking out eastward over the gently sloping land as it approached the sea. She could hear bird calls, sea birds of different sorts and, she thought, some grouse in the heather down below. A few minutes later, Albus emerged from around the east side of the house, having left through the rear kitchen door, two plates and two cups and saucers floating in front of him.

"I made us some coffee. I added cream to yours, but no sugar is that right?" Albus asked. Minerva rarely drank coffee, and he hadn't been sure.

"That's perfect."

"I thought the coffee would go well with our pudding Deep Chocolate Enthralment from Madam Puddifoot's," he said with a grin.

He had once brought her some of that wonderful torte of dark chocolate, buttery whipped cream, and cherry, as a way of apologising for being "crotchety," as he had put it at the time much to Minerva's displeasure, as she said it made him sound like some doddering, ill-tempered old man, when he had merely been irritable, as everyone has a right to be occasionally.

As he set the plates on the table, Albus added, "I have plans to make you a dessert, too, but I know you like this."

"You needn't spend a lot of time cooking, Albus," Minerva said. "I'll eat just about anything."

Albus raised an eyebrow. "Was our dinner not satisfactory?"

"It was lovely! Very good, indeed! And it didn't take you long I just don't want you to feel you have to spend a lot of time in the kitchen trying to make me some perfect meal, that's all," Minerva replied. He had let her shell the peas after she had demonstrated that she could do so deftly using her wand, but other than that, he had insisted that she sit and just keep him company.

He was quiet for a moment, and then he said, "I enjoyed cooking for you, Minerva. I enjoy doing things for you. You bring so much to my life . . . I simply feel moved to do these little things for you. I know they aren't very significant, but for me, it's important." He quirked a slight smile. "But if you'd rather we eat cheese and pickle sandwiches at every meal, and share equally in slicing the bread and spreading the pickle, that's fine, too."

Minerva laughed and took his hand. "I did enjoy the dinner very much. And I'm looking forward to seeing what else you come up with and not just in the kitchen!"

Albus did smile at that and nodded. "I have a few things in mind beyond our meals, my dear, and all of those things include your active participation." His smile grew.

"What things, Albus?" Minerva asked, picking up her fork and beginning to eat her torte.

He chuckled, sending a pleasurable shiver over Minerva as the chocolate melted over her tongue. "You will just have to wait and see! Surprises are most enjoyed when they are unexpected, I would say." He grinned at her over his coffee cup. "That is, after all, the nature of a surprise!"

She agreed, though she feigned impatience, teasing him just to see him smile again.

After dessert, which Minerva said was as good as it had been the first time they had it, Albus led her down one of the narrow paths that led to the southern-most tip of the island. They stood on a slight rise, looking down at the sea, and Albus turned her to face the sun, now low on the western horizon. He stood behind her, his arms around her, and kissed the top of her head.

"It is beautiful, Albus."

"More beautiful now than on any other day I have been here, more beautiful with you here with me," he murmured, his voice low in her ear. "Thank you, my dear."

She cocked her head, trying to look up at him. "For what?"

"For being here, for convincing me, for being with me here or anywhere," Albus said softly.

She held his arms to her and leaned back against him. "You are welcome, but it makes me happy, as well, all of it, being with you . . ."

They were silent for a while, feeling the sea breeze, listening to the waves below them and the birds above, then Albus spoke again. "Tomorrow, or the next day, I will bring you to the top of the mountain to watch the sunset."

"The view from there must be wonderful," Minerva replied.

"Mmm, it is, but I want to bring you there for another reason. It is said that from there, at sunset, for just a moment, Emain Ablach is visible, if you look at just the right place on the horizon," Albus explained. "I have never seen it, but Aberforth claims he did once. Only once, though, after many years of living here, and he never saw it again. But it is mentioned in some of the papers that came with the house." Albus shrugged. "Perhaps it is true."

"Emain Ablach? But that's . . . that's just a myth, isn't it?"

"It is a myth now, yes, but it was once truth. What we know of the place is filtered through more than a millennium of stories, and distorted, too, by the stories that the inhabitants once spread themselves, to hide the truth," Albus said. "But the place existed, and likely still exists, unless it was somehow destroyed. It is likely that it has been uninhabited and uncared for, for many centuries. The wards that protected it were strong, stronger even than those at Hogwarts, and older by far. They still protect it, though those who lived there have long before passed beyond their need."

Minerva thought about it a moment, then she said, "I would like that tomorrow, then, and the next day, if we don't see it. And any day that we visit here."

Albus chuckled. "Very well. Would you like to Apparate there now? The visibility is good, and we can see the horizon clearly; not all days will provide such good weather for seeking a ghost island."

"Yes! Let's!"

Minerva didn't even need to turn in his arms, and Albus Apparated them to the top of the mountain they had arrived on that day, the highest of three peaks on the island, and the one furthest north.

"Here now, we look out to the west, and supposedly, if the conditions are just right, we will be able to see the island appear," Albus said.

"You say that Aberforth saw it what did he say he saw?"

"A shadowy shape on the horizon, a shape that mirrored this island in a way, he said, with three larger mountains and some rolling hills. Aberforth said it was all in shadow, though, a grey-blue shape, although other reports claim seeing verdant land and the remains of a stone edifice on the highest of the mountains," Albus said. "You may have better luck than I, my dear, since of all those that were recorded in the small book that came with the house, most of the sightings were by women. Aberforth added his to it, and if we see it, we shall do the same."

"Hmmp." Minerva wanted to believe, but the sceptic in her caused her to say, "Either the women have much better eyesight or much greater imaginations."

Albus chuckled. "Perhaps both, perhaps both."

They stood watching the horizon for a while as the sun sank lower, disappearing, then Minerva asked, "How long has this book been kept?"

"Oh, only three hundred years or so, although the first pages record some of the apocryphal sightings of earlier times."

They were quiet a short while longer, and the twilight grew.

"You know, Albus, you never said, but does this island have a name? Your island? We could always call it Emain Albus if it doesn't," she joked.

Albus chuckled. "Then people might confuse this little island with Scotland, and where would we be then?" he replied with a laugh, referring to the old name for Scotland, Alba. "But yes, it does have a name, Eilean Tèarmunn."

"Refuge Island?" Minerva asked. "That does seem apt. There is a feeling of peace, of sanctuary here." Minerva gave a sigh of contentment. "Well, it does not look as though Emain Ablach is going to show herself today. We will try again tomorrow!"

"No, no Avalon for us tonight, it seems," Albus said.

Albus Apparated them back to the cottage, bringing them directly to the bedroom.

"It is still early," he explained, "but I thought we would have our bath before bed." He grinned. "After the day we spent, I think we need a bath!"

"You do, do you?" Minerva replied with a straight face. "Are you telling me that I am a dirty witch, Headmaster Dumbledore?"

Albus's eyes sparkled. "Oh, yes, I do . . . and I think you are *very* dirty witch, Professor McGonagall. And I believe I will need to do something about that!"

"And precisely what do you have in mind?"

"You shall see, Professor! You just wait and see. In fact, you are such a dirty witch, I think you need to sit in the corner for a few minutes and think about how very dirty you are," he said, leading her over to the small rocker. "You just sit there while I prepare to take care of you!"

Minerva smirked, but she sat in the chair as he directed, and Albus disappeared into the bathroom. She kicked off her shoes and sent them to rest beside the wardrobe, then she removed her stockings. After thinking a moment, she pulled off her knickers, as well, just rising in her seat enough to remove them. With another smirk, she Levitated them over to the bed and put them under Albus's pillow. She chuckled to herself. She did enjoy having Albus tease her in more ways than one but she could tease, too.

Albus emerged from the bathroom, wearing only his dressing gown, and observed Minerva's bare feet. "You have been a naughty witch, Professor McGonagall. You were supposed to sit and think about how dirty you are, and I can see that you did not concentrate on that!"

"But I did!" Minerva protested, smothering a smile. "I was thinking of how very dirty I was, and it made me very warm. I had to take off my shoes and stockings, I was so warm."

"Warm? I will have to take care of that, then," Albus said, a gleam in his eye. "Come here."

Minerva stood and walked across to him.

"Turn around," he said, and she did as he asked.

He unbuttoned the back of her over-robe all of the way, then he pushed it off. Her under-robe was like a light shift, with no fastenings, and he raised her arms above her head then whispered a spell and the robe came off over her head, releasing her breasts from its Support Charm.

"My, my, my, what have we here?" Albus said, cupping and squeezing her buttocks. "No knickers. So the dirty witch wears no knickers. How . . . very . . . very . . . naughty." He punctuated his words with gentle squeezes, and when he said "naughty," he slid his hand between her legs and moved it up to her crux.

"Mmmhmm, I can tell that you need a very good cleaning here." He separated her folds and rubbed his fingers against her, and Minerva began to breathe harder as he rubbed. "A good hard . . . cleaning," he whispered, his breath warm in her ear, and she moaned.

Albus put his left arm around her; his hand found her right breast and he pulled her back against him. He must have shed his dressing gown, and Minerva could feel his erection pressed, large and warm, against her back.

"Should I take care of this dirty witch?" he asked in a low voice as he fondled her breast with one hand and her clitoris with the other, rhythmically pressing himself against her from behind.

Minerva swallowed. "Yes, yes, you should. Definitely."

"I think we'll begin with a little scrub right here," he said, inserting a finger into her. "And I have just the right thing to scrub it with. Just the thing for a dirty witch, I believe."

Minerva only moaned in response, and, without removing either of his hands, Albus steered her over toward the bed. She was slightly confused, having heard Albus fill the bathtub, but he was pleasuring her, and she didn't protest.

"We will begin here," Albus said softly.

He moved his left hand from her breast to her back and gently urged her to bend at the waist and rest her upper body on the bed. Minerva folded her arms beneath her head, her eyes closed as she focussed on the sensation of Albus's fingers alternating between teasing her clitoris and entering and stimulating her from within. She felt his erection pressed against her buttocks, and then Albus removed his fingers from their task, and she felt him guide himself into her from behind. Unable to restrain a moan, Minerva grasped the bedcovers and raised her buttocks higher. Albus began to pump within her as his fingers resumed teasing her clitoris.

"Oh, gods, Albus . . . oh, oh, oh, gods " Minerva gasped and moaned as he thrust and rubbed.

"The dirty witch needs a good scrubbing . . . is this good? Is it good, Professor?" Albus asked, his own breathing coming in gasps.

"Yes, yes, very good, very good " Minerva's words were lost in moans as she came, and a rush of warmth flowed over Albus's hand, and he gave an answering low sound, holding himself still, trying to control his own reactions.

Albus pulled out of her and rolled her over onto her back. He smiled to see her flushed face and her glazed eyes.

"There is more to do, I can see that now," Albus said.

He knelt and parted her legs, pulling her closer to him. His tongue emerged and he licked at the wetness on her inner thighs before he proceeded to her crux, where he licked her inside and out, even sucking gently on her clitoris, which caused Minerva's legs to tighten around him spasmodically. She almost felt that it was too much stimulation, though not quite, when Albus stood, his erection still large and firm.

"I think that you need cleaning, now, as well," Minerva said, eying his cock.

Albus raised an eyebrow. "You do? And how would you propose to do that?"

"Like this," Minerva said, sliding from the bed to her knees in front of him.

Slowly, taking her time, she began to lick his penis, beginning at the base and licking upward. She could taste herself on him, and she licked him repeatedly, first one side of his penis then the other, each time, finishing by running her tongue across the head. Albus's hands were gripping her shoulders.

Minerva smiled and looked up at him. "Yes, you did need cleaning. In fact, you still need more," she said.

She closed her lips around the head of his cock, flicking her tongue gently across his slit before lowering herself down around him. Albus's grip tightened, and as she drew back up over him, he gasped.

"Wait . . . wait, Minerva," he said hoarsely.

Minerva stopped and looked up at him. His eyes were closed and his breathing rough. He swallowed, then knelt on the floor in front of her.

He kissed her lips lightly, then he whispered, "Do you remember that I told you that there is a charm, a spell, that I thought we might both enjoy using?"

Minerva nodded. He had been too uncomfortable to discuss it at the time, only saying in response to her inquiry about it that it wasn't an artificial erection spell, nor was it a charm to prevent himself from orgasming, which he had used the first time he made love to her.

Albus licked his lips. "Perhaps now might be a good time to try it . . . it accomplishes what some men are able to do with practise, discipline, and some difficulty, although I understand that the spell is actually rather nicer." He cleared his throat. "It would allow me to have an orgasm without ejaculating or losing my erection until the spell is released, although it does wear off naturally after a few hours." He looked into Minerva's eyes. "Is that something you might like to try?"

Minerva smiled. A spell that would allow him to have multiple orgasms when they made love? That would allow him to continue to make love to her, but without diminishing his pleasure increasing it, in fact? It sounded marvellous to her.

"It sounds wonderful, Albus. Yes!" Minerva's mind was already racing ahead to all of the different ways that she might make him come. Of course, they both might become rather sore . . .

She grinned up at him. "I hope you have something that might relieve any soreness either of us might develop, because I think I am going to enjoy this spell as much as you will!"

Albus chuckled and kissed her. "I did, indeed, bring a few potions that might help with that. I will teach the spell to you, but not tonight, I think." He grinned an uncharacteristically wicked grin. "I do, after all, still have to take care of a very dirty witch, and one who was rather naughty, as well!"

"But I haven't finished cleaning you yet, Albus," Minerva said, reaching for his cock.

Albus chuckled again and moved her hand aside. He closed his fingers around his penis then whispered a spell, which Minerva didn't catch.

"So, you wanted to finish washing me?" he asked, and he stood in front of her.

Minerva could detect no change in the appearance of his penis, which was, to her mind, a good thing. Without waiting or giving him any warning, she closed her mouth around him and began rapidly licking and sucking, pressing her tongue against him each time she withdrew her mouth, then diving down again and swallowing around the head of his cock, one hand cupping his balls.

Albus groaned softly, one hand lightly on her head, the other gripping her shoulder, and Minerva continued to lick and suck his cock, flicking her tongue across its head, then lowering herself on him and rolling her tongue against his length in waves as she swallowed around the tip of his penis. Albus gasped suddenly, gripping her harder, and she felt his penis pulsing in her mouth and his balls seemed to contract slightly. She thought that he was coming, but the spell seemed to be working, as he didn't ejaculate, despite the other physical signs.

"Oh, gods, Minerva . . . that was wonderful," Albus gasped, forgetting for a moment their role-play.

Minerva grinned up at him and licked her lips. "My cleaning was adequate, then?"

He chuckled. "You are a little vixen and still a dirty witch, you know." He pulled her to her feet. "I think it may be time for you to be punished for being so naughty earlier."

"Punished?" Minerva raised an eyebrow. Knowing Albus, his "punishment" would involve absolutely nothing of the sort.

"Oh, yes, Professor, a naughty witch, and such a dirty one, needs to be taught a lesson, I think, don't you?" Albus asked rhetorically.

Minerva nodded. "I deserve to be taught a lesson, Headmaster. Do you think you could do that for me?"

"Learning a lesson can be hard work, Professor McGonagall. Have you forgotten that?"

"I can work hard, I think," Minerva replied.

"You think you can work hard? Well, let us just see about that!"

Albus had been holding her, his hands lightly at her waist. Now, he let go and backed away from her, looking her up and down appreciatively. He backed over to the small armless rocker in the corner of the room where she had sat earlier, and he lowered himself onto it, stretching his legs out in front of him.

"I believe you need to spend more time in the corner, too. Come over here to me." He had one hand lightly holding his penis. "You see this? This is your assignment. To sit here and rock. And to take care of this, as well," he said, stroking his cock with one finger. "Do you think you could do that?"

"I can try, Headmaster," Minerva said. "I will do my best."

"You had better, Professor McGonagall, or I might have to think of something else for you to do," Albus said, smiling.

The chair was low, and Minerva stood first with his outstretched legs between hers, then she moved forward, straddling his lap then sitting on his knees. She grabbed the back of the chair with her left hand as she took his cock in her right. She pushed up with the balls of her feet and began to slowly rock the chair as she stroked his erection.

"Like this, Professor Dumbledore?" Minerva asked innocently.

Albus's eyes were dark with his desire, but he shook his head. "I think not. You are not working hard enough. In order for you to learn your lesson, you need to work harder."

Minerva slid forward, rose up on the balls of her feet, and slowly lowered herself onto his erection, closing her eyes and using her hand to guide him in. She lowered herself completely, unable to encircle even one finger around the base of his penis. She moaned. His cock was stretching her and her clitoris rubbed against his pubic bone. Minerva tried to control her breathing, taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly as she began to push with the balls of her feet against the floor, rocking them back and forth. The motion stimulated her clitoris and she wiggled against him, flexing her muscles around his cock as she did so.

"Like this, then, Headmaster?" Minerva asked, opening her eyes.

Albus had put his hands on her hips, and he nodded. "This is a start." His voice was a low rumble.

Minerva began to rise and fall, holding onto the back of the chair with both hands and raising herself on the balls of her feet as she rocked them back and forth and rode his cock up and down. Minerva gasped as she began to come.

"Oh, gods, Albus . . . talk to me . . . tell me . . . tell me I'm your dirty witch . . . gods!"

"You're my dirty witch, my dirty, naughty little vixen! You like to ride me and come, you naughty witch," Albus said, and he began to come, a dry but powerful orgasm, hot and throbbing, beginning low in his pelvis, pulsating and spreading out in waves of pleasure through his body. "Yes, Minerva! Yes, Minerva! Yes!"

Minerva lay her head on his shoulder as she tried to catch her breath. She turned her face into his hair and breathed in as she relaxed against him. The spell Albus had cast was still active, she could tell, because he was still large and firm inside of her. She smiled and flexed her muscles around him.

"Mmm, Minerva . . ."

"Did I do well, Headmaster?"

"Perfectly, perfectly," he whispered. "But now I do believe we are both rather dirty, dirty together, and I think we need a bath."

Minerva nodded against him. "Can we just rest here a bit first?"

Albus smiled. "Yes, my dear, we can rest a bit you did work very hard, after all."

Albus began taking the hairpins from Minerva's hair, sending them one at a time over to the top of the dresser. When he had finished, the charm Minerva had used earlier in the day still held her hair loosely in its French twist, but he combed his fingers through it, combing it all out and down over her shoulders. He took her face between his hands and kissed her lips lightly, then gazed at her with warmth and love.

"Time for our bath now?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, smiling. "If I can get up from here." Her legs felt rather like they were filled with lead at that moment.

Albus grinned; putting one arm under her buttocks and the other around her back, he stood, lifting her, and she put her legs around him.

"You are full of very good ideas," Minerva said as he carried her into the bathroom, where a large tub of warm, lovely-scented water awaited them.

"Thank you, my dear, but I do believe the bath was your idea, so I can't take credit for that," Albus replied.

"But I didn't suggest any of the lead up to it," Minerva pointed out. "And I also love it when you carry me when I'm still on you like this. It is arousing even when I think I can't be aroused any more."

Albus smiled as he set her down, sitting her on the edge of the tub and gently disengaging from her. "Aroused again? We shall have to do something about that! But first, into the bath, my sweet witch! Into the bath with us both!"

Chapter Five

Chapter 5 of 12

Albus makes waves! Later, Minerva tries to share.

Note: Not DH compliant. Disregards DHentirely.



Chapter Five

Minerva leaned back against one end of the tub, and Albus, after he swung the Charmed faucet out of his way, leaned against the other. The water was deep, clear, refreshingly scented, and the temperature perfect. Once they were both in, the water had overflowed, but Albus stopped Minerva from Summoning her wand to clean it up.

"It's fine, Minerva. I'll take care of it before we get out." He grinned. "I think we'll be doing a bit more splashing." He emphasised his point by flicking some water at her.

"I think I'd like to see you make waves, Albus," Minerva responded, bringing her foot to his still-erect penis and pressing against it with her sole. She grinned naughtily as she observed his reaction. His penis seemed a bit longer than her foot from its base, and she slid the ball of her foot up his length, then curled her toes over the tip and pressed again.

Albus gave a low growl and grabbed her ankle. He raised her foot to his mouth and kissed each toe, then he pulled, dunking Minerva beneath the water, creating more waves. Minerva sat up, spluttering and laughing.

"You think you can tease me?" Albus asked. "And I haven't forgotten about my 'adequate' kiss earlier today! Come here, witch!"

He pulled gently on her ankle, this time not too hard, and Minerva moved toward him on her own as he let her go. She knelt, straddling his legs, and reached for his cock.

"I think that your spell needs to be . . . taken advantage of," she said, closing her hand around him.

She leaned forward and kissed him, gently and sensuously, bringing his lips between hers and sucking at them as she began to stroke his penis. She licked their lips as

she pleased him, then introduced her tongue into his mouth, her hand and arm moving faster, the water lapping the edges of the tub and spilling over. Her tongue teased his, then she drew his between her lips and began to suck the tip of his tongue in rhythm with her strokes of his cock. She moaned in answer to his groaning sigh as she felt his cock pulse against her hand as he came, the spell still in place.

Still kissing him, Minerva held onto the edge of the tub and moved forward, intending to lower her crux onto his erection, but Albus caught hold of her buttocks with both hands and pulled her toward him, breaking their kiss as he caused her to rise up out of the water, straight up on her knees.

He kissed her stomach, circling her navel with his tongue, then he looked up at her and said, "Hold on."

Minerva kept her hands on the sides of the tub as he pushed her back so that she was half-lying in the water, her hair floating around her head. Albus rose up on his own knees, then he slid forward, his hands still at her buttocks, and he found her entrance with the tip of his penis.

Albus looked at her, her skin flushed, her lips parted, her eyes dark. "Oh, my dear, I love you. I love you, Minerva."

Holding onto the edge of the tub with one hand and one arm under Minerva, Albus pushed into her with a moan, closing his eyes. He opened them again. "You wanted me to make waves . . . what do you think of these waves?"

He began to move in and out of her, sliding against the tub as he did, the water rising and falling as he drove his cock into her again and again. Minerva's breath began to come in gasps, and Albus paused a moment to raise her ankles to his shoulders, and in this new position, he thrust up, over and over, watching her face as Minerva came again, contracting tightly around his cock as she shouted. Albus whispered a *Finite*, and after three more thrusts, he came, emptying himself, his orgasm seeming almost infinitely long as he released his cum into her.

Panting and gasping, exhausted, Albus sat back on his heels, leaning against the back of the tub again as Minerva pushed herself into a sitting position, looking at him with glazed eyes. She blinked and swallowed, then looked at the water in the bathtub. Softly at first, then more loudly, she began to laugh. Half of the water was now no longer in the bathtub, but was flowing across the floor.

"I hope the ceiling doesn't leak, or the floor," Minerva said as Albus opened his eyes to find out what Minerva was laughing at.

"Hmm?" He lifted his head, looked at the bathroom floor, then closed his eyes with a sigh and leaned back again. "Charmed."

"Charmed?"

"The floor."

Minerva smiled. Albus had completely exhausted himself. Perhaps it was time for those potions he'd mentioned bringing, and for a real wash and then bed.

A half hour later, they had each washed, more or less, and taken a small vial of iridescent peacock-blue potion, and Minerva had used her wand to dry the floor before they stepped out of the bathtub. Dry now and with a dressing gown wrapped around him, Albus began to unpack the clothes he had brought with him, not having taken the time to do it before. Minerva had left him half of each of the first three drawers, rather than taking any drawers to herself.

Albus looked in each of the drawers until he found an empty one on the bottom and began to put his things away in it.

"What are you doing?" Minerva asked.

"Unpacking, my dear."

"But why are you using the bottom drawer? It's not very convenient, and I left space in the other three."

"Oh, I thought this would be easier," Albus replied. He had never shared drawers before.

"You said you didn't have any preference."

"And I don't," he replied, stuffing the last of the articles into a corner and closing the drawer. He turned to her with a smile. "This is fine."

Minerva shook her head. He obviously didn't want to share. No point in taking offense. He had been a widower for nigh on a century, after all. She went over to the dresser and took all of her things from the second drawer and put them in the third.

"There, now you don't have to have everything stuffed into the bottom drawer," she said.

"You didn't need to do that." Albus was hanging his robes in the wardrobe.

"Here, I'll move half of your things into the second drawer. It will be more convenient, and neater."

"No, don't. I'll do it in a minute."

Minerva had already opened the bottom drawer. Well, perhaps there was some particular way he liked to organise things although the bottom drawer was rather a mess, with everything just dumped and stuffed. Perhaps he had had a house-elf too long.

"I don't mind, really, Albus."

"It is fine I'll take care of it."

He came over and began to take a handful of socks and put them in the second drawer. "There's really not enough here for more than one drawer, anyway, my dear. But thank you for making more room!"

"That's fine. I had thought we'd share, though. I hadn't intended that you think I had taken three drawers."

"You need more room, anyway, with your underthings. Mine are mostly socks, handkerchiefs, a few vests, in case it gets cool. And, of course, my night attire. But I'll be wearing that." He pulled out a red- and gold-striped nightshirt and sent it over to the bed. "I just am not used to sharing drawers."

"You shared the wardrobe," Minerva pointed out.

"That's different." He didn't know why, precisely, but it was. Each garment seemed to hang in its own space, with no danger of mingling with any other garments. Drawers were more fraught with danger; things could become mixed together. He might have to look for his socks or a handkerchief and find himself up to his elbows in knickers and frilly camisoles and who-knew-what else. The mere thought made him fight a blush. "Before we return again, I'll get us another dresser. And perhaps another wardrobe."

"You don't need to do that, not unless you think we'll be spending months here. Two drawers are more than sufficient, and there's still space in the wardrobe," Minerva replied. The wardrobe was an enormous old piece of furniture. She remembered her thought about the convenience of a dressing table, but decided not to mention it. "We don't want to overwhelm the room with unnecessary furniture. Let's just wait and talk about it after we get home to Hogwarts."

Minerva hadn't thought she would wear a nightgown that night, but she had brought one with her, and when Albus took out his nightshirt, she decided that she was glad

she had. It was her favourite summer nightgown, a pale, pearlescent silk, rather than the batiste she usually favoured, and unlike most of her nightgowns, even her lightweight summer ones, this one had no sleeves, and it had lacy insets in the bodice. It was thin and loose, seeming to float over her body when she put it on, and she hoped that Albus would like it. When Melina returned from her honeymoon, perhaps she would like to go lingerie shopping. Melina seemed to know more about such things than she did. Not that she would tell her why she was interested in purchasing pretty nightgowns, of course. Her young niece still saw Albus as her former Hogwarts Transfiguration teacher, a genial, courtly old wizard, and Minerva didn't want to have to explain things to her just yet.

Albus was now placing his brushes and a small bottle of lotion on the side of the dresser Minerva had left for him. He Summoned his wand from the pocket of the robes he had worn that day and placed it neatly beside the brushes. Minerva always kept hers on her bedside table, and she mentioned that.

"I do when I'm elsewhere, as well, as one never knows what one may awaken to, but here, I am a bit more complacent, I suppose," Albus said. He looked over at the bed. There was only one table, and it was on the right side, the side they had decided would be his. He furrowed his brow. That wasn't right.

Albus picked up his wand. He waved his left hand and the bench across the room rose and floated toward the bed. He swished his wand and the bedside table vanished then reappeared on the left side of the bed as the bench settled down where the table had been. Albus smiled. Much better.

Minerva watched Albus's coordination with admiration. Neither individual task was particularly difficult, but as with most things Albus did, he did it with so much grace and flair, seemingly effortlessly, and yet without any apparent recognition of how much talent he was exhibiting. Although he did have a bit of a show-off in him, it never manifested in these ordinary, everyday situations; he simply did them without thought, which made it all the more amazing to her.

"There you are, my dear! Now you have a place for your wand, and your book and reading glasses, as well!" Albus said, turning to her with a smile.

"Thank you, Albus but you could have given me the bench, you know," Minerva said.

"Nonsense. I could Transfigure it if I wished, anyway. Feel free to use the drawers, too. There may be a few things in them I'm not certain. It is something that I brought from the other cottage. In fact, I have a good deal of furniture there that Aberforth is simply storing for me, and the amount is growing as he replaces my old things with new furniture of his own. If there is anything you think the cottage needs but doesn't have, I may have it already provided it meets your approval, of course."

"There is one thing I thought of, but it isn't urgent, just something I noticed and thought would be nice. If you haven't anything like it, I'm sure we have something in the attic at the McGonagall Cliffs that might suit," Minerva said.

"What's that, my dear?"

"I thought it might be nice to have a dressing table. A vanity with a mirror. If you wouldn't mind. I don't want to "

"Mind? Not at all. That's an excellent idea. And if I had given it more thought before we came, I would have had Wilspy fix something for you. I have my mother's old vanity. It actually goes with this wardrobe and dresser. Would that be acceptable? It has a large mirror attached to it and it's a Muggle set, so the mirror isn't charmed. I don't know which you prefer."

"Uncharmed, definitely! I find Charmed mirrors generally obnoxious. We never had any at home. Grandmother Siofre never liked them, so we never acquired any," Minerva replied. "The vanity sounds perfect." She looked around her. "So this furniture was in your former cottage?"

"All but the bench, the rocker, the floor lamp, and the bed. I acquired a new bed when I moved."

Albus turned and fiddled with the items on top of the dresser, lining them all up neatly.

Minerva could understand that completely. After finding the witch you were dating fornicating with another wizard in your own bed she probably would have wanted to burn the mattress, herself.

"And downstairs?" she asked, hoping that Albus would stop fiddling with the things on the dresser. She knew that the mention of the bed had likely made him uncomfortable, remembering why he had a different bed, but he needn't be.

"Downstairs, the table and chairs in the main room were something that were here," Albus replied. "I told Aberforth to keep what I had, if he liked it, as it was more appropriate in the other cottage, and it wouldn't have looked right here. The sofa is one that I had had in my library in the old place, as is the rocker and chair, but the coffee table was here. The more . . . rustic items are likely all ones that the cottage retained after Aberforth left and had brought what he wanted with him, or that we decided to discard, as he didn't want it in his new home and I didn't care to keep it here."

"Has Aberforth visited since he moved out?"

"I don't believe he's been here when I haven't been, but two summers ago, before Headmaster Dippet died, he visited me here for a few days. I just Transfigured the sofa for him, and he claimed to be comfortable enough, but . . . we do try, and we get along, but we aren't very close. I think he missed his goats." Albus shrugged. "That was the last time I was here for longer than a few days at one time, actually. I spent most of July and the second two weeks of August here on the island. But I haven't had the time since."

"By yourself?" Minerva asked, imagining four or five weeks all alone on an island.

"Well, Aberforth was here for a few days in July, as I said, and Wilspy was here much of the time."

Minerva hadn't notice any house-elf accommodations when he gave her a tour of the cottage. "Where does she sleep?" The McGonagall house-elves had an entire wing of the second floor; obviously something like that wouldn't be practical or possible here, but she must sleep somewhere.

"When I first got the cottage, she had a cot in here." Albus grinned. "I really did feel like a little boy again, since the only other times she had slept in the same room with me was when I was a child and was sick. But that, obviously, is unsuitable for the long term, so when I built on the little library, I also reconfigured the kitchen. One of the cupboard doors is actually a door to her little room. You can see the window from the slate terrace, in fact. The one with the lace curtains."

"Oh, yes! Come to think of it, I noticed the curtains and thought it puzzling that I hadn't seen them inside you have a noticeable lack of window dressing," Minerva said.

"Do you mind? The ones Aberforth had were dreadful practically begging for Doxies to take up residence and the ones from my old cottage just wouldn't have been suitable. And there's no one around to see in except a few creatures, anyway."

"But what about in the summer particularly early in the summer when it gets light so early? Doesn't it bother you, or do you use a charm of some sort?"

"I put a dark filter on the east windows and a medium one on the west-facing ones, then I remove the charms when I get up. If the weather's very bad, I might close the shutters, too," Albus explained. "I keep them shut when I'm away, but I opened them when I Apparated down ahead of you."

"Oh, well, that's all right then." The sunrise wasn't dreadfully early anymore, but she was on holiday, and although Minerva doubted she would be able to sleep in, it would be nice to have that option. "So, I don't know what supplies you have in the kitchen, but I usually like to have a cup of tea before bed, as you know."

"Why don't we go down and do that together, then?" Albus suggested. "I brought chamomile, peppermint, catnip, and a blend of cinnamon, ginger, and cardamom."

"I like the sound of the last one, but perhaps after a meal, not at night," Minerva said as they started down the stairs together. "Maybe a mix of mint and catnip? I like those blended."

Albus grinned at her. "Yes, Raggles! I thought you might enjoy the catnip." "Raggles" derived from her despised middle name "Morag" was what he called Minerva when she was in her Animagus form.

Minerva snorted and rolled her eyes, but given his comment, she just had to do a bit of showing off, herself, and she popped into her Tabby-form midstride, then raced down the stairs, streaked around the perimeter of the room, leapt up on the back of the couch, ran across it, and finally jumped up on the front windowsill. Because the walls were so thick, the windowsill was wide, and she stretched out on it, as calm as she'd been frenzied only a moment before, looked up at Albus, where he stood laughing at the foot of the stair, and yawned at him before putting her chin on her paws and half-closing her eyes.

Albus came over and scratched her behind the ears, and as she stretched her front paws in front of her, he ran his hand down her back then over her tail. Minerva yawned again, standing and stretching, her head low and her tail high in the air.

"So, should I just sprinkle the catnip on the floor for you to roll in, or would you prefer it in your tea?" Albus asked teasingly.

Minerva sat up and looked up at him with her very best glare, but Albus just laughed again and continued to pet her. Suddenly, she transformed, now sitting against the windowsill, a smirk on her face.

"You really do think you're very amusing with your catnip-jokes, don't you?" she said in mock irritation.

"Mm, very!" Albus said with a grin. He looked her up and down. Her dressing gown had come open when she returned to her original form, and she was wearing nothing underneath. "I also like to . . . pet the pussy." His eyes fixed on her dark curly thatch.

Minerva blushed, but rather than cover herself, she opened the front of the gown further as she put her hands on her hips, teasing him in return. "I rather like it when you do, too . . . but you said we'd have tea."

Minerva brushed past him and headed toward the kitchen. "If you tell me where it is, I can make it for us or would you prefer chamomile or plain peppermint?"

Albus chuckled. "I'll have what you're having and come with you and help," he said. "I like that dressing gown, by the way, Minerva. The colour is very fetching on you."

"Thank you," Minerva replied, thinking he probably also liked the way it only tied with a sash.

The dressing gown was of silk, cool and soft, in a rich emerald green, a diamond design woven through the fabric, with wide, floaty sleeves, and a special wand pocket, and had been a gift from their friend Quin. A gift given at a time when Minerva had believed that all was lost and that Albus found the thought of an intimate relationship with her repugnant, even disturbing, and that he felt an affection for her as he would for a granddaughter. When Quin had given it to her, she had begun to entertain the notion of beginning a relationship with him as much as a balm and an escape from her pain as out of genuine affection for the wizard. Anguished, she had arrived on Quin's doorstep with nothing, and he had bought her a few articles of clothing so that she wouldn't have to wear the same robes and sleep in his Transfigured night attire. The memory now bothered her only because she wondered whether she should mention to Albus that it had been a gift from Quin, and how he would feel about her wearing it if he knew that it was.

Deciding that she would feel as though she was keeping something from him if she didn't mention it, at least casually, Minerva added, "It was a gift. From Quin, in fact. When I visited, so I wouldn't have to keep borrowing his things and Transfiguring them."

She turned, ostensibly to wait for Albus to reach her and enter the kitchen with her, but really to look to see how he reacted to that information.

"Ah. He chose well. The colour is very nice."

Albus didn't seem to display any reaction at all. Minerva didn't want to provoke one if he really had no thought about it beyond the fact that Quin had chosen well. Sometimes Albus could be very difficult to read. She would just ask him about it later, subtly, hopefully, though subtlety wasn't usually her forte.

Albus pulled a few small canisters from a cupboard near the cooker, and Minerva found some milk in the cool cupboard.

"I sometimes like milk in my herbal teas, especially at night," she said unnecessarily, still thinking about Albus's nonreaction to her revelation. She took a seat on one of the stools by the table as she watched Albus prepare the tea.

"Yes, very good. I have honey here, too," he said, pulling a blue-striped crock from the same cupboard as the tea.

Albus drew the water from the tap directly into the teapot, then waved his hand to cast a Warming Charm, bringing the water up to just barely boiling. He spooned some catnip and some mint into the pot, then turned to Minerva, "Chamomile, too?"

"If you like."

Albus added a small amount of chamomile to the water. He waved his hand to give it a brief stir, then put the lid back on. As it steeped, he took cups and saucers from another cupboard and set them on the table.

"Would you like it here, or upstairs?"

"It's cosy here," Minerva replied.

Albus smiled. "It is, isn't it?" He reached across the table and took her hand. "And I must say that the entire cottage feels cosier with you here, my dear, and we still haven't made any changes to it. Your mere presence brings warmth wherever you go."

Minerva returned his smile. "I was trying to imagine what it would have been like for you to spend several weeks alone here. Weren't you lonely?"

Albus shook his head and chuckled slightly. "No, no more so than usual, and less than sometimes." He looked at her, a smile still on his lips, but his eyes seeming more serious. "I was never one to feel lonely. Sometimes I would desire company, or the comfort of human warmth, but, alone or with others, I was rarely lonely. Often alone, and occasionally . . . isolated or . . . weary. But truly, I was rarely lonely. Then I began to fall in love with you, and I discovered what loneliness was. I ached. And I did not even acknowledge what I was aching for, which simply made it worse, I believe. And then when I finally did . . . I felt like such an old fool, no fool like an old fool, I thought, behaving like a love-struck adolescent, pining and " Albus let out a quick breath of self-effacing laughter. "But more the fool was I for not acknowledging it, and worse than for not telling you when I should have, before causing you such pain."

Minerva squeezed his hand. "Mother told me once that no one who loves is a fool, or if they are, then we are all fools, all who love. She told me that when I believed that I was a fool for loving you, for hoping that you could love me. The only thing foolish about either of us was that we danced about each other, trying to pretend what wasn't so."

"Your mother is a good and wise witch," Albus said, "and I am grateful to both your parents for their acceptance." He hesitated. "You didn't say, but . . . have you told anyone else in your family? Other than Malcolm, of course . . ."

"I haven't spoken to him, but I think that Murdoch knows or guesses, because Mother rearranged the seating at the table on Friday so that you and I could sit together, which shifted things so that Poppy was at the other end of the table from him," Minerva said, mentioning her youngest brother, still almost twelve years older than she. "But he seemed fine about it, and I doubt very much he'll say anything to anyone, even Melina. Other than that, no, I haven't told anyone else whom you don't already know about."

Albus nodded. "I do wonder what Siofre will think if you tell her, or if she finds out," he said slowly. Minerva's grandmother, who had been at Hogwarts with Albus, was a starchy, no-nonsense old witch with very strong opinions on many subjects.

Minerva shrugged. "I doubt she'll learn of it for a while yet. And it will be interesting to see her reaction, but I will attempt to . . . take it with equanimity if she disapproves or says anything derogatory."

"You mean you won't hex her the way you did Malcolm?" Albus asked with a smirk.

Minerva groaned. "I do wish he hadn't told you about that. As I said, I don't usually go about doing violence to people even when they deserve it. I simply was a little . . . overwrought, that's all. And I repaired the damage immediately."

Albus poured their tea, chuckling. "Biscuits? No?" He nodded, tasted his tea, then added some honey to it. "I actually think that Malcolm was rather impressed. He said you were quick with your wand."

"That's only because he was taken unawares. As he should have been. Sisters don't normally go about slicing open their brothers' faces during otherwise civilised conversation."

"No, I don't suppose they do. Never having had a sister, I can't speak from experience, of course, although I do believe that brothers tend to provoke each other that way more."

Minerva laughed. "Well, my experience with my three brothers wasn't typical, as they are all so much older than I am, but believe me, they have provoked me a lot. And I, them, probably. Though we don't normally draw wands on each other." She grinned. "Of course, being the baby probably provided me some protection! And they were older and better able to control themselves when I was at my most annoying."

"Annoying?" Albus laughed. "I cannot imagine that at all."

"Oh, you remember how I was when I was a student too serious by half, thinking I understood more than I did simply because I happened to read a lot, always wanting to grow up faster, catch up with my brothers I very nearly squandered my childhood, I think, in spending all of it wishing I were grown up!" Minerva smiled to herself. "I am sure I annoyed them all a lot. Malcolm, in particular. I think it quite hurt him that I . . . put on airs and stopped wanting to listen to his stories, and scoffing at them when I did. I outgrew the scoffing phase . . . more or less. But I still think I could be rather obnoxious at times. Not usually, and not intentionally, obviously, but . . . we all go through unattractive phases, I suppose."

Albus laughed. "Yes, I suppose we do and some people never outgrow them! Your 'phases,' brief as I am certain they were, were passing and a part of childhood. And I never found you obnoxious or annoying. Amusing, occasionally, but never annoying."

"I think that's your nature, Albus, to find amusing what others find irritating. I try, but I'm afraid that is one of your traits that I find difficult to emulate," Minerva said with a laugh.

The two drank their tea, chatting about their family and friends, and soon the tea was finished and both were stifling their yawns. Despite their desire to stay up and talk all night, they both decided to be sensible and go up to bed so that they could have their walk and picnic the next morning.

Chapter Six

Chapter 6 of 12

Albus and Minerva walk around the perimeter of the island and celebrate the accomplishment.



Chapter Six

Minerva went over to the dresser and pulled out her nightgown as Albus took something from his carpet bag then went over and got into bed. After she had put the nightgown on, she turned to see that Albus had conjured some kind of bolster and was sitting up in bed, reading. She smiled to see him there, her copy of *Through the Looking-Glass* in his hands, his half-glasses perched on his nose, as he turned the pages and found where he had left off reading a few nights before.

She went and retrieved a book from her own carpet bag, removed her dressing gown, and joined him in bed. The night stand had a small lamp on it, and she turned it up to see to read. Minerva looked over at Albus.

"Can you see all right, Albus?"

"Fine, my dear. The corner wall lamp is providing sufficient light," Albus answered.

Minerva nodded, put on her glasses, and found her place in her own book. She was slightly chilly, but she had left her shawl downstairs. She waved her wand and opened the door, then Summoned the soft wool shawl. After placing it around her shoulders, she turned to her book.

"Chilly?" Albus asked.

"Slightly. I'm fine now."

"That's a pretty nightgown, but it doesn't look very warm. I could cast a Warming Charm," he offered.

"As could I. I'm fine, Albus."

She turned a page. Albus chuckled beside her, evidently amused by something in his book. Her book was not as amusing and it wasn't capturing her attention that night. After Albus chuckled again, she partially closed her book and looked over at him.

"You're enjoying it?" she asked.

"Hmm?" Albus looked at her over his glasses. "Oh, yes, quite. Thank you for loaning it to me."

Minerva watched him read for a moment. Watching him read was more interesting than her own book. She sighed and turned back to her novel. Halfway through a paragraph, she decided she wasn't in the mood that night, closed it, and set it on the bedside table with her glasses, then she Levitated her shawl over to the rocking chair and draped it across the back.

"Do you mind if I turn out this light?" she asked. "Can you still see well enough?"

"That's fine, Minerva." He glanced over at her as she plumped her pillows. "Tired? I don't mind putting my book down for the night."

"My book just didn't hold my attention and I don't feel like finding something else. By the time I did, I would be ready to sleep, anyway."

"This is quite amusing, my dear." He smiled at her. "I could read it to you."

Minerva smiled. "That would be nice, but not tonight, I think."

Albus closed his book. "I had come to the end of a chapter, anyway, and it's best in small doses, I think."

He set his book on the bench and set his glasses beside them. He sat up straighter and banished the bolster behind him, then he began to plump his pillows.

He flipped them over, then he said, "What's this?"

He reached under the bottom pillow and pulled out something white. Albus looked at them and began to laugh. Minerva grinned. She had hoped she wouldn't have fallen asleep before he found them.

"So, your idea of a joke, Professor McGonagall?" Albus asked, holding them up and looking over at her.

"Oh, not at all," Minerva said quite seriously. "You told me once that under your pillow seemed a safe place for my knickers, so when I removed them earlier, I thought that the best place for them."

Albus laughed, then he winked at her and tucked them under his pillow. "Somewhat extraneous when I have you here beside me, though." He leaned over and kissed her forehead. He smiled down at her, seeming to memorise her face. "I love you, Minerva."

"I love you, too, Albus," Minerva replied, her heart seeming to expand in her chest. She reached up and caressed his face. "I love you more than I can say."

Albus leaned forward and kissed her lips gently. "Sweet dreams, my darling Minerva," he whispered, then waved his hand, extinguishing all the lights.

"Good night, Albus."

Fifteen minutes later, Minerva sat up in bed. "Albus," she said softly.

"Mmmmm." Albus was more asleep than awake.

"Do you mind if I open the window on this side of the bed?" She slept with the windows open during all but the coldest months, using charms to keep out the worst of the wind and rain when necessary, and she was used to having a cool breeze blow over her as she slept. "Just a little."

"Mmmmm," was Albus's reply.

Minerva looked at his shadowy form. She didn't know whether the light filtering charms would work if she opened the window, but she didn't want to wake him to ask. She lay back down, and Albus rolled over and put an arm around her. Now, that was nice. She could sleep like that. Minerva closed her eyes and relaxed, feeling Albus's solid warmth behind her. She was on the verge of sleep when her eyes popped open again. It was perverse. It truly was.

She turned, and Albus moved in his sleep.

"Albus? Albus? I'm sorry, darling, I hate to wake you," Minerva said softly.

"Mmm, Minerva. Something wrong?" Albus asked sleepily.

"I just don't think I can sleep tonight without the window a little open."

He let out a slight sigh. "That's fine. I'll do it."

"I have my wand, I can."

"I need to recast the charm, or we'll wake at dawn." Albus Summoned his wand, opened the window on Minerva's side of the bed a crack, then cast the filtering charm again. "Is that all right, my dear?"

"Perfect. Thank you." Minerva leaned forward and kissed him. "I'm sorry I woke you."

"It's all right," Albus said, giving her a peck on the cheek then setting his wand on the bench beside the bed. "Good night."

"Good night."

Minerva began to drift asleep. Just as she was almost completely there, she felt Albus sit up. She blinked her eyes open.

"Is everything all right, Albus?"

"Mmm, fine, my dear. I just can't sleep with the draught on my head." He reached for his wand. "But that's easily fixed."

Minerva felt a tingle of magic as he cast a spell.

"I'm sorry, Albus."

"Don't even think about it I'm fine. I sometimes like the window open, myself." When it's a good deal warmer, he added in his thoughts as he settled back down on his right side.

Minerva rolled over and put her arm around Albus. "I love you, Albus."

"I love you, too, my darling Minerva." And if she wanted to sleep with the windows open in the middle of January, why, he'd just use a stronger charm. Or wear a hat to bed. Albus took her hand, kissed it, then held it to his chest as he drifted back to sleep, happier than he had ever been in his long life.

The next morning, Minerva woke as the morning light gently filtered through the western windows. She sighed and rolled over, but Albus wasn't there, and his side of the bed was cool. She got up, shivering, and closed the window, then she pulled on her dressing gown and shucked on her slippers. She walked over and tapped on the partially closed door to the bathroom. When there was no response, she went in and made use of the facilities.

As she was splashing her face with cold water, she heard Albus in the other room.

"Minerva?"

"I'm in here. Be right out," she called unnecessarily. It's not as though she would have left through the window, she thought with a grin.

She came out into the bedroom and smiled to see Albus there, still in his nightshirt, but with a wooly dressing gown and fuzzy slippers on, a large tray floating in front of him.

"You woke before I could come back. I thought surely I had started early enough this morning that you would still be in bed when I returned," Albus complained mildly.

"I'm sorry, Albus," Minerva said. "Breakfast looks lovely! What a nice surprise!"

Albus smiled and settled the tray on the end of the bed. "Since you are up, it might be more comfortable to eat at a table."

He pulled his wand from his pocket and waved it, conjuring a small round table. Two more swishes, and there were two comfortable-looking chairs.

"And," he said, "I think this would be nicer than a Warming Charm." He pointed his wand at the fireplace, and the logs in it sprang into flame, then he waved it to remove the light filter charms from the windows, and the morning sunlight streamed into the room.

Minerva went over and looked at their breakfast. Boiled eggs, bacon, toast, butter, and some kind of berry preserves and, of course, a large pot of tea.

"It looks very good, Albus." She waved her wand and began moving the various items from the tray to the table.

"Thank you, my dear. Those eggs are medium, as I noted you like them, and I did more, hard-cooked, for our picnic lunch. I got a start on putting our picnic hamper together, but we can finish that after we dress."

Albus pulled out her chair for her, and she sat.

"Thank you. You must have started early! This is supposed to be your holiday," Minerva said, helping herself to some toast as he poured the tea, adding milk to both their cups.

"I know, but I realise that you are an early riser, and I wanted to serve you breakfast in bed." He smiled over at her. "I enjoy spoiling you a little, Minerva. That makes me feel like I'm on holiday."

A little over an hour later, both of them dressed for their ramble around the island, Albus in a large, wide-brimmed, woven hat, Minerva with her head bare, and a picnic basket floating behind them, the two left the cottage and headed down the same small path he had brought her on the evening before.

"How do you maintain the paths?" Minerva asked as they walked south to their starting point on the seal beach.

"I don't well, I do, some of them, particularly the ones on the hills that tend to get somewhat washed out or have debris fall on them. But essentially, the deer keep them up for me. We just use the same paths. There are a few that they don't use, but very few, actually."

They reached the beach, and Minerva insisted on stopping and casting a green "X" on a large flat rock, so that they would know precisely where they had begun walking.

Albus smiled and humoured her, but then he said, "Are you sure that's an 'x,' my dear?"

"Of course it's an 'x!'" It was a perfect, symmetrical cross to mark their spot.

"I suppose it depends on what direction you are looking at it from," Albus said.

"Mm, I suppose," Minerva replied impatiently.

"I don't know . . . what do you think, Minerva?"

Minerva turned back, her mouth open, ready to tell him to stop blathering about her mark so they could start their walk, but the words didn't emerge. She saw the rock. The silly wizard. The dear, silly wizard. She chuckled.

"Well, I suppose one could look at it like that," she said. She walked up to him, put her arms around him and looked up into his eyes. "You are the silliest, most adorable wizard in the world." She kissed his lips, then looked down at the rock again.

Instead of an "X," it now read, "Albus + Minerva," and was surrounded by a giant red heart-shape.

"I would like to be able to shout it to the world, Minerva," Albus murmured in her ear, nuzzling her, "but since I can't . . ."

Minerva slipped her arms down and took his hands. She nodded, smiling up at him. "Let's go take our walk, then."

They started off, Minerva glad of her stout short boots, though they became somewhat warm, and she had to cast a cooling spell on them. Albus's boots apparently had some kind of automatic charm to keep his feet just the right temperature regardless of the weather or his exertion, which Minerva thought would be quite handy.

Two hours later, they weren't even half-way to their goal as they climbed up and down, occasionally having to look for a detour around some particularly jagged rocks or an impossibly steep slope. Minerva had had to shorten her robes to clamber over some of the rougher terrain, but she was determined to do the walk with no magical assistance, though she did comment to Albus that she didn't think it would be cheating if she were to transform into her Animagus form for some especially difficult and narrow way.

"I'd still be walking, not Apparating," she said as they stopped for a breather and to look out over the ocean, watching the birds diving for fish.

"And does that mean that I could Transfigure, as well?" Albus asked with a grin.

"That's different. That would be cheating. You could fly all around the island with no more effort than it takes to fly anywhere else. Beside, I did say 'circumambulate,' not, not circumviate, or whatever flying would be," Minerva said.

"Yes, my dear," Albus answered, not arguing with her logic.

"But I think I'd prefer to do it all in my ordinary form, anyway. I can do a little exploring in my Animagus form some other time," Minerva said, deciding that it wouldn't be

precisely fair to Albus if she were to have an easier time by going on ahead in her Tabby-form.

"If you do decide to, be sure to tell me. Most of the animals on the island wouldn't bother you, but some of the predator birds might mistake you for their next meal. And there are a few others you might not care to run into. I'd like to be aware, just in case."

Minerva agreed, and they continued on their way, stopping occasionally to look at the view, Albus's arms around Minerva, or to examine a plant or unusual rock. Finally, Minerva decided that they were at least at the half-way point, and there was a nice flat rock, warmed by the sun, where they could sit and make their picnic, the scent of the sea blending sweetly with the aroma of the nearby juniper.

After they had eaten their simple picnic lunch of hard-cooked eggs, cheese and mixed pickle sandwiches on crusty bread, and fresh tomatoes, washed down with cold lemonade, Minerva stood and brushed herself off, then began returning things to the hamper.

Albus looked up at her, watching as she packed up.

"I can't fold the blanket while you're still lying on it, Albus."

"So we aren't having a rest?"

"We just did," Minerva replied. She paused. Perhaps he needed a rest. He was more than eighty years older than she, after all, she reminded herself, even if he did act like a little boy sometimes. And make love like a young man. No, better than any young man. "Of course, if you're tired "

"No, no, not tired," he said, standing, "just not as determined as you are, I suppose." He grinned at her. "You really have taken this on as a mission, haven't you?"

"Well, not a mission . . . but it's good to have a goal and head towards it. And to complete what one begins."

"Yes, but one should also enjoy the journey there," Albus replied, "otherwise . . . why take time making love? Why not just do it fast, get it over with?"

Minerva laughed. "I do see your point, Albus. But I am enjoying this. I like the exertion. And we do stop and look at the view. Although the best part of that is having your arms around me, holding me securely." Minerva emphasised that point by putting her arms around him and kissing him. "But I would like to finish this walk today, and it's taking longer than I thought it would."

They had left the cottage at almost eight-thirty, and it was four-thirty before they rounded the large boulders that marked the beginning of small cove where the seals played and the sand was soft. Albus let Minerva go on ahead. He sat down on a rock, watching her make a bee-line for the rock they had marked that morning. He took of his boots and his socks, putting his socks inside the boots, then lining them up carefully on the rock, then he placed his hat beside them, securing it with a charm so it wouldn't blow away. Albus stood and waved back at Minerva when she reached the rock, touched it, then turned and waved energetically at him. She beckoned to him and he started across the sand to her, enjoying the feeling of the warm grains between his toes. As he walked, he began to undo the buttons on the front of his robes.

Minerva met him partway and said, "Come on, Albus! Finish the walk!"

Albus reached for her and drew her closer. He looked down into her eyes, smiling. "In a bit, my love. We have time." He kissed her softly.

Minerva responded to his kiss, then she broke off and said, "It's just a few more yards, come on, Albus!"

"Not yet," he replied. He began to unbutton his robes again. "Let's enjoy the sand and the water."

Minerva looked out. "It must be cold."

Albus chuckled. "When you first get in, yes."

"I haven't a bathing costume." She looked down at her robes. "I could Transfigure my robes, I suppose."

Albus laughed. "Why?" He unbuttoned the last button then dropped his robes onto the sand.

Minerva couldn't keep herself from reaching for him, without thinking, and touching his partially-erect penis. It twitched beneath her fingertips.

"Mmm. Later, my dear," Albus said, taking her hand and kissing it. "Now undress! Or do you need help?"

Minerva raised an eyebrow. She hadn't been swimming in the nude since she was about ten. She shrugged off her loose over-robe then turned around. "You could take care of the hooks in back," she said, deciding that perhaps Albus had a good idea, after all. She grinned to herself as he touched the Charmed hooks on the back of her robes, releasing them. Anything to be naked together with Albus.

Minerva took her robes and Albus's and Levitated them over to the rock where he had left his shoes and the picnic basket. She took his hand and led him over to another rock, where she sat and removed her own shoes and stockings.

"I guess I could go in like this," she said, standing. She was still wearing a hip-length chemise and her knickers.

Albus smiled sceptically, his eyebrows raised. "If you wish. But it is just the two of us and a few seals and porpoises. I doubt they will care. And I certainly like to see you, and touch you, when you are wearing even less."

Minerva took out her hairpins, dropping them into one of her boots. She ran her fingers through her hair. "I suppose this will be better for swimming." She looked out at the water again. "It does look cold. And you're certain there are no unusual currents or whirlpools?"

"None in this cove. It's one of the best places on the island for swimming, and although it is cold, it's still not too cold to go in. If you don't want to join me, though, you don't have to," he said, beginning to walk backwards away from her and toward the water.

"I'll join you for a little while," Minerva said.

She began to unbutton her chemise, noting that Albus immediately stopped to watch her, his eyes seeming hungry as she bared herself to him. After putting her chemise on the rock with the rest of their clothes, she pulled off her knickers. She walked toward him and noted that by the time she reached him, his cock was fully erect. Minerva eyed him, smiling.

"Are you *sure* you want to go swimming?" she asked, reaching out and brushing the tips of her fingers against the head of his penis. She licked her lips.

Albus let out a breath he hadn't realised he'd been holding. "Oh, yes, I'm quite sure of it and the cold water will take care of this . . . distraction."

Minerva licked her lips again and stroked upward from his balls to the tip of his cock. "What a pity."

"Well, I'm sure that I will recover quickly," Albus said, his eyes roving over her breasts.

"Really? Are you certain you want to take that risk?" She closed her fist around him and stroked upward.

Albus moaned and closed his eyes, then he opened them and took one step toward her. He reached out and caressed her breast. Without another word, he put one arm

around her, drew her close, kissed her mouth, and sank to his knees in the sand, bringing her with him. He pushed her back and began to kiss her neck, licking and nipping as he brought both hands to her breasts. He made his way down her body, kissing and licking, until his lips closed around one nipple. Minerva's hand still stroked his penis, and he broke away gasping.

"Gods, Minerva . . ." He removed her hand from his cock, closed his own around it, and, his eyes shut, cast the same spell as he had the night before. Suddenly he looked down at her. "If that's all right if not, I can release it immediately "

"I do like that spell very much," Minerva murmured. "In fact, I insist that you test its efficacy immediately." She rose up on one elbow and whispered in his ear, "Fuck me, Albus Dumbledore. Fuck me till I come screaming."

Albus moaned, but he pushed her back into the soft sand and held her down, his hands at her shoulders. Without any further prelude, he raised his hips, then lowered himself, the head of his cock sliding down over her clitoris and finding her entrance. His eyes widened as he began to press into her.

"Already so wet? So hot and wet . . ."

"Sometimes, I can almost come just listening to you laugh," Minerva replied, lifting her hips as he slipped further into her. "Oh, gods, such a cock . . . gods, yes, Albus!"

Albus began to stroke within her, watching her face. "You want me to do this until you come screaming? You do?"

"Yes, yes, Albus, please, yes, yes," Minerva moaned and moved with him. The sand was soft yet gritty beneath her, but she hardly noticed that, only feeling his large, firm erection within her as he pumped, stroking in and out, in and out. "Oh, gods, more, Albus, harder, more, harder!"

"I'm going to come, Minerva, if I give you more. Do you want more?"

"Yes, come, give me more, come, oh, gods, Albus, come!" She could feel her own climax mounting as he thrust in and out.

"Ah, ah, aaah! Minerva!" Albus thrust harder and faster and came, a dry, but pulsing orgasm, and Minerva watched as his eyes closed and his head went back.

She rolled him over and began to ride his still erect cock, sliding her clit back and forth against him, and she came, clenching around him, gasping for air, then collapsing on top of him. Albus kissed the side of her head, then her ear. His tongue went out and licked it all around, then he drew her earlobe between his lips and sucked, before whispering, "I'm ready for more. Are you?"

Minerva raised her head and looked down at him. That spell certainly was something.

Albus pulled her down to him, kissing her, then he rolled her over onto her side and slipped out of her, as large and erect as he had been when they had started. He pushed her gently on the back of one shoulder, encouraging her to face the sand as he put one hand under her belly and pulled her up on both knees. He moved his hand to her breasts, and with his other hand, he guided himself into her again, thrusting hard, then he began to fondle her clitoris and he began to pump into her from behind. She raised her buttocks and lowered her shoulders, moaning as he caressed her nipples and her clitoris as he stroked into her vagina, hitting just the right spot over and over again in time with his fingers pulsing against her clit. Minerva began to come, moaning his name, and as her moans became shouts, Albus came again, still not releasing the spell, but pushing hard into her, the contractions of her vagina around his pulsating cock increasing his pleasure.

They both collapsed, exhausted, onto their sides. Minerva caught her breath first and looked over at Albus, his skin pink in the sun, and his penis, still long and heavy, resting on his lower abdomen.

"My gods, Albus, you're still . . . you're still ready."

Albus opened his eyes. "I am very glad I didn't know of this spell when I was young. I don't think I would ever have recovered. Each time is like new, and each one is stronger than the previous one, and then the final one last night . . . it was inexpressively good. It was complete and utter euphoria."

"Haven't you used it before, then?" Minerva asked. She had begun fondling his cock, happy to feel it in her hand and to have it jump in response to her stimulation.

Albus closed his eyes and swallowed. "I have used it only a few times. But never for more than two or three . . . orgasms at a time. And somehow . . . somehow it wasn't the same. It wasn't as good."

Minerva wanted to ask who he'd been with at the time, since he had not known the spell as a young man, and she knew that he had spent much of the last several decades in chosen celibacy. But she didn't want to bring up anything uncomfortable for him. And perhaps he hadn't been with anyone and had just been trying it out by himself. That would be embarrassing for him to admit, Minerva thought, so she didn't say anything.

"What do you think the cold water would do to it?" Minerva asked curiously.

"I don't know. Just because the orgasm doesn't bring about a . . . um, a resting period, it doesn't mean that nothing could affect the erection, I suppose," Albus said.

"Shall we see? Provided you still want to go into the water, of course."

Albus looked up at her and smiled. "Yes, I still want to go into the water. And I'm sure that if I suffer a bit of deflation, you could have me in good shape in no time!"

He stood, reached out his hand, and helped Minerva to her feet. He kissed her, then pulled her toward the water. "Come, Minerva, let's go swimming!" He let go and stepped back away from her, smiling.

Albus turned and ran lightly across the sand, and Minerva admired his long legs and the way his hair flew out behind him in the breeze. He was gorgeous. Albus splashed into the water with a shout, then when it was up to his waist, he began to swim, swimming out several yards, then turning and swimming parallel with the edge of the beach. He paused, rolled over onto his back, then called out to Minerva and waved.

"Come in, Minerva! Join me!"

Minerva laughed and ran toward the water, ready to join her lover in the sea.

Chapter Seven

Chapter 7 of 12

Albus and Minerva have a lovely end to a lovely day.



Chapter Seven

Minerva shivered, wrapped in the towel Albus had conjured for her. He waved his wand and cast a Warming Charm over the air around her, dried her hair with another charm, then Summoned their clothes and the picnic basket. He drew out their picnic blanket and spread it out on the warm rock. Finally, he cast a charm on himself to dry his hair and beard, though water still beaded on his body. His erection was not fully faded, though the cold water had taken its toll.

Minerva sat on the blanket, her lips still blue and her teeth chattering. "Honestly, Dumbledore, I don't know how you could think that was fun."

She had shrieked as soon as she entered the water, a most unbecoming sound coming from her, she thought. She ~~was~~ not a shrieker. But Albus was in the water. It had to get better. She waded further out, but was just about to change her mind about this particular activity when Albus swam toward her and pulled her in. Once she was over the initial shock, the water did feel better, she didn't feel as cold, and she swam about with Albus, even enjoying it when, in deeper water, he had treaded water, holding her close and kissing her. But she didn't feel entirely at home, and she began to get cold. When her teeth began to chatter uncontrollably, Albus insisted that they return to the beach. Minerva told him he could stay in, but her words were barely intelligible, coming from between her chattering teeth and her blue lips.

Fortunately, they were close to the beach, and it didn't take long for them to get out of the water. The breeze on Minerva's skin initially made her feel even colder, despite the warmer air temperature and the sunshine. Embarrassed, she wondered if she'd even be able to wave her wand to dry off or make it over to where her clothes and her wand lay, for that matter. But she needn't have worried. Albus immediately picked her up and carried her to a warm, dry, flat rock and conjured a huge towel for her, without even using his wand. After Summoning his wand, he continued to quietly take care of her before drying his own hair and sitting on the blanket beside her, his legs stretched out in front of him, ankles crossed, leaning back on his arms.

"Better now?" he asked, smiling slightly, but some concern in his voice.

Minerva nodded. She should have come out of the water as soon as she began to get cold again. Foolish pride.

"I don't know why you aren't shivering and blue," Minerva said, somewhat disgruntled at the unfairness of it.

Albus shrugged. "I don't like the cold, but I just . . . think warm, I suppose you could say, and tell myself I'm not cold."

Minerva reached out and touched his hands. They were cold, but when she placed her hand on his stomach, he was much warmer than she would have thought certainly a good deal warmer than she was. "I'd ask you to hold me and warm me up," she said, "but I'm afraid I'd just make you cold." She'd begun to shiver slightly again.

Albus raised his wand and cast two more Warming Charms, one on the towel and one on the air around her. "That should help, as should this."

He moved behind her, conjured a large cushion behind himself, leaned back, and pulled Minerva toward him to rest with her back against his chest, his legs stretched out on either side of her. He kissed the back of her head. They sat like that for a while, listening to the sounds of the sea, Albus's arms around her, his hands clasped in front of her, hers clutching the towel to her as she slowly warmed up.

"I can think of something else that would warm you up," he said, slipping his hand inside her towel and cupping her breast.

Minerva leaned her head back against his shoulder and closed her eyes, enjoying the sensation of Albus playing with her breast. Crossing his arms over her, he slipped his other hand around to fondle her other breast.

"Mmm, you have lovely breasts, Minerva," he said softly, his voice a rumble against her, a breath in her ear. "I love to touch them. I love to hold them, to play with them, to kiss them." His tongue went out and met her ear, entering then circling. "And I love to lick them and suck. Mmm, I cannot decide which I prefer, to kiss and lick and suck here," he said, squeezing her nipple and teasing it gently, "or if I prefer this." He moved one hand down, grazing and caressing her abdomen before reaching her crux. "I do so love to touch and suck and lick you here," he whispered, his finger touching her clit. "And the way you taste, especially when you come, mmm. Yes, I do love to touch and kiss you here." His finger pressed against her, then he pressed his palm to her and began to roll her folds against her clitoris.

He pulled her closer and moved against her back, still wrapped in the towel, pressing his erection against her. Minerva's eyes were still closed, and her lips were parted; now she was no longer pale and blue. Her lips were rosy and her skin flushed.

"I love how very responsive you are, Minerva, I love to see you lose yourself to your passion, I love to give you pleasure, and I love to make you come," he said, his voice still low, one hand rolling her nipple between his fingers, the other pressing and rubbing her below. "You are beautiful and extremely attractive. Seeing you undress arouses me more than you can know. You are so very, very beautiful, and I love you, Minerva. I love you beyond anything I ever could have imagined."

Albus bent his head and kissed her shoulder as she turned her head to give him access. He gently nipped it, then kissed the side of her neck.

"When we're making love, my dearest, no matter how or where, all of me wants you to know how much I love and adore you, how much I cherish you . . . I love to play, to play with you, to tease, but above all, I love to love you." He punctuated his final words by slipping his hand down from her clit and sliding a finger into her entrance. Minerva moaned lightly and spread her legs further. "Do you want me, Minerva?" he whispered as he slid his finger against her and entered her with it again.

"I want you," Minerva answered. "I want you now and I want you always." She opened her eyes and turned her head to look at him. "Even when we aren't making love, we are. You always make me feel loved, cherished, beautiful, exciting. I love you, Albus."

Albus kissed her neck again, and as he did, he bent one leg and began to move around her to one side, kissing her the entire time. Now she was sitting, his arms still around her, one of his legs bent behind her as he brought the other one over her legs. Minerva let go of her towel as Albus moved, and she reached for his erection. His hands travelled over her body, one hand cupping and fondling her breasts in turn, the other, caressing her back. His lips moved over her throat to her face, kissing her cheeks, her eyelids, her mouth. He held her between his legs and reached down to find her crux again. As he touched her warmth and her moisture, he moaned into her mouth. His fingers pleased her as she stroked his erection, and when he began to come, the spell still holding back his final release, his hand pounded against her, three fingers thrusting in her again and again, and Minerva broke away from the kiss, gasping as she began to come. She called his name and asked him for more, and he gave her more, not stopping until she was lying limp in his arms, still resting between his legs, slumped against his chest, one hand wound through his hair, the other at his beard.

Minerva looked up at him, her eyes moist. "I love you, Albus, and I want you, I want you still," she whispered. She moved her hand back down to his still-erect cock. "This . . . this, in me . . . make us one, Albus, make us one for just a little while."

Albus kissed her and moved so that she was leaning back against the conjured cushion. He knelt in front of her, touching her only with his gaze, seeming to drink her in, her hair spread out behind her and falling across her shoulders, some sand dusting one arm, her breasts, creamy, and her nipples, peaked and darkly rosy, the late afternoon sun casting a long shadow behind her and accenting her feminine contours. His eyes met hers, then he reached out and he raised her knees, pressing them toward her, spreading her legs at the same time, bringing her feet closer to her body, opening her even further to his gaze. With her legs spread and knees bent, he could

see her dusky folds and her engorged clitoris. He licked his lips and let out a breath. He reached out with one finger and grazed her glistening clitoris, then touched her opening, but did not enter.

Albus moved forward on his knees in front of her. When his knees met her buttocks, he reached out and took hold of her from both sides, lifting her gently from beneath as he slid closer to the cushion and pulled her up onto his lap.

"Lean back," Albus whispered, and Minerva leaned back so that her shoulders were resting against the cushion.

He pulled her toward him more until her crux was open against his erect cock. "Hold on to me," he said softly.

Minerva took hold of his upper arms as Albus rose up on his knees until found the right angle to enter her. Using one hand to guide him, he let Minerva slide down over him until he was sheathed within her, her legs still bent, her knees near his shoulders. Now he rocked back on his heels, bringing Minerva with him, away from the cushion. Albus put his arms around her and kissed her, his lips moving sensuously over hers, pulling, sucking, caressing, and he began to gently rise and fall, lifting her and moving within her, and she moved with him, sliding over him, lifting herself and lowering herself, placing her feet on the blanket on either side of him and pushing up, then letting herself fall to meet him, her breasts and clitoris rubbing against his chest and beard, and her crux massaging itself against his pelvis as she lowered herself over him. The two rocked together, arms around each other, kissing, caressing, joined and moving with each other. The sensations of near orgasm went on and on, until finally, Minerva's passions overwhelmed her as he continued to thrust within her, and she needed more, and faster.

She had moved her legs lower as they rocked together, and now she pressed against him, pushing him back against the blanket, and, supporting herself on her knees, she sat up and began to slide over him, faster and faster, Albus alternating his gaze between the point where their bodies joined and watching Minerva's face as her ecstasy grew. She began to come, a pulsating pleasure that began deep and expanded outward to envelope her entire body, her entire being, even seeming to enter into her magic.

"I love you, Albus! Albus, oh, I love you, I love you! Gods, Albus, my dearest, my only love, my one, my Albus, my love! Only you, always, only you, Albus, Albus!"

Albus pulled her to him and, kissing her, rolled her over onto her side. Never letting go of her, he continued to pump into her, maintaining the rhythm she had begun, carrying her through her orgasm and into his own. He released the charm and came within her, feeling as though his life was leaving him and entering her, but that he lost nothing, that greater life was entering him as he came, whispering her name, a soft, breathless chant of, "Minerva, Minerva, Minerva . . ."

They lay together like that a while, their legs entangled, and Albus slowly slipping out of her as he relaxed. Minerva felt warm and whole, and she sighed with contentment. She heard something and raised her head to see what it was. She blinked, then a smile crossed her face.

"Albus, Albus," she whispered.

Albus, who had been nearly asleep, opened his eyes groggily, but smiled at her.

"Very, very slowly," Minerva said, "turn your head and look around behind you."

Albus did as she instructed, and he breathed out a soft chuckle. Lined up watching them were four seals, each one smaller than the one to its right, and all apparently fascinated by the two peculiar animals in front of them and waiting for them to do something interesting again. Albus turned back toward Minerva with a grin.

"Well, we had an audience!"

Minerva laughed. "We must have been their afternoon entertainment. Special guest performance!"

"Mmm, well, if you ever begin to display any exhibitionist tendencies, my dear, I'll bring you down here, and we can perform for the seals!"

Minerva playfully slapped at his arm. "Albus Dumbledore! Exhibitionist tendencies! Really!"

"You're the one with the fantasy of doing it in the gardens with people walking around!" Albus said in protest.

"That is *not* precisely my fantasy, and you know it. Behind the greenhouses, and no one actually sees us, there's just the danger that they might. And it's only a fantasy, after all," Minerva said, pretending to be put out. "And what about you? Wanting to perform for the portraits in your office?"

"That was a mere . . . coincidence, because we happened to be in my office where they also are. And it wasn't a fantasy, it was a dream," Albus reminded her. "I didn't allow myself to fantasise about you."

"I know . . ." Minerva caressed his arm. She looked at his face, smiling. "So, do you have any now? Fantasies?"

"None at all. I have been very satisfied with reality these last few days. Not that I haven't thought about being intimate with you, but it was more remembering previous encounters and anticipating the next," Albus said, "not actually fantasising."

Minerva had been somewhat taken aback when he first began to answer her none at all? But now she smiled. "But you might in the future?"

"I am certain of it . . . I will be missing you and sitting in some boring meeting somewhere, and my thoughts will travel to you, and what I would like to be doing with you, and be very glad that my thoughts are safe and private. Then if I couldn't see you as soon as the meeting was over, I would go to my suite and I would fantasise about you again, and I would fantasise about telling you my fantasy."

"You would fantasise in the middle of a meeting?" Minerva asked, surprised.

"I think it would make it bearable. I will just have to make sure I wear very full robes in case there are any . . . side effects to my fantasy."

"But won't people be able to tell at least that your mind is elsewhere?"

"Half of them think likely I'm a barmpot, anyway. If I seemed less . . . present than usual, I doubt most people would notice. They would probably all think that I was dreaming up a thirteenth use for dragon's blood or something of the sort," Albus said with a laugh.

Minerva shook her head, unsure whether to be amused or disapproving. "Well, the half that don't already think you're a . . . a barmpot, will, no doubt, once your eyes glaze over and you start to go all flushed. They'll think you're half-daft or ill, at the best!"

Albus just laughed again.

Minerva looked at the sky. "It will be sunset soon. We should dress and Apparate to the mountain to watch it."

"Don't you want to go in to dinner, my dear? I was planning something rather nice for our evening meal today."

Minerva hesitated. "But it would take a while to prepare, and I don't want to miss a sunset. And tomorrow, it may be rainy or overcast."

"But aren't you hungry?" Albus asked.

"A bit. But there are biscuits left from lunch, and some lemonade. We could have that while we watch. And then we can have a late supper."

"We never even had our tea today," Albus said, protesting mildly. He was rather fond of his afternoon tea.

Minerva looked at the sky again. "Well, if we really hurried, you could probably get back to the cottage and make some tea and we could drink it with our biscuits now."

"That wasn't my point . . . but you want to go to the mountain to see the sunset." He smiled at her. "Then we will go to the mountain and see the sunset." He leaned toward her and kissed her nose. "I did promise to bring you today, after all. And biscuits will hold us for a while."

"Good!" Minerva stood, brushing off the bit of sand that somehow ended up on one side of her. "Let's dress and Apparate up there straight away. It could be that it's not quite at sunset that Ablach appears, but sometime before that."

Albus laughed and pushed himself to his feet. "I thought you were the sceptic?"

"Well, I am, but if all of these people say they have seen it, and your brother, too . . ." Minerva hesitated, thinking of some of the peculiar things she had heard about Aberforth Dumbledore. She shrugged. "If there's something there to be seen, I want to know it! And it could be exciting, if it really does exist and we really do see it one day."

"It's unlikely that that day will be today, as I am glad you recognise," Albus said. He began to get dressed, having a faster time of it than Minerva, as she had more articles of clothing to put on. He had a lightweight, buttoned under-robe and a slightly heavier, shorter over-robe that closed with a few hooks at the waist, and that was it.

Albus picked up his boots and socks, then folded the blanket with a wave of his hand. "I recommend carrying your shoes, Minerva, and putting them on when we get there. We can get rid of any sand up there without having more of it work its way in as we're putting them on."

"Good idea," Minerva said with a nod. "Do me up in back?" she asked. She could do it herself quite easily, as the hooks were all charmed, but it was nice to have him help her.

After he had done that and Minerva was pulling on her loose over-robe, Albus looked around, a puzzled look on his face.

"Lost something, Albus?"

"My hat. When I Summoned it, I didn't think to put a charm on it to hold it down. It must have blown off somewhere." Albus reached into his pocket and pulled out his wand. "*Accio hat!*"

A second later, there was a grunting from some seals down at the water's edge, and the hat was pulled away from them and soared toward Albus.

Albus held the hat in his hands and looked down at it sadly. Minerva tried not to giggle.

"This was my favourite summer walking hat," he said, a slump to his shoulders. "There's too much missing to use *Reparo*." Albus sighed. "I might as well leave it for them to play with."

He tossed it back toward the seals, using a bit of magic to carry it all the way to the group that had been playing with it. As he saw two of them begin to play a kind of tug-of-war with it, Albus grinned.

"You got over that loss quickly!" Minerva remarked.

"That's a nice way for a hat to end its life, I think! And I can get another," Albus said. "Ready to go? Good. I'll get the basket, you take our shoes, if you don't mind, Minerva, and I'll meet you there!"

An hour and a half later, they returned to the cottage, Minerva undaunted by the fact that nothing had appeared to them but white-tailed sea eagles and some other handsome birds. They had also seen several small red deer the smallest Minerva had ever seen popping out of one stand of trees, staring at them, then bounding away across some bracken, heading down toward a larger wood. She was in quite a cheerful mood when they landed in the main room, and Albus was warmed to see her so happy.

Minerva put her arms around him. "Thank you for an absolutely perfect day, Albus!" She reached up and kissed his cheek before leaning against him with a contented sigh.

"I am very glad you found it so," Albus replied, running his fingers through her hair, which was still down from their swim.

Looking up at him, Minerva asked, "Didn't you enjoy it, Albus?"

"I did. Very, very much. It was certainly a most wonderful day, indeed!" He kissed her upturned face. "But it could have been storming gales outside and we alone in here, and it would have been equally perfect, if you were here with me. Still, it was very satisfying all around. You didn't mind not seeing the hidden island, then?"

"No. And as you were saying earlier today, the pleasure isn't necessarily in attaining the goal!" Minerva said, turning his own words back on him as she so often did.

Albus chuckled. "Ah, yes, I can be so very wise at times! Yet so very forgetful of the fact!" he said self-deprecatingly.

"I think I'll go clean up join me?"

"No, my dear, as enticing as that sounds. I think that I will put away our picnic I don't mind at all! and get us a quick supper. How does that sound?" Albus asked.

"Fine, I'm not particularly hungry at the moment, after the biscuits, but I'm sure I will be! Between the walk and our swim and our time on the beach we should both be ravenous."

"I admit to being more than slightly peckish, myself," Albus said. "You go up and take your time, though."

Minerva undressed and washed, running the water in the old claw-footed bathtub, then climbing in, sitting down, and making a makeshift shower by directing the stream of water up and over her in an arc so she could wash the sand and seawater out of her hair. She dried her hair and brushed it out, then went into the bedroom and opened the musical box, smiling when *Liebstraum* began playing.

She found her Charmed amber earrings that Albus had given her the week before, and the amber necklace that she had bought for herself several years ago in Heidelberg. She pulled out her tortoiseshell hair combs from the box, as well, then went back into the bathroom and finished putting her hair up. Even though there wasn't time for Albus to cook them the meal that he had planned, she wanted to look especially nice for him, particularly as he had been so flexible about changing his plans to suit her whims. She had brought one rather nice set of robes no evening gown, to be sure, but still, prettier and more feminine than her walking robes and she put them on. The heathery greens of the robes complemented the amber necklace well, she thought. Despite being somewhat nicely dressed, Minerva decided against stockings, merely casting a charm on her light slippers to have them match her skirts, and she went down to see if she could help Albus finish getting dinner.

"Ah, there you are, my dear! And you look lovely!" Albus smiled as he looked at her from over the heavy pan he has just recovered. "Everything is almost ready. Just bubble-and-squeak tonight, and a few sausages. I hope that suits?"

"It sounds good and smells even better!" Minerva's appetite had returned as she had dressed.

"I am afraid the meal is not what I had hoped, nor is it as fine as your attire," Albus said.

"I'm not precisely dressed up, but I did want to try to look nice for you." She went over to him and embraced him. "You have been very flexible, changing your plans at my whim. I appreciate that, Albus, thank you."

Albus kissed her forehead. "I had very few specific plans, and all of yours sounded very good. And we are on holiday. One of the nicest things about being on holiday is not having to stick to plans and schedules."

"But you stuck to mine today," Minerva said, remembering how he would have preferred to have waited and had a more leisurely lunch before continuing their walk.

He grinned. "It did get us to our swim sooner, so that was fine with me!"

"Oh, so you had planned that all along!" Minerva exclaimed. So that was what he'd been thinking about when she'd been wearing only her dressing gown the previous day. "That's why we started our walk where we did, and not at some point closer to the cottage. You tricky wizard!"

Albus chuckled. "I had simply hoped that we might be able to end our walk with a swim, that's all."

"A swim in the nude," Minerva pointed out.

"That is the only way I ever swim here. Of course, I usually alone." He couldn't help the broad grin on his face. "Not to say that getting you undressed again wasn't a highly motivating factor! Especially outdoors."

"Now I would say that you certainly are a naughty wizard, Professor Dumbledore!"

"Mmhm, and you love it," he said, running his hands down her back to her buttocks and squeezing.

"You are right. I do." Minerva said, mimicking his gesture.

Albus kissed her lips lightly, then said, "I don't want to burn our dinner, my dear. The pan isn't charmed to keep it from burning."

"All right, then. I'll set the table while you finish up," Minerva said, letting him go.

When they sat down to their simple supper a few minutes later, Minerva thanked him for cooking again. "I am afraid that my interest in the culinary arts was never ignited," she admitted. "Although I could do a simple meal such as this." She looked at the food on her plate. "I must say, though, that even my bubble-and-squeak doesn't look anything like yours."

"I hope that it is satisfactory," Albus replied, a slight worried frown flitting across his face.

"I am sure it will be," Minerva said, picking up her fork. "But I never put carrots in mine."

"I almost always shred a carrot or two into it. It adds some colour and flavour."

Minerva tasted it. "It's very good, Albus! What did you put in it? This isn't just cabbages and potatoes, not at all."

"Just this and that. Some diced turnips. Some turnip greens. Onion. The carrot. A few herbs. Butter. The potato was left over from yesterday. A drop of cream. The cabbage, of course." He shrugged. "It's nothing special."

"It is the best bubble-and-squeak I've ever had," Minerva declared truthfully.

He smiled, pleased. "It is never the same twice, but I used to make it often in the winter when I cooked for myself. It's not terribly seasonal, but I thought it would be filling after our long day, and you did get quite chilled earlier."

"I've never put anything much in it but the potatoes and cabbage or kale or something of that sort. And some onion, if I remember to." Minerva thought it was a very good thing she wasn't cooking. "The sausages are very nice, too. You are spoiling me, Albus."

"Nonsense. Although I am glad you are happy with it."

"You know, Albus," Minerva said after she had almost cleaned her plate, "I feel as though I've been dictating what we're to do while we're here. What would you like to do tomorrow?"

Albus shook his head. "No, you haven't. Your ideas have all been good ones. And I'm the one who suggested watching the sunset. And the swim."

"Still, what would you like to do tomorrow?"

"If the weather is good, I thought we might go look at the standing stones, and I could show you the tumulus, as well."

"A tumulus? Standing stones? You never mentioned this before!" Minerva almost knocked over her glass of cider in her excitement.

"Didn't I? I meant to. Of course, you can't see them from where we arrived, so that's probably why I forgot. They are in the valley between the two smaller hills, or mountains, as I suppose they are."

"Yes, I would like to see those. Can we walk there easily from here?"

"It is easiest if we were to avoid going over the small mountain, of course, but that also affords the nicest view, I think." Albus replied. "We could Apparate part of the way and walk the rest, if you like."

The two finished making plans for the next day, Minerva trying not to think about the fact that it was their last full day on the island before they had to return to Hogwarts. They hadn't discussed precisely when they would be returning to the school, but the staff meeting was at two, so they would have to be back before that. Since Albus had already moved the meeting from Monday to Wednesday to accommodate her desire to go away with him for a few days, Minerva wasn't going to complain about how short their time alone was.

After supper, Minerva insisted that she clean up, and Albus went upstairs. When he came back down, he was in his nightshirt, dressing gown, and slippers.

"I was going to change, but it seemed rather silly at this hour," Albus said as he came into the kitchen where Minerva was putting the last of the dishes away. "I hope you don't mind."

"Not at all," she said, turning and putting her hands on his shoulders.

Albus bent his head and kissed her. "This has been a wonderful day, Minerva. I am very glad we came."

"So am I. Thank you for introducing me to your little haven, Albus."

"Yours, too." Albus kissed her again. "Let's go into the other room, my dear."

Albus lit a fire in the fireplace. The wind was picking up outside, and they could hear the rain hitting the windowpanes, but the little stone house was solid and warm. He had brought her musical box downstairs with him and left it on the table. When Albus lifted the lid, music filled the room as *Liebstraum* started to play, but he took his wand and selected a different piece from the Charmed box. As a Viennese waltz began, he turned to Minerva and asked, "May I have this dance, my dear Professor?"

Minerva smiled broadly. "Thank you, I would enjoy that."

They danced, and when the waltz ended and *Clair de Lune* began to play, Albus embraced her, kissing her, and he brought her over to the sofa.

"I love you, my darling Minerva. You are so very precious to me," he whispered, holding her close.

"And I love you. Forever," Minerva said softly. "Forever."

Note: *I hope you're enjoying this little story. There's more to come, though their holiday, as all holidays are wont to do, is going quickly.*

In a few days, I'll be posting the prologue of the sequel to An Act of Love, which is now complete, with epilogue. If you are interested in learning a bit about the sequel, take a look at [this entry of my LiveJournal](#).

Chapter Eight

Chapter 8 of 12

Minerva and Albus spend a cozy, quiet morning.



Chapter Eight

"I thought you said rain blows over quickly here," Minerva said the next morning as she moved her backgammon piece, set on her third victory in a row. Albus might usually dominate the game when they played chess, but he was rustier at backgammon, and she was doing quite well.

"It usually does. But not always," Albus replied, helping himself to another pistachio as he watched her send another one of his pieces to the bar. Now, three of his ivory checkers were waiting for him to free them.

He rolled. No valid moves. He took a handful of pistachios.

"Well, I don't think there's been more than ten minutes that it hasn't been raining since we went to bed last night," Minerva remarked.

"We still had a lovely morning, though, didn't we?" Albus asked, appearing serious, but his eyes twinkling at the memory.

"Very." Minerva grinned, remembering the way he had woken her that morning.

The rain still pattered against the slate roof when she awoke, lying on her left side, Albus's solidity at her back. A finger was caressing her. She didn't open her eyes, but sighed and bent her left leg, easing his access. His mouth was at the nape of her neck, his lips were moving over her skin, his breath warm against her.

"Mmmm . . ." Minerva shifted slightly as Albus's finger began to slide from her clitoris to her opening and back again.

Albus's lips moved to her ear. He kissed her, then whispered, "Good morning, my dearest love."

"Good morning, Albus."

She turned toward him, touching his face, and kissed him gently. As he returned her kiss, she felt the tingle of his special minty charm, and she deepened the kiss. Albus moved his hand further up under her nightgown, finding her breast and caressing it lightly. He moved over her, still kissing her, pushing her nightgown up. Minerva moved one hand from where it had rested on his side, and found his erection, feeling it through his nightshirt. She squeezed and Albus moaned. Releasing him from her grasp, she began to tug his nightshirt up until she could take him in her hand and stroke him with nothing between her and the soft skin of his penis, like chamois cloth covering his firm erection.

Albus lowered his hips and Minerva guided him into her. She brought one leg around him, and Albus moved so that her other leg was between his. She moved with him, meeting him as he stroked within her. He watched her face as she concentrated on the sensation of his cock moving in her, stretching and stimulating her as she gasped and moaned, until finally, he closed his eyes and released, shuddering as he came. Minerva held him on top of her and gave a sigh of contentment as she rubbed his back through his nightshirt.

"That was a lovely way to wake up," she said, "especially on a rainy morning."

"I am glad . . . although, well, I didn't use the spell, and you . . . are you satisfied?" Albus asked hesitantly.

"Perfectly," Minerva said truthfully. "And we shouldn't use the charm every time. If we did, we'd go through buckets of that blue potion of yours and never leave the bed."

Albus smiled down at her. "That sounds rather nice, actually, as long as you were the witch in the bed with me."

"Well, we do want to eat occasionally, or we would soon lack the strength to make love," Minerva said with a chuckle. "Speaking of which, why don't I fix us some breakfast?"

"All right, but don't take too long! I'll keep the bed warm for your return!"

Minerva realised when she reached the kitchen that she had no more clue how to use Albus's cooker than she had the day they arrived. She thought a moment, then took a heavy iron frying pan from the cupboard and placed it on the cooktop. She waved her wand, bringing the pan to the temperature to fry eggs at least, she hoped it was the temperature to fry eggs then she got butter from one cupboard and five eggs from the cool cupboard, then finding some cheese. Wensleydale and Emmenthaler might make a nice omelette with the addition of some mushrooms.

She found a bowl and sliced the mushrooms into it. Thinking that her mother would have fits if she saw her cooking methods, Minerva waved her wand to turn the raw mushrooms into cooked mushrooms. They might not be quite as tasty as they would be if she did them in a pan, but they would be fine for an omelette. As the lightly beaten eggs were cooking and it did seem the right temperature Minerva sliced some brown bread, waved her wand to toast it on both sides, then she charmed a knife to spread butter on the toast while she tended to the eggs. Another spell, and the cheese was grated and settled into the eggs. She added the mushrooms then folded the omelette over. It was a little bit . . . browner than an omelette should be, but it was by no means burned. Now for the tea.

A few minutes later, Minerva returned to the bedroom, a large tray floating in front of her. Albus raised his head from the pillow and blinked at her, apparently having fallen asleep again, but on her side of the bed.

"Breakfast in bed?" Minerva asked.

"That always sounds much more decadent and cosy than it turns out to be. Although it is nice to have a cup of tea before one's feet hit the floor . . . but let's do it as we did before. I'll set up a table for us, my dear."

Albus took his wand and in moments, there were a table and chairs set up in the centre of the room, then he lit a fire in the fireplace and lifted the filter charm from the windows as Minerva began to put their breakfast on the table.

"I still don't know how to use your cooker, Albus, but I made us an omelette," Minerva said, indicating the covered plate in the centre of the table and beginning to pour their tea.

"How very clever of you, my dear! And you said you can't cook," Albus replied brightly, sitting across from Minerva and removing the lid from the omelette plate. "It looks and smells lovely. And there's toast, as well." He reached for the toast rack.

Minerva began to rise from her chair. "I forgot the jam "

"No worries, my dear! I know where it is!" Albus Summoned the jam from the kitchen, and a moment later, it floated in through the door and came to rest on the table.

"Take as much of the omelette as you like, Albus. It has cheese and mushrooms." Minerva looked at the omelette again. It seemed wilted somehow after its time on the plate, though it still steamed in the slightly chilly bedroom, and it looked browner to her than it had in the kitchen. "If you don't like it, though, you needn't eat it."

"Nonsense! Cheese and mushroom omelettes are very good things." Albus helped himself to precisely half of the omelette then put the other half on Minerva's plate.

Minerva tasted it. It wasn't bad, and not overcooked, as she had feared, but it seemed a bit bland. And she hadn't brought any salt and pepper. "Albus? Do you suppose you could Summon the salt and pepper?"

"Of course, my dear!"

As soon as Minerva made use of the seasoning, Albus salted his own omelette.

"It's very nice. Two different cheeses are always lovely in an omelette. Thank you for breakfast!" Albus said with a smile.

Minerva smiled. It really wasn't too bad. No doubt Albus could have done better, but she was glad he was enjoying it.

When they finished eating, Minerva rose and looked out the west windows from which the sea and a rocky beach were usually visible, but although the rain had more-or-less stopped, it was still misty and grey, and she couldn't see the shoreline at all.

"Not a very nice morning for an outing," Minerva said. "Do you think it will clear up?"

Albus shrugged. "I presume so, though it doesn't look very promising for this morning. What do you say to another little nap?"

He had cleared the breakfast things away and banished the table and chairs while she had been at the window.

"Well . . ." Minerva pretended to be undecided.

"We needn't sleep during our nap," Albus said, his eyes sparkling as he looked at Minerva, her silhouette outlined by the grey morning light behind her.

"No? What else might we do?"

Albus removed his dressing gown and slippers. "I can think of a few things that I might like to do," he said.

"Such as?" Minerva watched him, hoping he would remove his nightshirt.

"This and that," Albus replied. He unbuttoned the few buttons at the top of his nightshirt and, seeing Minerva watching him, he smiled, then pulled the garment off over his head and tossed it aside.

He was beginning to get an erection, and Minerva's eyes focussed on that as Albus sat at the foot of the bed across from her.

"This and that?"

"Yes . . . I think I might like to . . . help you from your nightgown first, my dear, then I would like to feel your skin next to mine and lie down with you. And I would like to kiss you. I would like to kiss your lips . . . and your throat . . . and your beautiful breasts. I think I would tarry there awhile, holding you, your bare skin next to mine as I kissed your breasts." Albus's erection grew as he spoke. "But I do not think I could stop with just kissing them. You have lovely nipples, so wonderful to close my lips around, to lick and suck. And you have two, and I wouldn't want one of your breasts to feel neglected, so I would have to pause quite a while, I believe, and pay them both very careful attention."

Minerva was beginning to grow very warm and her clitoris was tingling as arousal settled into her, a heaviness and warmth expanding in her crux. She opened the sash of her dressing gown.

"Well, that does sound interesting, for a start," she said, letting her dressing gown fall to the floor behind her.

"Yes, that would be just a start, though. Because I would also like to kiss you elsewhere. Your chest, your stomach, your arms, your legs . . ."

Albus rose and approached Minerva. He half knelt before her, taking the hem of her nightgown in both hands, then he stood, raising the nightgown and baring her from the waist down. He gazed down at her crux, then his eyes travelled higher, and he smiled when he reached her breasts.

"It is a lovely nightgown, Minerva. I like this lace particularly. It gives me just a peek at your beautiful breasts and your creamy skin." He bent his head and kissed her through the lace. "But," he continued, "I think I prefer you . . . without it."

Albus raised the nightgown up over her head, removing it entirely. He let it fall where her dressing gown lay. Stepping back he looked at her. "Gods, Minerva . . . how can I be so fortunate? You are beautiful and I love you and you are here with me . . . I sometimes think that I will awaken and discover it is a dream. It never seemed possible." He seemed amazed.

"It is no dream, Albus, unless we are sharing it. And I never wish to wake up, if it is one," Minerva replied. "But you were telling me about this nap you would like to take. And where you would like to kiss me."

"Ah, yes . . . I would like to kiss you everywhere, my dear, and I would like it if you would allow me to kiss you here." He reached out one hand and touched her crux lightly.

"I think I would allow that," Minerva said with a smile.

"I would like to do that, then, and what else I would like to do during our nap . . . we can decide that as we proceed. If you are enjoying it, of course."

"Of course," Minerva replied. "If we are both enjoying it, we might think of other things to do."

Albus took Minerva in his arms and kissed her. A wave of his hand, and the covers were drawn back on the bed. He lay her down, resting close to her, running his hands over her body as he continued to kiss her, he pressed his erection against her side. Minerva ran her fingers through his hair and turned so that her breasts brushed against his chest and beard. Albus kissed her cheeks and her throat, moving his lips sensuously against her skin, then licking and sucking her earlobe gently. His fingers caressed her, her arms, her sides, her stomach, as his mouth roved her body, over her collarbone, down her shoulders to her chest, then to her breasts. He gently kissed her breasts everywhere until his lips found a nipple and closed around it, his tongue teasing it, and his hands continued to stroke her body, rounding the curves of her hips, and kneading her buttocks. Albus moved to her other side, suckling and licking her nipple, and began to tease the other with one hand. He stroked her inner thighs with feather-light touches, and Minerva moaned, grasping and squeezing his shoulders.

Albus chuckled against her, lifting his head briefly to smile at her. "You like this?" he asked, stroking her inner thigh with a teasing touch.

Minerva sighed, smiling, and said, "Very much . . . that and . . . what else you were doing, they feel very nice together."

"This?" Albus closed his mouth around her nipple again and began to suck as he caressed her soft skin.

Minerva moaned and opened her legs to him. Ripples of pleasure passed from her breasts to her crux and back again, the teasing strokes to her leg amplifying the tingling in her clitoris. She needed more, and she rocked her hips, trying to encourage Albus to touch her crux, but he simply began to stroke the inside of her other thigh, coming tantalizingly close but never touching her crux.

"Oh, gods, Albus, more . . . more, please, more," she begged.

Instead, Albus moved back up and kissed her lips, drawing her tongue into his mouth and teasing it with his own. He hummed into her mouth then drew back, kissing her lips softly. He gazed down into Minerva's eyes and smiled mischievously.

"Do you know what I would like to do now, my dear? Do you?" he asked, his own eyes sparkling.

"What would you like to do, Albus?" Minerva asked, her voice husky with desire.

"I would like to . . . kiss you . . . here." Albus drew his fingers up her leg and touched her crux lightly. "I would like to kiss you and tease you . . . right . . . here." His fingers parted her lips and found her clitoris. "And then, right here," he said, gently stroking her nub, "I would like to do this." He kissed her mouth then sucked her lower lip, then he said in warm whisper, "And then I want to do this . . ." He licked her lips then teased the tip of her tongue with his own as one finger rapidly flicked her clitoris.

Minerva moaned, raising her hips. "Oh, yes . . ."

"Then you know what else I would like?" Albus whispered.

"What?" Minerva asked breathlessly.

Albus slipped one hand under Minerva and rolled over on his back, bringing her with him. He drew her head down and kissed her, deepening the kiss and pulling her tongue into his mouth.

Releasing her, he said, "That is what I would like to do . . . here." He moved his hand to her crux again.

Minerva was breathing hard and her eyes were dark. "Yes . . ."

"Come, let me kiss you like that . . ." Albus raised her up and urged her to move forward until she was straddling his face and leaning against the wall at the head of the bed. "I like this . . . I like this very much. I can see your beautiful breasts as I kiss you and lick you and . . ."

His words were lost as he put his hands on her thighs and she lowered herself onto his mouth. Albus hummed as he licked from her entrance to her clitoris and back again. His tongue circled her nub, then he licked and flicked, his tongue moving rapidly first in one direction then the other as Minerva could not restrain her moans and sighs of pleasure. He moved one hand between her legs, and two fingers found her entrance, teasing and thrusting as he licked and flicked her nub. His fingers found her sweet spot and pulsed against it in time with his flicking tongue.

"Oh, gods, oh, gods, oh, gods, Albus!" Minerva came with a rush, shouting, one palm slapping the wall. Albus lapped at her clitoris, taking her all in, his eyes open and watching Minerva's face as she shouted his name again.

As Minerva's orgasm faded, she looked down into Albus's smiling eyes.

"I think it's time for that spell of yours, Albus," she said as she caught her breath. "Because I'm going to fuck you until you come, and then . . . and then, you will see!" Her eyes gleamed at the prospect.

She moved back down his body as he put one hand around his cock and whispered the spell. Minerva wasted no time lowering herself onto him, and Albus's eyes closed as he felt her vagina slide over him, but he opened them again to watch her as she moved over him, riding his erection. He raised his hands as Minerva bent toward him, and he caressed her breasts as she moved back and forth on his cock, flexing her muscles around him.

Minerva's eyes closed as she began to come again, her orgasm building slowly, then bursting through her in pulsing, electric waves. Albus moved his hands to Minerva's thighs, gripping them as his own orgasm overtook him, a dry but powerful climax.

"Minerva, oh, Minerva, my delight, my sweet, sweet delight! Oh, gods, what you do to me!"

Albus held her still, then embraced her as he caught his breath, his erection still large and firm in her. He nuzzled her hair, then kissed her jaw.

"More?" he asked in a whisper, raising his hips and moving against her.

Minerva lifted her head and smiled down at him. "More," she agreed with a nod. "But don't release the spell yet."

Albus raised his eyebrows. "You really want to use up all the potion I brought, don't you?" But he flipped her over, brought her legs together and began to pump and thrust, shifting as he increased her pleasure.

Sweat ran in rivulets down his back as he rose up on his hands and pushed into her, once, twice, three times more as he came, gasping. "Gods, Minerva . . ."

Minerva let him rest on top of her a bit, smiling as she felt his heart pounding in his chest. She rubbed his back, and when she judged he had rested long enough, she kissed his cheek and urged him to roll onto his back. Albus opened his eyes and smiled at her as she began to stroke his cock.

"Very nice, Headmaster Dumbledore. Very nice, indeed," she said, her gaze moving from his face down his body to where her hand was fondling his erect penis. "And a very impressive spell, as well." She licked her lips. "And as it is still a . . . wet morning, I think our nap should continue a bit longer." Minerva smiled at him. "This time, release the spell . . . just . . . let go," she whispered.

She moved around and lay beside him the other direction, her head propped on one elbow as she looked down at his penis. She fondled him, stroking him with the balls of her fingers and then teasing the crown. Bending her head, Minerva kissed first the tip of his cock followed by kissing his shaft, one kiss after another until she reached the base of his erection. As she kissed him again, the tip of her tongue emerged, swirling around the base of his cock, then tickling his balls gently. She pressed her tongue against his length and stroked up before taking his penis fully into her mouth. Minerva lowered herself onto him, relaxing as the head of his cock entered her throat then swallowing around him and humming low, the vibrations of her voice adding to the stimulation her mouth, tongue, and throat provided, and she was rewarded with a deep, guttural moan from Albus. She pulled up, shielding the sharp edges of her teeth with her lips, but biting down lightly as she drew her mouth over his shaft, taking in a breath and swallowing naturally as she did. Flicking her tongue across the head of his penis, she stroked him with her hand before lowering her mouth around him again. She began to move more rapidly, up and down, licking his length before closing her lips around him. The hand that was cupping his balls felt them retract slightly, and she thought that Albus's next gasp was a *Finite*, so she lowered herself fully around his cock again, swallowing around the crown. Albus gasped again and gripped her arm, then she felt his penis pulse as his balls retracted and she swallowed once more as she felt his climax in the back of her throat, then she swallowed again until Albus relaxed and his orgasm ended. Gently, she withdrew and smiled as she saw his clean, damp penis, spent and resting against his leg.

Minerva turned her head and looked up at Albus's face. His eyes were closed and he looked completely content and perfectly relaxed. She moved back up the bed and put her head on the pillow next to his, then kissed his cheek. Seeing that he was unlikely to exert himself any time soon, Minerva Summoned her wand and waved it to draw the covers up over them.

Minerva was watching his face as he turned to look at her. He smiled slightly. "Are you all right, my dear?" he asked.

"Mmmm, very, very all right."

Albus took her hand and brought it to his mouth, kissing it. "And that was . . . acceptable to you? You don't mind . . . that is, I wouldn't want you to do something you don't like just because I might."

"You *might* like it?" Minerva asked. She frowned slightly. "You seemed to enjoy it."

"I did. Very much. But . . . well, I just wanted to make sure . . . that is, I know you seem to enjoy it, you have said you like to do that," Albus said, seeming to struggle for words, "but ending like that, is that . . . you wanted me to, but . . ."

"Yes, I wanted you to." Minerva looked at him. She hoped he didn't think that there was something wrong with what they had just done, or something wrong with her for wanting to do it. They had made such progress in the last few days. But given his background . . . "I do enjoy it. Obviously not the same way that I do when I'm . . . being stimulated myself. But I love bringing you such pleasure, and," she said, drawing figures on his damp chest with her fingertips, "it is so very intimate. I love being so intimate with you, and knowing, too, that you are getting such pleasure from it. It's one of the great attractions of this spell, for me. I know that we can . . . take our pleasure with each other in different ways, including this. Only if you like it, though, and you like me to do it."

"Yes, I do. I do, very much, my dearest," Albus whispered. "I just wanted to be sure." He blushed. "That was actually, well, obviously not my very first time in that sort of, um, activity, um, even before you, but the first time for . . . for that particular outcome. Other than with the spell active. To climax like that. I just wanted to be sure you were happy with it, too."

Minerva didn't hide her smile. "Really?" She hadn't thought there was anything they could do together that he hadn't done before, particularly given the experience of his youth.

Albus nodded. "As you say, it's very intimate. And I never, um, other times, I . . . well, I never let go like that. It didn't seem that anyone else, not to bring anyone else into our love life, but . . . well, you said you wanted me to." He shrugged slightly, still pink-cheeked. "You probably think me ridiculous."

"No, not at all. I'm not smiling because of that. I just am happy that we have something that's a first for you. Not to imply that there's anything wrong with either of our experiences in the past, but . . . it's just nice to know that I can bring you a pleasure that's new to you, I suppose, one that only I have given you. Especially one so intimate."

Albus caressed her face. "There are so many firsts with you, Minerva, many, many more. This was just one of them."

"Other firsts? Such as?"

"The first witch I made love to in a stairwell, or in a rocking chair. And the first woman I made love to on a beach or in front of an audience of seals!" he said with a bright smile.

Minerva chuckled.

"And there are others, my sweetest love," Albus said more seriously, "but that was the most intimate of them, as you say." He kissed her forehead then looked into her eyes. "For all my fears in the beginning, I trust you more than anyone I have been with. And it goes without saying that I love you beyond all others. You are my beloved, my dearest, and my sweet, sweet delight."

"And you are mine, Albus, my darling, dearest, most wonderful wizard. There is none other that can compare. I love you." She kissed him again, then snuggled against him.

They rested for a while, speaking in soft voices, their arms around each other, their legs entwined, until they both dozed. When they woke together and the sun seemed to peek briefly through the clouds, they rose and dressed in a leisurely fashion before finally going downstairs. Albus insisted on doing the washing up from breakfast, such as it was, since Minerva had fixed it, and Minerva went into the library and poked around. She found a shelf containing games and decks of cards, and she smiled happily as she pulled out a backgammon set. Now *there* was one game at which she was a master. She could give Albus a run for his money, at least.

After three games won, however, she was somewhat surprised to see Albus gamely set up the pieces again.

"Another game, Albus? You don't want to try something different this time?"

Albus shook his head. "No. Backgammon is fine. And you enjoy it." He looked up and grinned at her. "Why, afraid I'll make a comeback?"

Minerva laughed. "Are you sure you aren't letting me win, Albus?"

"No such thing. Just some bad luck, that's all your rolls have been better than mine. And then when I'm on the bar, I can't seem to get off."

"You leave yourself open needlessly, Albus. And I find it hard to believe you aren't letting me win that opening move last time . . . you had a six and a four, and you didn't take advantage of it, but made your first mistake, leaving a piece open, which I bumped, and it was all downhill after that."

Albus chuckled. "I will admit to being somewhat rusty, and also to being distracted."

"Distracted?"

Albus nodded. "I keep thinking of our lovely morning upstairs in our room, and of how much I am looking forward to our next nap." He grinned. "Or just having you sit on my lap here, your warmth against me, your soft curves . . ."

"Those are distracting thoughts," Minerva admitted. "But no excuse for your poor performance. If you don't do better this game, I will be certain that you are letting me win."

"I think that perhaps if we made the game more interesting . . . a little wager, perhaps."

"I've already won, in that case, unless you intend to play a good many more games."

"No, just on the basis of the next game. Now that I've had a bit of practise," Albus said.

"I don't know . . . what kind of wager?"

"Oh, if you win . . . you can take me however you wish, have me do whatever you like. And if I win . . . I can make love to you however I like, take the pleasure of your beautiful body, loving you as I wish."

"It sounds as though we would both win. Not much of a gamble there," Minerva said with a laugh.

"Oh, but you see, there is a difference. If you win, I will do whatever you say, I " he hesitated. "Although perhaps this isn't the best game, nor the best wager."

Minerva's mind raced back to the confessions he had made to her, weeks before they had discovered the nature of their love for one another. How he had fallen into depression as a very young man and had attempted to escape it through a profligate and irresponsible life, leading him even to keeping witches company in exchange for a warm meal and a bed. "Keeping company" being a euphemism for using sex, allowing himself to be used and using the women he was with. The situations were entirely dissimilar. He had overcome so much in their physical relationship, revealing a playful and passionate lover; he would also overcome any lingering fears about how his behaviour many decades ago might affect their relationship. He likely thought she would make the association and feel repulsed or he made the association and felt repulsed. Either way, she would have to change that.

"On second thought, I think I do like this wager, Albus," Minerva said, adding with a laugh, "As long as I can wait to collect my winnings. I am still a bit tired from our earlier love-making."

"Ah, well, all right, if you wish, my dear," Albus said mildly. "And either of us can collect at any time."

"At any time before we leave tomorrow, though," Minerva said. "But you must try to beat me, or it's all off, and I will be quite unhappy with you!"

Albus nodded. "I shall do my best."

"I'll let you go first, since I'm altruistic that way," Minerva said. She nodded in approval when he made the correct opening move with his five and three. She was going to put up a fight, though. She wanted to win. She wanted to teach Albus something about himself, about her, and about the two of them together. She would teach the Headmaster a lesson . . .

Chapter Nine

Chapter 9 of 12

Minerva collects on their wager, and they look for Innis Ablach on their last evening on the island.

Note: Not DH compliant. Disregards DH entirely.



Chapter Nine

Minerva watched as Albus sauteed the onions and chicken in a large pan. Eggs and a canister of flour stood next to a mixing bowl on the table.

"So what are we having for lunch, Albus?"

"What I had planned for last night's dinner, my dear. Chicken paprikash with spaetzle. Spinach, as well, as that appears to be your preferred vegetable."

"Mmm, I adore spaetzle!" Minerva said. Their breakfast, to her mind, had not been particularly filling.

"I am glad do you know how to make it? No? Well, I'll make the batter and let you drop it in the water. That's fun," Albus said.

"I don't know if you should trust me with it," Minerva said with a frown. She didn't want to ruin Albus's meal.

"Nonsense! It will be fine, my dear. Now, there should be a crock of sour cream in the cool cupboard. Could you get it for me?"

A short while later, they were sitting down to their meal. After making just a little bit of a mess in the beginning, Minerva had caught on to how to drop the spaetzle through the holes of the spaetzle maker, glad of her wand to keep the batter from pouring too quickly, and the spaetzle looked as pretty as any she had ever had other than a few rather large blobs of noodle, but they would taste fine, Albus had assured her.

"Eat well, Albus you'll need your strength for what I have in mind for you!" Minerva said jokingly. She had won the backgammon game, though it was a good deal closer than the previous three, and Albus had only four pieces remaining on the board when she had declared victory.

"Of course, my dear," Albus replied. "But I had thought we might go out to see the tumulus and the standing stones now that the rain has stopped."

"I think a walk would be nice, myself," Minerva agreed. "But I am feeling just a wee bit sore, muscular and, um, otherwise. I think I need just a nip of the pain potion before we go out."

"Perhaps it might be best just to . . . let the soreness work itself out naturally," Albus suggested.

"I doubt I will enjoy the walk as much, though, or the later activities I have planned for us," Minerva said.

Albus nodded. "Very well, before our walk. We might both benefit from it, then. And after it all, we can take baths with some of the other potion in the water. It is quite effective for the more superficial soreness and chafing."

Minerva detected some reluctance on Albus's part. She reached across the table and placed her hand on his, smiling. "We will have fun today, Albus." Her eyes sparkled. "I am quite looking forward to it."

Albus returned her smile and raised her hand to his lips, kissing it. "I am glad, Minerva."

An hour later, Albus dressed once again in his walking robes of soft greens, browns, and blues, and Minerva in mossy green with rust-coloured swirls, the two left the cottage and headed up the slope, north toward the hills and following a burn that leapt south over water-rounded rocks, full and splashing after the long rain. Minerva could see flashes of silvery fleeting fish in the fast running stream, and Albus told her that there were several kinds of fish in the streams on the island, including trout.

"Aberforth used to fish. He fixed me fresh trout when I would visit. But I don't fish. I am satisfied to have others do that aspect of my food preparation for me."

Minerva chuckled. "Squeamish about catching a few fish, but willing to eat them?"

Albus shrugged. "I just can't bear to see them flopping about out of water." He grinned at her. "They are delicious, though!"

After they had walked for about forty minutes over the rolling braes, Albus suggested that they Apparate the rest of the way.

"Just to the top of the hill," he said, "Then we will have a nice view of both the tumulus and the menhirs in the stone circle, and we can walk down"

Minerva agreed, and Albus put his arms around her. As he kissed her, he Apparated them both to the top of the smallest of the three large hills or small mountains, depending on one's perspective. Minerva turned in his arms, leaning back against him, and took in the view. To the west, the afternoon sun cast shadows behind the standing stones, a perfect circle, it appeared to Minerva, with more smaller stones creating a lane leading eastward from the break between the hills to the stone circle. Albus turned them slightly so that she could see the burial mound, a small, slightly flattened hill to the east of where they stood, and not within view of the stones.

"Which would you like to see first?"

"I think viewing the tumulus from here is sufficient," Minerva said. "Let's go down to the stones shall we walk?"

Albus bent his head and kissed her just above her ear, then he whispered, "A bit nervous about disturbing the dead, Minerva?"

"Well, we wouldn't disturb them, even if they could be disturbed. And there really isn't very much to see that we can't see from here, I'm sure. But . . . just as well to leave the dead to the dead, I think."

Albus laughed.

They spent the next hour walking around the stone circle, Albus explaining their age and some of the ritual purposes people supposed they might have served. "Of course, this was many thousands of years before there was any separation between the magical and the Muggle, but it is assumed that as long as there have been human beings, there have been those with magical gifts, gifts which became stronger in some until, after millennia, there were two distinct classes of people, the largest number of which had no magic whatsoever, and it was they who multiplied."

As they walked west down the lane, Minerva asked, "But there used to be more of us of us in the wizarding world weren't there? Even a hundred years ago. From what *Hogwarts, A History*, indicates, classes were larger, there were more students, more teachers even Hogsmeade was larger. And Hogwarts didn't used to educate such a large proportion of wizarding children, either. That seems to be a relatively recent development. That must mean that there were far, far more of us earlier than there are now, and our population is shrinking even as the Muggle population is exploding."

Albus nodded. "That is true. There were almost twice as many students at Hogwarts when I was a boy than there are now, and a hundred years before that, another quarter more," he said. "And you are correct that it is only in the last few hundred years that more than ninety percent of wizarding families chose to send their children to Hogwarts, or any other wizarding school, yet at the same time, fewer Muggle families are willing to send their Muggle-born witches and wizards to Hogwarts, meaning that there are more completely untrained and magically unsophisticated Muggle-borns walking around in the Muggle world." Albus sighed and shook his head sadly. "Many of them do fine in the Muggle world. Their magical gifts, while they never completely disappear, atrophy through disuse and suppression. Others, though . . . they end their lives as alcoholics, or in Muggle asylums. Some do find their own way into the magical world, once they are of age. But they are untrained, completely and utterly untrained, not merely unschooled. If they remain in the wizarding world, they must take menial jobs, pick up what magic they can, learn to use a wand from kind friends and strangers. An unschooled Muggle-born witch or wizard in the wizarding world is actually worse off than a Squib in many ways. And, of course, the pureblood prejudice against Muggle-borns is simply reinforced by their presence in our society. I hope that in the next few decades, I can change the trend, convince more Muggles to send their young witches and wizards to Hogwarts. I had some success as Dippet's Deputy. I hope that in the next years, I will be able to improve the trend even more."

Their conversation drifted from Hogwarts to the history of magic, and they soon reached the last of the standing stones. Despite being in a valley between the two hills, they were still well above sea-level, and they had an excellent view of the shore and the sea.

"It truly is beautiful here, Albus," Minerva said, squeezing his arm. "Thank you again for bringing me to your island and indulging my whims. I really do appreciate it."

Albus kissed her temple. "You are most welcome . . . and it is your island too, now, or will be once we reset the wards." He paused, gazing out over the water. "And I will indulge your whims later today, too, as you wish." He glanced down at her, his eyes soft with affection. She hadn't seemed to associate their wager with the sorts of exchanges he had made as a dissolute youth, and, he reassured himself, it would be different with Minerva. He would do as she pleased regardless of any wager; it should make no difference. Nonetheless, he was slightly nervous about the associations that might arise in his mind and the possible affect that might have on their relationship, on the dynamic between them. But his feelings toward her could not change . . . they could not change. He would not allow them to change.

"I love you, you know, Minerva," he said softly.

Minerva looked up at him, a brilliant smile on her face, "Yes, I do know it. And I love you."

She put her arms around his neck and drew him down for a kiss. She snuggled against his chest, and they stood there for a while, surrounded by the sounds of the sea, the wind, and the birds above.

Finally, Minerva said softly, "Let's go home now, Albus. Let's have our tea."

Albus kissed the top of her head and Apparated them back to the main room of the cottage.

"Let me fix the tea, Albus. You have done so much cooking, and as much as I would like to offer to do more, well, this morning's breakfast was the height of my culinary skills."

"That's fine. There are some nice chocolate biscuits in a tin in the same cupboard as the flour. Those would be nice."

"Hungry for anything more? *I can* do sandwiches," Minerva said.

"No, just some biscuits, thank you."

A few minutes later, they were curled up together on the sofa, sipping their tea and munching their biscuits.

"Up for more backgammon?" Albus asked.

"No . . . but I'll have to bring my set from home. We can play at Hogwarts."

"There are other games here. Draughts. Chess. Playing cards. Snap. Exploding snap, but the charms are going. It's more sort of 'sparking snap' now," Albus said with a chuckle.

"Snap's more fun with a lot of people and when you're a bit tipsy," Minerva said. "Otherwise, it's rather dull. And I don't feel like playing that sort of game, anyway." She set her teacup down on the low table in front of her. "I feel rather . . . like . . . another . . . sort . . . of game." Minerva had begun to kiss Albus in whatever place she could easily reach and was playing with his beard. She slipped her hand under his beard, running it over his chest. She looked up at him. "If you're finished with your tea, I think I will collect on our wager now."

Her fingers crept toward the Charmed shoulder seam whose secret she now knew, but Albus caught up her hand and kissed her fingers. "I think one more cup of tea. Then I should . . . freshen myself for you."

"No need for that, but have another cup of tea, if you like. We can still start now." She smiled at him. "I do love to watch you, Albus, no matter what you are doing. So I shall sit here and watch you drink your tea and think how marvellous life is and how wonderful you are and how very, very lucky I am."

Albus poured himself another cup of tea, but after two sips, he set the cup down. "I don't suppose I was as thirsty as I thought." He nodded at her. "Unless you would prefer that I finish it."

Minerva laughed. "No, not if you don't want it." She leaned forward and kissed his lips lightly, pretending not to notice that he seemed nervous. This would work best, she thought, if she simply proceeded as though she had no notion about his nervousness or the cause of it.

"Let's go upstairs," Minerva whispered.

Albus nodded. He wondered if he should ask her whether there were some ground rules they should set, but that might make it seem as though he didn't trust her, and he did.

Minerva took his hand and led him up the stairs to their bedroom. She kissed him again, then said, "I think I'll use the loo, then if you'd like to take a turn, that might be best. No interruptions once we get started, then."

After Albus had used the loo, brushing out his hair and beard and washing his hands, face, and other bits he thought might need it, he returned to the bedroom to find that the bedclothes were turned back and that Minerva had conjured a settee or, more properly speaking, a chaise longue, a sort of fainting couch. Minerva was simply sitting on it, leaning against one arm and waiting for him to return. He paused outside the bathroom door, unsure what she expected of him, then he reminded himself that this was Minerva. Nothing there had changed. And the settee was certainly one of her more imaginative bits of conjury.

He smiled at her and said, "Very nice, Minerva."

"I thought you might approve," Minerva said, pleased.

The upholstery was flowered, Albus noticed just then, with hummingbirds and bumblebees drinking the nectar from open blossoms of dusky red. Rather . . . suggestive in this context, he suddenly thought.

"So, I am at your disposal, my dear!" Albus said, sketching a slight bow.

"Disposal.' I don't think I like that word," Minerva said with a frown. "Makes you sound like something I'd discard in the bin when we're through." She looked him up and down. "You are most assuredly not disposable. But . . . as far as what I would like . . . first, I would like you to undress. And take your time."

Albus sat at the end of the bed and removed his shoes and socks, then he stood facing Minerva and placed a finger at the Charmed shoulder seam. The charm released, and the seam opened down the shoulder then down the side of the chest, then continued down to the hem. There wasn't much he could do to take any more time with it, but he pulled back the front of his robes, then pulled them off, sending them to drape across the back of the rocking chair.

Minerva beckoned to him, and he took a few steps toward her. She held up her hand and stopped him, then she stood, looking him up and down. Although not completely flaccid, his penis was not erect, either, but that didn't bother her.

"Turn around," she said softly.

Albus obediently turned away from her and waited. He felt her hands on his shoulders, smoothing over his muscles, then down his arms.

"Beautiful," Minerva murmured. "Beautiful." Her hands moved back up to his shoulders, then she ran them under his hair, over his back, down to his waist, then back up again. "So beautiful."

She kneaded his muscles gently and briefly before again pressing her hands against him and slowly drawing them down his back. This time, she did not stop at his waist, but proceeded to feel his lower back, her fingers splayed as she drew her hands over his skin. Then her hands were at his buttocks, kneading and caressing. Then her arms came around him, and she felt his chest, stroking her hands over his pectorals then down over his ribs, all the time murmuring words of praise and appreciation for his masculine form.

"Such a treat, this, Albus, such a treat." She ran her hands over his stomach and down to his now-growing erection. She kissed the centre of his back as one hand explored his penis and his balls. Without turning him around, she said, "Go lie down on the bed. On your stomach, facing toward the bathroom door, please."

Albus did as she asked, but he was somewhat puzzled about what she intended. He hadn't had any specific expectations, but he had thought that by this point, he would

be pleasuring her in some way. It certainly wouldn't have been onerous, and bringing Minerva pleasure was in itself a pleasure and quite exciting, even if he received no direct stimulation himself. The only difficult thing about this for him was not being able to look at Minerva. He did so love to see her, especially when she was aroused. That morning, watching her face and her breasts as he pleased her with his tongue . . . the mere thought increased his erection. He could hear Minerva moving about the room, and he raised his head.

"Ah-ah-ah!" Minerva said admonishingly. "No peeking! And scoot over to the centre of the bed, please."

Albus "scooted" as she had directed, and the friction of the sheet against his penis brought him almost to a full erection. He briefly pressed his hips into the mattress, then he felt Minerva's weight beside him.

"Comfortable, Albus, darling?"

"Yes, quite."

"Good, I'm glad."

A pleasant scent met Albus's nose. Rose and some warm spices, he thought. Then he felt Minerva's hands on his shoulders again, and a warmed oil being rubbed into his skin.

"I'm sorry if it's a bit more floral than what you might prefer," Minerva said softly, "but I rather like it, and it's what I have with me."

"It's very nice, actually." And there would be no one but Minerva to notice him smelling like roses.

As her hands rubbed his shoulders and back, Albus grew puzzled. "I am sorry, my dear, but you did win that last game, you know. The wager was that I would be at your service, that I would do whatever you like, that you would have your every desire met, every pleasure given."

"And you have done admirably to this point," Minerva said, working the muscles in his lower back. "But we are not nearly done. And, should you have any doubt, this is my desire and I am taking great, great pleasure in it." She began to massage some of the oil into his buttocks, kneading the muscles. "Now, you just lie quietly, relax, and allow me to enjoy this. In fact, I believe some music might be in order."

She summoned her wand, and a moment later, Ravel wafted through the room, as though there were musicians set up in the corner.

"I do very much like the musical box, Albus." She kissed the back of his head. "I am going to enjoy it a great deal, I am sure. If your neck is getting stiff, you might want to turn your head," she added.

Albus did as she suggested, but he still was unable to see her, as she now straddled him, and he could tell that she must have disrobed at some point. Completely disrobed, he thought, as he felt her over his buttocks as she began to massage his shoulders again, this time working her way down each arm, not neglecting his fingers, massaging each one individually, and pressing her thumbs into the palms of his hands.

"You have such lovely hands, Albus," she whispered.

"Old. Old hands," he replied.

"Lovely," she countered.

"The oldest part of me, I think."

"Shush. None of that, now."

She turned, still straddling him, and began to massage his legs. "And wonderful legs. Strong, long, beautiful legs."

Minerva finished with his feet, separating the toes and massaging each one, pressing her fingers into his arch, and finally eliciting a moan of appreciation.

"Well, that's good I was beginning to think you don't enjoy massages, and I did hope I wasn't the only one enjoying this!" Minerva said.

She moved to one side. "Now, roll over on your back." As he did, Minerva saw his erection and smiled. "And that is a welcome sight." She reached out and touched it with one finger.

"Now, is this spell of yours difficult to learn?" she asked

"It might be," Albus replied. "I didn't get it right the first couple of times I tried it, then once I did get it right and I understood better how it worked, I translated it from Pali, and that seemed to make it easier for me to cast."

"Pali? Where did you learn it?" she asked, casually stroking one finger up his cock and back down again.

"When I was with Master Nyima. It was in one of the texts I studied when Mother Dragon and I were neighbours," he explained. "Naturally, I was curious." He blushed. "And, naturally, I had no one to, um, practise with. But I did get it to work. It is not very enjoyable, odd as that might sound, when you're on your own. Sort of a case of, um, . . . once is enough, if you know what I mean. And as I . . . as I became more devoted to my work . . . I had no particular occasion to use it again for a great many years." Albus stopped. He really did not want to talk to her about any occasions on which he might have used it before he was with her.

"Well, perhaps today is not the best day for me to learn it, then, if it takes practise to cast. And," she added with a smirk, "if this is the only wand one uses." She grasped his cock and squeezed it gently. "Cast the spell on yourself, please, Albus."

Albus did as she asked.

Minerva nodded. "Very good. I will let you know when you may release the spell although if you become uncomfortable or have some other difficulty, you must let me know!"

"I will," Albus promised.

Minerva put more oil on her hands and began to rub his chest, making her way down his abdomen, avoiding his penis, then massaging the fronts of his legs. As she finished, she ended with her head near his stomach, and she bent and kissed the tip of his penis.

"Mmm, it is lovely." Her tongue flicked out and stroked across the head of his cock. "And I know what I would like to do with it. With your assistance." She turned her head and looked up at Albus, a grin on her face.

"Really?"

"Mmmhmm." She was looking at his erection again, lazily running her fingers over it. "I have noticed," she said slowly, "that you seem to have something of an appreciation for my breasts, am I right?"

"You are. You have the most beautiful breasts, such delectable nipples," Albus replied, his eyes moving to gaze at them.

She looked back up at him. "Fuck them," she said bluntly.

Albus blinked. "What?"

"You work out the details. But," she said again, "fuck them. Until you come."

"Well, um, all right." He swallowed. He wasn't entirely sure how to go about it, but the thought of his penis rubbing against her breasts caused his cock to twitch. "Could you sit up? At the head of the bed?"

Minerva moved to sit where he indicated. Albus straddled her legs and reached out to fondle her breasts. Her nipples were peaked, and he brushed his thumbs over them. He raised his eyes and met hers. "I don't know how well this will work, but I will try."

He put more pillows behind her. "Now, just lean back."

Albus moved forward until the tip of his cock was brushing her skin, then he rose up on his knees until his cock was between her breasts. He looked at Minerva's face again. She was simply watching him, though she had placed her hands very lightly on his thighs.

"I don't know how much pleasure you will get from this, my dear, and if you are uncomfortable, you must tell me."

"I am fine. Just . . . pleasure yourself against me. Let me feel your length between my breasts, let me know what you are feeling, that you are enjoying it. I want you to take pleasure in this."

"You know, when you win this sort of bet, you are supposed to take advantage of it, Minerva. I don't think you quite understand the point," Albus said.

"Mmm, I believe I do. You are my sex slave for the rest of the day." At his expression, she amended, "Well, until we get hungry for our supper, anyway!" She grinned up at him.

Albus chuckled and lowered himself to kiss her.

"Mm, that was nice, Albus, but not what I requested," Minerva said. "Not that I'm objecting, of course. But . . . you are supposed to be fucking my breasts, those breasts you find so delectable."

Albus fondled her breasts again, then rose up on his knees and pressed her breasts on either side of his erection. Minerva kissed his stomach, and he began to move between her breasts, but he was still nervous and slightly uncomfortable about what he was doing, and he didn't think he could come like this. With the spell in place, perhaps he could fake it, he thought, and she wouldn't know the difference.

"Look down, Albus," Minerva said softly. "Look down and see your penis between my breasts, moving between my breasts. I love your cock, Albus, both soft and hard, so long and firm, and you're fucking my breasts with your hard cock," she whispered. "I love it when you fuck me, Albus, and I love it when you come; I love to know that you are in the ecstasy that I feel when you fuck me and I come."

Albus let out a moaning sigh as Minerva spoke, and he could feel his arousal building as he looked down at his cock between her breasts and listened to her talk. He didn't think he would have to try to fake it, after all.

Minerva looked up at him and continued. "I sometimes can almost come just listening to your voice, you know, Albus. I cannot count the number of times I have had to go and wipe myself dry because your voice aroused me so. And that is just your voice, but your touch . . . when you touch me, I never want you to stop, and I want you to continue to touch me, to stroke me, to feel my wetness, to put your fingers in me, deep in me."

Albus gasped as he began to come between Minerva's breasts, pushing against her chest as he came. He rested his forehead against the wall and let go of her breasts, placing his hands on her shoulders until he caught his breath.

"Come, now, sit beside me," Minerva said, patting the bed next to her. When he did, eyes closed, leaning his head back, she took hold of his cock. "Very nice job with that spell." She smiled and looked up at him. "You didn't think you could do that, did you?"

He turned his head. "You are a little vixen, Minerva." Albus said, his eyes smiling down at her.

"Yes, I believe I am," she replied, and with no further ado, she rose up and in one fluid motion, swung her leg over him and lowered herself onto his cock, moaning as he filled her. She pulled his head to her and began to kiss him as she rode him, pleasuring them both until she came, her hands gripping him hard as she pounded down on him, her clit rubbing him, feeling her orgasm through her entire body, and finally going entirely limp against him. She turned her head just enough to whisper to him, "Now take me again, hard, hard, Albus, very hard, until you come."

Albus rolled them both onto the bed without pulling out of her; with Minerva on her back with her head near the foot of the bed, he began to pump hard, as Minerva had requested. He raised her up so that her shoulders were still on the bed, but her buttocks were supported by a spell, and he continued to thrust into her, hard and fast, one finger flicking over her clit as he did, and Minerva came again, crying out as her orgasm overwhelmed her, and Albus followed on, another deep but dry orgasm pulsing through him.

Albus released the spell holding Minerva up, and he lay beside her as they both caught their breath.

"I love you, Albus," Minerva murmured, reaching out with one hand and letting it come to rest on his stomach. "I love you more than life itself. You are my life, my darling Albus."

Albus kissed the side of her head. "You said not to release the spell until you told me to, so . . . I am still . . ."

Minerva smirked. "Good. When you have caught your breath, then, you can do the same again. But from the back this time, I think. That always feels very nice, though it is a bit of a trade-off as I cannot embrace you or see your face." She rolled over onto her side.

Albus Summoned his wand. "I can fix one part of that for you, my dear."

He waved his wand, and facing her on the bedroom door, there was now a large mirror in which Minerva could now see them both.

"I'm not sure how I feel about seeing myself . . . but I will focus on you and your face," she said.

"And I will look at you as I embrace you from behind and watch as I fondle your breasts as I make love to you."

"You may release the spell this time, by the way," Minerva added.

Albus lay behind her and embraced her, caressing her breasts, her stomach, and her crux as he kissed her shoulders. When she seemed to be ready for more, he urged her to bend her legs, and he slipped into her.

"Oh, that is good, Albus, that is very, very good . . ."

He continued to caress and kiss her as he slowly moved within her, moving in rhythm with the music, *Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue*.

"I love you, Minerva, you are my love and my light. I love you so, my sweet flower, my darling," he whispered as he thrust, slowly at first, then as Minerva's breathing quickened, increasing the force and speed with which he pumped into her. "This is so good, Minerva, making love to you is so good."

"Yes, make love to me, Albus, make love to me forever . . . make love to me with your eyes, your hands, your cock, your mouth, your soul! Love me, Albus, love me! Yes, yes, Albus, yes . . . oh, I love you, I love you, my darling, most dear Albus." Her words became moans, and she came as her orgasm rushed through her in waves, seeming to enter her very breath; she saw only stars and felt nothing but Albus behind her and her orgasm within her.

A few minutes later, she became aware that Albus was just holding her and kissing her shoulder gently. From the dampness she felt, she assumed that they had both climaxed.

"Was that all right, Albus?" she asked.

Albus chuckled softly, then his chuckle became a laugh. "It was marvellous, Minerva. It was wonderful."

"Good," she said with a sigh. "I am rather tired now."

"So am I. What do you say we turn around, put our heads on the pillows, pull up the covers, and have a bit of a snuggle?"

"Excellent suggestion." Minerva yawned. "Then we can get some supper . . . once we've rested some. And perhaps play more backgammon. But I don't want to miss the sunset we haven't missed it yet, have we?"

"No, but we shall if we take our nap and have our snuggle," Albus replied.

Minerva was torn, but she sat up. "Snuggle after sunset. After all," she said, Summoning her robes and looking back at him, "how often will we have a sunset here? And now that the rain has completely passed, we should have a good view of the horizon."

They Apparated to the top of the tallest hill and looked out to the west. Albus waved his wand and conjured a glider for them.

"We can still have a bit of a snuggle while we watch for Ablach," he said.

"You always have the best ideas, Albus!"

They gently rocked back and forth in the glider, Albus almost falling asleep as the sun began to disappear, seemingly slowly swallowed by the black sea, when Minerva suddenly sat up and pointed.

"Look, look, Albus!" She shook him. "Look! Three hills! And . . . and some kind of building on the top of the highest one! And the island's green, I think! Do you see? Do you see it, Albus?"

Albus squinted. "Um . . ."

"There . . . look there, before it disappears again."

"I think I see a darker shadow, perhaps a dark cloud on the horizon?"

"No! Don't you see it? It's clear as . . . clear as anything . . . but now it's gone." She sat back into the swing and turned to look at Albus. Puzzled, she asked, "You really didn't see it? It was so clear. There was a building, and there were standing stones, too, I think. And I could see the shape of the entire island."

Albus shook his head. "I didn't see it. As I said, there was a darker patch there, where you were pointing, but . . . it could as easily have been a cloud as an island. I don't doubt, however, that you saw it, my dear."

"Well, that's good, as I certainly don't doubt it. At least . . . I don't think I doubt it. But why could I see it and you not?"

Albus shrugged. "Perhaps my state of mind was not right. And as I said before, women seem to see it far more frequently than men do."

"Oh, well, next time we come, we will do the same again. I want you to be able to see it one day, Albus. And now that I've seen it once, I want to see it again."

Albus smiled. "Very well, my dear. Though it may be a very long wait."

"I don't mind. I am very patient." She returned his smile. "After all, look how long I waited for you!"

"And how long was that, my dear?" Albus asked.

"Years and years, Albus, years and years . . . a lifetime or more." She stood and said briskly, "Time for our supper, Albus. I am hungry after all of our activity!"

Albus nodded. He would never deny Minerva anything if he could grant it, he thought as he took her in his arms and Apparated them both back to the cottage. He would love her and protect her for the rest of his life; however her feelings for him might change, he would always love her and protect her. Always.

Note: If you are enjoying the ADMM lemons in this story, you might enjoy "Obliging Minerva," also here on TPP. If you simply enjoy the lemons, check out "Heat," which is not ADMM, but which is, well, hot! If you like this AD, you might enjoy "The Unsentimental Arithmancer," which depicts this Albus forty years before the events in "Holiday with the Headmaster." All three of those stories are one-shots; for this same ADMM almost forty years after this story, read An Act of Love, which is a chaptered fic of about 160,000 words and which has lots of ADMM lemons. Of course, there is also Resolving a Misunderstanding, which is a mammoth story that tells of how Minerva and Albus moved from friendship to romance, and includes a lot of non-DH-compliant back-story for Albus. All of my fics can be found here on TPP. Just go to my author's profile page to find them.

I'm glad you're enjoying this story!

Chapter Ten

Chapter 10 of 12

Albus and Minerva enjoy their last evening on the island, and the next morning, Albus practises the art of gentle persuasion.



Chapter Ten

"Bannocks?" Minerva asked, coming into the kitchen.

"And apples, pears, a few different cheeses – some Stilton, a nice crumbly Wensleydale, and a creamy Double Gloucester – with a dry Riesling for you and a slightly less dry one for me." Albus smiled at her. "I thought something simple tonight. I often just have fruit, cheese, and bread while I'm here, as it saves cooking just for myself. But I enjoy it and thought you might, too. And for my sweet Scottish witch, I thought perhaps bannocks rather than bread." He poked one of the triangles that he had just taken from the griddle. "I was afraid I might have overdone them, but I think they are right. Bit like scones, they seem, but with buttermilk and oatmeal as well as the flour." He quirked a smile at her. "First time I've followed a recipe in years, so you'll have to let me know if they are edible. Then," he said, grinning more broadly, "I can begin to experiment on them!"

"I don't think bannocks leave much room for experimentation, Albus." Minerva wasn't terribly fond of them, but she thought she might not mention that, since he had gone to such trouble. "But I will let you know how they are."

Rather than eat at the table, Albus set the food on the low table in front of the sofa. Although it wasn't a very cool evening, he lit a fire in the fireplace, and he and Minerva curled up on the couch and ate their simple meal. Minerva liked the bannocks more than she had expected to, and told him that, and they were very nice with the cheese and fruit.

"They are sometimes . . . heavy and dry. Or else peculiarly sweet. These are good," she said. "Almost as good as Fwisky's. I'm sorry – I just mean that normally, I am not particularly fond of them, but I always liked Fwisky's, and others are always a disappointment. These aren't."

Albus chuckled. "I am glad that I didn't disappoint you, my dear."

"You rarely disappoint me, Albus. And never when you can help it," Minerva replied.

He reached over and took her hand, kissing it. "Never when I can help it, my dearest love."

"You know, Albus . . . I thought that I detected some nervousness on your part earlier, before we made love this afternoon."

"Did you?" Albus picked up a slice of apple and some Stilton, putting it in his mouth and chewing slowly.

"Yes, I did." Minerva looked at him for a moment as he very deliberately ate his fruit and cheese. "I know that you have been nervous before, but I thought we were both . . . past that."

Albus looked at her over his wineglass. "You helped me to get past it, Minerva. We are past it."

"Then . . . was I wrong?"

Albus put down his wine and looked into the fire. "No, you weren't wrong. But it was different." He thought for a moment. "I love you, Minerva, and I know that you love me. And I would have to be a complete fool to still believe that . . . that my touch would repulse you, as I once thought." He sighed. "No, this was different. I was . . . frankly, I was afraid that something might change in our relationship, in the . . . in the dynamic between us. Not terribly worried, and it seemed highly unlikely, but you surely do remember what I told you of my youth, of the time after the deaths of my wife and my mother. How I lost myself." He paused, thinking. "The relationships I had with other witches – if one could even have called them 'relationships' – were a means to escape my guilt and my grief. I allowed myself to be used, and I used them, in turn. There was a slight – a very, very slight – worry that you . . . that we . . . that something might change between us if this became some kind of . . . of an exchange. Perhaps that your feelings toward me . . . or about our physical relationship . . . might be altered, or that my own feelings might, I'm sorry, Minerva, but I feared that my feelings might change if I . . . if I felt . . ." He shook his head, unable to complete the thought. "I am sorry. It wasn't a great fear, you understand." He looked over at her. "And I trust you completely, you know. That's why I didn't say anything. Because I do trust you. And love you."

Minerva smiled gently. "I hope that you are reassured now. *We do* have a relationship, Albus. And, as you point out, we love each other and trust each other. It could never be the same as it was in those empty encounters. We take joy in each other's joy, and pleasure in each other's pleasure. I tried to show you something of that, something of its truth."

Albus returned her smile. "I shouldn't have needed reminding. But I did enjoy it."

"So did I. Very much. But, fair warning, Albus! If I win another such wager, I might be a bit more imaginative!" Her eyes sparkled.

"I will look forward to losing to you again, then," Albus replied, putting his arm around her, pulling her closer and kissing her head.

"Mmm . . . but it was nice. I enjoyed giving you a massage, although it did take a while for you to relax. But I think we could play some very nice little games, Albus." She gave him a squeeze. "Like when you 'punished' me. That was the best 'punishment' I have ever received. I didn't believe for one moment you would do anything to me that would hurt me or humiliate me. It was fun."

"I know – and believe me, I do trust you, too. I do. If I hadn't . . . well, I suppose I would have said something."

"I know you trust me, Albus. I just hope that now you see that we can play together without it changing anything between us, except to make us more intimate with each other. Remember, Poppy did tell you at the beginning of the summer that you were supposed to help me loosen up and have more fun," Minerva said, amused.

"I doubt very much that she meant it in quite that way," Albus said with a chuckle. "But I will continue to play with you and help you loosen up and have more fun!"

"As long as it doesn't involve skinny-dipping in icy cold water, I will look forward to it," Minerva replied.

"You could have left the water sooner. That would have been sensible, my dear."

"Mmph. I suppose I can be a bit stubborn sometimes," she admitted, "and not as sensible as I usually am."

"I should tell Malcolm he is a fan of skinny-dipping, after all!"

"You wouldn't! Don't! Oh, Albus!"

Albus just laughed. "It might reassure him of your true Gryffindor character to know you sometimes rush into things in typical Gryffindor fashion."

"Hmmp. As though he were a model I would want to follow in that respect, anyway." Minerva was proud of her oldest brother, if she did find him somewhat aggravating, particularly his penchant for exaggeration and entertaining his audience with outrageous stories. "But back to the original topic of conversation "

"Mmm, how very lovely it is to make love to you, my dear Minerva, and how beautiful and delectable you are?"

"No, Albus." She took hold of the hand that was slipping under her robes, stopping him from his distraction technique. "Not that though that is not a bad topic for another time! Playing. Having fun with each other. You remember when we were talking a few days ago after we made love, and you said that you always wanted to know what I liked and didn't like, and I said the same well, I think that same thing should apply when we are playing. If we like something, that's good, but if there's anything that one of us doesn't like, whether just in that moment because we aren't in the mood or whether it's something we don't like at all, we should say so. And if it's something we'd rather never try, we can just say that it's something that is better off remaining in the realm of fantasy. Hmm? What do you say?"

Albus leaned forward and kissed her softly. "That sounds perfect. We can be confident then that the other person isn't simply . . . tolerating something they dislike for the other person's sake. Not in this arena. It should only be about love and bringing each other pleasure and enjoyment."

"Precisely. We might tolerate . . . I don't know . . . something else we dislike because the other person enjoys it, the way that you might tolerate my having the window open, though I have gathered you don't like it. But you are perfectly correct that when we are making love, if one of us positively dislikes something, we don't do it as opposed to just not being especially fond of it, if you know what I mean."

"I'm not certain I do, but I'm sure we'll work it all out." He held her more tightly, closing his eyes and sighing. "I must never forget to be grateful, my dear, for every moment you are with me."

Minerva tilted her head and looked up at him. "We should both be grateful. Every moment for the rest of our lives."

Albus looked down at her face, beautiful and glowing, and shook his head. "I have done nothing to deserve you." He kissed her forehead. "Yet you are here," he whispered, "here in my arms."

"I don't think it's about what we deserve. If it were, I have not earned you, either. But we are fortunate. And I am as fortunate as you. It is our mutual good fortune, Albus."

He nodded. "It is, then, that. Yet when I am here with you, it is hard to believe that you are really with me, but at the same time, it is almost as hard to believe that there was a time without you. I feel . . . so much more myself with you. I don't know how I was a whole person before we were together."

"You have always held my heart, though, Albus . . . and you always will."

"And you hold mine. It is yours, Minerva," he whispered.

"I will take very good care of it, Albus. I promise." She placed her hand on his chest and felt the beat of his heart. "Always."

He kissed the top of her head, and they remained in the embrace a long time, saying nothing, simply savouring the sensation of being in each other's arms. After a while, Albus began to take the hairpins from Minerva's hair, sending them flying upstairs to the dresser as he did.

"I think that soon it will be time for us to retire for the night, my dear," he whispered. "And I do not know how you are feeling, but I could use a bath with some of the golden potion in it." He kissed her forehead as he removed the last hairpin.

"We have to clear up, first," Minerva said, sitting up slightly and looking at the leftover cheese and fruit.

Albus drew his wand and waved it, banishing the cheese and fruit, sending them to the cool cupboard; another wave, and the dishes were clean, and he likewise banished them to the kitchen.

"I prefer to use soap and water, but that will do," he said. He turned to Minerva with a smile. "Now, would you like a bath with some of that potion, as well? There's enough."

"I actually would, though . . . couldn't we save on potion and hot water by sharing the bath?" she asked.

"Well, um, yes, we could . . . although if we did, we might need more potion after," Albus said hesitantly.

"Let's share, Albus! Just for fun. I don't feel up to anything . . . strenuous, anyway, if that's what you're thinking. It isn't as though we'll be doing it all the time, after all, taking baths together." Minerva sighed. "Especially as tomorrow, we're returning to Hogwarts."

"You make a very good argument, Professor McGonagall!" Albus said, chuckling. "It would be nice to have someone wash my back, too!"

"After you have washed my back! Ladies first!"

"Mmm, but age before beauty, as I once heard you say somewhat uncharitably, I thought to Horace," Albus said.

"Oh. I hadn't thought anyone overheard that." Minerva blushed. She hadn't been very proud of herself after she'd said that. "He just annoys me, and he has an eye that tends to stray from my face, if you know what I mean."

Albus ran his hand over her curves. "The man has an eye that appreciates your feminine pulchritude. That's not such a bad thing as long as he appreciates you from a distance," Albus replied with a smile.

"Well, he has never said or done anything inappropriate. Though he did once ask me to share some exquisite bottle of wine with him," Minerva said. "I declined in preference to a bottle of butterbeer with Hagrid."

"He probably just wants to get on your good side, Minerva. He knows I value you. But if his attention ever seems to go beyond that, I will let him know that you are unavailable to him," Albus said.

"I can handle him myself, Albus. I'm sure he'd be easily put off. I don't need you to defend my honour although I appreciate the thought."

"Mmm, but nonetheless "

"That's enough about that," Minerva said, patting his chest. "Let's go up and take our bath!"

An hour later, they were snug in bed, all the soreness from the day's activities chased away by the fragrant golden potion in the warm bathwater. Minerva looked at her book, then set it aside.

"I really don't feel like reading tonight, Albus. Why don't you sing me that song you were singing the other day?"

"Oh, well . . . if you like . . . or another, perhaps? There's one I particularly like, an old lullaby," Albus said.

"That would be very nice. I would like that." Minerva settled down in bed and looked at him expectantly.

"But first . . . I think something from you!"

"Oh, Albus, I can't sing. And I can never remember lyrics," Minerva said.

"Not a song, then a story. Tell me a bedtime story, Minerva."

"A story? What kind of story?"

Albus shrugged. "Whatever kind of story you would like."

"Hmm, I don't know . . ." Minerva thought a moment, trying to remember some of the stories she used to tell Melina when she was little. Somehow, "The Wee Wee Mannie and the Big Big Coo" didn't seem quite the right sort of story, as humorous as it was . . . then she remembered another story that she had been told as a child.

"When I was a very little girl," Minerva began, deciding to tell a story within a story, "I began to have nightmares. It seemed that scarcely a night went by when I did not wake screaming from a bad dream. My parents even tried changing my bedroom, thinking that perhaps it was the move from the nursery that triggered the dreams, although that had been months and months before. But I would waken, terrified, and Fwisky would be there to reassure me, and she would call my mother or father, and one of them would come down to sit with me until I fell asleep again.

"As a Healer, my mother was loathe to give me any potions before bed because of my age, trying just cambric tea, then simple herbal teas, but my nightmares continued."

"What were your nightmares about?" Albus asked, interrupting.

"Usually, I was locked somewhere dark and cold; sometimes, I was being chased, and I could never see my pursuer, but I could hear him and know he would catch me, that I could not escape. I would always awaken with the feeling of falling from a great height, waking before I could hit the ground. They were terrifying for a child, and not like the other strange nightmares that I had occasionally had before, ones that seemed rather amusing in the light of day like the one of the giant carrots that would talk to me in deep voices, saying things I couldn't understand. But I stopped having those sorts of peculiar nightmares altogether, and only had these others that scared me even after I was awake," Minerva said.

"So what stopped them?"

"I'm getting to that, Albus! You will ruin the story," Minerva said, shaking her head at him.

"Oh, sorry!" Albus said with mock-meekness, settling back down to listen to his bedtime story. "I'm just rather caught up in it, that's all."

"Good," Minerva said, giving him a pat and a smile, her eyes sparkling. "And if you're a very good boy, you may get another story on another night!"

Albus chuckled at that.

"Malcolm came home to spend a few weeks, and he heard about my nightmares. Mother was just beginning to think she'd have to give me some weak Dreamless Sleep, when he said to give him a try at it. He set up a cot in my bedroom and stayed with me. The first night, I woke up crying, and Malcolm was there, ready with a lit candle and some warm, peppermint-flavoured milk . . . very nice, it was, too," Minerva said, smiling at the memory, "and he had me tell him the dream. He had me repeat the dream a few times, in great detail, more detail each time. Somehow, the fear of the dream dissipated as I retold it, and I slept through the rest of the night quite well.

"The next night, he set up his little bed in my room again, but this time, he gave me my warm peppermint milk before I settled down, then he had me tell him the nightmare again, and tell him all about the other bad dreams I had had in the previous weeks. I became afraid to sleep again, fearing I would have another one of those nightmares, but Malcolm told me that he would ask his friend Angus to bring me good dreams."

"Dream Angus!" Albus exclaimed, recognising the figure. "Oh, sorry!"

"Yes, well, as you say, Dream Angus. But Malcolm told me the *true* story of Dream Angus, you see, not the ones you may have heard," Minerva said, suspending disbelief to tell the story, and beginning to see the appeal that such story-telling had for Malcolm. "He met him, he said, one late night on the hills to the east of our home. And this is what he told me.

"I was out wandering the hills and moors one very late night, little sister, and I saw a little man a-hirpling over the brae, up to his knees in the yellow gorse, bright in the moonlight and fragrantly green underfoot. I hailed the fellow, calling to him across a rushing burn. He splashed over to me, arriving the other side as dry as a desert. He wore a blouse of the blue daylit sky, a bright waistcoat of sunny yellow with shiny gold buttons, and a tartan kilt of every colour of the moor. To look at his kilt caused my eyelids to grow heavy and my mind, confused, so I looked into his eyes, and met the hue of the heather at dawn.

"Greetings and well-met,' I said with a bow, seeing that this was no ordinary man before me and wanting his favour and not his wrath. It is always wise, little sister, when meeting such a one, to greet them most politely and never to anger them.

"And to you, young one,' he said to me. 'What be you a-doing out on such a night as this, a night to fill with sleep and beautiful dreams?"

"Enjoying the beauty of the moon, the stars, and the wind as it sings through the bracken,' I answered.

"And who are you, who listens to the song of the wind, young man?' he asked me.

"I am Malcolm of the McGonagall Cliffs, sir. And may I ask how I might address you?"

"I am Angus Óg, Angus the Young, Angus the Ancient, Angus of Dreams, Dream Angus, they call me,' he said.

"Dream Angus!' I exclaimed. 'I have heard your name.'

"And my story, would you like to hear my story, young Malcolm of the McGonagall Cliffs?' And without waiting for my response, he sat on the ground, his legs crossed, and began to tell me this tale.

"I am Young Angus, and I bring you dreams in the night, dreams of truth, dreams you can reach out and touch when you awaken if only you believe.

"And I, Young Angus, I dream daily of my love, my one love, my great love, my sweetly beloved Cáer, and she it is whom I seek in my nightly travels through the world, and as I travel I spread sweet dreams. One day, you will dream a dream of your true love, and if you believe, you will wake to find her, as I hope one day to find my sweet Cáer once more.'

"Dreams you bring?' I asked. 'And what of nightmares? When I am troubled by nightmares, do you send those, too?'

"Never a nightmare do I bring, unless you make it so yourself, and not all dreams are gifts of mine. But ask me for a dream, young one, and I will give you a dream of your greatest desire, and if you believe and your heart is great, you will waken and find it,' Dream Angus said. 'If you do not believe or your heart is weak, that which you love will drift by you, unseen, perhaps lost forever. You speak of nightmares, young Malcolm, and those never do I bring, but ask Old Angus, and I will come into your dream and weave you a basket to contain your nightmare; I will leave you the basket and you can put your nightmare in it, and then romp freely through happy, lighthearted dreams. Your nightmare can never escape from one of Old Angus's baskets. I weave them from golden sunlight and silver moonlight, with lids of starlight and the sparkle off the ocean waves holding them safely inside.'

"Can you give me such a basket?' I asked, thinking it would be a wondrous thing to have, to keep all my nightmares in, away from my sleep.

"I give them as you sleep, young Malcolm, as you dream, and only to those whose need is great,' Dream Angus told me. 'But now I must be on my way, though I do not believe I will attain my goal before the morning breaks,' he said with a sigh, looking off toward the east, 'for the morning comes soon on these high summer days and the nights are short.'

"Where are you bound, Old Angus?' I asked. 'May I help you on your way?'

"I seek the nearest fairy mound, thinking I may find my own true love asleep beneath, hoping that this will be the night I will find my beautiful Cáer, stolen from me yet again, and it is she I seek, and she who awaits me to save her. A year and a day I sought her before, knowing my dream of her was true, and on finding her, we flew off for an eternity of happiness, or so I believed and so she hoped. But she has been taken away again, and I will seek her a year and a day or more until I find her again, my beautiful Cáer.'

"Young Angus saddened and wept then, growing old in his grief there before my eyes. And oh, little sister, his tears moved my heart, and I vowed I would help him, help Dream Angus find his beautiful Cáer, stolen from him, his eternity of love stolen away.

"Young Angus,' I cried, 'still your weeping, for I will help you, I vow it. Until we restore your beautiful Cáer, I am your servant! Old Angus, cease your tears! Together, we will find your beloved Cáer and your eternity of love will be reborn!'

"And so I travelled with Young Angus as he spread his true dreaming across the land, to folk both magic and Muggle, and we sought his beloved, his beautiful Cáer; forty days and forty nights, we walked, we flew, we Apparated, seeking, ever seeking the one most beloved of Angus Óg, who loved so greatly that he wished to share his true dreams of love with all.

"After forty days and forty nights, we found his true love, his beloved Cáer, weeping beneath an apple tree on a wee small island, surrounded by a loch filled with Grindylows, and the loch was surrounded by bogs hopping with Hinkypunks, and the air of the island droned heavy with Glumbumbles. Together, Young Angus and I confused the Hinkypunks, leading them astray. Then we flew over the loch, angering the Grindylows, who gnashed their tiny teeth and screamed tiny screams. When we reached the wee small island, I played my penny whistle, a happy, cheery tune, too-too-la-too-la-too-roo-la-too, I played, driving the drear Glumbumbles away. And we took up Cáer, beloved of Young Angus, and we took her from that wee small island, saving her from her sadness.

"And Angus Óg, again forever young in his love, so grateful was he, he told me that if ever I needed a true dream or if ever I needed a nightmare basket of light, I could call on him, and he would come and give me that true dream or weave me that nightmare basket. He said he might not come the first night, nor even the second, but that come he would, because I helped him to find his beloved Cáer, saving her from her sorrow and returning to him his eternity of love.

"Never, little sister, have I called upon Young Angus for a true dream, and never have I asked him for a basket to trap my nightmares, but I think that if we call him tonight, Young Angus will come and take your nightmares away, if we call him together, little sister, he will come, if not tonight, then one night soon, and you will dream sweet dreams, your nightmares all bundled away in his enchanted basket of light.

"Then Malcolm sang me a song, a nonsense tune, I think," Minerva continued, "and I fell asleep thinking of Dream Angus and his dreams of love and his baskets of light. The next three nights, Malcolm slept on a little bed in my room, giving me warm peppermint milk and singing me to sleep, until we decided that Dream Angus had come and bundled all of my nightmares away in his special baskets of light.

"And that, Albus, is the true story of Dream Angus and his beloved Cáer, and of how Malcolm of the McGonagall Cliffs helped to reunite them, and how, in gratitude, Dream Angus took away my nightmares in his baskets of light," Minerva ended, hoping that he hadn't found it too silly.

"That was a wonderful story on so many levels, my dear. Thank you!" Albus said with a smile, raising up on one elbow to lean forward and kiss her cheek. "And Malcolm really slept in your room all those nights?"

"He did. Five nights. I hadn't thought about it in a while. I was . . . five, I think, maybe six. He was in his early twenties, and I'm sure he had more exciting things to be doing than babysitting his little sister. He can be flighty and aggravating, but he's a good man." Minerva's eyes were soft and unfocussed as she thought of the past and of her oldest brother, "the strange one," as she so often called him.

"I should tell him," she said. "Tell him how much I do appreciate him."

Minerva had always been appreciative of her youngest brother, Murdoch, who was only twelve years older than she, and who had spent more continuous time with her as she was growing up, but sometimes with Malcolm, she failed to look past his superficially irresponsible and impulsive manner to see the man beneath, the one she knew was there. Of the four McGonagall siblings, the two Gryffindors, Minerva and Malcolm, seemed the least like each other temperamentally, but perhaps they had more in common than she had thought.

"So," Minerva asked, turning her attention back to Albus, "did I earn my lullaby with that story?"

"You most certainly did, although now I'm so sleepy from hearing of Dream Angus, I'm not certain I can sing it," Albus teased.

"Shall I splash a little cold water on your face, then? That would wake you up!"

"No, no, my dear, I think I can manage," Albus said. "This is a song my mother used to sing to me, and later, to my brother, when we were young. It's just a simple Welsh tune."

Albus began to sing, the soft Welsh words rolling over Minerva. Her spoken Welsh was very rusty, but she still understood some of it from her lessons with her father when she was a child.

"Mae'r ha wedi sleifio'n ddi-sylw drwy'r cefn,

"A Chynffon y Gaseg sy'n winau drachefn,

"Mae'r Pren Gwyn yn wynnach nag y buodd erioed,

"A heno cyn hyned yw gweddill y coed.

"Mi cysgi di annwyl, mi cysgi di'n braf,

"Dy wyneb mar dawel â diwrnod of haf,

"Dy fysedd yn llacio wrth ollwng fy llaw,

"Mi cysgi di annwyl, a'r bore ddaw."

The song went on for two more verses and another chorus, then Albus softly chanted the lyrics in English, changing the melody slightly to suit the new words.

"The summer slid unnoticed out the back,

"And the falls of Chynffon y Gaseg run muddy again,

"The oak of Pren Gwyn is whiter than ever,

"And the other trees seem just as old.

"You'll sleep, my darling, you will sleep softly

"Your face as tranquil as a summer's day,

"Your fingers slacken as you let go my hand,

"You'll sleep, my dear, and morning will come.

"The big pool is blacker than peat bog water,

"It enticed me many an afternoon,

"The frost won't leave the old lead mill,

"And heavy tears fall from the oak.

"You'll sleep, my darling, you will sleep softly

"Your face as tranquil as a summer's day,

"Your fingers slacken as you let go my hand,

"You'll sleep, my dear, and morning will come.

"Two showers under shelter will drive me mad,

"In the shadow of the hearth is his shadow too,

"I see only the wall, but when I close my eyes,

"Not one rocks the cradle, but here there are two."

Minerva felt very sleepy by the time Albus had finished singing the song. She loved his voice, and had he been singing in words she understood not at all, she would have found it just as beautiful.

"That's an enchanting song," Minerva said, "but somehow . . . sad or foreboding, as well. And it's hard to tell whether it's winter or spring."

"The seasons always turn into each other, just as morning will always come following night, and twilight at both ends of the day," Albus said softly. "And morning will come soon. We should sleep so that we can enjoy the morning before we leave."

Minerva nodded. "I wish we had been able to spend more time. Perhaps next summer."

"Certainly, next summer. And we might be able to slip away for a few hours on a weekend afternoon, or perhaps even for a day," Albus said.

"That would be nice. Not the same, but still, very nice." Minerva moved closer to him and rested her head against him. "When are we leaving tomorrow?"

"I thought we would have lunch here. We should probably return sooner, but . . . I am reluctant to leave until we must." Albus kissed her forehead. "I thought we could Apparate to your parents' first, then one of us could go ahead to Hogwarts and the other could follow after a short interval. So we should probably leave by one o'clock, since the meeting is at two." He sighed. "Now I wish I had made it for Thursday morning. But there are preparations to be made before the students arrive on Sunday, and I should be available to the staff. There are always questions and difficulties, and although I am sure that Gertrude is more than happy to look after Malcolm, he is new to the staff and I should be available to him, as well."

"He quite likes you, I think. In fact, I think he rather looks up to you. You could be a good influence on him."

Albus chuckled. "I don't know, my darling. We do tend to have a bit too much fun together for me to be a very good influence on him, I'm afraid. We're more likely to lead each other astray, if anything." He grinned at her. "Are you still upset with me about the dragon?"

"I suppose not. It all worked out well, and Malcolm enjoyed himself. Perhaps a bit too much. I think you're right, though, Albus. You two will probably need minding. I will have to speak to Gertrude about that. Splitting the child-minding between us."

Albus laughed out loud at that. "We will try not to test your patience too much. And we do have to think of the students. Set an example."

"Yes, the students . . ." Minerva yawned. "I do think I am quite sleepy, though, Albus. I'm glad you liked my story, well, Malcolm's story. Thank you for the lullaby."

"You're very welcome, my dear." Albus doused the lights with a wave of his hand and settled down in the bed with an arm around Minerva. "Sleep well, sweet dreams."

"Good night, Albus," Minerva said, and she heard Albus beside her, softly humming the lullaby as she fell asleep.

The next morning, Minerva woke first, and she quietly got out of bed and padded to the bathroom. Out the bathroom window, she could see it would be a glorious day, as sunny and bright as the previous morning had been grey and rainy. Trying not to think about their leaving early that afternoon, Minerva returned to the bedroom. She looked down at Albus, asleep, his face completely relaxed, his cheeks rosy, his lips slightly parted. She wished that she had the magical talent that he had and that she

could give him a minty Charmed kiss, but an ordinary one would do to wake him.

She bent over and gave Albus a light kiss on the brow then another on his lips, caressing his cheek.

"Mmm, Minerva," he murmured, his eyes blinking open.

"Did you sleep well? It's a beautiful day. I thought we might have our breakfast outdoors. A picnic breakfast. If you'd like. Or at least take our tea out after we eat. I would like to enjoy the island as much as possible before we have to leave."

"I agree, we should enjoy our time here while we have it." Albus yawned. "I think I need to make a visit, my dear." He yawned again.

While he was in the bathroom, Minerva ended the filter charms on the windows, letting the morning light stream into the room. Albus returned, blinking.

"You look beautiful this morning, Minerva. More beautiful than the morning itself." He put his arms around her and kissed her. "I really think that we could enjoy the morning quite well in bed." He kissed her again. "I don't believe you would be at all disappointed," he said softly, kissing her and caressing her back and her buttocks, pulling her to him. "I love waking up next to you, my dear. I don't know when we will have time like this again. We will manage somehow, I am sure . . . but let's take advantage of our freedom." His lips moved sensuously over hers. "Let's return to bed for a while."

"I like being persuaded, Albus," Minerva said, returning his embrace and looking up into his eyes. "Persuade me."

Albus stood back at arms length, his hands grazing her bare upper arms, looking into her eyes. "Persuading?" Albus asked. "I shall have to practise the art of persuasion." His gaze moved from her face to her breasts and lower. "I am a bit out of practise, but I will do my best."

Minerva scarcely kept herself from laughing at that and said, "You do your best, and perhaps you will succeed."

Albus took Minerva's left hand in his right; very softly, he brushed the fingertips of his other hand over her sensitive fingers and palm, then he raised it to his mouth. Closing his eyes, he began to place feather-light kisses on her wrist.

His breath passed over her pulse-point as he whispered, "I would love to return to bed with you, Minerva." Albus softly kissed her wrist again. "You are so nice and warm, so soft and lovely, my dear." His lips moved up her inner arm, his tongue flicking out and tickling her tender skin.

As he began to caress her body through her nightgown, his kisses drifted over her arm, then reached her neck, gentle movement of lips over Minerva's sensitive throat, to her jaw, then to her ear. "I could kiss you everywhere, Minerva," Albus whispered, "everywhere."

Albus kissed the hollow of her throat, then his hands began to tug her nightgown up until he raised it up over her head and off.

"If we went back to bed, I could embrace you and kiss you everywhere, like this."

Albus bent and kissed her breasts before kneeling in front of her and softly moving his lips over her stomach as his hands caressed her sides, her buttocks, her legs. He slipped one hand between her legs, gently teasing her sensitive inner thighs on his way to her crux.

"And here, Minerva," he whispered warmly against her skin, "here. I could kiss you so nicely here if we returned to bed." As he spoke, his fingers began to play with her clitoris. "I would so like to kiss you here."

"You are very persuasive, Albus," Minerva said, letting out a breath and finally giving in as his fingers pleased her. "We could try your idea and see how I like it, I suppose."

Albus stood and removed his own nightshirt. Minerva smiled to see his erection and took a step toward him, pulling him to her, and embracing him.

"Mmm, just this is so nice," she said, loving the feel of his naked skin next to hers.

Albus kissed her, then he drew her over to the bed and slowly lowered her to the mattress. His kisses trailed down her neck to her chest, then he took her right hand and kissed her palm.

"I love you, Minerva." Albus lifted his head and looked at her, then he kissed her inner wrist. "Believe me when I say that I love you with everything in me, heart and mind, body and soul, with all that I am and hope to be."

Minerva squeezed his hand in reply, smiling. "You complete me," she whispered.

Albus kissed the tender skin of her inner arm as the fingertips of one hand brushed over her abdomen. Minerva closed her eyes and allowed herself to sink into a world of sensation, feeling Albus's lips, his fingertips, and his magic brushing her own. She did not withhold any gasp, sigh, or moan of appreciation. Pleasurable thrills ran through her body as his lips continued their journey across her body, pausing at her nipples as his fingers grazed her thighs. She opened herself to him, but his fingers only approached her crux, never touching it.

Albus's mouth, his lips, tongue, and warm breath, passed over Minerva's chest on the way to her stomach, kissing, flicking, sucking, until finally he parted her lower lips with his tongue and began to pleasure her clitoris with rapid flicks, his hands at rest on her thighs. Minerva began to move, rolling her hips and meeting his tongue. Just as she felt she was about to come, Albus sat up and rolled her over. Albus lifted her hips, urging her into a low crouch, then he entered her with his cock, slowly stretching her as he slid into her warm, wet vagina. As he thrust into her, finding her sweet spot, one of his fingers continued the stimulation that his tongue had been providing, and Minerva began to come, gripping her pillow and moaning, her mind a fog of euphoria as Albus continued to pump as she came in waves of brilliant pleasure through her entire body.

"Oh, gods, Minerva . . . Minerva, Minerva, Minerva . . ." Albus gripped her hips and drove in hard as he came.

They both lay gasping on the bed, Albus behind her, his arms around her, holding her close. He raised one hand and beckoned, and the duvet obediently covered them both.

Albus kissed her behind the ear. "So, was it nice to return to bed for a while?" he whispered.

"Mmm, one of your best ideas, I would say," Minerva answered, taking one of his hands and kissing it. "I love you, Albus."

"And I love you, my dear. And to prove it further, I will get up and make you tea, and then we can have some breakfast."

"Lovely. But not just yet, I think. I would be quite cold in bed alone if you were to leave right now."

Albus kissed her shoulder and snuggled closer. "Whatever your heart desires, my love. Whatever your heart desires."

Note: *The lyrics of the lullaby, both Welsh and English, are adapted from "My Gysgi Di 'Maban" ("You'll Sleep, My Baby") on the CD, "Celtic Lullaby," by elipsis arts. I changed "maban," "baby," to "anwyll," "dear, darling, beloved," to better suit the occasion. I highly recommend the CD. It's beautiful and restful. It also has a version of the song, "Dream Angus." If you want to know more*

about Angus Óg and the various tales about him, you can search the Web, and I'm sure you will find many of the stories told about Angus, both old and new.

Chapter Eleven

Chapter 11 of 12

Minerva and Albus begin their last morning on the island.



Chapter Eleven

Minerva awoke a while later, surprised that she had fallen back to sleep. She was immediately aware that Albus was no longer in bed. Lifting her head, she looked around the room and called out his name. Just then, the door opened and Albus entered with a tray.

"Tea, my dear!" he announced with a smile.

Minerva sat up, summoned her dressing gown to drape around her, and plumped the pillows behind her. She smiled with pleasure as she accepted a cup of tea, fixed precisely as she liked it.

"Thank you, Albus!"

"You are very welcome," Albus replied, sitting on the edge of the bed beside her with his own cup of tea. "Breakfast will be ready soon. I have started it, but I thought I would take a little break and share some tea with you."

"This is lovely," Minerva said. "You have completely spoiled me the past few days."

Albus brightened at that. "I am very glad, my dear. I hoped you would feel a little pampered despite the somewhat rustic surroundings."

"I love the cottage, Albus. Other than adding a showerhead to the bath, which could be convenient if we spend any length of time here, I can't think of any changes I would make to the house itself," she said.

"Think about it when we get back to Hogwarts, as well, and we can make some of the changes before next summer. Talk to Wilspy, too. I think she had some ideas about it at one time, as well."

"Speaking of Wilspy, is she happy with her room? Perhaps she would prefer to convert the storage area above the library, or part of it, anyway," Minerva suggested.

"I asked her about that, actually, when I created the library, but she likes being on the ground floor and near the kitchen. Her room is larger than it may appear, too, and she has it decorated as she likes it. Speaking of which, think about the decorating, if you would like curtains or something of the sort. Aberforth lived here for almost forty years, and he liked a rather . . . masculine decor. And as I said, other than removing the old draperies and bringing in a few pieces of my own furniture, I really haven't done very much to it in that regard. It didn't seem particularly important, since I was here so seldom." Albus smiled at her. "But now that you will be sharing it and spending time here with me, I would like it to be comfortable for you, and appealing, as well."

Minerva leaned forward and kissed his cheek. "That means a lot to me, Albus. I will think about it. But don't do something you don't like. We have to agree."

Albus nodded. "But your idea of a showerhead is a fine one although I think we are agreed that we both rather like the old bathtub." He glanced toward the bathroom. "We could think about a way of creating two rooms a separate loo, as I know we both prefer, though this arrangement has never bothered me here."

"I don't know, Albus," Minerva said, looking at the wall that separated the bedroom from the bath. "We would have to put in another door, too. I think it would be an easy enough thing to put in a dividing wall, but then the bath wouldn't have a window, unless we either reversed everything in the room or added another window, which I suppose we could do, though that would involve a good deal more work. This has worked out fine for now. We can wait and see how we feel after we have spent more time here together."

"Well, you think about it, my dear," Albus said, standing then giving her a kiss on the forehead. "I am going to go down and finish making our breakfast. Come down when you are ready. Take your time to dress, then we can bring the food outside, as you suggested." He reached out and pulled her dressing gown about her more closely, pausing to feel the soft fabric between his fingers.

"Do you mind that I wear this dressing gown, Albus?" Minerva asked frankly.

"It is a bit chilly this morning; I think you would be more comfortable in robes."

Minerva laughed. "I didn't mean just now. I meant in general."

He raised his eyebrows. "Why should I mind?"

Minerva didn't want to put any notions in his head that weren't there already, but she said, "Well, it was a gift from Quin after our misunderstanding, when I was staying with him, that's all."

"As I said, the dressing gown looks very nice on you. It brings out your eyes. Quin selected well." Albus paused, looking at her and caressing her cheek briefly. "Do I wish we hadn't had the misunderstanding? Of course. But Quin took very good care of you . . . I am glad that he bought you fresh things and helped you to feel . . . feminine and pretty." He blinked rapidly. "I am certain you needed that after what I had said to you."

Minerva reached up and took his hand, kissing it then holding it to her. "I didn't mean to upset you, Albus. I am sorry. I oughtn't have brought it up." She brushed away the single tear that had overflowed, caressing his cheek.

"Don't worry. Truly. I still feel bad about it all, and probably always will to some extent, but it won't always be as fresh. And I do mean it when I say that you should wear the dressing gown. You look quite beautiful in it." Albus looked affectionately at Minerva, then he said softly, "I know that Quin loves you, and that was for the best, and it still is. He has a great heart."

"You are certain? You aren't simply saying what you think you ought?"

"I am certain, my dear. And although I don't think that I would want to know the details if, um, if you were more intimate than you have said, I would understand if you were." He looked at her more seriously and squeezed her hand. "I mean that, Minerva. And you needn't tell me if you were, but you did say you consider him a lover . . ."

"Yes, and I explained why." Minerva sighed and moved over a bit, then tugged at his hand. "Here, sit next to me for a bit. Breakfast can wait."

Albus sat, stretching his legs out in front of him, and Minerva rested her head against him and wrapped her arm around his.

"It is as I said before, Albus," Minerva said. "But I see that you have some doubts. I didn't tell you what I did simply in order to save your feelings, although I can understand why you might think that. We were in some ways more intimate than I have been with other wizards with whom I . . . with whom I had a more extensive physical relationship, not to go into any detail. We were emotionally intimate, but we did not have sex, we didn't have intercourse, and that seems to be what you are unsure about." Minerva took a deep breath. "I was very unhappy when I went to him. No, that is an understatement. I felt broken and hurt, almost hurt beyond healing. You know how fond I am of Quin, and how good he was to me even before then. I didn't want to be alone, and so he slept with me, but he was a gentleman. He provided warmth and comfort. Other than that . . . he comforted me, but no more, Albus. Really. And I do not wish to hurt you by saying this, but I probably would have accepted more than just simple comfort and affection from him at the time, I felt so needy and so . . . undesirable, but now I am extremely glad that didn't happen, and I have absolutely no desire for him at all or for anyone else other than you, as I hope you know."

"I see," Albus said soberly.

"Do you? Do you understand? I only told you this because I didn't want you forever imagining what else might have happened between us. I know that you like Quin, and I didn't want you to look at him and always wonder whether we had been intimate in that way."

"And before that when you spent the night in London?" Albus asked hesitantly, not wanting to question her, but still wondering.

"It is exactly as I told you at the time or tried to. I had had too much to drink to safely Apparate and I didn't want to put him out by having him Floo to the Hog's Head with me and walk me back to Hogwarts. He didn't even kiss me good-night, as far as I remember. We had separate rooms and nothing of any note occurred at all. Except that he does make a very nice breakfast, though nothing to rival your cooking. You might ask him for his recipe for scones, though," Minerva added with a smile.

Albus grinned. "You seem blessed to have men who cook for you, my dear."

"Good thing, too!" Minerva said with a laugh. "But are you really all right with this? And with the dressing gown?"

"Yes, my dear, I really am all right," Albus reassured her. "It isn't that I didn't believe you before . . . well, not precisely. I just thought you might have wished to spare my feelings, I suppose, and so you minimised the extent of your, um, physical involvement with him. I think that . . . I would not have wished to have learned the details, as I say, but I think that even if he had made love to you, I could have understood and would have . . . would have dealt with it. It's not as though I believe you would wish to be with him now, to have him make love to you now. What bothered me most, I believe, was the thought that perhaps I had driven you to him in that way. I felt badly enough about what I said and did without thinking that I had done that, as well and not just for my sake, but for yours and his, as well."

"Yes, I understand. I really do," Minerva said. "But you do know that I will never seek anyone for that sort of comfort again, don't you? You are my beloved, and I know that you love me. You are all I need in that way."

"Never say 'never,' my dear. Life is long," Albus said. "Things can change."

"This will not." She kissed his cheek. "Now, I will get dressed and you can finish the lovely repast you are no doubt preparing."

"I hope it meets your standards!" Albus said, giving her a kiss before standing.

"As I say, you have completely spoiled me, Albus."

"It is a treat for me to do it. And you are always very appreciative."

"Mm, very appreciative," Minerva said, reaching out and touching him through his robes, "and I will certainly express my appreciation in every possible way."

Albus grinned. "Then this shall be a repast fit for a queen! For the Lady of Eilean Tèarmunn, only the very best will do!"

Minerva laughed and hit him with a pillow as she got out of bed. "You are a sweet, silly, and very dear wizard."

Albus kissed her once more and left to fix their breakfast. Minerva dressed then packed reluctantly, feeling particularly sad as she put the musical box in the bottom of her bag. But then she thought of the breakfast Albus was preparing and the fact that they still had the rest of the morning to enjoy their time alone, and she made up her mind not to ruin their final hours on the island by being gloomy.

She entered the kitchen where Albus was still busily cooking.

"Smells very good." Minerva peered at the griddle. "Crumpets?"

"Indeed," Albus replied as he waved his wand, simultaneously flipping all of them in their rings. "Some of the cheese from last night, sauteed mushrooms, grilled tomatoes, soft-boiled eggs I am doing those last and bacon for me, haggis for you."

"Shall I make the tea?" Minerva asked.

"Very good, my dear," Albus said. "And if you could set up a table out by the library, I thought we could eat there."

A half hour later, Minerva felt she couldn't eat one more morsel. "That was a wonderful breakfast, Albus. Thank you."

"You are welcome! I am glad you enjoyed it was it fit, then, for the Lady of Eilean Tèarmunn?" he asked with a smile.

"It was perfect!" Minerva laughed. "Although I do think I'm missing my tiara!"

"Ah, well, that is easily fixed!" Albus waved his wand over a silver butter knife, Transfiguring it into a circlet, delicate, leafy spirals emerging from it. "For the Lady of Eilean Tèarmunn," he said, standing and placing it on her head, a wide smile on his face.

Minerva laughed as he set it on her head, and he caressed her face.

"You are so beautiful, Minerva, so lovely," he murmured. He bent and kissed her lips lightly, then he knelt beside her chair, holding her hand in his. "Thank you, Minerva,

thank you for everything. Thank you for your warm heart, for your forgiveness, for your love, and for your generosity. You give me more than I ever dreamed possible, and come what may, I will do all in my power to give you all that you deserve, to love you and to keep you safe, never ceasing in my love until I draw my last breath, and even beyond if I am able."

Minerva leaned forward and kissed him, then kissed him again. Her breath was warm on his lips as she looked into his eyes and whispered, "Forever, Albus, now forever."

She kissed him again as he rose, putting his arms around her and bringing her to her feet.

"Let's go in," he said softly. "Let's go in, my love."

Albus drew her into the library, then under the stairs to the main room. He waved his right hand, lighting the logs in the fireplace.

"Fire likes our Albus," Minerva said softly, quoting a friend.

"Are you fire, Minerva? Are you fire? Will you burn for me?" he asked in a soft, low voice, his gaze intense.

"I do burn for you," she replied, running her hands over his chest. "I do . . . and I need you. I need you, Albus."

As they kissed, they began to each open the other's robes, exposing skin to skin and warmth to warmth. Kissing and caressing, they stumbled toward the sofa, but they came to their knees on the rug in front of the fire. Albus removed Minerva's gown, then lay her down and lowered himself to kiss her throat, then her chest, his lips moving softly over her skin, over her breasts, his tongue taking pleasure in circling her nipples, then moving down over her stomach as his hands found her knickers and tugged them down and off. He laid his head on her stomach as his hands caressed her legs.

"I love you, Minerva. I love you," he whispered, turning his head and kissing her softly. "I love you. You give me life. Whatever I had before, you have given me my life."

Minerva ran her fingers through his hair. "You have always had my love and my heart. My heart is yours; it beats for you, Albus. My heart beats for you."

Albus rose up on his knees and pushed off his own robes and toed off his slippers. He looked down at Minerva, reaching out and brushing his fingertips over her skin, from her throat to her crux. He put his hands on either side of her and slowly lowered himself, closing his eyes and his mouth finding her left breast. As he suckled, Minerva whispered endearments and caressed his back and shoulders. His lips found her other breast, closing around her nipple, his tongue teasing it gently.

Minerva urged Albus to roll over, and he did, his arms coming around her and his mouth still at her breast. She looked down, watching him take pleasure as he sucked and licked. He brought one hand to her other breast, caressing and kneading, his fingertips brushing her peaked nipple. Minerva gently pulled away from his mouth and hand as she moved to kiss him, first his forehead, then his eyes, then his mouth. Her hand sought and found his erection, and she moaned into his mouth as she stroked it. Her lips drew on his, then she looked down at him again as he opened his eyes.

"Albus . . . my dear, sweet Albus," she whispered. "Oh, my darling Albus!"

She lowered herself to come to lie upon him, his erection firm beneath her belly as she kissed and nipped his shoulder. She brushed his beard aside and her mouth travelled gently over his pectorals until her lips found his nipple. Her tongue pressed against it, then stroked it before moving on down over his torso.

"So wonderful," she murmured. "So strong, so solid, so warm."

Minerva urged Albus to bend his legs, and she lay between them, taking his cock in her mouth, pleasuring him with her lips and tongue, one hand still caressing his stomach, the other at his balls, until he gasped and pulled her up off of him.

Minerva looked down at his flushed face, smiling slightly as she moved up again, this time straddling him.

"Now, my love?" she asked softly.

His lips moved, as if he were searching for a word, but he nodded, and she took his erection in one hand and guided him into her, her eyes closing and her mouth open at the sensation.

"Oh, gods, Albus . . ."

She began to ride him, slowly at first, and then faster, her heart pounding and her breath coming in gasps as her orgasm began, waves of pleasure pulsing through her body, exhausting her. Albus gripped her hips and urged her onto her back, his thrusts carrying her through her orgasm and bringing him to his own, warm rushes of intense pleasure flowing through him, euphoria encompassing him, and even his magic reaching out to find Minerva's as his orgasm burst through him, bringing his ecstatic joy with it in a tidal wave of pleasure and love.

Minerva cried out, the stars in her vision becoming rainbows of light as his magic entered hers and raced through it in great streams of power. Overwhelmed, she could not even breathe, only clutch Albus harder as he collapsed upon her, and then his magic receded, only tendrils of it still tickling hers, entwining and curling about it as she gasped.

"Oh, Albus, my dearest love, my one, my only one." Minerva began to weep from the joy she felt, holding Albus to her and kissing his shoulder, her legs still wrapped around him. "Never leave me, never leave me . . ."

Albus raised his hand and, with some effort, Summoned his robes to cover them both. After a few minutes, he finally lifted his head and looked down at Minerva, who wore an expression of utter peace. He kissed her gently.

"That was wonderful," he whispered, "but I am sorry. Are you all right?"

"Sorry? All right?" Minerva asked, opening her eyes. "I am better than I ever have been. I don't know why you would apologise for that."

"I just . . . that is, I had no idea. That has never happened to me before, and I didn't intend it, honestly," he said.

Minerva's puzzlement increased. "Your orgasm? I just don't understand, Albus."

"My magic . . . I didn't intend to reach into yours that way. It just . . . happened, believe me. I normally have very good control, but I honestly didn't intend it."

"It was absolutely marvellous, Albus. I have felt your magic while we've made love before, and this was even better than usual, so you have no reason to apologise."

Albus kissed her again. "I am glad, but I will be more careful in the future."

"But why?"

"I do not want to overwhelm your magic; I do not want to bind us. I fear inadvertently binding us together, binding you to me," Albus explained softly. "Even if we use no binding ritual, it could still happen. You are so very receptive to me, and our magic is so resonant. I love you very much, Minerva and that is putting it mildly. We are so close, and our magic already so entwined, it would be a much simpler thing for us to be bound than it would be for most, even without a ritual. I fear that, although until now, it did not occur to me that it might happen spontaneously, even though I have read of such instances."

"Would that be such a bad thing?" Minerva asked.

"Some bindings are very unequal, as you know. Most of the older ritual bindings are. I do not know what a spontaneous binding between us would produce, but I do know that it would limit your freedom, even if it were completely balanced. And my magic is . . . stronger, so much so that I fear what such a binding would bring about." He caressed her face. "I do not own you. You are your own. I do not want that to change."

Minerva nodded. "I do not fear it, though, Albus. But if it bothers you . . ." She shrugged. "I believe we are bound, anyway, and a magical binding would not change that. And I cannot fear what you might do, because I know that any spontaneous binding *would* arise out of our love for each other. You would never bind me to you in any way that would harm me. I am completely confident of that. And I cannot tell you how wonderful your magic feels when it flows through mine. I hope you do not completely keep that from happening altogether."

Albus smiled slightly and caressed her face gently. "I will try to reach a balance, my sweet Minerva. Although when it happens it is not entirely under my control, either. It truly was spontaneous."

"That is probably the very best kind of pleasure. I could feel the love and joy in you." Minerva's eyes welled with tears again. "It was utterly beautiful," she whispered. "Your magic is always so beautiful; you are beautiful, Albus. I see it and feel it."

"You see and feel a reflection of your own beauty, my love. You bring forth all the best in me, always," Albus said as he cupped her cheek. "The struggle, the fight within me before we came together, it was because I was pulling away from you and away from the best of me, as a result. You are all the beauty in my life. You are my heart."

They lay there quietly for a while, gently caressing each other, until Albus finally said, "This is not the most comfortable location for us to be reclining, my dear. How would you like me to fix us more tea and we could bring it outdoors and enjoy the fresh sea air?"

"A very good idea, Albus, but let me make the tea. Perhaps we could go up on the rise above the house? It is pleasant there, with the burn and the trees. If the sun became too warm, we could move to the shade, or if it's too cool in the shade, we could sit in the sun."

"All right, but we will prepare the tea together. I think we'll leave all the cleaning up today to Wilsy. She will come and freshen the cottage and then seal it all up after we leave, anyway."

"I will have to thank her," Minerva said.

As they got dressed, Minerva thought of a question that had been in her mind for some time.

"Albus, what might be an appropriate gift for a house-elf? I am thinking of Blampa specifically. She has come a long way since she first began serving me, and I want her to know that I appreciate it. Also," she said, turning so that Albus could do up her Charmed hooks in back, "there is apparently a snooty house-elf who is always putting her down. I thought that if I gave her a gift, it might improve her status with the other house-elves, but I don't want to give her something inappropriate."

"Something to do with your House, Gryffindor House, would be both appropriate and indicate her status," Albus replied. "Serving a Head of House is considered something of a privilege, anyway, and if she had something with the Gryffindor crest on it, that would make her very happy, I am sure. But anything that would identify her with you would be a fine gift, Minerva." He put his arms around her, giving her a kiss on the forehead. "That is very thoughtful of you, my dear. And it would help Blampa without directly involving you in the internal house-elf politics. Who is the snooty house-elf, do you remember?"

Minerva furrowed her brow, thinking back on the conversation she had with Blampa. "Scruffy? No, that's not right. Spruffy?"

"Spruffle?" Albus asked.

"Yes, that's it! He's always calling poor Blampa a 'piddly little thing,'" Minerva said, a touch of outrage in her voice.

Albus chuckled. "I am unsurprised. Do you know who Spruffle serves?"

Minerva shook her head.

"One of your admirers although you have so many, I am sure, that I should narrow that field," Albus said with a smile. "One of your fellow Heads of House."

"Slughorn," Minerva said immediately. "Well, I'll have to find something suitable to give her, but I also don't want to start a war of one-upmanship with Slughorn, either."

"Just as long as you remember not to insult her by giving her an article of clothing, I am sure that Blampa would be happy with whatever you gave her, my dear."

Minerva couldn't free a Hogwarts house-elf by giving her a piece of clothing, since as they were Hogwarts elves, only the Headmaster could free one, but it was still insulting to give one clothing, and it was considered ill-mannered, at the very least, to try to hand them any clothing directly. Laundry went into a Charmed basket, and the house-elves took care of it with a minimum of handling.

"What about a badge of some sort, or a patch or other emblem?" Minerva asked.

"Those aren't clothing, so they would be fine. As would jewellery, although I would advise against that," Albus said as they went into the kitchen together. "Some house-elves become minor kleptomaniacs for some reason, and someone might misinterpret her possession of anything of that sort as a symptom of that."

Minerva raised her eyebrows. "Kleptomaniacs?" That was a new one.

Albus began taking fresh teacups and saucers from the cupboard as Minerva filled the teapot and brought the water up to a bare boil, then added the tea leaves.

"Yes. It's usually a harmless foible, and we rarely have a problem with it at Hogwarts. Personally, I think it's a sign of an unhappy home," Albus said. "They aren't receiving the validation they need that assures them that they are good house-elves to the family, so they begin to take things belonging to the family members in order to feel more validated, more a part of the family, and to reinforce their own perception of their position within the household."

"Oh. Well, no wonder I have never heard of such a thing before," Minerva said as she poured the milk into a small pitcher. "Our house-elves are most certainly happy, and I'm sure they feel valued and a part of the family. Mother positively dotes on them. Peculiar, I suppose some might find it. But they have always taken very good care of us, and when I was growing up, I never doubted that Fwisky loved me, so I loved her." She smiled as she set everything on the tray. "I still do, though I can't say I really understand her or any of our house-elves, really. Not the way I do the other members of my family, anyway."

Albus and Minerva left the cottage through the kitchen door and walked up the rise, finding a nice flat spot between some trees and the stream. With a wave of his wand, Albus conjured a low table and two well-cushioned chaises longues on either side. Minerva lowered the tray onto the table.

They sat in the sun, drank their tea, and talked about the island and their plans for returning for short visits during the school year.

"These trees behind us, Albus, they look like apple trees," Minerva said.

"They are; it's a small orchard. In fact, the apples will soon be ready to pick. I think some are beginning to fall from the trees. If I remember, I'll have Wilsy gather some when she comes to close up the cottage. Aberforth, of course, living here year-round as he did, had a good-sized garden, as well, and a large shed for the goats. It was not a particularly picturesque building, and as I had no use for it, I removed it. It was, however, of the same stone as the cottage, so I reused the stone when I added on the library."

"You did a very nice job with it, too." Minerva looked down at the cottage. "Was it thatched before?"

"Yes, but as I spend so little time here and even with magical construction, a thatched roof requires a good deal of regular upkeep. I thought the slate would be more practical. I have done very little work on the cottage since I made those changes, though."

"It is a beautiful island," Minerva said. "I really love it. How did Aberforth come to own it?"

"Ah, well, he had another cottage at one time, in Wales, actually, but . . . there was an incident. Quite some years ago, but he never felt as comfortable there again. You must be aware how gossip can spread and continue for years regardless of its veracity. When a friend told him about this island and that its previous owner needed to be divested of, but was being fussy about to whom he sold it, Aberforth immediately approached the man and his family," Albus explained. "The gentleman who lived here was getting on in years and was moving to Inverness to live with his daughter. She and her family were well settled there and had no desire to move to the island, so they wanted to sell it. It had been in their family for several generations, so the old fellow wasn't very happy about it, but when Aberforth reassured him that it would remain unplottable and that he would even add to the wards, he sold it to him."

"What was it that made Aberforth want to move away from Wales? He must have spent most of his life there," Minerva said.

Albus quirked a smile. "You have likely heard some of the stories, Minerva. You needn't pretend you haven't."

"The, um, 'inappropriate charms' stories?" Minerva asked hesitantly.

"Yes, and if I tell you the truth, you must never tell anyone else and not let Aberforth know that you know," Albus said. At her nod of understanding, he continued. "He was supposedly practising inappropriate charms on goats in order to, um, have carnal relations," he said with a slight blush. "The truth of the matter was that he was involved with a young witch. Her father didn't approve. They were in the midst of relations when they heard people coming. Aberforth cast a quick spell to Transfigure her into a goat, but in his haste, it was not completely effective, so he had to cast it again, and the witnesses briefly saw, um, a goat with the nether regions of a woman. His second spell was effective, and she ran away, leaving Aberforth alone in a state of, um, in a state. The Transfiguration eventually wore off and the witch went home. He refused to defend himself or explain things, and the woman never came forward. My influence was not particularly great at the time this was in the early eighties but I did what I could for him, and he was only fined and placed on a kind of magical supervision for a decade."

"A *decade*?" Minerva asked, appalled.

"Yes. It wasn't continuous or constant, but the MLE could pop in with no notice just to inspect him and his goats. They would go through the herd checking to see if any had had any spells cast on them recently which they often did, just in terms of basic care and maintenance. So Aberforth had to keep a log of all magic he performed on his goats and be prepared to explain and justify it. At the time that he purchased this island, he hadn't been under supervision for more than fifteen years, but the stigma still stung and he felt he never wanted to be in the position to be subject to the Ministry in that way again. This island was perfect for him at the time, since the Ministry has no claim of jurisdiction over it."

"But he took your cottage in the Dales," Minerva said, puzzled.

"Yes, but much more time has passed. He began working in Hogsmeade almost twenty years ago, shortly after I began at Hogwarts, so he had also developed new friends, and the cottage in the Dales is quite isolated. He feels more secure than he did. The jokes about goats haven't gone away, but he has become used to them. He even makes them himself, occasionally." Albus grinned. "So do I, actually."

"Poor Aberforth," Minerva said sympathetically.

"Yes, well, he could have averted it all if he hadn't been such a gentleman which I understood and approved of, in principle. What I found deplorable was the witch's behaviour afterward. She wouldn't even see him again, and he apparently had been entertaining the idea of marriage. I don't believe he's seen another witch on that sort of basis since. I don't know as he was heart-broken, but I think he decided women weren't worth the trouble, as he once put it to me."

"The Dumbledore boys didn't have very lucky love lives," Minerva remarked.

"No, but this Dumbledore boy just had to be patient, and I am now the most fortunate of all wizards," he said, blowing her a kiss. It landed warmly on Minerva's cheek, and she smiled.

"It is a beautiful island, though, and I'm very glad he gave it to you. Yorkshire is beautiful, of course, but this . . . this is extraordinary." Minerva stood and looked out to the sea, where she could just make out a pod of porpoises apparently playing. "You know, Albus, I have just been struck by something. I have seen porpoises and seals, but no dolphins. There are often dolphins near the McGonagall Cliffs. I used to watch them when I was a girl. Odd that there are no dolphins here."

"Not odd. There are anti-dolphin wards that extend quite a ways out from the island," Albus said with a yawn.

"Anti-dolphin wards?! Why on earth?"

"Aberforth," Albus said, stifling another yawn.

"Aberforth put them up?"

"No, I did it for him. He came to me one day in tears. I hadn't seen him cry since our mother's funeral. He was dreadfully upset. Apparently he witnessed some dolphins ganging up on a porpoise. They killed it, according to him." Albus shrugged. "I have never seen such a thing, but Aberforth wanted to create a safe area for the porpoises one where he wouldn't have to witness the nastiness of nature, anyway." Albus shook his head at the memory. "I never want to have to do such a thing again, Minerva, so I truly hope you don't develop an aversion to some sea creature."

"It was difficult?"

"I could do a good deal of it from a broom, but in order to get a magical reading from a sample dolphin and then to cast the wards deeply enough to make a difference, we had to go out in a boat." Albus grimaced. "I do not like boats. I never am prone to nausea, you know that, Minerva, but boats . . . little rickety things, always bouncing up and down, or whatever it is that boats do, even this one he'd borrowed from a friend and then controlling them!" He shook his head again. "It took three days to do the warding, with several hours of the first and last day spent in that boat. I'd rather try to ride a dragon, to be honest, than ever go out in a boat again."

Minerva laughed. "I've never been in a boat, myself, but I thought they looked amusing. However, I will take your word for it that they are not."

"I appreciate many Muggle forms of transportation, but as . . . useful as boats are, and they certainly are that, I don't fancy them as a method to get from one place to another unless they are charmed. I took a Charmed boat once in the Indian Ocean. That wasn't too bad. Still somewhat disconcerting to be out in the middle of the water like that, unable to see land, but at least it didn't make one ill."

"But witches and wizards used to use Muggle boats all of the time. They weren't always only for Muggles. Until the development of the Portkey, they were the only way to get to the Continent and back, unless one Apparated and one could only do that if one had already been wherever one was Apparating to. And most people can't Apparate that far, anyway, and even those who can are superstitious about Apparating over water. They have no trouble Apparating from Leeds to London, but ask them to hop over the Channel, and they suddenly develop a fear of Splinching."

Minerva smiled over at Albus. As she'd been talking, his eyes had closed, and now he looked relaxed and on the verge of sleep.

"Sleepy, Albus?"

"Mmmm . . . it's nice here in the sun." He opened his eyes and smiled at her. "We could get rid of the table and combine our chairs. Have a nice little snuggle together."

Minerva agreed with that proposition, and so she stood, banished the table, and with a flick of her wand, created one large chaise longue from their two. They snuggled up together, just as Albus had suggested. Soon, Albus was breathing gently, and Minerva, thinking of how little sleep Albus managed when at Hogwarts, was very happy to cuddle up to him for a while, feeling his comfortable solidity next to her. She wasn't sleepy, though, and after several minutes, she got up and walked about. An idea occurred to her, and she went back and bent over Albus.

"Albus Albus?" she whispered. "Albus, I'm going to walk about a bit in my Animagus form. I won't go far, I promise. Albus?"

"Mmmm."

Minerva shrugged. Well, she wouldn't be going far, and any eagle or hawk that tried to catch her would be in for quite a surprise. With a pop, she Transfigured into her Tabby-form and padded down to the stream and walked along it. Yes, fish. Nice fish. She had never tried to catch anything in her Animagus form before, but she could try. Not just yet, though. The trees tempted her more at that moment, and she trotted toward the apple trees. Minerva reached the small orchard and began to race through it, around trees, up a few feet, then leaping back down again. There were some windfall apples on the ground, so it would be good to ask Wilspy to pick the ripe ones so they didn't go to waste, though she supposed the animals enjoyed them.

She scratched the bark of one of the old, gnarled trees, stopping to sniff. There was a strange yet oddly familiar scent nearby, but she couldn't place it. Minerva dismissed the slight feline concern that arose in her, sharpened her claws a bit more, then climbed up the trunk to the first of the lower branches. She stood for a moment, enjoying the breeze, then she leapt to grasp the trunk again, climbing up to find another likely branch to stretch out on. After a bit of a kip, she could see about that fish, she thought. Might be nice for lunch, a fresh fish. If she could catch one. If she couldn't, it would still be fun to try, she thought as she stretched long out on a branch, letting one of her front paws dangle. She couldn't see Albus from where she was, but she wouldn't be gone long. She would be back before he woke up, she was sure. Minerva gradually drifted into a light sleep, lulled by the scent of the sea and the apple trees.

Chapter Twelve

Chapter 12 of 12

Minerva has a bit of an adventure; Albus adds Minerva to the island's wards before they leave. Final chapter!



Chapter Twelve

Albus woke and stretched, blinking. He raised his head slightly as he reached out with one hand, meeting the empty space where Minerva had been.

"Minerva?" He sat up and looked around, but he didn't see her. Perhaps she had to use the loo and went back down to the cottage. "Minerva!"

Albus stood and banished the chaise. She had said something to him. What had she said? He just remembered her voice in his ear. He called her name again. Perhaps she had gone into the orchard. She had expressed interest in the apples. At just that moment, something caught his eye. Little paw prints in the soft earth beside the stream.

Albus groaned. "Oh, Minerva!" He sighed, shaking his head. She would probably be just fine, but he still didn't like the idea of her little self out somewhere alone. There were dangers here of which she was unaware. He didn't think that he would wait for her to return.

He followed the paw prints a short ways, then they became lighter where she had turned away from the stream. He could see where she had begun to run toward the orchard, but he doubted he would be able to follow her path, although he could use magic to assist him. It would still be tedious. Instead, he flared into his own Animagus form and took to the air. As he flew above the small orchard, he heard a high-pitched screech followed by a low growl. Alarmed, he turned and flew in the direction of the sounds.

There was Minerva in her Tabby-form, on the end of a limb, her fur standing out around her, her ears back, snarling and growling, raising one paw threateningly. Her adversary stood on the same branch near the trunk. Minerva hissed and snarled again. The wildcat, a few pounds heavier than she and a good deal fiercer looking, remained where he was, his whiskers flattened back, his eyes large, and his tail switching straight out from his body. He emitted a long, low growl and inched his way toward Minerva, who arched her back and hissed again. Her attention was not distracted by the sound of a deeply trilled phoenix-song, though her ear twitched, and she continued to stare at her opponent, who, too late, became aware of the large bird coming at him from above.

The wildcat turned and raised a paw to swipe at the phoenix, but he was not the phoenix's target, and he didn't catch even a feather as the large bird grabbed the Tabby by the neck and brought her to the ground beneath the tree. As soon as Albus released her, Minerva transformed back into her ordinary form, and with a flash of flame, Albus followed suit, much to the surprise of the confused wildcat above them.

Minerva leaned into Albus's embrace, resting her forehead against his shoulder and let out a relieved breath.

"Are you all right, my dear?" Albus asked, worried.

"Fine, although my neck hurts where you grabbed me. Thank you, Albus!" She kissed his cheek and lay her cheek against his beard as he nuzzled the top of her head.

"You shouldn't have been out here alone or you should have been more prepared," Albus chided gently.

"I didn't go far, Albus. And I would have been prepared if I had had any idea that there were wildcats on the island. I caught its scent before I climbed the tree, but I didn't recognise it for what it was. Had I known there were wildcats, I'm sure I would have and would have exercised more care."

"I am sorry. I ought to have told you. They feed on the hare and grouse. When Aberforth lived here, they didn't come this close to the cottage, but now, I suppose they have expanded their comfort zone. I will set up some anti-wildcat wards," he said.

"You will not, Albus. We are here only a small part of the year. I will simply take much greater care in the future." Minerva looked up at the wildcat, which was now scrambling across another branch on the other side of the tree, away from them, then leaping down to a broad, low branch to make good his escape. "It isn't his fault. And he just wanted me to go away although I did catch a sense from him that if I were receptive, he might like an opportunity to mate. I might have been hurt, but not badly. Not that I would want to try to get into any kind of fight with such a creature, but it wasn't his fault. He was just doing what comes naturally."

"Could you communicate with it?" Albus asked.

Minerva shook her head, wincing at the pain in her neck. "No that's hard enough with domestic non-magical animals. Wild non-magical animals are much more difficult to communicate with. It was very clear, though, that he felt I was in his territory, but I could have sensed that just by looking at him," she said with a chuckle.

"Here, let me see your neck." Albus grimaced as he turned her and saw the results of his rescue: a large set of bruises at the base of her neck. "I am very sorry, my dear! I didn't mean to cause such damage!"

"A little bit of potion, and it will be fine, I'm sure. What hurts most are my trapezius muscles, actually. A full-grown cat isn't meant to be lifted that way normally but thank you! I am very glad you did!"

Albus kissed her neck. "You have such a beautiful neck, too. Let's go down to the cottage and take care of it." He kissed her bruises again, and a light, cooling sensation passed over her skin, and some of the superficial soreness was alleviated.

Minerva sighed as, hand-in-hand, they began to walk down to the cottage. "And I had wanted to try to catch us a fish for our lunch."

Albus laughed. "You had wanted to try to catch a fish?"

"Don't laugh, Albus! I thought it might be fun to try even if I wasn't successful," Minerva said, slightly put out.

Albus stifled a chuckle. "I am sorry, my dear. Of course it would be fun. I sometimes eat ripe berries in my Animagus form, and they taste absolutely wonderful to my phoenix-palate, so I suppose I could understand your wanting to try to catch a fish."

"For us both. Fresh fish is very nice even when you're not a cat," Minerva said somewhat crossly. Her shoulders ached and now she was getting a headache, and they were wasting time getting potion for her on their last morning on the island. It just didn't seem fair.

Albus stopped and turned her toward him, smiling down at her. He gently caressed her cheek. "You will have many opportunities in the future, my dearest Raggles." Albus softly kissed her forehead, then he slipped his arms around her and gave her a gentle kiss on the lips.

Minerva relaxed as he kissed her and very gently rubbed her back. She opened her mouth and let him deepen the kiss. His hand cupped her buttocks as he pulled her closer to him, and Minerva felt a slight tingle of magic. When she opened her eyes and broke the kiss, she saw that they were in their bedroom.

Albus caressed her forehead and cheek. "You need some loving care, I believe, my sweet delight," he said softly.

He kissed her once more lightly on the lips, then went into the bathroom, where Minerva could hear him opening the cabinet.

"You have a seat on the bed, Minerva," he called to her. "I will be out in a moment to soothe away all your aches."

Minerva's face relaxed into a smile as she sat on the edge of the bed and waited for Albus. He had a way of making her feel better, of calming her and putting her in a better frame of mind, just by being himself. With only a few words and kisses, he had helped some of her irritability drain away. He was so very good to her.

As he came out of the bathroom carrying a small tin, two potions bottles floating beside him, and Minerva turned to look at him, wincing at the pain in her neck.

"I love you, Albus," she said. "You are too good to me."

"I could never be too good to you," Albus replied with a smile. He set the potions down on the night stand on her side of the bed. "Now, let me help you off with these robes. Don't move your arms, my darling. Let me do the work here. Mm-hmm, very good. Now stand."

Albus very carefully and slowly helped her off with her robes; as she sat on the bed, he knelt and removed her shoes, then took off her stockings. He kissed each knee before standing and looking at her warmly. He Summoned the square blue bottle of potion and conjured a spoon.

"One swallow of this, first," he said, pouring some clear, viscous potion into the spoon.

Minerva obediently opened her mouth for the spoon. "Nngnn-ngle-nnsh," she said as she tasted the potion.

"What was that, my dear?"

"It's licorice. I hate licorice." She made a face. "You ought to have warned me."

"I am sorry! Next time I brew it, I will do something to disguise the flavour for you," Albus replied with a cheerful smile.

"You still brew your own potions?" Minerva asked as he poured out a small dose of green potion from the round brown bottle.

"Some. They last a while, and it's good to keep my hand in," he said in response, holding out the spoon until she opened her mouth again.

"Mmm, now that one is nice!" Minerva smacked her lips. "I can't even say what it tastes of, but it's very good!"

Albus chuckled. "I am very glad it meets with your approval, my sweet one." He gave her a quick peck on the lips. "Now, you just turn a bit here, and I'll sit behind you and put some of this on your neck and shoulders," he said as he took the lid off the small tin.

Albus began to work some of the thick, fragrant potion into her sore skin and muscles, and Minerva took in a deep breath and let it out slowly.

"Oh, this feels lovely. And it smells nice, too. Juniper?"

"Some juniper, yes," Albus said softly. "Just relax . . . just relax, my love." His thumbs moved up and down either side of her vertebrae and up to the base of her skull, then easing them over her shoulders and down her trapezius muscles. He pressed slightly on her shoulders and said, "Lie down, now, and I'll do the rest of your back."

"Mmm." Minerva lay down on her stomach as Albus moved her legs up onto the bed. "Lunch," she murmured.

"Oh, we have time for lunch later . . . it's not so late yet. Not even ten-thirty. Just relax. Relax and let me do all the work." He leaned over and kissed the back of her head before he began to smooth his hands down over her back, lingering over her ribs, stroking and kneading gently.

When his hands reached her knickers, he lifted her gently and eased them down and off.

"So beautiful," he whispered. "So beautiful." He ran his hands over her buttocks and back up her back, then down again. "I am very sorry that I hurt you, Minerva."

"You didn't intend it, and I'm very glad you came along. I had no idea how I would make it past that animal, and I couldn't transform on that branch. It wouldn't have held

me." She sighed as Albus's hands returned to her shoulders. "And it was worth it, too, if I get this lovely massage as a result."

Albus chuckled, and the sound sent a frisson of pleasure through Minerva. "I am enjoying it, too, my dear." His hands moved down to her legs, and he began to massage them.

Minerva spread her legs, and Albus smiled, continuing to knead her muscles, massaging her thighs and calves before reaching her feet. He rubbed her feet, massaging her arches, then separating her toes and paying attention to each one before returning his hands to her thighs. With whisper touches, his fingertips grazed the insides of Minerva's thighs. She let out a sighing moan and bent her knees, spreading her legs further.

"You like that?" Albus whispered. "When I do this?" He caressed her soft skin with tantalisingly light touches.

"Mmm, very much," Minerva said, her eyes closed. Her warmth and tingling was growing, and she raised her hips slightly and rocked on the bed.

Albus's eyes were warm with pleasure at her response, and he gradually moved one hand higher and began to gently touch her folds, barely grazing her clitoris with his fingertips. He smiled as Minerva moaned and tried to push back onto his fingers. He bent and kissed her buttocks, then gently nipped just as he slid two fingers into her.

"Oh, gods, Albus," Minerva moaned.

"Do you want more?" he asked in a whisper. "More?"

"Yes, more, please, more," Minerva begged as he began to thrust his fingers into her, his thumb angled to rub her clit as he pleased her.

One of his hands went to the front of his own robes, opening them, and he kicked off his short boots before climbing completely onto the bed. He bent and licked and lightly nipped her back and shoulders, then he lifted her further off the bed as he moved down and lay on his back between her legs.

"I can't resist having a taste, my love, just a taste before I fuck you," Albus said with a growl.

Minerva's arousal increased with his words, and she thought again how she enjoyed it when Albus would suddenly use a word she never would have expected to hear from his lips, and to know that he wanted her, that he desired her, that his desire was deep and visceral. She moaned again as his tongue found her clitoris and his fingers continued to pleasure her within, and as he did, she found her excitement mounting, and her urgency, too, and she wiggled against him. His tongue flicked hard and fast as he moved his head to provide her with even greater stimulation, and she began to come. His fingers pulsed against her sweet spot, and she felt a sudden flow of warm moisture leave her as Albus lapped at her, groaning with his own pleasure and desire.

Then he was gone from between her legs, and she felt him grip her hips as the head of his cock found her entrance.

"Gods, fuck me, Albus, yes, yes, fuck me, tell me you want me, please . . . please . . ." Minerva begged him, his cock rubbing against her.

"I want you and I'm going to fuck you, Minerva, I'm going to fuck you until you come again. I love you, I need you, I desire you, and I am going to fuck you!" Albus said, gasping as he pushed into her. He moved one hand so that he could reach her nub, and he began to flick it as he stilled himself, with difficulty, and said, "Do you want me to fuck you, Minerva? Do you?"

In response, Minerva squeezed his cock inside of her, and he groaned.

"I want you to fuck me, Albus. Love me, fuck me, take me, please! Yes, yes!"

Albus began to move in and out, pumping steadily.

"Harder, Albus, harder!"

"You want it harder?" Albus asked, and he obliged her, thrusting hard and fast into her, until he could feel himself about to come.

"Yes, Albus, yes!" Minerva shouted, coming around his cock, her euphoria intense and driving out all thought of anything but Albus and her pleasure.

He allowed himself to release, holding onto her hips with both hands and pushing into her deeply a few more times as he spent himself. "Oh, gods, Minerva, I love you, I love you, Minerva, my delight, my sweet, sweet delight!"

Albus lay beside her on the bed, pulling her close, her back to his chest. He gave her a tired kiss on the back of her head, and sighed in contentment.

"I love you, Albus," Minerva whispered. "Never leave me, please, never leave me."

"As long as it is within my power, my dearest love, I will not leave you." He took in a deep breath and let it out. "How are your neck and shoulders?"

Minerva laughed. "I don't notice them at all."

"And the grumps are gone?" he asked in a teasing voice.

"Grumps? I was not grumpy." She thought a moment. "Well, mildly irritable, perhaps. But that's gone, too." She yawned. "I do feel remarkably sleepy, though."

"That's likely the green potion. It does have a mild sedative effect, though that was not its purpose. It helped relax your muscles before the massage." Albus found his wand and cast a *Tempus*. "Why don't you lie here and have a little nap, and I'll make us some sandwiches," he suggested. "We still have to set the wards for you, and although we have a little time, we will need to leave soon."

Minerva sighed. "I really don't want to leave. It's paradise here, or as near to it as we can get." She turned her head to look at him. "You haven't packed yet. I could do that for you while you fix lunch." She stifled a yawn.

Albus kissed her cheek. "You just take a short nap, my dear. I'll have Wilspy fetch my things when she comes to clean up."

He stood, tucked himself away, then pulled the bed covers up over Minerva. He bent and gave her one more kiss. "I will come get you when they're ready."

Minerva's eyes were closed, and she just let out a sigh. Albus chuckled and left to fix the sandwiches for them.

Fifteen minutes later, he was back. "Minerva, Minerva, my dear," he said, stroking her forehead. "Lunch is ready! Tea and sandwiches!"

"Already?" Minerva yawned. "It feels as though you just left." She blinked. "You go on down. I'll just dress and join you in a minute."

"Don't fall asleep again, though! I do want to set the wards. It won't take very long, but I don't want to rush, either, and we both have to be back at the school by two."

A half hour later, they were finishing the last of their tea, and Minerva asked, "Is this complicated? You said that when you set the dolphin wards, you had to go out on a broom and it took three days."

"Those were unusual wards. The island has a naturally-formed perimeter, and the regular wards are set to go one-half mile around its perimeter at low tide, more or less. With the new wards, I had to be very specific against one sort of creature which is more difficult than allowing a specific creature or person in, as you may know without

having it affect the access of any others. They also had to go deeply enough to be effective against dolphins, allow any dolphins that were already within the perimeter to leave the area but not return, and although I should probably have used the island's perimeter as a way of setting the further perimeter, I didn't, and the ocean to me is just a formless sea of water, and it was hard for me to delineate the boundaries of the wards properly. I had never done anything quite like it, despite my experience with wards, and I made it more complicated than necessary. It was very good to have done once, and I learned a good deal from my mistakes, but I don't want to have to do that again. This is much easier; we may simply stand at any point on the island, and we can do what needs to be done to add you to them or to make any other changes to the existing wards."

"When was this that you added the creature wards for Aberforth?" Minerva asked, standing and placing her napkin on the table.

"About ten years after he acquired the island. Around . . . nineteen twenty-five, I think."

"Oh." Minerva didn't mention the thought that first came to her mind: she had been born in 1924 and wasn't even a year old at the time. "Well," she said briskly, "shall we get on with it?"

Albus nodded and stood. "Because this island isn't subject to any of the laws of the Ministry, when I took it, I created extremely strong wards, enhancing the ones that were already here and adding to them. Combined with the fact that it's unplottable and has been for several hundred years, it is a true refuge, and Eilean Tèarmunn is a very apt name. There have actually been witches and wizards who have lived here for years with little or no contact with the outside world. Of course, they had their family with them, sometimes quite a large extended family the foundations of four interconnected houses can still be easily discerned on the second-smallest of the three mountains so they weren't quite recluses or hermits, and usually there were at least a few members of the family who had frequent and regular contact with the rest of the wizarding world, but it truly is a sanctuary in many ways."

They stepped out the kitchen door into the noonday sun and Minerva took his hand. "Thank you, Albus," she said softly. "You needn't feel obligated to add me to the wards, you know. I would be content to have you bring me by Side-Along Apparition each time we come here."

Albus turned and smiled at her. "I am very happy to add you to them, my love, and this way, you can come here yourself, if you wish to get away for a while, or if you wish to proceed me, or if you need sometime to make a trip away from the island and then return. I don't want you dependent on me for that."

Minerva caressed his cheek. "I will never abuse your trust, you know."

He nodded. "I know it. You already have my heart; there are no wards between us, Minerva. This is something quite mundane in comparison." He kissed her lips lightly. "And I hope that I have your trust, my dear, as these stronger wards I created are blood wards. I added Aberforth to them using only a little venous blood so that he can come and go freely, but he can not alter the wards although I do think that would be a bit beyond his . . . beyond his normal range of activities and not an easy thing, in any case. The blood wards, though, were created with my freshly flowing arterial blood, and I would like to place you on an equal footing with them. It would allow you to make any changes you like to the wards, renew them, add to them, and create Portkeys to bring someone with you, or even add another person to the wards. Your blood and your magic would also strengthen the existing wards if we were to use the older ritual and your arterial blood. If you are uncomfortable with the notion of creating such a strong blood ward, though, I will just add you using the same method as I did Aberforth. If we use venous blood as I did with him, you could Apparate here yourself and bring someone with you by Side-Along or by using a Portkey that I created for you, but you would be limited and restricted in many ways. It is up to you, though, my darling."

Minerva swallowed, but did not hesitate. "Of course I trust you, Albus. Completely. I would be lying if I were to say that I am at ease with such wards, but it is the result of hearing for my entire life that blood magic is almost the same as Dark Magic. I know intellectually that that is not true, but the sense of taboo is still there."

"So . . . a drop of blood from a prick of the finger, or . . . the other? It . . . it might actually be somewhat frightening. I do not wish you to be afraid, though. And although it does take what may appear to be an alarming amount of blood for the older warding, it really isn't as much as it seems and I have some Blood-Replenishing Potion here."

"I can't take standard Blood-Replenishing Potion, Albus," Minerva said, interrupting him. "I'm very allergic to it, for some reason. It's in my health records, but I suppose that for future reference you should know that about me, anyway. Mother and Murdoch developed a potion for me when I was a teenager that I can take, but I can't take the standard one without becoming extremely ill. It doesn't really pose a problem, as it's not the sort of potion one often has occasion to need."

"Oh, well . . . you should be fine without it. Does your mother keep some at the house, though?" Albus asked.

"Yes, and so does Murdoch, and there's some in the Hospital Wing, as well, just in case." Minerva shrugged. "I think I've only had to take it once in my life, the altered potion, but it keeps indefinitely if it's in an unopened, Charmed bottle away from the light, so it makes sense to have some on hand."

"When we return, I will bring you by Side-Along Apparition, then, so that you needn't tire yourself, and your mother can give you some of the potion when we get there." He frowned. "I wish I had been aware of this. We should keep some of that potion here on the island, too. I will ask Murdoch or your mother for the formula if they will share it." When Minerva nodded, he continued, "In the meantime, I think you should be just fine unless you would prefer to wait? It was rather important to me to add you to the wards today, for purely sentimental reasons. But if you would prefer to wait, that is fine, and I would understand. Or we could just do the simple one today and the more extensive one on our next trip."

Minerva reached out and rubbed his arm. "Albus, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate this. It means more than you can know. And especially after what happened with, well, that other witch."

"That was very different," Albus replied. "The wards there were simple ones, and setting them . . . setting them was a simple process, very much like what your father did for me at the McGonagall Cliffs. I never would have let her have this kind of access if I had had such wards there. It is not the same at all."

"That just makes this even more special," Minerva said softly. "You have asked whether it is what I want, but are you certain it is what you want? We could wait. I would understand if you wanted to wait and reconsider it. I would understand, really."

Albus shook his head slowly. "In my heart and mind, it is done. It is merely a matter of realising it." He raised her hand to his mouth and kissed it. "All that I am, Minerva, all that I have . . . I give it to you."

Minerva blinked back tears. "Then let's do it today. Let's not wait."

Albus nodded. "It won't bind us, you understand; it's not a binding, not in the sense of the bindings that you are familiar with, bonds of service, slave bindings, marriage bindings, adoption bindings, and the like, but there will be a deeper magical and physical connection between us because we will be warding the island with a very powerful old magic that, in a way, binds us each individually to the island and its wards." He swallowed. "You need to know that. It is not irrevocable, of course; it can be severed, if you ever wish it. And I am completely certain of the parameters of the connection, but if this alters your "

"It alters nothing," Minerva said softly. "Even if it bound us magically for life, I would agree. We are already bound together; I have told you that. Anything else is . . . gilt. A wonderful, beautiful addition to what we have."

"You may not always feel that way, though," Albus said.

"I have felt that way for more years than I care to confess, Albus. Let us go and do the warding now." She slipped her hand down his arm to his hand.

"All right." Albus bent and kissed her lips softly. "We can do this from anywhere on the island. Is there anywhere in particular that you would like to do it? The top of the first mountain, perhaps?"

"Yes no! The hedge, Albus! That would be lovely."

Albus hesitated only slightly, then nodded. "The stone circle, then. You have your wand? Good, then we are off!" He put his arm around her and they Disapparated with a soft pop.

They arrived in the centre of the circle, and Minerva looked around her in delight. "A perfect way to end our holiday!"

Albus chuckled. "You wait until after it's over to declare that."

"You seemed hesitant about using this location superstitious?"

"No, but . . . it could enhance or amplify the effect, but even if it does, that would only strengthen the wards, and that would be a good thing. Between that and our mated wands, they will be very powerful wards, indeed. I do think I will need to reintroduce Aberforth's blood to it afterward, as well," Albus said thoughtfully. "It would be very unpleasant if he were to try to Apparate here and bounced. Even dangerous. I will let him know not to try until I've had a chance to retune them to him again."

"What about Wilsby?" Minerva asked.

"Oh, she isn't affected by these ward changes, as she's a house-elf, and it's quite a different matter. Once I had Apparated through with her the first time which was many years before Aberforth exchanged cottages with me she could return at any time, even after I created the stronger blood wards."

"I am still amazed that Aberforth gave it to you, even though you gave him your own cottage."

Albus shrugged. "I believe that in many respects, he is actually more sociable than I am, though more taciturn. It was wearing on him, I believe, to be as isolated as he had once believed he wished to be. And although he claims not to want unexpected visitors, he enjoys having his friends pop around and see him at the other cottage. He is even on the Floo-network, which I never bothered with when I was living there. Having his friends come here for a visit was not impossible, but it was very difficult, as you might imagine. No, it really was quite an ideal exchange from both our perspectives."

"For some reason, I used to think that he lived over the Hog's Head," Minerva said.

"He does have a room there, but it's more of a convenience than anything else. He now has a lad who comes around to the cottage and helps him with the goats, too, which is another advantage for him. Before, he could never leave the island for long because, except on the rare occasions when I agreed to pop over and look in on the goats for him which is not anything that I enjoy doing, I must admit he was unable to have anyone else take care of them. He was very tied down."

"Well, I suppose we ought to do this if we are going to be back at Hogwarts by two," Minerva said with a sigh. "It wouldn't do to have the Headmaster and the Head of Gryffindor both late for the first staff meeting of the year."

"Very well. Only a portion of the invocation is in Latin. It is unlikely that you will be able to follow most of it, but you needn't. You need only listen, focus on my voice and on the intent to join your magic and your body with the magic and the body of this place, and to create wards to guard it and hide it from all, maintaining it as a sanctuary and refuge. I will perform the actual warding. In time, I will teach you all you need to know to maintain, renew, or change the wards. But for now, this is sufficient. Any questions about that?" Albus asked. When she shook her head, he said, "The reason that this may be somewhat . . . alarming for you is that the ritual takes arterial blood, and for this particular one, the blood comes from the carotid artery. Just remain calm and even if you feel . . . faint, simply concentrate on my voice. Because of the ritual, your blood will not flow out of you as it would if you were simply cut, however. It will seek your wand. You will feel that, and it will be very peculiar, no doubt. I am also going to let some of my own blood. Again, have no fear about the magical effects. It is a highly refined, though very ancient, ritual. It may be enhanced by our mated wands, but it cannot be altered in any fundamental way."

"I understand. You needn't continue to reassure me on that," Minerva said. She wasn't worried about the effects of the warding; she was more nervous about the blood aspect of it, both from the purely practical point-of-view that one does not normally stand about and allow oneself to bleed freely from the neck, and from the lingering sense that what they were about to do was considered taboo, and would even be illegal if they were in Britain.

"You may be glad of the reassurance when we are in the midst of the warding, however. The entire process will take no more than a few minutes, with the blood-letting only twenty or thirty seconds of that. Remember, maintain your focus on my voice and on the intent of the warding. It may help if you keep your eyes on my face."

Minerva swallowed and nodded. "I am ready."

"Raise your wand and remain focussed on our task," Albus said gently. Suddenly, he stepped forward, bent, and kissed her throat softly. "I will take good care of you, my love. I promise. And it won't hurt."

Albus kissed her throat again, and Minerva felt a slight tingle then some numbness where his lips had touched her. She raised her wand just as he had instructed, and he raised his, closing his eyes. Slowly, he began chanting under his breath, and as he had said, she understood little of it. Some of it sounded Latin, some of it as though it might be a Gaelic language, but some was so different from anything she had heard before that she didn't recognise it at all. There were words about the wind, the sea, the earth, and the trees; that much she could understand, but rather than focus on what she barely comprehended, Minerva concentrated on the rise and fall of Albus's voice and on their mutual intent to ward the island, to keep it safe and hidden, and to bind herself and her magic to it; she could feel his magic ripple around her and her own magic flow through her wand to mingle with his.

Albus raised his wand higher, pointing toward the sky, then he pointed to each of the compass points, turning slowly in place as he did so, and Minerva could feel his magic radiating out from him in waves of energy. He opened his eyes, and when they met hers, he smiled slightly, though his voice didn't falter. With his left hand, he reached out and touched her right wrist, adjusting the angle of her wand, then he nodded once, pointed his wand at her throat, and a brief burst of magic opened a small slit through her skin and flesh and right into her artery. It was a peculiar sensation, although it did not hurt, but her heart seemed to pound harder as she became aware of her blood pulsing out of her body. She continued looking directly into Albus's face, though, listening to his voice, focussing on their intent in the ritual, and placing all of her trust in him.

As he had promised, the blood did not spurt in the powerful, uncontrolled way that she would have expected of a natural wound, though its flow pulsed constantly in time with her heart. It arced out of her body, meeting her wand at the point where she held it. As her blood began to flow up her wand, Albus touched the right side of his own throat with his left hand, opening his own artery. The blood from his neck leapt to his wand and pulsed up it to meet with hers. A bridge seemed to form between their wands, and their blood met on that bridge as Albus touched his own throat again, closing the small wound, but Minerva's blood continued to flow, gathering between their wands in a brightly glistening pool of scarlet, and Albus's words grew louder.

Minerva's knees grew weak, and despite her efforts to concentrate on Albus's voice, it seemed that all she could hear was a buzzing sound. Yet she focussed her narrowing vision on his face, trusting him entirely. Suddenly, the pool of blood expanded outward, impossibly growing into a giant sphere. She could feel it pass over her as it rushed outward and upward, yet it did not leave any mark of its passing. Minerva became aware that her blood was no longer flowing out of her, but she could feel her magic continue to pulse through her wand, and finally, she lifted her eyes from Albus's face, following his own gaze upward, where she saw a great iridescence filling the sky, the sky itself no longer visible, only brilliant colour and pearly light.

Just as she sank to her knees, she became aware of an azure sky again, seen as though through a mammoth soap bubble, and she smiled at its beauty before everything went black.

Minerva opened her eyes to see Albus's smiling face.

"There you are, my dear! You did very well!" He kissed her forehead.

"That was beautiful, Albus. You didn't say it would be so beautiful." She smiled as she remembered it.

"That is because I did not know how beautiful it would be, my precious one." He caressed her forehead. "It didn't do that before. I believe that we created a Thousand-Year Ward, something that was only a very remote possibility, had I even thought of it."

Minerva looked around her, aware that they were back in the bedroom. "How long "

"Less than a minute. I Apparated us back here immediately, and you woke up as soon as I lay you on the bed," Albus said.

"Thousand-Year Wards . . . I have read about them. I didn't think anyone could cast them anymore."

"That is because they do require a blood ritual, which is in most instances forbidden by the Ministry, and certain other conditions must be right for it, as well."

"Is that what Hogwarts has?"

"No the foundational wards are very similar, but they are too complex to be Thousand-Year Wards, and they require a flexibility that Thousand-Year Wards lack. They also have to be able to be changed easily to adapt to the changing needs and population of the school," Albus explained. "No, this is something more akin to the wards that people believe hide Innis Ablach from the world, and why they have not faded with time despite the fact that no one lives there any longer."

"Of course, if they are that well warded, we wouldn't know if no one lives there or not, would we?" Minerva asked.

"A very good point, my dear!" He chuckled. "Now, I am going to fetch you some juice, then we must be on our way. We can speak more of this later." He kissed her forehead, then Minerva heard him trot down the stairs.

Minerva touched her throat where just a short time ago, her blood had been leaving her body. It didn't hurt at all, though she thought she could detect a slight mark there. Albus strode back into the room, and Minerva sat up and reached for the glass he held out to her.

"Can you sit up all right?" he asked.

"Just fine. I do have a little bit of a headache, though," Minerva said, taking the glass and drinking thirstily.

"I am not surprised, but it should be better soon."

"How much blood was used?" she asked curiously.

"Just a few teaspoons of mine, since I had already done it once, but probably a pint or a bit more from you. It is not surprising that you, um, had a hard time staying on your feet, my dear."

"That I fainted, you mean?" Minerva grinned. "I should hardly think it was surprising, especially given that I was standing up the entire time."

"You did very well, though," Albus said approvingly.

"However did you manage it by yourself, Albus?"

"That, my dear, is a story for another time. Let us simply say that I had one very unhappy house-elf!" He laughed. "Now, it's close to one-fifteen, so we are running a little late. I'm just going to take you and one of your bags so that you have something to return with. Wilsby will bring everything else later. Are you ready?"

"Yes, of course."

Minerva stood as Albus picked up the larger of her two bags. He put a Featherlight Charm on the bag, put his arm around Minerva, kissed her, and together, they Disapparated for the McGonagall Cliffs.

Note: *So that is the end of "A Holiday with the Headmaster." They will be returning to Hogwarts, and we will return to the final chapters of Resolving a Misunderstanding. I hope that you enjoyed the story! Thank you for your reviews; I have appreciated them very much.*