

Of Fathers And Their Children

by chivalric

Fluffy, light-hearted little Easter sequel to "At All Costs." Snape and Lupin are sitting in the garden and watch their children play when an Easter bunny hops along.

One-shot story

Chapter 1 of 1

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Many thanks to my betas Stormi and CharmedForce for an extra fast check. May you both receive lots of Easter Eggs!

On a bright and sunny Saturday afternoon in early spring, Severus Snape, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, sat in his garden at Spinner's End. He was drinking tea with his friend and colleague, Remus Lupin. Lazily, both men sat in their chairs. Between them a small table sat, laden with a tea pot, cream and sugar, cups, a bowl of biscuits, a plate with strawberry cake, and two enormous bars of chocolate. Ah, yes, and two glasses of milk. One was still nearly full, one half empty. Both glasses had visible fingerprints smeared all over them.

"How long before they start fighting, Severus?" the werewolf asked and stole another biscuit from the bowl. They were too delicious to be resisted. Hermione had turned out to be a fabulous baker if she found the time and could be persuaded to leave her books for a little while.

Snape stretched out his long legs, clearly enjoying the sun on his face. "Another few minutes, I would guess," he replied. "In my opinion, they are all too quiet already."

Wiping off a few crumbs from his shirt and taking a sip from his tea, Remus nodded in agreement. They certainly were too quiet. Never a good thing, if children were not to be heard and not to be seen they usually were up to mischief. Especially those two. "I fear the worst," he said idly. "He might hex her."

Snape snorted dismissively. "As if he could. She's too quick to get herself hexed by your son. But she might find a way to harm him."

"She's five, Severus. No way she can do more than a bit of toy-wand-wagging. Whereas my son..."

"Your son, wolf, has only a toy-wand for himself, is slow and lazy, gets easily distracted, and tires fast. He has no chance against her."

One more biscuit found its way into the werewolf's mouth. Eyeing the cake greedily, he then put both hands behind his head and out of temptation's way. Lupin leaned comfortably against the chair's back and closed his eyes. "He's eight. She's five. Don't underestimate him and don't overestimate her. She might be your daughter, but she's not a genius. If Teddy decides he wants to fight her, she will lose."

"If you care for dinner in my house, you had better shut up now," Snape pointed out and took a small piece of cake for himself. "Remember, I'm cooking. Think it over twice."

Chuckling, Remus gave in; there was no way he would ever miss dinner at Severus's house if he could help it. The Potions master was a magician with a cooking spoon, but he rarely found the time to prepare dinner for his friends. On this Saturday, though, he had invited Remus, Tonks, and Teddy to spend the day at Spinner's End. Tonks

had declined urgent Auror business and wouldn't arrive before evening. But Remus had taken his boy without hesitation and had simply come without his wife. And now Teddy and Sasha, Severus's daughter, were playing in the garden. They hadn't been seen for half an hour at least, and the children's fathers started to think of the minor catastrophes they might have set in motion.

"Do you think we should have a look?" Remus didn't sound particularly concerned; it was more a question that needed to be asked than one that needed to be answered. Teddy and Sasha were friends, and they got along well. Usually. Until something happened and... stirred up things.

The last time the two of them had a row, it had been because Sasha had called Remus 'fur face'. True, it wasn't the most polite thing to say to a werewolf, especially when said werewolf was just playing horse for the two little terrors; but then, Remus *had* a furry face. Every now and then.

"My Daddy calls you fur face," she had pointed out, and Remus had laughed.

Teddy, though, hadn't considered that funny despite the fact that his father seemed quite amused. He had knocked the little girl squarely over the head, and she had bitten him in response. The resulting fistfight included hair-pulling and additional attempts at hexing each other. Both were far too young to master wandless magic, of course, but both fathers had decided that a severe scolding was mandatory. Before their wives found out that they had begun to teach their children hexes in the first place.

Sighing deep and contently, Severus Snape scanned the garden, hoping to see a black-haired little girl and a brown-haired, tall boy.

No. They weren't there. But then, only a heartbeat later, he could hear them. Faintly, but clearly.

Uh, oh. That didn't sound good.

"Good Merlin, are they shouting?" Remus asked but didn't move a limb.

"Sasha is shouting. Obviously, your cub has annoyed her."

"Can you hear what that's all about?" Remus asked and strained his ears. "Something about... bunnies?"

Severus just ran his hands through his long hair and tipped his head back to catch the sun on his face. "Easter bunnies," he murmured. "And Easter eggs. And... ah, yes, she tries to turn him into a beetle."

Incredulously, Remus looked at his friend. "You didn't teach her that spell, did you? Even you can't be that mad!" But silently he congratulated himself that he had trained with his son the counter-spell for the beetle-hex. By now, he knew Severus fairly well. Of course both children could do nothing more than shout the words without reaching a result, but still...

"She has managed to turn a button into a button with legs last week," Severus answered, each word ringing with pride. "With a child's wand. She'll be a marvellous witch as soon as she has a real wand."

Before Remus could reply to that, they heard a thundering sound. In a rage, the two children came galloping across the grass. Teddy was first to arrive as he owned the longer legs. Sasha wasn't too far behind him, and she was furious.

Teddy's hair was ruffled; his clothes were muddy and covered in grass. His left foot seemed to be dripping wet, and there was a serious frown lingering on his face. He ran straight up to his father and cried, "She tried to push me into the pond!"

"So much about fighting and losing," Snape stated dryly with a pointed look at Teddy's sorry state.

Remus fondly brushed his son's hair out of the boy's face. "She's mean. Small and mean, son. Like her Daddy. I thought I told you that before?"

Teddy scowled and emptied his glass of milk instead of answering. He stared at the little girl opposite the table.

Being Hermione's daughter as well as Severus's, the little girl had her father's black hair, pale skin, height, and temper. Luckily, it was somewhat balanced out by the heritage of her mother's freckles and good-natured righteousness. And Hermione's smile.

Sasha, although three years younger, stretched up proudly when she heard Uncle Lupin confess she was mean. She liked being mean. She liked a lot when someone compared her with her dad. She had first tripped Teddy and then had tried to roll him into the water. She would have nearly won, but he had been faster than she'd thought and had run away.

Not that Sasha was smiling right now. Like a little monkey she crawled fast onto her father's lap, rested her head on his shoulder and waited until he had wrapped his arms around her. "Teddy says there's no Easter bunny. He says it's all a lie for little babies. He called me a baby! But you told me there *is* an Easter bunny. Does that make you a liar, Daddy?" Earnestly, she looked up at her father. Her eyes, dark as bitter chocolate, were huge and curious in her face.

Suddenly, Teddy decided to hide behind a chair. 'Liar' was always a bad word, but it was even worse to call Uncle Severus a liar. There were rumours really scary rumours about the tall man who so innocently sipped his tea. It was said he... tortured children in his dungeons! "I haven't called you a liar, Uncle Severus," Teddy piped up from behind his father's back. "I just said that the Easter bunny doesn't exist. And then she shouted at me and..."

"... tried to push you into the pond. You said so," Severus stated dryly, trying hard to keep control over his twitching lips. To his daughter he continued, "You know that there are goldfish living in the pond, don't you? And that they get scared when you throw anything or anyone at them? And you know as well that I forbade you to become growly simply because someone else has a different opinion?"

"You always get growly when Mama says she wants potatoes but you want to cook spaghetti," the little girl pointed out. She didn't see the wide grin crossing Remus's face and neither heard the strangled sound, caused by a hand getting slapped over said grinning mouth. Sasha just wrapped her arms round her father's neck and placed a kiss on his chin. "And he said there's no Easter bunny!"

Sighing heavily, Severus returned the kiss to his daughter's tiny little nose and pushed a dark lock behind her ear. "First, I'm allowed to become growly every now and then, as I am an adult and always have proper reasons to growl. Second, don't listen to Teddy. You know the Easter bunny exists. Use your brain who else would deliver the eggs you find on Easter Sunday? And third honestly, Remus, it is a disgrace how you raise your boy. Telling lies about the Easter bunny! I would have thought better of you."

Surprised to finding himself so unexpectedly at the centre of an inquisition, Remus got a biscuit in the wrong pipe and coughed for several minutes, interrupted by hesitant slaps on his back provided by his son. Finally, wiping the tears out of his eyes, he managed to get out a strained, "What?"

Smiling maliciously, Severus pulled his child closer to his chest. Two pairs of eyes, one black and one nearly black, glared intently across the table. One werewolf and one little boy felt like prey to two nasty, black-haired monsters.

"Confess," the male monster said. "Tell your son you lied. Tell him the Easter bunny does deliver the eggs on Easter Sunday."

"Can I try that hex you taught me, Daddy? The one that makes people giggle?" the little monster cast in, somewhat ruining the mood as Severus rolled his eyes involuntarily.

"Maybe later," he said, oblivious to the fact that Teddy shook his head wildly.

Remus, in the meantime, had made a quick and smart decision. He really, really liked Severus. They had been friends for years despite their past, despite all odds and despite the fact that Remus had severely misjudged the Potions master only a year ago. They still were friends, although Severus had nearly died because of this misjudgement. An existing or non-existing Easter bunny was nothing, compared with last year. So he said, "Sorry, Teddy. I... Maybe I mixed up things. Of course the Easter bunny delivers the eggs. I think... I think you should go and... and..." At a loss of how to continue, he cast a helpless look at his friend.

"Sometimes, the Easter bunny loses eggs whilst delivering them," Severus added smoothly. "Go and have a look whomever finds them can keep them."

"Cool," Teddy said, being completely convinced due to the prospect of chocolate to be found. He dashed round the table, grabbed Sasha's hand and pulled her on. "Maybe we will even see it, what do you think?"

"Possibly," Severus said, silently searching for his wand.

Two slim arms wrapped around his neck, and a soft kiss was placed on his cheek. Hermione, having sneaked up on him, moved around and claimed the place on her husband's lap, kissing him lovingly on his lips.

Remus blushed slightly. Until last year, he hadn't known that Severus and Hermione were married no one had known it. And he still wasn't used to the sight of a tender and loving Potions master. Discretely, he cleared his throat.

Laughing, Hermione broke the kiss, leaving her husband breathless. "Hi, Remus," she said. "Did I just hear Teddy say the Easter bunny doesn't exist?"

"Merlin, Hermione, don't tell me you are into this children's tale as well!"

Still chuckling, Hermione fished for one of the chocolate bars. With Severus's arms wrapped safely around her waist, she opened and ate it. "It was not my idea to let her believe a rabbit delivers eggs on Easter Sunday," she said. "But this big, soft-hearted fool here considers it mandatory."

Looking furious at the insult of being soft-hearted, Severus growled, "It's a lot better to grow up with Easter bunnies than without them. I speak of experience here, and there will be no further discussion. Otherwise, my love, your books will mysteriously vanish into thin air."

Contented, Hermione snuggled up closer, leaning her head on her husband's chest. "As you wish," she mocked, licking chocolate off her lips.

Cheers from down at the pond indicated that an Easter egg had been found.

"You didn't cheat, did you?" Hermione asked as she acquired a piece of cake. "You didn't sort of, coincidentally, flick your wand and let eggs fall out of the sky?"

With dignity, Severus answered, "I never cheat. I don't even know the meaning of the word. As I have said, the Easter bunny sometimes loses eggs whilst delivering them. As it is Easter Sunday tomorrow, it is only logical to assume he has lost some sweets whilst hopping through our garden."

"There! There it is! Mommy, Daddy, there is the Easter bunny!" Two voices, highly excited, yelled through the quiet air.

Remus leaned forward in his chair. By accident, his hand landed on the table exactly next to the cake plate. Naturally, he secured the plate from falling and was rewarded with a nice, far too small piece of strawberry cake. He had just taken a bite when he saw the bunny, too.

It was about as big as an average rabbit, but with longer ears and brighter fur. It hopped conveniently slow across the lawn. Sasha and Teddy were a few steps behind, eyes wide in awe.

The piece of cake was forgotten for the moment.

On the bunny's back a basket bobbed. With its next hop, an egg fell out and landed on the ground.

Sasha and Teddy jumped for it. Their heads connected, and both let out a startled cry. Both reached for the egg again as a second one landed at their feet. Suddenly silenced, they picked up the eggs and saw the hopping rabbit vanished between the hedges. Both believed from the bottoms of their hearts that they just had personally witnessed a miracle. Their mouths were open; their eyes were bright, and chocolate was melting in their hands. They certainly wouldn't fight anytime soon.

Smugly, Severus Snape leaned over and snatched up the piece of cake that sat forgotten in Remus's half opened hand. "As I said," he muttered between bites. "Easter bunnies are a lot better than no Easter bunnies, as they not only shut up children, but werewolves as well."

This was mainly written for my son, who is six and strongly believes in the Easter bunny. I hereby swear that each spring said Easter bunny busily hops through the woods near our house and every now and then loses an egg, weeks before Easter Sunday. I have my boy for a witness he finds the eggs and eats them.