

# Pomona, Potions and Passiflora

*by Fishy*

Minerva has a surprise when visiting Hogwarts' greenhouses.

## The Greenhouse

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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*These characters belong to J.K. Rowling. I appreciate the opportunity to borrow them from time to time. My deepest thanks to the very generous and gracious MMADfan and Squibstress for their inspiration, advice, patience and time.*

Professor Sprout stood at her planting table, re-potting juvenile harlequin pipe vines, when she saw her colleague, Professor Slughorn, enter the greenhouse. *Was he whistling?* Cocking her head, she noticed he was wearing new robes of silver and royal purple, and their cut was very flattering, even to his stout figure.

"Good evening, Horace. How can I help you?" she asked, shaking the dirt from her hands as she turned to face him.

Horace approached slowly, admiring his surroundings, which were overgrown with all manner of vegetation, particularly along the greenhouse walls, whose lattice supported a jungle of creeping vines.

"Pomona, I really can't get over how much these greenhouses have changed these last few years since you replaced Professor Beery." Horace laid a scroll of parchment on the table beside her. "Not that Herbert's collection was poor, by no means! But this ..." He spread his arms wide. "This is amazing! I don't believe Hogwarts has ever had such diversity of rare species, both magical and mundane."

Pomona smiled broadly.

"I'd like to think that I've brought something special to Hogwarts in my own humble way," she replied.

"Nothing humble about this, Professor Sprout. Nothing at all." He smiled down at her. Horace watched her react to his compliment and was suddenly struck at how very beautiful her skin was, what little he could see of it under her soil-laden robes. Her face was flushed, and her eyes looked like polished chestnuts. *Why is it I've never noticed her beautiful spiral locks, and when did she start wearing her hair down?*

He cleared his throat.

"Ah, I'm just here to request a resupply of potions ingredients. The standard fare you know: alihotsy, asphodel, daisy root and knotgrass, to name a few."

"Of course." She took the parchment and unrolled it, reading it quickly. "If you want nettles, you'll have to collect them yourself, Horace; they're in greenhouse two. My hands simply can't take any more abuse today."

Without thinking, Horace reached out and took one of her hands in his, turning it palm up and running a finger down the center, tracing a few livid welts. "Tsk, Pomona, you should have asked for a balm for this, you know. I am a Potions master, after all. Talented hands such as yours should not suffer needlessly."

Pomona thought she had never seen such a tender expression on her older colleague's face which, combined with his touch and stimulating cologne, ignited both her affection and self-doubt.

"I ... well, I mean ...," she stammered.

Horace cleared his throat and dropped her hand, looking away as if embarrassed.

He changed the subject to Pomona's relief. "Albus mentioned you had some new rare plants, including fluxweed?"

"Not *that* new, really, Horace. Minerva brought me some from a trip she took to America a few years ago. *Passiflora* as well, both *incarnata* and *sexflorea*." Pomona thought the room was becoming awfully warm.

Horace's eyes widened.

"Really?" He looked over at one of the vine-covered walls. "I *thought* that was passion vine on the wall! I had no idea the flowers were so ...*big*."

He gazed down at Pomona, who had removed her hat and was fanning her face with it. He quirked a sly grin at her. "Don't tell me you're supplying an alchemist with ingredients for love potions, Pomona! That is very naughty of you." He feigned admonishment, a cheeky curve at the corners of his mouth.

Pomona shook her head. "No, of course not, Horace. Not the flowers ... just the leaves ... and roots ... for anti-anxiety and sleeping draughts," she answered, her voice somewhat ragged.

Before she realized what she was doing, she reached out and was caressing his thick side-burns with one hand and unbuttoning her robes with the other.

"My hands aren't the only part of me that might need the attentions of a Potions master," she said as she opened her tattered, brown robes and bared her generous bosom to him.

Slughorn's eyes went dark as he sank to his knees in front of her, his hands moving up over her hips, appreciating her curves. Horace silently thanked the heavens that Pomona was exceedingly short as his mouth was perfectly positioned beside a nipple to sample this most delectable dish.

"*Mon Dieu, que c'est belle*," he said about the sight before him.

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Minerva McGonagall shut the tower window and read a letter after admitting a persistent post owl into her office. It was from her brother Mathew. The letter contained a list of herbal ingredients the family apothecary needed from Hogwarts' productive greenhouses, and it was marked urgent. She pushed back from her desk and stood. The pile of unmarked essays would have to wait, she thought and left to find Professor Sprout.

It was mid-January, and the castle grounds were frigid and covered in a light dusting of snow. The wind whipped cold around Minerva's collar, as she had forgotten her muffler. She came to greenhouse four and opened the door, finding the room marginally warmer inside. Several students were working on various projects and were up to their armpits in soil and pots. She nodded to them and asked if anyone had seen Professor Sprout.

A sixth-year Ravenclaw student spoke up first.

"I saw her last in greenhouse five, Professor, just through that door." The student indicated a door directly in front of Minerva, which resided on the wall connecting greenhouses four and five.

"Thank you, Miss Austin," McGonagall replied and headed toward the adjacent structure.

Greenhouse five was suffocatingly warm and humid, and a pungent, loamy smell hung in the air. Well, truthfully it did more than hang, it overwhelmed Minerva's senses, making her nose run. The atmosphere reminded her of that horrible time she had spent in the swamps of Florida in North America.

As she walked further in, she noticed all but the south-most wall was covered in familiar vines, punctuated by large purple flowers that looked more like jellyfish than flora.

Wasn't that the same vine Pomona had requested she bring back from America some years back, Minerva wondered.

No students were about, nor could she see any sign of Professor Sprout, so Minerva headed toward the canopied planting station at the rear of the greenhouse. Her hard-heeled shoes made little noise on the soft soil flooring. Rounding an isle of waist-high planters, she stopped in her steps.

*Am I seeing this?* Minerva stood dumbfounded at the sight before her.

Professor Sprout was leaning up against a planting table, hat off, robes open in the front, head thrown back, mouth open and hands entwined in Professor Slughorn's hair, or what was left of it. Professor Slughorn was kneeling before his Hufflepuff colleague, worshiping one of her ample breasts with his mouth while his hands were busy under her skirts, no doubt doing wonderful things to her.

Minerva blinked.

*This is not happening.*

But then Pomona began to moan. Loudly. Any possibility of blissful denial was blasted far out to sea, perhaps as far as Iceland, and Minerva whirled around to shut the greenhouse door with a bang, casting a silencing charm upon it for good measure.

Pomona's eyes flew open, and her hands ceased their movement, pinning Horace's face to her breast. She stared in horror at the Deputy Headmistress, who was only twelve feet away.

"What on God's *green earth* do you two think you are doing?" Minerva demanded, turning her head away as Horace was finally able to free himself from Pomona's grip, stumbling backwards in an effort to stand up.

Minerva waited a moment, allowing them to button up before returning her admonishing glare to her two errant colleagues.

Pomona stammered. "I ... oh, dear God, Minerva ... I"

"This is not what it looks like," Horace blurted out, his face beet red and legs trembling. His great mustache was sticking out at chaotic angles, giving the impression that its wearer might be growing tusks.

Minerva's left eyebrow twitched spasmodically.

"No? And pray tell, *Professor* Slughorn, what you would have me believe? That Professor Sprout needed a practical demonstration of cross-pollination?"

The severity of the Transfiguration teacher's glare was so terrible, Horace felt reduced to the small boy who had just been caught smoking his father's best tobacco. His face went white, and he sat down heavily on a nearby bench, staring at his feet.

Pomona stared straight ahead, ramrod straight, as if she'd been Petrified.

"My office. One hour," was all Minerva said before turning on her heel and leaving.

Translation:

"Mon Dieu, que c'est belle." is French for "My God, how beautiful."