

28 Snape and Original Characters - Transcript

[Snapecentric]

Welcome to Snape Chat, the voice of the Snapedom. The podcast where we discuss all things Snape, always. Join us as we dive into the world of the bravest man we ever knew in art, fanfic, meta, and more.

Obviously. This is Snapecentric with episode 28. I am joined by Smiling for Money, Sev Snapes, Mare de Salinas, and jalapeno_eye_popper as we discuss Snape and original characters.

They are all Snape and OC authors and we have a great discussion about the pros and cons of writing original characters. Then each author reads excerpts from their stories. Enjoy the show.

This is Snapecentric and I'm here with Sevsnapes. Hello.

Maria_de_Salinas. Hey.

Smiling for Money. Hello.

And jalapeno_eye_popper Hi Everybody. As always, you can call me Hal.

Everybody's been on the show before. That's really unusual. Cool.

Yeah. And Hal, you've been on a few times. So our topic today is Snape and original characters.

And these four are all authors of Snape OC fics. So we should have a good discussion. All right.

So let's start with why OCs.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I've got a take that I wrote down and was ready for. Let's do this. My take on OCs is that it's all about freedom.

Possibly the self-indulgent freedom to do whatever we want. Building a character from scratch. That's great.

You can do your self-insert. You can do your overpowered or Mary Sue. You can dial up those flaws to 11.

And no one can cry out of character. No one can cry bashing. You build that character and it's yours.

And then also trying to come up with something as a counterpoint or compliment to an existing character like Snape, who we all love, can be a really fun exercise. Those are kind of my initial reactions to why OCs. It's all about the freedom.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

And I think that's a really good point. Definitely. But the freedom of creating this whole new person from scratch and seeing where they go.

And you can also create somebody who can just push his buttons in just the right way. It's kind of like throwing a firework in his office and then watching what happens. And I really love that.

[Smilingformoney]

The better question is probably why not? I don't really like the thing with read effects as much as I love them is that they are restricted and that you need to keep it vague. And then with canon characters is that you need to stick to the canon character unless you go really off script, in which case you are basically just creating an OC.

So it's I mean, if you if you're doing creative writing, creating a character is probably the step one.

[Sevsnapes]

Yeah, I also feel like it depends on who you ship characters with, because like I know you've said before that you don't really ship with any canon characters. So the next step then would be to create an OC if you want to ship in with someone and then you can just make it however you want it to be. I only really ship him with like one other character that's actually canon.

I wonder who that is. Yeah, I wonder who that could be. And then I write a lot of Snape/Reader , but but yeah.

And then like if you write a lot of Snape/Reader like you said, it has to be vague. And I wanted to write a story where I could do anything with the character and it not make the reader feel uncomfortable because it's not them. But you can project onto it as much as you or as little as you want to.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I think another aspect of it is that Snape himself can be treated like an OC because he is the mysterious spy. He is shielded behind all these layers of secrecy. He's been playing double, triple roles for his most of his life.

And he's this master of mind magic. So if you want to add extra layers to him, if you want to put something very hidden about his past, that all of that is a possibility with him too. So then you get double the amount of freedom and play with what happens to these characters.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

That's true. I love making up backstory for him, usually to various degrees of horrible. But yeah, I like to torture him a bit.

But yeah, that's something too. And you can kind of, I don't know, you can kind of fill in the gaps with his personality because you really don't know a lot about him. What was he doing when he sat in his room alone at night?

You can just make up all kinds of things.

[Sevsnapes]

I think also like you just said about his backstory, but also like post-war, because obviously like Snape lives AU. I just call it post-war now because I don't take it as an AU. It's canon.

He lived and that's that. But then you can do whatever you want with it. If you've created a character for him to interact with at that point, you can just take it wherever you want.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. And you've got no canon to fight with because even in the canon in which he dies. Yeah.

We don't know much about what happens because Cursed Child is a canon. So yeah, there's so much to play with. There really is.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah. That's basically what happened in my *Memories of Talia Oakbrush*. It is set post-war and I just had him go abscond to a beach in the Caribbean and he has gone zen.

He is good to go. He is actually the more calm one now and letting go of all of that intense trauma and pressure that makes him blow up at times.

[Sevsnapes]

Yeah. It's such a good way to give him the things that you want him to have as well. If you want him to have a nice time, you can just throw that in there.

You can make an OC that can show him how to do that.

[Smilingformoney]

Or if you want to make him have an even worse time, you can do that, I guess. Exactly. If he hasn't been through enough.

Yeah.

[Snapecentric]

I kind of wanted to take a moment to maybe talk about some definitions. Okay. An OC is an original character, a character who's not in canon.

I mean, that's what this is all about. Okay. Self-insert.

What is that?

[Smilingformoney]

I have a lot of thoughts on self-insert, if I talk too much. But the thing about characters, and I'm talking my characters, I'm talking Snape in relation to JK Rowling, I'm talking Dracula in relation to Bram Stoker. Every character comes from the writer.

It's not like there's some external force that's popped into their head. Although it feels like that sometimes when they really get their free will going. They are part of the author.

So every character ever is a self-insert of some sort. So, you know, you do get people sometimes criticise and go, oh, OC's, it's all self-inserts. Like, yeah.

You know, and Harry Potter is full of JK Rowling self-inserts. Every character is a self-insert. It's all a part of the self and it's all a part of the soul.

But that's one of the great things about writing is that it's so cathartic because you can take these elements of yourself and explore it, even if you don't even realise that you're doing it. Yes, absolutely. So if anyone comes up with criticism against self-inserts, I'm not sponsoring.

[Sevsnapes]

Yeah, I just I don't even like it as a term because I feel like it almost sounds derogatory, doesn't it? Like, oh, you're just writing a self-insert. Well, actually, no, I'm writing a character like all the other characters that exist.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

And I mean, I think that even the canon characters, there can be various degrees of, oh, this is another person or this is basically just a self-insert like I've seen. And there's nothing wrong with that. I'm not knocking at all.

But, you know, you might see like a Hermione that's kind of like an author avatar and that's fine. That's yeah, I don't think there's a really like they were saying, I don't think there's a huge gap between self-insert and character.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I've kind of embraced the notion of having self-inserts that, you know, we all to some degree project ourselves onto our characters indeed. And it's actually fun to do that and kind of go ham with it or take your own flaws and dial it up to 11. And I mentioned maybe before we started recording about my intense ego, my ego, the size of the planet.

And some of my characters have that too. And maybe to a bigger degree than I do or certain coping mechanisms that we have. Sometimes it's interesting to explore how far those can go with a character, especially a character that has had so much trauma in their past, like Snape and the characters we want with him.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. That's the thing. When you're writing for canon characters, there is always an element of yourself.

And definitely in regards to Snape people, pretty much every Snape fan sees himself in him in some element. So even if you write like Becca, when you write Snape and Lucius, there's still some Rebecca in both of them. Like it's not like they're entirely, it's impossible for a character to be entirely separate.

[Snapecentric]

Those are all really good points. And I think you've pretty much explained that it's not really, oh, here I am struggling for words. It's not a bad thing.

I think is what we're saying. Yeah. Yeah.

It's, it's, it's not a bad thing. And so I don't know why even use it, I guess.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I don't know. There's also a certain subset of fanfic where it's self insert where that's kind of the point where we are inserting ourselves and seeing, you know, what would we do in that world? Especially because of this rich, rich world that Harry Potter offers.

It's only a little natural to be like, what would I do at Hogwarts? And what, what would I do in the situations Harry had been in? Or what would I do in other situations in that world from the side characters?

So a little bit of that happens and, and that's how some people come into fanfic. It's probably how I came into fanfic. I don't know.

I've been writing fanfics since I could write. So it's, it probably started there with wanting to know what I would do in that situation. I mean, my earliest stuff was very self insert, like shipping myself with celebrities because I was nine years old and had crushes on actors.

But then, but that's where that comes from for some of us too. And that's okay. And actually wonderful because it gets you writing.

[Sevsnapes]

Actually, it's a really good point as well, because every single human being daydreams, everyone's going to daydream. Like if you have a favorite character, you're going to think about that favorite character at some point. And you're going to think about how you would interact with them or, you know, the possibilities are endless of how you could think.

And I think with, especially with reader fics, not even that long ago, they were kind of frowned upon and not that popular, but now it's kind of like Tumblr in particular is flooded with reader fics. And I think that's great because we all want to read ourselves in situations that we've imagined.

[Snapecentric]

I know for me, I guess I feel where I am when I step back from the action of a story. What I am is just kind of standing there watching these two people. That's too close for me, I guess, to be the reader.

It just is uncomfortable.

[Smilingformoney]

Yes. It depends what you imagine when you read. Like you say, some people might imagine it from a third person perspective to use a Harry Potter reference.

It's like when Harry had that dream about the snake attacking Arthur and Dumbledore was asking him, were you a third person where you were looking from above? Were you the snake? It's a similar kind of concept in that people see it differently.

Like some people will see it in the third person. Some people like, you know, it's a film playing out. Some people will see themselves as the other person.

And some people will see themselves as snake. When I'm writing, you see it in my writing, the points of view changing. That's me changing who I am when I'm writing it.

So like one second, I'm doing it from Snape's perspective. One second, I'm doing it from Abby's perspective. And that, I think, comes across.

But it is an interesting concept to think of whether people are seeing themselves in that position or if they are almost kind of watching a film.

[Sevsnapes]

Actually, sometimes if I posted something and I get a comment on it, or someone will message me about it, and they'll say something like, oh, I'm so jealous of the reader as though they haven't just read it. Like they're seeing a completely separate character to themselves, even though technically they could read it as themselves if they wanted to. But some people choose not to.

And that's fine too.

[Snapecentric]

Yeah, I guess that's part of interacting with art, I guess, you know, with writing as an art, of course. That part of what it is, is the reader comes to the words and either puts themselves in or watches from the sidelines or something like that. Does that make sense?

Yes.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I'd also say that as a hobbyist writer, I think it's really fun to play with point of view. So I recently wrote my, well, I recently published my first person, not first person, present tense, and thought about doing it in first person, because that is like the one-two punch of screenplay. And I was like, I held back on first person, but went with present tense.

And I think I'm going to be looking at first person again soon, because some of my favorite fics are in first person. And I've been trying to analyze why and how it

comes to that, like, really introspective journey that I go along with, with the character. And I still can't quite wrap my head around second person.

I don't think it's the standoffish thing of, like, it's too close for me, but I understand that perspective. And then, of course, the different character perspectives. So one of my big opinions about OCs and self inserts and reader, and generally the background characters as well, is that it's fun to play with perspective.

And it's fun to break out of the main character's point of view in a piece of media. And in Harry Potter, it's almost exclusively from Harry Potter's point of view. There's just a couple of chapters where it's from somebody else's point of view.

And so it's really fun to break out of that and pick somewhere else in this massive world to try to get a new perspective on. Yeah.

[Snapecentric]

Some of the things that we can play with, say, the time or era where the story is happening. I mean, you can do it. I hate to say Marauder's era.

70s era. The 70s?

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Like the 1970s?

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah, because it takes place in the 70s.

[Snapecentric]

Yeah, that makes sense.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

That was something that I really enjoyed. And it kind of goes back to what we're saying about being able to kind of fill in the gaps for Snape and him kind of almost being an original character. Because actually, my first OC fic was actually writing about him in the 80s when we don't know what was going on or what he was doing and what that must have been like.

And it was a really, really fun process.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah, there's a lot of missing time there. I want to know what he was doing.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah, you can definitely see, like in *The Prince's Tale*, you can see the difference between what he was like as a kid and what he's like as an adult. And there was definitely a change there that we didn't see. So yeah, that is really fun to play with.

And in my story, I pretty much cover the vast majority of all his eras. So it's quite, I find it quite a fun challenge when, say, if I do a flashback, I have to jump into sort of a different Snape and figure out, OK, how open is he? Where is the relationship at this point?

What's he thinking in terms of where he is with Voldemort? So to sort of get a bit of each Snape, essentially, it's very fun. It leaves a lot of scope as well as a lot to play with.

[Snapecentric]

I just, oh, I'm in awe of authors. I'm sorry. I just am.

That you can think about these characters and what you're going to do with them and just all the aspects.

[Smilingformoney]

So what happens is that they live in your brain and they don't leave.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

And then sometimes you manage to put that out into words. You make them pay rent by drafting something. Yeah.

[Sevsnapes]

Also, like everything just relates to that character, like everything that you're doing, you'll be like, what would Snape do in this situation? How would Snape react? Like literally everything, it never stops.

It's actually quite exhausting, but like in a fun way.

[Smilingformoney]

Yes, especially as you can't keep saying it because people start to get annoyed. Like when I'm watching *The Last of Us* recently, I'm just like, oh, Snape and Albie would totally be like that. And I'm just thinking no one, no one cares really.

Like stop projecting onto everything all the time. But yeah, it is constant.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I recently annoyed my spouse with this as well. We watched a new anime and I'm like, oh, I need this, but make it Sneminy.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

I would read all of that actually. So in case you ever want to put it out there.

[Snapecentric]

Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

On our outline, it says time and then age of Snape.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

We could talk a little bit about the comparison of the pair, the OCs age to his, because I tend to write OCs that are lightning gen. So there's still a big age gap there, but I've also enjoyed a number of fics where he is paired up with someone more his age. And I've also started shipping Snoppy as in Snape and Poppy, and she's a lot older and she's a side character that almost may as well be an OC.

This is an aspect of OCs that I think does happen a lot in Harry Potter, because there are so many characters where we don't see a lot of them. They have a name, they might have an occupation or like a couple lines in the book, and then you don't really know anything else about them. And I feel like Poppy is maybe a good example of that because she's the healer at the school.

She is the school nurse, the matron of the infirmary. And that's all we really see of her. She is kind of a no nonsense healer in the infirmary.

And then we never see her do anything else. So she often as a character in fanfic gets very one dimensional treatment. She's that same healer figure, maybe kind of a mother figure, maybe kind of a like older, more maternal mentor friend kind of style.

And rarely does she get any romantic ships or deep character development. So I wound up treating her a lot like my OCs where I had a separate character sheet and I filled out her motivations and made up some extra flaws and virtues. And that's kind of how that went.

Anyway, got on that topic because she's a generation older and I like seeing every age gaps for everyone, really.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah, I think there's definitely a gap in the market for pairings with Snape who are the same age other than canon characters. Because trying to find Snape fictions that aren't Snape and a student is so hard. It's so hard.

And, you know, for me, like, Seth is a year older than him. And that sort of thing, I personally, that's what I prefer is when they're a pair, because I think with someone like Snape, they do need to be equals in some way. And there's automatically, ignoring the illegality, there's automatically a power imbalance when it comes to Snape and a student.

But I think when it comes to romantically, he would definitely have to have someone who's an equal. So for me, personally, I find it works better when they're his age or very close.

[Sevsnapes]

Off the back of that, actually, I've recently started writing and it's going to take me like forever. So don't count on this being out anytime soon. But I've recently started writing a Snusius fic where it kind of covers their entire relationship from the point that they meet at school and then and then on through.

But so like, canonically, Lucius is supposed to be about five years older than Snape, something like that. And it just, when I first started writing, I was like, this just feels like grooming. This just does not feel like two people who met and decided that they liked each other as a friend or anything else.

So I just decided I would just change Lucius' age. Because the only reason he's that much older than Snape, really, is because when Snape joins the Slytherins, Lucius is prefect. And I just didn't see the need for that.

It didn't fit with what I wanted to write. And then when I looked at the timeline of canon events, it also just didn't seem to fit. Like their relationship just would never have happened in the way that it did in canon or otherwise, really, if he was that much older.

And so I just, I just changed it. Freedom.

[Smilingformoney]

Do what you want. Take the bits of canon you like, take the bits you don't, and do what you will. Because at the end of the day, none of it's canon.

None of it really happened. J.K. Rowling's version of the events is just as fake as ours. It's just that she got paid money for it.

So do what you want. Exactly.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I like to call it the canon buffet. Because there's so much to choose from. Because there is the main series.

There is movie adaptations. There's everything she put on Pottermore. There's Cursed Child or not.

And there is so much merchandise. There is video games. There's so much to choose from.

It's a buffet. Take what you want and take what will satisfy you. Interesting.

Okay.

[Snapecentric]

And then another aspect is either work or them being students together.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

This is part of why I got interested in Snape and Poppy. Even though she's a canon character, I do treat her a lot like an OC. But the bit we do have is that she's a healer.

And the healer and the potions master just seem like a natural fit. Especially because they do work in the same building. There's a lot of stuff they do that's going to overlap.

I picture him as supplying the infirmary with potions. And they're probably like working very hard together on some very difficult things. Like when Katie Bell was cursed by that necklace.

And before she had to go to St. Mungo's, I'm sure that the two of them were right there on the front lines going, oh, this is really bad. And we have to pool our resources and figure out what's going on. So as far as similar work, I often see him paired with other curse breakers, healers, potions masters, other Death Eaters, and then of course Aurors and having the combatant kind of.

Ages ago, I read like a great kind of enemies to lovers one. I'm going to try to dig that up. Might be one I have to find on the way back.

But she was like an ex-Auror and trying to do it on the down low. Trying to catch some dark wizards and they wound up together.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah, I think that's probably, I mean, it's hard for me to tell from my own perspective what other people are thinking about my own writing. But I think that might be something that appeals about Snape and Sephi is that I've given her quite a unique passion, but it's also similar to his. So she's a spy as well, but she's a different kind of spy.

She's like an official spy for the ministry. So she's got that connection to him, but she's not a Death Eater. She's not in the order until later in the story.

You know, she's very specifically, in fact, not either of those things. So I think that's something that gets explored a bit less, his love interest is almost always a student or another professor. And so, yeah, I really like it when you get something unique where they're a spy or an Auror or a baker, as in Becca's story.

When you just get a bit more, you realize that there is actually more to the world than just Hogwarts and people can be connected in different ways. But I don't think even J.K. Rowling realized that because she had everyone marry people that they knew at school.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I also consider the epilogue to be part of the canon buffet that I could just take or leave. Never mind, don't need. The EWE tag was a thing long before we had AO3 and tags.

We were marking our fanfics back in the early aughts with EWE because maybe not really aughts. When was that book released? 07?

It was the aughts, somewhere in the aughts. But yeah, I remember that being almost immediately as soon as book seven came out as we started seeing fanfic that was labeled epilogue, what epilogue? And so, yeah, all the canon pairings are basically, you can just toss them out the window, make up what you want.

Might have a point there about Rowling didn't even, I don't think she put a lot of effort into any of the relationships, to be honest. That's just my perspective that she was very much focused on the action and the theme and the notion of Harry coming out on top and all those themes of love and the power of love to conquer evil, but then not really examining too closely what love was.

[Snapecentric]

So certainly not a romantic love.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah, very much more familial and fraternal love.

[Snapecentric]

And we've talked a little bit about Snape being an OC. I think it was My Witch that called him the little black dress of the fandom, because there's so much you can do with him.

[Smilingformoney]

He basically wears black dress.

[Snapecentric]

Sometimes, yes.

[Smilingformoney]

But yeah, he's one of those characters who, like we were saying earlier, he is so mysterious that you can't really make an argument for anything. You could, you know, if you say, oh, in this situation, would Snape do X or Y? You can really kind of see both.

And that's what's, I think, part of what's so appealing about him is that there's so much depth that we can't see.

[Sevsnapes]

What makes him really fun to write, isn't it? Like to explore all those bits that we don't know at all.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I think that comes through sometimes when I'm reading fanfic that goes into his bedroom at Hogwarts and everybody's description of what his bedroom is like. And it tickles me every time that I read a new one, because I'm like, this is just that bit. Like, how do you personalize your room?

How does he personalize his room? And what's important for him to do? What is important to interplay off the characters you're pairing him with for that too?

So when I'm reading a lot of Snemione, there's books everywhere, just like his house at Spinner's End. Or when I'm reading something where it's really focusing

on the angst, maybe it's completely bare and just very serviceable place to sleep. And that's it.

And so that I feel like the bedroom descriptions in fanfic are a microcosm of his whole, like, we can do anything mysterious spy.

[Snapecentric]

Good stuff. Yeah, let's spend a little time having each of you talk about your OCs and what you do with them. Anybody want to go first?

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

On it? Okay. So hey, everybody, I'm Hal, in case you don't know my voice yet.

The two OCs that I've written the most of are Liz for Lizfic and Talia for Memories of Talia Oakbrush. Liz is the one I've been working on for like decades. And she's my indulgent self insert, who I had to very carefully rework many times over to try to make her a more compelling character and dial up flaws and work on what her actual motivations are.

And so that fic has a whole lot of world building. And her purpose is more of being an observer to the vast diversity of the magical world and all the magic available to them. And she's been under a lot of pressure under a lot of trauma her whole life.

So when things go down, and he has to witness it as his role as a Death Eater, or rather by then, he's just doing the double agent thing. They wind up grooming her

to be some of something like a backup for him. So that's that's been an interesting one.

And it's about two thirds written, I have quite a bit of drafting to do for part three yet, but half of it is up and published already. And then my other OC Talia, that story is much shorter, the total fic is like 35,000 words. And it was deliberately meant to be something to play with cliffhangers.

So her story was much more about the structure of the story. And I needed a character that wouldn't have a lot of preconceived things like the canon characters do so that readers coming in would have a bit of a mystery to unpack. So every chapter in that story, I started by writing the punchline or writing the cliffhanger, and then worked the chapter backward.

And that was possible because I didn't have a canon character who you could make too many assumptions about. So her purpose in that one was to be more of a mystery. So Snipes.

[Sevsnapes]

So I've only ever written two OCs. And they're both in the one fan fiction. So the one that I kind of shipped with with Snape was Tammy.

And I wrote her to kind of, in a way she kind of mirrors some of his qualities, but then she also kind of challenges him and pushes him out of his comfort zone a little bit. But she also like I just wanted to write a story where sorry to spoil it if anyone hasn't read it and wants to but where Snape just gets a happy ending like and we

actually get to see that. And then interestingly, when I was releasing the chapters, like probably a month or two at a time, so I'm quite slow.

People kept saying to me like, Oh, I'm really suspicious of her. What's she going to do to him, but then actually all turned out all right in the end, which I don't think people were expecting. And I kind of what we were saying earlier about how what you said, Millie about how you can have a character that isn't just a professor or a student kind of wanted to do that as well, because it's post war.

And I just wanted a character that was completely separate from the other types of people we see him interact with all the time. So she owns and runs a bakery that's next door to a shop that that Snape opens after the war. And that's how they meet.

And the other OC in the stories is her sister. And this is where people who know me on Tumblr are going to know how self indulgent this fan fiction is. Her sister ends up with Lucius.

So it's all like a very sort of found family sort of situation, which is just what I just wanted to give him a family and experience things like friendship and romance and and family all at within the same fan fiction.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

All right, Maria. For my OC, I wanted to give him someone who could push his buttons and get on his nerves, but also that he felt really safe around. So she's very, so my OC, Greya, she's pretty flawed, you know, she's a bit of a slob.

And he sees that about her straight away. And, you know, she's got a bit of a history that he knows about. And she's a bit younger than him.

But I wanted to very much put them on kind of make them feel like equals. So my Snape, as I write him, is quite emotionally and physically repressed. For instance, she's a lot more self aware, and a lot more forward, I guess.

So they kind of have a kind of an interesting dynamic, I think, where they get on each other's nerves. But also, there's this sort of underlying comfort, like, he'll still kind of snipe at each other a bit, or like have these verbal exchanges, but then he always kind of ends up going to her for comfort. The one where they get together is during the war.

So he'll, and she's in hiding above the hog's head inn, and he'll swear up and down that he can't stand her and just like quietly slip away and go visit her and not really understand why he's doing it even. And I wanted ultimately, to give him someone he could kind of be vulnerable with, and kind of be himself around and sort of give him eventually that happy ending. What was also fun is I have a have kind of a few other OCs that play a kind of an important role in the story.

And that was fun, making up all these people like her friends and family. And they're just this really, like, there's this group of oddballs. And her family is just very kind and loving and normal that it kind of freaks him out a little bit.

But eventually they they end up accepting him and welcoming him. And it's kind of a nice little family thing that they've got going on.

[Snapecentric]

All right. And smiling for money.

[Smilingformoney]

Yes. So I think, again, I don't want to sound like I'm tooting my own horn, but I do think that my story is a little bit unique in that the main love story is not romantic. It's between parent and child.

So for those who don't know, I've got Abby, who's his daughter, and Stephanie, who's his daughter's mother. And it is very much about Snape and Abby. When I started writing it, it was always about her.

And Stephanie wasn't actually supposed to be, there wasn't really supposed to be a love story there. She was more just sort of functional. She needed a mother.

There needed to be, you know, the birds and the bees happening at some point. But I found as I was writing, it just sort of came out probably mostly self-indulgently. And so I ended up with this family unit that I sort of didn't didn't intend to, because originally he was not going to be a good father.

He was going to be very emotionally stunted, which he was at first. But again, it goes back to that idea of characters kind of taking on a life of their own in that she helps him develop and become a better person. And I know a few of you have talked about there obviously being like a reflection of him, whereas Abby is a literal reflection of him.

She looks like him. She speaks like him. She acts like him.

She's got all his best traits. And she's almost kind of what he would be if he had a loving, supportive family. And I tried to make a sort of balance between her being a reflection of him and her really being her own independent person.

So I do try to give her traits and interests and friends that aren't really related to him, but also you get the personality in there. So he sees himself very much in her. And it's almost like for him, she is his inner child that he never got to care for.

So he cares for her and he sees her as the best thing ever. Yeah, she could do no wrong in his eyes. And she's she's the one going, oh, hang on, you know, I'm not perfect.

He's good. No, you are. You're the best student I've ever had.

You know, you're better than everyone. No one else matters. You're the only thing that matters.

And she's the one they're saying, actually, you know, there are other people and we do actually need to work to look after them as well as, you know, as well as me. But I think that it's a very snake thing is his love is very selfish. Like we saw that with Lily, when that he did what he did because of his love for Lily.

Whereas my version, he's doing it out of his love for his daughter. And that is his sort of his pride motivation. So I'm talking too much.

So my throat is getting dry.

[Snapecentric]

No, you're fine.

[Smilingformoney]

And then with Sefi, like I said, that kind of came on organically. Like that wasn't that wasn't intended. But again, I started off with them being quite similar people in that they have very similar flaws.

They're both spies. Both don't really have friends, both interested in the dark arts. And then they both kind of go on this journey of becoming better people.

And that is through really through having a child, they do everything kind of backwards. So they have a child, and then they get together about 14 years later. So none of it is there is a line that not to quote myself, but I'm going to quote myself, where he says, people would say we made her but really, she made us.

So it's really that familial relationship that helps develop him into a better person so that when he does survive the war, spoiler alert, he has something to be fighting

for. And he has something to live for. I think part of the reason why JK Rowling killed him off is because he ain't got nothing to live for.

All he had to live for was Lily and keeping Harry safe and ending the war. And he's done that so he can pop his plugs. But for me, what I'm trying to do is make it so that when he gets to that point, he wants to survive.

He's got that motivation because he's got something to fight for. And then who knows what's going to happen? I do but I'm not going to spoil it.

[Snapecentric]

All right. Oh, yeah, I was wondering about the difficulty of finding an audience because you know, you don't have a ready made Snape Hermione or Snape Harry type of thing that's, you know, kind of a huge thing.

[Smilingformoney]

It is really difficult. It's really difficult. You don't get people sort of really looking for it that much.

And I've had a lot of people say I I've never really read OC Vic but I really like this one. I think partly because people like people like Reader because they can project. People like canon characters because they already have an idea of who it is.

But with OCs, they're gonna have to get to know someone entirely new. And, you know, it's hard to care about a new character if they're poorly written, unfortunately. So when you actually do get high quality OC stuff, it's really hard to find.

So is the way I try and pull people in is to try and focus on Snape rather than saying, oh, I've got this character who does X, Y and Z. It's like Snape has a daughter, and we're going to see what happens to Snape. And people go, oh, I like Snape.

Let's have a look at this.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah, I think in fandom in general, people are attracted to the characters. They they're comfort characters. We know them, we want more of them.

People search for those characters. They don't really search for OCs the same way. And I mean, I'll be the first to admit that I don't read a lot of OCs.

I usually stick to canon characters as a reader. And then as a writer, it's mostly about that self indulgence or getting ideas out or playing with the form of it. And then in order to get readership for my own fics, I have to be fairly well invested in social media spaces to do lots of review exchanges.

Like I just did a review exchange on Reddit where that worked. I got a handful of new readers and good. Yay.

I don't know if they're actually going to do any more commenting on it, but the hits are rolling in from that. And then on Discord, I'm in a lot of writing groups. So whenever we do sprinting together, I make a point of making sure I'm sprinting in my project in writer bot.

So I'm with the titles of my project go by. I share in excerpt things. One of the servers I'm on does a writer's round table.

We try to do once a month. So I'll bring excerpts and try to try to get some feedback on that and possibly some more traffic to my stories. And so I feel like I'm very aggressive about advertising my fics and still- You do have to be.

Yeah. Cause you have to be. And still the readership is way low compared to say my Snape Hermione fics.

My Snape Hermione fics, I don't have to do anything. I just post that. And I mean, I still do some of that stuff and I interact in those spaces, but people will come to that anyway.

It's the OC stuff that I have to be a lot more aggressive about, and it still won't get anywhere near the readership and engagement that the Snape Hermione stuff will.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. I did a sort of questionnaire recently with my readers. And one of the things I said was, how did you start reading it?

And the amount of people that said, because you wouldn't shut up about it. So, oh yeah, I follow you on Tumblr and it's all you have to talk about. So I thought I'd try it out.

Or, you know, like Steph Snapes talks about it a lot. Or I saw a graphic that you did, or I saw a commission that you did. It is very much, yeah, you've got to sort of, you have got to advertise it.

You can't really rely on AO3 searches. You do get a bit, you get a few, I think, coming in from searches, but not a lot.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah. And sometimes I also get some readers who came for that Snaemione. Like I'll see the kudos email at the end of the day that has how they hit all of my Snape Hermione stories.

And then the next day it'll show them hitting my other stories. So that sometimes happens too, but I don't, I don't think they would have come to it if they hadn't read my other stuff.

[Sevsnapes]

So similar to you, how actually I'd never really read Snape OC. The first one that I read was Smiling for Monies. And that came about because, do you remember Millie, that you asked for my advice on, on Lucius, how you'd written Lucius?

[Smilingformoney]

Of course I do, that's how we met.

[Sevsnapes]

That's how we met. And so I read that and then read back and then that's how it kind of hooked me in. And I love your story, but yeah, I'd never really read any other Snape OC before that.

But I feel like for me, I kind of, maybe I'm, maybe I'm just lazy. I don't know, but I'm not, I just post it like, and if people find it, they find it. I don't really put any more effort into it.

I just post it, but I'm kind of lucky in that I can, a lot of people follow my reader stuff. So they kind of think, oh, I'll give it a go, I think. And that's probably where most of my readers come from.

Cause they see my other stuff, but also like you said, Hal, but I kind of, I don't really do anything else. Maybe I should, I just, I just haven't.

[Smilingformoney]

It depends on how much you want the readership. Like for me personally, if I don't get a comment on a chapter, then I feel like no one's read it. So for me, I want, I want the readership just so that I know it's there.

Cause I mean, I'm getting, you know, I get at least one kudos a day and yet I'm not getting that many comments. So yeah, I don't know if, like, I know I've got, I don't know, like 300 kudos, at least 300 people have looked at it and gone, that's right, click. But I don't know what the thing, and I don't know how much of it they read because it's long.

I don't know how far people get, if they get to the end or if they give up at some point, I mean, they're not commenting. So, you know, if you're listening and you don't comment, please comment, not just on mine, but on anything you read.

[Snapecentric]

Yes.

[Sevsnapes]

Comments are going to inform what we then carry on and write. So if you like something that we've written and you comment and say that we're going to write something probably similar to it again. And we need, we need to know that because otherwise there'd be things in my fics that I've probably forgotten about and I would never consider.

But if someone said, Oh, I really liked this bit. And then it'd be cool to explore that. It'd probably get me thinking.

And then I'd probably write another thing.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I'm always reprioritizing my backlog and my to write list. Always. Every comment makes me go look at that list and go, all right, do I need to reprioritize?

And I do recommend trying out some comment exchanges. They're kind of awesome. I'm careful about the ones on Reddit because you never know, but I am also in a couple of discords where there are regular ones.

One in particular is a dark fics discord and dark fics are another level of, we don't get a lot of engagement in comments just because of the content matter. So we have like a monthly one. And I am, even if I am not getting the comments that are like deep or which most of them are plenty deep, but I'll at least get the opportunity to then go read other people's and I'm reading more OCs that way than ever before because these are people I know.

And so when I meet up in these exchange events and go, oh, well, this is, this is like, we're all doing OCs. Good. Let's get tons of these read and tons of comments.

Like that was the recent Reddit one I just did was it was OC centric. So I'm like, Ooh, get me in there. And I was only required to do one, but I did five because I was like, give me all the OCs today.

So yeah, that, that was a really good experience and got a lot more interaction, both in reading them and in getting a little bit of feedback in the comments. So I do recommend watching for those kinds of things in your social spaces. Cause that's, that's fun.

That, that might be the only way I get eyes on some of these fics.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. I think in general, fan fiction is a very symbiotic relationship. Obviously we're not getting paid.

So if we're putting stuff out there and we're getting nothing back, what's the point of putting it out there? So if you've got, you know, if you've got readers who love it and they're not saying that they love it, you, you're not getting anything back for what you're putting in. And as much as you know, one does right for oneself, you do kind of need to be fed a bit as well.

Like there is still that, that ego and that feedback and that needs to be told, this is shit, or this is really good. Or what if you did this? And my absolute favorite thing to hear from someone is I've been thinking about it and this is what I want, or I wonder if this is going to happen.

And I'm just like, you mean you're thinking about it when you're not reading it? Like the amount of times that Seb Snopes has messaged me saying, so I was just thinking about Abby. And I'm just like, same.

But yeah, if kids don't comment, you don't get that. And it doesn't have to be like an essay. An essay is great when someone tries, like analyzes it, it's wonderful.

However, if someone also commented with an emoji, that, that, I love it, I just love it. You know, like if I wrote a chapter that was all smart and someone just commented with a, you know, a fire emoji and that, yes, someone enjoyed it.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Some of my favorite comments are also the ones where they just quote a line and then have an emoji. And so, or they quote a line and say, yes, perfect, or something like that. I'm like, yes, I'm so glad you liked that line.

I liked that line too.

[Sevsnapes]

Line quotes are the best ones because it just makes you feel like you've really reached out there and someone's really like taken something you've written and they just get it. That's the best feeling.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. And especially when it's a sentence that you didn't really think was that sort of big or important. It was just something that just came out when you're writing.

And then someone goes, this sentence is great because X, Y, and Z. And you're just like, hey, someone liked it. And someone saw more into it than I thought I was into it.

[Snapecentric]

Yeah. I have to admit, I've only had a handful of comments on the podcast and it's like, well, am I doing okay? Or you do wonder.

[Smilingformoney]

That's the thing. You don't know if you're just shouting out into the void unless someone shouts back. Even if they let you just shout back, ah, I love this.

Yes. Yes. An emoji.

[Snapecentric]

That's all it takes.

[Smilingformoney]

So one of the reasons why I wish the AO3 would let people kudos individual chapters, then someone could at least click something and say, I've read this. I'm not telling you what I think. So I've read this.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I have mixed feelings about that. And also there are ways to like throw some Google analytics code in your chapter. If you really want some stuff like that.

One of the biggest detractors of doing hits on every chapter is that a lot of people sort and find fanfics by kudos. And that would blow the stats way out of proportion on multi-chapter multi-chapter fics.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah. There'd probably be a way to like, you know, uh, story kudos and chapter kudos.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah. Like having those as two separate things. I could get behind that.

[Smilingformoney]

Yes.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah. So there, there's a couple of logistical problems with doing it on every chapter, but having just having both that sounds good to me or making it like a kind of prompted comments, uh, feature, um, like your phone can auto suggest stuff depending on what you're doing. So I'm willing to bet there's a way to write a little browser extension that you can throw a pre-filled comment field, um, into every chapter you're reading.

So yeah, I have some software programming experience, so I have ideas like this all the time. And I'm like, yeah, I could write a scraper to do that. Or I could write an auto filler to do that and get in touch with those three and tell them that you need to do this and I'll do it for you for free.

[Smilingformoney]

Here you go.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah, it is actually open source code and I could write a thing and then submit a pull request. Um, but usually they only accept those things when they're on the roadmap. So you have to convince somebody to put on the roadmap first, but that gets off into some of your three logistics that I don't know if we want to dig too deep in, but the point is we love hearing from our readers.

Anything, anything from our readers is great. And I, I even appreciate the silent lurkers. I mean, kudos and comments are better, but when I see those hits go up, I assume that somebody has at least put their eyes on it and made a judgment call of whether they're going to read it or not.

And that's all I can ask for. That's all I can really expect. And I know for a long time I was a lurker and it's hard to judge somebody for not participating in the social features for various, whatever reasons they had.

And yeah, I don't know. I like my readers. I like them all.

I do want the comments though.

[Snapecentric]

They do, they do make a huge difference. Yes. Oh, okay.

You mentioned hits. Do you see those for separate chapters?

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

No, it's just one hit count. It's just one hit count. And the way AO3 hits work is really interesting because they have kind of a timer on it.

I actually dug into the code and looked this up because when the kudos bot came around, I was interested in how things are counted. And so hits work by some kind of timer. I think it's like a 10 or 15 minute timer.

So if you read through a chapter and hit to the next chapter within 10 or 15 minutes, it's only going to count that as one hit and it resets the clock when you go to the next chapter. So especially like my chapters on the Talia fic were really short. So I'm assuming that those hits, if I only have a couple of hits that came in in one day, it's probably one person who read the whole thing because those chapters are so short.

They could probably read a chapter in five minutes. Whereas on my Liz fic, those chapters are like 10 to 20,000 words and it takes a hot minute to read those. And

then those hit count, that hit count is probably a little bit inflated because by the time they get to the bottom and hit for the next chapter, that actually does register the hit.

FYI. I know that's a really obscure bit of code I had to find to understand how that worked.

[Snapecentric]

Well, that's interesting to know.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Yeah. They have a similar mechanism for guest kudos. So if you are like on the same IP address and someone else is reading at the exact same time and tries to kudos the same time as you from the same IP address, they're going to block one of them.

That was basically their mechanism for combating things like the kudos bot. So that's been some interesting stuff digging in their code, but at least we can. One of the reasons I love AO3 is that I can go look at their code and verify their cybersecurity practices and how things actually work.

Sorry, that got real nerdy real fast.

[Snapecentric]

That's cool. I really enjoyed hearing about that. Okay.

Any advice for OC writers out there?

[Smilingformoney]

Just do it. Don't matter if it's crap. Every writer has written crap stuff.

You know, in JK Rowling's case, she did crap stuff after she did her best stuff, personally, I think. So everyone starts out somewhere. It's like people say it's about artists.

Everyone starts with stick figures. At the end of the day, you are writing for yourself. And as much as we just went on about kudos and comments, at the end of the day, you're doing it for yourself.

And if it's what you want to do, if it's fun, even if you don't think anyone's going to read it, just do it. I didn't think anyone was going to read mine. I didn't know I was going to write that much.

I had no idea the kind of scope that it would take on. It's completely taken on a life of its own. I've got Seth Snapes writing fan fiction for my fan fiction.

I did not expect the kind of reception that I got. So just do it.

[Maria_de_Salinas]

Yeah. If you have fun with it, you enjoy the process. The readers will pick up on that.

Absolutely. Some of my favorite chapters to write were also favorite. People commented on it and told me how much they enjoyed reading it, how much it made them smile.

And at the end of the day, if nothing else, you'll be able to look back on it and it can be your comfort fic.

[Sevsnapes]

Yeah, I think that's important, actually. Write whatever you want to write. What comforts you?

And then you've always got that. I read my own fics back all the time.

[Smilingformoney]

Yeah, I read mine back sometimes. You write for yourself. And so you've just made the perfect you fan fiction.

Exactly. It's like when people say, why are you laughing at your own jokes? Like, because I'm the same sense of humor as me.

I think I'm hilarious. I think I've written something great, actually. And I really enjoy what this author has done.

Oh, wait, that author is me. Aha, that's why it's so good. So you got to be your own number one fan.

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

I do 100% agree with all that. Though I would also add that if anybody is looking for kind of a, like literary exercise to do to make yourself a better OC writer, working on character sheets is a great idea. And really digging into character motivations is a good idea.

Establishing that for your OCs, we have a little harder job as OC writers because we don't have the canon characterization to lean on. So canon characters are in some ways a little easier because you have all of that built up already. But for an OC, you got to ask yourself, why are they behaving the way they do?

So I have a character sheet that I kind of use for that, mostly built around a motivational framework to answer that question of why. So the motivational framework has basically three questions. One, what are the primary and secondary motivations of your character?

Two, what like internal flaws and external obstacles are there in terms of achieving the goals related to those motivations or the progress that they are trying to make? And then question three is what are the internal virtues and external resources that that character has to make progress toward their goals or achieve those motivations? So it's very much, it's like a three-pronged approach.

Like what are they, what's in the way of getting to them and what can help them get there? So having that as kind of a touchstone can help you focus and tighten characterization and also plot and pacing. I felt like that was a big happy side effect of doing that.

So yeah, in terms of like, if you are looking for advice on the craft of doing that, thinking about ways that literature looks at characterization can be really helpful because you don't have the canon characters to lean on, you got to make it all up to yourself. So find a character sheet you like, use a motivational framework you like, something like that. And that might help you a lot to crafting a high-quality OC that both you and readers will find really compelling.

I think that's it. So on behalf of our host who had a little technical difficulty, I will say thanks everybody for joining. Thanks listener for listening and goodbye everybody.

Bye-bye. Yes, thank you. Bye-bye.

[Snapecentric]

That was a rather sudden end to the discussion, but after that each author read excerpts from their stories. Enjoy.

[Sevsnapes]

Hi, this is Rebecca, also known as [sevsnapes](#). (now [kendom](#) on AO2) I'm going to read an excerpt from two chapters of my fan fiction, [Prince's Cosmetics](#). So I'm

just going to start with a little bit from chapter one, but I'm not going to start from the beginning and I'm not going to read right to the end.

I'm going to leave it on a bit of a cliffhanger so it's not too spoilery. So this is from chapter one, introducing my OC Tammy. When she entered, awestruck at the well stocked shelves, an overwhelmingly pleasant smell hit her.

It was all her favourite scents combined with something very personal; a smell she recognised from her childhood but couldn't quite put her finger on. She stood still, closing her eyes for a moment to take a deep breath.

When her eyes opened again, they met with the man behind the counter who was just finishing up the process of rolling down his sleeves.

'You'll have to excuse me,' he said in a low, silky voice, 'I forgot to change the sign - I closed ten minutes early.'

Tammy watched as he pulled his hair out of the messy bun tied at the back of his head, his fingertips stained in pinks and blues; he's been working on new products she thought, but what left her lips instead was a small gasp at how his hair fell to frame his face and how his elegant brightly stained fingers worked through it, tousling it back into shape.

She collected herself with a single shake of her head and a deliberate blink. 'I can come back tomorrow, I'm only-'

'No, no,' he reassured her, 'please, what can I help you with?' He began to remove his apron.

'Well actually, I came to say hello,' she blushed, 'I have the shop next door, you see-'

'Ah, Tiffey's Treats?' Snape said, wandering over to the little sink by the bath products to wash the colours from his fingers under a warm tap.

'That's the one,' Tammy replied. 'I wanted to bring you something - a welcome gift. It's nothing much,' she excused as she pushed forward the little basket she held in her hands, covered with a silk scarf.

Snape turned back to her and met her in the middle of the shop floor to take the basket. 'You shouldn't have,' he said quietly, flushing as his fingers brushed hers.

'Oh, it's nothing, really,' she excused, voice breaking as she felt his skin against hers.

'Thank you,' he whispered, averting his eyes.

'Well. Why don't we have a slice of cake?' Tammy said brightly, cutting through the tense silence that followed the brief exchange.

Snape only nodded in response, sweeping behind the counter and returning a couple of minutes later with two small plates, a thick slice of cream-covered walnut cake and a fork on each.

'Please, sit down,' he gestured to the stools in front of the make up counter, handing Tammy a plate.

'So,' she said, hopping up onto a stool. 'Who are you?'

Snape smirked. 'I could ask you the same question... Severus.'

'You're not Severus Snape, by any chance?' Tammy asked casually, sticking her fork in to gather a big chunk of cake.

His eyes narrowed. 'Why?'

'The war hero, Severus Snape?' Tammy's eyes were still on her plate. 'This is pretty good, if I do say so myself,' she went on jovially, almost to herself..

'I am Severus Snape as a matter of fact. Are you going to ask me who Prince is next?' He said with a tired voice.

'Nope,' she replied, smiling and flicking her eyes up to meet his. 'I bet everyone's asked you that today. And I bet it's no one's business but yours.'

His face relaxed and he smiled back. 'It was my mother's maiden name. That's her dressing table in the window.'

Tammy glanced toward the back of it. 'That's lovely.'

'Actually, I always hated it until I found a use for it here,' he scoffed. 'It does fit in quite nicely, I suppose.'

They both took another mouthful of cake, the gentle damp outside now turning to a lashing of rainfall against the window.

'I'm Tempest,' Tammy said plainly after finishing the last mouthful her cake, 'but everyone calls me Tammy.'

'It's been a delight to meet you, Tempest,' Snape said.

Not presuming to fit into the category of everyone was intended as a sign of respect, but Tammy bit her lips together at hearing it.

'So, is there a Mrs Snape I've yet to meet?' She asked, stomach clenching as she awaited the answer. As sure as she was that he called her by her full name to place a barrier between them, she couldn't bite her tongue in time when the thought popped into her head upon hearing her full name from his lips. She winced at herself, looking up through narrowed eyes to gauge his response.

But Snape wasn't looking back at her - his eyes were now trained on the window. He almost kicked the stool over behind him as he stood and stumbled over to it.

'No... there's no Mrs...' he offered, distractedly.

'Severus? What is it?' Tammy stood to follow him carefully, only to see a man on the other side of the glass. It was a man she recognised - he was a regular at her bakery and had last been in her shop only half an hour prior.

'Do you want me to tell him you've closed?' She offered.

'No- no, I-' Snape stuttered, mouth open in disbelief and brow furrowed in thought as he edged to the entrance, flicking the Open sign to Closed and proceeding to swing the door back, rain spitting onto his clothes.

'Malf?' He called, incredulous, to the man still browsing the contents of the window.

The man turned to him, not quite hearing him through the pouring rain hitting the buildings and cobbled ground around him.

'Charming little shop. Good job on restoring it!' He shouted back, eyes bright.

Snape leapt outside and grabbed the man by his arms. Tammy stood back, watching from the doorway.

'Lucius?' He said, inches from the man's face.

'Do I know you?' Lucius replied, bewildered, searching Snape's face for recognition but drawing a blank.

The second excerpt that I'm going to read is from chapter seven, and it involves a bit more of a Snucius side to things. Would I even be a Snucius shipper if I didn't include this in my recording of *A Bit From My Fic*? So, this is probably about halfway down chapter seven.

They knew without the need for words that they both were having the exact same thought. Together, they reached for the sword, swung around with it firmly in their joint grasp and brought it down upon the box. The force of the strike crushed the box, slicing open part of the teddy bear in the process, as well as breaking clean through the rattle, which smoked and hissed, and gradually disintegrated into floating ashes that disappeared before their eyes. The green glow ceased and the sword clattered to the ground.

Snape, shocked and relieved and feeling all manner of emotions coursing through him, was about to turn to Lucius and hug him, but he was suddenly thrust back against the wall. Lucius's plump, wet lips pressed firmly to Snape's and his hands dragged down from Snape's shoulders to slide around his waist.

Snape gasped, and Lucius took the parted lips as an invitation to slip his tongue inside, sliding against Snape's with fervent passion.

Snape moaned weakly, which in turn made Lucius growl and deepen the kiss, pushing a hand up into Snape's hair and causing a further whimper, but despite the encouraging noises he was eliciting from his friend, Lucius suddenly felt the force of being pushed back.

'Malf, what the fuck-' Snape started, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand and catching his breath, but as he had prized himself out of the fierce embrace, he saw that Lucius's eyes didn't look the same somehow. They appeared sharper, much more like the old Lucius.

'Sev, I'm sorry, I-' Lucius dropped onto the sofa and his head immediately fell into his hands as his shoulders trembled. 'Fuck,' he repeated, muffled this time by his palms.

'Malf... did you... ' Snape started awkwardly, slowly moving closer to take a seat beside Lucius. 'We don't... do that anymore. You- you got married and we-'

'I know,' Lucius said plainly, lifting his head to look directly at Snape. His eyes were blank as he tried to process the thousands of memories that had suddenly flooded his consciousness. 'I know. But for a moment it was 1978 again. Just for a moment, and I saw you beside me, and it all made sense. It was one of the few things that made sense and we- we were-'

'It's alright,' Snape soothed, snaking an arm around his friend's shoulders and pulling him to rest against the comfort of his chest. Lucius's arms wrapped around Snape again, but this time it was a relieved grasp rather than a hungry, lustful one.

'I'm so sorry,' Lucius cried, almost shrieking through his sobs as he gripped at Snape's robes. 'I remember. I remember it all!

[Jalapeno_eye_popper]

Hi, this is [jalapeno_eye_popper](#). You can call me Hal. I'm here to read chapter one of my fanfiction, [Memories of Talia Oakbrush](#).

So, the summary is: Talia can't remember, and Severus can't forget. An unknown curse has her setting her affairs in order, but the mysteries of the past and present must be solved first.

Chapter One, Blood Memory.

Chapter Summary. To recover her missing memories, Talia performs a blood ritual.

Talia Oakbrush entered the ritual circle, drawn in white chalk, completely nude. She wore only a crown of large bacopa flowers woven among roses. Tiny drops of blood trickled down her temple from where the thorny stems bit into her skin. Her hands trembled as she gripped a tiny vial of more blood. Any ritual using the blood of a child was generally considered Dark Magic, but the circumstances were in her favour. She could do this. She had to. She needed to know.

Grounded in the certainty that she was doing the right thing, or at least that there wasn't a better thing, Talia reached out with her free hand to caress the stone basin propped in the centre of the circle. This Pensieve had been provided by her employers, bless them. Apparently, it had changed hands four times to come from Dumbledore to Talia. She could feel the deep-seated magic emanating from the runes. Soon she would have the truth.

She already knew she was missing memories from her final year at Hogwarts. She attributed many of her problems in life to her spotty recollection of that time. The

Year of Terror, some of her classmates called it. Talia thought that was pretty rich; after being in the same year with Harry Potter, she was more inclined to describe every year as terrifying. Potter had been on the run that year, and she tried her best to stay out of the fray back at Hogwarts. She was a pureblood, and her parents funded Voldemort's regime. They instructed her to cooperate fully with the new power structure at the school. She, like many Ravenclaws, was smart and studious enough to keep her head down and eyes open, waiting to see what happened next, and generally came out of it unscathed.

But it was maddening, the way she would find out about things that happened, and then not remember where she was at the time. It was also maddening, the way she would feel aches as though she exercised for hours, though her normal routine was only 20 minutes of yoga per day. And it was frustrating, the way she developed intense physical reactions to contact with people, as though her body knew something just awful about this war that her mind did not.

Most of those reactions had been conditioned back out of her by now, and her instinct was no longer to flinch but to freeze. But now wasn't the time to think about that. She had all of those memories.

Back in the present, she rubbed her sore neck and decided to get on with it.

This ritual had so much promise. Over the years, she went to many supposed experts in mind magic. They were all certain her memories were intact, just hidden behind quite advanced traps. When she asked for help at Hogwarts, Flitwick lamented the loss of Snape, whom he cited as the only Occlumens he would have known capable of understanding the traps. Instead, Flitwick sent her to Tibet, where she was examined and put through dozens of meditation rituals before the mages sent her back home.

But they sent her with a ritual script in-hand, and all she needed to do was acquire a Pensieve.

Now she finally had one, and she had hope.

Talia popped the cork on the vial and spoke, "Gods above and below, hear my plea." She dipped one finger and then traced the rim of the Pensieve. "Anoint this basin, with the blood of the innocent, as a receptacle of truth." Then she dipped again and pressed it to the open wound on her head. "Anoint your servant, with the blood of the innocent, as a source of truth." Finally, she poured the remaining blood directly into the Pensieve. "Let the blood of the innocent cleanse and purify the tainted memories, to reveal the truth."

Then she pressed her wand to her temple, focusing on the child who gave the blood. One dingy grey strand pulled away from her head. Her heart leapt, and she flicked her wand to detach the strand, allowing it to fall into the anointed basin of the Pensieve.

She didn't hesitate to plunge her face into the murky, bloody mix to view it.

When it was over, Talia stumbled backward out of the ritual circle, heart pounding and mind racing. She didn't have it all back, and there were plenty of questions left unanswered. Despite the success of tonight's Blood Memory Ritual, she still didn't know what had happened on her 18th birthday, or what she'd been doing during the Battle of Hogwarts. She was also still missing a handful of evening hours scattered through the spring term.

But she covered her bloodied face with her hands, stifling a mad cackle of glee. The simple little memory she did recover was supremely illuminating.

She was standing at a small sink in a cramped, dim bathroom, staring down two potions bottles. There was a soreness between her legs that she now associated with deeply satisfying sex, and she was freshly washed clean. The mirror was eerily quiet, having been Silenced long ago, but she mumbled at her reflection anyway, "If I don't take the memory potion, then I'll know, but so will he the next time he looks in my eyes." She scowled at the mirror, dumped out the contraceptive potion down the sink, and raised the other to her lips. Before the memory suppression potion took effect, she would need to get back to her dormitory. On her way out, she caught one last look at the man who provided these potions, lounging nude on a bed with rumpled sheets. His dark eyes flicked up from a book to meet her baby blues, and she felt a sense of longing she couldn't explain. It was only a fraction of a second, but as she exited through his office, the feeling bloomed into a full-blown hope that she would put the clues back together later.

It took her four years, but now she knew the father of her child.

Thanks.

[[Maria_de_Salinas](#)]

Hi, I'm [Maria de Salinas](#), and I'm going to be reading part of chapter 14 of my Snape and O.C. fic, [The Bolland Cross](#). And this fic takes place during the Deathly Hallows era. So, Snape is headmaster, and Gralhagh is in hiding at the Hog's Head, and they're working together to make an antidote for a very dangerous poison.

Graihagh was ready when Snape came for her the next evening, three vials of potential antidotes lined up on her work table. She opened the back door for him and beckoned him inside.

"We won't be working here," he said.

"What?"

"It's too dangerous. We'll go somewhere else."

Graihagh was rather touched that he didn't want them testing poison antidotes in her living space.

"Hold on. I just need to get the solutions I've prepared."

She ran upstairs for the jars and when she got back down to the alley Snape told her to Disillusion herself.

They passed a few villagers on their way to the Three Broomsticks, and a black-robed figure with a long pointed hood walked by, nodding to Snape. Graihagh gasped and the figure paused and turned round before moving on.

"Shh!" hissed Snape.

"Sorry," muttered Graihagh, though she really didn't appreciate being told to keep quiet when there were Death Eaters everywhere. Easy enough for him to do, he was one of them, they weren't hunting him down.

They turned down a side street and followed it to a path that forked off in the direction of the Shrieking Shack. Graihagh stared at the steeply sloped roof and the

boarded-up windows, bits of deepest black showing through the cracks. "Wait, we're going here?"

"Muffliato. Repello Inimucum. Yes."

She followed him into the falling-apart house, the door creaking shut behind them. The place was pitch-black and smelt of old wood and musty fabric and a musky, ammonia-like smell that was probably mice.

"Lumos."

Blue-white light filled the foyer, exaggerating their shadows on the peeling wallpaper. A chair with one leg missing leaned feebly against the wall and a mouse scurried for cover.

The stairway and the rooms beyond were pitch black, untouched by any light. Graihagh shivered. "Isn't this place haunted?"

Snape made a dismissive noise. "That so-called ghost was nothing more than a werewolf."

Graihagh followed him into a large room on the ground floor. "A werewolf?"

Snape lit a few lamps. "One Remus Lupin. This was built for him as a place to transform so he wouldn't be a danger to the other students. Not that it kept him from roaming the grounds with his friends."

Graihagh looked around at the broken furniture and torn wallpaper and scratched paintings. He'd wrecked the place, but far worse was knowing he'd let himself run free. Somebody could have been killed.

Snape glanced at her with a hint of a smirk on his face, as though he knew what she was thinking. Graihagh said nothing. She knew then that Snape didn't like him, whether because he was a werewolf or some other reason she didn't know.

She didn't have time to think on it just then. Snape had pulled two pieces of fabric out of his robes and draped them over a chair. They looked like Muggle hazmat suits, with face shields and hoods.

"You'll need to put this on," he said.

Graihagh's stomach tightened. She and Owain used full-face respirators once in awhile, when working with particularly noxious potions, but she'd never had to wear anything like this. "Just how dangerous is this poison?"

Snape slipped on a pair of gloves and held up a large vial of pale yellow liquid. "So dangerous that even the smallest amount will kill you within minutes."

Graihagh couldn't get a deep breath and the room faded as her mind swirled with images of people coughing and choking and dying, and she knew, she knew they had this poison and she wasn't doing a damn thing about it, just like she hadn't done anything about Rowle's dagger, and maybe this antidote would help them, just like her Felix Felicis helped Rowle...

"What the fuck is going on here?" she hissed. "What is this being used for?"

"I can't tell you."

Graihagh fought to keep her voice from rising. "How do I know you people aren't going to kill everyone and save yourselves?"

Snape raised an eyebrow. "I thought you trusted me, Miss Corlett."

She wanted to say yes. And it was true in a way, she did trust him, or she thought she did, but this was too much. "I-yeah, but..."

"It won't only be Death Eaters you save."

"So you're saying it'll save innocent people?"

"That conclusion follows logically from the premise, I should think."

Graihagh turned and paced the room, arms crossed over her chest. Maybe the poison was one step too far for him, and the Death Eaters didn't know about this. If worst came to worst, she could always steal it, or find out their plans and tell the Order.

"Fine. I'll do it. But I want you to promise me one thing."

"What's that?"

"Promise me you'll try to stop them using it."

Snape's face was impassive. "You know of whom you're speaking, don't you?"

"Yeah," she said, her rising inflection asking why it mattered.

"Then you'll know why I can't promise such a thing."

"Then I'm not making this." And she meant it. She turned and walked towards the door.

"Miss Corlett!"

Graihagh whipped around. "What?"

"You agreed to this."

She had agreed, that much was true, but she hadn't promised anything.

She sighed and rubbed her face. "Look, I don't want this to be another Felix Felicis. And I'm not going to-I won't let you-"

Snape slammed his fist down on the table, making her jump. "I am not using you!"

There was nothing forced or put on about his frustration, she knew him well enough to know that. And she wanted so much to believe him.

She let out a long breath. "Alright." She walked the room a few more times, to clear her head, and set her vials down on a table at the far end of the room.

"I thought we'd try neutralizing it with a caustic reagent first," she said, opening the first vial. "That sometimes works on Muggle poisons."

Snape nodded. "It's worth a try, I suppose."

Graihagh set her solutions down on the table and she and Snape put on their hazmat suits and stood over them, getting everything ready. Graihagh's chest tightened as Snape twisted the cap on the vial of poison. She reached up to check her hood, make sure it was on properly.

Snape piped a small amount into a beaker, and Graihagh added an equal amount of her solution. The mixture frothed and sizzled but the colour and texture of the poison stayed the same.

Graihagh tapped her wand to the beaker. "Revelare contenta."

The toxin had remained intact. They couldn't talk under their face shields, so Graihagh shook her head and Snape conjured another beaker and added a few more drops of poison. They tried all three of her solutions, but none of them took.

"I'll keep working on it," said Graihagh, when Snape had performed a charm on the room and she'd removed her hazmat suit. She could tell he was worried, and now that she knew the danger they were in she wanted the antidote quite as much as he did.

Snape nodded. "As quickly as you can."

He Vanished the beakers did some sort of charm on the suits, to remove any traces of the poison, probably. When he'd folded up the suits he capped the vial of poison and tucked it into his robes and even though Graihagh knew he'd put a charm on it to stop it breaking she made a mental note not to go anywhere near him until he'd put it away.

"Does anyone else have access to this poison?" she asked.

"Not that I'm aware of. From what I gather it's extremely difficult to produce, prohibitively expensive and extremely illegal. You can't just walk into a shop and buy some, any more than you could buy enriched uranium."

Well. She'd sleep a bit better then, but still.

Snape draped his traveling cloak over his shoulders. Graihagh supposed he'd head back to the castle, but she wasn't in a hurry to go back to her room, gloomy as the shack was. She wanted to stay with him, get her mind off things.

"I've been meaning to ask, who took over as Potions Master?" she said as she tucked her vials back into her robes.

"Horace Slughorn."

"Oh, I know him. We were in the Most Extraordinary Society of Potioneers together. He threw a big party at his house every year, it was good craic."

Snape made an indistinct murmur, and she wondered if he'd been invited and hadn't gone.

"He used to rave about you," she went on. "Said you were one of the best he'd ever taught. You and your friend-Lily, was that her name?"

Snape twitched as though something had bit him and Graihagh wondered if he'd stepped on something or gotten a sudden stomach pain. "Yes," he said. He adjusted his traveling cloak, clearly in a hurry to get going, but Graihagh leaned against an old sofa and pretended she hadn't noticed.

"What made you decide to become a teacher?"

Snape paused with his hand on his cloak as though she'd jumped out behind something and surprised him.

"I enjoy watching eager young minds get crushed by reality," he said.

Graihagh gave him a wry smile, remembering the way he swept around the classroom tearing everyone to pieces. "Seriously, though."

Snape played his cloak between his fingers, his face impassive as ever. She supposed she'd have to add teaching to her ever-growing list of Things Professor Snape Refused to Talk About.

"Because I was young and didn't know what else to do. Now if you're finished asking questions, I need to get back to the castle."

Graihagh didn't want to, but she supposed they'd better. She stood up and followed him to the door. Snape paused with his hand on the doorknob.

"Miss Corlett."

"Yeah?"

"You are not to tell anyone what we're doing. Do you understand?"

His usual sarcasm-tinged indifference was gone, and his face was serious, earnest even.

"I won't."

She wasn't sure she meant it, and Snape must've known it. He stepped out in front of her, his face close to hers. They were the same height.

"I am serious, Miss Corlett. Tell no one, or the consequences will be more severe than you can even imagine."

Graihagh's chest tightened and she was dizzy, too many thoughts going through her to sort them all out. She understood why they couldn't tell anyone, but what if she'd been tricked? What if she was just their tool, the way she'd been with Rowle? And what exactly was he threatening her with?

And yet. His face was so serious, so tired, the way he'd looked when he showed up at her door and when he'd been lying half-dead at the gates. He didn't like some of the things they were doing, she was sure of it. Maybe he was even going behind their backs. She had the strangest urge to reach up and stroke his face.

"I won't. I promise."

The action was impulsive, instinctual. She raised a hand towards his face, and only at the last minute, when Snape's eyes widened just slightly, did she realize what she was doing. She brushed back a loose strand of her hair as though she'd meant to do it all along, and Snape opened the door.

She Disillusioned herself and they walked in silence until they reached the road, Graihagh's mind full of the poison, and Snape's mind on what she didn't know, but he was every bit as preoccupied as she was.

"Stop," said Snape.

"What is it?" But Grahaigh saw what it was before she'd even finished the sentence. Three skeletally thin figures in ragged black robes were drifting over the high street of Hogsmeade, close enough that Graihagh's breath floated in front of her and the stars went black.

"Can you make a Patronus?" she whispered. Cate and Milo had shown her how to make a Patronus years ago, but she'd never gotten the hang of it.

"Death Eaters can't make Patronuses."

"So what do we do?"

"Wait until they pass."

Graihagh had never been so close to a Dementor before. She set her eyes on the moonlit mountains above the village, imagined they were just out for a walk, but she couldn't stop the voices in her head, Rowle and Milo's urgent whispers as they made their plans, her own voice, agreeing to help them. And other more distant voices, Rowle's shouts and Milo's screams, her dad telling her that her mum wasn't coming back, Cate asking why she hadn't stood up for her.

Another voice spoke in her ear, this one curt and annoyed. "Get up,"

Snape's boots were in front of her face and there were stones under her fingertips. She must've fallen.

"You're letting your emotions get control of you," said Snape, as though she'd just done something stupid. "Master yourself. The Dementors are going to be here awhile."

"Great, I was just thinking I could use a bit more anxiety right now," said Graihagh as she stood up.

Snape scanned the high street. "I think they've gone. Go, quickly."

"Right. I'll see you later, Professor."

She took the high street at a run, not worrying about her loud footfalls, and didn't stop until she was in her room.

[Smilingformoney]

This is [smilingformoney](#), and I'm reading an excerpt from chapter 23 of my fic, [Soul of Ice](#).

Abbie chanced a glance behind her as she ran; there was no one immediately behind her, but the footsteps echoing around the corridor told her someone was hot on her trail. She ducked into a room to the side and slammed the door closed. The room was dark; she felt her way along the wall, hoping not to knock anything over as she hid.

The footsteps pursuing her got closer and closer, and then, just as they seemed to reach the door she'd hidden behind, they stopped. No, she thought in a panic. How could they possibly have known which door she'd hidden behind?

The door creaked open and Abbie could just make out the silhouette of Lucius Malfoy entering the room, wand held aloft. His back was turned to her, and as soon as she had a clear shot, she blasted a jet of red light at him. He stumbled, and she tried to run, but he was too quick; she felt an invisible force grab her and pull her back, sending her flying against what felt like a table. She yelled out in pain, and in the same moment, the lights flickered on. The desk she'd been thrown into had tumbled onto its side and for a few moments, she had a shield.

Abbie threw another spell over the desk, not daring to look high enough to aim; she heard something shatter, and Lucius just laughed. "Stupid girl," he cursed. "The Dark Lord would have had you, you know - he is so very eager to bring you and Draco into the fold. Well, Draco and your father may have a soft spot for you, but I see what you really are. You would never be fit to join the Dark Lord."

Abbie fell onto her back as the table was pulled away, leaving her fully exposed. She clamboured to her feet and glared up at Lucius' sneering face. "Good," she snarled. "I'd rather die than be one of you."

"Do you think I won't hurt a child?" Lucius growled as he pointed his wand in her face. "Do you think I fear your father's retribution enough to spare you? If I were to kill you, he would hate me for a while, but eventually he would thank me for sparing him from such a pathetic, traitorous little -"

He was cut off by a blast to the stomach, and it was his turn to go flying across the room. Lucius stood, his face contorted with fury, and within moments, they were duelling fiercely, spells flying across the room, shattering shelves and blowing holes in the walls.

"Your father taught you well," Lucius yelled over the sound of the crumbling wall behind him. "But he taught me something better. Sectumsempra!"

When nothing emerged from Lucius' wand, Abbie thought the spell must have failed; but then she saw a twisted smirk of triumph on his face, and she felt something wet on her shirt. She looked down to see a large gash in her shirt, blood soaking through. She gasped as the pain set in, and suddenly it felt like every nerve in her torso was on fire. Her knees buckled, and she fell to the floor, screaming in pain. When she finally looked up, Lucius was gone, and she rolled over to her side, lying in a pool of her own blood.

With her remaining strength, Abbie raised her wand and cast one final spell before she blacked out.

When she came to, the first sense that came back to her was her hearing. She could hear a voice, soft and soothing, chanting an incantation that sounded like a lullaby. She knew that voice; she would recognise her father's voice anywhere.

The next sense that came back was her sense of touch. She was lying in something wet. Her abdomen felt funny; some of it was warm, the rest cold, and all of it stung.

Finally, she opened her eyes to see a blurry black shape leaning over her against the background of a grey stone ceiling. She was on her back, she realised.

The black shape moved, and Abbie recognised her father's profile as it came into view.

"Dad..." she mumbled, causing Snape's eyes to snap up to her face. He was almost unrecognisable; his face was riddled with fear, and there was a smudge of red on his cheek which she strongly suspected was her own blood.

Abbie tried to sit up, but a firm hand on her shoulder pushed her back down. "Don't move," Snape instructed her.

She did as she was told, but she had seen enough to confirm what she suspected. A deep gash had been cut across her stomach; she must have passed out from the blood loss. Snape resumed casting the healing spell, and she felt a gentle warmth at the area his wand was aimed at. For a few minutes, she lay there, gently sobbing, until he was done.

"Come on," Snape whispered gently. He lifted her up in his arms, carrying her like a babe. "Let's get you back to the castle."

"I'm sorry," Abbie sobbed into his shoulder. She wrapped her arms around his neck in an attempt to balance some of her weight, but she was so weak, it barely made any difference.

"It's okay," Snape said, his deep voice reverberating through his chest. With one hand pressed up against his chest, she could feel the vibrations, and it soothed her to feel him so close. "I've got you. It's all going to be okay."

Abbie felt her eyelids growing heavy, and she blacked out again.

[Snapecentric]

And that's the show. Thanks to Maria de Salinas, Jalapeño iPopper, Smiling for Money, and Sev Snapes for their readings and insights. Go to snapechatpodcast.com for links to their stories and more. And here we must say goodbye.

We wish we didn't have to, but it hasn't escaped our notice

that life isn't fair. Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Tumblr and Twitter.

Email us or leave a voicemail. We'd love to hear from you. Support us on Ko-fi to help defray costs of production.

Many thanks to Nyx for her continued work on our website at snapechatpodcast.com. Be sure to check out alwaysssnape.com. Thanks for listening.

Until next time, stay snarky.