

Black Against White

by tobeacting

Hermione thinks about a large fight that she and Severus had.

A Splotch on the Horizon

Chapter 1 of 10

Hermione thinks about a large fight that she and Severus had.

Professor Hermione Granger was spending an inordinate amount of her first winter break sitting in her empty classroom and watching as the snow softly coated everything with its pure whiteness.

As she stared out into the blankness, she noticed a blemish on the white. Her heart leapt as she realized who the most likely person it could be. Just as quickly it plummeted. Their last confrontation hadn't been exactly pleasant.

She wanted to speak to him, but she found this effort thoroughly useless and decided instead to slump against the window and turn away from the teasing splotch on the horizon.

Ruminations on a Fight

Chapter 2 of 10

Severus's turn to ruminate on the argument

Though few people knew it, there was little Severus liked more than a soft snow. It helped him think. Made him feel calmer. While students were there, he only dared to indulge just inside the Forbidden Forest. During Christmas, however, he was able to freely walk amongst the falling flakes. The subtle crunch as he crossed the white land was comforting to his ears. To anyone who cared to look, it appeared Severus was just brooding. If someone had read his mind, it would be obvious that he was contemplating a certain loud argument with a certain annoying transfiguration teacher.

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"You insufferable bastard, I was only asking a simple favor!"

"If you use any part of my lab, strands of hair will be everywhere."

"What a pathetic excuse! I could easily keep my hair in place. You simply refuse to be amiable to anyone. God forbid you show some slight humanity."

"God forbid you show some maturity. Really, Professor Granger, couldn't this have been done privately and at a lower decibel. I hardly think a public shouting match is necessary. Now if you will excuse me, I must leave. Maybe we can have another discussion when you decide to grow up."

Enter Stage Left

Chapter 3 of 10

Hermione continues to sulk and Severus gets some unwanted advice.

Hermione realized the irony of her pouting after being called a child. He could be so stubborn and so pompous. Surely her hair wasn't the true reason for him denying her access, but what could it be? He had been something reminiscent of a friend. What changed? She couldn't think of something she said that could be taken as an insult. Perhaps it was simply one of his infamous mood swings. . . . It just seemed different. Hermione bit her lip contemplating the intricacies of Severus Snape's subconscious: an activity that would make a girl so lost that she would certainly have a migraine afterwards. What could she do?

Beginning to get worried about his hair freezing, Severus was about to go in when he saw the original know-it-all Gryffindor loping towards him. "Go away, Lupin."

"I saw the argument you had with Miss Granger."

"You and half the school," Severus scoffed.

"It was a low blow to blame her hair. Especially when you aren't an expert in good hair care."

"Yes, let me take advice on my hair from a werewolf."

"Severus, I am only trying to help you. You don't have many friends, period. Why push someone away who is actually asking to spend time with you?"

A Higher Power

Chapter 4 of 10

Snape acts Snape-ish and Hermione talks to a higher power.

"Spend time with me? She doesn't care to spend time with me and I don't care to with her. Why should I be forced to share my working space with someone barely old enough to be a professor just so she can indulge her irksome curiosity? She needs to be told no. She is an adult now. Therefore, she doesn't need to be coddled like some child and have other people bow down to serve her needs. It is not my responsibility nor my duty."

"Okay, if you are done with your maniacal rant, you should go apologize to her."

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By now Severus's hair was more white than black. He was tired of trying to make Lupin come around to his point of view. "No" was all he said as he walked away and left Lupin shaking his head in the white. He wasn't the one whose voice echoed off all of the walls so loudly, inviting all the staff into an unneeded argument. Why should he apologize? Even if he wanted to apologize, he would have to seek her out. Hermione had been nowhere to be seen since. Severus Snape refused to sink to that.

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Hermione, meanwhile, had taken some aspirin and decided to ask a higher, more experienced power.

Ginny,

I need some help. I did exactly what we talked about and incurred the wrath of the Dreaded Potions Master. I thought I had asked a simple favor, but apparently it was ridiculous. I started yelling at him in the middle of the entrance hall! He called me immature. I can't believe I called him an insufferable bastard. I felt like I was twelve. Should I apologize? I'm rambling. We had been something almost like equals. I just don't know.

Your lost friend,

Hermione

...

Hermione bravely emerged from her self-imposed exile to trek to the owlery. As she turned the corner, "Hermione! I was just coming to see you."

"Remus, I'm sorry I was just headed to send this letter. Would you mind if we talked later?"

"How about at dinner tonight in the Great Hall?"

"I was actually planning on just ordering something in."

"That's ridiculous. I will even escort you from your quarters. See you then."

"Manipulative werewolf," Hermione grumbled under her breath. She knew exactly what he wanted to talk to her about and that she had no say about dinner.

Waxing?

Chapter 5 of 10

Snape makes a realization, and Hermione comes up with a lame excuse.

Severus thanked the stars that he saw no one as he trudged down to the dungeons. If he had, the person likely would have ended up in the infirmary. He was slightly damp from the snow melting, and he was heading towards the cold dungeons. He had no reason to apologize for the fight, but perhaps he had been harsh in so quickly denying her request. He was just afraid that if he were stuck in the dungeons with that annoying know-it-all. . . . It was so ridiculous. How the students would laugh. The Greasy Bat with a crush on the young, attractive professor.

Still he would search the hallways for a glimpse of soft chestnut, strain for a hint of her lilting laughter, search for a flash of snowy skin. He was going crazy. How could he be waxing romantic on an ex-student? He was too cynical to wax romantic period. She did something to him. He didn't like it. He didn't want it to happen. He wanted her to go away. He didn't want to hurt her, but it was better this way. It was better for her this way. Imagine how traumatized she would feel if she knew how he thought of her.

. . .

"My feet have turned green, and I can no longer feel them?"

"Hermione, you are coming with me. And afterward we can talk about the situation with you and Severus"

"There is no situation between us. He is simply being a jackass. I was simply being rational."

"You were both being immature third-years."

"You are being a snooping, pernicious, evasive, werewolf."

"Name-calling over. Time for dinner."

"Remus, I beg of you. I exploded at one of the highly respected inhabitants of the castle. I don't think I am wrong, but I admit I could have gone about it better."

Dinner and a game

Chapter 6 of 10

Remus continues to be sneaky, and Hermione gets a shock.

"Yes, which is all the more reason to show that you are the bigger person and attend dinner before Severus shows his face. Don't let him force you into isolation."

"He is not forcing me into anything. I am just trying to keep the staff from being forced into our conflict."

"Well then, there is no debate. Severus has stayed away as much as you have, my dear. Now I am ravenous. If we don't leave, I may have to eat you."

"Remus, I'm going to kill you."

"After dinner. I hear the house-elves have prepared a delicious roast."

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By the time Remus had managed to hog-tie and drag Hermione to the Great Hall, there were only three seats left at the community table. Hermione was instantly suspicious. Remus purposefully sat in one of the outside chairs. Seconds later, Severus burst through the doors still not able to regain the calm he had mastered in the snow. Of course, the only seat open happened to be next to Hermione. As repayment for his merciless and purposeful act, Hermione subtly stomped on Remus's foot. She decided that the best way to handle this was to say as little as possible.

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"Miss Granger."

"Severus."

"Lovely weather."

"Indeed."

"I think we should play a game!"

"Remus, shut up!"

"Now, Hermione. Okay, everyone at the table must give their two neighbors one compliment. Ouch!"

"I think that's a wonderful idea."

"Thank you, Minerva. I'll start. I will compliment you, and then you do me and then Severus, and then Severus compliments you, and we go all around the table. Hermione, I like how well you think outside the box. "

"Remus, I like how well you can take a hint. Severus, I think you are one of the most adept peoples in potions."

"Hermione, you are one of the least unintelligent people I have taught."

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Hermione was obviously shocked at the backwards compliment. He thought her intelligent. She was absurdly happy. She didn't completely understand why. Most of her teachers would have said the same thing. But it came from him. Unfortunately this made their argument more perplexing. It wasn't her hair denying her access. He didn't think her dull enough to cause an explosion. There must be a reason beyond him being Severus Snape, famous recluse of the dungeons. Maybe she should go apologize to him. It was highly unlikely that he was going to be beating down her door with an apology.

Fat Load of Good

Chapter 7 of 10

Hermione recovers only to be more confused.

By the time Hermione got over the shock of an almost compliment, the rest of the table was done with Remus's manipulative little game and was beginning to saunter out of the Great Hall. When Hermione was done with her food, everyone had left, including the current bane of her existence. Hermione was about to leave when the unmistakable blue-tipped wings of Ginny's purple swamphen, Lefou, dropped her response on Hermione's plate with an undignified squawk. Hermione let Lefou eat some of the leftovers before rushing off to read her friend's advice. She hoped it contained some answers.

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Hermione,

You are among the most ridiculous of my friends. It's right in your face but you are too blind to see it. I don't think I can really tell you what to do about the fight. This is something you have to figure out for yourself, and I hope you do it soon too. I have a bet with Harry on when you will finally wake up and smell the roses. I get out of dishes if you do it sooner rather than later.

I love you dearly,

Ginny

"Fat load of good that did. I'm actually more confused." Hermione grumbled.

...

Hermione decided the only thing she could do was suck it up and talk to him. Tomorrow. Tonight, she was going to crawl into bed with one of her favorite men. As Hermione drifted off after spending the night with Henry DeTamble, she had a strange vision of Severus striding toward her with an odd look in his eye. She chalked it up to staying up til 3:30 reading one of the ultimate love stories. She must remember that *The Time Traveler's Wife*, stress, and fatigue just don't mix. She contemplated dreamless sleep before deciding the vision was a freak occurrence.

Snake bite

Chapter 8 of 10

Hermione acts on her decision.

Hermione woke from a fitful sleep full of unrealized dreams. She tried desperately to remember some minute detail that might help her understand why, after nine hours of sleep, she still felt completely unrested. She chalked it up to her subconscious being utterly uncomfortable with the task she had assigned herself. Hermione, being the stubborn person she was, refused to listen to her subconscious and mulishly pushed aside any misgivings she might have. After eating the breakfast she had sent up to her, Hermione dressed and readied her nerves for the inevitable battle that surely awaited her in the dungeons.

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She bravely raised her hand to knock on the walnut door just as some loud, disconcerting noises were heard from the inside. Hermione's Gryffindor courage was derailed by fear of the Slytherin's bite.

On the other side of the door was a snake that had turned on itself. If Hermione had knocked on the door, she would have interrupted a perfectly good emotional flogging. Severus felt like a fool. They had been in a huge fight and he had given her a compliment. The Great Bat had actually dared to say something decent to another human being. It was ridiculous.

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The compliment to Sprout had not been about Sprout, but her gardens. The simple sentence that took such little thought had so strongly changed the dynamics between him and Hermione. As a 150-year-old chair was given a solid kick, he thought about the look on her face. It had been one of utter dismay. He had attempted to deliver an olive branch to one of the few souls in this forsaken place that didn't drive him to tears with their insipid conversations, and she could not believe it. Why had she come to dinner that night? Why had she come with Remus?

A Sudden Attack

Chapter 9 of 10

Someone is surprised. Someone is embarrassed. Someone is attacked.

Severus decided that he would not let a slip of a thing quell him. He ceased the destruction of his office and living quarters, straightened and repaired the remnants of his rage, and decided he was too old to let something as ridiculous as a fight keep him from his normal schedule. He would find the infuriating girl and get this business sorted out. Severus Snape was no coward and refused to become one. He was a man on a mission, and no one dared say a peep as he strode through the halls.

"Ms. Granger, we need to talk."

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Hermione found herself in a state of utter shock. Not two hours ago had her bravery turned tail when faced with confronting this man, yet here he was.

"Professor?" She was so surprised as to revert back to the young schoolgirl who was the epitome of proper.

"I will apologize for being so harsh in my dismissal, but I have my reasons for not wanting you in my lab, Hermione. Please understand." Severus was unaccustomed to begging and found that it left an uncomfortable sensation in his body.

"I realize I could have handled the situation better, but I promise to stay out of your way. I promise I won't use it very long."

"Silly girl!"

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"It's not that you would get in the way. I just can't have you there."

"Why not? If I am doing something, tell me and I will stop."

"Doubtful."

"Try me!"

Severus then fixed Hermione with an extremely perplexing stare. Just as she was about to look away, he grabbed her.

"This is why, damn it!"

Hermione found herself in the most passionate and searing kiss she or anyone else had ever experienced. Then it was over.

"I'm sorry."

Hermione hardly had time to regain coherent thought before her door slammed shut. She collapsed against the desk in a stupor.

Dishes Decided

Hermione thinks about a large fight that she and Severus had.

Hermione was in complete shock. Not only had Severus kissed her but she had also sincerely enjoyed it and wanted him to do it again. She knew Severus. He was most likely berating himself for behaving so unlike his stoic persona. After gathering her jaw from the floor, Hermione went to find the dark man. It had gotten late and there was hardly anyone about. She figured he would head to his haven. The stairs seemed steeper. Hallways were longer. Eventually she found herself at the door to his rooms. She knocked without hesitation or fear. "Fancy meeting you here."

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"Miss Granger." Severus was utterly shocked that she would so quickly come to rebuke him for his unwanted advances. "I must apologize. It was a mistake."

"Severus, stop."

His eyes were full of self-loathing. Hers were full of something he was unaccustomed to. No one had ever looked at him that way. Her hand slowly reached up and pulled his mouth down to meet hers.

"Don't ever apologize for that again." Once he realized what she meant, he fiercely pulled her to him.

Down the hall, Remus softly chuckled to himself. "Guess Harry will be doing dishes for a while."