

Yuletide Ball

by Corazon

Stand Here Please: Dumbledore/McGonaga II-type meddling to get an unsuspecting couple to stand under the mistletoe. HG/SS

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: It has been so long since I have written fan fiction, but I have a short one shot that will eventually be a part of a much longer story. A big thank you to my beta, Lady in the Cloak, who did a fabulous job!

I hope everyone enjoys this.

~Corazon

Yuletide Ball

With the fifth Yuletide Ball taking place after the end of the war, the excitement of the season was still evident, just as it was with the first ball. Couples were hand in hand as were several adults and relatives who attended the ball. It was open to not only the alumni of Hogwarts, but families as well. It was a time for celebration with family and friends.

As always, Professor Flitwick had outdone himself. The Great Hall was beautifully decorated with trees of various sizes and adorned with both animated and musical ornaments. The band was lovely as many danced the night away while others indulged in conversation. The professors were enjoying themselves by indulging in a few spirits, courtesy of the Professor Rikkus, the Potions master. He was capable of brewing nearly any drink requested by the staff, but applied a special incantation that prevented students from drinking it. This was the first Yuletide Ball he attended at Hogwarts and he offered the teachers each a specially brewed drink. They were simply delighted with the drink, but begged him not to tell Severus. The last thing they needed was the new Potions master to be challenged by the previous Potions master.

"Why not?" inquired Professor Rikkus. "I've already served Severus three drinks, so he clearly approves!"

Professor Flitwick glanced across the room at Severus in time to see him down the contents of his glass.

"Cheers," said Filius, raising his glass to Minerva and Sybil. The three toasted and enjoyed the festivities.

This year Hermione was attending her first Yuletide Ball as a professor. She was admiring the decorations of the Great Hall when Minerva approached.

"Hermione, you must try a drink!" squealed Minerva. She was quite giddy from the alcohol.

"No, thank you," Hermione politely responded, with an edge of snootiness.

"Come on, Hermione, just one drink. I promise you'll love it."

Holding her hand up, she politely said, "I'd rather not, Minerva." Because she was being a prude? Of course. She felt alcohol didn't have a place at a children's dance and said so. "We are at a student's dance, and I feel that as a professor, we should be setting an example for the students."

"Keep telling yourself that, dear," said Minerva as she finished her beverage and walked over to converse with Albus.

Hermione smiled and shook her head. On her list of New Year's Resolutions she vowed to be less of a prude and here, with only days left in the year, she began to realize the challenge ahead of her. *Maybe I could use a drink*, she told herself, but then she saw him, Severus Snape, lurking in the shadows. *Bastard*, she thought. He had made her life miserable as a student and not much had changed as a professor. One would think he would have softened up being the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, but no such luck. She glared at him, wondering if he received her Christmas present, and then she saw it..."Oh Merlin's pants!" she whispered under her breath. She wasn't sure what to do, but she had to do something.

"Shite!" she snapped loud enough for a few students to hear and then bee-lined straight to Professor Rikkus for a drink not a specialty drink, but a straight firewhiskey. That's what it would take to render the situation.

After a five-minute negotiation with Rikkus, he finally succumbed to her request for a simple firewhiskey. She slammed liquid and then made a gawd awful face as they burned her throat. Ordering two more, she slammed these, praying they would take effect immediately.

"Get a grip, Hermione, and just do it," she told herself. Closing her eyes and exhaling quickly, she squared her shoulders and stood proud. If it were anyone else, Hermione would jump to their aid, but this time it was Severus who needed help. She had stood in the shadows for nearly 30 minutes, analyzing the situation. The poor bastard needed help. Approaching the other professors for help was out of the question. They too had noticed Severus' situation and just laughed. Professor McGonagall was the worst.

Earlier Severus had been patrolling the corridors of Hogwarts for students who were snogging in dark corners and empty classrooms. With much displeasure of having to witness such atrocities, it did bring him pleasure to bring fear to the students, but tonight, as he stood in the hall glaring, the students' reactions had been anything but what he expected. The students were laughing at him, something they had never dared to do before. After taking house points away from the fifth couple for dancing too close, they laughed. He was so infuriated by their reactions that he decided to lurk in the shadows of the Great Hall. He signaled Rikkus and ordered a double. Severus' required attendance at the dance was his only obstacle to leaving.

Having given up on the other professors, Hermione realized that she had no choice but to do this herself. She straightened her robes and began walking slowly toward Severus. With each step she took in his direction, her vision blurred and her heart pounded. She felt like she was experiencing a scene for a horror Muggle movie because the distance between her and Severus seemed to increase. Shaking her head, she forced her vision to focus. Just as she was within feet of him, she bit her bottom lip, a nervous habit she had yet to break.

Her target, Snape, stood motionless against the wall, half hidden by the shadows cast from the flickering candlelight. His arms were crossed with his robes closed, around his body. His greasy black hair lay on his shoulders with several long strands hiding one eye. The expression on his face was that of pure disgust. If he couldn't spend the evening roaming the halls, corridors, and school grounds, blasting rose bushes apart along with blasting the doors to empty classrooms off the hinges, assigning detentions to students who were snogging and shagging, then what was the point?

But tonight he couldn't figure out why the students found his threats to be humorous. To make the situation worse, the know it all was approaching him and inwardly, he cringed. She was always confronting him, challenging him, questioning him. Why couldn't she just leave him alone? Her persistence only intensified the situation. He could flee or he could challenge her. After all, it had been three weeks since he had made her cry.

Hermione walked right up to him. Her arms were straight at her side with fists clenched. Taking a quick breath and releasing it, she forced a smile on her face that would not reveal her fear or insecurities, but he knew better. She looked as insecure as the first years, and this only added fuel to Severus' ambition of making her shed tears.

"Sir," she stated matter-of-factly, "there's something I've been meaning to tell you..." The only movement on his part was his black eyes, narrowing at her, causing her to stop in mid sentence.

His voice was rich with sarcasm as the words slowly rolled from his tongue, "Is that right, Professor Granger?" He raised a single eyebrow while he slightly tipped his head toward her. The corner of his mouth curled, just in the slightest, but it was clear anything that came out of her mouth would be used to his advantage.

Knowing she couldn't let her guard down, Hermione narrowed her eyes, crossed her arms, and glared back at him with all the intensity she could muster.

Holding her head up, she spoke again, "Sir, there is something I've been meaning to tell you..." He quickly held up a hand, silencing her.

"Your gift was inappropriate and there will be repercussions." Hermione blushed. "More often than not, such tasteless gifts are sent without being signed - such cowardliness. You signed the gift and I do respect that, but as I said, there will be repercussions."

"Well," she responded, blushing beyond control, "I felt it was the most appropriate gift and one that didn't cost me a single knut."

"If you hadn't been so courageous to have signed your name, I might have been angered at cleaning up the pile of mud with the stick in it." He leaned forward and whispered, "Repercussions."

"Bastard," she whispered, loud enough for him to hear. "You are a stick in the mud." He raised an eyebrow, smirking at her comment as he stood back up. "Severus." He glared at her for using his first name, but she didn't care. She was going to enjoy the situation, even though the solution turned her stomach.

"Severus," she said again, "You have been walking around most of the night with Mistletoe floating above your head."

If Hermione had not been watching so intently she would have missed his reaction fear. She saw the fear in his eyes, if only for a millisecond she saw it.

Severus's eyes slowly scanned the students and staff who were becoming more blatant in their snickering toward him. Noting Minerva and Albus' grins, he inwardly cringed, vowing to poison them in their sleep.

His eyes returned to Hermione, who was still looking at him, but he couldn't read her expression. So far she was the only one not using this situation to her advantage, or was she?

"Sir, as you know, Mistletoe will remain with you until you are kissed..."

"Granger," he said through gritted teeth, "I am not an imbecile. I am fully aware of the situation that I am in."

"Good, then you will understand, sir."

"Understand what?" he snapped.

Hermione stepped closer to him, quickly placed her hands on either side of his neck and pulled him toward her. Her lips claimed his, kind of. Her lips actually crushed his as she held him there for what seemed like minutes but was only seconds. With her lips on his, she looked into his eyes and got her second surprise of the night shock. His eyes could not hide the shock of her actions. After she heard a 'pop,' indicating the Mistletoe disappeared, she let go of him.

Stepping back, she raised a mock eyebrow to his along with letting the corner of her mouth curl. "Perhaps if you weren't such a stick in the mud, you would know a thing or two about kissing." Nodding politely to him, she turned and walked away.

Damn, I could have gotten a better reaction from kissing a wall she thought.

Severus stood there, motionless, as the students cringed and gagged. Minerva was gloating as Sprout and Flitwick paid up on their wagers to her and Albus.

Not knowing how to handle the situation, Severus stormed from the Great Hall, robes billowing behind him. Hermione, for once, held the upper hand. She asked Hagrid for a dance and enjoyed the rest of the evening.