

Valentine

by star_girl

Snape gets a Valentine...

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Chapter 1 of 1

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The dark-haired woman sighed, tearing the umpteenth parchment in two and throwing it dismissively into the waste paper bin at the side of her desk where it joined the many others. She flung her quill down with frustration, one hand on her temple. She was not a teenager, so why in the name of Merlin was she acting like one? With a flash of irritation she rose from her seat and stalked to her drinks cabinet, pouring herself a snifter of Ogden's.

Sometimes, she didn't know how she had the strength to go on, day after day, so near yet so far from the object of her affections. Yet that was the way it was, the way it had always been. It had been like that for years, at first as a pupil and now as a teacher.

She'd been three years younger than him when she started Hogwarts and had also been Sorted into Slytherin. She'd watched the older, brooding boy in her house with fascination, and saw him blossom from a gawky loner into a graceful young man. By the time he'd reached his seventh year, she was deeply in love. Of course, he wasn't even aware of her existence, having eyes only for the red-headed Gryffindor. Yes, that hadn't escaped her notice. Many times she watched him watching her, snakes of pure jealousy writhing in her stomach.

She downed the whiskey with a rueful smile. She was so young then, of course he wouldn't have looked twice at her. Yet her infatuation had continued as she'd grown older, and she'd kept a keen eye on his progress after Hogwarts. He had worked in an apothecary in Diagon Alley for a few years afterwards, whilst rumours of the unsavoury company he'd been keeping escalated. Some said he'd joined You-Know-Who himself. She took no notice of such whisperings. Who were these people to pass judgement? Plus, she had to admit the thrill of danger that surrounded him only added to his allure.

She'd visited him in the apothecary a few times, to buy bog-standard Potion supplies. He'd served her cordially, not recognising her. She would blush and stammer, fumbling with her Sickles, unable to meet his black gaze, afraid that if she looked directly into his eyes, she'd be sucked in like a vortex and would forever be unable to look away.

Then, there was news that the Muggle redhead and her husband had died, killed by You-Know-Who himself. *Good*, she'd thought. *Bloody Gryffindor deserved it.* The son lived; not that it was of great concern to her.

She'd aced her NEWTs easily, and had several job offers. She could have chosen any number of careers – Unplottable Cartographer, Auror Risk Assessment... There were many good and well-paid jobs out there that could have utilised her formidable numerical skills. In truth, the only reason she'd accepted the position at Hogwarts was because the man she loved from afar had taken a job there, too.

She was more than a little surprised to be offered the role by Dumbledore, as young as she was. He maintained that, after Octavian Agrippa's retirement, she was the only suitable candidate for the role.

And so, years later, here she was: Septima Vector, Professor of Arithmancy, thirty-two years old and attempting to write a childish Valentine's card to the only man she'd ever loved. *If it wasn't so tragic, I'd cry*, she thought with a self-pitying laugh.

The numbers never lied. His character was two; his heart was one. Her character was four, and her heart was eight. No matter how many times she rearranged the numbers, the results were always the same. They would not fit. She sighed again, and returned to her desk.

The next morning, Valentines Day, the Great Hall was filled with boisterous incessant chatter, the excitement from the girls almost tangible in lieu of the arrival of the post. Septima as usual sat near the end of the table, glancing at Snape occasionally as she pushed her scrambled eggs dully round her plate. She couldn't eat, even if she wanted to. *If only he'd look at me*, she thought. *He never even looks at me*.

Her thoughts were disturbed by the swooshing and flapping noise of many owls hurtling through the large oak doors. Pupils craned their necks as the owls circled, dropping cards and packages down on to the dining table and making the receivers grin with unabashed delight.

Septima's heart thudded with anticipation as a small tawny owl swept across to where Snape was sitting, delicately dropping a card onto his lap. Snape raised a characteristic sinister eyebrow of surprise, and she fought to keep her face neutral and the blush from rising up her cheeks as her other colleagues nudged and whispered to each other.

Snape held the card between finger and thumb as if covered in something unpleasant, his mouth curling into a sneer. He tore open the envelope disdainfully *He must think it's a joke, or from a pupil*, she thought, cringing with the shame. *How could I ever think this was a good idea?*

Snape saw the cover of the card had the symbol for infinity overlapped four times, to create a flower pattern. It was charmed to flash green and silver, giving the impression of the flower opening and closing. His face impassive, he opened the card and read:

Who am I to say who I am?

$x = y$

You are me.

$x^2 = xy$

You are part of each of us.

$x^2 - y^2 = xy - y^2$

And we are each less without each other.

$(x - y)(x + y) = y(x - y)$

But are we not each separate?

$x + y = y$

Look beyond, and we are the same.

$2y = y$

You will then see who I am.

$2 = 1$

Who are you to say who you are?

"Who's it from?" hissed Pamona Sprout from his right hand side.

"No idea," he replied, coldly and audibly, for the rest of the staff to hear. Finally, he turned his cold black eyes onto Septima, fixing her with an icy stare. "Vastly inappropriate, and barely worth the paper it's written on." He withdrew his wand and with a flick, it burst into flames. Moments later, only ash remained.

Septima lowered her eyes, blinking back tears. She was not going to cry in front of all these pupils. She was not! She barely noticed Snape excusing himself and gliding down the hall in a billow of black, such was the depth of her sorrow and mortification.

The numbers never lied. *Numbers. In my heart, there is only one.*

Author's note: This was a silly idea that popped into my head, so I decided to write it. I actually worked their numbers out using some random arithmancy calculator thing online, and turned out to be surprisingly accurate! (Septima should be seven given her name, but hey ho!) Results below:

One is the number of the individual, the solitary unit. Ones are independent, focused, and determined. They set a goal and stick to it. They are leaders and inventors. Ones find it difficult to work with others and don't like to take orders. They can be self-centred, egotistical, and domineering. They are often loners.

Two also introduces the idea of conflict, opposing forces, and the contrasting sides of things: night and day, good and evil. Twos can be withdrawn, moody, self-conscious and indecisive.

Four indicates stability and firmness, like a table that rests solidly on four legs. Fours enjoy hard work. They are practical, reliable and down to earth; they prefer logic and reason to flights of fancy. They are good at organization and getting things done. Like the cycle of the four seasons, they are also predictable. They can be stubborn, suspicious, overly practical and prone to angry outbursts. The conflicts possible in "two" are doubled in four.

Eight indicates the possibility of great success in business, finance, and politics. Eights are practical, ambitious, committed, and hard working. They can also be jealous, greedy, domineering, and power-hungry. Eight is said to be the most unpredictable of numbers and can indicate the pinnacle of success or the depths of failure; the potential to go either way is present from the beginning.

The poem is an actual mathematical poem, based on formula. It's called "Of Xs And Ys" by HK Norla. I think it's rather lovely.