

Job Qualifications

by Elisabeth

Hermione and Severus deal with a potential stalker. A series of drabbles originally written for the "Bodyguard" challenge on GS100. Many thanks to Melusin for beta reading.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Basic Disclaimer: JKR owns the stuff you recognize. No money is being made here.

I.

"This says that a properly trained bodyguard can fend off four unarmed attackers," she said. Her restless fingers tapped the laptop keys. The Muggle café buzzed around them.

"UN-armed? Consider me underwhelmed."

"Does rather miss the point, doesn't it? Oh, look: 'Essential Bodyguarding Skills'."

"Granger, why are you bombarding me with Internet trivia?"

"To annoy—erm, amuse you. And to kill time while we see what our friend across the street is up to. Another espresso?"

"No."

"Pity." More tapping. "'Bodyguarding requires excellent people skills—'"

"Granger, shut up."

"—Which is why you aren't one."

II.

"This is absurd." Severus set his cup down. (A third espresso, against his better judgment.) "The man isn't moving from that doorway."

"Not until we leave, he isn't."

"Granger, crushing as you might find this, he could be exactly what he seems—homeless."

She snorted at her laptop screen.

"You become more like Mad-Eye with every passing day," he noted.

"Thank you. It makes a nice counterpoint to your sunny nature, I find."

"I don't know why the Ministry sent you," he grumbled.

"Because I'm the best." Her smile was distracting, as always. "And you deserve the best, don't you?"

III.

He glared out the café window. Bugger it. She was right about the ragged man. He did look ... off.

Aloud, he said, "Have you Googled 'terminal boredom', yet?"

"Why? You're Exhibit A." She snapped the laptop shut. "You, Snape, are positively allergic to inaction. Amazing, really. Haven't you had enough excitement for one lifetime?"

"For two," he said quietly.

Her gaze faltered. "That was tactless," she said. "I'm sorry."

He looked away from her expression. "Stop wibbling, Granger," he said sharply.

A pause. "Right, then." She checked her glamour, reflected in the plate glass. "We might as well go."

IV.

It all happened very quickly. (As usual.)

The problem was not the man across the street, but the supermarket trolley beside him piled high with rags, plastic bags and a Disillusioned former Death Eater.

Snape had barely registered this when his breath left his body in an undignified woof. From his position on the pavement, securely tucked beneath Granger's shapely (don't notice!) bum, he felt rather than saw the curse whoosh harmlessly overhead.

"*Stupefy!*" Granger roared.

She continued roaring nearly nonstop with brief interruptions to secure Snape's attacker with state-of-the-art security charms and to Oblivate the Death Eater's unwitting host.

V.

In a nearby alley, he remembered to cast Muffliato and Do Not Notice, thank Merlin. What she lacked in profanity, she more than made up for in volume.

"You do NOT cross between me and a suspicious target, ever. EVER! Are you listening?"

He was listening. And looking. And remembering the feel of her astride him. (Stop remembering that.)

"You utterly exasperating ... pighead! For one last time: I. Am. The. Bodyguard!"

With every word, she lunged another step toward him, driving him backward. He hit a wall.

"Dammit!" she swore at last, yanking him down for a hungry kiss.

VI.

He waited on a bench outside Shackbolt's office, having given a rather circumspect account of the attack. The rest was his own damned business.

She emerged, shaking hands with Shackbolt, who beamed Ministerial approval. Snape rose. Granger's expression was uncharacteristically evasive.

"Coffee?" she asked as they left.

"Are you daft?"

"Drink, then."

"Better."

Over pints in the dim pub, her silences were notably long. For her.

"Sorry," she muttered into her glass. "The alley, I mean. Completely unprofessional."

She took a deep breath, giving him a direct look at last.

"I shall quite understand if you'd prefer a different bodyguard."

VII.

This had to be handled carefully, he saw. "I don't want one."

"Ridiculous. You're a prime target. You must have a bodyguard."

"My current bodyguard has impeccable qualifications," he clarified.

"Oh." She traced a pattern on the tabletop. "Such as?"

"Extensive combat experience. Superior judgment." He smirked. "Top-notch people skills."

"As if those matter."

"On the contrary." He covered her hand with his own. "They are ... crucial."

Much later, in her flat, she murmured against his ear, "Another qualification of mine: Willing to perform other duties to disguise true purpose of employment."

"What other duties?"

"I'll think of something."

Fin

Another A/N: Hermione paraphrased her tidbits about the bodyguarding profession from Kenneth Eichle's fascinating article, "The Training and Skills You Need to Become a Bodyguard," which can be read at www.articlesbase.com. The comment about fending off four unarmed attackers can be found at www.bodyguard-job.com.