

# The Maiden's Tale

by corianderpie

A bold prince lays claim to a fair maiden. Sort of.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Whose? Hers!

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The sky was lightening by the time Severus finished his long account of the hurts that drove his love for Lily and his embrace of the Dark Arts; his heartbroken rage, grief, and guilt; the shaping of his life and character towards revenge and restitution; the cracks that began to form in his defences when she became his friend and ally; his unwillingness to try for happiness; the terrifying flood of hope and joy that overtook him when they finally became lovers.

For some time Hermione intently studied their intertwined fingers as the totality of his soul-baring washed through her. She couldn't find any words, and she needed to find the right ones. His proud, wounded heart was in her hands.

Finally, she lifted her chin and smiled mischievously into his face, though her cheeks were still wet with tears.

'So. I am your prince. You are my maiden fair, imprisoned by dark enchantments. I like it.'

He gave her a reasonable facsimile of his old sour glare. 'I beg your pardon?'

'It's a common theme in Muggle fairy tales. A beautiful princess is captured by a dark magician or an evil fairy and pines away until a bold and handsome prince finds her and frees her and takes her away to be his queen.'

'Hermione. You are making no sense at all.'

'I am, though, I am!' She was laughing freely now. 'Okay, some of the details are off. The whole *fair* part.' She brushed a lock of his black hair away from his eyes. It promptly fell back down.

'And I *know*, no one better, that you are no maiden.' She leaned over to kiss the corner of his mouth. 'And you have done a great deal to fight your own way free. But I think the analogy holds.'

He leveled a deadpan look at her, then took her absurd metaphor to its absurd extreme: 'So if I understand you correctly, you are saying you want me to be your *queen*.'

Astonishingly, she didn't laugh at that. But her eyes shone into his with a light that could feed worlds. 'Yes. Yes I am.'

She seized his hand and pulled it to her chest, flattening it over her heart and piling both hers on top of it. 'Never be farther from me than this, Severus. Live with me. Marry

me, if you can bear it. But do stay with me forever. Be my queen. Rule my heart.'

This last she breathed into his mouth, rounding out her proposal with a kiss.