

# Tower

*by quaffswinegaily*

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## Protection

*Chapter 1 of 1*

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### *Tower*

Disclaimer: Ms Rowling should never let them out of her sight.

Severus could feel the heat radiating from Hermione's sweat-sheened skin as he moved closer. Her chest rose and fell with her laboured breathing. He was surprised, and delighted, she had come up the Tower with him.

Tenderly, he tucked an escaping wisp of hair behind her ear.

"Are you sure you want to do this, Hermione?"

"Yes." Her voice wavered with anxiety. "It's just further than I've ever been before. I'm way out of my comfort zone."

"If you want to take the next step, I'm with you all the way."

"What about—"

"I've got protection," he reassured her.

Turning away from him, she clutched the rough rock of the Tower, knuckles whitening. Moving behind her, his lean thighs pressed against hers.

Carefully, Severus slipped the straps over her small, red-slipped feet and slid them upwards. "Open your legs for me, so I can get in here."

Her breath hitched as his hands brushed her inner thigh.

"Is this the hardest part, Severus? The crux?"

"Yes. I have to screw—"

"Tight?" She needed to know.

"Yes, tight."

"And the rope?"

"You want a rope?"

"A tight rope. It's my first time, Severus."

He nodded. "Ready?"

"I feel so... exposed."

"Follow me, love."

"Oh gods, Severus, I'm going to go over the edge!"

"Come with me. Come on. Just a little bit further."

Watching his nimble fingers and lithe body move, Hermione followed his example, fingers gripping and legs shaking until, with muscles shuddering and screaming, she topped out.

Collapsing to the ground, her gasping breaths slowed gradually.

"I love you," Severus whispered into her tousled hair. "You're so brave."

"Do you do that with your students?" she asked shakily.

"All of them." He smirked.

"All of them? Bloody hell, Severus."

"Look, they're all waiting for us at the summit. Climbing Ben Nevis builds self-confidence. I have to add, you look very enticing in all that climbing hardware and helmet, Mrs Snape."

"Any more comments like that and you'll need more than climbing protection."

AN: Tower Ridge is a difficult route up Ben Nevis (Scotland's highest mountain), with a gap part way along which entails stepping across a large drop. Not hard, but very exposed.

Sunny33 is my beta, and she shares her wine gums with me. Thanks, sweetie.