

The Power of Positive Thinking

by Rose of the West

Luna Lovegood finds an unorthodox use for self-help books.

One-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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Headmaster Snape walked from the Restricted Area of the library and heard someone snickering. It sounded suspiciously like his Deputy Headmistress, so he followed the sound. Turning through one last stack of books, he discovered that indeed, Hermione Granger was laughing as she looked through a pile on a table.

"Sev, you've got to see these," she chortled. "*Chicken Soup for the Unmarried Woman, The Seven Habits of Highly-Effective Individuals, Fight Like a Girl and Win: Defense Decisions for Women?*"

He shook off his irritation that she had used Lily's nickname for him. It had been a few years since he'd given up asking her to stop shortening his name. "They're not yours?" he asked. "Whose are they?"

She shook her head. "Luna gets crazier all the time. My mother has this one." She held up *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

Snape had a premonition and took a step away from the table. "Perhaps you should put the books down and leave them alone, since they're not yours?"

"Definitely." The soft voice came from behind them, but it was less dreamy and firmer than usual. "Although," the dreaminess returned, "you might be interested in this one, or maybe this one?" She held out *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* and *Women Who Love Too Much: When You Keep Wishing and Hoping He'll Change*.

Hermione's eyes narrowed, and she pointedly turned and looked at Severus. "I'll have the revised Transfiguration schedule to you by the end of the day." She flounced off.

Snape glanced again at the spine of *Fight Like a Girl and Win* again. Perhaps there was some value to it. He considered her almost wordless riposte to be spot on, and it was certainly effective on Hermione. It was also a female sort of tactic. He realized that his newest staff member was listlessly stacking her books up. He cleared his throat.

"Is there a problem?"

"I never quite fit in. And can you explain why she left all the self-help books, but my copy of Borage's text is missing? Now I'll have to put together the sixth year lesson plan from memory."

"Did she take the Potions book?"

Luna shrugged. "It might have been anyone."

"Do you think these books will help you?" He caught sight of the title of one and swallowed hard. "Why don't we look through them in my office?" He helped her pick them

up and they went down the hallway.

"How did you manage it?" she asked. "You've always been an outsider, too."

She really did have an uncomfortable habit of bringing up the obvious things that should be left unsaid. He should point that out if he wanted to be helpful, or maybe he shouldn't. He never could tell in these sorts of situations. Would it be possible to pour himself a little whiskey before he got too far into this conversation? Would she notice, and if she did, would she be offended?

"Er, em, Miss Lovegood..." Maybe he shouldn't get involved. He didn't know anything about self-help, or female difficulties, or any of that damned sort of thing. He almost made a move to give her the books back and send her on her way. He made the mistake of looking at the top one and swallowed hard again. This time he had to lick his lips and realized his mouth was dry.

"It wouldn't bother me if you called me Luna, Severus." She fixed her blue eyes on his face, and suddenly he would call her anything she liked as long as she said his name that way. He frowned at the gargoyle, who whispered, "Debilitating Draught," out the corner of its mouth.

"Debilitating Draught," he said with the ring of authority. The gargoyle slid aside, although Snape could swear it rolled its eyes, and the pair in the hallway were soon the pair in the Headmaster's office.

Severus conjured a chair, which Luna transfigured into something more comfortable before sitting. He rounded his desk and sat in his own chair, trying hard not to think how comfortable she looked, nor how well the chair went with his office décor. He set the stack of books on the table and decided to go through them one by one. Before dropping the pile on his desk, he turned it over. He didn't want to start with *that* one.

"Ahem. All right then. What about *The Woman's Book of Confidence: Meditations for Strength and Inspiration*?"

"Well, it was okay, I guess. It had the same effect on me that a class with Trelawney did right after lunch.",

"It made you fall asleep?" He set it aside. Perhaps it had a value after all.

Next were *Fight Like a Girl and Win*, and *Men are From Mars*. He held them up. She wrinkled her nose. "I didn't like the way they seemed to keyhole men and women. I'm not really like the women in those books. Maybe that's my problem. Should I try to be like other women?"

"NO!" It was far too emphatic. He had to amend it. "That is, I hired you because you have a certain skill set, and it would be inappropriate to make significant changes that might impact your job performance." There, that contained a great many managerial words. It sounded professional.

"That *Chicken Soup* one was nice, but it wasn't particularly helpful. It seemed to want me to find a way to be happy with the way things are, but that's the problem."

He looked at *How to Win Friends and Women Who Love too Much*. "We'll put these in the staff room, shall we, unless you think the Gryffindor common room would be better?"

Her mouth made an O as she pondered his suggestion. "I didn't think...I thought you felt differently about Gryffindors," she said, skirting the issue in a non-Luna-like maneuver he found fascinating. Suddenly they were sharing a moment and that book was on top again. He slid it to the side and held up *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Individuals*.

"It's the second-best of the lot," she said, "except that it could be summed up in one run-on sentence: Decide what is most important, do everything you can to achieve it without letting other things distract you."

"Is that a principle that works?"

She turned her eyes on him again. "I hope so."

He looked at his desk, which seemed to be covered in books, with one left in the middle. He swallowed yet again and asked, weakly, "So the best of the lot?"

"*Legs of Steel*, yes. Would you like to see?"

"I...I have the book right..." his mouth and perhaps his whole head went dry as he saw that she had stood up and lifted her robe and skirt up over her knees so that he could see the effectiveness of the book. He turned around and looked out a window. He heard her sit back down in the chair he would re-conjure if it disappeared after she left.

After a long moment in which he was unable to collect his thoughts, Severus turned around and mumbled a spell at his desk. Within seconds the book collection was converted to a pile of ash. Then he thought to look at her, a question on his face. He saw amusement on hers.

"Oh, I don't mind. I think that was the best help of all."

He walked back around the desk. "Luna, I don't think you should read any more of those books. You're quite perfect as you are."

"Truly?"

"Truly." He didn't entirely understand the compulsion to lean down and kiss her, but he did it anyway. It was a successful experiment, so he put first one arm around her and then the other. During the next quarter-hour, he discovered that she must also have been reading a book called *Arms of Steel*. By tea time he knew that she was fully conversant in *Buns* and *Abs of Steel* as well.

Luna used Severus' copy of Borage's text to put together her sixth-year lesson plan. It had wonderful comments in the margins that made more interesting lessons, anyway. She handed it in to him the next morning as they brushed their teeth. As it happened, the self-help books had done quite a lot for her.

A/N: Thank you, MuseAmusant, for the Saturday Night Drabble prompt, "Luna, sick and tired of never being taken seriously, decides to use a Muggle self-help book in an attempt to shed her 'Looney' persona. But someone else thinks she's perfect just as she is."

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