

# One Small Word

by Pennfana

Viktor teaches himself how to say a word he's always had trouble with. (Canon-compliant through most of DH, but disregards the epilogue.)

## One Small Word

Chapter 1 of 1

Viktor teaches himself how to say a word he's always had trouble with. (Canon-compliant through most of DH, but disregards the epilogue.)

Viktor Krum sat in a comfy chair reading Hermione's latest letter to him. Although they had been corresponding on and off since the end of the war, their letters had gradually become more frequent since she and her husband had divorced. Ron Weasley's jealousy and insecurity had prevented more than a slightly distant friendship, and Viktor found it particularly difficult to forgive the other man for his determination to turn them into strangers. It was harder still to forgive Weasley for his partial success.

That said, he did not in any way blame Hermione for it; after all, when her husband had started to feel jealous, it was unsurprising that she'd sacrificed part of her friendship with Viktor to keep the peace. No, he was quite thankful that she'd been determined to keep in touch with him at all, even if her letters had taken on a certain amount of distance in the past few years. But that was over with now, and Viktor had to admit that he was more than a little pleased that they were corresponding regularly again. In her most recent letter she had indicated that she'd like to see him in person sometime soon. The idea was more than a little appealing.

Mind, as his own marriage had ended a bit less than a year ago, as tempting as the idea was he was in no hurry to court Hermione—no, not yet. For now, he was enjoying the process of getting to know her again.

She'd sent him a photograph this time. She was wearing deep blue robes that suited her complexion; her unpredictable hair was being ruffled by a passing breeze. Smiling, her image winked at him and blew him a kiss in an endless loop that he found at once slightly irritating and wholly endearing. The years since the end of the war had been relatively kind to her, the end of her marriage notwithstanding; she had been a pretty girl, but with age she had become a truly beautiful woman, now as attractive for her looks as she had already been for her loyalty, her kindness and her intelligence.

He shook his head, smiling slightly. *All right, so perhaps my feelings for her are deeper than I have admitted* it was certainly a possibility. Their prior association had left him with a lot of good memories, and he hadn't been exaggerating when he'd told her that his feelings for her back then had been special. He was certain that he could feel that way about her again, given the proper encouragement.

He smiled wryly. *But if I am so fond of her, perhaps I should learn to pronounce her name correctly; I know it hurts her when I mispronounce it* He remembered the sequence of sounds well enough—after all, he was Bulgarian, not stupid—and it was so very frustrating that his mouth somehow refused to make her name sound as it did in his mind!

He drew a deep breath and made his first attempt. "Herm-own-ninny."

No, that wasn't right. She hated it when he pronounced her name precisely like that, and that it had been his habit to do so ever since they'd known each other had been frustrating to both of them.

"Herm-een-ion-innie".

He winced. That was much worse. She'd hex him for sure if she ever heard him pronouncing her name that way. *This is obviously not working*, he thought. *Perhaps if I break her name down into syllables and get used to saying them I will have more success.*

Herm. Ai. Oh. Nee. How difficult could it be if he practiced them enough?

"Herm."

Good start.

"Herm-mai."

So far, so good.

"Her-my-own."

The corners of his mouth twitched into a brief smile. He liked the sound of that one! Just to savour the warm feeling of the three syllables, he said it several more times.

"Her-my-own. Her-my-own. Her-my-own."

Yes, that was the way. Just one more syllable now. He took a deep breath and slowly said:

"Her-my-own-ee."

Yes! That was it! A smile—a full-out grin, really—spread across his face. "Hermione," he said, relishing the feel of her odd-sounding name on his lips. "Hermione. Her-my-own-ee."

Looking at the photograph, he realized that the flirtatiousness of the image was giving him a very warm feeling indeed; perhaps he would start courting her sooner than he had intended. Moving over to his desk, he sat down and picked up a quill and a fresh piece of parchment.

"Dear Hermione," he wrote,

*I would be very happy to meet with you in person. It has been far too long. Just name the day, and I will visit you. I have a surprise for you that I think you will appreciate.*

*Regards,*

*Viktor*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Author's Notes:** For Kyria. Best wishes for a speedy recovery!

I based Viktor's process on something I've done a time or two myself when trying to pick up a word in another language. (I speak a bit of French and Italian, though admittedly not as well as I'd like to.) When I can't seem to get the sound quite right, I break the word down into syllables and gradually train myself to say the word the right way.