

Dancing in Minefields

by lady_rhian

"We danced in minefields."

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I'm just playing with JKR's toys, and I solemnly swear to put them back where I found them.

A/N: This varied and somewhat disjointed ficlet incorporates hpcon_envy and birthday prompts from sc010f (Scoffy), morethansirius, gilded_glamour, keladry_lupin, ayerf, Bambu, and geminiscorp.

My thanks to machshefa and tonksinger for alpha reading and, as always, to sshg316 (Shug) for beta reading. The title is shamelessly nicked from my current favorite song, "Dancing in the Minefields" by Andrew Peterson.

Hugo

Here are the latest additions to the collection for Mum and Severus. Please send me your notes as well as your thoughts on the organization and other themes we could explore. They're so private when it comes to serious matters any ideas on how to coerce more details out of them? It's their thirtieth anniversary, and I really want this to be at least somewhat representative of their years together. I'm meeting with Harry tomorrow to get some more material. He says he has a few pictures of them from when they were still dating, and one of them even has us in it.

By the way, Scorpius is wondering when you two are going to the Cannons game. Do owl him soon. Our children have more patience than he does.

I

Interview with Rose for her Newt-level Muggle Studies project on oral history December 28, 2021

S: We met in a very boring way, I'm afraid.

H: Severus.

S: People like to gossip about how she was my apprentice or co-conspirator they even suggest we were involved when she was a student, which as we all know is positively rid-

H: *Severus*.

S: IKEA.

H: Severus?

S: We met at IKEA, Hermione. You seem awfully keen on getting me off the subject of how you didn't find my buttons fascinating when you were a student.

H: He's obsessed with his buttons. And we did not meet at IKEA. I was assembling a piece of IKEA furniture at Harry's

S: Trying. Trying to assemble a piece of furniture.

H: That's what I said

S: For all that your mother likes to do things the Muggle way, Rose, she's absolute shite at reading directions

H: Don't listen to him, Rose.

R: I've seen you in action, Mum. He's quite right.

S: So your mother is trying to assemble this what was it?

H: Entertainment center. A storage unit for the telly and DVDs.

S: I have no idea why she was trying to do this by herself.

H: Because Harry is worse with tools than I am.

S: And I went to Harry's flat

H: We should talk about those coffee dates you two had.

S: You make it sound undignified.

H: If the shoe fits

S: So I arrived at Harold's flat

H: Since when do we call him Harold?

S: And he's busy establishing his habit of drinking terrible Muggle beer while your mother is sitting on the floor, tools around her with pieces of the entertainment center scattered about, wearing a most, erm

H: You're talking to our daughter. Please censor.

S: Censoring.

H: I looked good that day. Very sweaty.

R: Mum!

H: Well, I did!

S: Your mother always looks fetching, and that day was no different.

H: So he asked me out.

S: I did not invite you to dinner merely because you looked fetching. Rita Skeeter, in the appropriate attire, looks fetching.

H: I I'm not even going to dignify that with a reply.

S: Your mother was obviously confused, and so I assisted her.

R: You're a handyman.

S: I can use a toolkit and follow directions, which is more than Hermione can say.

H: What's that saying if you don't find me handsome, at least you find me handy? Oh, don't pout. You know I find you handsome, if not entirely agreeable

S: I assembled the entertainment center single-handedly. Your mother tried to help. It was very amusing.

H: I did help!

S: You bent over. It was a motivating factor.

R: I do not need to know about that.

S: My apologies. Suffice it to say, your mother and I argued fervently, and it was most invigorating, and since you and your brother were with your grandparents for the evening, I decided to invite your mother to dinner, with no ulterior motives at all, of course.

H: Absolutely none.

S: So you see, the gossip is utter nonsense. I went to see your Uncle Harry and ended up helping your mum, and then we argued all of the way through dinner and

H: Ended up together.

S: Precisely.

II

From Severus' personal notes

The most vivid memory from our honeymoon in Japan is of that damn picnic beneath the cherry blossoms. Hermione had never been to Japan, and she was enchanted by the cherry trees. After hours of searching, we found a grove that met her standards on some island near Osaka Bay, so we had a picnic in May under blooming cherry trees. She was as giddy as a first-year the entire time; I recall asking if thirty-year-old Hermione was ready to join the conversation, though I was more than happy to indulge her. I must admit, it was enchanting *she* was enchanting, sipping wine and eating cheese and crackers in the early summer sunshine, feet dangling dangerously

close to the cool water. Magic could not have added to that afternoon.

Later, I discovered that *hanami* is a Japanese custom whereby people will indulge in outdoor parties and picnics in order to admire the *sakura* the flowers, which, at that time of year, are practically synonymous with the cherry blossoms. Leave it to your mother to intuitively follow a custom she's never even heard of.

III

A letter from Ginny Potter to Rose Malfoy, January 2, 2040

Dear Rose,

I'm excited about your collection, and I agree that telling Hermione and Severus that you're collecting memories for the other's birthday is the best way of soliciting notes and letters from them they're so private, and I don't think Severus would share anything that he thought would even possibly be public, even if it's being compiled by you or your brother so yes, this is the best route, I think. And as much as I'd love to see the results, I understand that you want this to be for their eyes only. It's a beautiful gift.

So, to answering your questions. What was my reaction when they announced their engagement? Shock. I shouldn't have been shocked, as they'd dated for several years and Severus had already proposed three times, but still. I was shocked that Hermione had softened enough to agree to marriage the irony of it, we all thought, that a relationship with Severus Snape would soften her! And still more shocking that he was so persistent and, frankly, so sure of himself. It was that he was assured of her fidelity and love, I think, that he kept proposing he knew her reticence wasn't because of him. He understood her, understands her still, perhaps knows her insecurities better than even she does. They were committed for life, beyond the shadow of a doubt, even a year into their relationship. But her wounds from your father, the media storms around any "warrior weddings," her doubts about the institution of marriage all these compiled to make her opposed to the idea. And Severus knew that, and still he persisted. He's got a romantic streak a mile wide running up and down his back, and his affection for her brought it out for the world to see, though none of us dared tell him that.

But you also asked what was in the long term the greatest surprise? Frankly? Severus' deep and abiding love for you and your brother. Your father has been well, a subpar parent, to put it kindly, which has also surprised many of us but no matter. Even before your father moved to America, Severus was devoted to you and Hugo. You were oh, six? when they got married yes, six and Hugo was four, and Severus doted, positively *doted* on you both. It was so strange, as you got older, to see these children with Weasley coloring and even a few Weasley mannerisms, who would say things that would give Severus Snape a run for his money. And especially now that you are adults, Hugo is, in looks, all Weasley but in essence, all Snape. You are your mother's daughter through and through though you do reflect your stepfather from time to time. I hate calling him your stepfather. Severus is the truest and best father you and Hugo have known.

I've rambled (predictably) so let me know what other details, memories, or paraphernalia you're interested in collecting.

-Ginny

IV

From Hermione's personal notes

My favorite of Severus' birthdays was when I took him to Sweden. We had the most divine Turkish coffee oh, I know how it sounds. Authentic Turkish coffee in Scandinavia? But there was a lovely woman, Mrs. Reza, who owned a dive of a restaurant, and she served us the most luscious coffee I have ever had the pleasure of tasting. It was thick, dark, heady. Rich. And she even gave us a small dish of truffles you'd place the truffle at the bottom of the cup and pour the coffee over it, so the truffle would melt in the coffee. Divine, it was positively divine, and Severus and I frequented her shop until she passed on.

That particular morning, we had consumed almost an entire pot of Turkish coffee and were in the midst of bickering as to who would get the last cup. Even though he was turning 52, and was a bit sensitive about his age, and even though it was his first birthday we were celebrating as a married couple, I was not about to go down without a fight. I told him he'd have to start watching his coffee intake now that he was older, and he reminded me about wizarding lifespans, and I'm sure we said all manner of ridiculous things in an effort to convince the other to let us have the last cup of Mrs. Reza's delectable coffee. Fighting irrationality with rationality is really quite entertaining.

At some point during that debate, his owl decided to deposit a copy of the *Prophet* in his lap, and what was on the front cover but Rita Skeeter's review of my first book. I had only edited the collection of essays, but she spent an obscene amount of time talking about my personal life my scandalous divorce and "quicky" marriage to my former professor. There were three years between those two events, so I'd like to know what her definition of "quicky" is, but that's beside the point. I was furious that the substance of the collection had been overlooked. It had beautiful essays from Minerva and Kingsley, for example, essays from a generation even older than Severus' that had seen far more than we had in a lifetime, a generation that had witnessed many wars, Muggle and magical. The press focused so much on my friends and I that I wanted to give proper attention to those whose wisdom we had gleaned. And I was upset that they had been overlooked, and upset that they'd let Skeeter write the review, and upset that it had been released on Severus' birthday, and upset that I was upset on Severus' birthday.

Severus did the only reasonable thing. He poured me the rest of the pot of Turkish coffee and slid the dish of truffles over to my side of the table. Then he reached across the table and wiped my eyes and said something I cannot repeat in polite company about Rita Skeeter, and he also went on about how lovely my bosom looked in the top I was wearing. Really, the man has hardly any attention span at all.

Mrs. Reza passed on a few years ago, and in her will, she left Severus and me the recipe for her Turkish coffee and truffles. We make it every year on his birthday. And on our anniversary. And on my birthday. It's too delicious to not drink on special days of the year.

V

From Rose's notes

I remember the day I heard a scream from Mum and Severus' bedroom. I was maybe fifteen or sixteen years old, and I thought it was just Mum and me in the house, so I ran as fast as I could to their room, because it sounded like she was in pain. Just as I was approaching their room, Severus Apparated directly in front of me with a fierce look on his face and, gesturing for me to stay in the hall, strode into the bedroom, where I heard him shout *Riddikulus!* It took a moment for me to realize that Mum must have seen a Boggart. All I heard then was Severus murmuring something indistinguishable to Mum, and she was crying. I tip toed to the door and peeked in, and I saw Mum in perhaps the most vulnerable position I have ever seen her. She was curled up in a ball on the floor like a baby, and Severus had curled his body around her and was stroking her back, lying face to face on the floor, comforting her. After a moment or two, she twined her limbs around him like she was a Devil's Snare determined to catch something, and it was then that the door thudded shut. Severus must have seen me.

I walked back down the hall to my room, very shaken and a little hurt that Severus hadn't let me come in. To this day, I don't know what she saw, but now, having Scorpius, I have come to realize why I was pushed away. There are things between a husband and wife that are unbreachable, sometimes unspeakable, things that are only for the two of you.

VI

Excerpt from a letter from Hermione Granger Snape to Rose Malfoy, December 23, 2039

We danced in minefields... and eventually we danced in fields that saw the occasional thunderstorm.

But the point is we danced.

Those are the only additions I have for now (and I'm not sure about including the memory of the Boggart) what would you think about labeling the collection "Dancing in Minefields?" Seems like an apt description. But just a thought.

-Rose

A/N: My thanks to those who offered such delectable prompts:

Scoffy: SSHG and a summer picnic.

morethansirius: There's one cup of coffee left in the pot, no beans in the pantry and not a house-elf to be found. Who gets the last cup and why?

gilded_glamour: SSHG, the ocean, the colour red and cherry blossoms.

keladry_lupin: May I have some frustrating, assembly-required thing (possibly from IKEA) and Severus and/or Hermione, please?

ayerf: Severus, Hermione, and a Boggart.

Bambu: I'd really like to see Severus or Hermione's reactions to the reviews for their spouse's first book.

geminiscorp: The perfect cup of coffee - where, how, and why?

The description of how Severus and Hermione take their Turkish coffee is drawn from real life. I am forever indebted to the friend who fixed a cup of coffee for me as his family did in Iran, complete with the truffle at the bottom.