

Grey Socks, or Show Me

by Savva

This story was written for the Granger Enchanted Valentine's Day challenge. Prompt - his curse, his compulsions led him to her, the witch who made life into a song. Starring Remus Lupin, Hermione Granger, grey socks and a bar stool. DH ignored.

I do not own Harry Potter or any of its characters; J. K. Rowling does. In addition, I do not make any profit from this fanfiction.

Enormous thanks to Gloriox for brilliant editing and artful enhancing of my little story.

VDay

Chapter 1 of 1

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Grey Socks, or Show Me

Don't talk of June, don't talk of fall, don't talk at all, show me! ('Show Me'/My Fair Lady)

Remus Lupin, sitting on the bar stool in Hermione's kitchen, felt himself utterly inadequate and downright uncomfortable. There were a few reasons for this, or, to be precise, there were a few specific aspects of the situation which troubled Moony. These aspects (or problems, if you will) could be distinctly classified according to the level of discomfort they caused, into three ranks: huge, embarrassing and just plain, freaking annoying.

So, let's take a closer look at these pesky problems and their ensuing classification, shall we?

Firstly, this damned, oh-so-fashionable bar stool on which poor Remus sat, was unusually tall and uncomfortable. His skinny...ahem...well, lean and muscled arse kept

sliding off it, and that was highly annoying. This was, therefore, the first factor in Remus' discomfort today, ranked accordingly, as a freaking annoying one.

The next problem was classified as the embarrassing one, or, as Remus insisted, 'a quite embarrassing one'. The same stool (you have, I hope, identified the villain in this tale by now), due to its unusual, modern shape, caused Remus' trousers to ride up, and in turn revealed his socks to whoever cared to look. Remus was somewhat shy and embarrassed of them. They were just an ordinary pair of socks. Nothing to be ashamed of really. However, in Remus' eyes they looked hideous. Here, my friends, you need to visualize in order to be able to grasp the extent of the tragedy...they were grey; absolutely, plainly, inelegantly, ungracefully grey. Everything, everything about them was embarrassing. Simply said, they were not the socks a proper man would allow to be shown when ladies were present.

And yes, the ladies... This brings us to the third, primary and positively huge problem causing our beloved former Professor Lupin discomfort today. It was February 14, also known as, well, you know, the holiday most feared by those unfortunate souls who weren't lucky enough to find a date or, even worse, who managed entirely, completely and totally to forget about the whole thing. To cut a long story short...it was Valentine's Day, and Hermione didn't have a date. She was thus superlatively irritated.

If you asked me now how our always so careful, thoughtful, everything-remembering Remus had ended up in Hermione's kitchen on the evening of Valentine's Day, I would have to say it was a historical mystery, the answer to which was unknown to even Moony himself. One thing, however, was clear. Remus Lupin was doomed. He was sitting in the kitchen of the extremely irritated and highly volatile witch, with his trousers ridden up almost to his knees, his grey socks already making his eyes hurt and his knuckles aching from the constant convulsing on the edge of that bloody bar stool.

Doomed! That was the only thought on Moony's mind. It flashed there in different neon colours, assuming gradually darker and darker shades as Hermione's voice crept higher, reaching for a crescendo.

Hermione fumed with fury. She was livid and, therefore, even chattier than usual. The enraged witch demanded his undivided attention to her constant rambling. She wasn't simply ranting, no...she was conversing with her former Professor and friend of many years. Periodically, she asked questions, insisting on the answers.

Torture, it was torture.

Remus loved Hermione with all his heart, and it was quite difficult for him to see her so deeply distressed. It had already been over two hours, and two full pots of Earl Grey, and she still didn't show any signs of calming down. It looked as though Hermione was going to take account of each and every unfortunate encounter with the opposite sex in all of her twenty six years of living.

And at this moment she was still dealing with the time when she was only about fourteen.

Remus breathed a heavy sigh, looking at his grey socks with disgust. He was displeased with himself...how could he forget about Valentine's Day? While he would never dream of Hermione being his date, he could at least have brought something with him like flowers, a little chocolate cake or some of those delightful, chocolate-dipped drunken cherries. Moony swallowed wistfully.

Suddenly, and with horror, Remus became aware of the not-so-subtle signs of another incipient aspect of his terrible predicament. His bladder began to display the effects of the amount of tea he had consumed. Although, as of this moment, this particular problem still ranked somewhere in the freaking annoying level, Remus had a nagging suspicion that, after one more hour and one more pot of tea, it would undoubtedly move up into the company of the quite embarrassing ones. Actually, it might happen much sooner. Remus panicked.

Bugger!

"Did you hear me, Remus?" Hermione's irritated rambling reached his ears. "Liars, all of them! They all are just a bunch of sweet talking liars. They don't like me; they don't appreciate me; they don't even remember me. Well, obviously," chuckled the witch bitterly.

"Hermione, you are brilliant, smart, clever... blah, blah, blah," she continued mockingly and angrily. "Hermione, you are our only star, our only friend, our only love! Please, Hermione, dear, could you please do this for me? And Hermione, you are my only hope, could you please help me with that? And, please darling, could you arrange this for me?"

At this point, the girl was imitating her friends and co-workers. She had done it quite brilliantly, and Remus could unmistakably recognise Harry, Ron, Kingsley and even, with apprehension, himself.

"Bollocks! I hate them!" The loud shout forced Remus to jump on his bar stool, to which, surprisingly, he was almost getting used to by now.

"Hermione, please calm down," breathed her former Professor, after he had slid his rear, deeply, firmly and securely onto the stool again.

At this, Hermione looked at him thoughtfully, her brown eyes searching for something in his for a few seconds. Then she sighed. "Sure. I am sorry, Remus. More tea?" she said as she hurriedly stood up and walked to the kettle, trying to hide the few stray tears that appeared in the corners of her eyes. Remus of course, did not fail to notice them.

Silently cursing himself and his damn bladder, he decided to make the most of the moment and darted to the loo, muttering, "Excuse me, I'll be back in a minute."

When, after a minute (make it three...there had been two full pots of tea, after all) he was back in the kitchen, the atmosphere had changed quite significantly, and not for the better. Two teacups of Earl Grey stood on the table, along with a massive mane of wild, chocolate curls, from underneath which came gurgling and sobbing sounds.

The girl was crying. Hermione, brilliant, beautiful, witty Hermione was crying on her kitchen table on Valentine's Day, and he, good for nothing, old werewolf, couldn't do a thing. Remus growled in distress. It was ridiculous, stupid and ridiculous!

Remus drew two calming breaths, put his hand carefully on Hermione's luscious curls and murmured, "Hermione, dear, please calm down. You are wonderful, young, witty, and beautiful. We all love you and..."

"Blighers! Words! Empty words! I am so sick of them! Why don't you show me?"

The witch turned her tear-streaked face towards him, locked her almost amber eyes on his and asked, "You! Why haven't you ever ask me out, Remus? Why? Do you think that I am beautiful? Do you think that I am witty? Do you love me?" Her amber eyes sought the answer in his.

Caught by surprise, Remus hesitated for a moment, and that was enough for Hermione. She sighed and whispered, "Precisely. I think you need to go home, Remus. I have tortured you for long enough today. You've been a good friend. Thank you." And then the young witch put her head back on her arms.

Remus froze. His hand on Hermione's curls was still automatically smoothing them. For a long few minutes, our Marauder could not believe his ears. Then, when he quit doubting his ears, he began to doubt his luck. Could it be? Had she truly asked this of him? Finally, when his oh-so-doubtful mind was overwhelmed by pure joy, which the rest of his body had already been celebrating for the full one hundred and twenty three seconds, he sprang to life.

"Hermione!" he exclaimed as he lifted the sly witch from the stool, turning and shifting her until she was gathered in his arms and facing him, her eyes once more full of tears. She gazed at him with distrust.

"Did you mean that, witch? I would never even dare to think about us together. Did you li..." Remus stopped, afraid to say it aloud, remembering his awful grey socks, his skinny arse, his age, his terrible curse...everything. Then, despite it all, he continued, simply because he just had to know now. He would never rest if he did not ask. "Do you honestly consider me as a... as a..." Unable to find the right word, he fell into silence.

The witty witch in his arms, however, wasn't having any of this. Her eyes were alight. A happy, teasing smile appeared on her delicious lips. Her playful hands sneaked around his neck and hugged him tightly, and she finished the phrase for him. "As a date, as a beau, as a lover? Oh, yes, you silly werewolf, for many years. I not only considered you, I wanted you, dreamed about you, waited for you to come round."

As you can probably imagine, this passionate confession was quite enough for Remus to forget everything. Well, almost everything (you do realize that his inelegant grey socks still bothered him immensely). He launched himself on the delicious, plump, pink lips that fate had so unexpectedly allowed him to take, at the same time depositing his precious witch on the counter top.

Our freshly baked couple spent a fair amount of time in fiery and passionate kissing, exploring, investigating, researching and even mastering a number of different techniques and takes. But, as you and I know, kissing is never enough, and, therefore, when the time came, our hero-lover gathered Hermione in his arms once more, and they began their journey to where an optimal, horizontal position could be achieved more easily...the bedroom.

The last words heard from the moaning, growling, panting and grunting couple were Hermione's softly spoken, "Remus, I hope you will not be disappointed, but these socks have to go. They are truly horrendous."

Remus' answering moan couldn't strictly be considered a disappointed, unless... nah, it certainly wasn't a disappointed sound.