

Rapunzel

by DawnEB

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Snape shifted uneasily as he stood in the shadow of the tower. Three storeys up he could see the play of light and shadows against the chamber window where his *fair damsel* waited. He swallowed hard. Even Voldemort hadn't subjected him to activities as potentially humiliating as this, although Dumbledore had come close. Snape shuddered as he recalled the time--no, best not to go there.

Throwing a handful of gravel at the glass with a flick of his wand, he remembered just in time to erect an umbrella spell over himself just as the tiny missiles hurtled back down to earth. Meanwhile, the window above flooded with light as the curtains were thrown open. Snape waited. The window remained shut, but he thought he saw some kind of activity inside. Just as he wondered for the umpteenth time why he was doing this, a high pitched squeal of tortured metal echoed around the courtyard, followed by a number of thuds and the muffled sounds of a voice.

"Bloody frame... should have checked earlier... words with Filch... better be worth it, that's all I can say..."

'*Ah, the dulcet tones of my Lady Fair!*' Snape smirked at the thought, but became sober again as Hermione leaned far out of the window.

"*Psst*, that you, Severus? Damn, are you still out there?" Severus stepped away from the shadow of the wall into the light cast from the window to look up at Hermione. Her cheeks were flushed and her hair was as unruly as ever following the effort she'd had to put into getting the casement open for the first time in probably fifty years. Snape's eyes dropped to take in the rest of her as she leaned on the windowsill and was drawn to comment.

"If you lean over any further, my dear, you'll fall out." Hermione was just about to comment about the wards not allowing anyone to fall from upper windows when she noticed where her man's eyes were fixed on the low cut front of her gown. To his evident disappointment and her secret glee, Hermione leaned back a little and tugged her décolletage a little higher.

"Enough of that, Severus. You'll get your reward once you complete the terms of the challenge." She could see the subtle signs that indicated Severus was working himself up to an argument, so she changed tack and started running her fingertips across the bare skin above the neckline of her dress. "You know, I've been using that almond soap you made for me. It leaves my skin so smooth and supple, but the gentle scrub of the ground nuts leaves me so invigorated and ... ssssensssitive."

Hermione could hear the involuntary groan from her *dark swain* as she extended the sibilants of the last word and fought to keep a triumphant smirk from her face. She knew that she could only push him so far before he retreated back into his protectively snarky shell, but if she could get him to go through with this, she would have made a huge leap forward in her efforts to desensitise the man. Snape Taming is what Tonks had called it, a series of punishments and rewards designed to help modify his behaviour.

Tonks and Remus had been willing confidants, providing her with insights into some of the things that had made Snape the man he was, and suggesting ways to change him just enough to make him a barely more tractable companion. The particulars of the current challenge had been suggested by them. Following an outburst at the Burrow

when he'd come to collect her following Fleur's latest addition to the Weasley clan, Hermione demanded that Severus had to serenade her in order to get back in her good books. His eyes had been the only give-away when she'd issued the challenge; they had widened perceptibly before a slow tic became evident. Hermione reasoned with him that it could be arranged so that he was unlikely to be seen or heard, but it was only when she started to make up a bed on the couch that Severus finally spoke up saying, fine, if that was what it took, he'd do the damned thing for her.

Which is why they were here now. After a quick glance around to make sure no one was nearby Severus looked up at Hermione and began to sing.

Looking from a window above it's like a story of love

Can you hear me?

Came back only yesterday I'm moving further away

Want you near me

All I needed was the love you gave

All I needed for another day

And all I ever knew

Only you

Hermione had never heard Severus sing, and was surprised not only at the richness of his voice-*had he been practising somewhere?*-but also by the song. Who knew he'd even heard of Yazoo? She let herself get carried away as she stared down into the dark pools of her lover's eyes. Everything else faded away except his voice.

This is going to take a long time and I wonder what's mine

Can't take no more

Wonder if you'll understand it's just the touch of your hand

Behind a closed door

All I needed was the love you gave

All I needed for another day

And all I ever knew

Only you

All I needed was the love you gave

All I needed for another day

And all I ever knew

Only you

As the last words faded away, Hermione could feel the real world creeping back in, and drawing her attention away from his eyes, she saw that Severus had that secret smile on his face, the one that she knew no one ever saw but her. He was still an intensely private and prickly man, but he proved time and time again there was nothing he wouldn't do for her. Hermione resolved in that moment not to test his love anymore, but to accept that this was the man she loved, come what may. She stretched out an arm towards him and whispered, "*Severus...*"

Just then there was a loud clattering as something invisible tripped over one of the tubs of ornamental plants that were dotted around the courtyard. Snape whipped around, his wand at the ready to ward off this unknown assailant. Before he could hex the intruder, a swathe of silvery fabric appeared as it was hastily folded, revealing the two people who had evidently been hiding under the Invisibility Cloak. One of them waved cheekily to Hermione in the window.

"Wotcher, `Mione!" Tonks turned to Snape. "Severus Snape, put down your wand. I identify myself to you as an Auror, and you are hereby taken into custody for the crime of being beneath an unmarried witch's window and serenading and/or using fair words of seduction to tempt said witch into acts of disobedience and/or licentiousness. You do not have to say anything, but be advised that the witness memories may be put into a Pensieve and given up for public perusal should this be brought before the Court." Hermione stared down at her supposed friends. Severus was building up into one of his infamous temper tantrums.

"The Rapunzel Law?" he spat. "You're using a three hundred year old act of spite by an embittered old Hag who couldn't even hold onto her own apprentice against me? If you think--*mmmph!*" A flick of her wand had Snape bound and gagged before Tonks floated him off in her wake as she walked towards the front of the castle. Hermione gaped after them and just heard Tonk's gleeful "*None of that, Snapey, the Law is the Law after all!*" as they disappeared from view through the embrasure.

"Don't worry, Hermione. She just wants to get a little of her own back for what Snape said to her at the Burrow. She won't file the report; just lock him up in a cell overnight. That, and get Kingsley to talk to him like he was a miscreant third year before they release him in the morning."

Remus thrust a hand into his pocket while he pulled the other through his hair. Hermione glared down at him for a long minute before she found her voice.

"You set me up! Both of you, you used me to get to Severus!" Hermione looked down at her supposed friend. Remus looked up at her ruefully.

"There aren't many opportunities to get one over on Severus Snape. You have to take them when they come. That, and Tonks threatened to make up the couch for me if I didn't help." Remus hurried off after Tonks and Snape before Hermione could remember that she was a witch and tried to hex him.

Hermione slumped back into the window seat. Severus was going to be livid and was bound to blame her. What was she going to do? After a few minutes, a small smile appeared on her lips, which rapidly turned into a lascivious grin. She would just have to show him how sorry she was for being such a *Bad, Bad, Girl*. He always enjoyed that, and truth be told, so did she. Yes, if nothing else, living with a Slytherin certainly made you look for the silver lining in any situation.

AN:This was the challenge issued on lotm's Yahoo group MolTWF:

The challenge is thus: a short, silly story poking fun at a very silly law (that was enacted ages ago and everyone has since forgot about), starring *any* couple. However, if not directly about our intrepid couple [HG/SS], I'd like to see them get caught up in the madness somehow.

Oh, the very silly law? "It is against the law to serenade your girlfriend. (significant other).

Real law btw. Kalamazoo, Michigan.

-Deb

My only excuse is I'm sleep deprived and trying to shake off the tail end of 'flu.

Thanks to Katie Yates for offering her Beta skills at very short notice (and I hope you eventually got your caffiene). I stuck with the title she suggested, trying to think up one of my own took more time than writing the story did :D