

40 Easy Ways

by linlawless

Hermione scrambles for an explanation when her young daughter sees a suggestive headline. Set in the "How I Met Your Mother" Universe.

A one-shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: I opened my email this morning and a subject line triggered a plot bunny, so I shamelessly stole IVillage's headline and some of the caption titles from their photo essay for this ficlet. Hope you enjoy it!

40 Easy Ways

Hermione sighed tiredly as she watched the last of her fifth-year pupils leave the Charms classroom. Thank goodness that was the last class of the day! The Anderson twins seemed to get up to more trouble each and every year – and now, it seemed, they had discovered sex! She glared at the evidence she had confiscated not twenty minutes past, which she had noticed despite their rather crude effort to charm it to look like a Charms journal. As if she would believe they had developed a sudden, passionate interest in Charms – and would giggle and smirk over the articles in it! She snorted sceptically.

The magazine was just as ridiculous as ever, really. "40 Easy Ways to Make Him Better in Bed", indeed," she muttered irritably, thankful that she didn't have to worry about such things. Severus was an inventive, eager lover; he could go for hours and he loved to surprise her with suggestions from the latest version of the *Wizard's Guide to the Kama Sutra* or to pop into her office between classes for a quick snog designed to set her libido simmering for later. Smirking as she flipped through the suggestions in last month's *Witch Weekly*, she felt a tiny bit sorry for all the women out there who actually needed advice like "Deal with an Eager Beaver" or "Break Out of the Missionary Rut".

She continued to flip through the magazine, enjoying it for once, if only because it reminded her of how fortunate she was that no other witch had recognised the gem that Severus was before she was old enough to snare him herself (well, to let him blackmail her into marriage, she corrected herself mentally, amused). She was scanning the tips toward the end of the article ("Is He Too Tired? Get Him Motivated!") when the door to her office burst open and her six-year-old daughter, Serena, burst in. "Mummy, Mummy, I made this picture for you!" She waved a piece of parchment excitedly as she raced around the desk and clambered into Hermione's lap.

Hermione took a moment to dismiss their (paid) house-elf, Blinky, before smiling happily as she hugged her daughter and looked at the crude (yet beautiful) drawing of her family. Everyone was easy to identify, she noted with maternal pride – Severus was dressed completely in black and was the tallest, Hermione was depicted with very bushy hair, Serena wore a tiara that had been carefully decorated with glitter, and her younger brother, two-year-old Alexander, seemed to be pulling poor Toffee's tail.

As Hermione exclaimed over the picture, Serena's attention had wandered, it seemed, and Hermione couldn't stop the blush that suffused her cheeks as her innocent daughter read the *Witch Weekly* headline aloud. "40 Easy Ways to Make Him Better in Bed?" she said, the question clear in her voice. "Is this so we'll know what to do when Daddy is sick?"

Hermione answered hastily, "Yes, dear, that's exactly what it is."

"Really?" a silky, teasing voice drawled from the open doorway. Hermione groaned mentally before smiling at her husband as he continued, "Does Daddy get sick so often that Mummy needs to read about what to do?"

"Daddy!" Serena shrieked in ecstasy, jumping down from her mother's lap and running to leap into her father's waiting arms.

Hermione waited until they had finished their standard greeting (many kisses and hugs with a bit of tickling tossed in) before answering her husband cheekily. "Mummy likes to think she already knows *just* what to do when Daddy is in bed, sick or otherwise. Unfortunately, her dunderheaded pupils persist in having irrelevant reading material in Charms lessons."

Severus winked in response. "Mummy handles Daddy's bed rest extremely well. However, it's probably best that we continue to have regular practise sessions, just to be safe."

Hermione grinned mischievously before kissing him. "Yes, that's probably best, dear."

"Can I help?" Serena asked innocently. She looked bewildered when her parents burst out laughing.

When Hermione managed to contain her laughter, she kissed her daughter's cheek and promised, "Anytime Daddy's sick, you can help take care of him, all right, sweetie?" At Serena's nod, Hermione said, "Now, shall we go get your brother?"

Serena groaned theatrically. "Do we *have* to?"

Hermione chuckled, leaving the magazine on her desk as she locked and warded her office before following her husband and daughter down the corridor toward the rooms that had been converted into Hogwarts's very own daycare facility. As she caught up with them, Severus paused in his explanation to Serena that yes, they *did* have to get Alexander to give her a wicked smile. After almost fifteen years of marriage, Hermione still went weak in the knees.

No need for tips to make him a better lover when he could still *do that*, she thought contentedly, slipping her hand in his and tilting her head to rub his shoulder. Belying her earlier reluctance, Serena squirmed out of her father's arms and ran ahead calling her brother's name as soon as the day care came into sight. Severus squeezed Hermione's hand and dropped a kiss on her head, then murmured for her ears only, "I feel quite certain I shall need a good rest in bed later this evening ... Perhaps we can *practise* getting me better?"

Hermione grinned and stretched up for a kiss. "I very much look forward to it."

Hand in hand, they went to retrieve their children.