

The Headmaster Problem

by LivingTheDream

Headmaster Snape is working too hard when the Ministry comes calling to "assist" him. Oh, whatever will he do?

One Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This is a birthday present for one of my best mates, Sunny33, who puts up with me and is steadfastly optimistic and upbeat, no matter my dark moods and the occasional temper tantrum. And she does it all being completely upside down. Damn Kiwi. Special thanks, as always, to ladyinthecloak, for making it all happen. Happy birthday, Pen. :) This is reposted under my new author name.

Severus Snape massaged his temples and wondered idly if he had any headache potion left. Lighting a fag, he cursed himself for accepting the job of headmaster. Again. It had seemed like a good idea at the time, though, what with the mad fan girls clamoring to take him to bed and the press hounding him any time he set foot out of the castle or St. Mungo's. Then there was the pesky bother of trying to get a flat when he had no credit and no provable income for the past twenty years... Muggle estate agents were notoriously impervious to suggestion charms and doctored documents. And the less said about Wizarding estate agents the better. He shuddered at the memory.

"And how long were you in Azkaban, Mr. Snape?"

"McLaggen, you know very well how long I was in Azkaban, it was all over the papers: four weeks in 1979 and six days last month."

"Dear me, Mr. Snape, most neighborhoods have provisions about Death Eaters living among them, particularly those who killed their last employer."

He squirmed and went back to glaring at the missive he was writing.

Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry Health and Safety Mandate

Provision Seven, Part C

All witches and wizards will bathe a minimum of three times per week, which will include washing of hair. Any student found in violation of said mandate will have their personal hygiene overseen by the school matron on a daily basis.

Provision Seven, Part D

All witches and wizards will clean their teeth a minimum of twice per day, which will include flossing. Any student found in violation of said mandate will have their personal hygiene overseen by the school matron on a daily basis.

He put his cigarette out and laid his head down on his desk. Who would have thought, honestly, that the little miscreants would start emulating **him**? It wasn't his fault he had naturally greasy hair. And his yellow teeth were from being a chain smoking coffee addict. He was fairly certain none of them had ever sorted out the smoking bit, as

he'd always been careful not to be seen by anyone doing it except a few staff members and of course his fellow Death Eaters.

Merlin's balls, if I catch any of them with a fag, it will be detention for six months mucking out the thestral stalls. I'm going to have to write a dress code, too. I caught Abernathy last week with his hair colored black. He's naturally a blond.

Making a note to himself to construct a new dress code, he glanced at the clock. Half four. No sense in even trying to sleep then; the sun would be up in half an hour anyway. He decided to go down to the lake and watch the sun rise with the giant squid. There was always a chance the squid could knock him into the inky depths.

He sat out at the lake's edge until the need for coffee and tobacco drove him back inside. Taking up where he'd left off on the school handbook of horrors, he worked until his post arrived and realized that, once again, he'd missed breakfast. He rang for Tinky to bring him coffee and went through his letters. Sifting through the pink envelopes reeking of perfume with hearts on them, one caught his eye.

Severus T Snape, Headmaster

Order of Merlin First Class

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

After six years of reading her overlong essays, he'd recognize that script anywhere.

What on earth could Hermione Granger want?

Dear Headmaster Snape,

It has come to my attention that you have been discriminated against in your effort to find post-war housing. As part of the Ministry of Magic's effort to integrate former Death Eaters into mainstream Wizarding society, a report must be filed and you will be provided assistance in locating suitable housing that will meet your needs. I will arrive at your office at half ten this morning to take the previously mentioned report, and you will be given a list of various properties to peruse.

Regards,

Hermione Granger

Office of Integration and Transition

Ministry of Magic

Where do they think I've been sleeping for the past two years? A hay barn? Where was this assistance right after the war when it mattered? And who does she think she is, thinking she can show up with only a few scant hours notice? I could be in the middle of brewing Wolf's Bane.

He lit another fag and glowered at the letter.

Hermione Granger entered Hogwarts at half nine and was met warmly by Minerva McGonagall. She thought to ply her old mentor with tales of the Golden Trio in exchange for the headmaster password. It wouldn't do to be standing down at the bottom of his staircase like an errant first year when she was trying to storm the castle, as it were. They sipped their tea and Hermione filled Minerva in on all the comings and goings of her Gryffindor friends. Eventually Minerva came round to the question she'd wanted to ask ever since Hermione had broached the topic of tea on a Tuesday morning during the school year.

"While I'm pleased to meet you for tea, Hermione, what brings you to Hogwarts?"

"Professor Snape. Ministry business. Is he in his office?"

Minerva stared at her, knowing full well what department Hermione worked for.

"He wasn't at breakfast. Does he know you're here?"

"He should, I sent him a Ministry letter this morning. I was hoping you could give me the password so I could forgo the standing around downstairs forever while he makes up his mind whether to let me in or not."

"He's not in any trouble, is he?"

"Of course not, Minerva. Actually I'm trying to help him, although Merlin knows he'll be difficult enough to convince of that."

"Well, the password is Death Eater Scum. But... Hermione... have you seen him lately?"

"Well, no, not since... well... I think the Prophet caught a glimpse of him a couple of months ago?"

"Um... just don't be put off when you see him. He's still teaching upper year Potions and Defense Against the Dark Arts and still has to make the Wolf's Bane for St. Mungo's. In addition to all of the normal nonsense the Ministry sends his way. Worse, at least to his mind, is the students have decided he's a hero and started to emulate him. He hasn't been sleeping, and I have no idea when the last time was that he ate. I think he's living on nicotine and coffee."

Hermione looked startled.

"Nicotine?" Minerva rolled her eyes.

"Yes, Hermione." The word "duh" was implied.

"I guess I never thought about it."

"Well, go see him. Maybe whatever you're working on will snap him out of his latest mood."

Hermione gave the password to the gargoyle, wincing a bit as she did. She was sure it was Severus's attempt at black humor, but it also indicated what he still thought of himself and reminded everyone else of it, too. And people like Cormac McLaggen didn't need to be reminded of things like that. The door to his office opened before she could knock, and she strode confidently into the headmaster's office. If there was anything that caused that man to go into verbal-flay-mode, it was any sign of weakness. Despite Minerva's warning, she was completely gobsmacked by what greeted her when she walked into the office.

Severus was hunched over his desk, his quill scribbling away and a cigarette in the other. There was a coffee mug sitting on his desk with the Slytherin seal, verifying Minerva's suspicions. His frock coat hung loosely on him. Added to his sunken eyes and the dark shadows under them, he was positively skeletal. She pulled up short mid stride, not knowing quite what to do with a Snape who wasn't billowing and asserting his dominance.

"Granger, I will be with you in a moment. Have a seat. Tinky! Tea," he said, never taking his eyes off the parchment on which he was writing. A house-elf appeared and began bustling around.

"Thank you, headmaster."

Hermione sipped on her tea and watched Severus work. Her carefully planned speech fell out of her head. This was not the Severus Snape she'd planned on engaging when she'd come up with this plan. Was it possible that an administrative labyrinth had succeeded where Albus Dumbledore and the Dark Lord and Nagini had failed?

He finally looked up, expectantly.

"Well? Where are these properties you wanted me to look at? I daresay I could have used this assistance when it actually *mattered*, after the war. Instead, the Ministry seized Spinner's End and knocked it down in the six days I was in Azkaban, and I was forced to take *this* job, so I could have somewhere to sleep."

"Yes, well, I didn't know they did that, nor did I realize what Cormac had done to you, or I would have stopped it. For that I apologize."

"Really? Not for leaving me to die in the Shack, or not trusting me all those years when I did nothing but show I was protecting you?"

She had the decency to flush at that and, in order to avoid his gaze, rummaged around in her bag and pulled out a list of properties.

He took the time to assess her. She'd grown into herself nicely. She was petite and pretty, with her hair pulled back loosely. He was pleased to note that she didn't seem to be wearing any garish makeup.

Not that it should matter to me.

She handed him the list and he looked at it, then looked up at her, confused.

"One Hyde Place? Penthouse flats? Have you lost that vaunted intellect of yours?"

It was then that Hermione smirked.

"Oh, I'm very well aware of what the salary for the headmaster position is, Professor Snape. And Cormac McLaggen was sorted into Gryffindor because he is a brash, blundering idiot. I, however, was sorted into Gryffindor because I was too loud to be in Ravenclaw and too Muggle to be in Slytherin, not because I couldn't have succeeded in either place. Cormac didn't stand a chance. The properties are subsidized, but not by the Ministry. They're subsidized by Cormac's estate agency."

A feral grin spread across Severus's gaunt face.

"Subsidized you say?" He began to look at the properties in earnest. After selecting one he found the least flashy of the lot, he rose to show her out.

"Professor Snape, please forgive my impudence, but when was the last time you slept?"

As she expected, he scowled.

"None of your business, Granger. You've imposed upon my patience long enough."

"But, sir, no offense, you look dreadful."

"I always look dreadful. Get out."

"No."

"What?"

"No. I will not get out. You've never looked *this* dreadful." His senses dulled, she whipped out her wand and put him in full body bind.

"Granger! Release me this instant." She had to work quickly, as she was certain that he could break the bind in a few minutes.

"*Accio Dreamless Sleep.*"

"NO!"

The potion vial flew into her hand, and she shoved it into his mouth and forced him to drink. He opened his mouth to bellow at her, then blinked and fell backwards onto a quickly placed cushioning charm. She levitated him carefully and directed him back to his bedroom where she laid him on his bed and pulled off his boots. She released the bind on him, leaving him to sleep, and escaped to his office where she Floo'd Minerva.

They had a long discussion about The Problem of the Headmaster, with Hermione agreeing to return the next day and force her assistance on him and possibly finding someone to help with the DADA classes.

Severus woke up forty hours later. At first he was quite put out at being manhandled by a girl twenty years his junior. And then he realized he had a morning erection, something that hadn't happened in, well, years.

Taking himself in hand, he began to stroke himself, thinking about the feisty Gryffindor who'd got the drop on him. He stroked harder, reaching his climax a few minutes later, shouting out her name.