

Of course, he had tried to be nicer to her, even inviting her to lunch or standing closer to her at times. She had noticed the change in his behaviour toward her, but she mostly ignored his attentions, resolved in not becoming simply one of many.

Hermione was musing about the last two months when the door suddenly opened. She remembered that face; of course she did... Lavender Brown. Years had been good to her, and she looked stunning. Although, in that moment, she was a mess. Her eyes were puffy and red despite that fact that no tears were running down her cheeks. Lavender ignored her and entered the lab, looking around.

"Where is Severus?"

"Sorry?"

Lavender turned to face her, surprised, as if Hermione had suddenly appeared instead of being there the entire time.

"Oh, Hermione. Hi. You look... I guess you look good, just the same as you were at Hogwarts. Where is Severus?"

"Severus? Since when do you call him by his first name?"

Lavender blinked, looking at her, and suddenly, as if she had remembered what she was supposed to do, started crying.

"Oh, Hermione, I don't know what to do. This is so... so..." She threw herself to Hermione's arms, crying uncontrollably.

"What is it, Lavender? Why are you crying?"

"I need to see Severus. He has to know. He has to help me."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm pregnant, and he's the father. He has to save my honour and marry me."

Hermione froze in that moment. Severus and Lavender had... and now, she was pregnant.

"Pregnant... How did that happen?"

Lavender stopped crying and snorted, almost laughing.

"Hermione, even with your brains, you don't know where children come from? Do you even know what the word sex means?"

That remark made her furious, feeling a turmoil of emotions. She needed air. She needed to scream. She needed... She needed... She needed to get that wench out.

"I know what it means, Lavender; thank you very much for worrying about my knowledge on the topic. Obviously *Professor Snape* is not here. Now, if you don't mind, I have work to do, so get out of here."

Lavender forgot for a moment that she was on the verge of breaking down to look at Hermione curiously, as if studying her.

"My, my, Hermione, you don't have to be so rude with me. After all, I'm only a poor woman who's lost and expecting a child." She moved her hands over her stomach in what she intended to be a protective gesture, but it looked as if she wanted to undress.

"You're not a poor woman. You're obviously an opportunist who set him up."

"If I didn't know you better, I would think that you're jealous... Oh, my god, you're jealous. Poor thing, you fancy him, and from your attitude, it's clear that he doesn't give a damn about you. Well, not that he needs someone like you when he can have someone like me."

"Get out of here!"

"No need to yell, Hermione. I'm leaving. Just tell my man that I stopped by, but refrain from telling him the good news. That is for me to tell."

Lavender left, feeling as if she owned the lab and the Potions master. When she closed the door, Hermione collapsed onto a chair. It was happening again; Lavender was taking someone away from her. But this time, she wouldn't let it happen. This time, she had to fight back for what she wanted.

It wasn't long until he arrived at the lab, smiling as usual to the group of women that had walked him to his lab. He closed the door, looking quite satisfied with himself.

"Hermione, dear, how are you this morning?"

"Peachy." She hadn't intended to sound so sarcastic. She needed to be in control at the present if she wanted to make her move. She decided to start again. "You had a visitor earlier."

"Really, who came this time?"

"Lavender Brown. She wanted to talk with you, and it looked like something quite serious."

He cringed when he heard that name; so many memories came back to his mind about that night with her. He hoped that she hadn't told Hermione a thing. That wouldn't be good for his plans of wooing her.

"Did she tell you... something? Maybe... maybe what she wanted to discuss with me?"

Guilty, he looked positively guilty. It was true. He had been with her. That meant that it was possible that she was pregnant. Bloody bastard! She was sure that he had also been with many of the women who came by looking for him. Control, she had to remain cool while he was the one feeling nervous.

"Well, she wasn't here too long, but she wanted to discuss a meeting you had with her sometime ago."

"Did she tell you anything else?"

"Not really, but she looked terrible, as if she had been having a tough time. Excuse me, but can I ask what happened between you two?"

"Happened? Nothing happened, nothing at all. Now, we have to go back to work. I was thinking about a new potion for..."

"Liar!"

She couldn't stop herself. She was furious with him for having sex with Lavender and for having the nerve to deny it.

"Excuse me?"

"You heard me. I said that you're a liar."

"Hermione, watch your tone. Remember, you're my apprentice, and you owe me respect as your Master."

"Master? You're nothing but an arrogant bastard who has spent the last couple of months flirting with every available woman, letting them follow you to your bed. And the icing on the cake was bloody Lavender Brown. You even shagged her, who is nothing more than an empty twit who only has clothes and men filling her mind. How could you?"

"Well, she was asking nicely and..."

"Enough! I don't need to hear more about your sexual adventures with the entire feminine population of wizarding England. Even more, you can go and shag every witch in wizarding Europe. See if I care."

But she did care. Why, from all the available witches, did he have to choose that wench? Hermione couldn't bear that. It was the second time that giggling, overemotional dunderhead was taking something from her. No, she had already promised herself that this time would be different, that she would take what she wanted, even if she had to act like those witches that she despised and he seemed to find so attractive. If that was what he needed, she could do that. Hermione made up her mind and turned to face him, a mischievous smirk on her face while she walked slowly toward him.

"Now that I think it about it, maybe I should have a taste of you also. If so many women are willing to bed you, then you must be good."

She looked like a predator cornering its prey, which now had widened eyes and was moving back slowly to get out of her reach. The expression of confusion on Severus' face was simply priceless. He stumbled against his chair and sat down on it, disbelieving what was just happening.

"Miss Gran-Hermione, what are you trying to do?"

Hermione smiled at him and moved to straddle him. She immediately put her hands to work to unbutton his cloak.

"Isn't that obvious, sir?"

She was trying her best to achieve her task, finding difficult to keep her hands steady while she unbuttoned his cloak. She was no longer a virgin. She had decided to lose her virginity to Ron when she was nineteen, when they were trying to get back what he had taken from them when he'd started seeing Lavender. But this was different from shagging your school boyfriend. Severus Snape was a man, and she was sure that he was a very experienced one. She must have had a moment of hesitation while thinking about that because his hands came to hers, stopping her motion.

"Hermione, don't do this; this is not you."

"What do you know about me? I'll tell you what you know! You know nothing. You keep on seeing the annoying Gryffindor when you look at me, but believe me, I'm more than that."

Grabbing her courage again, she started attacking his trousers, trying to appear more confident than she actually was. She couldn't do more because he stopped her again.

"Please, don't do this Hermione."

Hermione looked at him. She had been right. He didn't want anything to do with her. Why would he if he had so many women to pick from? She rose slowly from his lap, feeling defeated.

"I should have known that you didn't want me. With all those women to pick from, who would want the annoying know-it-all?"

"Believe it or not, I have more taste than you think, Hermione. I can't deny all those women are quite attractive, but no one can compare to you. I find all of them terribly boring and not up to my tastes."

"What are you talking about? I saw you. You flirted with all of them and accepted their invitations by agreeing to meet them later. Try to deny that."

"Did you actually see me with any of them? I always told them that because I didn't want to go with them. I kept on asking you out and trying to get closer to you, but you always retreated and refused me."

"What did you expect me to do? I didn't want to be just one of many."

"One of many? But you are the only one. You know why I did this, Hermione? Because I don't want to be alone anymore, because I couldn't bear to be seen as the greasy git despised by everyone... because I didn't want you to pity me anymore."

Hermione looked at him, not believing what she was hearing. He thought she pitied him?

"I have never pitied you. I admire you, your strength, your courage, your intelligence, and I have admired who you are since I was a girl."

That was all he needed to know. He stood and walked to embrace her, knowing that was the chance he had been waiting for.

"You silly girl, I have wanted to be with you for a long time, but I always thought you were completely out of my reach. When I changed, I thought I was doing the right thing, that you would like me and that I would be worthy of you."

"I have always liked you, even when you were snarky and scolded me for no apparent reason. To be honest, I hate the new person you're attempting to be. I prefer your old self. Not that I don't like the dashing way you look now, mind you."

He'd done it. He'd gotten the girl, and all he'd had to do was to... be himself. Damn it, he'd wasted his time and money with that stupid makeover. He had to kiss her. He had to make sure she was his. He lowered his head to hers, his lips brushing hers, and when he started closing his eyes, he was pushed violently from her.

"What's wrong, Hermione? I thought we had reached an agreement."

"No, we haven't reached anything. There's still something you have to know and explain to me. Lavender was here to demand you to answer her. She's pregnant, and she says you're the father."

Severus blinked at her, and suddenly, he burst in laughter. "She told you that? Obviously, the dunderhead has no idea of how women get pregnant, or she is evil enough to try to frame me with that stupid story."

"But you admitted you had sex with her."

"I didn't admit a thing. I was answering when you kindly interrupted me. Like I was saying, she did come and proposition me, better to say that she practically forced herself on me. I felt my control slipping, but I was able to regain it when I thought about you, so nothing happened. Although I received a threat from a furious, almost naked woman, I would have never guessed this nonsense about pregnancy was her brilliant idea of revenge."

"And I believed you and her... Oh, the next time I see her I'm going to hex her silly for that. I should have known better and realised that you'd never want a woman like her."

"To be more accurate, my dear, I would never want any woman but you."

He embraced her again, finally kissing her lips and knowing he had been wrong. This plan had indeed worked out, although not in the way he had envisioned. Well, as long as he had Hermione in his arms, it was fine, but he made a mental note to visit that Armandi store again.

Lorraine's Notes: This fic was almost doomed to remain unfinished, but it finally saw the light. Damn, I wanted it to be funny, but it ended fluffy. Maybe this didn't turn out like I'd thought at first, but I have to admit I love my Severus the way he's, snarky and cunning, bad looks and everything.

Before HBP, I had always pictured Lavender as a blond girl with curly hair, but now I see her as a brunette. I guess it's because I think Ron simply has a thing for brunettes. I know, I pictured her like a femme fatale that can be considered OOC, but it was on purpose, and I had fun writing her in that way. I know most of you would have loved to have my head when it seemed clear they had shagged, but there's no way and no AU in which that could happen.

Many thanks for lovely Southern Witch and CocoaChristy, who beta read this even when they had little time; you both are amazing and have helped me so much. I also want to acknowledge my good friend, Inell; my descriptions about Hermione's insecurities were inspired by the Hermione she has developed in her fics.

Southern's Notes: Good Lord! I was pulling my hair out while reading this and wanting to slap Snape and Lavender both. Hehe! Glad things were not as they seemed.

Christy's Notes: I was worried there for a minute! I am glad things worked out in the end and Lavender didn't get her revenge!