

Marauder's Mapquest

by debjunk

Will the Marauder's Map help Severus get close to Hermione when nothing else has?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 4

Will the Marauder's Map help Severus get close to Hermione when nothing else has?

Severus Snape's eyes narrowed at the boy standing across the desk from him. The boy's head sunk low as if he were trying to hide. His eyes drifted down, boring into the floor, as if trying to open a chasm in which he could fall.

"So, Mr. Duncan," Severus began. "It seems that some of your friends have had some mishaps occur recently. They, of course, won't say who or what is causing these mishaps, however, as Headmaster, it is my job to find out."

"Sir?" the boy asked, moving his head up an inch so he could look up at the professor.

"Turn out your pockets," Severus demanded quietly.

Duncan reached into his pockets and pulled out a crumpled piece of paper, two pieces of gum, and a chocolate frog. He gave Severus an innocent look.

"That is all you wish to declare?" Severus asked.

The boy nodded.

Severus flicked his wand in annoyance, and several items flew from the inner pockets of Duncan's robes, adding to the small pile already on the desk.

"Instant Darkness Powder, Puking Pastilles, Nosebleed Nougat, a Punching telescope, Canary creams," Severus listed. His eyes narrowed at the boy. "You do realize all of these Weasley items are strictly forbidden?" He lifted up an old parchment which was folded into a rectangle. "What is this?"

Duncan averted his eyes. "It's just a piece of parchment, sir."

Severus unfolded it. It seemed familiar, but he couldn't quite place where he'd seen this particular item before. He pointed the tip of his wand to the parchment. "Reveal your secrets."

Immediately writing began to appear. Severus looked smugly at the parchment until the words became clear. *You have been warned before, Snivellus, you great bumbling git. Keep your enormous nose out of this page.* Severus ground his teeth together as his eyes snapped up to the boy's.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

"Sir, I don't know! It's never done that before!"

Severus sat back in his chair and steepled his fingers. "Duncan," he said.

"Y-yes, s-sir?"

"I've know your parents for a very long time, haven't I?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"We were associated with the same... group... if you may? Somehow, they were never officially associated with that group, isn't that right?"

"Y-yes, s-sir."

Severus leaned forward, a menacing glint in his eyes. "It would be horrible if their little secret came... out... wouldn't it?"

Duncan's eyes grew wide. "Sir... you wouldn't!"

Severus straightened. "As I see it, anything could be revealed at any time. However," he lifted the parchment for emphasis. "If, say, you explained to me how this worked... I may continue to forget about my association with your parents in a certain organization."

Duncan swallowed hard. "It's... it's a map, sir."

"Go on," Severus urged.

"Of Hogwarts. You can see everyone in the castle. I would find my friends, and when they were alone, pull pranks on them. It was just a little fun, sir. Please don't expel me!"

"Of course, Duncan," Severus said smoothly. "A little fun can sometimes be overlooked. I would need to know how this map worked in order to keep you here at the school."

The boy flinched at Severus' words, but approached the desk and motioned to his wand, silently asking permission to demonstrate the workings of the map. Severus nodded briefly.

"You activate it by putting your wand on it and saying, 'I solemnly swear that I am up to no good.'" As you can see, the map appears. To make the map disappear, you would say, 'Mischievous managed.'" The words on the paper disappeared as Duncan lifted his wand off the parchment.

Severus placed his wand on the parchment then and stated, "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good." His eyebrow arched as the map created itself once again. He stared at it for a few seconds before remembering the student still in the room, shifting nervously from foot to foot. His head snapped up.

"Two weeks of detention with Mr. Filch, and one hundred points from Ravenclaw, Mr. Duncan," Severus said with quiet menace. "Now I would urge you to take your leave before my good mood is destroyed, and you are expelled despite my previous words."

Severus was no sooner finished that the boy made a hasty retreat, nearly running for the door. Severus smiled mischievously at his exit. That had been entirely too easy. His attention turned back to the map. Once it had begun to deride him, he'd remembered where he'd seen it before. Potter had used it when he was a student. Now seeing what the map could do, it made a lot of sense how Potter seemed to always show up where trouble had been.

His eyes studied the parchment. There were many little footprints with names hovering above them. Minerva was pacing at the front of her classroom, no doubt lecturing. Twenty some-odd feet with small names were assembled in front of her footprints. Some footprints walked the halls. Mostly student names there. His eyes moved on, searching for one, particular name. It didn't take him too long to find it, as he knew she was teaching a class at the time. Hermione Granger, much like Minerva, paced in front of her class of little feet. He studied the script that formed her name. His finger, without bidding, moved up and began to caress the letters. He wondered if she could feel it, but then dismissed that thought as absurd.

Resting his elbow on the desk, he put his hand to his mouth, deep in thought as he studied Granger's name. This map could be the answer he'd been searching for. Too long now he'd been watching Hermione Granger from afar. She'd worked for him as the Charms professor for five years. She was a dedicated employee, good teacher, and was well liked among everyone at the school. Severus had found that his liking of her had become a bit more intense over the past year. He'd attempted to spend some time with her, but the witch was impossible to track down outside of classroom hours.

She came to meals, of course, but sat at the end of the table, and Severus had never really had an opportunity to converse with her during that time. He'd attempted to follow her after meals, but she seemed to disappear once she'd exited the doors of the Great Hall. Severus had been at his wits end, never able to really spend any quality time with her. Every opportunity he'd had to be in her company involved some sort of faculty gathering, and those were never a good place to start up private conversations. Either someone would get the wrong idea, or they'd start griping about favoritism. No, that wasn't the place to get to know Hermione better. He wanted to know her personally. Not just as an associate.

His finger moved back down to the parchment again, tracing the small letters that made up her name. Maybe this map could help him in ways he couldn't help himself. Maybe if he were subtle enough, he'd have her searching him out. He smiled to himself. The thought of Hermione Granger seeking out his company was a very satisfying idea, indeed.

"No time like the present," he muttered to himself. With a flick of his wand, he'd conjured up a rose. He knew where Hermione Granger wasn't, and that was in her room. He would leave this rose secretly, just to get some practice on being devious. Not that he really needed practice, but he'd never used his spying abilities to acquire the affections of a woman. This would be a whole new adventure for him. He smiled at the thought of it.

A/N: This is from the 2013 promptfest. I'm just getting around to putting up here.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 4

Will the Marauder's Map help Severus get close to Hermione when nothing else has?

It had taken him a bit more time than he thought to gather the courage to actually approach her. He'd left a rose at her door each day, but had not sought her out for a face to face encounter yet. The days had passed, and he had stared at the map every night for hours, but couldn't bring himself to seek her out. She spent most of her time in the library, he'd found. He wondered what she was doing holed up in there for so many hours. He knew she liked books, but it seemed a bit odd that she would go there

directly after classes and only take a break for the dinner hour, returning and often staying late into the night.

The catalyst to him approaching her happened quite by accident. It was a Saturday morning. He'd gone down to breakfast, and upon entering, spied Hermione and Minerva talking at the Head Table. There were few in the Hall that morning, so their voices were a little louder than usual and carried to him as he entered.

"A rose every night? Do you know who's leaving those for you?" Minerva asked.

Hermione shrugged. "I haven't any idea, but it's been really sweet."

"What if it's a student?" Minerva queried, a playful gleam in her eye.

Hermione laughed. "Well, I don't think it is because it's always there at night, but if it was, I suppose I'd have to let him down gently."

"Perhaps it's Hagrid," Minerva offered.

Severus snorted as he settled into his seat in the center of the table, causing the two women to glance at him.

"Do you have something to say, Severus?" Minerva asked.

His eyebrow arched as he regarded Minerva and Hermione. "Only that Hagrid would never be as subtle as to leave a rose at any woman's door...including Olympe's...even once, let alone for days on end."

"Well," Minerva said slyly, "there aren't very many possible candidates to choose from. Perhaps it was you, Severus?"

"It's always possible," Severus replied, eyeing Hermione. He was surprised to see her turn scarlet and stare down into her bowl of oatmeal. "I suppose you'll have to wait until this mystery man reveals himself to find out... for sure." He left his words hanging in the air as he turned away from the women and began sipping his tea. He noted Minerva staring at him oddly, but Hermione didn't seem to dare lift her head to regard him in any way. Her cheeks were still quite scarlet. He didn't really know what that meant, but he hoped it was a positive sign.

That night, he once again settled himself in his armchair and opened the Map. By now, he knew where to look. There were her little feet, stationary in the library. Yes, he'd procrastinated enough, it was time to seek her out and get her to notice him as more than the Headmaster. Folding the map and placing it into the pocket in his cloak, he rose and left his armchair behind him.

A little while later he stood in front of the library doors.

"Perhaps this isn't such a great idea," he thought. His eyes traced the frame of the door as he mulled over what to do.

"Good heaven's, man, stop vacillating, and just do it!" he chided himself aloud. Reaching out, he pushed open the door and entered the library. From the map, he knew she was towards the back of the room, near the restricted section. He strolled along, grabbing a book from a nearby shelf as he walked. He spied her when he rounded a stack. She was sitting at a table, bent over a book, her nose almost touching it. Her finger sped along the page, in search of something. He approached her quietly, and when he spoke, she jumped.

"Hermione, would you like me to conjure you up a bed? Rumor has it you spend more time here than in your own rooms."

Her hand flew to her chest as she gave him a wild look. "Goodness, Professor Snape, you gave me a fright!"

"Call me Severus," he said nonchalantly. "Mind if I join you?"

She looked panicked for a moment, then her face became calm again. "Oh... sure. Please do," she stuttered.

He settled into the seat across from her and opened the book he'd procured. His eyes narrowed, and he quickly flipped the cover to the front so he could read the title: *Divination and its Uses*. It was all he could do to keep himself from groaning at his choice. Hermione regarded the title as he gazed at it.

"I hadn't pictured you as the type to put credence in Divination, sir."

"Call me Severus," he repeated, this time giving her a stern glare. "I do not, per se, put credence into Divination, but in a bid to understand Professor Trelawney's babbling, I thought it may help to look deeper into her... craft."

Hermione tilted her head and looked at him with humor in her eyes. "I see, Severus. I think that's nice that you want to relate to her better. I'd be careful, though," she warned as she turned back to her book. "I see the way she looks at you in the Great Hall."

"Oh, really?" he asked with interest.

Hermione's head snapped up. "I mean... well, if she's your type... I mean..."

Severus threw his head back and laughed. "Sybil Trelawney is hardly my type. As a matter of fact, I don't think she's anyone's type, but that's irrelevant. What are you researching, Hermione?"

She turned her book around to show him. "I'm looking for a charm that will help novice spell casters not injure themselves. You know how crazy it gets once those first-years start swishing and flicking. It would be nice if we could get some sort of protection spell to cast over them so they do no harm to themselves or others."

"Have you found anything?" Severus asked as he looked over the old textbook Hermione had pulled from the stacks. It was the first charms book ever used at Hogwarts.

"Not yet. I've scoured all the textbooks, and nothing has been noted about any such spells. I've been at it for a couple months now. I'm about to give up."

"You, give up? That's not like you."

Hermione looked down and shrugged. "I'm kind of at a dead end. I'm not sure how to proceed."

"Well, as Headmaster, I'm very interested in seeing such a spell. Perhaps you can create one?"

Hermione pulled another text book off the small pile that was at her left. "I've been looking into that also. I could actually use your help with this. I have some ideas, but I think I'm lacking something."

He reviewed her notes and looked up at her in admiration. "This is remarkable," he stated.

She frowned. "It would be remarkable if it worked. Every time I attempt to cast the charm, my wand emits purple smoke, but nothing happens."

"Have you tried it on a student?"

"I don't dare. What if I hurt someone?"

Severus rubbed his chin as he reviewed her notes. He looked up at her again. "Your research seems well-based. I believe you probably have the spell, you just need to test it."

"I'm not going to try this on a student," she stated dryly.

"Try it on me," Severus said sincerely.

Hermione's eyes widened. "No!"

"Hermione, just try it on me."

"But what if it gives you purple hair, or your arm falls off?"

Severus chuckled. "Given the charm behind this, the worst that would happen is my eyes would be bloodshot for 12 hours."

"Severus..."

"Hermione..."

She sighed. "Ok, but we can't do this here in the library."

Severus rose and offered her his hand. She looked at it tentatively before gingerly placing her hand in his and rising from the table. "Shall we head to your classroom?" Severus asked as he arched his eyebrow.

She nodded absently and followed him, her hand still in his. The walk to the classroom was quiet, and Severus wondered if he'd done something to upset Hermione. He was about to ask her when they arrived at her classroom.

"Here we are," Hermione said nervously. She jerked her hand from his and opened the door.

They entered, and Severus moved across the room. He stretched out his hands and said, "I am at your mercy."

Hermione giggled and raised her wand. With a flick and a swish of her own, the spell was cast. At least, they thought it was cast. The purple smoke was the only sign that anything had happened.

Severus put his hands down. "Well, I supposed I should test your charm with some foolish wand waving now?"

Hermione smiled and nodded, anticipation in her eyes.

Severus pointed at a quill that had been left on a desk. "Wigerdeem Leveesa," he stated incorrectly. A great bolt shot to the feather quill and then back at Severus. When it hit Severus, it dissipated without harming him in the least. He smiled and looked up at Hermione.

It works," he stated.

"It works!" Hermione exclaimed as she ran and threw her arms around him. "You have no idea how long I've been trying to fix that spell, when it didn't need fixing at all!" she cried as she jumped up and down. "Thank you, thank you!" Suddenly Hermione froze mid-jump and stiffened. She dropped her arms from around Severus and retreated three feet back. Smoothing out her hair and her robes at the same time, she looked around the room nervously and cleared her throat.

"I... I mean, thank you."

Severus was still so stunned; he had no response for her. He could only stare in shock. Granted, it was from amazement and happiness, but it was still shock, and it temporarily made him quite mute. Hermione obviously took this as a bad sign.

"Umm, I should be heading to bed. It's late, and I have classes in the morning. Of course, you know that. I have to... well, thank you... anyway. I should be going. Have a good night."

And with that, she turned and fled from the room.

"Smooth, Snape... very smooth." Severus muttered to himself as he watched the door close behind her.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 4

Will the Marauder's Map help Severus get close to Hermione when nothing else has?

Severus searched the map. She wasn't in the library. She wasn't in her classroom or her rooms. Where was she? Ah, there... in the kitchen. It seemed quite an appropriate time to head down for a late night snack. Severus folded the map and placed it into his pocket and headed for the kitchens. Several minutes later, he arrived there and entered.

"It's the Headmaster!" screeched the head house-elf. He rushed over and grabbed Severus' hand, dragging him over to a table where Hermione sat. The witch was looking at him nervously, her eyes wide.

"Sir, if you're wantin something, you needs just ask, sir. Never a need for yous to come down to the kitchens. Fleetle will gladly bring you any snacks yous wants!"

"Fleetle," Severus said in a commanding tone. "I just came down for some tea. I was wandering the castle, and a good cup of tea sounded quite nice at this time of the evening. Of course I will remember to ask aloud for anything I need from my office or room. You know I would."

Fleetle seemed appeased and not about to iron his hands or bang his head against a stove. Severus bent a little lower. "Would you kindly get me a spot of tea?"

Fleetle straightened up. "Yes, Professor, sir! Right away!"

Hermione smiled thinly at Severus as he nodded at her and sat beside her at the table. "Fancy meeting you here, Hermione," he said smoothly.

"Yes," she said breathily. "Fancy that." She immediately looked down at her sandwich, as if it had just changed before her eyes.

"I noticed you hardly ate anything at dinner tonight. You rushed out of the Great Hall as if chased by a Dementor. Is everything all right?"

Hermione hazarded a glance at Severus. "Yes, it's fine. I just have a lot to do is all."

Severus nodded. "Have you implemented your charm yet?"

She nodded. "It was very successful today. We should announce it to the faculty so everyone can use it."

"I will at the next staff meeting on Saturday," Severus said before sipping his tea. He covertly looked at Hermione through his curtain of hair. She seemed to be incredibly skittish tonight. He wondered what was wrong with her.

As if sensing his stare, Hermione stood quickly, grabbing her plate. "I should be off. Good night, Severus," she cried as she hastily retreated from his presence.

He watched her go, his eyebrows furrowing. This was most unusual and disturbing behavior. He really wasn't sure *what* to make of it.

Another long search of the map the next night found Hermione up in a lonely classroom on the 7th floor. Severus wondered at that. Was she trying to hide from him? Too bad, he wasn't going to let her. He'd deliver her rose, then search her out. She'd soon learn there was no hiding from Severus Snape.

Severus opened the door, his wand in front of him. "Why, Hermione! I thought a couple of students were in here messing around."

Hermione jumped in her chair. Her hand came up to her chest, and she looked at Severus with wide-eyes. "Goodness, Severus! I just about jumped out of my skin!"

"Sorry, I was just patrolling the halls, and I saw some light coming from this classroom." He waved his wand as an aside. "Can't have the dunderheads out after curfew."

Hermione looked at Severus angrily. "They're not dunderheads, Severus, and you know it."

Severus shrugged. "They have to prove that before I consider them to not be dunderheads, and anyone out after curfew is obviously just that."

Hermione shook her head at him, but she had a small curve upward in her lips. He wasn't going to deem it a smile or smirk, but he knew she'd been amused. He glided up to her seat at the desk at the front of the room.

"What are you hiding from, Hermione?"

She stammered at him as she gave him an innocent look. "I'm not hiding. I just... I just needed to get away from everyone for a bit." She motioned to the stack of papers to her right. "As you can see, I have a lot of grading to do."

Severus waved his wand, and a chair pulled up behind him. He sat determinedly as Hermione watched him. That nervous look had returned, and she shifted in her seat.

"If you have a lot to do, I'll help you grade." He conjured up a quill and his special red ink.

"No!"

Severus gave her a sharp look.

"I mean, no, you don't need to do that."

"I know I don't need to do that; I'd like to help you."

"Severus, I can do this myself. I am just a little behind. I..."

Severus held up one finger. "I will help you grade these so you can have some time in your evening before you need to retire."

She opened her mouth to continue, and Severus raised his eyebrow at her. She snapped her mouth shut. Reaching over, she handed him a small stack of papers and gave him a tight smile.

His hand brushed hers as he accepted the stack. He knew it was impossible, but he thought he felt more than just her touch. Her eyes widened slightly also, mirroring his surprise. They froze for a slight second before he recovered and took the papers, placing them in front of him.

"That's better," he stated gruffly before looking down and beginning to grade.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 4

Will the Marauder's Map help Severus get close to Hermione when nothing else has?

Severus paced in his room. Every now and again he'd glance at the Marauder's Map. It had been an ongoing saga since their encounter on the seventh floor. Every day, he'd have to search her out, because she was never in the same place twice. She'd chosen another remote classroom today, this time on the third floor. One where most students never ventured, and few teachers patrolled. What was the witch up to? Why was she trying to avoid him? Or was he reading too much into all of this? Was she just moving around randomly? Was he just wasting his time and efforts trying to get to know her?

Severus stopped pacing. He folded his arms in front of him and huffed. Enough was enough. This wasn't going as he had planned. Certainly, he'd gotten to know Hermione

better. He'd become certain he wanted to be with her the more he spoke with her. However, she was constantly hiding from him, and he wasn't sure what she felt for him. He gathered his courage. He would tell her the truth about his feelings. Somehow, that felt harder to do than facing the Dark Lord himself, but he knew he must do it or quietly go insane. Once again, he folded the map and placed it into his pocket, ready for another encounter.

"Ah, there you are," Severus said as he burst into the room where Hermione was once again grading papers. She flew out of her seat, her quill shooting out of her hand.

"Severus, for the love...! Are you following me?" Hermione questioned indignantly.

Severus ignored her. He moved to the desk where she sat and extended his hand to her. "Walk with me," he demanded in a soft voice.

Hermione looked at his hand, then up to his eyes. He arched his eyebrow at her. She gave him a resigned look as he felt her hand move into his. He nodded to her, unable to say anything because he suddenly felt heady with her closeness as she stood and gazed at him intensely. He cleared his throat and finally was able to rasp some words at her.

"I thought you could use a break from what you're doing," he explained as he turned and led her out of the room.

She said nothing, but stared at him as they walked down the hall to the stairs. She turned her attention to the staircase as they proceeded down them, still saying nothing. They descended to the first floor and proceeded out the door. Severus searched for something to say, but was temporarily mute. His nerves were frazzled, and he was second guessing himself. Perhaps this wasn't a good idea after all. Maybe he should excuse himself and let her take a walk on her own. Maybe... He sighed, causing Hermione to look at him.

He looked down at her, temporarily mesmerized. *Good heavens, I have it bad*, he thought to himself.

"Hermione, there's something I would like to talk with you about." He struggled for words. His greatest fear was that she would laugh at him when he revealed his feelings. He needed a moment to regroup and find his waning courage again. He cleared his throat. "Have you taken time to look at the stars lately?" he asked lamely.

She gazed at him in confusion, causing him to point up at the sky. He quickly made up something to carry on with his distraction. "I find it calming to come out here after a long day and watch the sky, looking for recognizable constellations and such."

Hermione smiled then. "I do too, actually. I just haven't done it in a while." She gazed up at the stars, her face relaxing as she looked at the beauty above. They both watched the sky for a while, neither realizing their hands were still encircling one another.

"Look," Severus said as he pointed to the northeastern part of the sky. "A shooting star."

Hermione followed his finger to see. "Oh! It's beautiful!" she exclaimed.

The timing was perfect. Severus gathered his courage and steeled himself for the inevitable heartbreak he felt was to come. He lowered his hand and looked down at Hermione.

"Not as beautiful as you, Hermione."

The shock on her face made Severus smirk. He conjured up a rose and offered it to her. Hermione looked at it, her eyes wide. As if almost in a trance, she reached out and took it, slowly bringing it back to her.

"It's been you all along," she said hypnotically.

"I told you it was," he replied quietly.

"Yes, but you were joking, and I..." Tears filled her eyes as she turned away from him.

Severus looked at her with concern. He felt something stir within him. He hadn't meant to upset her, and the sight of her turning from him made his heart twist within his chest. This was just not going the way he expected. He reached out and encircled her arms comfortingly. She was trembling, her head bent low. She then began to sob. He turned her around and caressed her face.

"I didn't mean to make you miserable," he offered sadly. "I will stop this pursuit immediately. I didn't know it would upset you so, Hermione."

She shook her head emphatically. "No," she replied, but couldn't seem to say anything more. She shook her head again. "No."

His hand moved down to her chin. He nudged her head up slowly so she was looking at him.

"Why are you so upset, then?"

Her arms flew around him, and she pulled him close. She continued to say nothing. He could only assume she was composing herself. His arms involuntarily encircled her. She felt so right within his arms. Deep down he hoped she'd never let him go, but he knew this was too wonderful to last. Despite the warring feelings of elation and despair running through him, he did not push her off, as his conscience was telling him to do. No, he just held her tighter and caressed her back, damn the consequences. He even got up the nerve to kiss the top of her head. He was taking the opportunities he could now, before whatever she was going to say ended any hope he had of being with her.

After what pleasantly seemed like forever, Hermione drew back and looked at him. She sniffled before she began to speak. Severus steeled himself once again for heartbreak.

"I'm sorry I'm such a mess," she offered. She turned and conjured up a wrought-iron bench. "Please sit with me?" she asked shyly. Severus took her hand and immediately sat down on the bench. He smiled at her, urging her to go on. She looked away shyly before taking his hand in both of hers.

"Severus, I have been avoiding you for a while now." She looked away. "I found myself drawn to you two years ago, and I knew you wouldn't ever be interested in me, so I thought the best way to proceed was to stay away from you. Obviously, you're the Headmaster, so that wasn't always possible, but whenever I could, I stayed as far away from you as possible. Nonetheless, even though we spent no time together, I found my feelings for you only increasing instead of disappearing, as I'd so hoped they would."

Severus could only stare at her, eager to hear what else she was going to say. He pushed down his elation, waiting for the rest. Despite this starting to look very good for him, he would not let himself rejoice prematurely. That just wasn't something he did... ever.

"I still felt that keeping away from you was the best thing to do," Hermione continued. "It worked pretty well until these last few weeks. How on earth were you able to find me every day?"

Severus reluctantly pulled his hand from hers and reached into the pocket of his robes, extracting the Marauder's Map. He handed it to her. She looked down at it in surprise.

"This isn't what I think it is, is it?" she asked. Shaking her head, she extracted her wand. "I solemnly swear I am up to no good," she stated.

The map revealed itself.

"The Marauder's Map! I haven't seen this in years," she said with a smile on her face. "Severus, wherever did you find it?"

"I confiscated it from a student a little while back," he explained. "Hermione, what were you afraid of? I've wanted to get closer to you for a long time now, but I could never find you! This map was like a beacon to me. I'm sorry if I stalked you, but the map gave me a way to find you that I could not have done on my own."

She looked at him searchingly. "You really wanted to find me that badly?"

"Yes!"

She looked down at the map again, her cheeks red. "I didn't think you would ever see me as more than the know-it-all you hated in school."

He reached out for her. "It's true you were a know-it-all in school, and I was a spy that had to use everything offered me to cover my guise. You haven't been a schoolgirl for a great while, Hermione. Since your return to Hogwarts I find you intelligent, well-spoken, beautiful..."

She smiled at that. "I'm so foolish," she said with a shake of her head.

"No, never foolish. I understand your fear. I was afraid you wouldn't be interested in me either, Hermione. I was never kind to you in your youth."

She thought about that for a moment. "But you were under such stress. I couldn't blame you for how you acted. And you were very professional in my interview, and you've never been rude in any way to me during my tenure here. The more I got to know you, the more attractive you became, and I soon found myself..." she turned away, blushing. "... dreaming about you."

"You've been dreaming about me?"

She nodded, thoroughly embarrassed. He found her incredibly enticing in that moment and pulled her to him, kissing her soundly. That something he'd felt when he'd brushed her hand that first time returned. He reveled in her and never wanted to release her from the kiss. All too soon, it was over.

"You must tell me about these dreams, Hermione," he said as he looked at her.

She giggled shyly. "There were quite a few. Some weren't very, shall we say, innocent."

He groaned within himself. Before pulling her back to his lips he smiled. "I want to hear every one." Their arms encircled each other once again, and they kissed passionately.

He pulled back to gaze at the beautiful witch in his arms. The map had delivered everything he wanted. His heart filled with hope for a future with Hermione as she now smiled lovingly at him.

He pushed her hair behind her ear and caressed her cheek. "Every, single, one," he murmured before returning to her lips.

A/N: I hope you enjoyed this little romp with the map.