

Tarnished Knight

by Emmy

Hermione gets in over her head and is rescued by a most unlikely person. (Starts as general fic, but will end up as a romance.)

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I own nothing and seek no profit from this story.

Warning: Character spoilers for GoF.

Feedback: Yes, please.

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She can remember the way he looked as he stood directly in front of them – she, Ron, and Harry – when Professor Lupin transformed into a werewolf before their eyes. He stood firm, his arms out, protecting them despite the fact that he was clearly a bit afraid himself. Hermione can remember seeing, literally seeing, the tension in his muscles that day. She sees the same thing again now. He is not afraid, though. Not now. No, now . . . he is just very, very angry. What Hermione cannot understand is why he seems to be angry on her behalf. With the exception of Lupin's werewolf mishap, Hermione cannot think offhand of any instance where Professor Snape jumped into any sort of fray to help her.

Yet, here he is.

And Viktor does seem to be cowering. Finally. Hermione watches, her eyes wide, as Krum nods at what Snape is saying to him and walks away without so much as a glance in her direction. And, when Professor Snape turns his glare upon her, Hermione tries to tell herself that she should do some cowering of her own; she did allow herself to get into that dreadful situation, after all. She cannot, though. She cannot even bring herself to flinch under his harsh gaze.

Her feet are moving, her arms are extending, and she is hugging the dreaded Potions professor. Tightly. "Thank you," she murmurs softly.

"Miss Granger," he barks sharply, even as his hand pats her on the shoulder once in what she takes to be a somewhat reassuring manner. "Do try to remember that dating older boys comes with consequences. If you are not prepared to deal with such things, perhaps you should return to playing with Potter and Weasley."

She pulls away quickly and nods. "Yes, sir."

His scowl seems to deepen just for a second, as he glances up and down her body. "You are not hurt? I don't need to cart you off to St. Mungos?"

"No, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"What?"

The sigh that fills the air reminds her that she is not dealing with a random kind stranger, nor one of her other professors. Rather, she is dealing with Professor Snape, and he is neither kind nor patient. Clearing her throat, Hermione says quickly, "Only four streets over, sir. Near Cooksbury and Bloom."

His eyes narrow. "If I Apparate you to the park at the corner of Bloom, I trust you shall be able to find your way home from there without incident."

She nods quickly. "Yes, sir, that's just right across from my house, but it's really not nes—"

"Miss Granger," he says sharply. "Despite the fact that it is the middle of the summer, I am still your professor. I will not chance Krum – or anyone else for that matter – accosting you between here and your home, given your current state of . . . dress."

Blinking, Hermione looked down and gasped loudly. The entire left strap of her dress has been pulled free, exposing quite a lot of skin. "Bloody hell!"

"I do believe that is the first time I have ever heard you utter those words, or any of the sort, Granger. If school was in session, you do realize I would have to take points."

She tries not to think of why his voice holds such amusement now, choosing instead to attempt to salvage what is left of the strap of her dress. Her parents, she knows, will be appalled. And, when the reality of the situation sets in, Hermione is sure she will be, too. Would Viktor have stopped at all? She glances around; the park they are in is dark and quiet, not to mention deserted. Somehow she doubts Krum would have stopped, no matter how firmly she told him to. A shudder travels over her skin, and she looks up at the professor. "Professor Snape. . ."

"Miss Granger." She does not fail to notice that his voice lacks its normal biting quality. "While I am well aware that you have just realized exactly what I happened upon here tonight, I do not wish to discuss it with you in any way. The *hugging* earlier was quite enough. Now, if we may go?"

She nods and steps up to him cautiously. He sighs heavily again and wraps an arm around her. She thinks she hears him whisper 'hold on' before her entire world seems to spin out of control. Apparating, she quickly discovers, is highly overrated and she never, ever, wants to do it again.

He waits until she's caught her breath, has regained her footing, and pointed out her house. Then, he nods curtly and leaves without another word. Hermione stares at the spot where he had stood only a moment before for several minutes. She will not pretend to understand why Professor Snape intervened on her behalf, except for to understand one of the things he said: he is her professor. Perhaps he simply considered this a part of his job.

In any case, Hermione decides as she heads across the street to her house, she is very glad he happened to be in the area when Viktor decided to get grabby. The hugging aside, she is reasonably sure that nothing too horrible happened while she was alone in Snape's presence to make her life in his class even worse, come September. Ruined dress and all. He only saw her shoulder, after all, and she only hugged him. What could that possibly change about their relationship? Not a lot, she thinks.

One thing is very plain though: Hermione will not be seeing Mr. Viktor Krum again if she can help it.

End part one.