

She Stoops to Conquer

by CiraArana

The diary of a young witch who is madly in love with Severus Snape.

September - December

Chapter 1 of 4

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Disclaimer: The important characters belong to JKR. I only own a set of less important/ totally insignificant characters. The Title isn't mine, either. It's from a play by Oliver Goldsmith.

A/N: It was the bunny. It attacked me one day and didn't take no for an answer, but kept nibbling on my toes until I gave in. It was a very silly bunny.

September December

September, just back at Hogwarts

Dear Diary,

It is strange to be here, after all that happened last year, what with the War and everything. But the War is over and things are back to normal. The school has opened again, and the students and teachers are back. So, here I am now, back at school for my final year and the NEWTs and for something else. The most important thing of all! This year, I'm going to make The Attempt. I will make Severus Snape aware of me and fall in love with me! This demands courage and cunning. But I'm a Gryffindor and a woman, and I know I will succeed! I have to.

September, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

First class today. I spent all the time watching him, listening to his gorgeous voice and planning my tactics instead of paying attention. Thankfully, he didn't notice. If someone had told me years ago that I would fall in love with him, I'd have hexed them! No one could have foreseen *that!* He's so not my type! He's not handsome or flirty or polite. But, oh, he is so *sexy!* The way he talks, the way he moves ... and he will be mine one day!

September, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Horrible lesson today. I had such problems understanding what he was talking about! But, oh, he's so brilliant! And his voice ... hmmm ... it made me giddy just to listen to him! I must study more and ask intelligent questions. That will make him realise I'm not a stupid young girl, but a mature, intelligent woman!

September, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

I got my essay back. It was full of snide comments and crossed out sentences and the comment at the end ... Oh, he's so mean! I had to charm my eyes to make the puffiness go away. Thank god Lavender found that charm!

Lesson was horrible as well. I was so busy trying to understand that I had no time thinking about intelligent questions and then was forced to listen to a lively discussion between dearest Severus and *the Enemy*. I hate her!

September, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I made progress! Yay! I spent last evening reading my textbook to be properly prepared for today's lesson, and I was quite satisfied that I understood it all so well. Then, in class, I asked an intelligent question. Yes, the Slytherins sniggered, but that's what they always do! I didn't pay attention to them. They don't deserve it. *The Enemy* seemed to hide a grin as well. I hate her! But I know I impressed him. Okay, he didn't answer my question, just sneered at me, but his eyes glittered. Yes, he *will* come to admire my intelligence!

September, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Horrible weekend. I spent it in the library, reading and writing my essay for him until I had a headache. And then, yesterday, Professor Flitwick handed our Charms essays back and I was so horrified to see my results! I never got such bad results before! It was most mortifying.

DADA today was even more difficult than last week. I don't understand it, but apparently even the Slytherins understood it. I must study more. Perhaps I can borrow some additional books from the library?

September, Thursday

Dear Diary,

My friends think I'm going crazy with all the time I spend in the library. They want me to come outside with them and have fun. But I can't take the books outside because Pince, the old hag, wouldn't loan them to me, and I need the books to write my essays. And I *must* write intelligent essays! Otherwise he'll think me stupid.

Besides, sometimes I see him in the library. I cherish these moments, even though he ignores me, but that in turn means I can watch him all I want! The only bitterness is that he *does* greet *the Enemy*. Only a short nod or curt word, but he notices her. I hate her.

September, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

What am I doing wrong? This essay was ... oh, he's so mean and horrible! Why did I ever fall in love with him? I hate him!

My Secret Sister has by now figured out there's something going on with a boy. She was a little angry because I didn't tell her, but I thought that after her heartbreak last year she wouldn't want to think about love. She cried a little, but then recovered and promised to help me. I didn't tell her who it is, though. She wouldn't understand and only make things harder for me. That made her angry again, of course, and she threatened to find out on her own, but I made her promise not to. She was narked, so I told her it was a bad omen if anybody knew. That's not even a lie. And it made her drop the matter instantly.

September, Thursday

Dear Diary,

No, I don't hate Severus. I love him, love him, love him! I was just being bitchy. And his comments on my last essay ... okay, they were pretty mean, but when I looked at them again, I noticed that there were subtle hints at how I could improve! That's progress, don't you think? He's trying to help me. Oh, he's such a darling!

October, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

I really think my endeavours show results. He didn't scowl at me today. He didn't deduct house points from Gryffindor, either, not even from Harry! He was even almost polite when a certain someone started showing off her knowledge again. I'm so happy! I will redouble my efforts.

October, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Another essay back full of red insults. Had to apply Lavender's Charm again, but I will not stop!

October, Sunday

Dear Diary,

Hogsmeade weekend. It was nice to get out of the castle and spend time with my friends. I've barely seen them these last weeks what with all the studying. We had a lot of fun, went through all the shops, spent a lot of money, and gossiped. Juicy gossip! I couldn't believe it, but Phoebe swore that Nancy had seen Stephanie *doing it* with Alexander Badcock from Hufflepuff. And he's a year younger than Stephanie!

But the best thing about today was that at Sant's Treasure Trove I saw *just* the right Christmas present for Severus! It's gorgeous, but awfully expensive. I will have to save up my pocket money to buy it. Hm, perhaps I can persuade Mum to give me some extra money? I'm an adult, after all! Adults need more money than children. Oh, I *must* buy it for him! It's too perfect!

October, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Oh, I'm so dead! I fell asleep last night over my DADA essay and had no time this morning to finish it! I had to hand in an incomplete essay! Oh, no! This will ruin everything! *And* I will get a bad grade!

October, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Spent the weekend fretting. My friends thought I was coming down with something since I was so pale and had no appetite and flinched at every noise. Yesterday, they dragged me off to the hospital wing and Madam Pomfrey gave me a potion to calm my nerves. It was of no use because when we left the hospital wing, we met Severus, who looked like a thundercloud. We hurried to leave, but still heard him bellowing at Pomfrey that if she wanted a special potion she ought to ask Professor Riley, the new Potions professor, or even the Granger-chit to brew it for her, but not him, since he wasn't Potions master any longer. Gosh, he was furious! Uh ...

And I was so right about the essay! The look on his face when he handed me the essay back! And his words! 'I know that even you can do much better!' I want to die!

October, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I seriously thought about faking ill to skive off DADA. But my friends dragged me along. Good thing they did. *Saw the Enemy* pegged down. Hah, serves her right! Going on and on and pestering poor Severus with questions no one understands or wants to understand! And this arrogance! As if only she knew what he was talking about! What is this *roisin dubh*, anyway?

October, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Horrible day. Turned out that *Enemy* was right about this rose-thing being a powerful Dark spell. Apparently, it's a kind of black rose created from malice, and when you touch it, coldness creeps into your heart and slowly turns it to ice. Uh, horrible! But how did she know? Damn. Must study more. I can't allow her to know more than I do!

October, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I got desperate after so many failures and thought I had to take a more direct approach to show him what an intelligent woman I am. So, I approached him in the spirit of recklessness (I'm a Gryffindor, after all!) and asked him for permission to enter the Restricted Section. Ever since the War it's out of bounds to everybody, and only with permission from the DADA professor the old hag Pince will let you enter. He stared at me and asked what I needed from the Restricted Section. Oh, his voice ... so soft ... oh ... I told him I wanted to do further study on the subject we're dealing with in class. He sneered at me, but his eyes glittered and he signed the permission. Yay!

But the best was, when I left his office, I bumped into *the Enemy* who apparently wanted to see him as well for one thing or other, and after the door had closed behind her I noticed that my shoelace was undone so I had to linger and tie it, and I heard the murmur of voices, and then he laughed. It was an amused, but cruel laugh, and I so did not pity her for making him laugh at her!

October, Tuesday, Hallowe'en

Dear Diary,

I'm so frustrated! Class was okay, but the Feast ... I wore new robes and had my hair done really elegantly. Noticed several boys staring at me, which was very nice, but Severus ignored me completely. And none of my wonderful little plans worked! My Secret Sister and I had thought about ways to approach him during or after the Feast. She still doesn't know who he is, but she helped me making up several tactics that I could use. But just when I saw my chance, some idiot boy from Hufflepuff chatted me up and then spilled his drink on my new robes! I tried to charm the spots away, but it didn't work. Damn, my new robes ruined!

And just the crown of the evening was that when I left, I saw Severus talking to *the Enemy*! I couldn't get close enough to listen in on them without them noticing me, so I hid behind a suit of armour to watch. They didn't talk long, but he didn't sneer at her, either. And then a Slytherin brushed past her so that she stumbled and fell against him, and he took her arms to steady her, and for a moment it looked as if they were embracing! And Severus neither scowled at her nor did he deduct House points! He said something that made her smile before he inclined his head and walked away! I want to tear her hair out! I hate her!!

November, Thursday

Dear Diary,

This was the second week I spent in the Restricted Section, and I will never go there again. Impressing him or not, the place is just plain scary! I must find another way.

November, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Slytherin lost dramatically to Gryffindor on Saturday. Class was horrible.

November, Thursday

Dear Diary,

My poor Severus is still gliding through the hallways with a dark scowl on his face and keeps deducting points from Gryffindor. I couldn't concentrate in class at all today, because I kept fantasising on how I could lighten his mood. Oh, delicious daydreams ... But, of course, he caught me and I lost 15 points for daydreaming in his class. My friends nearly exploded, but I wasn't angry. Everybody knows that deducting House points from Gryffindor makes him happy, and if these 15 points made him happy, I'm not going to protest.

November, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

A day of triumph! I finally managed to shine in DADA! Yes, yes! Severus and Harry were heatedly discussing some spell or other, with *the Enemy* forever interrupting. I noticed how annoyed Severus was at her stupid arguments. And though I was pretty nervous, I joined the discussion and quite cleverly destroyed every single argument *she* brought forth. Hah! He thanked (!!) me for my contribution, and then he cast a quick glance at *her* with such an expression of malicious glee on his face! I saw how her lips twitched, and then she hung her head, no doubt to hide that she was crying. Oh, glorious day!

November, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Less red than ever before on my essay! I saw the glitter in his eyes and I know he's proud how much I have improved! Well, I certainly worked hard enough!

November, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Tired. Spent whole weekend in library and on the DADA essay. This is all so difficult! Wrote Charms essay last night. Almost forgot the one for Herbology and had to write it

during break. Fell asleep in my favourite class, though ever since we got the new teacher years ago, it hasn't been the same. I wonder how I could ever think him gorgeous. He's nothing in comparison to darling Severus!

November, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Missed DADA today because Amery sent me to the hospital wing (Amery = new Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor, nasty old hag). She said I looked worn out and ordered me to get a Pepper-up from Pomfrey. Stupid Pomfrey kept me for ages, and I arrived to DADA just in time to see the students leave the classroom.

I thought at first that this would be my chance to talk to him under the pretence of asking for homework, but *the Enemy* was still there and they were discussing some thing or other. She was waving a book in his face and he was snarling at her. Hah, serves her right! I stepped in to save my dearest Severus, but he snarled at us both and threw us out of his classroom and then bellowed at her something about reading the wrong books and stuff. I had to ask her for homework, and she snapped at me and stormed off. I never really liked her, but after what she did to my Secret Sister last year I began positively hating her, and now she's forever standing between Severus and me! Stupid cow!

November, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Horrible day. Felt crampy and sick. Got another essay back full of red. It's most unfair! I went to his office hour on Friday afternoon to ask what they did in class last Thursday. He sneered at me, asking if my classmates' notes weren't good enough for me, and when I said I thought it best to get information directly from him, he laughed harshly and told me to read the chapter on *Magica Maleficia* in the textbook. So I did. But all I got was another nasty comment on my essay on how I apparently didn't understand the most basic facts.

Went to Pomfrey and got a potion for the cramps.

November, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Feel sick. And tired. Quarrelled with Secret Sister and embarrassed myself in DADA. Essay from Flitwick back with the comment that 'apparently I have been neglecting my studies.' But DADA is so difficult I have no time left and I *must* be good in DADA!

Went to the hospital wing for another Pepper-up. Pomfrey gave me odd looks, the ugly old hag.

December, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Term's nearly over and I've made no real progress. I don't know what to do anymore. I keep on studying and studying but it doesn't work! My marks aren't getting better in DADA and down in every other subject! I'm going to be thrown out of Hogwarts, and my parents will be happy because they didn't want me to come back at all with what happened here last year and with Severus back as teacher and everything. And then I will never see Severus again! This can't happen! I won't survive it! I must work harder and study more. I can't leave Hogwarts! Not now, not this year! It's my last chance with Severus!

But it's all so much! Friends are still angry. I'm lonely and tired and Severus still hasn't noticed me as a woman and I'm so sad ...

December, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Haven't written for a week. I couldn't because I wasn't even allowed to come near a quill and a book. I had a nervous breakdown last Thursday in Charms and spent the week in the hospital wing. Madam Pomfrey kept me there even after she had given me several calming potions and stuff because she said I was totally worn-out, took too many potions in too short a time and was becoming undernourished. Honestly, what does she think? I have to keep my figure! But she said so and Amery agreed and I spent a horrible week in hospital wing. It was not only a dead bore, but I was also missing all of my classes, couldn't even see Severus, and was getting desperate.

After Pomfrey was satisfied that I was okay, I had counselling sessions with the Headmistress and Amery (so embarrassing!), and they both forbade me to study as much as I've been doing during the last weeks. They told me both that grades aren't everything and that I mustn't ruin my health. Silly cows, I'm not doing this for grades, but for Severus to notice me!

I have to admit, though, that they are right. I can't keep going on as I did. I must slow down; besides, it didn't really work out, did it? Whatever small progress I made in September and October vanished over the last weeks. What's more, I realised that it's not a sign of maturity and intelligence if I work myself to exhaustion just for him and neglect my other subjects. So, in future I will divide my time equally between my subjects. It can only get better.

Yes, girl, that's the spirit!

However, I must work out new tactics.

December, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Spent this lesson staring at him and trying to come up with new tactics. But I couldn't think of anything. It's good that it's Christmas break soon. Maybe when I'm home, I'll come up with a new idea.

But Christmas break means two horrible weeks without seeing my beloved! Oh, I can't stand it! It hurts to even think of it! Not seeing him glide down the halls, not hearing his silky voice hiss insults ... oh, no!

Maybe I can dare Colin to take a picture of him and then take it with me? Or perhaps the library has old copies of the Daily Prophet with his picture?

December, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Today was the last DADA class before the break. I will miss him so much! Tomorrow evening I will be packing my trunks and going home. Two weeks without Severus! Horrible!

I don't have a picture. There was no opportunity to talk to Colin, and I couldn't find old Daily Prophets in the library. Do they even keep them there? Damn. But at least I've figured out how to give Severus the present. I will order a house-elf to give it to him on Boxing Day. Isn't that clever? I have it all wrapped up nicely and written a card that I signed with a *witch that loves and admires you*. Isn't that mysterious and romantic? Oooh, I'd love to see his face when he opens it! But I can't. Anyway, I'll see from his face next year what he thinks of it. I hope he'll like it, but I think he will. It's so gorgeous and so nicely shows the depths of my feelings for him!

Oh, dear diary, I love, love, love him so much! *I must* find a way to win him!

Notes:

Sant's Treasure Trove

= here a jeweller, but actually *Sant and the Treasure Trove* is part of Hystoria O Uuched Dewi (the Welsh Life of St David). Sant is the father of David, who is for the Welsh what St Patrick is for the Irish. Sant was told by an angel that he would find three treasures to mark the place that his son would once possess (the treasures, by the way, were a stag, a young salmon, and a bee hive; well, fashion changes).

roisin dubh (Irish)

= black rose. It wasn't my idea; I borrowed the concept from Mark Chadbourn who in turn said he borrowed from Celtic mythology.

(I think he meant Irish mythology, since *Celtic* mythology in that sense does not exist, *Celtic* being nothing more than the name of a language family that is used to pigeon-hole the various different tribes that lived in Ireland, Britain, Wales, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and Turkey *rant*)

Magica Maleficia (Latin)

= during the Middle Ages the expression for every magic done with ill intention (curses etc.)

January - March

Chapter 2 of 4

The diary of a young witch who is madly in love with Severus Snape.

January March

January, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Back at Hogwarts. It was a close call for me. After my breakdown in December, my parents were even more unwilling to let me go back. But I managed to convince them with the help of my Secret Sister, who came to visit in January.

I was so happy when I came back two days ago! And then I saw him when we arrived at the castle! He strode up from Hagrid's hut, I suppose ~~the~~ *the Enemy* at his heels. He looked as if he was close to hexing her. Why can't she just leave him alone? I hate her. And I love him so much! My heart was beating in my throat, and my hands were shaking, and I was breathless when he brushed past me. He touched me! Yes! His hand brushed mine! Oh, what a feeling! Was it deliberate? Oh, if it was ...

Class today was only a repetition, so I could let my mind wander and admire him. He's so dashing! My Secret Sister and I worked out a new plan, though she still doesn't know who the man in question is. I think she believes it's Harry. I will let her believe it, because even though she is my Secret Sister, and I love her dearly, she wouldn't understand me. Severus is not the kind of man I fancied before. But what are looks in comparison to this voice and this grace and ... oh, Severus is just the sexiest man alive!

January, Thursday

Dear Diary,

First essay was due today. It isn't nearly as long as the ones I wrote last year and certainly not as good. On the other hand, I had time to write the ones for Charms and Transfiguration. I dread what he'll say.

Today was also the first day of my new tactics my Secret Sister and I came up with: if I can't impress him with my intelligence, I shall enchant him with my beauty. No man can resist a pretty young witch! And I am pretty. Even the mirror says so.

So, I'm going to improve my looks. Not so much that it gets noticed and sets the tongues wagging, but enough to make a difference. And according to the new tactics, I wore my hair in a different style today. I saw it in a *Witch Weekly* some time ago, and it's called *Sophia's Sophisticated Sphere*. It's a beautiful kind of bun, and even if it doesn't look the way it does in the picture, it's still pretty. I certainly look good. And he noticed! I know he did! Yay!

January, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Essay back. Wasn't as horrible as I thought it would be. Wore the *Sphere* again today, though I mustn't wear it too often. It will get boring. It's so annoying that we must wear school robes. I got such a pretty new gown for Christmas!

January, Thursday

Dear Diary,

New day, new hairdo. This one is called *Transcendental Triangle*. I found it in a magazine a sixth-year loaned to me. I wasn't sure about it, but my Secret Sister said it's beautiful. And she was so right! I noticed how Severus kept stealing glances at me throughout class! So, finally, he noticed me! My tactics are already working. Oh, I'm so happy!

January, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Today I wore my usual hairdo, a simple long braid. But together with it, I wore the earrings my parents gave me on my seventeenth birthday. They are very pretty, golden and with small diamonds and lapis lazuli. They make me look older. In addition, I wore a little more make-up than I usually do. I looked splendid! Even my impossible mirror said so! Ah, the looks the boys gave me! And I think I surprised Severus. It was so cute! He looked at me and then looked again as if he couldn't believe what he saw. I simply smiled at him. He grimaced as if he was trying not to smile and didn't look at me again. Do I have him flustered? Progress! Oh my god, I'm so happy!

January, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I tried another braid today with five instead of three strands. My arms hurt after I was done. It looks a bit jumbled, but intriguing. I wore large gold hoops and a small necklace. The boys kept glancing at me. It was such a nice feeling to be so admired! *The Enemy* cast me a derisive look, but what does she know anyway! And then she got into a discussion with Severus again! It was really boring. They kept arguing, with occasional arguments from Harry or Ron or one of the Slytherins, but most of the class was very much bored. She's such an egoistic, arrogant little snob! Monopolizing my Severus the way she does! I hate her!

January, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Today, I wore a hairdo I created myself during Christmas break. Very pretty! I think he liked it. He couldn't help a small smile when I entered the classroom right in front of *the Enemy*. I think he appreciated the difference between my sophisticated style and her minimal efforts at looking good. I must remember to be seen close to her more often. Her plain appearance will give me a nice background.

The only thing that saddens me is that my dearest Severus hasn't worn my Christmas present yet. But I know he got it. I asked the elf. Hm, I think I will listen to the grapevine, maybe I can hear something.

January, Thursday

Dear Diary,

The *Sphere* today, with decent but gorgeous make-up. Plus, I charmed a small embroidery to the collar and hem of my robes. It's still school robes, but now they're a lot more individual.

We got separated into pairs today for practising spells, and I managed to get partnered with *the Enemy*. It was slightly unpleasant because I got hexed constantly, but on the other hand, it was exhilarating because Severus was watching us for a long time. The expression on his face! Almost soft, and there was such an adorable little smile on his lips!

February, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Slytherin won against Ravenclaw on Saturday. It makes me deliriously happy to see Severus so happy! And he is! He smiled during class! A real, genuine smile. Okay, directed at that Zabini guy - a Slytherin - but he smiled!! I almost fainted!

February, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Another really gorgeous hairdo today: *Celeste's Crown*. It makes me look like a princess. I wore little pearl earrings and silvery make-up and looked so stunning that Seamus choked on his Pumpkin juice when I sat down opposite him at breakfast. It was very gratifying.

This comforts me a bit, because I don't know how Severus has reacted to my looks. He sprang a mock exam at us in preparation for the NEWTs, he said - and I was so busy with it that I had no time to watch him. I only had time to look up once, but then he was staring at *the Enemy*, and his eyes were slightly dazed as if he wasn't really seeing her.

What was a lot more satisfying was that I got finally news via grapevine. Rumour has it he got several Christmas presents from students, but there was one he was extremely pleased about. No one knows what it was, but it came from a witch. He's said to have been heard saying that the witch apparently knew him very well. I think he was talking about my present. Yay! Oh, I *knew* he would like it! It's such a gorgeous little pendant, and I gave him the matching chain for it, too!

February, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

I wore ribbons in my hair I thought looked very pretty. My Secret Sister said so, too. And I know she wouldn't lie to me, so I ignored Ron's guffawing ~~at~~ *the Enemy's* remark about circus horses. *Her* hair looks like the fur of these Muggle dogs, poodles or whatever they are called, only it isn't violet. But equally curly. I don't care what she says, because my sweetest Severus liked my hairdo. He kept watching me the whole class as we practised spells. I had managed again to be partnered with the Poodle - curly fur is the best background for silken strands adorned with ribbons!

February, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Today, I changed the colour of the stitching on my robes to green. I look good in green and it is a Slytherin colour. No practise in class today, but lecture. Very boring, but then I had a lot of time to watch him and listen to his wonderful voice and think about what to write on the Valentine's card. It must be something romantic, of course, and slightly erotic. I am, after all, a grown woman! But it mustn't be too obvious. Hm ...

February, Tuesday (day after St Valentine's Day)

Dear Diary,

My Secret Sister and I spent the whole weekend thinking what to write on our cards. She wouldn't tell me to whom she gave it because I didn't tell her to whom I gave it. I can't even guess! She's dated no one so far this year. But she must be madly in love, from the look in her eyes. I think it's mean that she won't tell me. I'm her best friend!

We sent our cards yesterday morning via house-elf, and I waited the whole day for a reaction. But he only sneered and glowered. It was so depressing. I got five cards, but none from him. Why not? I know he's interested; this would have been the perfect opportunity to let me know! But no. Nothing from him. I was all the more depressed because my Secret Sister apparently got a card from the boy she fancies, and she was ridiculously happy, but still wouldn't tell me who it is. I cried myself to sleep last night and had to use Lavender's Charm again this morning.

Ah, but then came DADA! And there was a reaction! He was astonishingly nice. No snide comments, no insults. He even complimented the Poodle! I saw the comment on her essay about how brilliant her argumentation was and how well done her research and that she had apparently learned to read the right books. He gave her full 100% -

and he's never done that before. Even the best Slytherin only got 99%. I got less insults than ever before and a nice comment on how well I used my resources. Oh, I think I got him with my Valentine card! Yay!

February, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I so think I'm making progress! Dearest Severus is nicer than ever. Everybody says so! He isn't so nasty anymore in his comments and gives fewer detentions. Plus, I notice how often he looks at the Gryffindor table during meals. Never anything obvious, but with the close watch I keep on him, I notice.

My friends wonder at this change. Someone even suggested that it's because of a woman, that he's nice because he's happy. They shuddered at it, but I nearly burst with happiness! Oh, dare I write it? I think he's falling in love with me! Oh, Severus ... Love me, and I will make you happy forever!

February, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Oh, oh, yes! Progress! Oh, I'm still all dizzy! Dear Diary, I think he was flirting with me today! There is no other explanation for it. He kept shooting glances in my direction, sometimes with a tiny smile. Yes, yes, yes! I knew it! I was so happy that I even didn't mind that the Poudle's books kept poking me in the back. She had a stack on her desk, and every time I leaned back (and I did that a lot because elegantly leaning back makes my robes stretch over my breasts, which is very sexy, and Dean and Seamus kept ogling me), one of those stupid books poked an edge into my back, usually right between my shoulder blades. This didn't only hurt, but also prevented the right angle for elegantly leaning back. Oh, doesn't matter, he noticed anyway. Yay!

March, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Another practise class today. I didn't partner with the Poudle. It's not necessary anymore; or at least it's not necessary to pair with her every time. So I partnered with my Secret Sister and the Poudle with Neville. If I didn't hate her so much, I could almost pity her. Severus watched them practise like a hawk, and we all know what happens to Neville when Professor Snape watches him!

Poor Neville. He got so nervous, and then one of his hexes went wrong, and knocked the Poudle out, and Severus had to carry her to the hospital wing. Poor Neville; he'll get detention for the rest of the term. Severus was so furious! He was pale with anger and only snapped at us to dare not even breathe until he was back before he carried her to the hospital wing. Poor dear, he takes his responsibilities as teacher so seriously! The accident upset him so much that he didn't even remember to conjure a stretcher, but literally swept her up into his arms and carried her away. I envied her only a little. After all, she'd got hit by Neville's hex. And I'd rather be conscious when Severus carries me.

March, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

A calm class today. Severus paired me with the Poudle again. He said he didn't want to risk her life again. That's very sweet because it means he trusts me to do my hexes correctly, but also very mean towards my Secret Sister because now she has to practise with Neville, and apparently, her life isn't as important as the Poudle's. Besides, it's silly. From all I've heard, the Poudle's been through much worse things during the War! Anyway, Neville didn't hurt my Secret Sister. Maybe because Severus wasn't watching him today but me. Oh yes, he was! He did his usual rounds around the classroom, but most of the time he stood right behind me. I could feel his eyes on me, and it made me a little nervous, and ruined my concentration so that the Poudle managed to hex me even more often than usual. And then she had the nerve to grin at him!

Well, she's been acting very odd lately. She beams at everybody and always looks flushed and radiant. Her hair's become even messier! She lies on her bed for hours and stares into space with a goofy smile on her face. I think she's fallen in love. What a surprise, Missy has emotions like everybody else! I wonder who it is, but I can guess. It's always been so obvious, isn't it? The bitch. I hope he breaks her heart! I'll never forgive her for what she's done to my Secret Sister!

March, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I really, really think that The Attempt will be successful. Oh, yes, I'm winning! I will get him! There was no snide remark on my essay this time and even a mild praise! I really think he's falling in love with me! I'm so happy that not even the sight of darling Severus and the Poudle walking down the corridor together angered me. Apparently, she had intercepted him after class and was now bragging about one thing or other. I admire his patience with her! I have no patience at all where Poudle is concerned! I hate her.

Amazingly, my Secret Sister stopped abusing her verbally. She now only shrugs and says, 'Oh, forget it, sister dear, it's all past and gone' and continues to smile dreamily. Her new love has healed her heart. I'm so happy for her!

March, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

He *must* love me! There is no other explanation than love for the change in Severus! He's so nice and polite to everybody, even Gryffindors! And just imagine, yesterday, Sarah Webster from Hufflepuff told me during Herbology that her friend Nourah Farradin heard Gwendolene Tregaron tell Laura Cardega that Amy Marsh-Compsey was in the library Saturday afternoon and saw how Severus got a book from the top-shelf for the Poudle and *dusted it before he gave it to her!* If I didn't know better, I'd say it's someone else pretending to be Severus, but he was still nasty enough at the beginning of the term, and I saw him change and know what caused it.

It must be love. He even *looks* different! He isn't as pale as he used to be, and his eyes are warm and more enticing than ever, the way they glint when he smiles. Yes, he smiles often, yesterday morning even during breakfast in the Great Hall! He must have done something about his hair and teeth as well because, Dear Diary, he's really handsome all of a sudden! And everybody noticed and wonders. My darling Severus, I shall keep our sweet secret!

February, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I still continue my tactics. After all, now, that my darling has become so nice, I want to look my best for him! So, today, I changed the colour of my school robes to a very deep blue. It's almost black, and you can see the difference only when you look really closely. But no matter how small the difference in colour, it has an enormous effect on my complexion, and together with my hairdo, the *Venus* (all hair piled on the head in wild curls with a few strands hanging down), and my pretty earrings I look totally stunning. I couldn't help notice the many sputterings up and down the tables when I entered the Great Hall this morning!

We had another practise class today, and once more I was partnered with the Poudle. We were practising a really difficult Protection Spell. The incantation is *Ceilur*, which is Gaelic and really hard to pronounce even non-verbally, and the wand movement is a sharp, twist-like motion of the wrist with a flourish. I felt as if I broke my wrist at some point and couldn't for the life of me get the incantation right. My consolation is that, apparently, not even the Poudle managed to get it right because at one point Severus interrupted us and grabbed her wrist to show her how to do it.

He stood next to her and led her hand through the move, lecturing her on how to do it correctly in that voice that sends shivers up and down my spine! I could have stood there forever, listening to him and enjoying her embarrassment at being thus corrected! But, alas, class ended, and we got tons of homework, an essay on the spell and practise of the incantation. Darling Severus hasn't changed so much that he would relent and give less homework.

March, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

We practised the spell and the bloody incantation for the whole weekend and really thought we got it right. But we were disillusioned. Apparently, none of us is able to cast even the easiest spell, and we will all fail our NEWTs horribly. And after thus making us all really, really nervous, Severus introduced us to the next Gaelic spell, an attack similar to Stupefy. I don't understand why we have to learn another spell that works similarly, but is much more difficult and so close to the Easter break, too. Severus ignored our protests and set us working. The incantation is much easier *Benur* but the wand movement will give me nightmares.

And the Poudle got it right! I don't know how she did it, but she just snapped her wand and narrowed her eyes a little *an'oo!* That cow Parkinson fell back against her friend Maundeyville, looking dazed. Severus raised both brows, said, 'It seems, Miss Granger, that your training was not a total waste of time,' and deducted points for attacking a fellow student. Then he set us practising and told the Poudle that since she already proved she could do it, she could make herself useful and mark first-year essays for him. And then he did his rounds and watched us practising, and Poudle sat at his desk, beet red, and hunched over the parchments. Once, I saw her grinning madly. Severus never looked at her, I made sure to observe, but I think he's been awfully favouring her. I hate her!

March, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Last class before the break, and this time it will be even harder to go home. Yes, I will go home, because my parents told me to come. I hate it. I'd rather stay here. Everybody else does! So, today was the last chance for me to see my beloved for the next two weeks. These weeks will be more than horrible, a torture! Oh, it could be so nice if I stayed! But it will be torture instead.

We didn't practise spells today. Severus only pushed us through everything we've done ever since September, 'As a repetition,' he said and preparation for the NEWTs, and then gave us a list of books we'd better read for further preparation and threw us out of his classroom. My dearest was very short-tempered today. This is, I think, the last proof I needed. He hates me going home as much as I do. Of course this cheers me, but makes leaving only harder still. I don't want to go! I want to stay here with Severus! But perhaps I can owl him. Oh, yes, that's a wonderful idea! I shall owl him, anonymously, but of course he'll know who the letters come from! Oh, that's so romantic!!

Now I'm reasonably happy again, and not even the fact that Severus and the Poudle just entered the library together annoys me!

Notes

Ceilur (Old Irish)

= imperative 1st person singular of *ceiliid* = to conceal, to hide

It is really hard to pronounce, since both the c and the l are palatal and the r neutral, which makes it sound like *cjeiljurr*.

Benur (Old Irish)

= imperative 1st person singular of *benaid* = to strike

The pronunciation *bjenurr* is definitely easier.

I must add that the existence of a 1st person imperative in Old Irish has been doubted by some linguists. But in this fic, it does exist. Yay for poetic license!

April - June

Chapter 3 of 4

The diary of a young witch who is madly in love with Severus Snape.

April June

April, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Finally back at Hogwarts after an endless, miserable break, and in class with my beloved. Oh, I'm so, so happy to see him again! I didn't see him when I returned, though I expected him to be there. Of course, with some excuse or other, but he wasn't. That disappointed me a little, and I was sad until I heard that he had been very busy during the break, working on some project of his, and that the project kept him so occupied that he forgot everything else around.

At first, I suspected this to be a project the Poudle is involved in after all, she's forever clinging to the hem of his robes and bragging on about extra credit and so on, and she stayed at Hogwarts during the break. But she wasn't involved. Rumour has it that it's some kind of mystery project and deeply private. Oh, oh, I wonder what it is! Has it something to do with me? I bet it has! So, I was happy again and not too disappointed he hadn't come to see me arrive. Though I really thought, after all the owls I sent him, he would come. I wrote every other day! Nothing much, just small, romantic love letters. I bet he loved them! Oh! Perhaps he's too shy? How sweet!

Though, considering what he is usually like, he isn't the least bit shy. On the other hand, when a man has found his one true love, he is insecure and shy. Everybody knows that. Oh, oh, oh!! What a wonderful thought! He loves me, I know he does!

Now that I thought of that, I can forgive him his nastiness. And he was nasty in class today. Moody, and scowling, and deducting points for doing as much as turning a page at the wrong time. He was even nasty to me, sneering at me when I couldn't immediately tell him the right incantation for some spell or other. It didn't help that he called the Poudle an overbearing know-it-all when she stepped in and gave the right answer. And he gave us tons of homework!! I wonder what is wrong. I thought he'd be

happy to see me again.

April, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Something must have happened during the break, something bad. My dearest Severus was nastier than ever during class today, and I had to apply Lavender's Charm afterwards before I went on to Divination. And I wasn't the only one. I met the Poudle in the bathroom, and she had rather red eyes as well. I know I always said that I don't like her, and I really don't, but at that moment we were two women against one man, and I taught her Lavender's Charm.

And it wasn't only today and in our class. All week we've been hearing stories about how mean and snappy he was, deducting points and giving detentions. He looks as horrible as he did at the beginning of the year, and that dreadful scowl is back. But what could have happened? What made my darling so miserable that not even me being back lightens his mood? Oh, does he think I don't love him back? But I wrote him all the letters! He must know what I feel! And it hurts me to see him so unhappy. I so want to hug him and kiss that scowl away, and make him happy again!

April, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Oh, I hate him! He's so mean! How could he say that? How?? He insulted me! Yes! Called me names he never did that before! He broke my heart. Oh, why, why did he say that!?!?

And I tried so hard to lighten his mood! I wore the *Venus* today because I know it makes me look gorgeous, and I know he likes to look at me, but what did he do? He insulted me! And I still don't know why he's so moody and glum!

I spent the weekend chatting with friends to try and find out what happened during the break that made my darling so miserable. And there was a lot of chatting about his abrupt change after he was so nice before the break! But I couldn't find out much. It's all rumours! All I know for sure is that he barely showed up for meals (well, he was busy with this mystery project), got a lot of owls, told Amery one morning to keep her kittens in check, and has been in the blackest of moods since halfway through the break. No one knows why or what happened. My friends speculate he broke up with his lover. Oh, no! Has he given up on me? Does he think I don't love him? But how can he think so?? After all those owls ... what can I do to let him know how I feel?

April, Thursday

Dear Diary,

After some thinking about it, and talking to my Secret Sister and watching him in class today, I think I figured it out. I think I know now why darling Severus is so miserable. Oh, it breaks my heart again and again when I see him like this! But there's nothing I can do. You see, he takes his responsibilities so seriously, and I'm still his student! That must be the reason! He finally figured out he's in love with me, but he can't act on it because he's my teacher. I know that's true. I lay *Five Ways*, and that's exactly what I got!

April, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

I continue with my tactics. Perhaps that helps my darling. Shows him I still feel the same. So, I wore a new hairdo today, with some strands pinned up and some hanging down. It looked really good and unique. I also charmed silver stitching on my deep blue robes and wore my lapis lazuli earrings. And my darling liked it. He looked at me, without a sneer, and didn't insult me. Not even when my wand got tangled in my hair during practice! He simply stood there, staring.

He's still pestering us with these Gaelic spells, and still no one but Poudle manages them correctly, but he doesn't acknowledge it anymore, not like he did before the break. He only nods, but doesn't look at her, and sweeps away. Oh, I so enjoy watching her glare furiously at his back! Aw, is ickle Poudly not teacher's pet any longer?

April, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Horrible day. My essay seemed to be written in red instead of blue with all the comments and corrections he made. And those comments ... he has never, ever been so nasty! I understand he has to keep up appearances, but does he have to do it while commenting on my essay? I had to apply Lavender's Charm again, and once again met the Poudle in the bathroom. She was staring at herself in the mirror, all white, teeth gnashing, and eyes flashing with fury. If looks could kill, she'd be dead. When she saw me in the mirror, she turned and stared at me as I hurried to charm my red eyes away, snarled 'Damn that man,' and stormed out of the bathroom. I wonder what got her so riled up. Trouble in paradise, perhaps?

April, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Class was horrible. Severus sprang another mock exam at us, and I didn't even understand some of his questions! I felt sick when I left the classroom only five weeks until the NEWTs! And I don't have the time to study! I have a far more important project going!

On the other hand, if I study more in the library I might see him more often, have the chance to talk to him, and impress him with my studiousness. Yes, I think I'll do that! I remember, from last year, how often I saw him there. Oh, what a good idea!

May, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I took extra care this morning to look good and went to his classroom a little early. I thought to ask for books I could read for the NEWTs and then, who knows, maybe chat a bit? But when I arrived, Poudle was already there. I hate her! Always, always getting in my way! And she had apparently been arguing with Severus, because when I entered the room, they were standing very close together, both flushed and breathing hard, as if they had been shouting, and Severus was in a really foul mood when he turned to me. He glared at me, then at her, and then snapped at us to sit down and prepare for class. And then he ignored us for the rest of the day. Oh, I was so mad at Poudle! Why, why did she have to go and make Severus angry?!

May, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Phew, what a weekend! I went to Severus's office on Friday to ask for the books, and he sneered at me and told me he had given me a list of recommended books the lesson before the break, and then threw me out of his office.

Damn. Of course I remembered the list! But I needed an excuse to talk to him. Only, he didn't let me talk. I spent the afternoon looking for the dratted list and then spent the weekend in the library. I really studied, but I don't see why I should go all frantic just because of the NEWTs. Okay, so they are important, but still, there's no need to study

like Poudle or Hannah Abbot or Ernie Macmillan. They are mad! Besides, the cards told me that I will achieve my goals so why bother?

And because I didn't study like mad, I saw Severus enter the library. After a while, I followed him inconspicuously under the pretence of looking for a book. I half expected him to go into the Restricted Section, but he didn't. He went to the Magical Beasts and Creatures section where he got some books on water-spirits (I looked at the shelves after he was gone to see what books he got, and at first I was surprised, but then I remembered my third year with all the creatures Lupin told us about).

On his way out, he stopped at Poudle's desk, and they exchanged a few words, but that didn't bother me at all because although I couldn't hear what they said, I could see how angry she looked. Apparently, he had insulted her again. My triumph was heightened when he greeted me as he brushed past me, shortly but civilly, and I saw Poudle watching us. I couldn't help a smile, at which she raised her brows, but then shrugged and bent down again over her books, and I floated back to my own desk.

This calmed all fears that rose over the last few weeks. He really does love me! But I'm his student, and he can't let it show. But he was polite in the library at the weekend and today in class as well. Yes, indeed! He didn't snarl at me when I mispronounced *Expelliarmus* (he's stopped teaching new spells and is now revising about everything we ever did), but merely snorted and told me to practise the correct pronunciation if I couldn't do it non-verbally, and then went on to Dean and Seamus. He's nasty to everybody, but not to me any longer! He loves me!

May, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Class today was practical revision again, and this time I did all my hexes correctly, which he acknowledged with a nod. And he criticised Poudle! He told her she had to do better than that to impress him! At which she promptly hexed him! I believe I was never more shocked. She must have gone mad! And Severus, to everybody's surprise, merely gave her a horrible scold and deducted tons of points, but didn't put her in detention nor threaten to have her expelled.

This is the proof! I did manage to lighten his mood! I have influence on his emotions, and that can only mean he cares for me! Oh, I'm so happy!

May, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Slytherin smashed Hufflepuff last Saturday. Severus ought to be happy, but he is not. On the other hand, he didn't sneer at the Hufflepuffs, either, which means he can't be in a very black mood. Plus, today in class he was almost his old, nasty self from the beginning of the year. Not as nice as in March, but neither as mean as he was these last few weeks. He called us a bunch of dunderheads and prophesised that we shall all fail our NEWTs abysmally, but he didn't insult any of us. Not even Poudle.

I just wish he would stop talking about the NEWTs. It's only three and a half weeks! We are all drowning in homework and revisions. With all the studying I must do, I have barely time to continue the conquest of my beloved.

May, Thursday

Dear Diary,

I now spend every evening in the library ostensibly studying, but in truth waiting for Severus to show up. Sometimes I'm lucky and he puts in an appearance, but those are rare occasions. Well, of course, he must have his own library and doesn't depend on the school library. And he never stays very long, just sweeps in to get his books and leaves, barely acknowledging the students' presence.

Today was one of the very, very few times he did, though. He saw me when he came in; our eyes locked for a second, and he grimaced as if he wanted to suppress a smile. I stared after him when he swept past my desk, totally surprised, and my heart beating madly in my throat. He almost smiled at me! After he completely ignored me in class today! Oh, this is what I live for, these few, secret moments!

This short, sweet moment had made me so happy that I didn't even mind seeing him with Poudle later. I suddenly noticed that I needed a certain book that happened to be found somewhere in the direction darling Severus vanished between the shelves, and so I went in search of it and that's when I saw them.

Poudle was hugging a book and leaning against the shelves, looking up at him, and Severus was bracing himself with one hand on a shelf above her head and leaning down, quite threateningly. He seemed to have said something very mean to her, because I'd swear she was crying. She tried to say something, but he hissed at her and pushed back, and when she opened her mouth again, he made a cutting gesture with his hand and stormed out of the library.

My darling almost smiled at me and was mean to the Poudle. Yay!

May, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

Apart from studying, the weekend was a failure. Severus didn't show up in the library. And he was late for class today! What kept him? When he finally arrived, he was in such a foul mood, we expected to be hexed every moment. I've never seen him like that before! He wasn't moody; he was in a towering rage! He merely snapped at us to start practising, and then continued to criticise us and deduct points. This was the worst class I've ever had in my life! What in the world made him so mad?

May, Thursday

Dear Diary,

Rumours are running around about the reason of Severus's foul mood which, by the way, hasn't abated one bit! The one that sounds most likely is that he had a row with the Headmistress on one thing or other. Some even claim to know that it was about a student. My friends said this sounded true; after all, he's been so nasty to us for weeks. Of course, there would have been a student who didn't like it and complained to their Head of House.

I decided to test the waters, so to speak, and suggested that it was because he was in love with a student, and the Headmistress naturally couldn't tolerate that. They all looked at me as if I had grown a second head, and even when I reminded them that they as well had believed him to be in love in March, they just shook their heads and said it was gross. Lucky me that I didn't tell my Secret Sister!

May, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

I was so right! Everybody thought I was going crazy, but I was right! The portraits in the Headmistress's office have been whispering with the other portraits, and at one point the students caught the whispering, and now it's all over school: Severus is in love with a student. And not just any student, but a witch from Gryffindor! So there! Dear God, I all but burst with happiness when Phoebe told me that she heard it from Anna Perry, a fifth-year, who had it directly from the Fat Lady! There's no room for doubts anymore! He loves me!! Oh, I'm so, so, so happy!!

May, Thursday

Dear Diary,

The rumours are still running around the school like wild-fire. Whenever we have the opportunity, my friends and I discuss it. Well, they discuss it, marvelling that I was

so right about it and wondering who the witch in question might be, and I listen to them and try not to burst out singing. I'm so happy!

The Slytherins all are mad at the rest of the school for their gossiping, and whenever they hear someone talk about the rumour or even hint at it, they hex them. Severus ignores it, while other teachers keep on deducting House points in dozens. Since Slytherin isn't so far back in House points, I assume Severus secretly gives the lost points back to his house.

With the rumour still fresh, class today was horrible. Not that Severus was nastier than before. He was still fuming, but all he did was torture us with practise revision. But the Slytherins were watching us, and neither of us dared say anything lest they thought we were offending their Head of House. Even Harry, whose feud with Severus is legendary, didn't say anything.

He paired with Poudle today, and if I didn't know they are bosom companions, I'd say he hates her: he kept flinging hexes and jinxes at her, and she really had to struggle to keep up with him. It's been some time since I've seen Harry in action, and if I wasn't already madly in love, I'd fall for him. He looks so amazing, and it's pretty obvious he's a lot more powerful than we all thought!

June, Tuesday

Dear Diary,

The last week before the NEWTs has begun, and everybody is nervous. Even I! Although both the cards and the crystal ball tell me that I don't have to worry. But I do everybody is frantic, and that's catching. I can't remember ever studying so hard, not even last year before my breakdown! And I'll have another breakdown before next week comes, with all the revisions and practices the professors force us through! There isn't time for anything else but studying; rumours, tactics, relationships are all put on hold till the week after next.

June, Sunday

Dear Diary,

Fatigued to death after intense studying. Tomorrow at nine, I have my first exam in Transfiguration. I hope I can sleep tonight!

June, Wednesday

Dear Diary,

Over, over, over!! My last exam is over! I'm a graduate of Hogwarts now! Yay!! Oh, I'm so relieved it's finally over! The last week ... boo! I was forever either taking an exam or studying for another, but that's over, over, over now! No more exams for me! I feel as light as a feather and SO happy!

There are others who still have to sit exams, but both my Secret Sister and I are done, and we're planning a large party in Gryffindor for Friday when everybody has sat their last NEWT! It's a reason to celebrate, no matter how the results are! We'll get them some time in July, Amery told us, but I don't care much about them. I think I did fairly well, and besides, when I get the owl I shall be engaged to darling Severus and that's the only career I want! Mrs Severus Snape!

Oh, oh, oh! I don't know how I shall survive next week till the leaving feast. Ah, but I know what will happen then. I have something to look forward to! And it's something so delightful, so ... oh, it's better than any words could ever be!!

June, Friday, the day of the Leaving Feast

Morning

Dear Diary,

The week's over, and how I survived it, I'll never know. I'm so giddy! My head feels as if it's stuffed with clouds. Is it only nine days since I sat my last NEWT? I've forgotten everything! I've been floating on clouds and don't even remember what I did this week. I've lived as if I was in a dream! But the real dream, the one I've been dreaming for months, will come true tonight!

I haven't seen my darling very often this week. He was busy grading all the exams of the first- through fourth-years. Poor dear! Such beautiful weather, and he had to stay inside and grade exams! It's not surprising he always looked so sour at mealtime! Ah, but I will make him smile before the day ends!!

It's still early. Only Poudle is awake. She isn't looking very well, even for her standards. She's pale and thin, and her hair looks awful. Her eyes are a little too bright, and have been for some time, a sure sign that she applied Lavender's Charm far too often. So she's been crying? I wonder why. Oh, well, perhaps she thinks she answered a question or two wrong and won't get seven Outstanding.

But I won't think of her. I'd rather think of my sweetest darling Severus! Oh, and of my dress! I bought such beautiful new dress robes, just for this occasion! Well, I had to, thanks to that Hufflepuff on Hallowe'en. But now, I don't mind he ruined the robes because my new ones are so much prettier! They are of a dark, shimmering emerald green with embroidery in a lighter shade of green. But the embroidery, gorgeous as it is, also has a practical value because it spells out charms against tearing of the cloth and so on in Indian! My Secret Sister was as green as my robes with envy. Hers are blue, and though they aren't as gorgeous as mine, they are very pretty and suit her.

We're both going to wear elegant hairdos I haven't decided which one yet and our most beautiful jewellery. I can't wear my earrings because the blue lapis clashes with my green robes, but my parents sent me grandma Patil's jewels, traditional Indian jewellery, and they look magnificent with my robes! Oh, we'll look splendid! And take the shine out of everybody else!

I'm looking forward to seeing Severus's face when he sees me wearing my new robes! Oh, I'm so looking forward to tonight! It will be wonderful! I know it! This is going to be the happiest day of my life!

Night

Dear Diary,

I hate her! I HATE her!! And him too! I wish they were dead! I wish I was dead! Why, why? It was supposed to be me! ME! Not her!! How could he do this to me? All the time I thought it was me! My life is over. She ruined everything!!!!

And it began so well! My Secret Sister and I looked so good in our dress robes! All the boys were staring! Ron gaped at us, and Seamus almost missed the bank when sitting down. It was very gratifying. I didn't even mind that *she* looked so good again. I remembered she did the same in our fourth year at the Yule Ball, when she showed up with Krum and stunned everybody because nobody knew she could look so good. She did the same tonight. She had been looking so ill, and then she swept in tonight, wearing dress robes of such deep red they seemed purple and her hair tamed and shimmering and ...

I hate her! I HATE HER!! She had NO RIGHT to look so good, that ... that ... there are no words to describe her! Oh, I could scream when I think of it!

Well, the evening progressed very well. The feast was, as usual, splendid, though it was odd to see McGonagall in the Head Seat, and not Dumbledore. I kept watching the bastard Snape. He looked tense and moody. I feel ready to burst when I remember thinking that he was nervous about proposing to me! Oh, I wish I could hit him! And her!!

But back to tonight. After the feast was over, the first- through fourth-years went to their common rooms and supposedly to bed, and the fifth- through seventh-years stayed

for the party. It was a wonderful party! The music was great, and we danced a lot, which was great fun. I wanted to dance with Severus, but he looked so forbidding that I didn't dare ask.

I noticed that my Secret Sister very often danced with Ron, and that *she* danced with him only once. It makes me mad to remember that I thought it odd, and weren't they supposed to be an item? But they danced only once, and she didn't seem to mind he danced so often with a girl she would have loved to hex only two years ago!

Oh, I'm so *angry*! I wish I could hex her!!!

But of course I didn't pay much attention to her, only to that bastard Severus, of course. I always knew where he was, whether he was brooding in a dark corner or berating fifth-years for drinking mead, which they weren't allowed to. Close to midnight, I saw how he crept out of the Great Hall, and naturally, I followed him.

He left the castle and went down to Lover's Garden that's a kind of shrubbery halfway down to the lake, and the name of course only exists in the vocabulary of the students. He swept along the paths, blasting bushes apart and deducting House points from all the poor students he caught snogging.

Then he paused, and I thought he was about to go back to the castle, but he went on and to the bank that's hidden in there. I didn't know he knew about it because it's really the most secret spot. And so romantic! With a wonderful view down o the lake!

I wondered why he was going there, but then I thought and oh, how mad it makes me to think of it that he knew I was following him (he was a spy after all!) and wanted to guide me there and propose! So I followed him there, but when I came to the last corner, I saw that there was someone there already. I felt disappointed at first, but thought Severus would get rid of them soon, so I hid in the shadow of a bush and stayed.

I wish I hadn't. I wish I'd never seen or heard anything!! It was a horrible, horrible scene! It's still clear in my memory, and I know I'll never forget it! I wish I could Obliviate myself! But all I can do is write it down and hope to forget it.

I was hidden in the bush and waiting for whomever it was to leave, but nothing happened, and so I crept a little closer until I could peer at the bank. My jaw dropped when I saw that the person there was Poudie! She sat on the bank, back rigidly straight, and face turned to the lake. Severus simply stood there and looked at her, and neither moved nor said anything for quite some time. But then he stepped closer and called her, and that's when the nightmare began. I'll never forget it!

'Miss Granger,' he said, and it wasn't in his classroom voice.

She looked up and said coolly, 'Yes, Professor Snape? Is there something I can do for you?'

'I want to talk to you, Miss Granger,' he answered calmly.

She lifted her brows at that, which gave her a very haughty expression. 'Oh? I don't know what you could want to talk about! I think all was said weeks ago.' She turned away.

He stepped a little closer and said, 'You may of course think so, but there are still some things I need to say.' His back was turned to me, so I couldn't see his face, but his voice sent shivers down my back. He sounded so urgent, so pleading!

But she wasn't touched and simply snapped, 'Yes, I think so, and I don't want to hear it!'

He stood still as a statue. Finally, he said, and it sounded as if he fought to say each single word, 'If this is your desire, I shall not bother you again.'

She didn't look at him, and I saw how her hands clenched in her lap. 'Yes, it is!' she said vehemently.

He bowed slightly, said flatly, 'As you wish,' and turned to leave, when suddenly she whirled around and shouted, 'You didn't listen to me, either!'

He stepped closer again and balled his fists. 'I couldn't!'

'You *couldn't*?! You mean you didn't want to!'

'No, I did not want to hear it, stupid girl, because it would have made everything even worse!' he hissed at her.

'*Worse*?!' she screamed. She looked ready to hex him. 'So you say it was okay to hurt me? To brush me aside like ... like I didn't matter?'

He grabbed her shoulders and shook her. 'No, it wasn't okay, but it was the only thing I could have done, you silly girl!'

'S-silly ...? Oh!'

She started pummelling him with her fists, and in the pale moonlight I could see tears running down her face. He struggled to stop her, and finally managed to get hold of her hands and held them down. 'Use your admirable brain, Hermione!' he snapped impatiently. 'You were my student! What else could I have done? My reputation is not of a kind that would allow me to brush off rumours. I'm still on social probation and '

'Is that all you care for?' she screeched. 'Your reputation?'

'Silly girl! Think! Reputation is one of the most valuable assets in my profession, and if there was only the tiniest hint of something irregular ... the Board of Governors would have fired me before I could have said "Hogwarts"!'!

She glared at him, clearly not convinced, and he growled, 'As it was, I had to listen to a damn impudent scold from the Headmistress on proper behaviour, and when she was finished, I was given a talking-to by a portrait! It may seem a petty reason to you, but it was self-preservation. I'm a Slytherin after all. And no, it wasn't only my reputation I was concerned for, but yours as well. Think, Hermione! What would the wizarding world have said? Remember what that Skeeter woman wrote about you during the tournament! This would have been worse! So, why risk everything when in only a few months' time the obstacle would eradicate itself?'

They were both silent, staring at each other, and the anger on her face faded. 'You could have told me,' she finally said very softly, a little hurt.

'Would you have listened?'

'Of course!'

He shook his head. 'But would you have *listened*? No, you wouldn't have. Shh,' he interrupted her protest by putting one finger to her lips, and his voice was almost gentle when he continued. 'No, Hermione. You would have listened to my words, but not to my reasons. You would have begun to argue that we could try to keep it secret.'

'Well, we could have!' she protested, and he shook his head again.

'No. You can't keep a secret of that size in a place like Hogwarts. Someone would have found out. And this would only have been another incentive for you.' He paused, and then went on, in a tender voice that quite shocked me, 'You would have argued that you are not ashamed of yourself or your feelings, and you would have gone ahead and tried to brave the world. You would have taken the risk, Gryffindor, and I couldn't allow you to do it. For my sake as well as yours.'

She lowered her eyes. 'But why ... when I tried to tell you ... why were you so ... why didn't you let me finish?'

He let go of her wrists and took her hands in his. 'Because I'm only a man, Hermione. I know my limits. Had you said ... what you intended to say ... But you were my student, and a teacher mustn't kiss his student.'

Her eyes flew up to his face, surprised. 'Oh!' She blinked, and frowned. 'But ... why are you here now?'

He bent his head down and whispered, 'It's eight minutes past midnight. Hermione, you are no longer my student.'

She smiled shakily and tilted her head back. 'Is a teacher allowed to kiss a former student?' she asked softly.

His answer was so quiet I almost didn't hear it. 'A man is allowed to kiss his future wife.'

She gasped and pulled back, staring at him with wide eyes.

'W-wife? Severus, do you ...?'

He inclined his head in a nod. 'If you want to have me.'

'You ... you ...!' She was angry and clearly at a loss for words, but then her features softened, and when she smiled up at him and cupped his face in her hands there was a glow in her eyes that couldn't be mistaken. She pulled him down and whispered, 'You had my answer weeks ago, Severus.'

And then she kissed him. Or he kissed her. I don't know. And I don't care. When she threw her arms around his neck and he pulled her close, I could move again after having frozen in shock halfway through the scene, and I turned and ran back to the castle. I don't know if they heard me or not, and I don't care! I simply ran, fled from the horror, back up the stairs to the dorm, and I flung myself onto the bed and cried and screamed, kicking and punching the mattress and pillow, wishing it was her face. Or his! I felt sick and thought I'd throw up, and at the same time I was burning with fury!

Damn, damn, damn! It was supposed to be me! He was supposed to propose *to me*, not to *her*! Why did he do that?? I don't understand it! He loved me! I know he did! I can't have been that wrong all the time! All those moments ... he must have meant me! He must have loved me! I hate her, I hate her! She has stolen him from me! She must have hexed him, or made him drink a love potion, or ...

Oh, I HATE HER!!

And then, after some time, my Secret Sister came dancing into the room and told me ecstatically that Ron had invited her to come to his home during summer, and that she was sure he would propose very soon. Oh, I could have strangled her! Apparently, they've been dating secretly since Valentine's day, but she never told me because she thought I'd be angry with her for forgiving him, and then she went into raptures of how handsome he was, and how funny, and how brave, and so on. I longed to stuff her mouth with my pillow!

Ages later, she suddenly remembered my plans for my beloved and asked me how it went, and then I really threw my pillow at her and screamed and raged and hid in the bathroom.

It's so degrading, so mortifying! Lavender will be engaged before I am! And I look better than her! It's so unfair! Everybody's got a man but me! Lavender has Ron, Phoebe's been dating Jeremy Richards from Ravenclaw for months, Judith has been prattling about some guy, who graduated two years ago and according to her is only waiting for her to leave school before he proposes, and Poudle...

It's not fair!! He doesn't love me, but that furry Hermione Granger! He's going to marry her! Cut out by the Poudle! It's a shame! I hate her! I hate them both! And I'm going to marry the first guy that I'll meet when I leave this bathroom!!

Notes

Five Ways

= a way of laying the runes for fortune-telling

July

Chapter 4 of 4

Society news from the Daily Prophet.

July

The Daily Prophet, Society News

Unprecedented Rush for Matrimony on Memorial Day

Last night's great celebration was enlivened by the announcement of several engagements.

Ever since You-Know-Who's death, life and love have been blossoming throughout the wizarding world. The number of marriages has increased, and in eleven years' time, the venerable halls of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry will be thronging with the laughter of the children of Peace. We have been living in the merry month of May all year round. And now, the great Heroes of the War have joined the dance.

The dessert had just been served last night when Professor Snape, Order of Merlin, First Class, teacher of Defence Against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, unexpectedly rose to announce his engagement to Miss Granger, the pretty young witch who sat by his side and blushed becomingly at the announcement.

Miss Hermione Granger, Order of Merlin, First Class, is a close friend to the Defeater of the Dark, Harry Potter, Order of Merlin, First Class With Honour. She has been lauded as the brightest witch of her age and has recently graduated from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry with truly Outstanding success.

When the dark man at her side bent down to kiss her hand after the announcement, the smile Miss Granger gave him made the matrons grab for their handkerchiefs before they joined the frenetic applause. Yet afterwards, there were whisperings about this match, about when the relationship started, and whether this engagement was in any way related to Miss Granger's smashing good grades.

'Nonsense,' snorted the enraged headmistress of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Professor Minerva McGonagall, Order of Merlin, Second Class. 'I can assure you, Professor Snape kept strictly to the rules of decorum. There was no relationship beyond that of student-teacher while Miss Granger was at Hogwarts. And it is a sad affair that I have to remind the wizarding world that the NEWT exams are given by the Wizarding Examinations Authority (an outside Board of Examiners), and not by the teaching staff of Hogwarts. It's out of the question that Miss Granger influenced the examiners in any way! And if you don't trust me, ask Professor Marchbanks, who supervised the practical exam!'

But the engagement of Professor Snape and Miss Granger was just the first surprise of the evening. When the speeches after the feast began, Mr Ronald Weasley, Order of Merlin, First Class, another close friend to the Defeater of the Dark, rose and announced his engagement to Miss Lavender Brown. Mr Weasley, who is renowned for his brilliance at wizard chess, and the beautiful Miss Brown dated during their sixth year at Hogwarts, but due to misunderstandings and the strain of the approaching War, they broke up. Over the past year, they came closer to each other again and, now that the War was over and misunderstandings were erased, found in the other their one true love.

The announcement and the newly affianceds' smiles sent the matrons once more grabbing for their handkerchiefs, and the applause the young couple received was deafening.

And as if that had not been enough happiness for one evening, young Mr Seamus Finnegan, Order of Merlin, Third Class, of Gryffindor House and classmate of the heroes, rose to announce his engagement to the Indian beauty at his side, Miss Parvati Patil. Mr Finnegan and his mother were the leaders of the Irish Rebels Against You-Know-Who, the underground organisation that so energetically worked against Death Eater activities in the Republic of Ireland. Miss Patil, also a classmate of the heroes, is beyond any doubt the most beautiful graduate of Hogwarts.

While Mr Finnegan had felt most tenderly for her for several months, she only discovered her love for him when they had left school. Yet, her ardour cannot be doubted by anyone who saw her, sitting close to the beaming Mr Finnegan and casting dark glances at everyone who came close, muttering 'I hate her, I hate her' under her breath. These words were supposed to be directed at a pretty young witch at the neighbouring table, who kept flirting outrageously with Mr Finnegan.

After so many surprises, the atmosphere of the following dance was throbbing with happiness and prickling like a freshly opened bottle of the finest Cherry Champagne. Who knows what surprising and happy announcements we shall hear in the next days and weeks? Though we do not want to present ourselves as Seers, we can predict another happy announcement in one year's time.

When asked about his thoughts on the engagements of his friends, Mr Potter, the Defeater of the Dark, Order of Merlin, First Class With Honour, smiled and said, 'They found their happiness, and I am happy for them,' and smiled down at Miss Ginevra Weasley. Pretty Miss Weasley, a formidable witch, youngest offspring of Arthur and Molly Weasley and the first girl in the Weasley family for several generations, smiled back at him, and their hands linked closer together. The expression in their eyes made your faithful correspondents grab for their handkerchiefs, and we are sure that as soon as Miss Weasley graduates from Hogwarts School next year, we shall hear an announcement from Mr Potter.

The evening ended splendidly, and most romantically, with the three happily engaged couples dancing the last dance. These were moments for deepest sighs and more happy tears. Who should judge other people's happiness? Yet, in our eyes, the most genuine representation of deep, true love was not Miss Parvati's possessive clinging to her betrothed nor Mr Weasley and Miss Brown's amorous dilly-dallying either, but the way Miss Granger and Professor Snape were lost in each other's eyes as they drifted at a correct distance across the dance-floor.

It touched our hearts, and we – and with us the staff of the *Daily Prophet* – wish the three couples all the best in the world. After the horror of the War, and the sacrifices they made to save our world, it is heartening to see those people finally gain the happiness they so richly deserve.

And we close, handkerchiefs in hand and romance in our hearts,

Yours ever faithfully,

Rebecca and Rabea Rosemont, the Romance Reporters

This article would have been a lot better if the bloody editor hadn't cut out all the good parts!

The End