

People Will Say...

by MollyP

A slightly humorous and extremely fluffy attempt to merge Severus and Hermione into a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I rather enthusiastically abuse their characters and lyrics, but in the end Rodgers and Hammerstein as well as Ms. Rowling have absolutely nothing to do with me.

When Hermione saw the tall figure approach, walking up the gravel path to the McGonagall highland cottage, she abruptly turned and fled towards one of the many hills surrounding it, the wind whipping her woollen robes about.

Minerva, sitting on a small wooden bench at the front, peered up at her disconcerted-looking ex-colleague. "Apparently, she likes you."

The dark-haired man let out a derisive snort. "If she liked me any more, she'd sic the dogs on me."

Minerva raised a sardonic eyebrow. "Indeed." She sighed, and against her better judgement, decided to take the plunge. "I don't know what you fought about this morning, but perhaps she just needs to know a bit more about your feelings in this matter. You do tend to come across as a bit aloof, even to those who know you well."

"My — Oh, for — It should be painfully obvious even to the most obtuse of her imbecilic friends!"

Minerva simply stared at him impassively, until he let out a strangled noise at the back of his throat and turned away from her, down the path he had seen Hermione take.

When she spotted him, she let out a weary chuckle. "You know, you can't keep being seen following me about like this. People will talk."

He stopped short, scanning her face for any sign of the tears she had been shedding earlier. "Will they?" he asked tentatively. "I doubt people even know we exist."

"Oh, they certainly do, and they certainly have been talking." She turned her face away, walking a bit further up the hillside. "You know, since I am concerned for your privacy in this, perhaps I could persuade you to follow a few simple rules, you could avoid the embarrassment of being so conspicuously emotional."

"Emotional? Surely you jest."

"Yes, emotional. Now really, Severus, you should listen to me on this if you don't want to be known as a man who 'wears his heart on his sleeve'."

"I hardly think anyone would ever—"

"What about the bouquet of flowers I got last week? And the one you sent to my Mum, the bottle of Scotch for my father? You're acting like you want their approval."

"Well, I—"

"In the Ministry canteen yesterday, you laughed so hard at one of my jokes you nearly fell out of your chair!"

"It was a very funny—"

"Not the point, dear. The other day, your secretary came up to me and told me how romantic she thought it was that you sometimes just sighed and gazed at my picture on the staff wall with glowing eyes, just like I did with yours!"

"You do? I mean..."

"Apparently, you keep mementos of our times together in your desk drawer. My glove from the anniversary ball, the rose I had in my hair at Michaelmas. Do you know who conveyed that bit of information to me? Your protégé, Draco "Bigmouth" Malfoy. So, as you may imagine, everyone else knows as well."

"What was he doing in my office?"

"People will say we're in love, Severus."

He took a deep breath to calm himself before retorting, "Well, if they do, the blame cannot possibly be laid entirely at my door. Who was the one who brought me home-baked mince pies at work in December? When we were out in the Forbidden Forest, whose idea was it to carve our initials on that tree?"

"So we would find out again—"

"It hardly matters what the purpose was, people have seen it and drawn conclusions accordingly. I think, perhaps, before you presume to lecture me on this, you examine your own transgressions more thoroughly. Did you not tell Lavender Brown that I was the most charming man you had ever known, certainly more charming than the Weasley boy she had married on that day?"

"I was drunk and she was gloating so horribly—"

"Did you not ask the Weasley girl for advice on how to do your hair for our first dates in a most uncharacteristic show of vanity? On the night of my mother's funeral, you stood out in the rain with me for hours, not complaining, not seeking shelter."

"Severus, I—"

"Every time we go anywhere, you take my arm, or hold my hand. Most agreeable to me, I might add, but certainly more proof for our avid observers. At the aforementioned anniversary ball, you danced all night only with me until the enchanted stars in the ceiling started to fade and nearly everyone else was gone. You know I've never made it my habit to dance with anyone at these functions. Everyone could see I did not mind in the least on this occasion, however."

As he spoke he extended a hand towards her, never breaking their intense eye contact. "I think I have made it obvious by my actions, but let me say it to you now. What people think is up to them, but their estimations are certainly accurate as far as my feelings are concerned."

Hermione gasped, stepping so close her chest brushed his front.

Severus leaned his forehead against hers. "Let people say we're in love," he whispered, and only the Scottish hillside witnessed the conclusive evidence they now displayed.

Note: The full text of the rather heavily quoted song "People Will Say We're in Love" from Oklahoma! can be found here:
<http://www.guntheranderson.com/v/data/peoplewi.htm>