

Meet the Parents

by *Subversa*

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Chapter 1 of 1

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They met in her rooms, each of them freshly washed and groomed. They agreed upon Muggle dress for this excursion; Hermione, mainly because it was still so hot, and Severus, because he felt the Grangers would be less reminded of his anomaly if he were not swathed in black robes.

She greeted him at the door with a dazzling smile and pulled him into her tiny sitting room, only to begin snogging him rather wildly. Severus quickly put a stop to her exploratory groping; she sighed against him with resigned acceptance when she heard his dark chuckle.

"Shall we start this outing off with a bang by showing up late and smelling of sex? *That* would certainly impress them."

"You're right." She turned from him and began to reapply her lip-gloss at the mirror over her love seat.

"I am always right." He crossed his arms over his chest and curled his lip at her.

"...always a right *pain*," she muttered to the mirror.

"Speak up, dearie, I don't think he heard you," the mirror advised her helpfully.

"Oh, sod off," she said crossly, recapping her cosmetic and returning it to her pocket.

Severus grasped her shoulders and turned her to face him, surveying her critically. "Always look your opponent in the eye when delivering a verbal insult," he instructed, using the pad of his thumb to remove a dot of colour from the corner of her mouth. "It is far more intimidating for the recipient as well as far more satisfactory for you."

She gazed up at him in amazement. "Do you actually have all of this stuff written *down* somewhere?"

Severus quirked an eyebrow at her. "Do you doubt it?" he inquired provocatively.

She narrowed her eyes at him. "Probably in the Slytherin House Handbook," she sniped.

"Excellent, Miss Granger. Ten points to Gryffindor. Shall we go and ask your parents if we can get married, now?"

The Grangers greeted Severus with unreserved pleasure, each shaking his hand in turn and thanking him for the way he had protected their daughter and saved the life of Harry Potter in the final showdown with the Dark Lord.

"You received a commendation from the Queen, I understand?" Herman Granger asked, gesturing for Severus to precede him into the dining room.

"Very quietly, yes. Along with Professor Dumbledore and Potter, of course," Severus answered politely, ill at ease, as ever, with the mention of his honours.

"And, more importantly in the wizarding world, he also received the Order of Merlin, First Class," Hermione interpolated proudly, her eyes glowing as they rested on his face.

Severus merely bowed his head in acknowledgement and thanked Merlin when the conversation moved on to the health and wellness of the elder Grangers.

Now, settled around the dining room table, the remains of their light lunch of salads still before them, the topic came around to the reason for their visit.

Jane Granger handed Severus a cup of freshly brewed coffee and resumed her seat, beginning to stir milk into her own cup. "Please, tell us what is the dire emergency that necessitated this meeting?" Her smile was encouraging, but it was possible to see the faint worry in her eyes.

Severus glanced at Hermione, his own courage quailing in the face of this question as it had never quailed under the red eyes of Lord Voldemort. Hermione, however, took the lead with the ever-vaunted Gryffindor courage.

"Mum Daddy Severus and I are engaged to be married and we would like to have the ceremony this Friday night."

Severus realised that he was clutching the glass phial in his trousers pocket, which contained one of his more successful restoratives for persons who had fainted dead away. He was relieved to see that Jane Granger did not appear to be faint in the least; Herman, however, was looking a little bit green about the gills.

"Plainly, this is rather ... sudden?" Jane said, in a rather shaky voice.

"I know that it *seems* sudden, Mum, but it really isn't," Hermione said. "Severus and I have been ... involved ... for three years, now."

Severus resisted the urge to cover his eyes with his hand. Somehow, the words they had rehearsed together did not sound terribly reassuring at this moment as she spoke them to her parents. Now she was telling them, in effect, that her nasty old teacher had nourished designs upon her when she was still a teenager. Dimly, he wondered why he had neglected to slip a migraine cure into his pocket.

Jane continued in her calmly reasonable tone, "But, Hermione surely you used to tell us that Professor Snape was your *least* favourite teacher?" She smiled kindly at Severus. "No offence to you, of course, Professor..."

Severus once again inclined his head in acceptance of her courtesy. Cautiously, he cast a glance over at Herman, who looked as if he had swallowed a dose of undiluted bubotuber pus. It had apparently blistered his tongue right out of his head, and it also appeared to be having a bad effect on his lungs, as he seemed to be having a difficult time catching his breath.

Hermione took a deep breath. "Mum and Daddy I need to tell you about the Enchantment."

Miraculously, Jane's brow cleared, and Herman actually spoke up. "We know all about the Enchantment, dumpling," he told his daughter.

Diverted, Severus turned a sardonic eye on Hermione, his lips soundlessly repeating, *Dumpling?*

Her withering glare seemed to contain the warning, "Don't even *think* about it."

Her mother stood suddenly and bustled into the sitting room, returning moments later with a small book, bound in handsome brown leather. She offered the book to Hermione, saying, "This lovely little book is all about the Enchantment. That delightful Professor Dumbledore came to see us over Christmas, and he brought it as a gift." Jane's face took on a contemplative look. "I was ever so surprised to see him; we had met him at school functions, of course, but he had never come to visit us at home before. Well, once I had the book unwrapped, I just couldn't rest until I had read it all, right through to the end. And your Da' read it too, didn't you, Herman?"

Herman Granger nodded his head with some fervour. "Well, the Professor was good enough to bring it to us, wasn't he? And it was only polite to give it a read."

Hermione sat, the wind taken from her sails by this sudden burst of wizardly erudition from her utterly Muggle parents. "But, Daddy you never read anything but dental journals and sporting magazines!" she protested faintly.

A puzzled frown appeared on Herman's face. "That's true enough, sweetie. But this was only a little book, and jolly good reading I found it. In fact, I've read it through twice," he added with a touch of bemusement.

Jane nodded enthusiastically. "I've read it three or four times, I've lost count."

Severus allowed his teeth to release their grip on the inside of his cheek. Holding out one long-fingered hand, he said, "May I look at it, Pet?"

Hermione handed it over soundlessly, a hint of understanding beginning to dawn on her.

"Then Professor Dumbledore came back to see us at Easter," Jane said, watching Severus tap the small book with his wand, while muttering quietly to himself.

"He came back?" Hermione repeated.

"Yes, and he brought that dear Professor McGonagall with him. We sat over tea and had the nicest conversation about the Enchantment." Jane looked over at her husband, who was watching Severus as if he were demonstrating some new dental technique. "Your Da' even wondered why Professor McGonagall and Dumbledore aren't a couple themselves, didn't you, Herman?"

"...because they scarcely have time left over from their MEDDLING," Severus snarled.

Herman and Jane jumped at this change in tone from their purported son-in-law-to-be, who was very nearly a contemporary of their own.

Severus passed the book back to Hermione. "It's a simple Compelling Charm," he commented to her.

Hermione took the book back into her own hands, noticing now the faint pull she felt an urge to open the book and find out what the pages had to say to her. A wicked smile flickered across her face, and she cast Severus a look of pure mischief.

His lips twitched until he relented in an answering gleam. "Yes, Pet, the very same charm you used on your letters to me."

Jane and Herman watched this by-play with mixed emotions; clearly, these two were very much in love. Sadly, one of the two was their only child, who had yet to see her twenty-second birthday. Herman spoke quietly, as if in respect for the palpable vibration between the two lovers before him. "But does there need to be such haste?"

Severus stopped in the act of pressing a kiss to Hermione's hand, now warmly clasped in his much larger one, to answer her father. "No, Mr. Granger, there is no need for haste. It is, however, Hermione's wish to be married, to have our honeymoon and to settle into our married life before the new term of school begins on September first. And it is *my* wish to procure for her whatsoever her heart desires." He completed this sentence while making firm eye contact with Hermione's father. He could not see the look of adoration shining from Hermione's eyes, but both of her parents saw it and realised with sinking hearts that they were about to give way on this most important issue.

"So ... you and Hermione have the Enchantment between you, Severus?" Jane asked, reaching across to place her hand on top of their joined hands.

Severus turned his onyx eyes to Jane, covering her hand with his free hand and applying a light pressure. "Can you not feel it?" he inquired gently.

Sudden tears flooded her mother's eyes, and Hermione was out of her chair and on her knees before her mother, pressing her face to her mother's knees. "Oh, please don't cry, Mum," she whispered.

Jane began to caress the tumbled curls in her lap, saying in a choked, if reassuring voice, "How can I not cry to see you so happy and to be able to FEEL how happy you are? How many mums all over the world would be happier to see their daughters married if they could be so sure of their son-in-law's love?" Jane said these last words while looking quietly into Severus's eyes.

Severus bravely held the gaze of his love's mother, nodding once in validation of her words. For his trouble, he received a glowing smile from Jane Granger; with a dawning appreciation, he saw from whom Hermione had inherited that latent incandescence.

Jane stood and encouraged her daughter to rise. She wrapped a loving arm about Hermione's waist as she led the way to the stairs, saying, "It seems as if we had better pull my wedding gown out of lavender and see what alterations need to be made..."

The exit of the women left Severus with the last hurdle he must cross in this encounter. Squaring his shoulders and straightening his spine, he turned back to Herman Granger, mentally preparing for The Father Interrogation.

Herman sat for a moment, seemingly lost in thought. Then he stood and said, "Let's remove to my study, shall we?"

Severus complied willingly, allowing the much shorter man to direct him into a smaller room, panelled in a dark wood and smelling pleasantly of cigar smoke. Mr. Granger indicated that Severus should be seated in a fine leather wingback chair, then crossed to the sideboard and picked up a decanter. "Brandy or whisky?" he inquired.

"Brandy," Severus replied, viewing the well-stocked bookcases with approval.

Dr. Granger handed Severus a tumbler of brandy and seated himself behind the massive mahogany desk. "I'm sure you understand it is my duty to make some inquiries," he said.

Severus replied, "I certainly do understand that, Mr. Granger."

The other man waved his hand. "I think we had best dispense with the formality, Severus; we are about to become family."

"As you wish, Herman."

"May I inquire as to your age?"

"I was forty-one in January," Severus informed him.

Herman nodded. "Janie and I are fifty-two; we wanted to have our practice established before we started our family." He shot the younger man a look from under his lowered brows. "Do you not foresee any problems in marrying a woman young enough to be your own daughter?"

"I am not so foolish as to imagine that any marriage will be devoid of conflict, Herman. One point of contention may very well be our age difference. It may allay your fears somewhat to know that Hermione and I are of very similar temperament. We are both bookish and we share a disinclination for a great deal of social interaction." It was the nicest way he could devise to say that they were too intelligent to require or relish the company of the dunderheads who comprised ninety-nine percent of the rest of the world.

Herman had to nod his head in agreement; it was apparent that this strange man did indeed understand his swotty child. Making a quick recovery, he came back with the hardest question of all.

"What are your means? How do you intend to provide for my daughter?"

Severus had carefully prepared for this one.

"I have a small independence, including a house in Wiltshire with a bit of land, which I inherited from my mother. That will be our permanent residence. I also have my salary from my teaching position at Hogwarts and my rooms there, which will be our primary residence during the school year. Additionally, I have income from published works, as well as income from licensed potions, which are brewed commercially. Financially, Hermione will be secure."

Severus took a mouthful of brandy, trying very hard to look like a man who has just presented an inarguable position, rather than like a schoolboy who has just been fresh with his teacher.

Herman found himself at a bit of a loss for words. It is one thing to skewer a school teacher to the wall about how he intends to provide for your daughter; it is a different matter entirely to question a bona fide war hero who appears to be independently comfortable, if not wealthy. Before he could open his mouth, the professor spoke again.

"I have instructed my man of business to draw up a formal statement of my assets for your perusal, Mr. Granger. I am willing to sign any type of contractual agreement that is customary in Muggle marriages."

"You most certainly will NOT," Hermione interjected from the doorway behind him.

She advanced into the room, her mother following behind her, and stood between Severus and her father with her hands on her denim-clad hips. "Prenuptial agreements are for rich people. I'm not rich, so that's not an issue."

Severus quelled her with an admonitory tone and a stern look. "Your parents will be fully satisfied with the arrangements concerning our marriage before it takes place, Hermione. *All* of the arrangements. If you wish to interfere in said arrangements, please be my guest providing you understand that the wedding will take place only when your parents are *completely* satisfied."

Hermione was gaping, with an unattractively opened mouth, at her betrothed, while he stared her down unflinchingly. Behind her back, her father met her mother's eyes, and the two of them bit their lips and struggled to keep from expressing their amusement as well as their unqualified amazement at this masterful demonstration of how to bring Hermione to a screeching halt without stirring from one's chair, or raising one's voice. Jane was the first to lose control of her emotions, and her outburst of laughter created the same reaction in her spouse by an apparent domino effect. Turning her back on Severus, Hermione looked back and forth from her mum to her dad.

"What? What is so bloody funny?"

Herman mopped his streaming face with his pocket handkerchief, saying, "Oh, nothing, dumpling. It just does a body good to see you brought up short that way." Herman pocketed his handkerchief and stood, extending his hand to the younger man across the desk. "Severus, you have our blessing. There won't be a need for any contracts. I have read about the Enchantment, and I've seen you handle our little spitfire like a man born to take on the job. God bless you, son, and welcome to the family."

Severus stood with alacrity and set his beloved gently aside as he shook her father's hand. "Thank you, Herman. Please know that I fully appreciate the honour you do me by accepting my suit for your daughter's hand."

Jane stepped up then and stood on tiptoe to press a kiss to Severus's cheek. "I know you'll take good care of one another," she said softly.

Herman came from behind his desk to envelop his child in a fatherly hug, adjuring her to be a good girl and to do as Severus told her, while Jane reminded her to drop the dress with Madam Malkin for alterations, without delay. With further promises to keep in close daily contact regarding the wedding details, Hermione and Severus took leave of her parents, carrying away not only a carefully packed wedding gown, but also the Grangers' warmest blessings.

As they strolled back up to the castle from the Apparation point, Hermione tucked her hand into Severus's elbow. "That went well," she offered.

"Well, considering that Albus and Minerva spent six months laying the groundwork, I can't say I'm surprised, Pet."

"I can't believe my dad is already telling me to obey *you*!"

"He's a wise man, your father. Obviously, *he* knows I'm always right."

"... a right pain in the *arse*, maybe," came the muttered reply.

"I can see that some one-on-one tutoring will be required to teach you the proper way to deliver an insult," Severus said, stepping through the great oak doors and pressing Hermione up against the stone wall of the entrance hall.

"Severus!" she expostulated, looking around him for witnesses.

"Hermione!" he mocked back at her before fiercely claiming her mouth in a lip-bruising kiss.

Some indefinable time later, he lifted his head to gaze into her passion-smudged eyes. "Only a love beyond my previous comprehension would have made that little jaunt conceivable," he said to her, his voice hoarse with desire.

Hermione held onto his biceps with her hands, still too overcome by the power of the Enchantment to be able to function very well once in the throes of it. Severus took a moment to let his burning eyes devour her face her unfocused gaze, her delicious mouth and to feel the pounding of the Enchantment that focussed all of their energies upon each other. Cursing, not for the first time, the inability to Apparate within the castle, he guided her to her rooms, which were closer than his, and settled her upon the edge of the bed while he began to strip out of his clothes.

Hermione recovered some part of her consciousness, noting the time on the clock on her bedside table.

"Severus!" she protested weakly, as he unbelted his trousers and stepped out of them and his briefs in one motion. "The time! The boys will be here in an hour." Her voice dwindled to a whisper as he advanced upon her and began to undress her with impatient competence.

"Potter and Weasley can respect their betters and wait their turn," he replied savagely. "I have earned a reward, my Pet, and I intend to *have* it, do you understand me?"

He jerked her body into his own naked lap, his hands roaming her flesh relentlessly, his voice harsh in her ears, as he reiterated his possession of her with each caress.

With all thought of interruptions burned from her mind, Hermione twisted in his lap to straddle his hips, pressing his shoulders down until his back was flat on her mattress; with a twist of his own, he slid into the warmth of her core, and they groaned as with one voice.

"Yes, Severus, my darling, only love I think we understand one another very well."

Oddly enough, the boys *did* have to wait.