

Be Mine... I'm Yours

by Southern_Witch_69

After Voldemort's been defeated, Dumbledore brings a carnival to Hogwarts. This is a fluffy Valentine's Day Challenge response and is being told from Hermione's POV.

Hermione's POV

Chapter 1 of 2

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Disclaimer: Not mine, I say! But I wish it would be. Hell the plot idea isn't even mine. See below.

A/N: This is a little fluffy snapshot. I got this idea from MsJessicaAllen over at WIKTT. She issued a Valentine's Day Challenge (A Carni Intervention) Deadline: February 14, 2005 and no length requirement.

A big thanks to the brilliant Charmed Nay.

"Hell, yes," Ron said cheerfully. "I could do with this!"

Hermione looked at all of the contraptions that Dumbledore had magically brought to Hogwarts. She'd been to many Muggle carnivals with her parents before she'd started school, but she'd never been to one that was run by wizards and magic! "If it's anything like some I've gone to, then you will enjoy yourself."

"Brilliant," Harry commented. "I've never been to one, but I heard Dudley bragging about it, and I saw pictures that Aunt Petunia took. Come on!"

The three raced towards a group of friends. "Hermione!" Lavender admonished haughtily. "Where is your pink and red in honor of Valentine's Day? Hmmm? We all agreed to dress alike!"

Hermione grimaced. Good grief! Voldemort had finally fallen only a couple of weeks before, many people had been killed, and here Lavender was worried about the color of their clothing.

"Honestly! I'd think you had more important things to worry about. Besides, I didn't agree to wear any matching clothes. I was merely listening to your rambling!"

"Easy, Hermione," Ron chided, putting an arm around Lavender. "I think she's cute and looks like a little heart." He made a face where his girlfriend couldn't see though. He didn't care what she was wearing actually, so long as she would be out of her clothes later.

"Hmph!" Lavender threw in Hermione's direction. "Ron, we have got to take a ride through The Love Tunnel! Parvati said that it is smashing! All the couples are taking rides through it. Please?"

"Sure," he said with a sly grin. "Harry, Mione? You two coming along?"

"All right," Harry agreed, shaking his head sourly. Hell, he wanted to go on the spinning top ride that he'd seen, but to keep the peace, he would go with them.

Hermione smiled. "All right."

"H-Harry?" Ginny stammered. "Would you ride with me?"

Damn! He didn't want to have a ride with her. He had another interest. "Well, I've already told Hermione that she could ride with me." At her look of disappointment, he added, "But I don't see why one more person would hurt. Ride with us."

"No, it's okay," she said, sauntering off.

Harry looked to Neville. "Well, there is your chance, mate."

Neville smiled uncertainly, but he went after Ginny all the same.

"Harry," Hermione whispered. "I think you should just tell her that you aren't interested."

"She knows. I've told her already, but even though she said she only wants to be friends, I get the feeling that's not quite the truth," he said. "Come on. We're getting left behind."

Hermione followed Harry through the crowd, and they came to stand in a long line. "Looks like a boring ride, if you ask me. Look how slow those carts are moving along. I wanted to have a turn at the big wheel."

"I know what you mean," Harry said under his breath. "We'll do this, and then they'll come with us. If not, bugger them."

"Deal," she said with a grin. She looked over to the cotton candy stand and saw Neville buying some for Ginny. She smiled. They would make a great pair. Ginny needed someone who could be gentle with her after what had happened with the Death Eaters. Ginny tried not to speak about it, but Hermione knew that more had gone on than she would admit to anyone. She only claimed to have been beaten for information on Harry, but there was too much evidence that made Hermione think that she had been assaulted sexually.

Her eyes locked with Professor Snape's for a moment. What the bloody hell was he looking at? She supposed he wanted to give her another biting remark about her appearance. Bugger him! She thought back to their last 'friendly' chat.

"Miss Granger, why don't you do something with that hair! It's flying about and hitting me in my face," he said in an annoyed tone.

"Perhaps, sir, if you didn't feel the need to stand so closely, then it wouldn't be such a bother to you." Really! He didn't need to be looking over her shoulder. It was making her nervous! They had been out in the forest together plucking leaves for a much-needed potion that would restore Professor McGonagall to her health.

"Ha! If I didn't watch closely, you would have picked the wrong plant twice!" He sneered at her in the worst way. "And what is this cloak? You need to cover yourself in weather such as this! It's quite flimsy at best. Poorly made."

"My thick cloak was destroyed, as I was wearing it yesterday when Bellatrix Lestrange tried to set me on fire! This is the only spare that I have," she said heatedly. Here they were needing to hurry, and he'd stopped to harass her about her appearance. Bastard! "And, furthermore, what about the way you are dressed?"

He looked down at his perfectly attired person. "What? There is nothing wrong with my attire. I am properly dressed for the elements!"

"Well... you're... that is to say, overdressed!" She nodded. "That's right! Do you really need to stalk about dressed as if you are going to a formal dinner? We are picking ingredients, for Merlin's sake!"

"Very well. Point taken. I apologize for my comments on your attire," he said, moving away from her. "Get back to work, Miss Granger. Enough of this dallying!"

She had only been shocked for a moment. He had apologized to her. Ha! So, she'd gotten one up on him. Ten points to Gryffindor!

Dragging herself back to the present time, she watched in amazement as the couples began exiting the ride. Draco and Padma? Since when did they even talk, much less want to share a ride together? She sniggered at the next pair. Crabbe and Goyle. She'd often wondered about those two. She raised her eyebrows. Dean and Luna? What the hell was going on here? Exactly how were these people pairing up? She looked questioningly to Harry.

"Looks like they're all on cloud nine!" Harry blanched. "Do you feel that?"

Hermione nodded mutely. A sudden feeling gripped her soul. She had to go on this ride. She had to see what had made them so happy. What had made these people ride together? She was about to comment on it to Harry when Pansy strode up between them.

"Care for a ride partner, Harry?" she asked coyly.

"Yes," he murmured, taking her hand.

Hermione's mouth gaped open. What the bloody hell was this? Harry had forgotten all about her, as he seemed to only have eyes for Pansy now. The ride operator gathered them all in, couple by couple. Well, she'd not be riding with Harry and Pansy, in any event! The carts only seated two people, it seemed. She raised her chin defiantly. *I don't need anyone to come with me. I can go it alone!*

"Come on," the hunched man called. "Get in." Hermione watched through narrowed eyes as Harry led Pansy into their cart without even looking back at her. He could have at least been a little apologetic about it!

The ride operator tapped their cart with his wand, and it lurched forward. "Come on then. Get in," he said to Hermione, breaking her out of her reverie. She sat down. "Hang on! Where's your partner? This is a two-person ride, this is."

"I haven't the need for anyone, thanks" she hissed.

"Nonsense. It's The Tunnel of Love, this is. You 'ave to 'ave two." He held up two fingers on each hand to emphasize this. She was about to comment that he had shown her four, not two, but then he bellowed, "Lone rider! Step right up. Need another rider."

Calmly, Hermione looked away. Bloody hell! How embarrassing! She'd not let him know it. She'd let him call out all he wanted, and when no one came, he would have to let her go alone. To her utter surprise, she felt the cart shift as someone got in. She heard the man say, "Well, that's a good lad. Off you go!"

She slowly turned to face her passenger and nearly fainted. Professor Snape was sitting there looking straight ahead. "Sir?"

"Good evening, Miss Granger," he replied in a bored tone, not even looking at her.

"You felt like riding through The Tunnel of Love?" she asked incredulously.

"Don't flatter yourself, Miss Granger. I simply felt a pull in this direction. When I heard the fellow calling out, I got in. I didn't even realize it was you until I sat down." He finally looked at her with a smirk. "I couldn't very well get back out now, could I?"

"I suppose that would have been rude, yes." She turned away. No one seemed to even be looking in their direction. As the cart entered the opening of the tunnel, they were shrouded in darkness. "Er... Professor, do you hear that?" she asked, inching closer. "Sounds like a million muffled voices."

He sighed. "It's the hum of magic, Miss Granger. Obviously, the fools have put something a little extra into this ride. I daresay, the magic is what must have compelled me to do something as foolish as to get on the ride in the first place."

"Something just brushed against my arm!" she squealed, moving closer. She felt his arm go around her. She wished she could see his face, but it was just too damned dark! At the same time, she was glad they were unable to see each other's faces, or he would see the look of pure shock and... joy on hers. He made her feel secure. Part of her needed the feeling of security now more than ever. What would it be like to be loved and protected by him? *What? Where did that come from?*

"I felt something on my side as well," he murmured. After a few moments, there was a brilliant display of light. The room they were cruising through at the moment was full of fluffy pink material. The ceiling above them had floating clouds and what looked suspiciously like cupid aiming an arrow in their direction. There were falling rose petals, floating hearts, and a large, lacey chaise near one side. Above it, a neon sign on the wall was flashing in bright shades of red. It read, *Hermione's Love Nest*.

"What the hell?" she asked incredulously! "I did not put that there! This is ridiculous! I would never decorate a room so horribly! Oh, honestly! I'll bet the headmaster is behind this."

Her mouth gaped open as the Potions master began laughing loudly. "Well, well, well! Miss Granger, I would assume that this room is made from your innermost thoughts. Are you quite certain these frilly bows and floating rose petals are not some fantasy?"

"I assure you, Professor, had I imagined being somewhere with a love interest, it would not be in a room such as this!" The man was a nightmare!

Suddenly, the cupid poised above near a cloud spoke. "Hello, Hermione. Hello, Severus. This is a special room. You can choose to get out here to do the deed or move on to the next room."

"What deed?" Professor Snape asked acridly.

"What?" Hermione echoed.

"Well, you are in The Tunnel of Love, of course! You have to kiss before you can exit. You were drawn together to ride through by a bit of magic. It seeps out into the crowd and pulls people together. People who seem well matched." The cupid began giggling madly.

"I will do no such thing! She is a student!" Severus bellowed indignantly. He tried to move away from her and pull his arm from around her, but it wouldn't budge.

"Blast! Are you stuck to me?"

"It would seem so," he said dryly. "You may as well let us through, you impertinent pixie! No such ~~deed~~ will be occurring."

The cupid bounced around, reminding Hermione much of Peeves. "It appears we have a dilemma then. You will continuously ride until it happens. When you entered the dark room just there, your inner thoughts were probed," he said saucily. "You, Severus, deep down, envisioned this to be what Hermione would like if she was to receive a dreamy kiss."

"You thought I would like this?" Hermione asked, looking at him with a crazed expression. "I can certainly tell you that this ~~is~~not to my liking!"

"I'm being framed. I thought no such thing! He's a liar," he said indignantly. He turned to glare at the pest above them. "Let us through. We are not getting out here!"

"Suit yourself," he said mysteriously. The room darkened again, and they felt the lurch of the cart pulling forward.

"Good Lord, Professor! That room was horrible! I'd call it a right sickeningly sweet room. I'm not the type of girl you thought me to be!" she scoffed.

"If you dare to sa..." He was cut off as the lights came back on, and the cart stopped. "What the fuck is this?"

She would have chided him for his foul language, but the room took her by surprise as well. This room had a dark green mist floating about near the ceiling as a substitute for clouds. Hermione felt as if damp, humid air was gliding over her skin. There was a large bed with silky, black sheets near them on one side with what appeared to be chains hanging from the bedposts. A flashing neon sign above the bed read, *Severus' Lair*.

"What the bloody hell is this? Professor! What are you playing at? This is clearly a room devised from your thoughts!"

"I assure you, Miss Granger, that I've never in my wildest dreams imagined anything like this before! Well, perhaps once when I... enough!" he roared. "Let us pass!"

A woman with long, black hair approached the cart from the opposite side. "Will you not stay and share a kiss?" She was clad in leather and wielding a long whip in one hand.

"Certainly not," Hermione said in disbelief.

"Why not, Hermione?" the woman goaded. "You are the one who thought of this as Severus' ideal place for a passionate kiss."

Severus turned accusing eyes at her. "So, the truth is revealed. You most certainly aren't the girl I thought you to be. Your tainted little mind concocted this room for me? I am a Potions master, not a Dungeon Master!"

"If I had ever thought of this absurd room, which I didn't, I would never have thought of such... rubbish!" She looked around uneasily. "Besides, you live in a dungeon. This does seem appropriate!"

He smirked at her for a moment before speaking to the woman. "Let us pass."

"As you wish," she said. With a crack of her whip, they were shrouded in darkness.

"Professor, maybe... maybe you should just give me a little peck on the cheek. I mean, it would get us out of here, wouldn't it?" The inability to see him had given her the courage to say this. She felt his fingers lightly caress her arm.

"Miss Granger, I don't think that such an action would be prudent. You are still my student. As such..."

Once again the room lightened. This time lush trees and several rose bushes surrounded them. Large, pink, lacey bows were tied around the trunks of the trees. Above them, the sky appeared to be nearing sunset. The shades of red, orange, and pink were beautifully displayed. There was a velvety red heart-shaped comforter spread near the foot of a tree. Overstuffed, pink pillows were present as well. Two books were laid open as if they had been left in the middle of a read. Hermione noted two glasses and a bottle of some sort of wine next to it. "Er? Is this you?" she asked, gazing at the romantic scene before them.

"I... don't know," he admitted.

He sounded so uncertain she turned to meet his gaze. She noticed that he seemed to be gazing at the vision longingly.

"Perhaps we should just get out," he said softly. Before adding, "To get this over with if nothing else."

She nodded and moved away from him. "Hey, we're unstuck."

"So it would seem," he said in a bored voice.

As if pulled by some magical force, Hermione went to sit on the soft pallet. "It's cushiony," she said with a giggle, picking up the book nearest her. "Oh! I have been wanting to read this."

He paused for a moment. "This must be your ideal place then."

"Maybe," she shrugged, lying back against a plush pink, heart-shaped pillow. She brought the book up to her eyes for a quick skim. "Do you... like it?"

"It is acceptable," he said. Through her peripheral vision, she saw him sit next to her, picking up the other book. "I have been thinking of reading this book as well."

She lowered her book and looked at him. "Maybe this is a mixture of what we both would have wanted."

He looked at her oddly. "Perhaps... Would you like a glass?" He nodded to the wine next to them.

"All right," she agreed. After he filled a glass, she took it and helped herself to a long swig. "Not bad."

"No, it isn't," he said, taking a sip of his own drink. "It's quite... pleasant."

They sat in silence for a while. Each perusing the book before them and sipping on the wine. After long minutes, she laughed. "Look at this!" She pointed to a section in the book.

He put down his glass and book, moving closer. "Good Lord! What the hell are you reading?" He took the book from her to look at the cover. He raised an eyebrow. "*Sylvia's Love Tales* is what you wanted to read?"

"Well, I heard Lavender and the others talking on it. It sounded interesting, but doesn't that seem a bit ridiculous? Who would try that to land a boyfriend?"

A small debate ensued where he pressed that he could understand the woman's desire to try to trap the man, but he could not condone her brewing an illegal potion. Hermione claimed that she did not think the potion should have been brewed either, but what woman would feel so desperate? It seemed unreal to her that someone would go through such measures for a man.

"I mean, honestly, if he doesn't like you, then move on," she said disbelievingly.

"Spoken like a Gryffindor," he jeered. "It is clear that this woman is a Slytherin. Tell me, Hermione. What would you do should you find yourself fancying someone who didn't share the feeling?"

"If I thought he'd never return the feeling, then he would never know how I felt. I would simply think of him from afar, and I would eventually get over him," she said softly, gazing at him intently.

He returned the intense gaze equally. "How would you ever know for sure that he didn't feel that way if you didn't use that Gryffindor courage to ask him?"

"I don't have to. I can tell by the way he treats me. He'd never be interested in a young witch like me," she said, not realizing she was inching closer.

"Perhaps those are merely Slytherin tactics to make you believe he would never be interested when he actually has been interested," he replied steadily, also inching closer.

"Well... that's just wrong. He should tell me."

"What if he can't find the words?"

"Then why can't he show me? Give me a sign?"

Severus brought his lips to hers for a light brush. "Like this?" he questioned, pulling back slightly.

"Yes," she breathed, putting a hand on his cheek to guide his mouth back to hers. Her lips parted, allowing his tongue entrance, and her body began tingling. Ever so slowly, he lowered her back down to the comforter, never breaking the kiss. Her book and glass forgotten next to her, she wrapped both arms around him, one hand caressing his back, the other matted in his hair.

One of his hands cupped her face gently while the other held him above her. Finally breathless, they parted. "I believe we have met the requirements to leave this place."

"Oh, right," she said, trying not to let the disappointment show on her face or seep into her voice. "I guess we should be off then."

"I suppose so," he agreed. Neither moved. With a sigh of resignation, he brought his lips back to hers for another dazzling kiss. When he pulled away this time, he stood up, but offered a hand to help her up. Standing with his help, she allowed him to hold her hand until they reached the cart.

They sat silently until the cart slowly progressed forward.

"Professor?"

"Miss Granger?"

They had both begun to speak at the same time. Laughing, she told him to go first. He nodded. "I... that... we can't. I'm your teacher."

She could see the look of regret in his eyes for a moment. Knowing that those lips and soft caresses were what she had been longing for, she said, "Not for much longer, Severus. I can wait if you can."

He smiled for a moment. "I would like that, but why me?"

"Why me?" she countered.

"Touché," he said with a smirk. "Oh, here we are."

The cart had exited The Tunnel of Love once again. The crowd seemed to have dispersed some. With a big grin, the ride operator helped them out of their cart. "Night, you two. You're the last to come out."

Neither paid any attention to the man; both making their way to the castle. Once they neared the castle door, she said, "Happy Valentine's Day."

He seemed thoughtful for a moment. "The same to you." When she nodded and turned away, he said, "Hermione?"

"Yes?" She turned back eagerly.

"Perhaps you would like to accompany me to the Astronomy Tower. The February skies are nice on clear nights such as this."

Taking his outstretched hand, she smiled. "That would be nice."

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Albus Dumbledore stared at the pair making their way to the corridor of the Astronomy Tower. He turned to his accomplice. "*And that*, my dear Minerva, is why I charmed that ride."

"It appears that you were right. How much did I say?"

"Five Galleons."

"Come to my rooms. I'll get it for you," she said, shaking her head.

"Five Galleons per couple. I believe I pointed out several who would find some happiness together after this dark time." He brought his hand to his chin in thought. "If I have calculated correctly, I do believe that you owe me an even fifty Galleons."

"That's absurd! You can't prove that some of them have actually decided to be a couple! I am withholding the rest until I see proof," she said huffily.

He glanced at her over his half-moon spectacles, his eyes twinkling madly. "Are you backing out on a debt?"

"I will give you half now," she said firmly. "And the rest after I've seen proof. Come along!" She should have known better than to place bets with the likes of Albus! The codger always had a way of knowing things. She'd remember this next time. Of course, she always said that after losing a bet to him.

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**A/N:** The rules for the challenge are as follows:

\*\*\*To celebrate the defeat of Voldemort in Hermione's 7th year,

Dumbledore decides to hold a Muggle carnival (coincides with Valentine's Day).

\*\*\*All the seventh years are raving about the love tunnel ride, and Hermione decides to see what is so special about it. It's a ride through a dark tunnel of sickening sweet hearts and angels.

\*\*\*No one rides with her, so the ride operator, yells

out, "Lone rider." Hermione doesn't show obvious embarrassment.

\*\*\*Snape stalking the carnival grounds is suddenly curious about the ride and takes the empty seat beside Hermione. It is not apparent that he cares whether Hermione is embarrassed in any way.

\*\*\*What will occur? What spells does the tricky Dumbledore have in store for the lovers? Did Dumbledore make them both curious on

purpose? Will the ride spark something between the two? You decide.

## Severus' POV

### Chapter 2 of 2

Severus' POV of the Valentine's Day Challenge on WIKTT. A little ride with the woman of his fantasies...

**Disclaimer:** Not mine, I say! But I wish it would be. See chapter one for challenge details.

**A big thanks to the brilliant Charmed Nay.**

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Absolutely ridiculous! Albus certainly didn't need to have this catastrophe waiting to happen! *Look at the little dunderheads*, he thought darkly. *They are prancing about excitedly as if Christmas has come again!* Severus stalked through the crowds, hissing at all in his way. He had seen Albus and Minerva talking conspiratorially and pointing to the most ludicrous thing he'd seen yet. *The Tunnel of Love, indeed!* A bright pink building decorated with red hearts and little cherubs stood before him. Couples were getting into little carts two at a time and disappearing into the entrance.

Raising an eyebrow, he watched as Draco, Gregory, and Vincent strode up to Padma Patil. He wished he could move closer to hear what they were saying, but he didn't want to appear interested. *What the...?* Draco had just kissed the girl's hand. Something wasn't right. They were now going to stand in line to ride the contraption. What was it about this thing? He could feel a pull. It's as if he wanted to go stand in line himself. "Hell no," he growled aloud.

He looked out over the crowd. Where was she? No sign of his bushy-haired nemesis as of yet, but she would surely be there. All of her other friends were present, save Potter and Weasley. They would be along shortly, and he would do as he always did. He would watch her. What was it about the chit that fascinated him so?

Her lips. Yes, a few months back she'd been chewing on her lower lip as she'd contemplated something on the essay before her. She'd scribbled down a few more notes before bringing her quill to her mouth. To his horror, he'd found her mouth, lips, and teeth enticing. What other things would she be able to bring pleasure to with those actions?

He'd never been attracted to a student before, much less one as irritating as she. She, however, was nineteen and, as such, of legal age. It wasn't as if he were lusting after a child. She was no longer a child. He smirked to himself, remembering over the holidays how he'd 'accidentally' walked in on her as she'd had a bath at Grimmauld Place. She had never known that he was there, but he'd been drawn to a voice. He had heard some sort of singing, and he'd wanted to see which infernal brat had woken

him from his much needed sleep.

They were going to pay even though he had forgotten to place a soundproofing spell on his room. The door to her room had been locked, but he had easily unlocked it without her knowing. He had wanted to catch her unawares and ream her for being so bloody loud! However, noting that she was not in her bed and that the bathroom door was ajar, he'd decided to remain unseen a bit longer. He had placed a Disillusionment Charm on his person and had a peek. Granger had been lying back in the tub with her eyes closed.

*She was singing, or trying to sing, some odd song. He was mesmerized once again by those lush little lips as they formed the words. His gaze dropped down to her body. The only blasted thing he was able to see through all of those bubbles was a small portion of one of her breasts. A perky, pink nipple and a rounded bit of flesh poked through. He fled the room as quietly as he could before hurrying to his own to relieve himself.*

That had been the exact moment he'd known that he desired her completely. Someone crashed into him suddenly, breaking him from his reverie. "Watch where you are going!"

"S-sorry, sir," Longbottom said, looking completely afraid.

Severus sneered and moved to the side slightly. The boy was with the Weasley girl and apparently trying to show her that he wanted to be her man. It didn't seem like she wanted any of it. Poor girl. Rookwood had pulled a number on her, and to hear Minerva tell it, she was still seeking counseling over it. At that moment, his dark eyes met the soft brown pair that belonged to the woman who plagued his fantasies. What was she thinking? There was an odd expression on her face.

"*Legilimens*," he whispered, flipping his wand casually. A flash of their last conversation accosted him. He could feel her annoyance that he had commented on her attire. He then felt her joy as she obviously thought she had gotten one over on him. He smirked, losing eye contact. He remembered the day well.

He had almost given in to the urge to kiss her. Granger had still been upset by the battle that had taken place, and he'd felt the need to involve her with things. Her eyes had been dull until he pretended to need help with Minerva's potion and the fetching of its ingredients. She had followed him into the forest without question. At one point, he'd found himself directly behind her. Had he not realized what he'd been about to do, he would have moved her hair aside to kiss her neck. Her tangy scent had been intoxicating. He'd jeered about her messy hair to put things back into perspective.

She was still a student after all. Her flimsy cloak hadn't done much to hide her womanly figure, and he'd felt the need to comment on that as well. Hell, he was only a man. Having *her* so near, alone, hadn't really been a good idea after all. When she'd rounded on him about how he had been dressed, he'd given in by apologizing and moving away from her. He had been overdressed actually. Severus had wanted to look appealing to her. When she'd gaped at his apology, he'd known that he'd made the right decision. It had been too soon to act on his desires. He had a plan to stick with!

His eyes narrowed. Just whom was she planning to have a ride with? She seemed to be paired with Potter. *Well, of course*, he thought sourly. If it had been anyone else, he would have likely found a way to hex him accidentally at some point in the future.

"Well, well, well," he murmured as Pansy approached Potter. He'd had no idea that a student in his own house would actually want to spend time with the brat. He chuckled slightly as Granger looked put out. Ha! Now she would have to ride alone. Good. Severus didn't want to see her interested in anyone. He wanted her to be alone and easily vulnerable by the time she graduated. Then, he would begin his seduction. Then, he would have her. She would never know that he'd long planned this, of course.

Suddenly, the wretched man bellowed, "Lone rider! Step right up. Need another rider." Severus smirked. How embarrassing! No one seemed to be going forth, much to his satisfaction. Something then happened. A feeling in his gut pulled him forward forcefully. One step. Then another. To his horror, he was making his way to the cart. *What the fuck is going on here?* She didn't even look to see who it was that had sat with her. He decided to look straight ahead *What the bloody hell am I doing riding in a damn pink cart with a student?* "Well, that's a good lad. Off you go!" Severus felt the cart lurch forward. He would be sure to hex the ride operator as soon as he got off. The bastard must have charmed it somehow!

"Sir?"

She had finally realized that it was he who had chosen to ride with her. He could hear the surprise in her tone.

"Good evening, Miss Granger," he replied, sounding bored and still not looking at her. Part of him feared that he might see repulsion in her eyes.

"You felt like riding through The Tunnel of Love?" she asked incredulously.

"Don't flatter yourself, Miss Granger. I simply felt a pull in this direction. When I heard the fellow calling out, I got in. I didn't even realize it was you until I sat down," he lied. He finally looked at her with a smirk. "I couldn't very well get back out now, could I?" It was the truth. Some bit of ruddy magic had forced him to join her, and he couldn't have fought it if he'd tried.

"I suppose that would have been rude, yes." She turned away. Severus watched as she looked around uneasily. She was likely hoping that nobody had seen them together. As the cart entered the opening of the tunnel, they were shrouded in darkness.

"Er... Professor, do you hear that?" she asked, inching closer. "Sounds like a million muffled voices."

Allowing himself a wicked grin, he enjoyed the feel of her thigh brushing against his. He sighed. "It's the hum of magic, Miss Granger. Obviously the fools have put something a little extra into this ride. I daresay, the magic is what must have compelled me to do something as foolish as to get on the ride in the first place."

"Something just brushed against my arm!" she squealed, moving closer. In order to feel her body flush against his, he placed his arm around her, relishing in the fact that she was seeking protection with him. Perhaps his feelings were not so one-sided. And had that been a sigh of contentment just now? He then felt a nudging also.

"I felt something on my side as well," he murmured to make her feel at ease. Light suddenly shined throughout the room and nearly blinded them. Disgusting fluffy pink material clung about the floor and walls. The ceiling above them had floating clouds and some ruddy cupid aiming an arrow in their direction. There were falling rose petals, floating hearts, and a large, lacey chaise near one side. Above it, a neon sign on the wall was flashing in bright shades of red. It read, *Hermione's Love Nest*. Severus sneered at the room in general. It reminded him of a little girl's room!

"What the hell?" she asked incredulously! "I did not put that there! This is ridiculous! I would never decorate a room so horridly! Oh, honestly! I'll bet the Headmaster is behind this."

He began laughing loudly. "Well, well, well! Miss Granger, I would assume that this room is made from your innermost thoughts. Are you quite certain these frilly bows and floating rose petals are not some fantasies?" He might have known that she would be like so many of the other little romantic sots running about the castle. He had hoped she would be above such frivolities.

"I assure you, Professor, had I imagined being somewhere with a love interest, it would not be in a room such as this!"

He looked at her for a moment. Was he a potential love interest then?

The cretin above them spoke. "Hello, Hermione. Hello, Severus. This is a special room. You can choose to get out here to do the deed or move on to the next room."

Deed? "What deed?" Severus asked acridly.

"What?" Hermione echoed.

"Well, you are in The Tunnel of Love, of course! You have to kiss before you can exit. You were drawn together to ride through by a bit of magic. It seeps out into the crowd and pulls people together. People who seem well matched." The cupid began giggling madly.

"I will do no such thing! She is a student!" Severus bellowed indignantly. He would not have his plan thwarted by some magical pest! Realizing that he was still holding her, he tried to pull his arm from around her, but it wouldn't budge.

"Blast! Are you stuck to me?" So... she hadn't liked his arm around her then.

"It would seem so," he said dryly. "You may as well let us through, you impertinent pixie! No such ~~deed~~ will be occurring."

The cupid bounced around, looking much like Peeves. "It appears we have a dilemma then. You will continuously ride until it happens. When you entered the dark room just there, your inner thoughts were probed," he said saucily. "You, Severus, deep down, envisioned this to be what Hermione would like if she was to receive a dreamy kiss."

Damn! Guilty as charged. Some part of him, perhaps, did think of her on a soft, pastel-colored bed begging to be kissed. The pesky blighter shouldn't have said so!

"You thought I would like this?" Hermione asked, looking at him with a crazed expression. "I can certainly tell you that this is ~~not~~ to my liking!"

Thank Merlin for small miracles then! He was glad that this... childish room was not what she liked.

"I'm being framed. I thought no such thing! He's a liar," he said, feigning resentment. He turned to glare at the pest above them. "Let us through. We are not getting out here!"

"Suit yourself," he said mysteriously. The room darkened again, and they felt the lurch of the cart pulling forward.

"Good Lord, Professor! That room was horrible! I'd call it a right, sickeningly sweet room. I'm not exactly the type of girl you thought me to be!" she scoffed.

He agreed with her on that point, but she seemed to have believed the pest! He didn't want her to know that on some level ~~he~~ may have imagined her wanting a place such as that.

"If you dare to sa..." He was cut off as the lights came back on, and the cart stopped. "What the fuck is this?" He looked around in awe. Bloody hell! They were in a damn... dungeon. This room had a dark green mist floating about near the ceiling as a substitute for clouds. Damp, humid air glided over his skin. There was a large bed with silky, black sheets near them on one side with what appeared to be chains hanging from the bedposts. A flashing neon sign above the bed read, *Severus' Lair*.

"What the bloody hell is this? Professor! What are you playing at? This is clearly a room devised from your thoughts!" She looked suspiciously guilty.

"I assure you, Miss Granger, that I've never in my wildest dreams imagined anything like this before! Well, perhaps once when I... Enough!" he roared. "Let us pass!" He had imagined a scene similar to this not that long ago...Hermione's wrists tied with silky scarves as he had his way with her.

A sex goddess clad in leather while wielding a whip approached them. "Will you not stay and share a kiss?" Her dark eyes glimmered with mischief.

"Certainly not," Hermione said in disbelief.

Damn! She really didn't like him, did she?

"Why not, Hermione?" the woman goaded. "You are the one who thought of this as Severus' ideal place for a passionate kiss."

Aha! The truth! Severus turned accusing eyes towards her. "So, the truth is revealed. You most certainly aren't the girl I thought you to be. Your tainted little mind concocted this room for me? I am a Potions master, not a Dungeon Master!" However, he could easily make the change if that was as she desired it.

"If I had ever thought of this absurd room, which I didn't, I would never have thought of such... rubbish!" She looked around uneasily. "Besides you live in a dungeon. This does seem appropriate!"

He could see she was lying. Had she thought of him and imagined that this type of room would be where he wanted to be with a woman? That this was how he would enjoy the pleasures of the flesh?

He smirked at her for a moment before speaking to the woman. "Let us pass."

"As you wish," she said. With a crack of her whip, they were shrouded in darkness.

"Professor, maybe... maybe you should just give me a little peck on the cheek. I mean, it would get us out of here, wouldn't it?"

He smiled smugly for a moment. She wanted to get this over with, and she would actually agree to have his lips pressed against her skin. He would not let her know that this would be acceptable to him. Not yet.

"Miss Granger, I don't think that such an action would be prudent. You are still my student. As such..."

Once again the room lightened. This time lush trees and several rose bushes surrounded them. Large, pink, lacey bows were tied around the trunks of the trees. Above them, the sky appeared to be nearing sunset. The shades of red, orange, and pink were beautifully displayed. There was a velvety red heart-shaped comforter spread near the foot of a tree. Overstuffed, pink pillows were present as well. Two books were laid open as if they had been left in the middle of a read. There were even glasses and chilled wine waiting for them.

"Er? Is this you?" she asked, gazing starry-eyed at the romantic scene before them.

"I... don't know," he admitted. He could not be certain. It did appeal to him, but she seemed to approve as well. He longed to be out on the pallet with her, holding her, sharing a moment or two of peaceful companionship. "Perhaps we should just get out," he said softly.

Damn! She would be on to him if he kept acting like a schoolboy. He added sharply, "To get this over with if nothing else."

She nodded and moved away from him. "Hey, we're unstuck."

"So it would seem," he said in a bored voice. He rather liked the closeness and immediately missed her warm body as she moved away.

As if pulled by some magical force, he followed her as she went to sit on the soft pallet. "It's cushiony," she said with a giggle, picking up the book nearest her. "Oh! I have been wanting to read this."

She looked beautiful sitting there comfortably. "This must be your ideal place then."

"Maybe," she shrugged before lying back against a plush pink, heart-shaped pillow. She hid behind her book before asking, "Do you... like it?"

"It is acceptable," he said, not wanting her to know exactly how much he appreciated the room. He took a seat next to her and picked up the other book. "I have been thinking of reading this book as well." Interesting.

She lowered her book and looked at him. "Maybe this is a mixture of what we both would have wanted."

He looked at her, thinking of her words. *What we both would have wanted.* Did she just mean theoretically, or dare he hope that she meant the two of them? "Perhaps... Would you like a glass?" He nodded to the wine next to them.

"All right," she agreed. After he filled a glass, she took it and helped herself to a long swig. "Not bad."

"No, it isn't," he said, taking a sip of his own drink. "It's quite... pleasant." Not just the scene, but the company as well.

They sat in silence while reading and sipping on the wine. He had been wondering how to break the silence when she began to laugh.

"Look at this!" She pointed to a section in the book.

He put down his glass and book, eagerly moving closer. "Good Lord! What the hell are you reading?" He took the book from her to look at the cover. He raised an eyebrow. "*Sylvia's Love Tales* is what you wanted to read?" It was one of those trashy witch novels!

"Well, I heard Lavender and the others talking on it. It sounded interesting, but doesn't that seem a bit ridiculous? Who would try that to land a boyfriend?"

A small debate ensued where he explained that the woman's desire to have the man was understandable, and he could see her going to all lengths necessary to try to win him. "I don't think she should go as far as to brew an illegal potion, but I could see her using a few tricks." Hadn't he been thinking of doing much of the same? No potion or anything, but the art of seduction was nothing more than mind games. His plan would work.

Hermione claimed that she did not think the potion should have been brewed either, but couldn't fathom why the woman would feel so desperate. "I mean, honestly, if he doesn't like you, then move on," she said disbelievingly.

"Spoken like a Gryffindor," he jeered. "It is clear that this woman is a Slytherin. Tell me, Hermione. What would you do should you find yourself fancying someone that didn't share the feeling?" Perhaps he could listen to what she had to say on this subject and use it to his advantage.

"If I thought he'd never return the feeling, then he would never know how I felt. I would simply think of him from afar, and I would eventually get over him," she said softly, gazing at him intently.

Why was she looking at him like that? *She is implying this about me!* He could play along with this. It would come out.

He returned the intense gaze equally. "How would you ever know for sure that he didn't feel that way if you didn't use that Gryffindor courage to ask him?"

"I don't have to. I can tell by the way he treats me. He'd never be interested in a young witch like me," she said, not realizing she was inching closer.

He relished that she had moved closer to him. And she had said young witch! That meant she was definitely referring to an older wizard. Him. Severus Snape. His body moved closer of its own accord.

"Perhaps those are merely Slytherin tactics to make you believe he would never be interested when he actually has been interested," he replied steadily, not wanting to give anything away just yet.

"Well... that's just wrong. He should tell me."

Indeed?

"What if he can't find the words?" What could he say really? He could see it now *Miss Granger, the moment you are not my student, I intend to seduce you, ravish you, and fuck you for days on end.* That wouldn't do.

"Then why can't he show me? Give me a sign?" Oh, hell. He could do that.

Severus brought his lips to hers for a light brush. "Like this?" he questioned, pulling back slightly.

"Yes," she breathed, putting a hand on his cheek to guide his mouth back to hers. Her lips parted, allowing his tongue entrance, and her body shivered against his. Ever so slowly, he lowered her back down to the comforter, never breaking the kiss. Her warm mouth was everything he had imagined and more. She tasted of something sweet. Likely some candy she had eaten. He nearly moaned as he felt her hands come to life. She had one hand caressing his back, and the other was groping his hair.

One of his hands cupped her face gently while the other held him above her. Finally breathless, they parted. Her wide eyes frightened him for a moment. Surely he hadn't gone too far. She had wanted that as much as he had. Just in case, he said, "I believe we have met the requirements to leave this place."

"Oh, right," she said.

He could see and hear the disappointment. She wasn't ready to leave.

"I guess we should be off then."

"I suppose so," he agreed. Neither moved. Plan be damned. He wanted those luscious lips again. They were everything he'd longed for over the past few months. With a sigh of resignation, he brought his lips back to hers for another dazzling kiss. When he pulled away this time, he stood up. He could not do too much too soon. He knew of her interest now, and that was enough. Until later. He offered a hand to help her up and didn't release it until they were seated back in the cart.

They had both begun to speak at the same time. Laughing, she told him to go first. He nodded. Using his most sincere voice, he said, "I... That... We can't. I'm your teacher." He so wished that they could carry on, but it wouldn't be prudent whilst she was still a student.

He watched in amazement as her jaw set firmly. Defiantly. "Not for much longer, Severus. I can wait if you can."

He'd been waiting! Something vexed him. He had to know, so he smiled for a moment. "I would like that, but why me?"

"Why me?" she countered.

"Touché," he said with a smirk. "Oh, here we are."

The cart had exited The Tunnel of Love once again. Well, how long could they have been in there? The crowd seemed to have dispersed some.

The jovial ride operator helped them out of their cart. "Night, you two. You're the last to come out."

Severus had long lost his desire to hex the man. Whatever he had done to the ride had been beneficial.



They silently made their way to the castle. Once they neared the castle door, she said, "Happy Valentine's Day." He'd forgotten about that. No wonder everything was decorated with all the ruddy pinks and reds.

He wanted to kiss her. To tell her that this was the first Valentine's Day that he'd ever enjoyed, but he only whispered, "The same to you."

She nodded and turned away.

"Hermione?" He couldn't let her go. Not yet.

"Yes?" She turned back eagerly.

He could see it in her face. She wanted to be with him. Wanted to spend time with him. The plan would just commence sooner than he had originally planned. Surely kisses and caresses wouldn't be too out of the question?

"Perhaps you would like to accompany me to the Astronomy Tower. The February skies are nice on clear nights such as this." She didn't hesitate to take his hand as he held it out to her. The feel of her skin on his sent shivers down his spine. Yes, they would definitely have to make arrangements to spend time together until she graduated. After that, well, that was another story.

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**A/N:** I hope you all didn't mind this companion to my original story. I felt that the other was lacking, so I added more.