

Snape the Seducer

by ayerf

Snape wants his apprentice, Hermione, to be his. The only snag is that she's Quidditch Star!Ron's. Not for long, though... SS/HG winter 2006 gift exchange fic

Chapter the first (and only)

Chapter 1 of 1

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AN: Thanks to my beta, LadySunflower. For Arsenic Jade, answering the prompt: Not HBP compliant. Post Hogwarts, Post war. Severus stealing an under appreciated Hermione out from under a famous Quidditch playing Ron. Would like Snape wooing in a Slytherin manner, not mushy! A useless/clueless Harry and lemons would be a bonus NC-17/R/M.

"Even Oliver Wood fell off his broom trying the new hoop swing move, but I managed it! You saw me, didn't you, Harry? You have to admit I'm a better Keeper than him. I used to be rubbish, but now... I'm a legend. King of the Cannons!" Ron Weasley raised his arms in exaltation, sending a spurt of his Firewhisky from the bottle he was clutching surging over the heads of the Quidditch team clustered around the bar.

Harry Potter smiled at his best mate, cradling his own bottle as he took the occasional sip. "That you are, Ron. Weasley is our King and all. You must be good for the fans to have taken the good version of Malfoy's song and changed it to apply for the Chudley Cannons."

"Weasley can block anything, he doesn't miss a single thing, that's why all Cannons sing: Weasley is our King!" The assembled group of orange-clad wizards burst into song, chasing out most of the other occupants of the Hog's Head with their tone deaf display.

"I never thought I'd be a world famous Quidditch player the first time I stepped foot in this place. Yet here I am, more well-known than Krum! Only you top me in fame, Harry."

"I wish I didn't. I'm glad you fulfilled your life-long dream of the Cannons winning the league. We are England's Keeper and Seeker. We're unbeatable! Just picture old Krum's face when Bulgaria loses the next World Cup!"

"Quidditch is my life, Harry. I live Quidditch!" Ron's eyes were slightly bleary from his consumption of liquor, but they gleamed with a fanatical fervour.

"It's important to me too, but your sister comes first for me. Ginny, her hair like spun fire..." Harry sighed, pushing his glasses back up his nose as they threatened to fall off.

"As she should! You'd better treat my baby sister right, Potter. Remember, she's got six big, strong, older brothers who'd break every bone in your body if you ever hurt so much as a hair on her head." Ron glowered at Harry before his eyes slipped to the filthy floor of the pub. "Although Percy's a poncy wimp."

"I would never hurt my Ginny. Never. No fear. Just a week before she's Ginny Potter! A week! I can't wait!"

"You'd better. My baby sister better still be a virgin on her wedding night, or you'll have hell to pay."

Harry snorted into his Firewhisky. "Like you waited with Hermione, you mean."

"That's different. 'Mione couldn't get enough of me, and I could hardly say no, now could I?"

"If her experience was any different to mine, Ronald Weasley, I'd like to know how you managed it. You kiss like a wet sponge and go at sex like a flobberworm. One thrust and that was it, I seem to recall. Much as I want to forget it!" Lavender Brown sneered from behind the bar.

Ron flushed crimson, clashing even further what with his red hair and orange uniform. "I was a virgin, only sixteen then! And I was drunk. I'm twenty," Ron paused, frowning as he tried to recall his exact age through a haze of alcohol, "twenty-one now! I'm a sex god. The groupies I shagged before I got together with 'Mione told me I was the best ever. So shut your gob, Lav-Lav."

Harry frowned, having been under the impression that Hermione had been Ron's girlfriend ever since the end of the war, when Ron's name was known before he became famous as a Quidditch player. But Ron was loyal; he'd never cheat on anyone, least of all on Hermione, or so Harry reassured himself. The truth that Ron was lying about the groupies wanting him in the first place didn't occur to him.

"My life is complete. I'm a successful Quidditch Keeper for what's now the best team in the country; I'm rich, famous... All I need now are a wife and kids. Gotta girlfriend, just need to upgrade her to a wife."

"You're going to ask Hermione to marry you?" Harry asked, a dreamy smile widening on his face as he thought of his other best friend being along with him soon in the big, happy Weasley family.

"Yeah. After we get married and have lots of little Weasleys, she'll come to all of my matches with our brood."

"They'll sit with my own, all of their little faces smiling up at us as they cheer for us. To us and the future!" Harry clinked his bottle together with Ron's as a toast to their bright, shining, utopian future while Lavender sniffed with disgust.

'Not if I have anything to do with it, Weasley,' Severus Snape thought, glowering over at the group of Quidditch louts from his position sitting at a table in the shadows under the stairs. 'It's clear that you don't appreciate a witch of Hermione Granger's intelligence. Why don't you go for a Quidditch groupie or a brainless bleach blonde? Mind you, I thought Miss Brown counted as the latter, yet she seems to have developed better sense. I wonder if what she said about Weasley's lack of accomplishment as a lover is true? If it is, then my pursuit will be easier.'

He stood up and swept out of the Hog's Head, unnoticed by the carousing group at the bar, his trademark black robes blending into the shadows even if they had been paying any attention to their surroundings. He paused before leaving, the tip of his wand barely visible as it poked out of the sleeve of his robes. One unnoticed spell on Weasley later, and he sidled out of the door.

The path up to the gates to Hogwarts was easy to negotiate by the light of his wand, which in turn was simple enough to produce for Severus as he hadn't drunk nearly enough to be counted as under the influence.

Once the gates had opened, it didn't take long for Severus to make his way into the castle and down to the dungeons where his quarters were located. Light streaming from under his office door diverted him from his destination. He touched his wand to the door, causing it to swing open. No one was inside unless they were hiding under the desk or in the storeroom, but the familiar sounds of a potion being brewed indicated that someone was occupying his private laboratory after hours. Only one other person knew the combination to the wards to his pride and joy of the state-of-the-art lab, and that person had a habit of using their spare time to brew challenging potions.

Severus lowered the wards (which automatically reset when the door shut, with a safety buffer to prevent the noise of an explosion from deafening the occupants of the castle) and opened the door. He stood watching the progress of the late night Potions maker, in part to attempt to identify the potion and also to admire the girl making it.

Allowing his eyes trace over the curvaceous body of Hermione Granger was something he rarely had the opportunity to do, despite the amount of time she spent in his presence. When they were working on a potion together, any distractions such as ogling the chit were potentially catastrophic, what with the danger of volatile ingredients in a boiling hot cauldron. That and he knew while it was bad enough that he was a lecherous old man, it would be far worse if she caught him leering at her.

"Either come in or leave; don't stand in the door like that," Hermione called as she flicked a few crushed beetle's eyes into the brew.

Severus jumped, unaware that she'd noticed his presence. He stepped inside, the door swinging closed behind him as the wards reactivated.

"It's also rather distracting the way you're looking at me, so please stop it. I've already lost my eyebrows this evening; I have no wish to be bald."

"There are such things as restorative potions and charms, Hermione." *'You'd be just as beautiful with or without that shrub, at least to me.'* was Severus's unspoken thought, something that his Slytherin nature would never allow him to speak aloud.

"Two hundred and four..." she muttered as she stirred the potion, keeping count. "That there are, Severus, but my request remains. You're free to look at me after I finish this, although heaven knows why you'd want to. I look a mess during and after brewing, even if I didn't before. Which I did."

A smirk widened on Severus's face as he heard his given name escape her lips. Although the Hogwarts policy was for masters and apprentices to call each other by more respectful terms, in private he had taken the move of being more familiar. Up until recently, Hermione had struggled not to refer to him as 'sir'.

Stepping closer to the cauldron, Severus switched his focus to the potion. The bubbling blue liquid narrowed the possibilities down, together with the knowledge of what he'd seen earlier led to the conclusion of what it was most likely to be.

"You're brewing a Sober-Up Potion for Weasley. He doesn't deserve it." *Or you, come to that!*

"No, he doesn't. Which is just as well, as this isn't a Sober-Up. It looks like one, tastes like one, but it is not one. It'll knock the randy bugger out and give him the mother of all hangovers." Hermione jabbed her wand at the flames under the cauldron, lowering the temperature so that the questionable potion simmered along merrily.

"My, my. Trouble in paradise?"

She snorted, adding in the last ingredient: a grindylow fang. "What makes you think that it was ever paradise to begin with? Oh, sure, it's paradise for him, but for me? More like purgatory for every bit of studying I ever made him do."

"I'd be concerned if you thought it was heavenly to be within the grip of his gargantuan paws."

"You've realised why he's so good at Keeping?" Hermione sniggered.

"He blocks the rings with swipes of his overlong arms, using his enormous hands in a way that should be against the rules. Unfortunately, they didn't allow for someone of Ronald Weasley's physique."

The flames under the cauldron were extinguished with another jab of Hermione's wand, leaving the potion to cool before it could be ladled into vials.

Hermione ran her hands over her face, pushing her hair back before turning to face him. Her eyebrows were indeed singed, but not completely gone. While her eyes still

held their usual lively sparkle, they were slightly dimmed with a combination of weariness and a touch of what seemed to be despair to Severus's keen, Legitimacy-empowered gaze.

"I must admit that I never thought my future with him would be like this. Sometimes I wonder if he even knows I exist."

"What do you want from the future?" Severus murmured, an outstretched hand grazing over the back of Hermione's as he reached to lean against the table, causing her breath to catch as he did so.

"In the short term, to finish my apprenticeships," Hermione answered. She'd taken the almost unheard of route of taking three apprenticeships on at the same time, in part due to her own inability to decide which subject to specialise in and also because of the intense competition between the faculty to have the 'brightest witch in a century' as their protégé. Usually an apprenticeship lasted three years, something that would have taken a witch of Hermione's calibre far less time. In this case, three apprenticeships were to last her a total of five years. This was to be her final year before she earned her Mastery in Charms, Arithmancy and Potions.

"In the long term... I don't know. I know that I'll be swamped with job offers, but I am thinking of taking up the Headmaster's offer. You know, the one where you finally get the Defence position if I take over as Potions mistress?"

His lips twitched as Severus attempted to stop the triumphant smirk from slipping onto his face. "I cannot advise you with that decision, as I have ~~everything~~ to gain if you stay. Yet earlier on, I overheard something that would mean you wouldn't have to choose from a job if what someone else wants of you comes to pass."

Her head jerked as she looked up sharply. "What do you mean? What... Who did you overhear? Is it someone who wants me dead?"

"No, not a threat to your life. I suppose it is a threat to your life as you know it." Severus gazed at Hermione contemplatively as he decided how to go about this. She might suspect him of fudging the truth when his own ulterior motives came out if he just told her. So instead, perhaps he should show her. "Come with me. See for yourself."

After retrieving his Pensieve in his office and extracting the pertaining memory, Severus invited Hermione to view it. She emerged, her eyes burning with anger, her jaw line tight as she ground her teeth.

"How dare he? Narcissistic, egotistical prick! If he thinks I'll marry him with that future ahead of me, he's in for a nasty wake up call!" she raged, her hands moving as if to tighten around an invisible neck. "I'm not a brood mare! One or two children are my limit, and even then not until I'm ready... which I may never be."

The fireplace abruptly flared green, with the disembodied voice of Albus Dumbledore calling, "Miss Granger, are you there? Mr Weasley is asking after you. If you'd care to step into my office before Fawkes attacks him, I would be much obliged."

"I'll be there momentarily, Headmaster," Hermione called back. The green light faded, leaving them in the gentle light of the wall scones. "I hope Fawkes claws his precious uniform into shreds. That phoenix has enough sense to know those particular shades of red and orange clash violently." She gripped her wand tightly, sparks flying from the tip. "One of these days I'll burn it off him... but no, that would be a rather grim, disgusting sight. I'll hex it pink in the middle of a crucial game, together with special Bludger attracting features."

"Before you leave, don't you need that potion you were brewing?" Severus reminded her as she made to grab a handful of the Floo powder on the mantelpiece.

She slapped her forehead, darting back into the laboratory, returning moments later with a vial of the dubious potion clutched tightly in one hand. "Good point. That drunken sod deserves it all the more for disturbing Dumbledore at this hour." After grabbing a handful of the glittering powder, Hermione threw it at the fireplace, calling out her destination as she did so. A flash of green later and Severus was alone in his office.

'Hermione on the warpath. I almost pity Weasley..' He smirked as the thought of what was likely to be happening in Albus's office crossed his mind. The smirk deepened as Severus realised that this no doubt meant that his spell on Weasley had done its work. If everything went as planned, Hermione would be his by nightfall.

I must confess that I am genetically opposed to the colours red and orange when they are not part of my own adornment of feathers. As such, I was on the verge of attacking the youngest cock of the Weasley brood, who had dared to enter my abode clad in bright orange wrapping. The Weasley boy could have at least made the effort to cover his similarly bright red head fur, but he always was a particularly obtuse human.

My pet human, Twinkle Eyes, is daft enough to consistently damage his teeth sucking lemon drops all day long, but even he winced at the sight of Bean Pole (my name for the offending one) as the boy sidled in.

"Wassup, Dubblemore? Where's 'Ermione? Want 'Mione. Want her now. Where's she?" Bean Pole burred, swaying on his ungainly feet. I do believe the dolt was inebriated, judging by his slurring speech and the overpowering stench of alcohol drifting from him.

I let out a challenging screech as I automatically reacted to the offending, vibrant colours of the intruder. Twinkle Eyes shot me an entreating look to remain calm as he spoke to Bean Pole, saying that he did not know exactly where Dazzler was (human intelligence sometimes outweighs physical characteristics when it comes to my names for them, this being the case with her), but would use the Floo to find her.

Twinkle Eyes did as he said he would, throwing a handful of the powder into the fireplace. I sneezed as he did so, having a slight allergy to it. He called out his message, her reply following soon afterwards. Moments later Dazzler staggered out of the fireplace, soot encrusted on her robe.

"There you are 'Mione! Come 'ere, look outta the window." Bean Pole knocked several of Twinkle Eyes playthings to the floor as he waved his long arms around, gesticulating.

Dazzler cautiously approached the window, shifting her grip on a container of viscous liquid; no doubt a remedy intended for Bean Pole's intoxicated condition. As a phoenix, I am not an expert on human relationships, but I have observed many interactions between the genders over the myriad years of my existence. Judging by that experience, I would say that Bean Pole and Dazzler's relationship has reached a burning day, and I doubt that their love will survive this.

"What am I meant to be seeing? Ro-on, you should know better than to disturb the Headmaster, especially when you've been drinking. There are such things as owls, and if the message was particularly important, a Patronus..." Dazzler abruptly stopped talking as she caught sight of something outside the window. I fluttered over, landing on her shoulder to peer down at something burning on the ground far below. Two words formed of stacks of burning books, although Dazzler had to transfigure her handkerchief into a telescope to see this, as her eyesight is no match for mine.

A strangled gasp escaped her, shoulders tensing under my talons. The vial fell from her hands, to shatter on the floor, the liquid splattering her robes. I could feel the burst of dark despair coming from Dazzler, something that Twinkle Eyes seemed to catch as well, yet Bean Pole was blissfully ignorant.

Make that completely dense, as he misunderstood or misinterpreted Dazzler's reaction entirely. Bean Pole pulled a hideous looking travesty of a ring from his pocket, grabbed Dazzler's left hand and made to put it on her ring finger. I could see a muscle twitching just below one of Dazzler's eyes as Bean Pole moved. Before he could put the ring on her finger, she spun around, snatching her hand from his grasp and clenching it into a fist. Said fist was hurled between his bleary eyes, sending blood spouting from Bean Pole's long nose when he stumbled back.

"*Are those my books?*" Dazzler hissed, too enraged to raise her voice.

"Y-yeah. Y' won't need 'em when you mawwy me..."

"When I marry you? Do you honestly think I wanted to do that, even before you burnt my books as a sick alternative to fireworks?"

"Hey, that's not true. It was a romantic thing, burning 'em like that." Blood still trickled from Bean Pole's dented nose, which also affected his speech.

"For future reference, Ronald Weasley, it is NOT romantic to burn a bookworm's books in a 'Marry Me' sign!"

"So will you?"

Dazzler's reply was to whip out her wand, summoning Bean Pole's broom. She took the doubtless expensive, beloved broom in her hands and gripped tightly before holding it over her upraised knee. CRACK! CRACK! The broom was broken in two places, forming a jagged 'N'. Dazzler hurled the broom aside and summoned something else with her wand. Catching the ball apparently called a 'Quaffle', she threw it at Bean Pole's head as he stood stock still, stunned at her actions. It bounced off, landing beside the broom, completing the word 'NO'. I glided over to my perch, fearing for my own safety around the distressed witch.

"Once, I loved you. Once, you treated me as if I meant something to you as a person, not as an accessory. Now, I hate you. I never want to see you again!" Dazzler snarled. She turned to leave, striding over to the door, her hand on the door knob. Before she left, she looked back. Tears were trickling down Bean Pole's cheeks as he cradled his broken broom in his arms. "I do believe that your broom means more to you than I do. Good riddance, you complete and utter bastard!" Dazzler stalked out, slamming the door shut behind her.

Perhaps it would have been suitably courageous for me to attempt to alleviate her fury, but Dazzler stores her negative emotions rather unhealthily, leading to these outbursts. My phoenix song might alleviate the symptoms, but it will not prevent it. In addition, when Dazzler is in moods like this, it is unwise for a magical creature like me to approach her unless I wish to have all of my feathers standing on end. Her magic runs unchecked when angered, I mean to say. She wouldn't attack me on purpose.

Hermione was too enraged to think clearly; far too furious to realise that travelling by Floo powder would be much faster. Although it must be said that storming through the castle gave her time to cool down. Tears blurred her vision, her cheeks hot. A swipe of one hand dashed the tears away as a guttural snarl escaped her throat. *'I hate it when I cry because I'm angry. It makes me feel pathetic. Grr. Ron's the pathetic one. Bastard! Why did it have to end like this? Now I've lost one of my oldest friends. Knowing Harry's love for Quidditch, he'll take Ron's side and I'll lose him too. Oh, fuck it all. If Harry does that, he's just as much as a useless git as Ron is. I have other friends; this isn't like my third year here at Hogwarts.'*

She'd reached the entrance hall by the time her anger had dissipated enough for her to feel other emotions. Like guilt. *'I should've warded my books against fire. How stupid can I get?'* A strangled moan of grief escaped Hermione as she caught sight of the still flaming pile of ruined books. She slowly approached, wand ready to extinguish the flames even as she acknowledged that it was a futile exercise as the books were beyond repair, none intact from the consuming flames. Competing with the lump of sorrow in her throat was the pang of shame shooting through her abdomen that she was just as bad as Ron: *'My books meant more to me than he did, just as his broom did to him than me. What kind of hypocrite am I? Face it, girl, it wasn't meant to be. Bookworms and Quidditch jocks don't mix.'*

"Oi! You can't just do that to a man, 'Mione. A wizard's broomstick is as precious to him as his wands... Oops. I mean, wand."

Hermione spun to face Ron, who had apparently sobered up enough to follow her. He was still clutching the shards of his broken broomstick, his face streaked with blood from his nose. Someone (most likely Dumbledore) had taken the trouble to heal his nose, restoring his ability to speak more coherently.

"I have nothing to say to you, Ronald. I may have overreacted back in Dumbledore's office slightly, but my books were just as precious to me as your broom was to you. As for your wands, you were pretty much useless with both of them. If you value your continued usage of them, I strongly suggest you leave now."

Shaking his head in refusal, Ron stood as still as he could, swaying slightly under the remaining influence of his celebratory drinks.

"Don't say that I didn't warn you!" Hermione levelled her wand at Ron. Yet before she could let any spell fly, he managed to coordinate his limbs enough to snatch the wand from her grip.

"You broke my broom, you're not going to curse me, too. You owe me more than that. If you really won't marry me, then I want a goodbye shag. I mean, bookworm that you are, you're a pretty good lay."

"How dare you! Go fuck yourself, Ronald." Prudence strongly suggested that Hermione get away from the lanky man looming ahead of her, but prudence was not much use when a woman of her size was confronted by a man of Ron's. Regardless of this, she backed away, Ron doggedly followed her every move, large hands grabbing at her. "Get off me, I don't consent to this kind of treatm..."

Her incensed words were cut off as Ron caught hold of her shoulders and hauled her towards him for a rough kiss. A kiss that Hermione would have no part of, keeping her mouth tight shut. Fresh tears slipped down her cheeks as she struggled to break free.

'Someone stop him, please. I don't want this at all. Oh God help me, this is turning him on. I'm going to be sick. The Ron I loved would never sink to this sort of assault. It doesn't help matters that he's drunk...'

Nausea roiled in her gut as Ron pressed his erection against her. Her mouth opened to allow a strangled cry of 'No' to escape. Ron attempted to deepen the kiss as she did so, only to back off as she bit him.

"Argh! You bitch... fine, I won't insist on a shag, but I want a goodbye kiss." His hands tightened painfully around her shoulders as he shook her.

"Stop it, you're hurting me!"

Ron's hands abruptly loosened as his entire body went limp. He toppled forwards, pinning Hermione under him on the flagstones.

Moments later she was freed as someone rolled Ron's unmoving body off her with judicious use of a kick to his side.

"Hermione, are you all right? Bastard deserved more than a *Stupefy* for what he wanted from you." Her knight in black robes, Severus helped her up, even as he kicked again at Ron.

"I'm fine..."

"Maybe physically, but I'll wager that mentally you are not."

Even as she opened her mouth to deny that, Hermione noticed how much she was trembling. Tears were still trickling down from her eyes. "It's not so much what he just tried to do. It's what he's already done," she tried to continue speaking, but her throat closed up before she could finish. Gesturing helplessly towards the smouldering pile of what remained of her books, Hermione sniffled.

Severus raised an eyebrow at the sight. "Madam Pince will have his guts for garters! Ransacking the library for books to burn..." His other eyebrow joined the first as Hermione gave a strangled howl of grief and buried her face in his robes as she clung to him. A little uncertainly at first, he stroked her back and hair soothingly. "I knew you were a book lover, but even this is a little extreme for you."

"They were *mine!*" Hermione wailed, albeit a little muffled by Severus's robes. His hands stilled as he temporarily seemed to forget to breathe.

"Oh."

'The fool! I specifically enchanted him with a mental 'suggestion' to burn library books so as to get in trouble with Irma as well as Hermione. Still, it appears to have succeeded in driving Weasley from Hermione's heart. It's just as well that Albus saw fit to send me after her. If he hadn't...' Severus tightened his grip on the sobbing girl in his arms. 'It doesn't bear thinking of.'

"I'm sorry. I'm being pathetic..."

Pulling away enough from Hermione to gently grip her chin, Severus tilted her face up to meet his as he bent down to steal a kiss, disregarding her tear-dampened cheeks. As Hermione stiffened at his sudden action, Severus pulled away, cursing his impulse. Weasley had done much the same thing without permission, and now he himself was taking advantage of her. Swallowing hard, he thought frantically of what he could say to rectify the situation.

"My apologies. I shouldn't have done that without your consent. It won't happen again... unless you wish it to?" Severus searched Hermione's stunned features for any sign that she desired his attentions after Weasley's attack. Her eyes narrowed as a frown pinched her face. Wincing, Severus readied himself for her diatribe... hopefully one that wouldn't include usage of her wand. Hermione's face softened, a chuckle escaping her as she shook her head.

"Honestly, Severus! I'm not going to hex you. Even if I wanted to, that git currently lying comatose confiscated my wand. If I'm going to lecture you at all, it'll be for stopping." Reaching up to loop her arms around his neck, Hermione stood on tiptoe to bring their lips back together.

As the kiss deepened, Severus reached down to pick Hermione up with a possessive grip on her behind, bringing their hips together. She made no complaint, reciprocating the move by wrapping her legs around his waist.

Severus pushed her legs back down and lowered her down onto her admittedly shaky feet with a groan as his arousal made itself known. Much as he wanted her, he wasn't about to take this any further in a public area... and there was Weasley, who was beginning to stir. A Stunner only lasted a limited time, a reason why a Revival charm was not always necessary.

Weasley groaned, clutching his side where Severus had kicked him. Bleary eyes opened as the boy lifted his head up. Before he could move further, Severus stalked over, pulling a vial of Hermione's potion from his robes. Grasping a handful of Weasley's red hair, it was easy enough to move the brat's head into the right position to pour the potion into his conveniently opened mouth. Weasley moaned, eyes rolling back in his head as the potion did its work.

Having returned Hermione's wand to her, she crafted an admittedly illegal Portkey to take the drunken sot to his home.

"If you wish to continue where we left off, come with me," Severus murmured, offering his hand to Hermione. She didn't hesitate, grasping it firmly with an accompanying eager gleam in her eye.

It was when they had reached the door to his quarters that Severus paused, turning sharply on his heel to gaze at Hermione. Now was the time where his scheme could fall apart. If he played this wrong, he might have her for the night... but Severus was not after a one night stand. This was the girl he wanted as his wife after all.

"You may want this us now, but will you in the morning? Will you in a week? A month? A year?" at Severus's clutch of questions, Hermione opened her mouth to respond but was shushed by his finger pressed to her lips. "I play for keeps, Hermione. If I have you, I will never let you go. You should return to your chambers and sleep on this decision."

Hermione's eyebrows drew together as she scowled. "This is no rebound, Severus Snape. I may have physically been in a relationship with Ronald up until about an hour ago, but mentally I gave up on him long ago. Before I even began dating him, in fact."

"Then why did you date him at all?"

She shrugged. "I wish I knew. I know everyone else expected it, but that's no excuse. I do know that while I gave up on him, there was no one else who wanted me at the time."

Frowning, Severus wondered at the note of rebuke in her tone.

"You're just as clueless as every other male out there, aren't you?" At his look of bewilderment, Hermione rolled her eyes before continuing, "I've fancied you for years, dunderhead that you are! You showed no interest in me then. I was just the Insufferable Know-It-All to you."

"When was this?"

"Forget Lockhart, you're the one I had a crush on as a teenager. Well, until you repeatedly crushed my tender hopes with your treatment of a Muggle-born Gryffindor student before the Dork Lord choked on Nagini." Hermione sniggered. "Then the crush came back when I was old enough to call it love. Of course, you only started showing interest in me when I was Ron's girl. Why is it that all men want what they can't have?"

Severus winced. So, he could have had first shot at her if he hadn't been working his way through the sudden surge of fan girls after the ignominious defeat of the late Tom Riddle. "My apologies. I still viewed you as a student then and as such out of bounds."

"Make it up to me now: don't send me away."

"As you wish," he hissed, lowering his wards and leading her inside. A secret smirk slipped across his face. *I have her right where I want her. If I'd asked her to stay, she might have left; there's nothing like reverse psychology for manipulating Gryffindors.'*

The life of a portrait is generally rather uneventful unless the sheer amount of gossip from the other 'works of art' in the castle is counted. Sometimes I wish that my painting was disconnected from the rest, as there is nothing more disturbing than a horde of interlopers traipsing through your own private place, conversing in whispers under the misapprehension that it makes them less annoying.

Yet this evening I must confess that I have seen a sight more disturbing than uninvited guests; the current Head of my house engaged in a quite inappropriate display with his Mudblood apprentice. Severus Snape is quite welcome to do as he wishes with no audible complaint from me (I have no wish for hints about paint remover), but surely he could have satisfied his base urges in the bedroom? I'm quite sure that his bed is more comfortable than his sofa... and certainly more comfortable than the floor.

Of course, I have no real objection about watching them. I could have closed my eyes or left for a painting in another room, but it's been quite some time since Severus last had a woman in his quarters. On second thoughts, that time doesn't count. McGonagall only came to lay into him about his Slytherins; no copulation was involved. Even if intercourse had been involved, I would have left, as McGonagall naked is the stuff of nightmares. I've seen her and Dumbledore at it before, and that made my oils flake.

At least I can understand why Severus would want Granger. She's young and shapely... altogether easy on the eyes. For a Mudblood, she's quite a splendid specimen. As for Severus, while I'm no lover of men, he's a fine man, although his appearance would be better if he'd had a wizard instead of a Muggle for a father.

Such crude behaviour as wolf whistling is beyond me, so I kept quiet. They didn't even realise I was there, although that's no great surprise considering the speed at which their clothes came off after Severus ascertained that she was on the Potion. I'm glad that he doesn't want to breed with a Mudblood, although I wouldn't mind seeing more

of this one... and it must be said that she is worthy of the title of 'witch'.

It was very tempting at first to ask them to shift positions as the sight of Severus's arse wasn't my idea of a good show. Most fortunately for me, they rolled off the sofa onto the floor with Granger on top. The view of her jiggling bosoms as she rode her Master was almost worth the cost my mortal self paid for this portrait; if I hadn't been languishing within the portrait network in this castle for centuries, it would have been worth it.

Sexual intercourse is surreal to watch and all the more so with an Imperturbable Charm preventing any sound from reaching this admittedly voyeuristic portrait. While an intimate act between the, ah, participants, to an observer it looks like a cross between a seizure and a dance. Especially at the culmination, with the contortion of faces and limbs.

After they had recovered, the lovers moved their activities to the bedroom, where no painting hangs. Typical! Now that my entertainment has gone, I am forced back to the drudgery of my current existence. Perhaps Phineas Nigellus would be interested to hear of this...

Having awoken under such situations as being held at wand point, it was all the more rewarding to be roused from sleep by fellatio. Severus's hands drifted down to entwine themselves in Hermione's bushy hair (which seemed more shrubby than bushy after the activities of the night before).

Either she'd read some particularly instructive Eromancy manuals or she'd had plenty of previous experience in giving head. The thought of Ronald Weasley having the benefit of this caused Severus's fingers to tighten in Hermione's hair. She didn't appreciate that, letting his cock slip from her mouth into the unwelcome chill air of the dungeons.

"Pull my hair again and I might bite!"

"My sincerest apologies. Where did you learn this subtle art?" Severus murmured, wincing at the thought of her threat.

"Where do you think? Remember who you're asking," she retorted, lowering her head to run the tip of her tongue around his glans.

"A book, then. So... Minerva's prize Prefect used the Restricted Section for... recreational purposes."

"Mhmm," Hermione hummed an affirmative around his shaft, a shiver running through him at the sensation.

"You'll bite if I make any comments about being Head Girl, won't you?"

A warning nip hinted that he was talking too much. She withdrew from him again.

"Severus, shut up. It doesn't say much about my prowess if you can still talk!" she growled, teeth bared a mere inch from his pride and joy.

"There's nothing wrong with your technique. I just happen to have more control than a lesser man," Severus assured her. *A lesser man would also be flaccid by now when faced by her sharp teeth...*

Mollified, Hermione continued. She certainly knew how to put her lips, teeth and tongue to good use, varying the pressure of the suction and rhythm of her movements. Her hands crept up to stroke his balls, gently massaging them. Just when he thought he'd be able to control himself and stave off his release for a while longer, he felt a tingling sensation as she used a spell to stimulate his prostate and swiftly brought him to the point of no return.

Having no idea as to her preferences, Severus thought it only polite to attempt to warn her of his impending release, only to find that she'd succeeded in compromising his ability to speak. "Ungh!" *Hermione, I'm about to... oh, God!*

Regardless of his ineffectual wording, she had some forewarning from the shifting of his balls as they moved closer to his body. He didn't know whether she swallowed or not as he was lost in the explosion of stars figuratively accompanying his ejaculation.

"Thank you... That's the best way to wake me," Severus murmured, having recovered his voice.

It was only when he tried to untangle his hands from her hair that he realised the dangers of coming into contact with Hermione's infamous hair before it had been brushed...

'There had to be a drawback!

"There you are! I was afraid you weren't going to come to my stag party," Harry exclaimed upon seeing his best friend sidle into the Hog's Head.

"I wouldn't miss your last night as a free man," Ron mumbled, his face unshaven and eyes bloodshot. Harry shied away as Ron came close; he reeked of cheap Firewhisky.

"Hermione said 'No'?" asked the Boy Who Lived To Be Easily Shocked.

"Yeah. We're over. Looking back, I proposed in the wrong way. But she would've refused anyway."

"What did you do, Ron?" Knowing Ron's propensity for acting without thinking matched (and at times surpassed) his own, Harry waited with bated breath for the answer.

"I was drunk and that's all I'm saying. I messed up and she wants nothing to do with me. Come to that, I want nothing to do with her after she broke my broom. Especially now that she's with... Hide me, they're here!" Ron dived to his knees behind Harry, peering between the befuddled Seeker's legs at the new arrivals.

Harry peered at whoever had spooked Ron. He blinked, then examined the bottle he'd been drinking from, certain that he was hallucinating. His hallucinations then caught sight of him and approached.

"Harry, good to see you. Do you mind if I bring Severus along as my guest tomorrow?" Hermione gave him a friendly kiss on the cheek in greeting, but refrained from hugging him due to Ron clinging to his legs.

"Snape? Tomorrow?"

"You are entering the bonds of matrimony tomorrow, are you not, Potter?" Snape purred, pulling Hermione close and wrapping a possessive arm around her shoulders.

"I, ah, yes, um, er..." Harry mentally shook himself. He'd take this development as a man, unlike Ron who was still cowering behind him. "Feel... feel free. I won't notice anything beyond Ginny, after all. No offence meant, Professor."

"Thanks, Harry. Well, I'll leave you in peace... with your leg warmer. Honestly, Ronald. We didn't come here to force another dose of that potion into you." Hermione sauntered off, Snape in tow.

"Get up, Ron. They've gone. Care to tell me why Hermione's with Snape now?"

"It's her loss. I mean, who would pick the ugly Potions master when they could have the champion Keeper of the Chudley Cannons?" Ron sniffed, dusting himself off. "I'll just have to find someone who appreciates me."

"You do that. If Hermione's bringing Snape to my wedding, she must be serious about him," Harry mused.

"Huh. Hey, that blonde girl over there's wearing a Cannons shirt. And she's alone..." Ron strutted over to the fan girl, who looked adoringly up at him after her empty head had managed to recognise him.

'Wait a minute, did Ron say something about Hermionebreaking his broomstick?!? I'll never say a bad word about Snape, S.P.E.W. or Crookshanks again if that's how she reacts now!'

Severus smirked as he sat at his customary table under the stairs in the Hog's Head, his dark eyes fixed on Hermione as she chattered about the latest discoveries in Potions. While he appeared to be listening to her, his thoughts were gloating about his success.

'Weasley is out of the picture with some blonde bimbo Quidditch groupie, Potter is immaterial and Hermione is mine. Everything is as it should be.'

Mischief managed.