

The Rest of You

by SS Lupin

It was the stretch marks that did her in. SS/HG, One-shot.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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It was the stretch marks that did her in.

Hermione would never call herself a pretty girl – woman, she chided herself; that's why she had the damn things now – but she had always prided herself on her skin. While her hands were callused and ink stained and her hair a nesting ground for knots and perhaps Nargles, her skin had a sort of pale luminescence about it that couldn't be reproduced with foundation and Complexion Charms. It was smooth to the touch and dotted occasionally with a birthmark and was for the most part unscarred – even the injuries of the war hadn't marred the creamy white expanse of it; instead, a nasty hex left her with impaired vision and painful headaches.

One of those headaches was forming an insistent pressure at the front of her skull as she made a startling discovery whilst applying her post-shower body lotion. Instead of encountering soft smoothness, her fingers brushed against something... different on her belly.

She looked in the mirror for confirmation, putting on her thick glasses, and saw it. No. Them. A pattern of pale white lines that stretched vertically along the skin below her belly button.

Hermione couldn't help but gasp. She and Severus had decided to hold off on having children – Hermione wanted to pursue her career while Severus didn't want to jump from the responsibilities of a spy and teacher to the duties of fatherhood. Pregnancy couldn't explain the marks on her skin, and neither could weight gain. Sure, she had filled into her formerly gawky adolescent figure – though to her disappointment, still had small breasts – but she certainly wasn't at the point where her skin had to stretch to accommodate all of her.

Was she?

She looked at her reflection until the mirror whispered, "Sweetheart, you'll catch cold standing naked in here!"

Hermione looked at the mirror inquiringly, an eyebrow rising in the mirror's reflection. "I thought Severus Silenced you years ago."

"He threatened to, but who was going to tell him if he missed a spot shaving?"

Hermione laughed; the throbbing in her head increased. "I suppose I should get dressed then," she said, reaching for her red lace knickers and giving her belly's reflection a frown.

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Hermione entered the bedroom after downing a small Headache Potion. She closed the door behind her softly, not wanting to aggravate her fading headache or wake her sleeping husband.

She was surprised then when Severus' hands trailed up her silk covered back and went around to toy with the belt of her robe.

Ah. So that's why he had set out the lingerie before going to work this morning.

Severus must have taken Hermione's sigh of remembrance as arousal and untied her robe. Parting each side of the fabric, his hands cupped her breasts and caressed them, his touch bringing Hermione to sigh again – this time in approval.

"Mmm. Feeling better, I see."

"A little," she said, closing her eyes and leaning back until she could feel the firmness of his chest, the hot press of his erection.

"I take it that a little headache won't stop you tonight."

Hermione took off her glasses and shook her head, ignoring the small jabs of pain as she did so. She wanted this, wanted his hands to stay on her skin.

Severus chuckled, warm puffs of breath on her neck. "Should I continue?" His hands no longer hovered above her breasts, and Hermione felt the absence of them, her nipples hardening because of the heat behind her and the voice at her ear.

"Yes," she all but moaned as his hands glided over her stomach, down the curve of her belly and the ugly lines there...

"Stop!" She pushed his hands away and pulled her robe closed.

"Hermione. What's wrong?" Severus turned her to face him.

"No... I can see you fine." When she opened her eyes, she saw concern in her husband's gaze, no matter how blurred the sight was.

"Then... why stop?" He bent his head toward hers and kissed her slowly, bringing her to move her lips in time with his and slip her tongue in to meet his.

"Severus," she moaned as he lowered his lips to kiss her throat. She tipped her head back, arching into the nips and licks he placed there, feeling her breathing quicken as he opened her robe and began to run his hands along her sides.

He backed her into the bed, and when the backs of her legs touched the mattress, she gave Severus a final kiss and climbed on the bed, removing her robe and lying on her stomach.

He followed her, and she felt the bed dip, Severus kissing down her spine until he reached the fabric of her knickers.

"Lie on your back."

Hermione stayed where she was in protest. "I want it like this," she lied. She waited for him to just take her, but Severus lay next to her until his hair brushed her shoulder.

"Why won't you let me see you?"

"It's nothing."

"It's something if you cannot answer me."

"I'm surprised you're able to speak coherently with your current state."

"A hard-on doesn't make me mentally incompetent. Mostly."

"That's good to know." She turned so that she lay on her side and pushed back into Severus' groin.

"No. I want to see you."

"Why so insistent on the position?" He draped his arm over Hermione. She could feel his hand play along the fabric of her knickers, and she rolled her hips back. Only when his fingers went higher did she gasp, "No."

"What is it you don't want me to see? Are you pregnant?"

"No!"

"In pain there?"

"No."

"A rash?"

"Of course not," she sniffed.

"Then for Merlin's sake, Hermione, what is it?"

She'd tried his patience long enough. "It's just..."

"Get on with it."

"I have stretch marks, okay?" She pulled the blanket over her – being practically naked in bed was giving her a chill.

"Is that all?"

"Is that all?" She sat up and whirled to face him. "Is that *all*?"

"It certainly is not a reason for us not to have sex."

"Severus!" She almost cried aloud in frustration. "It's all I've got – my skin. Everything else about me is rubbish. I'm too short and half-blind, my hair is an utter mess, and I'm not pretty. And now the one nice thing about me has been destroyed by these... things!"

"Do you think I was merely attracted to you for your intelligence?" Severus sat up with her. "I'm only a man, Hermione, and the first thing I noticed about you at that Potions Convention was your breasts in the low-cut robes you wore."

Hermione wasn't sure if she should be offended or pleased. "Really?"

"Of course, I got to know you as we continued to meet after that night, but I... love you for your looks as well as the rest of you."

"Even with these ugly scars?"

"Even then."

Hermione felt light-hearted enough to kiss him and curl her fingers through his chest hair, signaling them to finish what they had started.

When they separated later, sated and sleepy, Hermione felt Severus' hand holding her belly.

"I love you. Sorry I was being so silly about this."

"My wife will occasionally suffer from madness now and again."

"And so will my husband – remember when you tried to hex the grey out of your hair?"

- end.

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Author's Note: This was in response to the Potter Place Prompt Challenge: Number 16. Prompt - Sometime in her late twenties or early thirties, Hermione wakes up in bed next to her husband, Severus, and notices several new stretch marks adorning her skin. How does she react? What does Severus say to her reaction? (This cannot be because she's pregnant; it has to be because she's a normal, healthy woman.)

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