

Snape's Shakespearean Revelation

by snapemylove

My response to the Potter Place's Winter Prompt Challenge, Prompt #22. What happens when Snape is inadvertently hit with an obscure curse that forces its victim to declare his secret love? He doesn't even release he has a secret heart's desire until the spell forces him to declare it, publicly, in Shakespearean prose no less!

Sinus Amor Cupido Declaro

Chapter 1 of 5

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Sinus Amor Cupido Declaro

Snape groaned as he neared the large cluster of students that filled the end of the corridor. He knew the gathering meant yet another duel, and he would be willing to bet his last Galleon as to the students involved: Mr. Dennis Creevey of Gryffindor and Mr. Ivan McGregor of his own house.

As the students became aware of his presence, they began to scatter out of his way like little black beetles. Snape could only thank Merlin that the combatants were seventh years. The two boys faced off continuously, and their open hostility made the Potter/Malfoy days look like a walk in the park. *Only a few more months and then, if I've any good fortune at all, I'll never again have to set eyes on either of them,*" he reminded himself.

He pushed through the last of the crowd of bystanders just as Mr. McGregor dodged Creevey's latest hex. A flash of brilliant red light flew past the young Slytherin and hit Snape directly in the chest. The light hovered for the briefest of moments over the left side of Snape's chest, then seemed to simply dissipate into the air. Fortunately for Mr. Creevey, the hex was apparently miscast, as nothing else happened. Unfortunately for the two duelists, Snape was less than pleased at becoming an involuntary target.

"Creevey. McGregor. Headmistress' Office. NOW!" he growled, barely able to articulate the words.

The few students brave enough not to flee at Snape's arrival beat a hasty retreat in the face of his obvious fury.

Snape ushered the two assailants up to Minerva's office, intent on seeing the boys punished properly this time. The Headmistress' lenient tactics were going to come to an end today!

Once the students had, begrudgingly, told their very distinct versions of events, Snape interjected himself into the conversation before Minerva could have a chance to respond. "Headmistress, I happen to know for a fact, that this is the fifth such altercation this month. This is the third duel I have personally broken up between these two! The both of them should be on the train back home. TONIGHT!"

Minerva glared at the boys across her desk for a few minutes, allowing Snape's words to sink in before speaking. "I will take your suggestion under advisement, Professor Snape. However, until such time as I reach my decision, Mr. Creevey and Mr. McGregor will serve daily detentions and 100 points will be deducted from each of their houses."

Both boys gasped. No one had ever heard of the Headmistress deducting more than 50 points from a single person before. With their heads hung, the students awaited their dismissal.

"Mr. McGregor, you will report to Mr. Filch directly after dinner for tonight's detention. In the meantime, you will go directly to your common room and remain there until dinner. If you do not, rest assured that I will know immediately."

The young man nodded his head and left, careful to avoid the disdainful glare from his Head of House.

"Now, Mr. Creevey," Minerva said, her voice filled with disappointment, "I need to know the name of the spell that struck Professor Snape."

"*Sinus amor cupido declara*" Dennis mumbled, intently examining the floor between his feet.

It took all of Snape's will power to conceal a gasp of disgust. He had never heard of the particular curse before, but the incantation left little doubt as to the charm's intent. *A love charm. Of course, it just had to be a love charm! Thank Merlin, I am beyond such romantic nonsense. As if I really need another humiliating moment for my Pensieve!*

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Three days after the debacle, Snape had nearly forgotten the love-charm incident. It was Saturday and not a Hogsmeade weekend, so he walked the path toward the town secure in the knowledge that he would be able to enjoy the beautiful afternoon blissfully student-free. Snape was well aware that he was rumored to be vampiric, among many other atrocities, but in reality he enjoyed not only peace and quiet, but the warmth and sunshine of a day such as this. For a rare moment, he even felt content.

Entering the small village, Snape strode leisurely toward the local apothecary. He planned to place his order and then step into the Three Broomsticks for a spot of lunch while his order was filled. He hoped that the apothecary's owner, Garrett Anderson, would be working the counter today.

Mr. Anderson was extremely careful in his choices for Snape's orders, ensuring only the highest quality in the ingredients chosen for the sale. He was also a Potions master, and while he rarely delved into the field of potion research, he had an eye for detail and understood the need for only the purest and freshest ingredients in order to produce the best results. Mr. Anderson was also a man of few words, not one to waste Snape's time with frivolous chatter.

His new apprentice, on the other hand, was none other than the Gryffindor Golden Girl, Miss Hermione Granger. While quite capable of preparing the order, the chit retained many of the traits that had so annoyed Snape when she was his student. She still made a show of her ever-increasing knowledge at every chance. She was insistently cheerful, as if every day was filled with sunshine and roses. She even had the courage to appear happy to see him whenever he appeared during her working hours. *As if any of my former pupils would actually wish for my presence.* Perhaps most annoyingly, she also remained close friends with the other two-thirds of the Golden Trio, Saviors of the Wizarding World.

He resolved to immediately vacate the premises should those two be present. Order by owl left less to be desired than subjecting himself to the likes of Potter and Weasley.

As much as Snape hated to admit it, Miss Granger was by far the most promising student he had ever taught. She had the potential to revolutionize the art of potions, but what she was doing with Garrett Anderson was beyond Snape's comprehension. *She could have studied under me, refining her research skills, learning to create her own unique works, and actually challenging herself rather than wasting her abilities filling orders and waiting on customers in a small town apothecary. But did she? No. The chit never even talked to me about apprenticing her. I didn't even know she wanted to enter into the field until Minerva asked for my signature on her transcript. I'm twice the Potions master Anderson will ever be, and she bloody well knows it.*

The girl really is insufferable, Snape thought with a silent snort as he entered the apothecary. Standing at the counter, her bushy hair pulled back into a careless ponytail, was none other than the irritating object of his ruminations, Miss Granger.

Snape felt a tingle wash over his flesh as he crossed the shop's threshold. He immediately discounted the sensation as a change in the shop's wards. That was, until the chime announced his arrival and Miss Granger turned her attention to the doorway. Their eyes locked momentarily. There was something different about the girl today. She looked the same, her greeting of "It's so good to see you again, Professor Snape" and accompanying smile were the same, yet something was certainly different.

Miss Granger was not beautiful, but if Snape had ever really thought about it, he would have acquiesced that she was rather pretty. *'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,'* his mind supplied. *Shakespeare? Where the hell did THAT come from?*

Shaking the odd thought from his mind, he approached the counter and opened his mouth to place his order. It was only then that he realized his mistake. As soon as the words left his mouth, he knew there was a definite problem.

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

The curse! Mr. Creevey will be lucky to survive to the end of the day! How dare he make me look the fool! Hermione Granger? My secret love is Hermione Granger? Severus Snape, of all the bloody women of the world, you have to go and choose Hermione "Aren't-I-just-perfect" Granger? This isn't happening! This cannot be happening! Oh, Merlin, just kill me now!

A/N: This story is a response to Potter Place's Winter Prompt Challenge, Prompt #22. *Snape is hit with a stray curse intended to make the victim openly express his love for his heart's true desire. The intended victim and other corresponding details are up to the author. When nothing immediately happens, both Snape and the spell's caster breathe a sigh of relief. But what happens when Snape later encounters his secret heart's desire and suddenly turns into a gushing, lovesick romantic. How will the object of his affections react? How will Snape react when the spell finally wears off?*

Sinus amor cupido declaro = Secret love longing reveal, according to an online English-Latin translator.

Ivan McGregor is a person of my own creation. He is not found in canon.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind" is from A Midsummer's Night's Dream, Act 1, Scene 1.

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day..." is from Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

I hope you enjoy reading this much more so than I did writing it. Honestly, I can't recall doing this much research for anything since college. To be fair, according to my best college bud and beta, Ravine, I didn't even do this much research in college. :) Concrit is always welcome.

Shakespearean Snape - Act I

Chapter 2 of 5

Shakespearean prose flows, Hermione reacts, and Minerva discovers that Snape does harbor a secret love.

Shakespearean Snape

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

Snape snapped his mouth shut, his mind racing to analyze what had just occurred. *This is not happening. This cannot be happening, not in front of her. She and her bloody little friends will be falling arse over tip in laughter when she relates this blasted tale. And how in all the world did I come to care for her of all people?* Snape moaned, his lips thinned in an effort to keep from speaking again.

The voice in his head that always sounded so much like Dumbledore chose this particular moment to appear and answer his silent question. *How could you not realize your growing esteem for the girl? Have you already forgotten how disappointed and hurt you felt when you discovered that Miss Granger had decided to pursue Potions, but had not come to you first to inquire about an apprenticeship? She is talented and bright. She is eager to learn and has tremendous potential. She is also caring and kind. And you have already admitted she is attractive.*

No, Snape argued with himself, *I was not hurt. I simply acknowledged that I would have been better suited in regards to the girl's inclination toward research.*

His internal diatribe was effectively ended by Miss Granger, who had remained silent up to this point.

"Shakespeare, Professor? Are you feeling all right?" she asked. Concern and amusement battled for expressive supremacy as her eyes scanned his face for some sort of explanation.

Snape closed his eyes and drew a deep breath. Maybe that declaration would end the spell, he hoped. But as he opened his mouth to explain, once more the spell took control.

"So are you to my thoughts as food to life, Or as sweet-seasoned showers are to the ground; And for the peace of you I hold such strife As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found; Now proud as an enjoyer and anon, Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure, Now counting best to be with you alone, Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure; Sometime all full with feasting on your sight, And by and by clean starved for a look; Possessing or pursuing no delight, Save what is had or must from you be took. Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day, Or gluttoning on all, or all away'."

Snape heaved a silent groan of anguish as the words poured forth. Try as he might, he seemed unable to stop the flow of words. *More damned Shakespeare. The chit's going to think I've gone mad! And why Shakespeare of all things? I certainly hope that all that vaulted knowledge of hers proves useful and she reaches a logical conclusion.*

Snape watched in humiliation as the look of concern on Miss Granger's face deepened. Then she walked around the counter and approached him. He flinched as her hand gently came to rest on his arm. "You are behaving very oddly, Professor. Have you been cursed?"

So much for "brightest witch of her age". Forgetting himself momentarily, he opened his mouth to snap at her that of course he'd been cursed. Why else would he be spouting such romantic nonsense? Unfortunately, those words never made it past his lips.

"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'." Then without intending to, Snape felt a smirk emerge. "'Tempt not a desperate man', Miss Granger," he said in a silky tone he almost didn't recognize as his own.

Miss Granger's hand flew from his arm, repositioning itself, along with its mate, on her curvy hips. "What on earth has gotten into you, Professor? You had better hope your behavior is the result of a curse, or you'll find yourself cursed by me every which way but up!"

Letting out a defeated, angry sigh, Snape tried once more to explain himself. The words simply refused to come out as intended.

"These words are a razor to my wounded heart'."

Snape watched, helpless to explain himself, as Miss Granger withdrew her wand. Wand in hand, she took a step back. Her arms remained down at her sides, but the tension of her musculature belied her calm stance. He had seen her fight. Miss Granger could and would hex him if she felt sufficiently threatened.

"I have always respected you, Professor, and I had thought that you might finally allow me a bit of respect as well. I can see I have been sorely mistaken. I am no longer your student. I am neither required nor willing to put up with your taunts and humiliating barbs anymore." She gestured toward the door. "I believe you should leave, Professor."

Snape nodded, but held up his hand in a request for patience. "My dearest Hermione, I will do as you bid," the spell brought forth, "but 'I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peak at' until the fates permit me view of your beauty again."

Then, he backed out of the shop, fled Hogsmeade, and did not slow until he arrived at Hogwarts and the Headmistress' Office door. He knocked twice, hard, waiting for her permission to enter. At Minerva's admittance, he plopped gracelessly into the nearest chair and glared at his employer.

"Severus, are you all right?"

"No, Minerva. I can assure you that I most certainly am not all right. I came here to inform you that I have every intention of killing one of your students before this day is through."

"Oh, honestly, Severus, calm yourself. There is no need for dramatics. Now, which student has upset you this time?"

"Creevey." Snape growled the name as if it was too vile to even pronounce.

"Creevey? Oh, dear. Does this have anything to do with the spell from the other day?"

Snape just glared at his long-time friend as a hint of a smile began to appear on her face.

"So am I to assume that you do in fact have a secret love?"

Snape growled again before answering. "So it would seem. Minerva, I was spouting Shakespeare in the Hogsmeade apothecary! Shakespeare! I sounded like some

lovesick teenager on Valentine's Day. So help me, Minerva, I am going to kill that boy! Anyone could have come in and heard me. It's bad enough she heard me!"

"Well, aren't you going to at least tell me **who**she is?" Minerva asked teasingly.

Snape deflated immediately. He sank back into the chair and stubbornly looked at the floor, refusing to meet Minerva's gaze.

"Oh, come on, Severus. It can't be that bad," she consoled.

"I sincerely doubt you'll feel the same when you find out the young woman's identity," Snape muttered, hating the self-deprecating tone of his voice.

"I can assure you that regardless of who your lady of choice happens to be, I'll be quite content. I just want you to be happy, Severus."

"Yes, well, enjoy your flight of fantasy, Minerva, because you'll never see your delusions come to fruition," Snape answered softly. Then he added, "The young woman in question is..." Minerva leaned across the desk to catch his barely audible words. "... Miss Granger."

A/N:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day..." comes from Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

"So are you to my thoughts as food to life..." comes from Sonnet 75.

"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" is from MacBeth, Act 5, Scene 1.

"Tempt not a desperate man" is from Romeo & Juliet, Act 5, Scene 3.

"I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peak at" is from Othello, Act 1, Scene 1.

This was harrowing to write, but I hope you will enjoy reading it.:

In Search of Answers

Chapter 3 of 5

Snape learns the full effects of the curse, we find out Minerva's reaction, and Snape contemplates his feelings for Hermione.

In Search of Answers

Snape strode directly to the library after leaving Minerva's office, prepared to spend the rest of the afternoon, or as much time as necessary, researching the curse in which he found himself ensnared. Several dozen books and a few hours later, he finally found a description of the obscure love curse.

How did that Creevey brat ever find this? For a few brief moments, Snape begrudgingly admired the young man's tenacity in finding such a rare hex. The admiration faded immediately as he began to read.

According to this antiquated book, the only text he had been able to find that even mentioned the curse, the spell could lay dormant indefinitely. Once activated, however, the spell's effects would last for five days time.

Five days? Sod it all to Hades! I cannot wait five more days to order all those ingredients!

'The spell literally translates to secret love, longing reveal', the text stated, 'and as such may result in some unexpected symptoms for the spell's victim. Firstly, the victim may, himself, be yet unaware of his concealed affections.' Snape sneered at the text, muttering, "Indeed," under his breath.

'Secondly, while the sufferer will maintain complete control over his thoughts, while in the presence of his heart's secret desire, the spell will govern his power of speech and force him to openly declare his love. A corollary manifestation of the spell is speech in the manner deemed by the sufferer to be most eloquent and/or romantic, though this effect is limited to the presence of the secret love. The spell will overrule the victim's typical physical responses in the same manner. The effects will strengthen in direct relation to the amount of time spent within the presence of the victim's desired, continuing to increase until the spell ultimately releases at the close of the fifth day.'

Snape was grinding his teeth together in frustration by the time he finished the short paragraph. The curse could strengthen? It would control not only his speech, but his actions? *This blasted curse should be listed as the fourth Unforgivable! It's little more than an Imperio mated with a love potion. Shite, shite, and shite!* Snape quickly drew two conclusions: First, he needed to avoid any contact with Miss Granger over the next four days. Second, Creevey would pay for this damnation of a spell if it was the last thing Snape ever did! Yes, revenge may not be swift, as these things take proper planning; however, if Snape survived the horrendous ordeal, Creevey would pay dearly for his professor's humiliation.

Deciding that the whole situation required a bit more thought, Snape approached the librarian's desk to sign out the antiquated text. He glared at Madam Pince, who was trying desperately to hide her amusement at the book's title, Powerful Love Charms for the Ages. Then, with one final glare, he spun on his heel and strode out of the library, robes billowing in his wake.

Once safely ensconced within the privacy of his quarters, Snape allowed his thoughts free reign. What of the Shakespeare? Surely that was not what he considered to be the most eloquent and romantic method of speech, was it? *Hmm...* Well, it was eloquent and love did play heavily in his works, although some of the more notable seemed to end in tragedy. Then again, tragedy certainly befitted the situation.

His thoughts turned again to the object of his 'concealed affections,' Miss Hermione Granger. She had grown rather attractive since her early schoolgirl days and always seemed to be happy to see him, although he was uncertain as to whether or not he could trust her intentions. No one was ever happy to see Severus Snape; well, no one except Albus, rest his soul, and Minerva. And Granger had expressed her respect for him during their morning encounter, hadn't she? Yet if she truly respected him, why hadn't she asked him to apprentice her, rather than Anderson? Surely by then the girl had seen through his "fearsome bat of the dungeons" persona. *She wasn't exactly trembling in fear as she ordered me out of the shop this morning,* he grumbled in remembrance.

This last thought prompted Albus' voice to once again add it's two Knuts worth. *Perhaps it is not so much a fear of the man as it is fear of rejection. You never once praised either the girl or her abilities. She may have felt that you would not see her as worthy of your tutelage.*

Snape mulled that possibly over in his mind. It was true. When she was a student, the war had required that he maintain a disdainful rejection. Praise for her would have been viewed as treachery within Voldemort's ranks. She was Muggle-born, and he had had a role to play. Yet, he had never rectified that behavior after the war ended. Perhaps she really was unaware of his true opinion of her.

Furthermore, Snape was certain that Miss Granger could be a superb conversationalist, if he could learn to overlook her ability to chatter a bit too much. She was knowledgeable in many subjects, and given her propensity for continual learning, she probably followed all of the quality journals in each of her varied subjects of interest.

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Snape spent the rest of the day in his quarters mulling over his situation from all possible angles. As the hours of internal debate passed, he became increasingly convinced that discovering he harbored a certain amount of affection for Granger wasn't the absolute worst thing that could have come of the curse. Granted, he would have been completely content to continue his life in blissful ignorance of the fact, but he supposed it could have turned out worse. Yes, it could have been *much* worse.

He took dinner in his rooms, telling himself it was so that he could continue to concentrate on the task at hand, rather than to avoid the Headmistress. Minerva's amusement over his enchantment was quite annoying. Her apparent joy at discovering that the object of his desire was none other than her most prized student was just as irritating as it was surprising. "Oh, Severus, how wonderful! You two really are quite well suited, you know. I've no doubt that with just a little equal effort, you could be very happy together," Snape repeated in a shrill, sing-song voice that was as close an imitation as he could muster. With a snort, he rolled his eyes.

Snape had been sure Minerva would not approve. Instead she had encouraged him to "reflect upon the situation." She even appeared to think Hermione would accept his attentions, despite the dismal history of their interactions. The whole affair was quite frustrating, and Snape simply had no desire to be confronted by the witch's twinkling eyes and knowing smile just yet. Some days, she was just too much like Albus.

Finally at 10 o'clock, Snape decided that he had endured enough torture for one day. He prepared for bed while reviewing the conclusions he had reached. He would avoid Hogsmeade and Miss Granger for the next four days. In the morning, he would ask Minerva to order the most urgently required potions' supplies on his behalf. Then, when the spell ended, he would go to Miss Granger, order the remaining ingredients, explain the situation, and hope the young woman would be forgiving. In the meantime, he would give some more thought to Hermione, the woman.

His hours of introspection had cast her in a new light. Perhaps, she wasn't just showing off, so much as trying to impress him. Perhaps she actually wanted his approval. That possibility certainly wasn't as bad as it had originally seemed. In any event, he hoped to be able to determine the young woman's true intentions once he could talk with her without spewing centuries old poetic prose. Until then, he would just have to wait.

A/N: Thank you to all of you who has stuck with the story so far. I really appreciate it.

Shakespeare, Act 2

Chapter 4 of 5

Snape attempts to put his plan into motion, but encounters an unexpected visitor.

Shakespeare, Act 2

Snape awoke the next morning feeling satisfied with his plan to wait out the spell and much more comfortable with his attraction to Miss Granger. He had dreamed of her. In his dreams, she had indeed returned his affections. A smug smirk crossed his face. *Several times*. Typically, if he dreamed at all, the visions were guilt-ridden night terrors that would curl the toes of full grown wizards. Hermione evoked dreams of soft, supple skin pressed against his own, and tender, whispered words that caressed his ears while gentle hands caressed his skin.

In his youth, Snape had yearned for a true, loving relationship. He had believed that particular wish was abandoned long ago. Now, the spell had reawakened this desire and offered a glimmer of hope. He mused over Miss Granger's formidable intelligence, the curiosity sparkling in her eyes, and her passion for knowledge qualities that must have planted her in his subconscious desires. Just perhaps, she would help him make his long suppressed wish become reality.

Speculation, however appealing, would not get him to Minerva's office before she left for the Great Hall. Before he could leave his rooms, however, he had a bit of a "situation" to resolve. Reluctantly leaving the warm confines of his dreams' haven, Snape quickly headed toward the loo. He really was running out of time.

With his morning ablutions, including a very cold shower, finished as quickly as possible, Snape left for Minerva's office to request her assistance. He made it as far as the Entrance Hall when he stopped cold. Hermione Granger was meandering slowly across the hall, apparently lost in her own thoughts.

He was certain she had not yet noticed him, but he was more than aware of the tingling sensation of the spell's magic flooding through him again. Frozen, he was unable to retreat and unwilling to close the gap between them. Snape threw all of his formidable energies into the usually simple task of keeping his distance from the young woman and trying to keep his mouth shut.

When Hermione was just a few feet away from Snape, she finally noticed him. As soon as she looked up, their eyes locked. The magic surged. Snape strained to hold it back, his face contorting with the exertion.

"Minerva has just explained your predicament to me, Professor," she said, still closing the gap between them inch by inch. "I am so sorry for my behavior in town yesterday. I do hope you will forgive me."

Internally, Snape sighed defeat. *Is it too much to ask that she would have just continued through the Hall without noticing me?* Outwardly, however, the spell broke through his resistance. His hand reached forward of its own accord to grasp hers. He drew it to his chest, pulling her closer to him.

"The miserable have no other medicine but only hope.' Hermione, my love, the fault is entirely my own," he purred in his silkiest voice, all the while trying to plead with his eyes for her to take mercy on him. "Your beauty simply overwhelms my sensibilities." *Ugh, back to the Shakespeare. The gods obviously hate me. Now please, woman, just leave and end this humiliating spectacle.*

Hermione seemed to understand, at least to some degree, his unspoken plea. As he began speaking, the young woman scanned their surroundings. She pulled her hand

from his chest, along with his own, and forcibly led him across the Hall. They stepped into a rarely used corridor, away from the prying eyes and ears of his students and colleagues. Snape silently thanked her for her sensibility.

"More Shakespeare, Professor? That was one of many aspects of the curse Minerva seemed at a loss to explain." She shot him a wry grin. "Perhaps the quote, 'The better part of valour is discretion,' will please your current sensibilities?" she quipped, obviously amused with herself.

The humorous intent of her question neither escaped nor amused Snape, but under the influence of the spell's power, he was limited in his response. He wanted nothing more than to hotly declare that he saw nothing humorous about his current affliction. Instead, he found himself firmly pulling the young woman to him. He was barely able to suppress a groan of pleasure as he felt her luscious curves press against the length of his body.

He caressed the soft skin of her cheek as he looked down at her. "'The lady doth protest too much, me thinks'," he quoted with a smirk, reaching to bury his hand in her silky curls. He leaned close to scatter feather-soft kisses down her earlobe and across her jaw line.

Snape knew the spell was intensifying, but was no longer sure he even wanted to resist. She smelled of a delicious blend of lavender and vanilla. Her body felt so right flush against his, and her hair was so soft. Why not allow himself to enjoy this moment? She would certainly blame the spell for his actions and wouldn't hold him accountable once the spell wore off.

When he looked down at her again, he immediately regretted such thoughts. For just a moment, she gently leaned her head back into his hand, but her eyes looked so sad as she gazed up at him. Then she took a small step back. He immediately missed her warmth, even though she was less than a foot away.

"Professor, I think it would be best if I go. You are under a very powerful love spell. Neither your words nor actions are under your control. I do not yet know the details of this curse, or how I became involved, but I do know that you are not acting of your own free will on your true feelings. I do hope you will not hold this against me in the future. I did not intend to cause you further trouble."

She doesn't know the details? Minerva didn't explain that the spell causes my genuine feelings to emerge? Damn it, Minerva! You could have made it at least a little easier for me! But no! You're going to make me explain this to Miss Granger myself when the spell wears off. And if I say so much as a word about your meddling ways, you'll just grin and spout some rot about how it's better this way! Ruddy wench!

Even as the thoughts were screaming in his mind, his hand sprung into action. It slid down over Hermione's cheek and cupped her chin, forcing her to look him in the eye. His other hand still clutched her hand.

"'Doubt that the sun doth move, doubt truth to be a liar, but never doubt I love'," he quoted, allowing the spell to bring forth the response it deemed appropriate. Then, in a strong surge of will, he attempted to force at least a little explanation of his predicament through the spell's restraints. "My dearest heart, I beg you: Search your brilliant mind, then search your heart. Sinus amor cupido declaro."

Snape sagged from the amount of effort required to utter something not of the curse's making, but did not release his grip on the young woman. He hoped she would grasp his meaning.

Hermione simply stared at him, speechless, as the seconds passed by.

"My love's more richer than my tongue'," he finally said softly. Only then did he release her.

Hermione seemed to snap out of her stupor. "I will do my research, Professor, as you have requested. I hope that if I stay clear of the castle until the curse has run its course, you will suffer less. However, I do ask that you at least give me the opportunity to discuss the results of my research with you. I will give you a week. If I have not seen you at the week's end, I will return to find you."

Snape gave a slight bow. "It would be my dearest pleasure, m'lady," he replied, before brushing a brief open-mouthed kiss to the palm of her hand. *I should have expected no less. I asked her to research the curse. Of course Know-It-All Granger would want to discuss any information she finds. I can only hope that she does find the explanation. I'm not sure I can admit I have been harboring concealed affections.*

Hermione understood the implied dismissal. She gently pulled her hand free and walked to the door. Pausing to glance over her shoulder, she seemed to search his face for additional information. Her expression did not reveal whether she found what she was looking for. After a few moments, she turned and left.

Snape stood in the empty passage, exhausted by his struggle with the curse. Even though he had been unable to restrain the flowery endearments and physical reactions, he had made his point. For the moment, he was simply pleased that the confrontation was ended.

A/N:

"The miserable have no other medicine but only hope" is from Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene I.

"The better part of valour is discretion" is from King Henry IV, Part 2, Act V, Scene IV.

"The lady doth protest too much, me thinks" is from Hamlet, Act III, Scene II.

"Doubt that the sun doth move..." is from Hamlet, Act II, Scene II.

"My love's more richer than my tongue" is from King Lear, Act I, Scene I.

Thank you to all of you who have stuck with this story. I apologize for the delay in the updates. Unfortunately, real life decided to interfere for awhile. This will, thankfully, be the end of Shakespeare's interference. I've never done as much research for a fanfiction as I've done looking up all of the quotes for this story. I just couldn't contain my glee over the thought of making Snape quote some of Shakespeare's most gushing overtures. I had to share them with you. Only one more chapter to go.

Cupido Declaro, The Final Act

Chapter 5 of 5

The week is up. Snape returns to Hogsmeade to face Hermione and his own feelings.

Cupido Declaro, The Final Act

It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon as Snape walked toward Hogsmeade once again. Typically, he would enjoy such glorious weather. Today, it just seemed to taunt him. Each step brought him closer to Hermione and fed the storm raging within him. A week had passed since his last trek to the village, and his time was up. He had to face her today, and he was going to have to do it without the aid of the spell and with full knowledge of his feelings. The question was what was she feeling?

He was certain that Hermione would have researched the curse thoroughly to the extent of all of her rather formidable abilities. *Has she been successful in her search? Does she now understand the spell's effects and the implications? If she understands my true feelings, how does that make her feel? Disgusted? Angry? Or is it possible that she will accept my affections, as Minerva suggested? There are just too many possibilities!*

Snape had survived two wars by being prepared for every possibility. He never entered a situation without first obtaining all possible information. His current dilemma, however, simply had too many unknowns for his liking. For that reason more than any other, he dreaded the upcoming confrontation.

To make matters worse, this was a Hogsmeade weekend, and the village would be teeming with students. He had waited as long as possible before making the trek to the village, hoping that the majority of students would either already be gone or be preparing to head back to the castle post-haste. Also in his favor, the apothecary was not exactly the students' most sought after shop in town. With a little luck, his meeting would go unnoticed by his pupils.

Taking a deep breath and praying to whatever deity might listen that this encounter would not result in humiliation, Snape pushed open the apothecary door. Hermione stood behind the shop's counter, helping Mr. Somerby, a Hufflepuff fifth-year, with his order. She looked up at him as he crossed the threshold, but her expression hid any indications of her emotional state. Mr. Somerby visibly paled at the sight of his Potions professor.

"Miss Granger. Mr. Somerby." He acknowledged each with a nod of his head.

"It's good to see you again, Professor," Hermione replied, her voice conveying pure professionalism.

"G-Good afternoon, P-Prof-fessor Snape," Mr. Somerby stammered.

The young man hurriedly paid for his purchases and scurried out of the shop, leaving Snape alone with Hermione. Uncomfortable silence reigned for several minutes. Hermione showed no intention of initiating conversation. *She would choose this moment to become speechless.*

"Hermione, I...," he started, but then changed his mind. "Hermione, is Mr. Anderson in this afternoon? I have an order to place. I would also like to speak with you, but feel that the conversation will fare better without interruptions."

Hermione's eyes narrowed slightly, scanning up and down his person, appraising him. After a few more thoughtful moments, she appeared to reach a decision.

"He is. Please wait here, and I will get him for you," she said, then disappeared through the doorway behind the counter.

A few minutes later, Garrett Anderson came bustling through the doorway. Hermione followed behind him, appearing completely calm. "Professor!" Mr. Anderson exclaimed. "It's so good to see you. I apologize if I have kept you waiting. How can I help you today?"

"Your apologies are quite unnecessary, Mr. Anderson. I have just recently arrived. I do have a favor to ask of you, however. You see, I have an order I need filled, but I also have some news I need to deliver to your apprentice. As the news is of a rather personal nature, I thought Miss Granger might be more comfortable if the discussion occurs in a private environment. Would it be possible for me to have a few moments of her time?"

The robust man gave Snape a look of surprise, but quickly replaced it with his professional smile. "Think nothing of it, Professor. I do hope everything is alright?"

Snape wasn't quite sure how to answer that question; their discussion was none of the man's business. Hermione had given him no indication as to her feelings, and Snape was unsure what to expect. But since Mr. Anderson had offered him a way to hold the discussion in private, Snape ultimately decided to answer honestly.

"I am uncertain at this time. I am hoping Miss Granger will be able to shed some light on the situation."

There, he thought smugly, an honest answer, yet ambiguous enough not to give anything away.

Stealing a quick glance in Hermione's direction, he noted that she was once again assessing him.

"Well, I do hope that everything will work out for the best then. Just leave your order with me, Professor, and I will have it ready by the time you return," Mr. Anderson replied. He then turned his attention to Hermione. "Miss Granger, perhaps we should just call it a day for you today ... you did start very early this morning. Just review for the brewing before tomorrow morning."

Hermione nodded her understanding, and Snape thanked Mr. Anderson for his help. The two then left the shop without exchanging a single glance.

Once outside, Snape led Hermione over to a small wooden bench near the edge of town and gestured for her to sit. He sat beside her and turned so that he faced her.

"Hermione, I owe you an explanation. When I was here last weekend, I thought that Mr. Creevey had miscast the spell. I hadn't realized that the spell had worked, and I was also unaware of its actual effects. Regardless, I..." he shifted slightly. "I apologize... for the scene I created and for offending you in the process."

Hermione caught his gaze with hers before he could drop his eyes. "Professor, I did find a book in the Hogwarts' library that had some information on this particular spell," she paused for a moment, appearing to choose her words carefully before continuing. "You said that you didn't know how the spell worked. Were you aware of your feelings before you were hit with the hex?"

Snape was uncomfortably aware of the heat rising in his cheeks. *Leave to a Gryffindor to immediately plunge into the heart of the situation.* "No, I was not. Emotions are very dangerous, even deadly, when one is a spy. And when attempting espionage in the presence of a skilled Legilimens, control and emotional evenness are vital. I have spent most of my life suppressing a large percentage of my emotions in order to survive," he answered, tearing his gaze from hers. "As such, I am not accustomed to analyzing my feelings."

"I see. How then can you be sure that the feelings are real?" she asked softly.

Snape's eyes snapped back up to look at her. Fighting to suppress his sudden and increasing ire, he drew another deep breath and slowly let it out before answering. It would not do to offend Hermione if he wanted to try to court her.

"Hermione, I have no doubt that you read the same text I did, as it was the only one I could find that even mentioned that abomination of a spell. You saw and heard the evidence yourself. And after having been forced to confront these feelings for the last five days, I can assure you that they are in fact real."

"How can you be so certain? You said yourself that you believed Dennis miscast the spell?"

Snape sighed heavily. Could nothing in his life simply work out? "Nothing happened upon impact. I didn't know the spell could lie dormant. Once I knew the spell's effects, I was surprised to discover that you were my heart's desire. However, after several days of introspection, I have discovered many clues that previously went unacknowledged. I should have noticed my growing regard for you a long time ago. I didn't. As I said, dealing with my emotions is hardly my forte."

Hermione remained silent, but Snape recognized the considering look on her face.

"Hermione, why didn't you ask to apprentice with me?"

She looked up at him in confusion. "Erm, well, I, ah... to be honest, I didn't think you would even consider it. There was little point in asking only to be rejected."

Well, Snape, old boy, it's now or never. She's been brutally honest with you. She deserves to finally hear the truth. Please, Merlin, don't let this be a mistake.

"When I heard that you had accepted an apprenticeship in Potions, I was deeply hurt that you had not come to me, though I did not delve into the feelings at the time. However, over the last few days, I have given the matter quite a bit of thought. I have been completely dishonest with myself and unjust to you. You are an extraordinarily talented and bright Muggle-born and a shining example of just how far off the mark Voldemort's basic fundamental beliefs really were. When you were my student, I had to play the role of a Death Eater. I could never have shown approval of your abilities, let alone help you explore that potential. I should have been honest with us both after the war and given you the praise you so rightly deserved. I am sorry, Hermione. I am very proud of you. In many ways, I admire you. I should have told you that."

He saw unshed tears forming in her eyes as he spoke. *She believes me. Thank Merlin!* It would have ripped out his newly discovered heart if she had jeered at his confession.

"The spell has ended, correct?" she asked.

"Indeed, it has. I can assure you I will be granting The Bard a wide berth for quite some time."

"So now what, Professor? How do you feel now?"

Snape allowed himself a small smile. "My feelings for you remain intact. As to your first question, that depends entirely on you."

"I never shared my classmates' opinions of you, Professor. I have always respected your intellect and have been awed by your bravery ever since I understood your role in the war. By the end of my Hogwarts career, I had moved well beyond simple respect and admiration. I wanted you to see me as a woman. I had seen past your roles and personas. You were a man to me ... an

intelligent, brave, alluring, cantankerous man. I wanted you to care for me in the same way I had begun to care for you, but gave up hope that you could ever return my affection. That is why I became so upset last weekend. I thought that you had discovered my secret and were using it against me."

Snape shook his head, silently denying the accusation.

"I would very much like to get to know you better, Professor, if you are willing, and see where life takes us from there."

Snape smirked. "Perhaps we can start with you calling me something other than Professor? Hermione, I'd much prefer to hear you call me by name."

Hermione smiled beautifully. "I'd like that too, Severus."

The sound of his name on her lips caused Snape's breath to hitch and stomach to lurch slightly, but not in an unpleasant way. Hesitantly, he reached across to caress her cheek with the back of his hand. The sight of her eyes fluttering closed and her head tilting into his hand were all the encouragement he needed. He tenderly kissed her lips.

Her arms snaked around his neck as she returned the gesture. He pulled her closer, deepening the kiss. She tasted of tea and honey. Her lips were soft and eager, and her body felt warm against his chest.

When they finally broke apart, each gasped a bit for air. He held her close for a few minutes more before opening his eyes and being forced back into the reality of his ordinary life. For a few precious moments, he felt like he had his princess. He was happy, truly happy.

It was then that he noticed Dennis Creevey over Hermione's shoulder, standing stock-still and staring wide-eyed at the couple on the bench. His eyes flashed in panic, and his stance was taut with tension. The boy looked positively ill. *Serves you right, you meddling little prat! I hope you have nightmares about this for weeks.* He smirked evilly.

Hermione turned, following his gaze, and burst into laughter.

The boy fled in the direction of Hogwarts, running as fast as his legs could carry him, no doubt terrified of Snape's retribution.

Snape's smirk intensified. *I got the girl, and I believe that incident qualifies as my revenge. The little wanker will be terrified for the remainder of the year, looking over his shoulder, petrified with fear that I will appear to exact my revenge. In the meantime, I will be enjoying the luxury of pursuing my own interests with the beautiful, intelligent, young witch of my dreams. Hats off to you, Mr. Shakespeare. "All's Well That Ends Well" indeed.*