

Damsel

by ayerf

Severus Snape is in distress...

One and only chapter

Chapter 1 of 1

Severus Snape is in distress...

For Darth Ada/ dacia_n_goddess

The prompt:

I'd like to see a reversal of the 'damsel in distress' ploy with a twist. Severus gets to be the one in need of rescue, and Hermione the dashing hero riding in to save the day. It needs to be something that magic cannot fix; and if you manage to work in some sort of 'quest' for Hermione, that'd be grand. Light and fluffy, this one it's in good humour (no rabies in sight).

Disclaimer: The Potterverse is not mine.

AN: This was written in response to a meme on Livejournal.

Many thanks to septentrion for betaing.

Hermione Granger was reading. She was also finding doing so to be hard going, but that was no surprise, considering that it was bigger than her. Turning each page would have been easier if she could use her wand, but that was out of the question when it was too heavy for her to lift.

The contents of the next page startled her, making her jerk in shock. Hissing in pain, she pulled her hand away from the book, as the unbelievably sharp edge of the page inflicted a cut across her palm, almost staggering her off the edge of the desk she stood on.

From his place lounging below her on the floor, Crookshanks mewed sympathetically. Hermione was very thankful that her familiar was half Kneazle, otherwise he might have considered her to be his next meal. Not that she would have ended up eaten, as Severus would have killed Crooks before that happened.

It had been a little over two weeks since Voldemort had been crushed to death by one of Hagrid's bear hugs. It turned out that the 'power he knew not' was how to wriggle out of the half giant's grip. During the course of the battle, the unexpected hero had been Confunded, so had forgotten all about the battle and mistaken Voldemort for Harry when Hagrid had believed his young friend to be dead. The truth, of course, was that Harry had faked his death, along with Ron and Hermione, in order to track down the remaining Horcruxes undercover.

To cut a long story short, Hermione had used Muggle methods to disguise herself so that she could inveigle the Death Eaters, to the point where she managed to seduce Voldemort's favourite, Severus Snape. Her espionage skills hadn't been enough to deceive Severus, who had discovered her identity within an hour. He accidentally on purpose let slip the locations to the rest of the Horcruxes, information Hermione passed on to Harry, to be tracked down and destroyed with Ron's help. What Hermione didn't mention to Harry was that she was fast falling for Severus.

On the eve of the long awaited battle, Severus proposed, intentionally using her real name, revealing that he'd known it was her from the start. Hermione's pride in her abilities was stung, but Severus managed to soothe her ruffled ego sufficiently for her to accept. She allowed him to slide the Prince family ring onto her finger, shrinking it to fit.

It was only after Voldemort was reduced to pulp that the Death Eaters put their backs into fighting, knowing that they had a choice between death and life imprisonment. Dramatic souls that most of them were, they preferred to go out with a bang. Severus kindly obliged them, dealing with more of them than anyone else.

In the time it took to subdue the crazed Death Eaters, Ron had been Transfigured into a tea cosy, which was perfect proof of the fact that one should never threaten a Kneazle.

Bellatrix Lestrange had crept up on Harry as he picked up Ron-the-tea-cosy, cackling insanely as she cast her last curse, only to be disappointed when Hermione dived in front of her best friend. When Hermione appeared to vanish, her clothes a heap on the ground, both Harry and the watching Severus went berserk.

United in their mutual need for vengeance, the onslaught of their spells had mixed rather oddly and turned the unfortunate Bella into a Jarvey covered in sky-blue, pink and yellow dots...boils, to be precise. Swearing viciously, the creature ran helter-skelter to shelter to safety, cowering, behind the befuddled Hagrid. Harry pursued her, only to be stopped by the tender-hearted lover of all things beastly.

Of course, Hermione hadn't really vanished. An alarmed squeak from her clothes drew the overwrought Severus's attention to a wriggling lump. He helped Hermione untangle herself, working automatically, stunned as he was by the sight of her the size of a fairy, sans the wings.

Covering herself with a corner of her robes, she glowered up at him after fruitlessly attempting to pick up her wand. Catching on, he obligingly shrunk her clothes to fit her, noting that her engagement ring had continued shrinking to fit her, the earlier spell on it apparently permanently in effect.

In the two weeks after she had been shrunk, Hermione had worked with Severus to try to reverse Bella's spell. Rather than being arrested by Aurors after Voldemort fell, Severus was pardoned due to the information he'd provided. The scores of Death Eaters neutralised by his curses didn't hurt, either, so Dumbledore's portrait was left spluttering to himself when it turned out that his dramatic awakening and evidence was not required.

Bella the Jarvey had been persuaded by Hagrid to admit that there was no counter curse, so Severus had been investigating Potions whilst Hermione fruitlessly scoured every book on Charms. Harry and the newly restored Ron were no help, the former being swarmed by fangirls and the latter too busy laughing his head off at his midget friend. Much to Hermione's relief, Severus found the solution in an obscure tome. Most of the required ingredients could be found either in the storeroom at Hogwarts or in various apothecaries. However, one vital ingredient could not be found anywhere, which was why Severus was scouring the Forbidden Forest.

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Slamming the bloody book closed, Hermione grumbled to herself as she clambered down from the desk, using the ladder Severus had conjured for her. Although irritated with her fiancé, she was thankful that he'd enspelled her voice to be within her normal vocal range instead of squeaking like a mouse.

Glowing down at her watch, shrunken to fit, she tapped her foot impatiently. "Where is he? He's been gone longer than he should have." Worrying at her lip, she walked over to Crookshanks, burying her hands in his fur. "Oh, Crooks, no wonder he didn't tell me what he was looking for. Acromantula silk! I'll feed him to the overgrown spiders myself for worrying me."

The part Kneazle's fur abruptly stood on end, his eyes widening, pupils narrowing to slits. He got to his bandy-legged feet, caterwauling, before pouncing at her. Hermione didn't have time to do anything but gasp as Crookshanks lowered the front of his body, front legs stretched out either side of her, placing his squashed face on the floor in front of her. Stepping backwards, face screwed up due to the stench of his breath, Hermione flinched when he butted her body with her head. After several more nudges, she finally got the message and scrambled up onto his back.

"This is one of the only good things about being small, Crooks. I can hitch a ride on you...Whoa! Crooks! Slow down!" Crookshanks had run out of Severus's quarters, the door magically swinging open to let them out. Hermione clung to his collar for dear life, nervously eyeing the painfully hard looking stone floor rushing past.

Soon they were out on the grounds, Crookshanks making almost no sound on the grass underpaw.

"Where are you taking me? To Hagrid's hut?" Hermione asked. "Crooks? No! Severus'll have your head if you take me into the Forbidden Forest."

Crookshanks ignored the protestations of his owner, darting straight past Hagrid's rebuilt hut and under the eaves of the dark forest looming overhead.

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'All this trouble over a single strand of Acromantula silk,' mused the unhappy prisoner of the herd of centaurs resident in the Forbidden Forest. 'How was I supposed to know that it had been reserved for the bowstring of their leader?'

Severus Snape let his head fall back against the wooden frame of the cage he was imprisoned in. 'It would have been less dangerous to get my supply directly from the source and risk being eaten.'

"Human!" At the sudden harsh voice, Severus sat bolt upright, turning his head to see one of the centaurs glowering through the bars at him. "We have decided your fate: the punishment will fit the crime."

"Then you will let me go now? After all, one of you did stamp on my wand and remove the magical core."

"No. That was disarming you, human. We will leave you until dawn to reflect upon your crime. Then justice will be served." The centaur reached through the rough cage to grasp his wrists, holding Severus's hands up. "These thieving hands will never steal again." With those decidedly ominous words, the centaur withdrew to stand watch, a shadow on the edge of the firelight illuminating the cage.

Massaging feeling back into his hands after the bruising grip of the four-legged brute, Severus closed his eyes, reliving the moment where he was held up off the ground and ignominiously shaken until he lost his grip on his wand. All things considered, he was lucky that he hadn't bitten through his tongue, only grazing it as his teeth clacked together repeatedly.

As it turned out, Severus did not have long to dwell on his capture. The centaur watching him wandered off into the surrounding trees, to answer the call of nature judging by the resulting sounds. Something orange darted out of the shadows, squeezing into the cage. Severus flinched away as that thing brushed against his legs. He caught his breath when he felt something climbing up his robes to perch on his shoulder, brushing his hair out of the way to whisper in his ear.

"Severus, where's your wand?"

"Hermione, what the hell are you doing here?" Severus hissed, furious, ignoring her question. The silly little er, even littler girl was in the Forbidden Forest, wandless, and small enough to be crushed underfoot accidentally by the resident creatures.

"Getting you out of trouble. So tell me where your wand is, so I can get it!"

"In pieces," he said shortly, angry red spots forming on his cheeks.

The creature plastering his robes with hideous orange hair shifted, plucking at the ropes binding together the wooden stakes constructing the cage, only to emit a frustrated sounding mew. Severus was willing to bet that the centaurs had used some of their precious Acromantula silk in the place of rope. Bull-headed bastards!

"What are the centaurs planning to do with you?" Hermione asked, absently swinging her legs against his collarbone.

"You doubtless know by now what the final ingredient for your potion is. I tried to steal it from the centaurs. It turns out that they have a similar justice system to that of Medieval England."

"Do they think that lopping hands off is a fair punishment for stealing?" Hermione sounded disgusted. "For all that centaurs look down on us, at least the wizarding world is stuck in the more recent past." She shifted on his shoulder, accidentally pulling his hair when she almost slipped off. "We've got to get you out of here. How far do Hogwarts' wards extend?"

"I tried it once during my later student days. Suffice to say that I never want to repeat the experience."

"You splinched?" Hermione sounded like she couldn't believe her ears, a hint of repressed laughter in her voice.

"No. The wards did not prevent Apparition as such, but they threw me into the middle of the Acromantula territory," said Severus, his teeth grinding together when Hermione was unable to repress a snort of laughter.

"I'm sorry! It's really not funny." Hermione's apology was ruined by the fact that she was clearly struggling against a fit of giggles.

Growling under his breath, Severus reached up to pluck her off him, mock-threatening to squeeze her. It was just as well that he had grabbed her, because in the next moment the cage was knocked over, the top smashed off, allowing Severus to roll out. If Hermione had just been perched on him, as she had been a moment previously, she would have been crushed to death or her body broken, hurled against the wreckage of the cage.

The centaur supposedly guarding Severus yelped, cantering away, bellowing for help.

Before Severus could get up, he was knocked out by a blow to the back of his head. The last sensation he was conscious of was Hermione struggling out of his grip and scrambling inside the loose sleeve of his robes.

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Hermione clung to Severus's arm, wincing as the rough fabric of his clothes abraded her nails. Severus's attacker hadn't seen her, allowing her to hide. Not a very Gryffindor action, but Hermione was also lacking in the typical Gryffindor stupidity. It would have been stupid to go against what had looked to be an Amazon warrior. Not of the mythical variety with only one breast, but of the more popular version possessing impossible beauty.

With impossible strength too, apparently, as the Amazon hauled Severus's body over her shoulder and set off at a brisk pace, making it all the more difficult for Hermione to hold on as Severus's arm was jolted around.

The uncomfortable journey soon came to an end. Severus was dropped onto the ground. Thankfully, his arm did not land on top of Hermione. As it was, she lost her grip on him, almost falling out of her hiding place. At the last moment, she managed to twist around, keeping herself within his sleeve. Beyond Severus's hand, Hermione could see that they were in a clearing carpeted with pine needles. There was at least one other Amazon moving closer, heavy leather boots sending the insects resident in the pine needles running away as fast as they could.

"We will not have to raid the castle beyond the forest after all, sister," Severus's attacker sounded pleased with herself.

"I would not be so sure of that, Polly. I am sure we could find a better specimen than that," the other Amazon said, contempt dripping from her voice.

"Now, Milly, do not speak so hastily. Observe the size of his nose, of his fingers! He must possess equipment worthy of being our consort...."

It was the last straw for Hermione, hearing cloth being pushed aside and a zipper being undone. Polly-the-purloining-Amazon yelped as her fingers were zapped by Hermione's unleashed wandless magic.

Too angry to care about the risk of death resulting from revealing herself, Hermione scrambled out of her hiding place. "Hands off! He's mine."

"Where did she come from? What is she?" Milly asked, sword in hand.

"I care not. As little savages such as yourself would say, finders keepers!" Polly growled, the point of her sword poised to impale Hermione.

Gulping, Hermione stepped back onto Severus's hand. "I'm from the castle, I'm a witch, I was shrunk in an... accident," she hastily explained. "Your sister is right about there being better specimens." It was a struggle for her to control her surprise when Severus's hand twitched beneath her, as if he'd heard what she'd said and was containing his outraged reaction. "There're younger men there who are also single. I know of one, eighteen years old, handsome if red hair's your thing, from a family known for their fertility."

Polly did not seem willing to listen, drawing her sword back to thrust it forwards, but Milly parried the blow, willing to listen.

"How old is the man yonder you claim is yours, small one? He looks to be in the prime of his life."

"He's my great-uncle. His seventy fifth birthday was last week. He's a Potions master, you see, possessing all sorts of ways to make himself seem younger, but at the cost of his fertility."

"You lie!" Polly shrieked, trying again to cut Hermione down.

"We shall see. Whilst you caught this dubious male, I found a cat possessing Kneazle blood." Milly clicked her tongue, summoning the animal from the trees surrounding the clearing. Crookshanks sauntered over, made a show of sniffing Hermione over, rubbing up against her, purring, to show that she was trustworthy. He hissed, hair standing on end when instructed to inspect Severus.

Polly hurled her sword into the ground, to stand on end, vibrating. She huffed, folding her arms, nose in the air.

"Where can we find this young man?" asked Milly. Red hair was obviously not putting her off. Ron would be overjoyed!

"I'll fetch him, if you like," Hermione offered, trying not to sound too eager.

"Very well. Kneazle, take this half-pint to the castle and guide her back here when she has this promised breeding stock for us. We shall stay here with the old man until then," Polly spat, eyeing Severus distastefully.

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Once the Amazons and Ron had met, it was clear that the deal would be satisfactory to all sides. Ron was more than happy to be in demand by at least two buxom brunettes. Polly was more than happy with the size of Ron's nose and fingers, and Milly seemed to be satisfied with the condition of his body, which Ron claimed was due to his Quidditch playing. Not that Hermione could understand how sitting on a broom counted as exercise, but then the physics of flying broomsticks were beyond her.

"Old man?" Severus hissed, once they were alone, holding her up to his face.

"Extolling your selling points would have hardly persuaded the Amazons not to steal you. Unless you would have preferred them to me?" Hermione asked, her insecurity

rearing its head.

"Hard as it is to believe, it would be a fate worse than death. You know I hate children, and who takes care of the blighters in Amazon society these days? The breeding stock." Severus gently stroked a finger over Hermione's cheek. "Apart from anything else, I do happen to be quite attached to you."

She leaned into his caress, wrapping her arms around the back of his hand. "Just as well that I don't care for children, either."

"Glad to hear it," Severus murmured. "We are still lacking the last ingredient for your restoration potion."

"We are not going back into the Forbidden Forest!" Hermione glowered at him.

A muffled mew from Severus's feet drew their attention to Crookshanks. He was holding a strand of the elusive Acromantula silk in his mouth.

"I think I love your cat."

Crookshanks purred.

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The brewing of the potion proceeded without a hitch. It worked perfectly, restoring Hermione to full size in moments, except for her garments. Without his wand, Severus claimed to be unable to make them grow with her. Not that he really needed an excuse to get his fiancée naked....

However, it was a little off-putting for Hermione's voice to be deeper than his own until she managed to cancel the enchantment, snatching up her wand.

"Finally," Severus murmured, pulling her into his arms. "We can celebrate properly, now."

"I knew you had an ulterior motive. A Slytherin never...Mmm."

Severus made his point quite clear that words were not needed, stealing a kiss and her breath with it.

Mischief Managed