

The Courting of Hermione

by peppermint

GS100 Regency Challenge. Flowery prose, virginal maidens, and tall dark potions professors. *swoon*

Graduation Tea

Chapter 1 of 10

GS100 Regency Challenge. Flowery prose, virginal maidens, and tall dark potions professors. *swoon*

Scene First: Graduation Tea

"Really, Miss Granger. Now that we are no longer teacher and student, you must call me 'Severus,'" he insisted, brushing dry lips against her glove-clad knuckles.

"Oh, how *droll*! Yet, I mustn't – *won't* the gossip just *fly*?!" She laughed kindly, rapping her folded fan against her palm. "I can hardly imagine the look on ~~dear~~ Mistress McGonagall's face should she witness my addressing you with such blatant impropriety – no, sir – I couldn't."

Severus smiled at the charming Miss Granger. "Then I shall come 'round to see your father on Sunday next."

"Whyever for, sir?"

"How else shall I court you?"

A Visit With Doctor Granger

Chapter 2 of 10

GS100 Regency Challenge Continued – Snape visits Hermione's father.

"You've come to ask me to allow you to court my Hermione – how do you expect to support her on a schoolteacher's pittance?"

"Doctor Granger, I *do* hold land and the title of Baron Snape of Snapington. I am hardly destitute."

"Oh ho! *Lord Snape!* You, of course, intend marriage?"

"Nothing less shall satisfy me. Your daughter is a gifted witch and a becoming young lady."

Doctor Granger looked Snape over carefully. "Very well, then. I'll permit you to court my daughter," he said, pointedly adding, "properly chaperoned."

Severus nodded. "Of course. I shall be the very *soul* of propriety."

Letters

Chapter 3 of 10

Correspondence between Severus and Minerva

My Dear Miss Granger,

Your father has given me leave to court you, under chaperonage. Might I suggest a stroll in Hogsmeade Park on Saturday next? Perhaps the charming young Miss Weasley will agree to accompany us.

Your faithful servant,

Severus, Baron Snape and Potion Master of Hogwarts

Severus,

I accept your invitation on behalf of Miss Granger. Miss Weasley is hardly an acceptable chaperone, so I shall serve in her stead at dear Miss Granger's request. We shall meet you at the Park gates at two, with tea to follow here at the castle.

Dutifully,

Minerva McGonagall, Hogwarts Headmistress

A Stroll in Hogsmeade Park

Chapter 4 of 10

A walk in the park is not all it seems

"I hope you don't find me too bold, Miss Granger?" inquired the Professor, patting Hermione's hand on his forearm ever-so-gently.

'Sir, despite my previous misgivings, you have discharged yourself as a gentleman ought," the lady replied with a gentle smile.

Behind them, Hermione thought she heard a rather uncouth snort from the Headmistress' vicinity, but passed it off as a flight of fancy.

Severus had heard, however. "Why, Headmistress! Are you quite well? Perhaps you had better sit down on this bench, and rest for a spell."

"Severus Archimedes Snape, stop attempting to impugn Miss Granger's honour!"

A Stroll Continued/Discussion

Chapter 5 of 10

continued strolling, double-entendre, and other delightful things...

A/N: Rawther obviously, I don't own it. Also, since I seem to write these in pairs, that's how they'll be uploaded from now on. A little two-for-one, if you will.

A Stroll Continued

Hermione whirled about to ascertain if her dear mentor was indeed at rights. "Has it been too sunny, Headmistress? I didn't think it would be too bright at this hour."

"Ah," interjected Severus, "but anywhere Miss Granger goes, the sun shines all the brighter!"

Hermione lifted her eyebrow just a bit at the professor. "You flatter me, Professor; but if the Headmistress isn't well, we should perhaps retire to the castle for tea."

"It's good to see that one of you has retained your good sense in the midst of budding romance," remarked Minerva dryly. "Yet, we shall keep walking."

Discussion

The rest of the stroll passed uneventfully – Snape extolling Hermione's virtues all the while under cover of a discreet *muffliato*.

Hermione sat on a fussy chair in the Headmistress' quarters, pinky properly raised as she sipped her tea and nibbled at a biscuit. She could see the professor sneaking glances at her over the rim of her teacup and found it difficult to keep from blushing.

"There is a research project I am conducting that I think you might enjoy, Miss Granger."

"Indeed, sir? Is there time yet this afternoon, or shall we arrange another meeting for such . . . academic pursuits?"

Insatiable, More Letters

Chapter 6 of 10

Serial Drabble for GS100 – flowery prose, virginal maidens, all that jazz.

"I'm afraid it will have to wait, Miss Granger," interjected Minerva. "I did promise your mother you'd be home directly after tea."

Hermione frowned, nodding. "Of course, Headmistress. My *insatiable* thirst for knowledge does overwhelm me at times."

Severus rose from his chair. "Thank you for a lovely afternoon, ladies. Miss Granger, I look forward to attempting to quench your thirst in the very near future. I shall owl you soon."

Minerva's glare could have curdled cream, but Hermione didn't notice. "I will look forward to it, sir. Have a pleasant evening."

Severus nodded, leaving the room with robes swirling.

Professor Snape,

I hope you don't find me too forward, but are there any books you think I may find useful in assisting with your research?

Hoping you are well,

Miss Hermione Granger

Miss Granger,

I've taken the liberty of enclosing two books you may find useful. I am sure you will care for them as if they were your own until you can return them to me. This coming Thursday would be convenient if you are available, ten o'clock in the morning with lunch following at the White Peacock?

My regards to your father,

Yrs,

Severus, Lord Snape

Hermione Apparated just outside the Hogwarts gates, a younger girl in tow. Snape strode toward the gate, wearing a mildly puzzled expression.

"Good morning, Miss Granger. I don't think I've had the distinct pleasure of meeting your..."

"Cousin," Hermione interjected, rather tartly. "Lord Snape, may I present my second cousin, Illiana Puckle?"

"Charmed, Miss Puckle. To what do we owe the pleasure of your company?"

"Illy attends Beauxbatons, but she is here on holiday," Hermione answered for the girl. "Oh, and Father asked if I would be so kind as to remind you of your first promise to him, Professor."

~~~~~

"Now, Miss Granger, if you will just tip the chopped rosemary into the cauldron, we will be finished here. You've been an excellent helpmeet."

Hermione felt a blush rising to her cheeks as she added the fragrant rosemary into the experimental potion. The brew gave off an enticing scent in delicate swirls of silvery steam.

"Thank you, Professor. I do strive to exceed in *all* my endeavors."

Snape set the cauldron aside and made to guide the two ladies out of the laboratory.

"Ladies, if you'll just retrieve your cloaks, Minerva and Alastor are expecting us at the White Peacock."

~~~~~

The White Peacock was the current most fashionable dining establishment in Wizarding London. The supper hour was positively decadent, and the luncheon menu was absolutely *avant-garde*. However, the gustatory pleasures of the restaurant paled in comparison to the inestimable social clout of simply being *seen* there.

Severus hoped that his intentions were being read loud and clear. They had been photographed upon arriving by the *Daily Prophet* and would most likely make the evening social page. Speculation abounded as to why Lord Snape still remained a bachelor, and if this season would be when he would finally take a bride.

~~~~~

Following luncheon, Severus escorted Hermione and Illy home.

'Wait here,' Hermione mouthed to Severus as she practically shoved Illy into the house.

Severus smirked inwardly as he waited patiently on the porch.

Hermione reappeared a few moments later.

"Father says we may have five un-chaperoned minutes if we do not leave the porch, Lord Snape."

"Miss Granger. Hermione, if I may be so bold?" Her brilliant smile told him he most certainly could. "I am aware of the gossip surrounding my continued bachelor state. I assure you that I seek to rectify the issue before the end of the season."

~~~~~

Doctor Granger,

I find myself enchanted with your daughter. If you are amenable, I should like to have you around at the weekend to discuss the alliance of our families. Would Saturday afternoon at three suit? I await your owl.

Cordially,

Severus, Lord Snape

Lord Snape,

I am most amenable to such a discussion. Saturday afternoon at three it is.

Yrs,

Dr. Herbert Granger

Herbert leaned back in his chair after sealing the note and sending it off with Hermione's owl, Camus. Lord Snape would be a fine match for his daughter, and wouldn't be put off by her bookishness.

Herbert Granger sipped from his snifter of brandy, ensconced in a comfortable chair at Snape Manor.

"I hope I haven't offended you by insisting on complete propriety, Snape. It's just that the gossip mill pegs you year after year as the most eligible bachelor, and I want no speculation as to why you're suddenly heading to the altar with a bluestocking former student."

"No offense taken, sir. Have we settled the matter, then?"

"Yes, as far as I'm concerned. You still have to deal with Hermione on your own, and she's a wily negotiator."

"I quite look forward to it."

~~~~~

"Where is he?! It's gone six!" Hermione fretted, pacing the front parlor in a state of agitation.

"Darling, calm yourself. I'm sure everything is fine!"

"Mother, he's probably sold me up the river for two sheep and a wheel of cheese by now!" Hermione snapped.

Jean settled her daughter on the settee with a bemused smile. "Hermione, your father would never do such a thing. You know these are only formalities. I have a feeling he'll leave the final decisions up to you. I know you planned on further education. Do you really think your professor would begrudge you that?"

~~~~~

Hoofbeats clattered in the driveway, and Hermione leapt from the couch and twitched the curtains aside.

"He's back!" She made to run out to the forecourt, but her mother stopped her.

"Hermione," she said, quite seriously, "you're likely going to be married this season. Your father and I have allowed you to be wilder than perhaps we ought, but a little decorum would do you a world of good right now. Sit down and be still."

Sit down and be still!? Her entire life was hanging on whatever news her father brought! How was sitting still even an option?

~~~~~

Herbert peered into the front parlor with a smile on his face.

"Your professor and I have come to an understanding, my girl. I knew you'd have demands beyond what I needed for assurance he'd take care of you, so it's still up to you whether you accept his forthcoming proposal or not. Don't give in until you have what you really want."

To say that Hermione quite resembled a codfish for a moment would not be incorrect.

"Y-you only settled that I'd be taken care of financially? He agreed to negotiate with me on everything - EVERYTHING - else?!"

~~~~~

"You see, dear! He didn't sell you up the river for two sheep and a wheel of cheese at all," Jean remarked.

Hermione blushed prettily and looked off to the side.

To his credit, Herbert laughed. "Fetch your old dad his pipe, my dear. You're worth considerably more to us than sheep and cheese. Lord Snape is a good match for you. You'll keep each other young."

"When do you think I can expect Professor, er, Lord Snape to come to call?" Hermione inquired, handing her father his pipe and tin of tobacco.

Before he could answer, the doorbell rang.

9

Chapter 9 of 10

Just who is that knocking at the door?

Ron Weasley strode into the Grangers' front parlour.

"Sir, Madam. Hermione. I've heard some atrocious gossip, and I wanted to be sure you knew of it tonight."

Hermione shared an amused glance with her mother before acknowledging Ron.

"Well, do sit down, Ronald. Will you have tea?" she asked politely.

"To be honest, I need a brandy. I spoke to Mother, who heard from Headmistress McGonagall that you're being courted by Snape!"

"Lord Snape. Or at the very least, Professor!" Hermione corrected. "And it's not gossip."

To say that Ron resembled a codfish at that moment would not be incorrect.

~~~~~

"I would advise you to choose your next words very carefully, Mr. Weasley," Hermione snapped, "for even the benefit of a childhood friendship will not prevent me from

severing any and all connections with you if you do not."

"You... him... potions... how long has this been going on?!" Ron managed before dropping into a chair.

"Are you questioning my daughter's honor and propriety?" Herbert bellowed, ready to leap out of his chair.

"He has been above reproach! He approached my father; I have not seen him without a chaperone! Good night, Mr. Weasley!" Hermione flounced away from the parlour.

~~~~~

Mrs. Molly Weasley

The Burrow at Ottery St. Catchpole

My Dear Mrs. Weasley,

I'm not sure in what state your son Ronald returned home last night. He's lucky my father didn't challenge him to a duel over my honor, and he will be luckier still if Lord Snape refrains from doing the same. I do not hold you or the rest of the family responsible for his idiocy, but perhaps you'll want to keep him out of polite society until he learns to hold his most wretched tongue. Give the rest of the family my regards and love.

Affectionately,

Hermione

Final

Chapter 10 of 10

GS100 Regency Challenge

This is the end! Thanks for sticking with me through it. I don't own anything except the sheep and the wheel of cheese.

Thanks to ScatteredLogic for her insightful beta skills :)

~~~~~

Severus spotted Ronald Weasley across the village green, being herded by his mother on some errand. He strode purposefully across the lawns, peeled off his glove, and threw it unceremoniously at Ron's feet.

"I am honor-bound, Mr. Weasley, to address your accusations of impropriety regarding Miss Granger. A duel it must be."

"Name the time and place, Snape. You don't deserve her anyway," Ron sneered, kicking the glove away.

"Two o'clock this afternoon, Hogwarts lawns." Severus then turned to a speechless Molly and sketched a bow. "Madam Weasley, a pleasure as always," he intoned before stalking off toward the jeweler's.

~~~~~

The two men drew their wands, but Ron had never quite grasped nonverbal spells. He was on the ground in a full Body-Bind before he could get the entire "Tarantallegra" out of his mouth.

Severus strolled over to where Hermione had been watching and bent his head close to hers.

"I know how much you care for him, and I do not wish to cause you anguish. He's unharmed, but his pride is bruised," he said quietly.

"Thank you for not killing him; although it will be a long time before I wish to speak to him again." Hermione frowned.

~~~~~

Hermione and Severus Apparated back to Grange House and settled themselves in the drawing room for an early tea.

"I suppose now is as good a time as ever for you to tell me what you expect of me as your wife, Lord Snape. I do wish to make an informed decision."

"Miss Granger, I expect that you will tell me what you still wish to accomplish in life – I do not wish to hold you back from your aspirations."

Hermione reached for a small notebook on the side table. "You're going to be quite sorry you asked me that."

~~~~~

After laying out her plans for continued education, freedom of movement, and fiduciary concerns, Hermione noticed that Severus' eyes had glazed over a bit.

"Are you quite well, sir? Shall I have Tissy bring you something stronger than tea?"

Severus set his teacup down, sat back in the chair, and laughed – a full, hearty laugh.

"Your father warned me you would have a pile of stipulations. You're quite lucky that I have a secret passion for Gryffindor bluestockings! Yes, I agree to most of your terms. Arithmancy mastery, teaching if you like. However, I insist that you use 'Snape' socially."

~~~~~

"You're quite all right with waiting for an heir for another few years, then?" she asked, looking a bit worried.

"Hermione...I shall require that long to get used to being married to such an intelligent, lovely woman. I'm rather sure our children will be mischievous at best and hellions at worst – I'm fine with putting that off for a while."

She smiled, and took a sip of her tea. "I suppose that's settled, then. Er. Are you sure you won't want two sheep and a wheel of cheese as well?"

He chuckled, and she blushed, prettily.

"Oh, never you mind."

~~~~

The wedding was billed as the social event of the season. Invitations were delivered, and there were no regrets. The wedding day arrived, sunny and gorgeous. As the guests waited for the ceremony to start, an otter Patronus scampered up the aisle and spoke with Hermione's voice.

"The bride and groom are delighted to inform you they've gone to Gretna Green. Enjoy the banquet with our compliments."

None of the guests could figure out why the head table was occupied by two sheep and a wheel of cheese; but the sheep were well behaved, and the cheese was delicious.

~~~~

Somewhere in Iceland, the bride and groom were relaxing happily in a private hot spring behind their Unplottable honeymoon chateau.

"You truly didn't mind eloping?" Severus asked, nudging her leg with his foot.

"You agreed to so many things in our negotiations, I couldn't refuse you this one thing," Hermione replied, a grin on her face. "Besides, I'd still be in that ridiculous corseted ball of frilly fluff if we hadn't. Naked in a hot spring with my surprisingly fit husband is a far more satisfactory way to spend the evening."

The rest of the evening was rather satisfactory, indeed.

~~~~

Hermione did indeed become a top-notch Arithmancy mistress. When not doing contract work for the highest bidder, she spent her time chasing two darling curly-headed girls.

Severus continued to research and perfect experimental potions. He spent his off time entertaining Sophie and Sigrid and teaching them the finer points of Slytherin cunning.

Both parties were of the opinion that they had each made a very good deal. If they occasionally hexed each other during a heated academic debate, it was hardly worthy of notice, and they always made up afterward.

All reports indicate that they lived happily ever after.