

Pet Names

by a_bees_buzz

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Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This was written for Monique_27, who requested a story with Severus Snape and pet names.

"Hermione."

"Yes?" She put down her book, carefully marking the place, and prepared to listen to whatever her husband of eight months had to say.

Severus sat in the armchair opposite hers. "It occurs to me that, at this stage in our relationship, we must consider the options for ... pet names."

Listen? Yes. Agree with? Not bloody likely. "Excuse me? Why on earth would we want to do that?"

"If we are to have any hope of convincing your kin of the existence of an affectionate bond between us, we must adopt the customary forms of courting couples. Unfortunately, this includes ... pet names."

Hermione sighed. If she had wanted a conventional, romantic relationship, she would never have set out to seduce her old Potions teacher. She was perfectly happy with their arrangement exactly the way it was. He respected, nay, encouraged her work. They had compatible tastes in nearly everything, her friends aside. And the sex was ... satisfactory. Highly satisfactory. All in all, Hermione was quite pleased to have found such a compatible life partner. Why everyone else worried about whether or not they were in love was beyond her. After careful consideration, she had come to the conclusions that affection was highly overrated and love would be an undesirable complication to an otherwise well-ordered life.

"Is that really necessary?"

"Need I remind you of our last evening with your parents?"

No. He definitely did not. It was, without question, one of the most awkward and unpleasant evenings of her life. Marginally less unpleasant than the evening spent battling Death Eaters in the halls of Hogwarts Castle, but what it lacked in death rattles and screams of agony, it made up for in interminable, excruciatingly awkward silences.

Hermione looked at the clock. They were due at her parents' house in just under half an hour.

"Honestly, Severus. Do you really think pet names will make a difference?"

"It is worthy of experiment."

"Very well. Shall I call you 'Sevvie'?"

"Perhaps something a bit more ... dignified. I might call you 'Mione', for example."

Hermione shuddered. The use of that particular sobriquet had been one of the factors in her decision to terminate relations with Ron Weasley. "Would you prefer 'Sevilove'?"

He glowered. "Hermeneutics."

"Severence."

"Hermetically sealed crypt."

"Severed limbs."

A slight twitch preceded a conciliatory half-smile. "Perhaps we should attempt something other than variations on our own names."

"Oh, good." Hermione grinned. "This should be fun. Shall we attempt personal attributes? I could call you 'Snarky'."

Severus quirked an eyebrow. "I do believe that 'Bossy' would suit you."

"I had no idea you thought of me as a cow, Hook-Nose," she said in mock horror.

"On the contrary, I was merely describing your manner, Bush-Head." His supercilious tone was belied by his amused smirk.

"Can I tell you how reassuring I find that, Cadaverous Bat?" Hermione managed to get out between her giggles.

Severus sighed. "This does not appear to be a fruitful approach, Insufferable Know-It-All."

"No. Nor is it honest. If I really were insufferable, you wouldn't suffer me."

"True."

"Maybe the computer can give us some ideas." Hermione went over to the desk in the corner, opened a browser and entered a search for "pet names", bringing up a screen-full of sites for naming cats and dogs. On the second screen, she found an article on developing data security keys.

"Actually, I kind of like that one."

"You wish to investigate computer security systems?"

"No. That." She pointed at the screen, where there was a graphic representation of the theoretical model discussed in the article.

"That, Hermione, is a triangle."

"Yes, but not just any triangle. That," she declared triumphantly, "is Zooko's Triangle."

"And?"

"That's your pet name. Zooko."

A single raised eyebrow was the only indication that he might find her suggestion less than entirely pleasing. "Do I have any say in the matter?"

"No. I've made up my mind," she said with a triumphant smirk.

"I see." Severus got another chair and brought it to the computer. "Budge over."

He continued on through the search. "I believe I have something here." He clicked on the site labeled "cutesy pet name generator" and entered Hermione's name and gender. "Tinkle Jiggles."

"Please, Severus. Tell me you are joking."

"The screen does not lie."

"You are not going to call me ... that in front of my parents."

"That depends. Are you reconsidering your plan to refer to me as 'Zooko'?"

Hermione glowered. "Fine. Let's see what yours comes out as."

Even Severus had to concede that "Zooko" was preferable to "Monkey Poo".

"Well, then. I think it's time we left for dinner."

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When Hermione asked, in a perfectly normal voice, "Zooko, darling, could you pass the butter?" her father glared at his plate.

When Severus replied, in his most stentorian tones, "Certainly, my beloved Tinkle Jiggles," Mrs. Granger's eyes widened in alarm.

Unsatisfied, Hermione raised the stakes. "Thank you, Zookie Wookie. You know, you are just too good to me."

Severus followed suit. "Anything for you, my Tinkly one."

"All right, Hermione," her father growled. "Spill. What are you two up to?"

By the time the story was told, there were tears of mirth pouring down Hermione's mother's face and Mr. Granger was holding his sides and gasping for breath.

As Hermione caught her husband's pleased expression, she was surprised to note a warm, tingly sensation in the area of her chest. It occurred to her that perhaps affection would not be an entirely unwelcome aspect to their marriage.

A/N: the websites referenced in the story are:

<http://www.skyhunter.com/marcs/petnames/IntroPetNames.html>

http://gangstaname.com/pet_name.php