

Another Love Letter

by chivalric

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One-shot story

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: This story is the second out of two: I recommend to first read the prequel, titled "Love Letter."

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A knock on his door, late in the evening. Snape looked up from the book he had been reading and frowned. He didn't expect anyone. No student had annoyed him enough in the last few days, thus he hadn't rewarded anyone with detention. And Minerva, who was the only one who dared to disturb him every now and then, would have sent a house-elf in order to summon him to her rooms instead of coming down to the dungeons herself.

Another knock, slightly impatient.

Snape got up, took his wand and opened the door.

The young woman standing outside looked furious. She paced up and down the torch-lit corridor, and when she saw Snape, she seemed close to attacking him.

"Here," she snapped and thrust her hand at his chest severely enough to make him stagger. Her hand was holding a parchment, and Snape was just able to catch it before it hit the floor. Bewildered at the woman's behaviour, he was about to ask what that was all about, but she had already turned and stormed off, upstairs, away from him and out of the dungeons.

"Damn you," Snape hissed and slammed the door shut.

Back inside, he was about to toss the parchment into the fire when he observed that it was not, as he had suspected, an essay of one of her students she had considered wrongly marked by him, but a letter.

All colour left the Potions master's face. He stared at the parchment as if it could bite him, then he absent-mindedly dropped his wand. It clattered to the floor, but he was oblivious to it. Like a sleepwalker, he went over to his chair, broke the seal on the letter, and started to read.

Beloved Severus,

Well, I guess this says everything I want to say: beloved. Beloved, beloved Severus. Really, I tried not to write this letter, but it seems that the words are stuck in my head and want to get out and are haunting me day and night, and as I can't come to you and simply say what I have to say (I'd fail at that task, believe me!), I write them down instead. And just in case you didn't know or have forgotten: I'm well known for talking too much, so settle down somewhere comfortable as this is going to be a long letter. Plus, my words might shock you, and I don't want you to faint and hurt yourself by crashing to the floor.

Brace yourself: I love you. Simple as that, and I thought I should tell you this straight away so you can stop reading here and start sneering (or fainting). I know how stupid this is, falling in love with you, and how ridiculous you will find it, but there you go. I can't help it.

I love you.

Don't ask me how it happened, as I don't know. One morning I woke up after a particularly nice dream of you, opened my eyes and thought, "I love Severus." That came as a bit of a surprise, but then my dream had been quite detailed, and I usually accept facts when they are presented in such obvious ways.

Don't misunderstand me: you are every bit as nasty as you were when I was your student, you are sneering and snappy and aggressive and unfair, and you really shouldn't have started to take regular showers and sort out that greasy hair of yours, and honestly, was it necessary that you had your teeth straightened? And that you finally bought a toothbrush AND are using it? You could call that unfair tactics, I say! And of course you are still so damn tall, and you still dress in that oh so fitting black, and your hair bound back in a ponytail looks sooo good, and I can't stop thinking what might be hidden under those many layers of clothing. How I wish I could unbutton all those infuriating little buttons, every single one of them, and reveal your marble-white skin so I might cover it with thousands of kisses from throat down to navel down to... oh, I better stop here!

See, I got carried away again. Your fault! That happens every time I think about you. And I think about you a lot. All the time, actually. During classes, during breaks, at meals, day and night and even in my dreams. You follow me into my dreams, did you know that? Stupid question, of course you don't know that. How could you? I have never told you how much I would like to be near you. And I never will. Do you really believe I would ever give you that letter? I am a Gryffindor, but I am not that brave.

I fear your scowl. I fear your sarcasm. I fear every nasty, well-placed remark. You hit to wound, and it seems you have taken a certain pleasure in hurting me. Whenever I dare to smile at you, you look even more grim. Whenever I manage to say a friendly word, you make me feel silly with a harsh reply. Whenever my heartbeat speeds up at the sight of you, your coldness makes me numb. Go to hell, Severus. No! Take me in your arms instead and carry me down into your dungeons!

Oh, something else you don't know: I spy on you. I am aware of how ridiculous that sounds with you being the spy, and me being just silly and so on, but I can't be that bad as it seems to me you haven't noticed yet. And I don't use Harry's Invisibility Cloak for it! I am just very quiet, and you are always so lost in thought when you are patrolling. Possibly thinking about a new and nasty way to take away house points... Sometimes you even end up at my door, and I see the disgust in your eyes when you look at the doormat with the books printed on it. Sorry, but I like books! I won't change my doormat just because you are offended by it.

And, erm, and last week I broke into your rooms when you were in London. Luckily you will never read this letter because otherwise I would be as good as dead. I couldn't help myself! I had the afternoon off and I had planned to meet Ron and then decided otherwise. Since I broke up with Ron (did you know we were engaged? Possibly not, as you are not interested in me)... well, Ron's hugely in love with Lavender again, and he never stops to tell me how great she is, and really, it gets on my nerves after an hour or so.

Sorry, I have changed the subject. I was near your rooms. In your rooms, actually as I found that your wards are not as strong as they should be. Or maybe I'm just good, although you would never ever acknowledge it. Go, put some stronger spells on your private quarters and find out if I will be able to break them! But then, you will never find out so no harm done.

Anyway, the door opened, and I had all the time I wanted to look around and to walk around and to touch things. I went into your bedroom, of course, and was shocked at the size of your bed. How can you sleep in such a small thing? Mine is a proper four-poster... Well, I think I should confess that I imagine lying in my bed with you now and then. Often. Always. Certainly, you should get a bigger bed. And you shouldn't leave your shirts out. They are a temptation for any innocent women who coincidentally breaks your wards and stumbles into your bedroom. Honestly, it wasn't my fault that I had to pick it up! It sort of jumped into my hands, this shirt, and I pressed it to my face as if someone had forced me, and oh, how good you smell! I figured your fragrance would be... would be... like... different. Less appetising, I guess. More like hell, you live in the dungeons where it's dark and wet, and you work with all sorts of the most nasty potion ingredients. So how come your shirt smells of autumn leaves mixed with wildfire smoke? And where does that whiff of chocolate come from? You don't have a sweet tooth, Severus, do you?

My mind wanders again. Apart from raiding your bedroom (and I will NOT tell you what else I have done!), I touched your books ... all of them, I think, and you know how many there are in your rooms. I ran my fingers over their leathery backs, and I nearly whimpered when I did so! Me, whimpering! But I so much wished you were there with me and would watch me touching your books, and I imagined how much it would arouse you. It certainly would drive me crazy with desire if you were to touch my books. (Can you imagine? Whilst I was with Ron, he one day took one of my bookshelves down - in MY rooms! - to make way for a Quidditch poster! I nearly hexed him into oblivion for that! He certainly never understood how fond I am of books.)

But you, you understand books and the temptation they bring. Your long, strong fingers running down the spine... turning the pages... caressing the words... Ah, here comes the whimper again. Not that you ever will touch my books, of course. But one can dream!

Severus, you really have to stop doing this to me! I can't concentrate anymore. I can't prepare for my classes properly, and that's a bad thing, don't you agree? Well, I have to admit that I never really was able to put my mind fully to Arithmancy because when I first found out that I would sit next to you at meals, I nearly passed out. I had developed a crush on you in my last year at school, but honestly thought I had grown out of it. I had thought taking on the job as Arithmancy teacher would be safe and then you sweep in, wearing your robes and your glare and that cool, thin smile, and I find myself clutching the table in order to not just drop off the chair. And you just clink your glass with Minerva, ignoring me entirely. Have you even noticed yet that I am a teacher at Hogwarts? That evening was awful and wonderful at the same time, and I didn't eat one single little bite.

Great. Well done, and thank you so very much! Would you mind eating in your quarters from now on so that I am at least able to get some food into me? I even started chatting to Sybil she is so very boring she sort of sedates me enough with her droning that I manage not to feel your presence for the time being. Thank Merlin for small favours, I say. I can't live without a certain amount of nutrition, you know.

Here is a theory: how would you react if I ambushed you out of a dark corner, threw myself into your arms, and kissed you passionately whilst you were too shocked to react in time to prevent my lips touching yours? Would that be all right with you? Or would you just push me aside? Would you swear? Would you wipe your mouth? (Note: I have to stop thinking about your mouth and your lips!) I guess you would just pierce me with those wonderful black eyes of yours, saying nothing, and it would break me to pieces. So don't worry, I won't attack you. It's humiliating enough to pour my heart out on paper. I don't need to make a fool of myself where others could see me.

I know you don't love me. I know you dislike me massively, as you have always disliked me from the first moment I raised my hand in your classroom. I was so eager to give the right answer back then; now I only wish you could look at me only once without that sarcastic, dismissive smile on your lips. Although it looks so damn sexy!

I'm going to destroy this letter in a moment. It is far too embarrassing to be kept, even under my pillow where I keep your picture, the one that was made when you were freed of all charges. I mean, honestly, maybe if you hadn't looked so dark and sinister that day, and maybe if that photographer hadn't done such a fine job, the picture

wouldn't be that good, and I wouldn't have to keep it under my pillow and look at it every night before I go to sleep, but there you go. As it is I can't help doing it. And I hereby swear that I will never ever tell you that shameful little secret of mine!

I shouldn't have written this. If you, by accident or a world-threatening catastrophe, were ever to read this babbling I know I would sink even lower in your eyes. Which is hardly possible, come to think of it. On the other hand, so what? It's not as if you have ever even looked at me with anything else but disgust. If you now laughed at me it couldn't make things worse. It certainly couldn't change the way I feel about you. Nothing can change the fact that I love you.

Love, hugs, kisses, tears.

Yours forever,

Hermione

Dinner was over, and the students had poured out of the Great Hall already. So had most of her fellow colleagues. Hermione Granger, Arithmancy teacher at Hogwarts, leant back in her chair and stared at the spot where a moment ago her half-full plate had vanished. She hadn't eaten more than a spoon-full, but she wasn't hungry. In fact, she was terrified.

Severus hadn't been at the table.

Maybe he had already decided that it was impossible for him to teach at the same school with a woman who wrote such utter nonsense. Who had stalked him. Who had broken into his rooms. Who had been stupid enough to give him that letter, admitting to all those crimes. He would have her fired, she was certain of it. She was jobless, and regarding the content of the letter and her confessions, she was dead as well.

"Why did I do this," Hermione whispered in despair, her eyes huge in her pale face. "Why for once in my life couldn't I stop myself from doing something massively, extremely stupid. Why didn't I destroy it, as planned. Why, why, oh why did I do this!"

"You did it because you are a lot braver than I am."

Hermione jumped and whirled round at the same time. Fiercely, she wiped her arm across her face, drying the tears that had welled in her eyes. She tried hard to get her uproaring emotions under control, but when she saw the lean shadow looming in the darkness, she couldn't help a shiver.

"I'll quit," she said, and then, "I'm very sorry, and I'll quit, naturally. By tomorrow, you'll be rid of me."

"You won't quit," Snape said, his voice as cool and as smooth as ever. He took a step towards her, and she saw that he was even paler than usual. She never had had a thing for pale guys, but this had changed recently. And his voice just made her wish he would never ever stop growling at her.

"You won't quit, and you won't leave Hogwarts. You will read this, though." He reached out, and there was something in his hand. Something crumpled and slightly burned. A piece of parchment.

"What's that?" Hermione asked, as it was obviously not her letter. And she didn't take it. Her heartbeat had sped up to a gallop, and her eyes were searching for the familiar sneer in his face. It wasn't there, though. He looked different tonight. Less angry, less aggressive, less hostile. In fact, he looked worried.

"Take it," he said, and there was a strange undertone in his voice, implying that reading what he offered meant a lot to him. "Please," he added.

Hermione's eyes widened. He begged her to read... "What is it?" she asked again, but this time took the parchment. "And why do you want me to read something you obviously fished out of the fireplace?"

Another step, and he was only a few inches away from her. He took her by the shoulders and pressed her down to a chair. "I wrote it," he explained, and was there something like despair in his voice? Why didn't he shout at her? Why didn't he toss her letter back at her, demanding her to pack up and to leave immediately?

"I wrote it more than two weeks ago, Hermione, and I would have never given it to you hadn't you knocked on my door last night. Read it. I beg you."

Blanching, Hermione unfolded the crumpled parchment. She didn't know what to expect, but she started to read.

Not too much later, Hermione scribbled a few words on a piece of parchment, summoned a house-elf, and ordered the elf to put the note on her door. When the house-elf had popped out of the Great Hall, she got up and walked into the shadows. Sighing, she wrapped her arms around the waist of the man who had been waiting there. Leaning in close, she didn't move until he asked, "What did you write?"

"I'm supposed to be in my room tonight, attending to student's questions," she answered with a smile. "I just told Quark to put the note on my door, saying that I can't be there due to urgent personal matters."

The Potions master could feel his heart skip a beat. "Urgent personal matters? Which hinder you to attend to students' problems? Pray tell me about those personal matters, and where you have to go to take care of them if not in your rooms. They must be truly life-threatening if you abandon your duties."

She raised her head that had rested on his chest. She had heard his heart speeding up, and it made her knees weak. Looking into those eyes she had been dreaming about for months made her heart flutter. "Your bed is ridiculously small, Severus, and therefore out of question, but I think a nice thick fur in front of the fireplace will do just as well. And it is urgent, very urgent!"

Taking his hand in hers and pulling him along, she continued, "Only, of course, if you don't have something better to do? Gathering some mistletoe, maybe, or skinning mandrakes?"

Holding her back, Snape forced Hermione to face him. Then he pulled her closer, unaware or ignorant of the fact that they stood in the middle of one of the main corridors where any moment a student or a colleague could come by.

"You are not planning to drive me crazy before you have even given me a kiss, little witch, are you?" There was a smile on his lips and desire in his eyes.

Placing a hand on the back of his neck she whispered, "But certainly, Severus," pulled him down, and took what belonged to her.