

What I Want My Words to Do to You

by Ladymage Samiko

When Snape receives a letter from a 'secret admirer', the correspondence proceeds in a manner that is anything but orthodox.

1st Posting

Chapter 1 of 6

When Snape receives a letter from a 'secret admirer', the correspondence proceeds in a manner that is anything but orthodox.

or

A Series of Extracts Belonging to the Epistolary Courtship of Hermione Granger and Severus Snape, with Suitable Additions of Edifying Thoughts and Actions

by Severus Snape and Hermione Granger

edited by Lm. Samiko ^_~

1st Posting

Dear sir,

Hmm... That is not exactly the way a letter like this ought to begin, which I assure you, is something I realize fully. However, I do want you to read it and, knowing you as I do, I realize that egregious flattery, proclamations of undying love and/or anatomically detailed descriptions of sex are more likely to make you throw this letter into the waste bin. Besides which, you wouldn't believe any of that tinnut nonsense, anyway.

And yes, I am rambling. You have that effect on me, even in print, it seems. Still, it is better than standing in front of you, babbling incoherently. I have no doubt you would verbally shred me into little pieces and that would be intolerable. I would be forced to claw you back in self-defense and we should get no farther than we are now. In a letter, neither of us is on the spot and therefore, our better sides may be presented.

Don't get me wrong; I fully expect you to flay me in your return letter, if there is one. But I can deal with your sarcasm and wit much better when it's not being thrown at my head like a Muddling Hex. And please note, if you do not answer this letter, I shall be forced to take a more direct and very much unpleasant (for you) approach. It would be very public and very messy, I assure you. And I have the imagination to pull it off.

Threats aside, I would like to say that I admire you greatly. I have long noticed your wit (which is appreciable when directed at someone else), as well as your intelligence, diligence, and discipline (by which I mean personal, rather than inflicted). I would very much appreciate a chance to know you better than I do now, to determine whether this attraction is merely that or something more and, of course, to see whether you might be interested in me. On any level. I would add, that for the time being, letters are

sufficient; I would not ask you to suffer my presence until you feel ready. Which, I imagine, would involve the selection of half a dozen prime hexes and curses. Just be warned: by that point, I should have at least a dozen prepared.

Yours sincerely,

ZS.

Dear madam (or so I assume),

You will no doubt be pleased to know that your letter has found its way into the pile of burnt love-letters that I accumulate every week. They make quite a lovely, if uselessly brief, blaze. If you ever do show up on my doorstep, be assured I have no less than one hundred hexes and curses prepared for that eventuality; there are too many witches already trying to assault me. However, I admit that you are the first to display some modicum of intelligence, however diminished by this current situation. I dread to think of what desperate circumstances drove you to this course of action. I have now answered your letter; I can only assume you are satisfied. If I hear from you again, I shall be forced to take more drastic measures.

Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class.

Well, he had written her a reply, which was more than she had expected, and it consisted of more than "bugger off," which was a hell of a lot more than she had expected. Encouraged, Hermione picked up a quill and applied it to a fresh sheet of parchment.

Dear sir,

Thank you for your considerate reply. Having been told I have some intelligence leads me to believe we have something to start with. It is very heartening, though I know that was not your intent. And to clarify that point, the current situation has affected my sanity, not my intelligence, and so you may expect reasonably intelligent letters from yours truly. If you want proof, I shall be happy to enclose a sample of my Arithmancy research; I'm sure Professor Vector will be equally happy to explain it for you. And, for your information, the 'desperate circumstances' you assume are only that I have yet to find any man, handsome, intelligent, or otherwise, whom I can converse with intelligently. For some reason, any man who sees me tends to focus on my cleavage within .2 milliseconds and forget the fact that either of us have brains. Of course, whether said man had one to begin with is debatable. They usually don't. Finding someone who does would be a relief. I imagine you have the same type of problem. I mean that the witches who pursue you focus on the OoM medal you no doubt have pinned to your chest, rather than noting the fact you have a brain. Not to mention taste; I can't imagine you wanting to have anything to do with that sort of woman. Your tolerance for stupidity is about the same as mine. Tell me, how long do you wait before you hex them? I give mine about two warnings on average. I envy you, though. At least they're admiring your bravery and skill, while mine are focused solely on secondary sex characteristics. I have my own medals and most of the time they're ignored in favor of the illusion that I will cook and clean.

I cook and clean for one person: me. Anyone else can bloody well get house-elves.

Ah, yes. Before I sign off, I would like to point out that I have taken every precaution possible to prevent your so-called 'drastic measures.' And I would remind you that you do not know who I am or where I live. I, however, know exactly what you look like (which you should consider as a factor when you determine my sincerity) and I know the exact coordinates of where you live down to the second. But don't worry; I still like you.

Yours sincerely,

ZS.

PS - By the way, I thought the full list of titles was a nice touch. And how is the experimentation going on the Smaragdina potion?

Dear madam,

I have no need of Vector to 'explain' anything to me. As for the rest, it is none of your bloody business.

Bugger off,

Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class.

Well, she couldn't say she hadn't expected it. Nor could she say she hadn't expected the five different tracking spells, the three time-delayed hexes, or the particularly ingenious 'bug' spell. She'd disabled every single one, after all. The man had imagination. And intelligence, ingenuity, long, slender fingers... Hermione shook her head and applied herself to concocting a suitable revenge. Had she mentioned the fact that she loved a challenge?

At precisely twelve noon, when everyone was assembled for lunch, a Howler arrived. It was addressed to Minerva, who opened it, and immediately flew over to Severus.

"NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY, DEAR SEVVIE! YOU'RE SUCH A BAD BOY!" It was followed by the sound of a flamboyant smooch before it reduced itself to ribbons.

The flirtatious voice alone was enough to make Severus Snape's insides writhe in humiliation. While the other professors snorted in laughter, he continued stone-faced through lunch, planning revenge. An ordinary letter arrived.

Dear sir,

I warned you. And you got off lightly this time.

And I still like you.

ZS.

Dear madam,

What part of 'bugger off' is so difficult for you to understand, pray tell? I revoke any previous positive comments I may inadvertently have made.

Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class.

It was just as well that Hermione opened the note in the same manner she would have used on a volatile potion; the resulting mess took her an hour to clean off the glass screen and would have turned her a brilliant shade of blue with screaming orange hair. Rather like a Celt seen during an LSD trip. Now there was an idea...

Once again, a letter arrived during lunch. It *looked* ordinary, save that the stupid owl dropped it right on his plate. Still, Snape performed every check he could think of before setting it aside to open later. He never noticed the amount of white powder that had transferred and dissolved into the curry.

He much regretted it later, when a variety of unlikely visions were parading themselves in front of his eyes and he uttered one of the most clichéd phrases known to man: "Ooh, look at all the pretty colours!" He regretted it even more when he heard it repeated to him dozens of times over the next week. And when he finally opened the letter to read:

Didn't think to look for Muggle poisons, did you?

ZS.

Now alerted to what, or rather whom, he was dealing with, Snape's efforts at retaliation improved. He and his mystery correspondent (he frothed at the mouth if you called her a 'secret admirer') traded hexes, potions, curses and jibes back and forth regularly. Much of his personal time was devoted to thinking up new ways to get her back. To his credit, Hermione's protections failed several times; she spent time speaking in Cat, blown up like a giant balloon (though without the lighter-than-air properties), and, much to her chagrin, brilliant blue with screaming orange hair. She had assumed he wouldn't repeat a trick.

All in all, the Owl Post was right pissed with both of them.

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This is a little something I (thought) I finished last year. It needed something more, so it's been sitting in limbo for quite a while. But now it is finished. (I think.) It's fairly short, about 5/6 parts, and will be posted as I find time to format it for the net.

On the title: The main title is from a PBS documentary that has absolutely nothing to do with this fic, being about things that are written by women in prison. The subtitle is what happens when I read too many Victorian novels. ^\_^;

*tunnut* - contraction of the phrase 'two knut'

I hope you've enjoyed! -- Lm. Samiko

## Second Posting

*Chapter 2 of 6*

...in which Hermione makes far more progress than one might have expected

or

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### Second Posting

It was the last week of winter term when Severus Snape received the following letter. To his surprise, it had been certified by the Owl Post as Adverse Spell Free.

*Dear Professor,*

*Surprised, aren't you? I figured the certification would make a suitable declaration of my intentions; I am well aware of the amount of work you must be facing as the term ends. As I calculate it, the two of us are exactly even in our number of successful booby-traps. I believe these two factors make it an appropriate time to broach the subject of a cease-fire, if not a full truce. I shall be candid and admit that the effort of fully disenchanting my mail every time your letter arrives is tiring. For once, I should like to simply take the packets from the owl without wearing full safety kit. Well, what do you think? Shall we stop acting like adolescents? I must say, though, it was fun while it lasted.*

*Now, about your latest paper, did you try the properties of ten-Knut-weed on the potion? I've always had good results with it...*

The remainder of the letter contained a detailed discussion of a variety of theories concerning his current research. Remarkably (and annoyingly), they contained a number of good ideas--many of which had occurred to him, but a few which had not. Irritating wench! With a quick mutter, he summoned the list he had begun when this whole farce had started. In the beginning, it had included, in miniscule type, the name of every witch in England over eighteen. As letters arrived, names had disappeared. An Arithmancer (explicitly mentioned), either Muggle-born or half-blood (implied by use of Muggle drugs, etc.). One who obviously had a feel for Potions. One who was part of Voldemort's defeat...

It came down to one name. One name, which had been his hypothesis after the receipt of the first letter and which he had thereafter tried to forget. Which hadn't worked when her writing style matched her speech patterns almost exactly. He had spent months now listening to her voice in his head as he read the letters with a fascination akin to the mouse under the gaze of a snake. (Ironical, that one...) It was annoying. He didn't understand why she kept writing him. He didn't understand why *he* kept writing *her*.

Unless it was to take advantage of that theoretical rambling she was prone to. Yes. That must be it. Take advantage of free information from a brain that was, normally, reasonably functional...

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Woman:

*A cease-fire would not be necessary if you would just run away and play with somebody else like a good little girl. I find you annoying and time-consuming and have no wish to further waste hours, magic, and parchment on you.*

*Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class*

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*Dear Professor,*

No.

ZS

This was intolerable.

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*What in the name of Hades do you want from me, woman?*

*Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class*

Ah. Interest and inquiry. Not to mention distinct end-of-tether overtones. Just what she had been waiting for.

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*Dear Severus,*

*It's not so much that I want you to do something, it's more... what I want my words to do to you. I want them to stimulate your mind, to brighten your day, to drag you out of that shell you call your existence. I want them to make you see me, see me as the person I am and not the person you believe me to be. We've spent so much time at cross-purposes and you've spent a great deal of effort to lump me in with my companions. I am not a part of a three-headed hydra, Severus Snape. I am a woman with a mind, personality, and will of her own. I want to bring all of these before you and have you realize that this is who I am and make your evaluations therefrom. Evaluations based on facts, not preconceptions and prejudices. I want my words to let you know how I feel and, if you'll let them, how I want to make you feel. And yes, you may read a double entendre into that if you wish. I want to make you feel loved, wanted, needed, desired. As warm as a Hogwarts Christmas and as hot as a raging wildfire.*

*That, Professor Severus C. Snape, MP. MDA. OoM. 1st class, is what I want.*

*Yours,*

ZS

This had to be some sort of joke. Oh, not necessarily on *her* part. Perhaps her "friends" thought such a thing would be amusing; it was quite clear from her letters that they thought of her as a frigid old maid and fair game for such a prank. Or maybe the gods just thought it amusing to fuck with his life. Again. They seemed to enjoy doing that. So had Albus, for that matter, old bastard that he was. And he'd always said it was "for your own good." Miserable old arse.

Still...

*...loved, wanted, needed, desired.*

She was half his age.

She had approached him.

They didn't even know each other.

She probably knew him better than anyone else anyway.

She had no idea what she was doing.

Did he have a better one?

*...loved, wanted, needed, desired.*

*I am a woman with a mind, personality, and will of her own.*

It wouldn't be boring.

Irritating, passionate, stimulating, painful...

But never boring.

She was bossy, stubborn, intelligent, so very young...

Not so young as that.

And she would never be boring.

And she knew what he was and what he'd done.

*...loved, wanted, needed, desired.*

She was never cruel.

Severus picked up a quill. This was probably going to hurt like hell.

But he could be just as stubborn as she could.

Damn it.

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Dear madam,

*I confess myself to be dumbfounded at the contents of your previous missive. To be confronted with such declarations--ones which are, to all appearances, sincere-- is... unexpected to say the least, particularly for a man at my stage in life. I have certainly not been accustomed to them. However, it would appear that you are a very stubborn woman and if you truly wish to undertake such a risky venture, then I shall not endeavour to apply myself to a useless confrontation. I simply request that we conduct this correspondence with due respect for both parties concerned.*

Severus C. Snape

Finally! Hermione stared at the letter she held in her hand, almost disbelieving the thick slashes of black ink on parchment. After a moment's consideration, she decided that a silly grin was appropriate, having no other witness but Crookshanks, who was inclined to observe all of his mistress's actions with the condescending superiority all cats (and Kneazles) display towards their human inferiors when they do something particularly silly and incomprehensible. Honestly, she had never expected to... well, she had never expected to get anywhere with Severus C. Snape. (What did the 'C' stand for, anyway? Perhaps she could work that into the next letter.) Hermione pulled out a sheet of parchment from her desk drawer and the bottle of hematite-coloured ink she saved for special occasions. It was her own creation, after all...

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Dear Severus,

*I... I have to admit that your last letter floored me. I, one who is never at a loss for words, have found myself staring at this parchment for the last half-hour, taking breaks only to clean up the large ink spots from holding my quill motionless over the leaf. Perhaps I should switch to a modern fountain pen...*

*I know I'm babbling, but I just cannot seem to get a hold of anything of substance to write. I was, have been, and will be sincere in all of my letters to you. And I would never approach you--or any man, for that matter--on any terms other than ones of mutual respect. Call me an idealist, a romantic, whatever you please, but I believe in the 'marriage of true minds', though I wouldn't go so far as to say it 'looks on tempests and is never shaken.' Which one of us never experiences doubt in our lives, particularly in--yes, I will write it, you can't stop me--in love? Or fear, for that matter? No human being is ever so sure of another as to know that person's feelings every moment. Nor are we ever free of self-doubt. I may not admit it, show it, but I think I can tell you now that I've never been free of it from the day I first set foot in Diagon Alley. I had determination; I had brains. Unfortunately, those brains told me how little I really knew about what I was getting myself into. I wonder sometimes if I hadn't ought to have stayed where I was... But there. I am where I am and have no intention of going anywhere at this point. It's far too rewarding to rub my presence--and, yes, my talent--in other people's faces. It's the little things in life, right? Speaking of little things...*

Snape read through the letter twice when it arrived late Friday night, meditating upon its contents and his reply. As it was, he did not begin to write until the following morning, after a full night's sleep and a few precious hours free of the miniature morons he was supposed to instruct.

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Dear Miss Granger,

*You were quite correct; you were 'babbling'. And that was quite a long epistle for one who claims to have nothing of substance to write about. However, this is not unexpected, when one considers that you are the author of said manuscript. I must assume you are not familiar with the saying 'Brevity is the soul of wit?' Ah, well. We must each have our imperfections, though I myself have tried in vain to discover my own. I really must set to work on that point one of these days. Perhaps once I have retired and no longer have to watch these troglodytes they flatter with the name of 'children.' The gods know I am certainly busy looking in a hundred other directions to prevent the thick-headed dolts from immolating, poisoning, or otherwise destroying themselves. Why do they insist on teaching Potions to infants who have no concept of caution and even less interest or talent? Of any given year, only five students ever show any promise in the field, fewer still use it after graduation. I often wonder why I continue to engage in this exercise in futility. I am no longer under any obligation to remain, though at a loss as to what other profession I pursue. Pure Potions or Defence work is difficult to find, I have no interest in entering healing in any manner (which is probably for the best, for I should be forced to throttle half my patients), and gods forbid I ever find myself indentured to the Ministry. I hope you have had the basic intelligence to avoid that fate, unlike your two appendages.*

*Yes, Miss Granger, I wrote 'appendages'. Whilst you may not solely be an addendum to the Trio, I am sure you are aware that they have battened onto you all these years? It quite honestly gives me nervous tremors trying to imagine what they would have become without a responsible, sensible human being giving them good, swift kicks when appropriate. That you were able, in some small measure, to penetrate those thick, stone-like interiors they call heads is a laudable achievement in and of itself. I shall now take the opportunity to congratulate you on it.*

*By the by, what sort of Arithmantic research are you involved in? I believe Minerva has mentioned it--numerous times, more than likely--but I shall candidly admit that by the time you had completed Oxford, I had heard quite enough of you and tuned out ensuing references.*

*As for the content of your second paragraph, I believe I am inclined to agree with you, in theory, at least...*

---

Dear Severus,

*Egotist. But thank you for the complement. And yes, I am aware of the state of my relationship with those two mental amoeba they call Harry Potter and Ronald Weasley. I must admit that, at the moment, I rather wish I weren't. Bastards. Do you realize what they bought me for my birthday? Grr... You see, I'm so annoyed I'm even resorting to written sub-vocals. Sorry; I shouldn't vent. You weren't involved. And no, that is not a hint that you ought to have bought me something yourself. I don't even know when your birthday is and I didn't expect you to remember mine, if you ever knew it in the first place. Besides, we haven't even progressed to a face-to-face relationship yet.*

*I feel better now. Feel free to ignore that last paragraph. I suppose I ought to erase it, but I really do feel better with it in black and white, knowing that I can share my feelings with someone. Very few people around here would listen--not that I would tell them--and most of them would agree with those cretins.*

*You can ignore that paragraph as well. Damn it, I refuse to let this interfere any further with a letter to you. There are far more amusing topics of discussion to include here. Speaking of which...*

Far from ignoring the initial paragraphs, Snape found them the most intriguing of the long letter that Hermione was in the habit of sending. So his... whatever he was supposed to call her... was at odds with her little 'appendages'. He wondered what idiocy they had committed this time, that she was so angry with them. Of course, finding out wouldn't take very long. He wouldn't be either a Slytherin or a spy if he didn't have his sources.

---

Dear Hermione,

*It is reassuring that you have--eventually--come around to the correct evaluation of the half-brained duo. I can only add that it makes me dubious that it has taken so long for you to do so. Ah, well. What on earth would I do with someone as intelligent as I?*

*I can only assume that you have not hexed various sensitive bits of their anatomy; surely such an event would have deserved front page exposure in the Daily Prophet. A pity. I would have cheerfully funded your defence before the Wizengamot. Still, I trust that you have fully informed them of their error in judgment; a woman of your calibre*

*has no need to resort to such inane, cheap tricks to 'get' a man--assuming that you even want or require one. Besides which, it would seem that your obstinacy and knowledge of hexes are quite sufficient in this regard.*

*I have enclosed with this missive a small package that I trust will suffice for your birthday honoraria. You are quite correct; I did not know the date, however, I am aware and quite capable of fulfilling the social requisites of our relationship, as unconventional as it may be in this day and age. For future reference, my own is 9 January, should you be in a position to reciprocate at that time.*

*As to the problem you mentioned with your current research, I may have a few suggestions in that respect. Firstly...*

Hermione had stopped fuming about the present itself--a full magical make-over, including breast-enhancement and fat-reduction (Ron) as well as enrolment in *Wizard/Witch Wand Connection - Matching Wand Couples for Five Centuries*(Harry)--by the time Severus' letter arrived, but she had not gotten over the morons' reaction to her tirade. They'd treated her like... like a kitten that was spitting and hissing, merely patting her on the head (metaphorically) and walking away content in their own masculine superiority. Wankers. Severus' caustic comments--and full support--helped soothe her somewhat; how was it that the man knew exactly what to say? Her mother would probably say it was love. Was it? Hard to say anything definitive; they hadn't even *seen* each other since her graduation some years before. Though she had to admit, the little hints--and certainly his 'honoraria'--rather made her think it was.

---

*Dear Severus,*

*I know that by now, you won't believe me when I say I haven't the words, but really, this time I haven't. Your present was... beyond lovely. I can only say that if you had given it to me directly, you would have been presented with an armful of Hermione. And no, I would not have been squealing. I am not a fifth year. From your perspective, I doubt I ever was. I was--and am-- frankly awe-struck by your gift. (By the way, where on earth did you find a copy of The Instruction of Imhotep? You do realize that it means I shall have to invade your library, since I now suspect you of harbouring similarly rare and fascinating volumes.)*

*You probably are aware by now of the effect of the other half of your gift. (Do you naturally have such good taste, or did you ask Minerva for assistance?) I've worn the earrings on a few occasions; as something obviously beyond my means, they attracted quite a bit of attention. The girls at work are trying their hardest to find out who you are (and if you have a similarly well-heeled brother, cousin, nephew, widowed father...) and how long I've been seeing you. I'm still debating how to answer that question. It might be amusing to tell the exact truth and say that I don't see you. Or, at least, I haven't seen you in several years. The Amoeba are driving themselves mad with the same questions, though, of course, they could care less whether you have brothers, cousins, etc. A sister might do, I suppose. In any case, they came to my flat and demanded to know who had given me the gifts and how long it had been going on, etc., etc., etc. I told them in no uncertain terms to bugger off. Treating me like a brainless tart--furthermore, a brainless tart who isn't even good at being a tart--had forfeited their right to knowledge about any of my affairs. Pun inclusive. There were words. And yes, some of them hurt. They may be insensitive clods, but they have been my friends for almost fifteen years. Still, I had to make a stand sometime. I couldn't allow them to keep walking over my feelings and self-respect the way they do. Will they understand this? I doubt it, but I am done with accommodating them. They can damn well accommodate me for once.*

*In any case, they left 'in high dudgeon', as they say, vowing to find your dungeon, if not in those exact words. They're plotting to find out who and where you are. Good luck to them. And now to something more interesting...*

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*Dear Hermione,*

*I am pleased that you are enjoying your gifts; Minerva did not help me with the jewellery, for she would then have driven me mad trying to discover whom they were for, rather like your colleagues. Strictly speaking, the Imhotep was not from my own library, but inherited from my mother's; it really isn't my sort of thing at all, though I did, of course, read it when I was young. In any case, I have included a catalogue of my library in this letter, so that you may decide upon its merits before investigating it yourself. And no, I have not left anything off of the list.*

*As to the 'words' you mentioned in your last letter, I am sorry to have precipitated them, though I agree that such a scene needed to take place. You must be your own woman, Hermione, and not depend upon the opinion or good will of anyone save yourself. I include myself in this; if you think well of me--and Merlin alone knows why you should--then my opinion should have weight with you, but not make you as miserable as it would seem they do. Betrayal by one's supposed friends does hurt, and hurt terribly, but it is better that you recognise it for what it is and make the wound clean and swift rather than suffer their small, endless barbs for years to come. I have endured both over the years, Hermione, and the former is infinitely preferable to the latter. Though I suppose one might compare it to having a dragon bite off your hand all at once rather than having it nibbled on by flesh-eating slugs over an extended period of time. Both hurt like hell, but there is something to be said for getting it over with, if you must choose one or the other.*

*I almost wish those morons would figure out who I am. I would take great delight in playing with their non-existent minds before inflicting something truly nasty upon them for meddling in my affairs. Pun inclusive.*

*Beyond your problems with pea-brained pillocks, how fares the Arithmantic work? I had a thought the other evening as regards your investigation of the effect of radicals on the number five...*

He was right. As, Hermione admitted, he was the majority of the time. Perhaps it had something to do with being older and more experienced. One didn't tend to think of Snape being the sort of person to have 'friends', but he must have had *something* over the years. If he had felt anything like what she was going through, then he certainly had her deepest sympathy. It *did* hurt like hell.

But wait... Was that an actual invitation to his library?

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^_^ FYI: The phrase 'pea-brained pillock' was taken from the Britcom 'Chef!', which was written & starred in by Lenny Henry (who also voiced the shrunken head in PoA). Cheers! Lm. Samiko ^_~

Third Posting

...in which they go on a date—of sorts.

or

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Third Posting

Dear Severus,

Thank you for a lovely afternoon. Your library is certainly something to be reckoned with; I am now suffering from an inferiority complex as I regard my own pitiful bookshelves. If there is anything to be said for being a pureblood, it is that you're able to take advantage of the work of generations. The only books I can look forward to getting from my parents are dental textbooks and my mother's hidden stash of Barbara Cartland. (Don't ask.)

It had been another dull day at work. My co-workers are still trying to worm your identity out of me; I've had to disable any number of Extendable Ears and Dictoquills. I can't believe that they think I would talk or write to you from work. I also can't believe that they wouldn't realise that I can recognise Fred and George's work from ten miles away. Twenty miles, if we ever get any sun in this god-forsaken island. Yes, the weather's getting to me. It's not like I need the excuse to stay indoors, anyway, and, if nothing else, everyone else's bitching is driving me up the wall. I daresay you aren't faring much better, what with discontented students and the mud and other things they're tracking in. I'd reminisce, but I'd rather you not incinerate this letter. I hope instead that you're reading this in front of that simply enormous fireplace of yours with a cup of something hot and bracing on the table next to your chair. Don't forget to block the school Floo! Minerva scared me half to death when she popped in last Saturday and I know how she likes to 'check up' on you. Don't take the risk of having what little free time you have interrupted by petty concerns. And yes, I include the students in that category. I honestly don't know how you put up with them.

In any event, I wanted to take the opportunity to invite you over for All Hallows Eve. I know there is nothing in the Teachers' Articles that requires you to be on hand for every Halloween from now until you retire and I thought you might like a chance to enjoy the holiday for once without having to watch out for students lurking with Weasley Wheezes or skulking with intentions of snogging. As an extra incentive, I thought we might go Amoeba hunting; they're due for a couple of good Halloween hexes.

Let me know what you decide and if Minerva gives you any problems, I'll gladly speak to her. It would be nice to say exactly what I mean for once; that's the problem with having nitwits for one's 'superiors'.

Hugs,

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Thank you for reminding me to shut down my Floo; it really is very odd that after twenty-odd years of spying and only a few of 'ordinary' life, I consistently forget that aspect. Though doing so meant that I had to listen to thirty-five minutes of Minerva's whinging about how she had wanted to speak with me and what would happen if there was an emergency and I couldn't be reached or if I was somehow incapacitated and couldn't summon help? I merely pointed out that there were more than a half-dozen other professors who could ostensibly help with any sort of 'emergency' and that I probably wouldn't summon help even if I were writhing on the floor in agony. Particularly if it meant a gaggle of ham-handed ninnies were to come galloping into my quarters.

As you might imagine, such a comment did not go over well. I was forced to listen to another twenty minutes of lecture on the subject of ingratitude and duty to one's position. I pointed out there was nothing in particular to be grateful for—at least not as regards my colleagues or the school—and that my duty did not include those rather meagre hours of so-called 'free time' that are a part of my contract.

That did not go over terribly well, either. Minerva is far too easy to bait. If I have more luck than has been evidenced heretofore, she will sack me for insubordination. It is in the contract, though the Great Wizards know that I never could have forced Albus into it. That man was more possessive than an iron-jawed piranha.

As regards All Hallows', it is true that I have spent every one of them cooped up in this place with overly hormonal teenagers with delusions of ingenuity. It is virtually scheduled: 6.30 - collect Dungbombs from 3rd Year Dormitory, 7.00 - confiscate firewhisky that the 5th Years were going to put in the punchbowl, 7.15 - confiscate the vodka that the 7th Years were going to put in the punchbowl... 10.05 - clear the fumbling couples out the Astronomy Tower, 10.45 - clear the 6th and 7th Year orgy out the Room of Requirement. More points are taken from Hufflepuff on Halloween than on any other night, actually. Odd, honestly, with their ideals of dogged loyalty, though perhaps they figure it is easier to be loyal (or in this case, faithful) to a group than to any single person. The things that occur in this castle... Fluffy and Buckbeak do not even begin to approach the horrors I have seen. Though I will admit that Slytherins tend to come up with the most interesting... accessories.

In any event, you should realize that I would leap with the enthusiasm of Lupin for a mouldy bone at the chance to be elsewhere. Merlin knows, I've spent twenty years in Purgatory, I deserve some little reprieve. After all, Purgatory is supposed to occur after death, not before. Though perhaps it would be more prudent for you to speak with Minerva at this point. She actually likes you, for reasons I find totally incomprehensible, and I, as I have just recounted, am not exactly in her good graces at the moment. Not that I mind, but it would take quite a bit longer for me to talk her around than it would you.

Severus.

Dear Minerva,

I am writing to ask you a very important favour. As you recall, you found me with Professor Snape in his library the other day. The truth is, it occurred to me that he needed some socialization to prevent him from sinking entirely into that rather thick cloud of isolation and snarkiness that surrounds him. I know he's capable of putting everybody's back up just for the fun of the thing, but it's rather sad, really, don't you think? I mean, after all, he must do such things because he's really afraid of connecting to other people. And he must be terribly lonely as a result. So I decided I simply have to do something about it. You know me, after all. To that end, I have invited him to spend Halloween with me, as well. Would you be so very kind as to let him off for the evening? I promise to return him in good condition and perhaps a little more cheerful than when he left. Do say you will.

Thanks awfully,

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Of course you may have our resident hedgehog for Halloween, if you really want him. I can't imagine why, except that you have one of the biggest hearts for lost causes I've ever seen, my dear girl. Albus would be proud of you, Hermione. I wish you the best of luck in your endeavours. And try not to let him spoil your holiday too badly.

Sincerely,

Minerva.

Dear Severus,

We're on. I told Minerva you are my new charity cause; I think I used up my year's supply of italics in the process. She fell for it like a tripped mountain troll. Do have any idea how it is that she still expects me to sound like a third year? In any case, I'll see you at Hogwarts' gates at 6.30, then, shall I? No reason not to start early and miss the student revels besides.

Hugs,

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Agreed.

Severus.

Dear Severus,

That was absolutely, bloody marvellous. Completely childish, generally petty, and entirely self-serving, but fuck all, it felt good! Just remind me not to get on your bad side now that you have no reason to hold yourself back. Our pranks were bad enough - and they, at least, were a challenge - I have no desire to end up both in pain and utterly humiliated. I only wish I had thought to bring a camera, but then, we can review our Pensieves together sometime when we need a good laugh. And, damn it, the Amoeba deserved it. And I... feel cleansed, actually. Like I've gotten rid of all the bad karma they've been piling around me for years. Free at last!

The investigations at work doubled when I showed up this morning with that silly grin on my face. You know the one -- I was wearing it last night after we finished with the Amoeba. Apparently, it matches what I ought to look like after brain-scrambling sex. I didn't bother to correct their mistaken conclusions. What would be the point? It's far too much fun to play with their minds.

It occurs to me that I may be spending too much time with you. Your personality is definitely rubbing off on me. Should I be worried or amused about that?

By the way, I've run into a slight snag in my Arithmantic research; I've included the relevant bits in this letter. Would you look at the Potions equations and check that I've got the right values for the ingredients? I know there's a mistake in there somewhere, but I can't see it for the life of me. You know more than I do (which is a fact due to your age, not a compliment, you raving egotist) and will probably spot what I've missed. And it never hurts to have a fresh pair of eyes. You know I don't dare show it around here; my superiors would pounce on the evidence I've been doing it up at work and claim all of the credit. When I find the bastard who introduced Muggle contract clauses to the Wizarding community... Well, I imagine you'll be right there beside me, won't you?

All my love,

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

You have the value for newt's testicles wrong. It should be 19824.0924, not 19842.0924. Don't ask me why; I can only assume it has something to do with the sense of humour that controls the absurdity of this existence. But I trust this will advance your work somewhat. And that you will adequately reimburse me for the time I spent in finding your silly little error.

I agree with your assessment of contract clauses. Albus, being the sneaky bastard that he was, tried to slip several by me when I began to teach at Hogwarts. When I pointed them out, he tried to justify them, an endeavour that basically boiled down to: 'You ought to be grateful to me for giving you any sort of work, you stupid sod, so sign the damn contract.' I threatened to simply turn myself in to Azkaban and deprive him of my sterling qualities as a Stupid Sod Who's Seen the Light, which brought him back to his senses immediately. Albus may have been powerful and crafty, but he was pathetically easy to manipulate sometimes. In return, of course, for manipulating everyone else all of the time. I do occasionally ask myself how I managed to get into all of this nonsense. It is a rather depressing answer: I was manipulated by anyone who had any say in my life whatsoever. I shan't bore you with the details, but it would seem that Albus was merely the last in a long line...

...I must take my leave of you, Hermione; it is my turn to patrol the halls. May I say, dear one, that I myself would not object to seeing your 'silly grin' in the mornings?

Sincerely,

Severus.

Hermione was grateful for the help, pleased at his openness, and utterly floored by the last line. Did he mean what she thought he meant? What if he did? What if she assumed he did and he didn't? What if he did and assumed she agreed? Or that she didn't agree? How should she reply? Would she sound too eager? Not eager enough? Was she ready to be eager? What if she wasn't when she thought she was? What if she was and she thought she wasn't? What if he wasn't ready for it? What if...?

Damn.

Dear Severus,

.....

Fuck. Erase the drops and start again.

Dearest Severus,

.....

Why did these damned quills have to drip so much? Erase 'em again.

Dear

Weren't letters supposed to get longer once you started them?

Severus -

.....

Oh, sod it.

Fourth Posting

Chapter 4 of 6

In which Severus and Hermione experience some bumps in their road.

or

A Series of Extracts Belonging to the Epistolary Courtship of Hermione Granger and Severus Snape, with Suitable Additions of Edifying Thoughts and Actions

by Severus Snape and Hermione Granger

edited by Lm. Samiko ^_~

Fourth Posting

Dear Hermione,

Well, I must say, whatever it is you are doing, you should continue doing it. It would seem you were right; all Severus needed was a little socialization to perk him right up. And it probably helped that he was able to escape the students for some small period of time. Thank you ever so much! After he returned from your Halloween gathering, he seemed rather pleased and while he cannot be called cheerful at the best of times, he was actually pleasant to converse with. And now... Well, all I can say, dear, is that whatever you two were up to last Friday evening (it was a dance, was it not? In any case, I did not see Severus until the next morning, so I assume it ran in to the wee sma's), he has been seen sporting a grin for the first time in over forty years. It is, I must admit, a rather predatory grin, which looks most like a man-eating shark and which scares the First through Fifth Years into hysterics, but it is such a change for him!

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Minerva.

Hermione herself was hysterical for a good twenty minutes after receiving Minerva's letter, particularly when she noticed the last set of italics. Keep it up, indeed!

My Hermione,

It has been quite some time since either of us last wrote a letter to the other; I find that, in spite of certain... benefits in seeing (and, if I am to be perfectly honest, in hearing, touching, and tasting) each other, I miss this particular style of communication--the leisurely, considered process of committing my thoughts to parchment and knowing that you have put just as much time and meaning into what you have written to me. In addition, I should like to have more specimens to put aside and look at when I am one hundred and ninety and in need of reliving my life's Great Folly. (As opposed to dwelling upon my life's Great Mistake.) I rather imagine you'll have left me for a younger wizard by that point, so I shall need everything I can lay my hands on to enable me to be properly maudlin and not simply bitter-which, as you know, I am much more inclined to.

You asked me the other day what I thought of Minerva's powers of observation. Simply put, beloved, she has none. She is Gryffindor, after all, and subtleties tend to elude you all. I believe she still thinks you are trying to 'socialize' me (completely ignoring the fact that you yourself are far from sociable) and that I am alternately finding it to my liking and despising it with a vengeance. The latter was in ascendance the other day after we had fought about the Billywig spots. But as long as it keeps her nose and spectacles out of my business, I have no great difficulty pandering to her delusions.

One might say it keeps me in practice. Speaking of which...

[Several paragraphs of a technical nature omitted.]

I must admit to being at a loss as to our next excursion. We have been to your flat. We have been to the BM and the Bodleian Archives. Cambridge, as we both know, is a next to total loss. As fascinating as it would be, having you here would be uncomfortable and counterproductive. Restaurants are dull, nightclubs abysmal, shops indescribable. The Tower, I suppose, is a possibility, if you don't mind Muggle-dodging. Any thoughts, dear one?

My own thoughts remain with you. I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Severus.

My dearest Severus,

You're being both maudlin and absurd. I insist that you cease at once. It's disturbing. I have no objection to furnishing you with further letters; in fact, I am completely delighted to do so. I myself look forward to the day when I can pull the bundles of letters from their box and read them fondly. However, I have no intention of doing so alone. Or with any other wizard at my side except you. For practical reasons, I shall refer you to some of my earlier letters, copies of which I have included with this one, not knowing whether you burnt these particular ones. Another point that I would like to make is that I chose you to last, Severus Snape. You cannot accuse me of walking into this relationship with my eyes closed to who and what you are. Nor can you accuse me of being a flighty teenage nymphet. I knew what I was doing from the start--though I couldn't be sure of where it was going--and I fully intend to see it through. So if you end up old and alone a century from now, it won't be my fault.

Particularly as you are built like a bloody Minotaur on steroids.

There. Have I pandered to your vanity enough? I suppose not; I haven't commented on your level of intelligence. Well, I will tell you now that I simply refuse to do so when you are acting like such a silly bugger.

Love a thousand times over,

Hermione.

PS - There is one place, though I hesitate to suggest it. I'll save it for when I see you, lest it colour our excursion tomorrow. In the interim, what do you say to Normandy and the Wizards' Whinge?

To my Hermione,

I said it before we went and, at the risk of being redundant, I shall say it again: you must have been insane to suggest such a thing. Correspondingly, I must have taken leave of my senses to agree to this 'excursion.' Both of us should have known better.

I suppose, however, that there is some merit to having gotten it over with. We have been physically involved for nearly a year now and corresponding for a year previous. Meeting your parents was, I suppose, the next logical step. That said, it would not have been a misstep on your part to have prepared both parties somewhat better than you did. To have your father call me... whatever it was he called me--the meaning of which was only too clear--was not something I would have willingly subjected myself to. You should be grateful that I am possessed of such self-control; I would, otherwise, have done something which all of us would have regretted--and which would probably have been permanent. I did not spend those years in the Death Eaters learning how to crochet doilies. Nor was I busy taking advantage of Muggle-born children, no matter what your father might say.

I trust we shall not engage in a similar experiment in future. I can only thank the Great Wizards that my own parents have long since shuffled off this mortal coil and are safely ensconced in Hell where they belong.

Severus.

Severus,

You cannot have the gall to blame this all on me. While I certainly don't exonerate my father--his words were entirely uncalled for--you certainly didn't help matters any with your high-and-mighty attitude. Is that something you learn specifically in Wizarding families? Do you just automatically assume that you're better than every single poor, stupid Muggle and, oh, you should be ever so grateful that I've condescended to bestow my attentions on your little Muggle-born daughter? I've never seen this side of you, Severus, not since you stopped spying; I hadn't thought it was truly a part of your character. Or, at least, I'd hoped it wasn't.

Silly me.

Hermione.

Hermione,

I will not apologise for my pride. I am not about to let some Muggle--or, indeed, some Wizard--walk all over me. Never again. Full stop. If you cannot accept this, then perhaps you should reconsider this entire enterprise.

Severus.

Severus,

It's not about letting someone walk all over you; it's about acknowledging that other people have a right to address you as equals, at least during the first five minutes of your acquaintance. Those Muggles--those people--are my parents. You owed it to all of us, including yourself, to give them a chance to prove themselves before treating them like the dirt under your feet! How does that change anything, except that now you are the one who's walking on people?

Hermione.

Hermione,

As I said before, if my attitude and personality bother you, then you are perfectly free to leave them alone.

Severus.

Severus,

You know my opinion on that matter, though I admit that at the moment I am seriously reconsidering my decision.

Hermione.

Intercastle Memorandum -- From the Desk of the Headmistress

Severus--

As I tried to ask you earlier, I would like to know if you have heard from Miss Granger recently. She has not answered my owls for several days now and I am becoming concerned. Furthermore, if you ever yell at me like that again, young man, I shall ensure that you chaperone Hogsmeade weekends for the next twenty years.

Minerva.

Minerva--

Do not waste my time with such trivialities. I have no idea where the girl has got to.

Severus.

Miss Granger--

Please have the courtesy to reply to Minerva's letters; she is beginning to bother me about it.

S. Snape.

Miss Granger--

You carry this silence too far. What the devil is the matter with you, woman?

S. Snape.

Never do that to me again, woman. Do you realize that you could have died? What were you thinking, not to contact anyone if you were ill? Or were you thinking?

Severus.

Severus--

I am sorry, really, for making you worry. But how was I to know that a little cold was actually Acromantula flu? It's not exactly a common disease, you know. I have yet to figure out where exactly I picked it up; I only hope no one else caught it at the same time.

Still, I can't be entirely remorseful, Severus. After all, my flu forced you to... well, force my door. (Thank you for patching it back up, by the way.) And once I was better, we were able to talk through a number of matters that ought to have been thrashed out quite some time ago. I think that, if we are to continue, we'll have to set some sort of ground rules for when we both lose our tempers. "Never let the sun set on your anger" or something of that sort. Though we may want to "Cool down and talk the next day (or week)" instead; talking too soon got us into this mess after all.

Anyway, I am taking my potions like a good little patient and have kept myself to my flat. Though I did send an owl to retrieve some books from the library. I'm bored! And very much looking forward to your visit this weekend. (Though I thought you might be able to finagle more time off from Minerva. Ah, well.)

Thinking of you (in various positions),

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Thank you for keeping me updated about your condition; we need to be wary of a relapse. I do not wish to go through this whole muddle again. And thank you for your apology.

[several paragraphs omitted]

I request that you not make any plans concerning our appointment this weekend. I have several exceedingly serious matters I wish to discuss with you (including the one you mentioned in your last missive) and cannot be certain how much time they will take.

Yours sincerely,

Severus.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Granger

cordially invite you to attend the wedding of their daughter,

Hermione Jane

to

Professor Severus C. Snape

on 15 May, 200x

at 5.30 pm.

a.n. - Formatted at last! One more posting and an epilogue to go...

Fifth Posting

Chapter 5 of 6

Many little details must be taken care of before a proper fairy-tale ending.

or

A Series of Extracts Belonging to the Epistolary Courtship of Hermione Granger and Severus Snape, with Suitable Additions of Edifying Thoughts and Actions

by Severus Snape and Hermione Granger

edited by Lm. Samiko ^_~

Fourth Posting

Severus-

INCOMING!

H.

Dear Hermione,

Thank you for the warning. It was not, perhaps, strictly necessary, as I am more than capable of dealing with those two twits with my eyes closed and my wand five feet away. Still, the preparation allowed me to be particularly creative in the manner with which I dealt with your two 'friends.' And I was able to keep my current project in order, which enabled me to keep my temper. I assume that, having made it up with them (though I cannot for the life of me understand why), you wished them to be returned in one piece? However, do attempt to break them of these violent impulses in the future. I should hate to have to be the one to deliver them back to you after a less restrained encounter. And remind them - as often as necessary, since I doubt my own assertions will have much effect, if any - that you are more than capable of repelling any number of potions, hexes, jinxes, and curses that might have been administered in order to result in our engagement. You might conceivably add that, as you are the one who began this entire affair, you are more likely to have potioned, hexed, jinxed, or cursed me to ensure this conclusion. However, I have little faith that logic, no matter how simple, will serve to convince your mentally incapacitated friends of the truth.

That said, slightly more intelligent parties are having difficulty with this concept, as well. Minerva has been to see me no less than half a dozen times since she received the invitation two days ago. I do believe it is the first time in over thirty years that I have seen her truly speechless. She wanders in, begins some innocuous conversation, then falls into a sort of bemused stupor. I believe she is trying to figure out what about me could be remotely attractive to you. And possibly what on earth you did that could convince me to propose.

Needless to say, I have not enlightened her. I suggest that, should she be so tactless as to ask you, a modicum of discretion is in order. I have no desire to hear some of your previous commentary bandied about as common knowledge. If I do, I shall be forced to begin our marriage with a severe round of hexing. Please take this consideration under advisement.

With regards to the more pleasant and more tedious matter of our wedding arrangements, you have requested my opinion on the following matters, which I shall now relate to you...

[Several paragraphs omitted]

And finally, Hermione, Minerva has proposed several alternate possibilities for us as regards the augmentation of my quarters or new quarters altogether for our use upon our return to Hogwarts. It would appear that she is somewhat at a loss as how to proceed, taking into account not only my angelic nature, but the fact that there has apparently been no married faculty at Hogwarts for the past two centuries. You will find enclosed a list of her suggestions, as well as one or two of my own.

Sincerely,

Severus.

Dearest Severus,

Thank you for sparing the Amoeba due anguish. While I can deal with their complaints, I admit to not being of a mind to listen to their whining at what my Git Fiancé has done to them in addition. It's tiresome enough as it is.

Thank you also for your input into the wedding plans. I agree that the matter is incredibly tedious, and as matters progress, I am wishing even more profoundly that we had simply run off to Gretna Green in the time-honoured fashion. Since you are inclined to that era of dress anyway, it would have been a simple matter for me to transfigure a period wedding gown and done the thing properly with a minimum of fuss. As it is, be grateful that you aren't the bride and subject to all sorts of female fuss from all sorts of female relatives (and acquaintances). I've been pulled in fifty different directions, subjected to innumerable shopping trips, and chattered at whilst others make my decisions for me. I have only two consolations...well, three, if I count your humble self, though at this point, you apparently count rather as a requisite accessory to the proceedings, ranking slightly higher than good music. In other words, if I really like you, that's marvellous, but we could always find a substitute in a pinch, for *The Show Must Go On*. Hermione must have Her Big Day. To which end, my aunt has suggested her son's friend, Milton, as best man, on the principle that the best man steps into your shoes should you decide to hie yourself to the furthest corner of Timbuktu on said day. Needless to say, I declined. My own opinions of Milton aside, if you do not show up for the wedding, I shall track you down to the furthest corner of Timbuktu and personally disengage certain portions of your anatomy from your body. I hope that is quite clear.

But I was going to mention my other two consolations, wasn't I? Well, the first one is the sheer amount of wedding cake I've been able to sample. I forced everyone to go to five different shops before I 'decided.' Both Crooks and I were pleased with the result. The second consolation is the fact that when everybody shows up for the ceremony, they will realize that we've countermanded practically every decision that was made. Your evil ways are rubbing off on me, Severus. I am practically rubbing my hands with glee. (No, I am not suggesting that you ever do anything 'with glee.' That would be contrary to your character, of course.)

But at least we'll have a wedding I think we'll both... well, 'enjoy' seems too strong a word, considering the pair of us, but 'approve of' is probably appropriate. And afterwards, we can run far, far away and escape the madness for a while.

Speaking of escape, I haven't had much time to consider matters thoroughly--certainly not to draw up a useful chart to organise my thoughts properly--but it seems to me that whatever quarters we use should continue to open out into the dungeons. I certainly do not want to be any more accessible than I imagine you do to Hogwarts' denizens, not for the time being, at any rate. Whether we augment your quarters or find new ones altogether... I rather think that depends on you. I shall certainly require my own space--the gods know we have our moments--but I know you need yours as well. I have no intention of making our home the 'woman's domain' and forcing you to go elsewhere to be comfortable. I've been to Ginny's and Lavender's and Parvati's homes. And it's obvious that their husbands are never at ease in the frilled, furbelowed, fanatical neatness. They head for the hills (the backyard or the pub or who knows) as soon as they possibly can. Not because they don't love their wives, but because they can't relax anywhere within the confines of the four walls. I am determined that sha'n't be the case with us. Wherever we live, it is our home, not yours, not mine.

I know I'm pontificating, but the end of it is this: do you want a familiar environment or an entirely new one? I can certainly work with either decision. Also... I wanted to ask you about our sleeping arrangements. In the Muggle world, it is currently the done thing to share bed and room. I know that in the Wizard community, separate bedrooms are preferred. I'm not sure which I'd choose. While more attuned to the idea of a shared room, I can again see the benefits of having our own spaces. Please give me your opinion on the matter; I promise not to read too much into it. You proposed, after all, so I know you like me. I'm just nervous at the thought of trying to mesh our personalities on a permanent basis. You never really know how it's going to turn out in five or ten or twenty years, do you?

Please don't take me too seriously right now. I'm just having pre-wedding jitters. I love you and I want to marry you and nothing my overtaxed brain comes up with can compete with that. So please don't worry about it. I'll say it any number of times, if you like. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.

Hermione.

P.S.-- I love you.

Dear Hermione,

You begin to make me glad that I have no family to speak of. Certainly, having Molly Weasley in my vicinity is sufficiently horrifying; I can't begin to imagine the effects of more than one 'concerned' female nattering at me. I might be tempted to reinstate my Evil Git status. (As opposed to my mere 'Git' status, which I now hold postbellum.) I am exceedingly grateful I have found a woman who does not natter. Nag, yes. (Try to) bully, occasionally. Those I am capable of dealing with. But you do not natter, for which I give many thanks.

I am also thankful that your relatives (not to mention the née Patils, Brown, and Weasley) do not have full control over the wedding. The hoops that we shall have to jump through are bad enough. I trust you to keep it simple. And yes, I do remember that I must go and have my robes fitted tomorrow, and I will honour the engagement. I do not 'forget' my engagements, unless it serves my purpose so to do. Having ill-fitting formal robes does not.

You were quite prolix in your last missive concerning our living arrangements and I am conscious of your reasons for not bringing the matter up with me directly. You were quite right; it is easier for me to be 'reasonable', as you might say, when I am presented a series of arguments that I am able to ruminate over at my leisure. Though I must say that the coherence of your reasoning was not up to your usual standard. Please endeavour to improve upon that next time.

I am... pleased that you consider our home-to-be ours, not yours, not mine, nor belonging to any dictates of fashion. Not that I expected any less, knowing you, but still, I am pleased. To that end, I have indicated to Minerva that we require an entirely different suite of rooms; it would be most unfair, I believe, to make you give up your space whilst I can remain comfortably in mine. Mind, I fully intend to keep my private laboratory; I need familiarity to work well and even the thought of attempting to shift all of my equipment and materials makes me shudder. In any case, I have spent some little time scouting various corners of the castle with Minerva and have created a short list of possibilities. It is, of course, impossible to describe any of them within the confines of a letter, and I have no wish to engage in such foolish spellcasting; perhaps you have some time when you can escape the harpies plaguing you and take a look for yourself? An alternative is, I believe, to visit the Room of Requirement together to request a recommendation. It is rather in the way of drawing lots, my dear, but the information might be useful in making our final decision.

As to the second issue you mentioned, I admit to being uncertain as to how to reply. I am, certainly, more accustomed to the idea of separate bedrooms, but I admit that, to date, I have not been averse to sharing our spaces when we have had occasion to do so. Still, it is difficult to base a decision on the impression of a night or two at a time. We are both very solitary people when all is said and done. I must say, however, that I refuse to share any sleeping quarters I occupy with your hell-cat. Further than that, I imagine we shall have to discuss in person, most likely in conjunction with our search for proper space within the castle.

I have just now noticed the date on the calendar and realised that it has been two weeks entire since I have seen you. What on earth are those gorgons making you do?

Do not answer that; I most sincerely do not wish to know. I can only vaguely imagine the tortures involved in arranging a wedding; I do not need to see the process in any greater detail. I have the greatest confidence in your discretion, beloved.

Sincerely,

Severus.

Beloved:

It's almost impossible to put pen to paper right now; it is even harder to try to wring some coherency out of my brain. It is the night before our wedding, dearest Severus, and though I know this is the most right decision of my life, I can't seem to control these nerves and jitters. Crookshanks could tell you that I have been pacing the floor for the past hour, muttering the Compleat Liste of Poation Herbes and Mineralls backwards and forwards. I wish it were tomorrow. I wish it were the day after tomorrow. I'd really prefer it if it were five months from now. I've no idea what I'll be like by the time you actually see me tomorrow. Perhaps in the throes of a nervous breakdown. Or medicated up to my eyeballs. My parents are dentists. I'm sure I could wheedle something out of them. I could.

Oh, sweet Nimue, Severus, I haven't the faintest idea what I'm doing. I want to go through with this, I do, believe me, but... but...

I love you, Severus, I do. Please excuse me whilst I wear a trough in my floor.

Hermione.

Dear Hermione,

Damned silly girl. Floo over here this minute and damn the absurdities of social conventions.

Severus.

Severus's handwriting was so shaky as to be virtually illegible.

Severus Claudius Snape and Hermione Jane Granger were married on 15 May 200x, in a small, beautiful ceremony, accompanied by their dearest friends and relations.

Editor's Notes

Chapter 6 of 6

A proper post-script to a literary academic offering.

or

A Series of Extracts Belonging to the Epistolary Courtship of Hermione Granger and Severus Snape, with Suitable Additions of Edifying Thoughts and Actions

by Severus Snape and Hermione Granger

edited by Lm. Samiko ^_~

Editor's Notes

This letter marks the last extant missive of the Granger-Snape archive, though, as their heirs have informed me, the habit of letter writing continued throughout the course of their seventy-year marriage. It would seem, however, that the letters written after this one have either been destroyed or permanently hidden. The spokeswoman for the Granger-Snape family, Apollonia Patil, *née* Granger-Snape, has recounted to me a memory of her mother burning a number of letters shortly before her death, telling her daughter, "Your father would hex me into oblivion if I let anyone else read them." One can assume that the destroyed collection referred to matters of even greater personal detail than those that have been published in this collection. Mrs. Patil speculates that they would have portrayed her father's most personal side - and that such a blow to his reputation would have infuriated him.

The editor would like to thank Mrs. Patil and the rest of the Granger-Snape family, including children and grandchildren, for their cooperation on and encouragement of this project. Not only the donation of this archive but their collective opinions, memories, and spells have been invaluable in the course of collating and augmenting this text. If there are errors in this humble addition to the corpus of material concerning this famous couple, they are mine alone.

Lm. Samiko

Tortoise Greene

13 Apr. 21xx

an.s - Honestly, thanks to everyone who has read and reviewed and kept up with my erratic posting. I hope it has proved an enjoyable read. Cheers, Lm. S.