

# Snape Rules!

## NT/SS

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## Skin on Skin

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"Oh noooo," wailed Hermione, as she surveyed the damage Crookshanks had caused. A small puddle of liquid pooled on the floor, her desk was dripping, tufts of orange fur swirled in the air, and a generous amount of glass shards lay sprawled across half of the room. "That was the last vial with the Love Potion ..." While the girl was still half in shock, a soft noise could be heard.

Hermione looked for the source, and then her features turned grim as she caught sight of the leisurely chilling, contentedly purring cat.

"Oh Crookshanks," she sang, crooking her index finger in a luring manner. "Come here, kitty-kitty ..."

She might have been able to overlook the fact that her cat wanted to eat her friend's rat (hell, the blasted animal had been a traitor after all!), but if it ruined her fruits of hard labour, Hermione saw red.

"Meow!"

Deep down in the heart of the dungeons, Severus Snape saw red as well, in form of dots dancing in front of his eyes. He was feeling dizzy and drained of all his energy, as if some parasite would leech him out thoroughly. His joints ached with every movement, and all Severus wanted to do was lie down and sleep for a whole week; but that wouldn't do. He had responsibilities to look after more important than his health, and there were also those dreaded dunderheads he was supposed to teach to consider. And to top it all off, the potion hadn't taken effect yet, and there was a thrumming that didn't seem to originate in his head but somewhere outside ... and it was getting louder by the second.

"Sev? Severus?" sounded a muffled voice through the thick door, which could only belong to one person. "I know that you're in there! Open up already!"

"Oh no," whimpered Severus in dread. "Merlin, have mercy with me!"

"Sev? It's me, Tonks! You know, Nymphy?" she added helpfully.

"I created a monster ..." If he had had the strength, Severus would have shoved his cupboard in front of the door to block the entrance; if his mind had worked properly, he would have realised he could use his wand. So, all he could do was wait and quiver in cold fear (and from the shivers).

"Step back from the door, Sev!" Tonks shouted, and Severus winced at the determined tone. "I'm coming in!"

And she did, indeed. Severus could only watch helplessly as his solid oak door shook, creaked and smashed down, whirling puffs of dust into the air. Light poured into his chambers, and for only a moment, Severus was blinded by the intensity, and then a silhouette emerged from the background, stepping over the threshold.

"Oh my God!" gasped Ron. "What happened to your cat, Mione?"

"There ... there was an accident," stuttered the girl, unable to meet her friend's eye. She stroked the writhing cat, trying to console it.

"An accident including a razor, an electro shocker and a flame-thrower?" asked Ron wide-eyed. "At least, it looks as though ... I mean, I don't like the animal, but even I can't say it's that daft and clumsy."

"Maybe he got a bit confused after she licked a few drops of the potion," Hermione hissed, causing Crookshanks to flinch and try to escape once more. 'Oh no, you don't,' she thought, gripping the cat's neck tightly.

"What potion?" asked Ron slowly. Hermione only shot him a look. "No ..."

"Yes." Hermione sighed. "But it shouldn't matter, anyways. Snape already took his dose, and the next time he sees Tonks, he will be hopelessly in love. Tonks' reaction will depend upon Snape's, and then we're free." The girl turned an empty vial thoughtfully in her hand. "I liked the vial, though, it was one of my favourites," she said wistfully in memory of the broken glass.

"You've got enough of them," Ron said, pointing to the one she was holding.

"Hmm," Hermione murmured absently, smoothing her thumb over the label saying 'Snape/Tonks Love Potion #4'. Then she squinted her eyes, trying to decipher the tiny printed words on the edge. A quick glance at her watch later, Hermione had blanched.

"I believe we've got a problem, Ron."

It was like an epiphany, and if Severus would have been at this particular island, back in 1990, he would have noticed the analogies between how Tonks acted and how Hagrid had acted then.

"Sorry 'bout that," Tonks said and coughed, the fallen door creaking under her feet. Dust particles burned in her eyes - didn't Filch ever sweep the dungeons? - and they started to prickle with tears. "Sev? Where are you? I know you're not feeling well. Please, don't hide from me ..."

Severus would have like to scream at Tonks to leave immediately, but he knew his voice sounded horrible, and he didn't want to appear ridiculous.

"Sev, where- Ah! There you are!" Tonks suddenly exclaimed, and the Potions master flinched, trying to sink further into the armchair, however pathetic it might appear.

The Metamorphmagus rushed towards her darling, arms wide.

"No!" Severus croaked hoarsely. "Don't you dare-" His objection was lost, as Tonks abruptly pulled his head to her, burying his face in her small but soft bosom.

"Don't try to speak," she cooed, threading her fingers through his sweaty hair. "I'm here and I'm not going to leave you ..."

Severus knew he had to take the threat seriously. Whoever was desperate enough for company to blast his door, could be desperate enough to want to actually stay with him in this dark time. Even if he couldn't think of someone beside Albus who'd want to help him ... or his dreaded 'secret admirer'. Merlin, he hoped those two weren't the same!

Severus shuddered at the mere (oh so disturbing) thought, and an instant later, he felt Tonks' arms tightening around him, giving him a certain sense of security and shelter. He tried to struggle out of the embrace, wanted to flee from the bodily contact which was far too close, too personal; but his limbs were weak, and Tonks' warmth felt so good, as if the small witch was at the same time sucking out and feeding his strength. And Severus felt himself falling, slipping away from his conscious mind into dreamless oblivion.