

Snape Rules!

NT/SS

Von YasaiNoVampaia

High on Emotion

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Nymphadora Tonks was a resolute woman, and when she set her mind, she was hardly to be swayed. She had not thought she could be mistaken in her judgment, but one Severus Snape proved her wrong. After she had - literally - landed on the hard ground of reality, she saw the world (and her sadly inexistent love life) from a different angle.

Tonks sniffled. Why couldn't Severus like her as well? Was she really that repulsive? It was so unjust. She had fallen in love at first insult, but Severus didn't even give her a chance.

Tonks balled her hands into fists. She would show him just what he was going to miss.

With that, Tonks took off to the Infirmary to pay Harry, who had come down with a cold, too, (as Hermione and Ron, whom she had happened to meet in the hallways, had told her) a visit.

"Poor boy ..."

Severus Snape was fairly high on emotion this Monday morning. He could take points off Gryffindor for being too late - twice. Granger and Weasley were all it took for Severus to feel better after his wake-up horror. Now, all that he needed to die a happy wizard was Harry Potter daring to show up even later than his two faithful sidekicks, or better yet: back talking him when he told the boy to try and keep his (admittedly much needed) beauty sleep hours in check. Gryffindor points would be in the negative sooner than the brat could think that his Potions master was being unfair.

Severus cackled evilly, causing Hermione to take an uneasy step backwards. Ron took her arm and dragged her to their seats, mumbling something about Snape being more than a bit weird and that he didn't want to be anywhere near him when he finally fell off the rocker. Hermione nodded numbly; that made sense. That had put a paid to their prospect of Snape being in love.

"Where is our favourite celebrity?" Snape asked then, eyeing them coolly. "Doesn't he feel up to a - conveniently shortened - Potions lesson?"

"If you mean Harry, sir," said Hermione, trying to keep the growl out of her voice, "he's ill. Ron and I saw him to the Infirmary. That's why we-" she wanted to weave in the reason for their tardiness, but Snape cut her off smoothly.

"Yes, that's why you cost your House twenty points. Didn't dear Potter find the way to the Hospital Wing by himself? Odd, considering how often he has ended up with Pomfrey, isn't it? He must feel almost second home there. Or was he too sick? Must have been the fame then that had finally gotten to his head, eh?" Snape smirked smugly and let the snickering of the Slytherins push his sore ego. There you go. He was the least pleasant being on Earth, after all, and no other being would want to fall in love with him.

Snape raised one brow haughtily at Ron, daring him to argue back, but this time Hermione was quicker. She covered the redhead's mouth with her hands and prevented any further deduction of House points - at least, deductions that were Ron's fault.

Before Snape went back to his desk, he sneered and drawled, "And twenty additional points from Gryffindor for this open fondling in my Potions class. Please, for all our sakes, do try and keep your hands to yourself, Miss Granger." Hermione blushed beet red and jerked both her hands to her sides. "Good girl."

Meanwhile, Harry was ripped from his (previously) undisturbed slumber by a sudden crash, a girlish shriek and then some hurried apologies. Call it his newly awakened Divination skills, he just knew at once that Tonks was paying him a visit.

Cracking open one bleary eye, he was greeted to a familiar sight: brightly coloured Tonks in the middle of broken junks (Harry couldn't even tell what the Metamorphmagus had smashed earlier), trying to explain her mishap to someone - in this case, Madam Pomfrey.

"Can't you be a little quieter?" the Matron hissed. "You'll surely wake up poor Harry if you can't keep your clumsy hands to yourself."

"I didn't mean-"

"Too late!" Pomfrey snapped, throwing a glance at the prone boy. "He's already awake! Are you happy now?" She put her hands on her hips and gave an indignant huff.

"I'm sorry," Tonks said, sounding precariously close to tears. "I just wanted-"

"It's all right, Madam Pomfrey," said Harry, pushing himself awkwardly into a sitting position. "I wasn't asleep." He smiled at Tonks' grateful look.

Pomfrey scowled. "Very well," she said, eyeing the both of them suspiciously. "You've

got five minutes. Harry needs to rest a lot. After that blasted poltergeist destroyed nearly my whole stack of Potions, we'll have to resort to the Muggle way of healing. And sleep is, which should be widely known, the best medicine." With a grim expression firmly plastered on her face, Pomfrey turned on her heel and headed to her office, carelessly flicking her wand to vanish the shards.

"Isn't laughing the best medicine?" asked Harry to lighten the mood a bit. "Not that Pomfrey would know ..." his voice petered out, as he realized that Tonks wasn't even listening. She had a lost look on her face and her jaw shivered faintly. Harry hoped she wouldn't start crying - he didn't know if he wouldn't join her in her tears now that his Girlfriend Plan was not going to become reality.

"What's up?" he asked, sniffing.

"Nothing," Tonks said quickly. "Nothing at all. How are you?" She handed the boy a tissue, which he took gratefully.

"I'm just a bit dizzy and-" Harry stopped as he couldn't hear his own voice amidst Tonks' sudden sobs.

"I'm sorry," she wailed. "I'm so sorry I woke you with my clumsy-" she hiccupped.

"It's alright," said Harry uneasily.

"No, it's not. Poppy is right ... I'm a clumsy klutz ... I can't even go five minutes without causing chaos ... No wonder he doesn't like-" And here Tonks broke down completely, falling to her knees beside Harry's bed and burying her face in the crisp sheets. Her shoulders shook, her orange pigtails bobbing.

Harry was momentarily at a loss of what to do. One instant he was peacefully slumbering away, and the next he saw himself confronted with a wailing bundle of distress. Cautiously, the boy reached out with his hand and laid it upon Tonks' head, feeling her tense shortly before relaxing under the gentle touch.

"I-I don't want to moan and heap all my problems on you, Harry," the small witch sobbed. "You've got enough already with ..."

"School?" prompted Harry as Tonks fell silent. "No Voldemort anymore, remember?"

Tonks snickered dryly. "I actually forgot. How embarrassing; not that that's a surprise ..."

"Hey," Harry tried to console his crying friend. "You can tell me, you know. What's up? I mean, never before has it bothered you that you're a bit clumsy - which suits you, really."

"But he- he doesn't ..." Tonks drew a shuddering breath. "The first time he saw me he said I was a clumsy klutz ... and I did nothing to improve that image ..."

"He?" asked Harry tentatively, sensing trouble in paradise. "Who is he? Maybe I can help you."

"I can't tell you," Tonks sniffed. "You hate him. Then you'll hate me, too. But I'm a clumsy klutz, so it shouldn't really matter, because everybody hates me already ..."

"That's not true," objected Harry. "You've got loads of friends. And you could have everyone you want," he added, having read that line somewhere.

"But not the one I want!"

'Isn't it always?' Harry thought. "Who is it you want, then? I'm sure I don't hate him."

Tonks stilled, sniffled some more, and then turned her head to gaze up at Harry with shining eyes. "He's ..."

"He is ...?" prodded Harry, a faint curling in his stomach. And as Tonks' eyes flinched, Harry suddenly knew (thanks to his astounding Divination skills). Of course; Harry hated him; the mysterious man dared to call Tonks a 'clumsy klutz' at first sight ... It all made sense. Harry was taken with pity.

"It's Snape, isn't it?" he asked gently. "He's the one you want."

"How-?" Tonks was confused, sitting back on her haunches because her knees started to hurt. "How did you know?"

"Must have been my Inner Trelawney," the boy joked - more or less successfully.

"Great. Now I'm not only a clumsy klutz, but transparent to boot!" Tonks broke down again, wailing for all she was worth. She fleetingly wondered where her resolve to show Severus what he missed had fled to when she couldn't even keep her face in front of Harry, but she quickly chalked it up to emotional stress. Waking up in the arms of a man and now nearly crying in another one's needed some adjustment, after all.

"Don't talk that way about yourself. And you're not transparent, Tonks, I just happen to know you," Harry said soothingly. "And if Snape knew you as well as I do, he would want to be with you, I'm sure."

"But he doesn't want me," wailed Tonks.

Harry didn't know how to answer. "There are a lot of men who-"

"I don't want anyone else," Tonks said as quietly as she could. "Don't you understand, Harry?" She locked gazes with the boy, trying to transmit the meaning of her words with looks alone. "I love him."

'Oh no,' thought Harry weakly.

Similar thoughts shot through Severus Snape's head as he staggered backwards. He ignored the confused looks he received from the students, blocked out the whispered questions whether Neville Longbottom's potion had been wronger than ever judged by his strange reaction.

It was his seventh year Potions class, Gryffindor and Slytherin - how could it be any different? Neville Longbottom, epitome of clumsiness (leaving even someone like Tonks worlds behind), hadn't finished one single potion in his life right all by himself. And seeing how Granger had been told to work together with Parkinson for this lesson, it came as no surprise that the boy had muffed it once again.

There existed a wide range of Truth Serums (the most famous one being Veritaserum), and a seventh year Potions class should be able to brew something more sophisticated than the simplest of them all. Longbottom had not been able to. He had been able, however, to brew something else instead - a potion which showed another kind of truth altogether.

"Ten points," began Snape, clenching his shaking fists, and Neville winced in dread of the impending point deduction, "to Gryffindor."

"But that's unfair!" cried Ron, before his brain could wrap itself around the information fully. He grinned nervously as Snape swept his dark gaze in his direction, lifting one brow. "Ten points to Gryffindor?" he repeated, voicing the surprise of all present students.

"It will be ten points from Gryffindor if you don't shut your mouth instantly, Mr. Weasley."

"Yes, sir," Ron said numbly.

Neville was still catatonic.

Snape swept towards the blackboard, his robe billowing. As he rushed past Neville, the boy fell stiffly from his seat, landing with a hard smack.

"Neville!" cried Hermione, rushing to his side like the helpful Gryffindor she was. She grabbed his collar and shook him, but he wouldn't wake. Must have been too much of a shock for his heart.

"Professor," Hermione said quickly. "May I bring Neville to the Infirmary? I already finished my-"

"I'll take Mr. Longbottom down," Snape interrupted the girl, surprising her into speechlessness, which was, which is widely known, something very, very rare. "I trust no one will try and kill their fellow students while I'm gone? Finish your potions and bottle up a sample for me."

Snape conjured a stretcher, levitated the apparently petrified boy upon it, and then he left the classroom, letting the stretcher float in front of him.

Severus' breath quickened as he neared the Hospital Wing. His mind reeling, he wasn't sure whether his brain had processed what he had seen correctly. He was the most unpleasant being on Earth, that much was death sure, therefore he hadn't ever believed that someone could actually fall in love with him - and such a beautiful young witch no less! How could Tonks have the desire to love him? Yes, she may be clumsy (and he even regretted calling her a klutz), but she wasn't blind!

Or was she ...? It would surely explain her perpetual accidents.

Severus shoved these thoughts aside. No, Tonks was perfectly fine, he'd even felt a twinge of something this very morning as he woke in her arms. Nobody before had ever gone out of his or her way to ensure his well-being - except for Dumbledore, but he didn't count, as the old Headmaster cared for all people.

Waking in another's personal space had been quite a shock for the surly Potions master. However, he had been able to enjoy Tonks' warmth, too, as well as her mere soothing presence ... and her smell.

The fragrance she wore was all it took for Severus' little bubble to burst. He'd immediately drawn the connection between Tonks and his secret admirer. He'd been angry at the discovery. How dare she terrorize him with her bloody love letters? Severus hadn't had a single serene moment ever since. He didn't take making fun of him very well.

It wasn't after he'd seen the scene unfolding before his very eyes through Neville's Truth Serum concoction that he realised what Tonks' true feelings were. He hadn't been able to stop thinking of her, and though he wasn't sure why it was exactly this truth he saw, Severus could not have been more grateful. And if it weren't for his principles (and for the fact that he already broke them once that day by giving Longbottom ten points), he'd award Potter some points as well for being there for his ...

He wasn't sure what it meant. Did it mean anything at all; the rapid beating of his heart, the sweating of his palms, the fluttering of his nerves? He wished he could write a short question to the "Ask Dumbledore" social service - the old meddler surely would know what to do in every given situation.

Tonks smiled sadly, tucking the comforter tightly around Harry's sleeping form. Even after Voldemort's downfall, the boy took way too much upon himself - not that he had much of a choice when Tonks practically assaulted him. She just couldn't help herself. With his glazed-over eyes and his reddened nose, the boy had reminded her so much of Severus that it all just spilled out of her. Now Harry knew, but it didn't really matter since he could keep a secret.

A door creaked open, and Tonks turned around, expecting to see Madam Pomfrey. However, it wasn't the door leading to the Matron's office swinging open, but the one leading to the hallway. And it wasn't Pomfrey who entered the Infirmary but Tonks' sole reason of pain and sorrow - and her generally pitiful state.

She knew (somewhere, deep inside of her presently spongy brain) she had to breathe in order to draw essential oxygen from the air to survive, but Tonks found she couldn't as dark eyes sought out hers. There was no secret message transmitting - at least, Tonks didn't think so -; their gazes only stayed locked for a few moments, however, when the eye contact broke, Tonks could tell Severus' eyes had not spoken of anger and revulsion like in the morning, but of something else entirely.

Finally, Tonks saw the stretcher floating in mid-air carrying Neville Longbottom. She hadn't even noticed the boy earlier because of Severus' incredible aura - she must have been temporarily blind for everything but him.

Severus levitated the prone figure onto the nearest bed and then went straight for Pomfrey's office. Mere seconds later, the Matron emerged in full professional mode.

"You are still here?" she asked sharply as she took in the sight of Tonks, who flinched at the harsh words. Speaking of being unwanted ...

"Severus? You go as well," Pomfrey said briskly, making impatient shooping motions. "I need peace and quiet in order to get some work done, so out with you."

Tonks blinked and saw the door closing in on her face. When had she left the room? Sighing, she turned to leave, only to be caught off-guard by Severus' very close presence - she could almost feel his warm breath on her ... well, her forehead; she was quite small, after all.

Severus opened his mouth, and for one insane instance, Tonks thought he was going to kiss her - or scream at her for blocking his way, which was nonsense, anyhow, since Tonks was standing with her back to the door leading back to the Infirmary.

"I need to talk to you," Severus said, then added after a moment's hesitation, "in private."

To say Tonks was surprised would have been an understatement. Severus wanted, no, he needed to talk to her; and in private no less? Tonks felt as if she could join Neville in his near-catatonic state. Was she dreaming? But no; judging by Severus' expression she wasn't.

"Well?" he asked impatiently.

Tonks felt a flare of temper rising in her chest. She was seriously tempted to huff in his ... well, his chest, and brush him off just like that. However, she loved him and she had the very unhealthy wish to soak up all the attention he was willing to give her.

"Alright," she found herself saying, before Severus already swept away, clearly expecting her to follow. Frowning, she went after him, needing to jog to keep up with his brisk pace.

"Don't you have a class to teach right now?" she gasped as they arrived at a door

which Tonks knew led to Severus' personal chambers, even if it wasn't the exact same door as this morning. She didn't really need to ask why he had a new door.

"They're going to survive one lesson without my supervision," the Potions master muttered, swishing his wand to deactivate the anti-intruder wards. "At least, I don't hope so."

The lock clicked and the door swung open, revealing a room Tonks was already faintly acquainted with. When she'd stormed in last night, she'd only had eyes for her ill darling, but now she could take in the chamber in its entire Spartan beauty. A comfy armchair (of which she had fond memories), two wide-stretched shelves filled to the rim with books and pickled potions ingredients, and a merrily crackling fire. On the far side of the room was another door which probably led to the bedroom.

Not waiting to be invited, Tonks took a cautious step forward. "Okay, spit it out, Snape. What do you want?" she asked neutrally, wrapping her arms around her midriff as, despite the warm fire, a chill raced down her spine. Maybe it had not been such a good idea to talk to Severus alone, after all.

"Snape?" he repeated with a slight frown as if the word was totally new to him; maybe it was, coming out of Tonks' mouth.

"That's your name, remember?" Tonks closed her eyes briefly. "That's pointless. I don't even know what I'm doing here, you don't seem very intent on disclosing this information anytime soon and now you're complaining because I called you by the name you wanted to be called. It'd be better if I just-" She shook her head, averting her gaze, and made to leave again, when suddenly fingers clamped down on her upper arm. Tonks lifted her eyes once more, and Severus flushed faintly, letting go with a jerk.

"Would you stay and listen? It won't take more than five minutes. After that, you're free to go," Severus asked with slightly pleading eyes. "You may want to sit down," he added and indicated the armchair.

Tonks sighed in surrender and plopped down, raising her brows expectantly - frowning again as she saw Severus gulp dryly.

The dark-haired man paced the floor, many seconds ticking by, and Tonks was on the verge of pointing out that he had only two minutes left, when Severus took a deep breath and spoke. "I'm sorry."

A very long pause ensued after that, and it was very considerate of him to let Tonks digest these two words.

"I shouldn't have kicked you out that way after ... well ..."

"I see," Tonks said. "But it's not important anymore."

"It's just ..." Severus searched for words, rubbing his temples, "I didn't understand. The

letters you wrote," (Tonks flushed,) "and as I realised it was you I just ... I mean, there aren't that many who care whatever happens to me ... I was blinded with anger as I realised you wrote those messages ... I thought you were ..." He cut himself off and made an angry noise - whether it was directed at himself or at Tonks, she didn't know. The man altogether became more confusing by the second. What was he babbling about exactly? Tonks was about to voice her question, as Severus went on explaining.

"I thought it all had been a joke - simple as that."

Tonks gasped softly, taken by surprise by the confession. How could he-? She would never even-! "Other people's feelings are nothing to make fun of!" she said fiercely, unable to understand how someone could even consider such a thing. When Severus smiled crookedly, she felt her heart break.

"How can you say you love me when you don't even know me?" he asked softly.

"What? When have I-" Tonks' expression changed as horror dawned. "Did you hear me talking to Harry?" she whispered. 'Great. Just great! Now he thinks I'm whiny,' she wailed silently.

"It was more of an accident, seeing as how Longbottom was the cause ... but that's beside the point. Answer me," he said before adding a, "please."

"Uh," Tonks said just to stall for time. "You ask why I love you? That's a difficult question ... It just happened. Remember the first time we met?" Severus nodded, rubbing his elbow where the faint bruise was still visible. "I was intrigued by you and I was immediately taken with your voice. It just developed from there. Kind of fast, I know, but it did. And now, well, you know ..."

"And what if I don't know?"

"Well, then it wouldn't matter anyway, since it doesn't change anything, right? I may have feelings for you, but as those feelings are not reciprocated ..." She searched Severus' face for any indication. She had feelings for him, but why would he need to talk to her when he didn't feel something for her in return? Severus blushed, and Tonks grinned triumphantly. Two times in a row! Wow.

"I-" He cut himself off before he could start to stutter. "Swear by the grave of your mother that you are serious about this whole ... affair."

Tonks heard the desperate need in his voice. How long must he have longed for his solitude to end?

'No longer,' vowed the witch silently, leaning forward in her seat and fixing Severus with a sombre gaze. "I can't," she said (Severus looked surprised, miserable and angry at the same time,) "my mother is still alive."

"Oh," Severus said, relief trying to battle its way onto his face.

"I'm willing, though," Tonks continued with a smile, "to swear by the lives of my future kids."

Three weeks, Dumbledore's return and ample clandestine meetings later, former morose Severus Snape was as happy as he could get. He'd brewed a life-stock Pepper-up Potions for his (and Tonks') personal usage, he'd slyly managed to award Potter and Co. a few points (by not deducting as many as before) and he lived a peaceful life with one Nymphadora Tonks in the Hogwart's dungeons.

Smiling as far as the corners of his mouth would go up, Severus pushed open the door to their chambers. He froze in place instantly as deafening music and his lover's voice nearly blasted him backwards.

Tonks was jumping around like a kangaroo with coordination problems (Severus supposed she thought she was dancing,) some kind of mini Engorgio Charm device was in one hand, and she was singing quite horribly.

"Well, here we go again! Living in a world that others cannot share! Yeah, here we go again! We are moving from a spark to a flame! I am hiiigh!"

"Don't you say," Severus muttered, closing the door.

"-on emotion! Hiiigh again! Your love will find the way!" she finished with a flourish, plopping down in the armchair she had grown so fond of. Her eyes twinkled as she surveyed Severus, her cheeks flushed from exertion. She pointed her wand at her throat and muttered a "Reducio" to return the volume of her voice to normal. "How was your day, honey?" Tonks asked, putting the microphone beside her.

'It's going downhill,' Severus thought, because whenever she asked that particular question, she wanted something he was not willing to grant.

"Fine," he said slowly, and while Tonks was high on emotion, he was on high alert.

"That's nice!"

"Why are you asking?" Severus was still suspicious; out of old habit.

"Just because. I don't need a reason to be interested in your health, do I?"

"I guess not."

Tonks sighed dreamily, leant back and closed her eyes. "Sev?"

The flash of revulsion at the still somehow hated nickname faded after 0.271828 seconds, which was a new record. "Yes?"

"Do you remember the first time we met?"

"How could I forget?" Severus asked back, though there was no bite in his words. "It

was just a few corridors down ..."

"Hmm," made Tonks and smiled in remembrance. "You stumbled over my leg." She snickered, and Severus felt a pang of annoyance which dissipated again as Tonks looked up at him with a loving smile. "You fell over me that day and I couldn't stop wishing that you would fall for me ..."

There was a pause in which Severus contemplated how to put his feelings. He ended up saying just what came to mind first.

"Some wishes do come true."

-End-

A/N: Hermione will probably end up with Ron, Harry will be down for a while, but then he'll find love as well. McGonagall subjects Dumbledore to a strict diet - no more sweets. Peeves moves in with Myrtle (Peeves wants kids and suggests to kill some of the younger students, but Myrtle isn't into the parents thing). Lupin wins in the lottery, quits his job and moves to Quebec. He donates most of the money, but keeps enough to allow him to live without worry for the next day. Tonks takes over DADA for good, moving in Severus' (now magically enlarged) chambers. Snape and Tonks won't find out that three Gryffindors were to blame for their union.

-That's all, folks!-