

Hyperbole & Prevarication

by TeaOli

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: Anything you recognise belongs to JK Rowling.

A/N: This is a discarded bit from a much longer fic I've been working on since the beginning of 2011. As that one might *never* be completed (it keeps growing and growing), let alone posted, I figured I'd offer this up now because (even though the fic it sprang from has gone in a different direction) writing it made me giggle.

No sooner than she'd waddled into her own sitting room from visits with the Muggle doctor and the Wizarding Healer was she confronted with thin lips stretched into a thin line beneath an overlarge (and sharply hooked) nose and a furrowed brow wrinkled over piercing black eyes. Completely accustomed to such a sight, she was prepared to ignore it and launch into what she'd learned at both appointments when...

"You!" her husband said darkly, dangerously even. "Come here!"

Despite the harshness of his tone, she complied with alacrity, and when he patted his lap, she lowered herself there with no small amount of difficulty and then only with a great deal of his assistance and looked up at him, unfazed and expectant.

"I have had a... vision," he told her.

"You don't *have* visions," she said, looking decidedly sceptical as she settled herself more comfortably in his embrace. "And you don't believe in them any more than I do."

He pretended to sneer at her defiance. "I married you because of visions, didn't I?"

"You married me for the publicity," she corrected.

"Prove it," he dared, smirking. "In any case, you cannot deny I agreed to put you in an... interesting condition in order to satisfy said visions."

To his consternation, the witch had the temerity to giggle. *Giggle!*

"Don't. Be. So. *Victorian*," she said between little bursts of laughter that left her gasping for breath. "'Interesting condition,' indeed!" she mocked. "Can't you just say you've got me up the duff or knocked up or *something* vaguely modern? And, Merlin help me, a vision! *You!*"

She rocked forward in her hilarity, nearly spilling out of his lap, arms flailing, and he was hard-pressed to hold on to her. When one hand flew to her lower back and the other cradled her expansive belly and she let out a resounding "Ooof!", his heart rate kicked up a truly frightening or was that *frightened?* rhythm.

"Darling?" he queried, pulling her securely to his chest.

"Nothing important, dearest," she assured him, sounding far more sober than she had moments before. "A vision?"

Out of the corner of his eye, he treated her to a sceptical glance that rivalled her own before answering.

"Right," he said, not entirely satisfied that all was well, but confident that she would not hesitate to inform him if anything were truly *w*rong. "I had a vision whilst you were out."

"Riiight," she drawled, patently disbelieving him, but managing a cheeky grin all the same. "Tell me what you saw."

SS~SS

The little girl raced into the sitting room as if a rabid three-headed canine were snapping at her heels. Her chocolate-coloured wavy hair was a wild disarray that rivalled her mother's own untamed mop; the rims of her eyes and the tip of her long nose were as red as the school tie which that parent insisted on saving as a keepsake. She took one look at the tall, distinguished-looking gentleman dressed in flowing black robes, who stood by the unlit fireplace, and burst into a fresh bout of sobs.

"I *hate* school," she wailed, throwing her arms around his slender legs. "And I am never going back there again!"

After gently extricating himself from the little girl's embrace, the distinguished-looking gentleman bent low, lifted her into his strong, secure arms and carried her over to the sofa. Sitting, he placed her on his knee, smoothed back her unruly tresses and wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Now, sweetest," he crooned to the now quietly weeping child, "tell Papa what is the matter."

SS~HG

"Papa?" His wife choked on a chuckle. "You expect our children to call you *Papa*? What's wrong with 'Dad'?"

"Who said the vision pertained to me and our offspring?"

She couldn't quite manage the single eyebrow lift, but she managed to imbue her tone with a certain amount of haughty mocking. "'Distinguished-looking gentleman dressed in flowing black robes'?"

He started to loose the scathing retort that hovered on the tip of his tongue, but a fortuitous glance at her soft pink lips and the saucy smile tugging at their corners reminded him just in time that he'd had better ideas in his life.

Looking at the soft pink lips had other effects than just serving as a shield against imprudent speech. Rather *pleasant* effects, yes, but effects that happened to be inconvenient to his current endeavour. *Time for that later*, he promised himself. Leering at her for good measure, he turned his mind back to the matter at hand.

"Do you wish to hear the remainder of my vision, or would you prefer to continue finding fault with my recounting?"

"By all means, tell me the rest!" she said. Then she had the audacity to stretch the smile into a full-blown lascivious grin before he could go on.

Shifting her over a bit so that *he* was more comfortable *Merlin! The witch must have gained nearly a stone and a half!* he raised a supercilious eyebrow.

"As I was attempting to inform you, in my vision, this poor child was being bullied at school."

SS~SS

"Snotty Snanger Stranger Danger!" he called me!" Her little arms tried and failed to wrap around his trim waist, seeking comfort and assurance that all would be well. "Then they *all* laughed at me, Papa. I'm not going back there!"

As any good father would do, he hugged her close to his heart, allowing her to cry quietly in the warm confines of his arms. Eventually the tears stopped flowing and he could convince her to make good use of the handkerchief he withdrew from a pocket in his robes.

"You mustn't pay attention to those dunderheads, my sweet *V. vinifera x amurensis*," he told her. "They aren't intelligent enough for your notice."

"But *why* am I a Snotty Snanger, Papa?" she asked, trying to hold back a fresh wave of woe. "Mummy's a Granger and you're a Snape. Why can't I be one of those?"

For the most fleeting of moments, he considered keeping the truth from her, but good conscience forced him to admit, "It's all Papa's fault." He stroked her dark, glossy curls and studied her carefully. "I *knew* we should have called you something different, but Mummy insisted and I didn't like to hurt her feelings."

SS~HG

"Veeviniferaexamurensis?" She tipped her head back to meet his eyes and he ended up with a mouthful of bushy brown curls. "What's that?"

"Must you keep interrupting me, woman?" he grumbled, spitting out her (if he were honest, rather gorgeous) hair. "If you must know, the Severny grape is a cross between varieties of *Vitis vinifera* and *Vitis amurensis*."

"As the girl was called 'Severny', it seemed a fitting pet name for..."

She groaned. "Haven't we already talked about the Grapes?"

Spitting out another mouthful of wildly curling tresses, he ignored his wife's indignation and carried on telling his tale.

SS~SS

Severny scrunched up her (thankfully *not* hooked) nose and regarded her father seriously through huge eyes the colour of toffee. "Why *not*, Papa?" she said before glancing away. When she looked up at him once again, her eyes were dry, full of curiosity and (most importantly) not nearly as red as they had been.

"Why not *what*, my little Concord?" he asked, utterly perplexed.

SS~HG

"You know, you can't call her that if she's got your nose."

"Call her what?"

"Concord. Little or not."

"And why not?"

Hermione made a swooping aeroplane motion with her hand.

"I will surely not refer to her as such in the presence of Muggles," Snape said. Lifting his nose (which Severn *did not* have!) he glared at the witch in his lap until she urged him to carry on.

SS~SS

"Why didn't you wish to hurt Mummy's feelings?"

Chuckling softly, the potions master leant forward and pressed a kiss into the little girl's glossy dark waves. Because she was her mother's daughter, that answer wasn't nearly comprehensive enough for Severn and she requested that her dear papa clarify matters. Because she was also her *father's* daughter, her request came out sounding much more like a demand.

"Why, Papa?" she demanded, folding stick-like arms across her scrawny chest. "Why should we worry about *Mummy's* feelings? *She* doesn't have to be a Snanger!"

All at once, he was nearly as serious as the tiny child sitting on his knees.

"You really mustn't blame Mummy, darling. She did mean well, and we love her even if she sometimes isn't any cleverer than those dunderheads at your school."

And even though she could sometimes be both a stubborn brat and an obnoxious show-off, Severn decided that answer was good enough for her.

SS~HG

Hermione rolled her eyes at her husband, ready to launch into her argument, but a sudden signal from her abused bladder had her stiffening and struggling to pull away from his hold. She tried to heave herself from her perch on his skinny legs. Well, not *skinny*, per se; he was all wiry strength and corded muscle once the trousers came off, and... *Mustn't think such thoughts for at least the next two months!* she admonished herself as she continued her efforts in extricating her eight-months-pregnant body from his sinewy arms.

"Don't be so silly, Severus," she chided her husband, attempting to squeeze her thighs together in the hope of avoiding disaster.

Severus chuckled softly, burying his protuberant proboscis in her cascade of curls.

"And let me go; your *son* " she emphasised the word to make sure he understood she'd seen through his ridiculous story " is dancing a one-man tarantella on my bladder!"

He waved his wand in the general direction of her hips and waist, leaving her wearing what appeared to be an adult nappy. Before she could even *begin* to protest, he'd lifted her up into his arms and was hurriedly striding from the room.

"Mmmm, yes," he murmured, face still planted firmly in her hair. "Echion is made of sterner stuff than his little sister, so we probably didn't have the same trouble with him."

"Well," she said, biting her lip. "As long as you stick to the obscure varietals I've never heard anyone mention Severns or Echions for their given names, I suppose I wouldn't mind them being Grapes. Just no Cabernet or Chardonnay, all right?"

"As far as I know, there is no Echion grape," Snape admitted. "I believe it means 'son of the viper' and was the name of one of Hermes's sons rather fitting whichever way you look at it, don't you think? but I've never heard of such a grape variety."

(Hermione rather thought most people wouldn't find it fitting at all disturbing and distasteful, more like, considering the circumstances of his "death" but most people didn't know her husband as well as she did.)

Knowing better than to start a whole new argument whilst he was feeling so pleased with himself, she didn't even try.

"Severus, can't you just once say 'I love you, Hermione,' without resorting to exaggeration and lies?"

They reached their destination and he set her on her feet. A flick of his wand bared her from the waist down and (fervently hoping her favourite skirt and most attractive maternity knickers hadn't had disappeared forever) she slowly lowered herself onto the toilet.

"I have no idea what you are talking about, my tolerable know-it-all," he claimed as he retreated before the closing door.

~fin H&P~

A/N addendum: The inspiration for H&P was a conversation from an early version of my as-yet-unposted-anywhere SS/HG WiP *Metempsychosis*:

"I will not curse any child with that man's name. Not even children whose mother is an insufferable, know-it-all Gryffindor."

"What would you like to call them, then?" she managed to ask bossily. "Granger? You never seemed to like it on me."

"That's because I never much liked *you*," he retorted with a nasty sneer. "I haven't even met these two hypothetical children yet. But you can call them whatever you like, as long as they aren't called Snape. Call them Snangers. Call them Grapes, if you want! But there will be no more Snapes or the deal's off!"