

# Unexpected Events

*by Ladymage Samiko*

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*Chapter 1 of 1*

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Hermione sighed, grateful for the chance to put her feet up. Life wasn't easy on the Muggle side. But then, the morals of wizards were as Dickensian as their clothing. Single mothers(-to-be) were not particularly welcome. Molly had been loudly... and publicly... denunciatory, though Hermione refusing Ron was probably the lion's share of that.

But she could never have married Ron. Sweet of him to offer, but it wouldn't have been fair to him. Particularly since she rather imagined black hair was a dominant trait, and evil-minded gossip would whisper that she'd pawned off one friend's child on the other.

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Confession hadn't been a pleasant experience. After months of disguising it, McGonagall had been the first person she'd told, the nearest person to a mother available. First came sympathy, then demands for the father's name so 'he could do the right thing.' Hermione had refused. It wouldn't make anything better; if anything, public exposure would bring even more disgust and censure. And he could hardly make an honest woman of her, now. He'd never know that their golden afternoon had borne fruit.

Hermione grimaced. Pregnancy hormones were making her maudlin enough for tenth-rate prose. Severus Snape would have been appalled.

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What would his reaction have been? Their coupling had been a surprise to both of them, an accident of time and place in the madness that preceded the final confrontations. And yet... no less... meaningful... to either of them. He'd stripped himself bare in more ways than the physical.

And he'd treated her far more gently than she would ever have expected.

The way his fingers had traced the lines of her face... The startled concern when he'd realized she was a virgin... How he'd no hesitation once she'd said she was sure.

She hoped he would have been pleased.

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Hermione frowned at the invitation in her hand. Oh, she didn't mind that it came from Harry; he'd been puzzled, but ultimately supportive when she'd confessed her pregnancy. And without any insinuations or condemnations. No, it was the fact that she was in her eighth month of pregnancy, tired and miserable and rampantly anti-

social. In fact, in a completely Snape-like mood. Perhaps his DNA was somehow shuttling back into her system.

But it *was* from Harry.

She wondered what sort of 'small get-together' he had in mind. Maybe it was just Ron. That'd be okay.

And it *was* from Harry.

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Harry seemed inordinately preoccupied, fussing over her to the point of annoyance. But Hermione suppressed her irritation and merely acquiesced when he asked her to wait in the hall. He'd someone he wanted to introduce to her.

She heard a murmured argument; a blind date, perhaps, not too keen on the idea. Her mood slipped rapidly downhill. Hearing them approach, Hermione turned to face the newcomer.

For a split second, she glimpsed Severus's bloodless face before he slumped to the floor in a faint. Hermione paid little attention... the sudden pain from her stomach demanded full concentration.

Harry simply gaped.

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*Nothing, nothing, will surprise me after this*, Hermione determined as she tried to catch her breath. Harry, at least, had moved quickly after recovering from puzzled surprise, bundling both guests through the Floo to Hogwarts' infirmary, then disappearing to fetch Hermione's suitcase from her flat. Before leaving, he'd babbled apologies and a garbled explanation to which Hermione paid little attention.

She simply couldn't stop staring at Severus. He was alive. Really alive. Unconscious, but alive and in the next bed, which Hermione insisted be moved as close as possible to hers. Alive and... oh, god!... she was having his baby.

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Severus needed several minutes to reorient himself; the infirmary ceiling was too familiar to trigger specific memories. And when he did remember, the light-headedness threatened to overtake him again.

*She* was pregnant. Very pregnant.

How long had he been in that bloody coma? What... whom?... had she been doing in the interim? *How many bloody months?* Was it...? Was she...?

He rose, only to pale again at the sight of Hermione grimacing against the pain of another contraction. It didn't seem to matter anymore; his hands enveloped her clenched fist as he dropped to his knees beside her.

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She was little more than a child. *In some ways*, he reminded himself. In others, her childhood was many years gone.

He remembered the old-soul eyes staring at him that afternoon. That had warmed... *warmed!* ... with recognition. He'd been poised to flee. She'd smiled with a genuineness that had startled him, embraced him with the warmth of trust, friendship, relief.

Shock had been followed by an embarrassing breakdown, the loneliness in his soul overflowing into tears. And later, there was unexpected heat, long-ignored desires that centred on this young woman.

And, by some miraculous alchemy, she'd felt the same.

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"You're alive." He could hear the wonder, the joy in her voice; her heart was still open.

"Yes," he replied simply. "And..." He glanced meaningfully at her midsection.

She understood what he wouldn't ask. Slightly miffed at the implication, but she couldn't blame him. She'd thought he was dead. If she hadn't already been pregnant, it was *possible* she'd turn to someone else for solace. Not bloody *likely*, but possible. So she merely said, "Yes."

She didn't need to ask him her question. His expression of wonder, the tentative caress of her stomach, told her what she needed to know.

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There were two.

Severus stared at the tiny bundles, mind unable to work its way past the fact that there were two. He had, by some strange quirk of fate, managed to father two children. Simultaneously. Hermione'd done the lion's share of the work...he'd always regret being unable to spend these last several months with her... but their pitch black mops and slightly dusky skin made his share in the proceedings undeniable.

And gods help that boy if he developed the Snape nose.

They blinked sleepily at him. He touched their cheeks gently.

He was, against all odds, a father.

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Hermione smiled to see Severus slumped over her bed, protective even in sleep. It was still difficult to believe that he was real, not merely some sort of mental projection. But even her imagination couldn't create the scene he'd had with McGonagall, telling the screeching professor to 'shut up, you old biddy, before you wake my children.' The Scotswoman had retired, speechless.

Hermione had drifted into sleep, confident that he'd handle the rest of the explanations.

But what happened now? she wondered idly. Would he 'make an honest woman of her'? Would he want to? Did *she* want him to?

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"*Would* you want to be saddled with me?"

Hermione looked up in shock to find Severus's eyes on her; he'd been conscious... and reading her mind, damn him. The only redemption for that was the incredulous note in his voice.

She paused, honestly considering her answer. "I think," she said slowly, "that we'd best try living in sin first." She grinned impishly. "I don't even know what side of the bed you sleep on."

A tiny, tentative smile grew on his face. "I've never seen your hair in the morning," he countered. "There will be talk."

"I'm used to it."

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'Talk' was an understatement. 'Angry mob' was closer to the truth, but between them, Hermione and Severus managed to stare down the lot... even if their effectiveness was impaired by the infant each held. And after a month of nappies, feedings, and wailings (from both infants and friends), Hermione realized that this just might work. She loved him. By all indications, he loved her. He was almost comically protective of little Turia and Titus.

*An unexpected turn*, Hermione thought, *to love this man, to have his children. But if he doesn't propose in another month, I will.*

And she did.