

# The Ghost And Mrs. Krum

*by ancientgirl*

Hermione Krum has just lost her husband. She has found a small home for her and young Viktoria Krum. But she soon finds a big surprise shortly after arriving in her new home.

## Chapter 1 - The Encounter

*Chapter 1 of 11*

Hermione Krum has just lost her husband. She has found a small home for her and young Viktoria Krum. But she soon finds a big surprise shortly after arriving in her new home.

This story is an adaptation of a movie called The Ghost And Mrs. Muir. It stars Rex Harrison and Gene Tierney and if you have never seen it, I urge you to do so.

I recently saw this movie again after several years and thought it would make a wonderful little fic for our Severus and Hermione. I only hope my little fic does the story justice.

As always, all canon characters belong to JKR.

Thank you to June for her beta work, and also to Deviantauthor for pointing out some of my bad habits. I appreciate the help you both have given me.

### **The Ghost And Mrs. Krum**

#### **Chapter one - The Encounter**

Just that very morning, Hermione Krum purchased the small brick row house on a cobbled street named Spinner's End. After she moved in all of her belongings, and made sure Viktoria's room was set up, she left the little girl to play with her dolls while she began to unpack the rest of the house. Being a witch came in handy, especially a witch who was an expert in charms - Shrinking charms, to be exact. In Bulgaria, she had been able to pack all of their belongings into a small hatbox. Within two hours of their arrival here, the empty house was transformed into a lovely comfortable home.

When she first saw the house she knew it would need a bit of work, but a few simple spells would make it just like new. It was rather run down and wasn't in the best of neighborhood, but she had hoped - since there seemed to be many new homes springing up just down the road - that this would eventually become a good investment. She loved the look of the small house, as well; it had potential. What she especially liked, however, was the potions laboratory in the cellar. The house seemed to have been built on some sort of incline, since there was a window in the cellar that actually allowed her to view the backyard. She hoped to get back to the one thing that had always given her so much happiness; making potions.

The love of her life was now Viktoria, her six-year-old daughter. Wanting to experience motherhood to its fullest, she had not made a potion since her daughter's birth, other than the usual things needed for colds and stomach ailments that children often got.

She had been married to Viktor Krum for almost seven years, until a Quidditch accident had taken his life. Several years ago, Viktor had gained ownership of a once quite prosperous team several years ago, yet in the last two years, the team had been what Hermione called a money pit. Viktor's sisters owned several teams of their own, which for them were quite successful. While he knew the game well, Viktor didn't have the business sense his sisters had; and the team eventually ended up taking most of

their earnings. What little money Hermione had when she married him was gone. In order to pay the hospital debts as well as funeral costs Hermione was forced to sell the team. She knew she would not be able to maintain it on her own.

Hermione loved Viktor, but never deeply and passionately as a woman should love a man to whom she is married. They were married shortly after her parents had died; she needed comfort, and he gave it to her.

It was her parents' death that sparked the Final Battle. Seeing how grief-stricken his friend was, Harry decided that Voldemort needed to be gone for good. With the help of the Order they had managed to come up with a plan; and on a cold January morning at the front gates of Hogwarts, the battle began. The rest, as they say, is history. Harry won, and luckily, few lives were taken on the side of the Order. Those who fell were mourned, including a snarky Potions Master whom everyone had doubted, yet he came through in the end for their side. Harry, Ron, and all her friends then got on with their lives; Hermione had nothing and no one except Viktor.

After getting the upstairs of the house settled, Hermione went to the cellar. She blew away some of the dust on the large wooden table and began to unpack her equipment. Suddenly, she felt a chill behind her; she ignored it. It was expected for a cellar to have chill spots, so she went on about her work of setting up her new potions lab.

"And just who the hell are you?" asked a menacing voice behind her.

She stiffened as she cursed herself. She had checked the house for any possible intruders, but failed to look in the cellar. She readied her wand and turned quickly, only to come face-to-face with someone long dead.

"Professor Snape?" she exclaimed, astonished.

Severus scowled.

"Who are you?" he asked again as he stood imposingly in front of her, just as he had always done when she was a student.

"H...Hermione Krum, well Krum now, but you knew me as...."

"Hell. All this time I thought I had avoided it, but I am obviously in hell." He threw his arms up in the air and shook his head. "So this is it. This is how I am to spend eternity," he sighed heavily and shook his head, "Well, at least it isn't Potter, although your incessant questions will most probably make me wish I had a dozen Potters haunting me."

"Um...sir, this isn't hell. This is my home. I just moved in."

"Your home? I think not. You, Miss Granger, are...Mrs. Krum? No, please do not tell me you actually married that oaf?"

"He was not an oaf! Viktor was a good man and a wonderful father."

"Was? Ah, so he left you? No doubt you drove the man insane with your constant chatter."

"My husband died two months ago. And don't you dare speak about him in any way other than with respect."

"I will speak about anyone I wish, in any way I wish, in my home."

"I didn't know this was your home at one time. Professor, you do know that you are...dead?"

He rolled his eyes.

"Of course I bloody know I'm dead. And I was quite happy as well, until I began to hear a commotion going on all about. Why are you here? This is my home, and I insist you leave here immediately!" shouted Severus

"This WAS your home. I purchased it this morning; here are the papers to prove so." Hermione took a scroll out of her pocket and placed it on the table next to her. "Why are you here, anyway?"

"I don't know why I am here now, do I?" He scoffed. "And anyway, it is none of your concern. I don't give a damn what those papers say. You are leaving here at once. Am I to never have peace? Not even in death?"

"I will not be forced out of here, Professor. I love this house. I loved it the moment I first saw it. I spent my last galleon buying it. I have nowhere to go and I will not be pushed out by the disembodied spirit of a grumpy git!"

"Why, you insufferable little know-it-all! Fine, if you refuse to leave after I have asked you so nicely, I will just have to force you out."

"And just how do you intend to do that? You are no longer a wizard; there is no magic in your specter. And flying objects do not frighten me. So, feel free to move things all you wish, as I can easily put an anchoring charm on everything."

"I do not need magic. All I need to do is scare those who live here."

"I am not afraid of you."

"You may not be, but the little child playing with her dollies upstairs is a different story." He had seen the little girl playing in her room before he came to the cellar.

At this, Hermione blanched. She knew that Viktoria had been through so much these last few weeks. She could not bear to hear the screams of her frightened daughter in the middle of the night, not when the girl had just only begun to come to terms with the loss of her father. Hermione had felt so strong until now. She hoped this new place would allow her a bit of peace of her own. But there was no fight left inside of Hermione anymore.

"No! Please, don't show yourself to her. All right, Professor," she said dejectedly and bowed her head. "You win. Viktor's sisters will be stopping by tomorrow. I...I will speak with them and ask if Viktoria and I can stay with them." She turned and walked out of the room quickly, not wanting him to see the tears falling down her cheeks.

Severus stood by the window with his arms crossed and his head held high. He would finally be able to enjoy the peace he deserved. He was glad she had not called his bluff. Much as he had once loved making the children's lives miserable when he was still teaching at Hogwarts, he had no desire to haunt Mrs. Krum's daughter. He found that all he wished for now was to be left alone.

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The following day, Hermione prepared for the Krum sisters. '*Oh Viktor, what am I to do? Why did you have to leave us?*' she thought sadly. She had no family of her own, and she could not go to Harry or Ron, since they had their own wives and children to care for. Her only option was to take up residence with Viktor's sisters.

She looked around the small house. It would have been so wonderful to see herself spending her days here. She had lost so much, and now, even this was lost to her. Hermione would now have to endure living with Viktor's sisters. Two more horrible women, she had never met. Next to them Dolores Umbridge was Mary Poppins.

Hermione looked out the window and saw the small burgundy coach approach. She then took a deep breath and steadied herself.

"Good. I see your ride is here," said a deep voice behind her.

Hermione closed her eyes and willed herself to remain calm.

"Please, leave. It will be difficult enough for me to speak with them about my situation. The last thing I need is for them to see you here, as well."

"Why would I leave when this is obviously going to be quite a delightful show? Besides, they cannot see me or hear me. Only you can."

"Lucky me," she mumbled, as she heard a hard knock on the door. She walked out of the small living room and into the hall. As she opened the front door, she heard the two women talking about the home.

"Dreadful." Said Katerina.

"This is smaller than the horse stalls in our summer home," hissed Nadia. The two women looked up and smiled. "Hermione, how could you have spent Viktor's money on this, this..."

"Outhouse," finished Katerina. The two women shoved their way in and walked to the living room, where Severus stood in the corner, wearing his best Potions master scowl.

"Outhouse? Did that harpy just call my home an outhouse?" asked Severus as he approached Hermione.

"Nadia, Katerina. It's so nice to see you," she ignored Severus and walked past him, "Please have a seat. I'll bring in some tea."

"No, tea for us, we have just come from the Habishams. They live five miles up the road. I almost thought you had made a good investment, until we started down that dark road and we came upon this," said Nadia looking around the room in disgust.

"Hermione, if Viktor could see you and Viktoria here, he would be mortified." Katerina looked at Hermione, and then noticed she was wearing a navy blue skirt and a white blouse. "Where are your mourning robes?"

"Well, I thought it was time for me to put them away. Viktor never liked the mourning process. He would not want me to wear mourning robes for longer than a couple of months. And there is no need to wear them inside my home."

"No, that simply will not do," said Nadia as she walked towards the window and unknowingly stood next to Severus. "And you have a draft! Why, it's freezing here."

"That Madam is the problem with reptiles. They suffer from no body heat." Severus looked at the woman in disgust. Never before had he been in the presence of two such horrible women. Even Bellatrix could have taken a few lessons in bitch from these two.

Hermione looked towards Severus and shook her head.

"Quiet," she said, before she realized that the Krum sisters could not hear him.

"Well, I was only pointing out the draft. You don't have to be so rude."

"Oh, no, I'm sorry. I wasn't speaking to you. I...oh, never mind. Please come sit down. I wanted to speak with you both about the possibility of...."

"Hermione, before you say anything, we want you to know that we have decided that Viktoria needs to begin her schooling."

"But she's only six years old. She won't be getting her letter for another five years."

"Yes, we know, but we have found a lovely school just outside of Italy. She will only be gone for six months of the year. And besides, you will be too busy helping us with our Quidditch teams. We forgive you for selling Viktor's team, but after all, you do need to earn your keep, you know."

"But, I don't know anything about Quidditch. I hate Quidditch."

"Well, you married a Quidditch player. You could not have hated it that much." said Nadia in a huff.

"Hermione, don't tell me you actually think you can manage on your own? Why, you have not had a job since you married Viktor. Do you think toying with those syrups and herbs...."

"I was a Potions mistress, and a very good one," said Hermione through gritted teeth.

Severus, who had been stiffly observing the entire scene, immediately dropped his crossed arms to his side. He had died before she had gone into Potions. She must have earned her Potions title shortly after graduating from Hogwarts. Other than him, she was probably the youngest to ever hold the title of Potions master.

"I can get a job working for the Ministry, perhaps. Or even make my own potions and sell them to an Apothecary."

The two women began to laugh.

"Oh, Hermione, be serious!" scoffed Katerina.

Hermione's eyes began tearing. Between her anger, and the emotions she had dealt with in the last several weeks, she felt she would explode any moment.

"I have heard entirely enough!" yelled Severus. Within seconds, he had grabbed each woman by the arm and was forcing both to their feet.

"What is going on here?" yelled Nadia as she was being hurled through the door.

"Oh, sweet Merlin, what is this? Hermione, help us!" begged Katerina.

All Hermione could do was sit on the small chaise and stare at the sight of Severus Snape, taking the two women and shoving them out the door, with his feet on their ass.

"You two are the vilest, aberrations ever to have walked this earth. I shall thank you to stay out of our house!" He yelled, momentarily forgetting they could not hear a word he had said.

Hermione ran to the door.

"And don't come back!" she yelled, as she threw their bags at them. She slammed the door and locked it. Then she rested her head against the door and took a deep breath.

Severus saw her shoulders shaking. Much as he hated to admit it, he didn't like the way the two women had treated her. He was the only one who could treat her like that; how dare they take what little joy he had away like that.

"Don't cry; they do not deserve your tears," he said softly, trying to calm her before she became hysterical.

Hermione turned around. To his amazement, she was not crying but laughing.

"Did you see the looks on their faces when you grabbed them?" She chortled. "That was brilliant, Professor, absolutely brilliant."

His lips twitched, and he smiled with a gleam in his eye.

"Yes, they did look rather aghast, didn't they?" he agreed.

"That they did." She looked at him for a moment. She had never seen him smile in life. He had a lovely smile. After they stopped laughing, she spoke. "Much as I enjoyed seeing them like that, they were the only two people who I could have stayed with. If you give me some time, I can try to find another place for Viktoria and me."

"No, Mrs. Krum," he sighed, thinking for once the he may have been somewhat unreasonable with her. "Perhaps it might be possible for us to co-exist without driving each other mad."

"Thank you, Professor. I promise, we won't be in the way. Viktoria is a quiet child; she spends most of her time reading. And I have been trying to get some freelance potions work, so I will most probably be in the lab quite a bit. Why, we may spend days not having to see one another. I will not intrude on your solitude."

"Very well, Mrs. Krum. See that you do not, and we shall get along fine." With that final word, he disappeared.

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I'm sorry, but when I first posted this quite a bit had been cut off. I'm not sure what happened.

I hope you enjoyed this first chapter. I'll try to have more soon.

## Chapter 2 – Pounding the cobblestones

*Chapter 2 of 11*

Hermione is having a hard time finding work. Lucky for her Severus is there to help.

As always, all canon characters belong to JKR.

This story is an adaptation of The Ghost and Mrs. Muir. I am trying to keep this as close to the original movie as I can in the hopes of making this a bit of a different fic.

Thanks again to June for her beta help.

### Chapter 2 Pounding the cobblestones

Two weeks passed quickly, and Hermione was at the end of her rope. During her first week in her new home, she applied for several job opportunities. The Ministry had nothing to offer her, much to her dismay. Her idea about working freelance for some of the apothecaries in the area didn't pan out either. Most of them already had their own potions makers in house; thus, her offer to work from home was no good.

She even tried applying at Hogwarts, yet Minerva sadly informed her that they had a full staff. Before she Apparated home after visiting with some of the other professors at Hogwarts, she stopped by Gringotts. Her account was in dire need of an infusion, and fast. At this rate, there wouldn't be so much as a single Knut in her vault by the end of the month. While the house was hers, she still needed money for food and clothing for Viktoria. Hermione did not spoil her child, but she also wanted to provide as much comfort as she could, be it with her favorite dessert or a special book or toy.

Hermione had asked Ginny to watch the girl while she went about her job search. Not wanting to spend too much time trying to convince Ginny and Harry she would be fine, she happily came to pick up Viktoria and let them know that she had been given several offers that very afternoon to mull over.

"Which job are you going to take, Mummy?" asked Viktoria.

Hermione didn't want her daughter to know that she had just lied to Uncle Harry and Aunt Ginny.

"Well, sweetie, I'm not sure yet. I need to think which one is best for me. After all, I don't want to spend too much time away from you."

The girl smiled as her mother took her by the hand and Apparated them to their home. Hermione sent Viktoria up to her room for her nap, and then she dragged herself to the kitchen and set a pot of water on the stove for tea. She sighed and sat down.

"Now what?" she said to the empty chair next to her.

Severus had been wandering the home for several days out of her sight. He now stood behind her, wondering if she had finally gone mad.

"How am I supposed to make any money if no one will hire me?" she said, shaking her head.

"Who on earth are you talking to?" asked Severus from behind her.

Hermione jumped.

"Professor!" she grabbed her chest, hoping her rapidly pounding heart would remain in its place. "It isn't polite to sneak up on people like that."

"Yes, I know," he said matter of factly. "Do forgive me, though, for interrupting your conversation with the chair. It looks positively enthralled."

She rolled her eyes.

"I wasn't talking to the chair. I was just thinking out loud."

"The first signs of insanity."

Hermione stood and walked to her now whistling teapot.

"Thank you, Professor. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to have my own personal therapist. It's so nice to know that no matter how miserable my day is, I can always count on your words to make me feel even worse" She readied her tea and sat back down.

Severus walked around the table and sat down in the empty chair in front of her.

"It is entirely my pleasure. Now, what were you on about?" he asked.

"Oh, I've been everywhere looking for work, but there just isn't anything out there. I've been to the Ministry, to the apothecaries, the bookstores; I even went to Hogwarts. There just isn't any work available, and at this rate I'll be out of money by the end of the month."

They sat in silence for a long while, until Severus jumped up and began pacing. He did this for several minutes, then stopped and turned to look at her.

"I believe I have a solution."

"You do?" asked Hermione hopefully.

"Yes. You, Mrs. Krum, are going to write a book," he stated simply.

"Me? Write a book? Professor, I read books; I don't write them. Besides, what would I possibly write about?"

"You will write about something that has never been written."

"And that would be...?" she asked expectantly.

"A book about being a Death Eater," he said.

Her eyes went wide.

"Well, you've done it," she said. "You have touched upon the only subject I know nothing about."

"You may not know," he leaned down towards her and smiled evilly as he quirked his eyebrow, "but I do."

"Oh, now, just wait a minute. No one will believe I know the first thing about being a Death Eater. Who would buy a book written by a Muggleborn about being a Death Eater?"

"No one will. But you have moved into an ex-Death Eater's home. It would be logical for you to have found papers or journals I may have written. No one would buy a book from a Death Eater either, but if *you* write the book about a Death Eater, using his own accounts, the profits will go to you, a war hero and member of the Order."

"You know, I think you're on to something," she said.

"I know I am on to something, silly girl." He walked to the window and noticed clouds in the sky. "We begin in the morning. I will dictate to you, and you will transcribe what I write in that infernal machine you have in your room."

"It's a computer, sir," she said blandly.

He waved his hands and shook his head.

"Yes, yes, computer. I will tell you where my journals are so that you can look through them, and some old notes I kept from my early days."

"Thank you, Professor. I really appreciate you helping us out."

"I am not helping you," he huffed. "This is just the only way I can get you to keep your mouth shut for longer than ten minutes." With those final words, he disappeared.

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Hermione barely slept that night. She wondered what stories Professor Snape would tell her. It was well known by all of the Order members that he had been a deadly Death Eater in his time. No one had ever really asked him about any of his past deeds in detail. She knew he had killed people, and possibly tortured a few as well. How much would she be able to listen to? Would hearing the accounts of his former life change the way she viewed him? She sighed and turned over on her side. He was an early riser in life, and ... knowing that ghosts needed no sleep ... she had no doubt he would be shaking her bed before the sun appeared on the horizon.

A few hours after she finally went to sleep, Severus glided into her room. He watched her sleep and remembered her childhood face. Her daughter looked very much like her. There was a bit of her father in the girl, but thank goodness not much. The girl had also inherited her mother's intelligence and love of reading.

Severus thought back on the day he died. It was on the front lawn of Hogwarts. He had been avoiding hexes all morning, and managed to even bring down several of his old cohorts.

At one point he began to think he would survive the battle. And then in a brief flash of light, he was gone. The next thing he knew, he was back in his small home. For days, he wandered about the house, remembering only bits and pieces at a time about what had happened. Then he realized he really wasn't sure how long he had been there. Time meant nothing to him anymore.

Another thing he wondered was why he was there? He had done all that was asked of him in life ... even things he did not want to do, one of which was to kill Albus Dumbledore. That was something he had never forgiven himself for, even if it had been part of the old wizard's plan. Severus had not been afraid to die, nor did he leave anything behind undone. Why was he still there?

He was shaken out of his reverie when he heard Mrs. Krum whimpering in her sleep. During the daytime, as he kept himself in the shadows and out of her sight, he was able to observe her. She cried every now and then, both for her husband and for the situation she now saw herself in. He would never have admitted this to her, but he felt sorry for her. Many times he himself had felt the misery of being alone in the world. He had Albus for a time, but even the old wizard was of little comfort to him, as the Headmaster was constantly worrying about running Hogwarts and the Order ... and keeping Potter alive.

Severus looked at the clock next to the bed and noticed it was six o'clock. Smiling, he stood in front of the bed and took hold of the footboard.

Hermione was dreaming that she was on a sailboat. The sea was calm as her body drank in the sun. All of a sudden, the boat began to rock. She sat up and tried to walk towards the steering wheel of the boat, yet the waves rocked the small boat so badly she fell overboard. She fell into the water, and her arms were flailing. She didn't know how to swim, and she began to sink into the water. The waves were crashing all around her. Suddenly, she bolted upright in her now shaking bed.

"Good morning," said a very satisfied-looking Severus.

Hermione blinked the sleep out of her eyes and looked around the room.

"Wha...what the hell time is it?" she asked.

"Six o'clock. Time to wake up, Mrs. Krum. We have work to do."

"Oh, please. Just a few more minutes." Hermione threw herself back onto the bed and pulled the covers over her head, only to have them unceremoniously thrown off of her. "Professor!" She felt the cold morning chill hit her immediately. She thanked the heavens above it was still winter and she slept with a flannel nightgown.

"Up! Now!" he yelled, and sat on the leather chair next to the desk.

Knowing he would not allow her to go back to sleep, she slowly sat up, slid her feet into her fluffy slippers, and looked for her robe. As she tied her robe around her, she turned to her former Professor.

"Let me at least get some coffee and toast. I'll be up here in ten minutes, and we can get started. Viktoria won't be up for another few hours, so we can have uninterrupted time. Is that all right with you?"

"Yes, yes, get your coffee. The last thing I need is a grumpy secretary."

She opened her mouth to complain about his calling her his secretary, but thought better of it. She turned and walked towards the staircase, mumbling the entire way.

"Bastard...who's he calling grumpy..."

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I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I've got another one in the works and hope to have it up in a few days. Thank you.

## Chapter 3 – Walking In The Midst Of Death

*Chapter 3 of 11*

Severus and Hermione begin their project and Hermione hears more than she bargained for.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thank you to June for her help and beta work.

### Chapter 3 – Walking In The Midst Of Death

All in all, it took Hermione twenty minutes to get herself settled for her morning. She had her coffee and toast, then came upstairs, brushed her teeth, and got dressed. During this time, Severus had decided to gather his old journals and scrolls that contained some early accounts of life amongst the ranks of Voldemort's army.

She came out of the small closet after getting dressed, and found Severus staring ahead with a faraway look in his eyes.

"Professor?" she asked as she approached him. "Are you all right?"

He looked at her and shook his head.

"No, I am not." He turned away from her and closed the journal that was lying on his lap.

"Is there anything I can do? Perhaps you wish to begin this another time," she offered.

"No, Mrs. Krum. It matters not when we begin. The result will always be the same for me. There are so many things I wanted to forget. So many things I wanted to pretend I had never done. But I know that no amount of denial or hesitation will ever make my past transgressions go away."

"I understand you regret those things, but the important thing is you did and do regret them. Many Death Eaters did not."

He sighed heavily and stood.

"I suppose that counts for something," he said as he crossed his arms and stared out into the lightly fogged street.

"Where would you like to begin?" Hermione sat at her desk and turned on her laptop computer. It was something Viktor had given her two years ago for Christmas. She'd used it to keep her ideas for potions she wanted to develop someday.

"Where all stories of heartache and anguish begin. At the beginning."

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He was born Severus Snape on January 9, 1960. His mother was a pureblood witch named Eileen Prince, and his father was a Muggle named Tobias Snape. His childhood was one of little happiness. What moments he could remember were few and far between. His father was ashamed of him and his mother for their magical ability. Many nights, young Severus would sit in the corner of his room, listening to the torment his father would inflict on his mother. Sometimes it was physical, many times it was verbal. Upon his eleventh birthday, he received his letter to Hogwarts. While his father did not approve, his mother was thrilled. She knew that her son was gifted, and sending him away would be the only way she could at least free one of them from the torment of living at home.

Severus spent his Hogwarts years absorbing everything he could learn. He was a sponge for knowledge. Much of his free time was spent studying spells and reworking them. He even became quite adept to creating his own spells and several potent hexes.

He made no friends. He considered all the other students as acquaintances. Many of them would take the same path he would in his later years.

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"Professor? Did all of your friends become Death Eaters?" asked Hermione.

"Having friends, Mrs. Krum, is something I have never been familiar with." He thought back wistfully. "Save for one man, and you know what became of him."

Hermione nodded and turned back to her keyboard, waiting for him to continue.

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After completing his education at Hogwarts, Severus was offered an opportunity to join several of his former fellow students in a new movement. This was to be a movement that would free the wizarding world of Muggles. Severus despised his father. He often had visions of killing him with his bare hands. However, this hatred was never more strong than during his last year at Hogwarts, when he received an owl from his father simply stating, *"Your mother is dead. Don't bother to come home again."*

Perhaps this new movement would give Severus the opportunity to do just what he wanted to do for so long. He would make his father pay for making his life and his mother's life miserable. He had kept his parentage a secret throughout his time at Hogwarts. He wondered if he would always be able to keep his secret from these people. He hoped he could.

On a dark Autumn afternoon in 1978, the rain beat down on the cobblestone street he and Lucius Malfoy walked on. They approached a large Gothic-style home and knocked on the door. They were granted entry and were guided into a room filled with other people. Many of the people Severus recognized, but many more he did not.

After waiting for several minutes, a man finally joined them.

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"When Voldemort entered that room, I felt something I had never in my life felt until then." He looked at Hermione. "I felt I was in the presence of the devil himself. There was an aura of evil that emanated from that man. I could feel my blood chill the closer he came to me. It was as though my body was dying and I didn't even care. I was... mesmerized."

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That first meeting with Voldemort was the beginning of the end for many Muggles and Muggle-borns. After the recruits had all received their mission statement, Voldemort dismissed them, but not before placing his hand on Severus' shoulder and asking him to remain behind.

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"He knew about your parentage?" asked Hermione, looking up from her keyboard.

"Voldemort was an accomplished Legilimens. And at the time, I was just beginning my study in Occlumency. He knew from the moment he walked into that room that I was not a pureblood. I thought he would tell me that I would not be welcome there again. But he did something that no one until then had ever done."

"And what was that?" asked Hermione.

"He accepted me as I was."

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Voldemort confided in Severus that evening that he himself was also the product of a mixed marriage. He also offered Severus the opportunity to take revenge on his father, and that was an offer Severus could not refuse.

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Hermione stopped typing. Severus looked at her from the chair next to the small fireplace.

"You killed your father?" she asked softly.

He said nothing.

"I found some other notes earlier," he said, handing her some parchments. "You can take them for now and type them into your computer. The sun has been up for a while now. You should see to Viktoria." He then disappeared.

Hermione felt numb. Yes, he was a Death Eater in his younger years; yes, he had killed people, and he had been cruel to her and her friends at Hogwarts. Severus Snape was not the lonely misunderstood hero in fairy tales. What you saw was pretty much what you got with him. Yet she never even considered that fact he could have killed his own father.

Still deep in the back of her mind, she could not condemn him for that. Much as she hated to admit it, she had also never considered the possibility of a husband killing his own wife, a father rejecting his own child. Tobias Snape probably deserved everything his son gave him.

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I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I'm not sure when I will be able to get the next one up, but I'll try to get something for you by the end of the week.

In the meantime, you can also have a look at this lovely drawing Marquise made for me. This is for the scene in chapter two.



# Chapter 4 - Barbie, Bluebells, and Athames

Chapter 4 of 11

Severus and Hermione have begun their book and Hermione hears things she wished she had never known. \*Violence described\*

I've got a busy few days ahead of me so I thought I'd post a chapter before it got too bad.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

As always, thank you to the lovely June for her help and being my beta.

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## Chapter 4 Barbie, Bluebells, and Athames

After Severus left the room, Hermione gathered the parchments he had given her and placed them on the desk next to her laptop. She saved what was already written and closed the laptop. She then silently turned and walked to Viktoria's room.

Her daughter was already up and dressed. She was sitting on her already made bed, reading a book that had belonged to Hermione as a child. Hermione had always loved Cinderella, and was happy she had saved all of her storybooks for her daughter.

"Well, someone looks like she's been up for a while," Hermione said as she sat next to her daughter on the small bed.

"I didn't want to disturb you, Mummy. I heard you on your computer."

Hermione was glad her daughter had not come into the room. While Severus did promise not to reveal himself to her daughter, she felt relieved that Viktoria hadn't wandered into her room and found her talking to the leather chair next to the desk. While the professor was amused by Hermione's earlier conversation with the kitchen chair, her daughter might find her mother's behavior odd, to say the least.

"Come, let's get you some breakfast. You must be hungry." She took Viktoria's hand, and they walked down to the kitchen. She made some eggs and bacon, and sat with the girl as she ate. When Viktoria was done, they went outside for a walk and picked some of the wildflowers that were growing in the garden.

Severus watched them from the window of Hermione's bedroom. He tried to remember if he had ever done anything like that with his own mother. He closed his eyes and sighed. 'Yes,' he remembered. It was vivid in his mind now. One afternoon stood out in his mind now. He and his mother went into Hogsmeade one afternoon, while his father had been away. His mother always made her trips there with him when his father was gone. In that way, there would be no explanations as to what was purchased or why they had been gone so long.

On a bright day in April ... no, May ... he recalled his mother taking him through a field of bluebells. He could almost smell their scent all around him now. They both walked through a field that looked like a blanket of violet snow. They picked so many, that by the time they got home the tips of their fingers were tinged with the blue-violet color of the flower.

She loved him. Severus fondly remembered how, that night, she made it a point to tell him at every opportunity. Looking back now, he knew she must have known how important it would be for him to know that, during a brief period in his life, he was loved by at least one person.

He heard laughter coming from downstairs. Hermione and Viktoria had returned from their walk. Severus approached the stairs quietly, and heard Hermione giving her daughter strict instructions to not interrupt her until lunchtime.

"Yes, Mummy. I'll play with Barbie while you work."

Severus wondered who this Barbie could be. He saw no one else in the living room. He glided back to Hermione's room and waited for her. When she entered, he was sitting in the leather chair once again.

"I didn't know you would be back so soon," she said. "I was going to begin transcribing the notes you gave me this morning." Hermione didn't want to make him feel as though she judged him for anything he had said that morning. It was not her place to judge him. The Severus Snape she had known while he lived was a good man of high principle. It mattered not how he became that man.

"Who is this Barbie person? There are no neighbors in this area with young children."

Hermione stifled a laugh.

"Barbie is a doll. She has movable arms and legs. She has an enviable wardrobe, and she is quite the career-oriented woman."

He rolled his eyes.

"Dolls," he snorted. "Thank Merlin you don't dress the child in those pink frilly frocks." He shivered.

Hermione shook her head in amusement and smiled, then opened her laptop cover and readied herself for him to begin another recitation.

"Now, in order for one to become a Death Eater, there is an initiation in which the Dark Mark is embedded onto your skin. This process is done using the darkest of magic, and is something that cannot be reversed. The Dark Mark is forever." He held up his left arm. "As you can see, I cannot escape it, even in death."

Hermione looked at the Mark on his arm. It was there as he said; even as a ghost, he bore the Mark. As she studied the Mark, she wondered if he had noticed that it no longer looked as it did in life. True, it depicted the skull with the snake emerging from its mouth, but it looked almost as though it was going through a metamorphosis. It was not clear yet what it was becoming, but it was not the same Mark. She looked into his eyes and nodded her understanding of his words.

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The Dark Mark ceremony involved few things, but they were very important things.

First and foremost was pain. If you were not willing to accept the pain, then you were not worthy of the reward.

Second, there must be innocence, in order that at the moment of corruption the innocent soul can be siphoned and combined with that of the initiate. For one brief moment,



you were allowed to be a god. For one brief moment, you touched the soul of another, only to tear it to pieces.

There were many innocents taken and corrupted the night Severus was initiated. Those who wished to join had to bring their own victims. Most brought young adult males and females, yet many had taken children. During the ceremony, he took the life of a young woman, ripping through her virgin membrane all the while bleeding her with his Athame. As the initiates all chanted together in that dark moonless night, the ground seemed to tremble. It was as though the earth wanted to shake itself away from the evil that was growing above it. As though it wanted to clean itself of the filth, yet no cleansing waters came, and it was left bloodied and dirty with the echoing cries of the dying slowly ebbing away.

After it was over and they had washed the blood from their hands, they all looked at their bodies and noticed the Mark. Never had Severus felt so lost as he did that night, yet he looked for no guiding path. That path would not be visible for many long nights.

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As Hermione typed, she willed herself to hear the words yet not listen to their meaning. *'Words, Hermione,'* she thought to herself, *'they are just words.'* She didn't dare actually listen to what he was saying, knowing that if she did she would never be able to sleep comfortably again.

The two worked until it was time for lunch. Severus felt it was also time for them to stop for the day. They had only worked several hours, yet he could feel her emotions were troubled. He knew that what he told her had been difficult to hear, and he did not want to overburden her mind with visions of death and doom for too long. He would leave her to transcribe the parchments of notes he left her earlier. The information in there was fairly general and somewhat tame, compared to the words he spoke that morning.

"We can begin again in the morning," he said brusquely. "I believe we have made good progress for today. The notes will provide sufficient information for you to put together a bit more of the mysteries of the Death Eater mind. I gather you are growing tired of the sound of my voice" He tried to make light of the situation, hoping it would boost her mood.

She smiled and saved her work on the laptop.

"I could never grow tired of your voice, Professor." She flinched. *'I did not just say that out loud,'* she thought. Even though he had been a stern professor, his voice always held a sort of calming affect on her. It was so deep and smooth. She loved hearing him speak, even when he was being a nasty sarcastic git.

He smiled but said nothing as he disappeared. If she loved to hear him speak, then she would get an earful the coming week.

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I'll be working on another chapter in the next few days. I will not be going into too much detail as far as the book goes, so one more chapter with a few bits and then on with the story.

Thank you for reading.

## Chapter 5 - Diary of a Death Eater

*Chapter 5 of 11*

Severus and Hermione put the finishing touches on their book, and Hermione asks a question Severus is not prepared to answer just yet.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

I'd like to thank of course my lovely Beta June for her help and suggestions.

### Chapter 5 – Diary of a Death Eater

The days passed quickly. Severus and Hermione formed a sort of unspoken routine. He would come and shake her bed at six in the morning and they would work until nine o'clock, when Hermione would feed Viktoria breakfast and then spend a few hours with her daughter. After lunch, Hermione would come back to her room, where she and Severus would work until late afternoon. It was surprising the amount of work they were able to accomplish. By the end of two weeks, she had amassed a huge collection of stories and information.

Hermione rarely interrupted him while he spoke. He was very detailed in his explanations of the intricacies of both the actions of Death Eaters and the many raids he participated in, as well as observed. He finally explained the truth behind many Death Eater myths — no, Death Eaters did not share their wives; no, not all Death Eaters were Slytherins; yes, there was a charm on the mask to incite fear. And most importantly, there had never been any such thing called a Dark Revel.

Severus also wanted to include the history of Tom Riddle. He said it was important that people really know who this man was, before he became Voldemort. Severus described what happened the night Voldemort

tried to kill Harry as a baby, as well as the night he used Harry's blood to regain his physical form.

Hermione typed on, and briefly wondered how Severus knew so many details about the night Voldemort tried to kill baby Harry.

One day though she grew incredibly curious about two things. Severus had become a Death Eater not long after graduating from Hogwarts, yet he was really only a full participating Death Eater for what seemed to be a period of about two years. The first thing she was curious about was how he lured his victims. While he did not kill many during his years with the Death Eaters, the few people who did die at his hands were young women barely into their twenties. The other question was: why did he stop?

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"Professor," she said as she looked to him. His place was always the same: next to her desk, on the large leather chair. "How did you lure the Muggle victims Voldemort sent you to kill?"

He turned his head slowly towards her.

"Animals lure, people entice." His eyes glittered, and he cocked his head to the side slightly. "Do you find me attractive, Mrs. Krum?"

Hermione stared into his eyes for several moments, and then swallowed hard.

"Yes," she said. "In a dangerous and unattainable sort of way."

"If you saw me from across a room while I was standing alone, looking as though I was bored and uninterested, would you think me a challenge?"

She created the scene inside her mind, and chuckled.

"I think any woman would."

"That was how my victims came to me. Lucius was sometimes seen as arrogant and unapproachable, simply because some women thought him too good for them. In contrast, I was seen as a challenge, a man in a dark corner, who looked dangerous, yet withdrawn. I was seen as someone who, perhaps, looked lonely or bored with all going on around him. I played my game with little effort."

As he spoke, Hermione typed and wondered how many times she had done just what he had described — approached a lonely-looking boy — before she met Viktor. It would have been so easy for Severus to have taken her had she been alive in that time. She shivered, thinking what he would have done.

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Severus always made it a point to never look into the eyes of the Muggle he was told to kill. He knew better. One particular night, he was standing in the shadows just outside a Muggle nightclub. He saw a young woman walking out towards the darkness of the streets. It was the one occasion that he actually pursued someone.

He had been particularly angry that day, and had argued with Lucius. They had gone on a raid two days prior, and Lucius — in his anxiousness to cause havoc — became careless. They had barely gotten away as the Aurors Apparated onto the scene. Severus visited Lucius that morning and told him that his negligence would one day land him in Azkaban. How right he had been.

As the woman rounded the corner, Severus caught up with her and was almost within reaching distance. He cast a cloaking charm on himself and continued to follow her. Just as she reached the door of her flat, he grabbed her and Apparated away.

There was something he needed to do. The frustration he had felt building all day because of Lucius needed to be released — and what better way to do this than to have a writhing young woman beneath him. Severus took a small bottle out of his pocket and held her mouth open, then poured the contents down her throat. Within seconds, she stopped kicking and scratching at him.

He kissed and sucked at her neck. As his hands roughly kneaded her breasts, her hands reached down to unbutton his pants and then took hold of his erection. When he pulled her skirt up, he realized she wore no undergarments.

"Yes," she moaned as she spread her legs open to him, and he thrust into her deeply.

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Hermione typed furiously. Every now and then, she would wiggle a bit in her seat and wipe the sheen of sweat beginning to form on her forehead, all the while thinking that Severus Snape was one hell of a storyteller.

Onward they went until finally after two weeks, five hours, and twenty-seven minutes, it was finished. All five hundred and sixty-two pages of the book that would be known as *"Diary of a Death Eater – The Story of Severus Snape – Spy and War Hero."* She insisted on the "war hero" part. He was a hero, for after all was said and done, it was finally revealed that his spy work was what had turned the tide in favor of the Order's victory.

She saved her work on a disk and enclosed it in a small clear case, then placed it on her nightstand. In the morning, she would take Viktoria to Muggle London. She knew of a place where she could print out the entire file for little money. She looked at the clock on the mantle, next to the leather chair where Severus still sat. It was almost five o'clock. She would have to start dinner soon. She looked to him and wondered about her second question. Why did he turn against Voldemort? He never spoke of it. It was something he left out of the book entirely. Why?

"What is it?" he asked, knowing she had a question on her mind, yet was too afraid to ask.

"Why did you turn away? Why did you decide to become a spy and work against Voldemort? When you came to that part in the book, you skirted around the reason." She wondered if he would answer her, or just try to change the subject, like the day she asked him if he had killed his father.

He stood and looked out the window. Hermione moved to stand next to him. His eyes stared off into the distance. She thought she saw a tear begin to fall down his cheek.

"Bluebells," he whispered and then disappeared.

"Bluebells?" She shook her head, wondering what he could have possibly met. Whatever the reasons, they were very personal to him, and she knew she could never ask him again. If he ever decided to tell her, he would do so when the time was right.

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I hope you like this chapter. I've got a bit written for the next chapter, but I'd like to add a bit more. Thanks to all who have read so far and taken the time to review. I appreciate all of your comments.

## Chapter 6 - Mercury's Wings

*Chapter 6 of 11*

Hermione begins the task of trying to sell hers and Severus' book.

Thank you to June for her help and for being my beta.

## Chapter 6 Mercury's Wings

Hermione spent the weekend thinking on Severus' words. He didn't show himself to her for the rest of the weekend, and she thought that perhaps he wanted to be alone. She kept herself busy by reading over a few things in the book that she had made notes to herself to go back to. Every so often, she would hear Viktoria in her room, talking to her dolls. She had taken to giving them tea parties as of late.

Monday morning, she dressed Viktoria warmly and dropped her off at Harry and Ginny's. She knew that her book would never make sense to Muggle readers, so she decided to peddle her and Severus' combined efforts to wizarding society. There were three publishing houses that seemed to be the most open to new writers, so she thought it would be best to approach those to begin with. At the first house, she waited in a small room with several other would-be authors; she left after waiting over two hours. Hermione decided to try her luck with another firm just down the street, where she waited three hours. Hoping that the third time would be a charm, she Apparated to the last firm on her list, which was just a ways down the street from the Three Broomsticks.

Mercury's Wings was a small publishing firm. It was located in a building that looked as though a weak wind could blow it down to the ground. Hermione walked into the building, and found a balding chubby man sitting behind a very old desk, reading that day's copy of *The Quibbler*.

"Do you have an appointment?" he asked gruffly, not even bothering to look up from his paper.

"No, sir. I don't." She looked around the small room and saw that she was the only person there other than him. "Do I need one?"

The man looked over to her and set the paper down. Just then, another man walked through the door. He looked at Hermione and tipped his hat. He reminded her of Bill Weasley, except he had dark brown hair instead of red.

"Good afternoon," he said as he smiled.

Hermione smiled, and then heard the man behind the desk clearing his throat.

"You can't be seen without an appointment," he said.

"Can I make one now?" she asked.

The man rolled his eyes and opened up a wired book that had been closed. He took his quill and dipped it in ink.

Hermione looked down at the book and noticed that there were no appointments made for the entire day.

"Fine, for when," asked the gruff man impatiently.

"I would like an appointment for December eighteenth at two o'clock."

The man frowned and looked up from his writing.

"That's five minutes from now."

"Yes, it is," she agreed.

"You can't make an appointment for five minutes from now."

"Wilfred, stop giving this lovely young lady such a difficult time. Just have a look at what she has. It isn't as though you have anything better to do," said the man behind Hermione.

"You stay out of this, Reg. It's enough I have to deal with you hanging about; the last thing I need is more no-talent dimwits waltzing in here, thinking they have written the next *Merlin's Chronicles*," huffed Wilfred.

Hermione narrowed her brow and stepped forward.

"How dare you say that. You haven't even given me a chance to show you what I have."

"At least allow the lady to show you her work." The younger man took a step forward and looked at Hermione. "I must apologize for old Wilfred here. As you can see, he's in a rather nasty mood today. I gather he's lost last week's profits after the Chudley Cannons' loss yesterday." Wilfred crossed his arms and pursed his lips. "My name is Reginald Warren, aspiring best selling author," he said as he bowed slightly and took Hermione's hand. He then motioned to the chubby man. "And that cranky old coot is Wilfred Mercury."

Wilfred mumbled beneath his breath, "All I need, another bloody romance novel."

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Warren. I'm Hermione Krum."

Wilfred's face then brightened suddenly.

"Krum? Were you related to the Quidditch player, Viktor Krum?" he asked.

"Why, yes, he was my husband," said Hermione quietly.

"Well, perhaps I can have a look at what you have," said Wilfred.

"Really?" said Hermione, excitedly.

"Oh, now you're interested," shot Reginald.

Wilfred ignored the other man and reached out for Hermione's manuscript.

"Just what sort of book is this?" Wilfred asked, hoping it really wasn't another sickeningly sweet romance novel. He turned it to face him, and his eyes opened wide as he read the cover. "Death Eaters?"

Hermione smiled. She knew that was the last thing he expected to see.

"You wrote a book about Death Eaters?" asked Reginald.

"Not just any old Death Eaters. This is about Severus Snape."

Wilfred looked up at Hermione, like a child opening up a Christmas present. "Wait! You used to be Hermione Granger."

"I still am. I'm not dead, sir," she said, still standing but now with her hands on her hips.

"I mean, you also fought in the war. You knew him? You know Harry Potter?" Wilfred asked excitedly.

"Yes, I knew Professor Snape. And I do know Harry Potter."

Wilfred moved the book closer to him and read the title fully.

"From the title, I gather this is a tell-all book, but Severus Snape has been dead for years. He died in the war. Where did you get the information for this book?" he inquired.

"I have recently purchased a home he once lived in. I found several journals and notes written on parchments. I arranged them all by date and began to write this book. Everything in there is documented in his own writing," answered Hermione hopefully. She could see the man becoming more interested by the minute. For a brief moment she considered taking him to meet Severus but pushed the thought from her mind. Severus was not an ordinary ghost like the ones at Hogwarts. He made it clear to her from the beginning that he wanted to be left alone. He would appear only to Hermione.

"Those journals must be something," said Reginald.

"They are quite fascinating, actually. Professor Snape was a brilliant man. There is so much about him that is misunderstood, and many unwarranted rumors," answered Hermione, smiling.

"All right, Mrs. Krum. I'll have a read. Come back Wednesday afternoon."

"Do you think it's something you can sell? Would people be interested in reading something like this?"

"Are you kidding me? Next to nothing is known about what true Death Eaters were all about. All other Death Eaters are dead or were given the Dementor's Kiss. If this book is what I think it is, then you have yourself a goldmine here, Mrs. Krum ... a goldmine."

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Hermione stepped out of the building with an extra spring in her step. She couldn't wait to get home to tell Severus that Mr. Mercury was incredibly interested in the book. She felt a drop of rain and looked up into the sky. At that very moment, there began a torrential downpour. As she was going to turn back into the building, she bumped into Reginald, who had just opened a rather large umbrella.

"I'm sorry, I was going to go inside and cast a rain repellant charm."

Reginald laughed.

"But umbrellas are much more fun, don't you think?" he smiled, then realized he had his arm around her waist.

Hermione realized it too, and moved away from him slightly, yet kept herself under the umbrella.

"And may I ask where you procured this very Muggle item?" She thought it interesting to see an umbrella being used in Hogesmead, only ever seeing wizards and witches keeping the rain off of themselves by way of charms.

"My mother is a Muggle. She gave this to me several years ago for Christmas. Would you like to accompany me for some tea? I would love to hear about your book."

Hermione was flattered to be asked to tea. She never dated much as a teenager, and only had a brief relationship with Ron; Viktor was the only other man she had dated. She also felt a slight tinge of guilt. What would Severus say if he knew she was having tea with some strange man? Why would Severus think anything? He would probably be pleased a nice man had shown interest in her. Still, she hesitated.

"I really should be getting back home. I have to pick up my daughter. I left her with some friends of mine, and I don't want to get home too late."

"Oh, please, I promise I'll only keep you a short time. I really would love to hear about your book."

She thought back on the stories Severus told her. But she could certainly not live her life wondering if every man that approached her was out to attack her. She smiled and nodded.

"All right. One cup of tea, then."

They walked down the street together under the umbrella.

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I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I'll try to have more some time this week. Thanks to all of you who have read so far. I'm very happy you are enjoying it.

## Chapter 7 - Goldmines and Golddiggers

*Chapter 7 of 11*

Hermione gets some good news about the book and runs into her new friend.

All canon characters belong to JKR. The plot of this story is taken from a movie called "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir." I thought it would be interesting to write something a bit different for our favorite couple.

Thanks to June for her beta work and the wonderful suggestions.

### Chapter 7 Goldmines and Golddiggers

Hermione had more than one cup of tea with Reginald. They talked for almost two hours. She finally left after looking over his shoulder and seeing the time on the clock against the wall. With a rushed apology, she bid him goodbye and practically sprinted out of the shop, then Apparated to Harry and Ginny's to pick up Viktoria.

Once they got home, she sent her daughter to have her bath, and she began to make dinner. As she was humming in the kitchen, she detected the now familiar scent of sandalwood and the cold chill that announced the arrival of Severus.

"By your late arrival, and the fact that you are humming that annoying tune, I gather things went well," said Severus as he materialized next to the counter.

"Moon River is not annoying. It was my grandmother's favorite song. And as you asked so nicely," she said as he smirked, "yes, things went well."

She began to chop some vegetables as she continued to speak.

"I left a manuscript at a small firm called Mercury's Wings,"

"Mercury's Wings? That's the worst firm in the wizarding world!" he now bellowed. "All they publish are sickly sweet romance novels." He rolled his eyes and ran his hands through his hair in aggravation.

"How do you know that's all they publish?" she asked accusingly.

"I know because, during my years at Hogwarts, every single book I confiscated from silly hormonal girls was a romance novel published by Mercury's Wings. I suppose I should be thankful you did not know their name." He now began pacing. "The last thing I wished was for my book to be associated with that sort of rubbish."

"Oh, Professor, calm down. It doesn't matter what they published before. The important thing is that they publish this book. If it's any consolation to you, I don't think Mr. Mercury himself is pleased with the type or quality of the material he has been given to now. You should have seen him when he looked at the cover," she said excitedly, now putting down her knife and turning to him. "I swear his eyes almost popped out of their sockets!"

Severus looked to her. For a moment, she thought she saw him pout.

"Really?" he drawled.

"He said that a book about Death Eaters would be a gold mine. And he was so excited to see it was about you."

"Well, of course he would be. I am a war hero, after all." He crossed his arms and lifted his head.

She held back a chuckle and turned to her chopping once more.

"I have to return Wednesday. I'm sure Mr. Mercury will offer me some sort of a publishing deal. Reginald told me that almost no one is offered a deal with their first book, and..."

"Reginald? And whom might I ask is Reginald?" he sneered. He wasn't sure why, but he didn't like the fact that there was yet another male name in the picture.

"Oh, well, Reginald is a writer I met while at the firm. He was very nice, and it was he who asked Mr. Mercury to give me a chance with the book." She continued her gathering of ingredients and now began to look for a pan. "He was very encouraging when I was telling him about the book over tea."

"Tea? You had tea with him?" He rolled his eyes and was pacing now. "I'm sure he was quite interested. He's obviously a gold digger, as Muggles say."

Hermione threw her head back and laughed.

"You can hardly accuse him of that! I have nothing for him to take. I can barely make ends meet, you know that."

"Yes, *now* you can hardly make ends meet, wait until Wednesday. I am certain a woman with a publishing contract would be quite the catch for him or any man."

"Well, I would like to think I'm quite the catch for any man now." She huffed.

"You know what I mean, don't try to turn this around now." He stood with his arms crossed once again and pouted like a child.

Hermione shook her head. He was difficult when he became like this, as she realized during their time writing the book.

"If you are going to pout, then you can just go off to wherever you go, and come back when we can have a adult conversation about this."

"I do not pout," he said, crossing the room. He looked down and began to inspect her vegetables. "And you have chopped these defenseless vegetables to the point of mush."

"Viktoria likes them like that."

"Why don't you just give the poor girl a straw along with her dinner?" he scoffed.

"Oh, you are impossible sometimes, do you know that?" she quipped.

He smiled then.

"Yes, I know," he agreed, and then disappeared.

It exasperated her that he always disappeared like that. It made it so that he always had the last word. But it made him happy, so she accepted it.

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Two days passed quickly, and Hermione now found herself at the doorstep of Mercury's Wings once more. When she walked in, this time her greeting was quite different.

"Mrs. Krum, please come in, come in." Wilfred practically attacked her as she walked through the door. "How lovely to see you again. Would you like some tea?"

"No, thank you, Mr. Mercury."

"Wilfred, my dear; call me Wilfred. No tea then; well, perhaps coffee? Pumpkin juice? I have some scones, muffins; would you like a sandwich, then?" he offered excitedly.

"I've already eaten; thank you, Wilfred." She sat down in front of his desk, and Wilfred walked around to sit. "Did you finish the book?" she asked hopefully.

"My dear, I could not put it down! Look at me," he said as he motioned to his shabby state. "I haven't slept, I haven't showered, I haven't eaten! I tell you, Hermione ... may I call you Hermione?" he asked as she nodded. "I tell you I devoured your manuscript."

Hermione smiled. If he was this excited, she could only imagine what the rest of the wizarding population would think.

"Now, I have drawn up a contract." He took from his desk a parchment and placed it in front of her. "We have non-copying clauses for wizarding books so you need not worry about someone taking your idea. As you see, Mercury's Wings will assume all costs for printing and advertising. As such, we expect to of course retain the right to a portion of the royalties."

"Umm...how much of a portion are we talking about?" asked Hermione.

"Oh, it's almost not even worth mentioning, really..."

"How much?"

"Seventy-five percent."

"What?" Hermione stood. "Why, that leaves me with twenty-five percent of the profits. That's hardly even worth the time and effort we...I've put into this."

"But Mrs. Krum, you have to understand, this is a standard contract for a first time writer. Why, I'm putting up the money to have the book printed and shipped and promoted. It's more than fair."

"Yes, fair for whom exactly?" Hermione yelled. She leaned forward and placed her hands on the desk, and looked down at the chubby man. "Now you see here, Mr. Mercury. I will not be cheated out of the profits of this book. I put my heart and soul into this. I wrote many a day and night. You read it; do you think I was able to sleep well after writing some of those things? I am a single mother, and I have a small child I need to provide for. I wrote this book so that I might be able to give her things she needs to have a normal and happy life.

"I will not allow you to take the food from my daughter's mouth so easily. I know this is a good book. I know I can take this to any other firm, and they will happily give me whatever I ask. Since you have taken the time to already read it, I will give you the opportunity to right this while I am still in an amiable mood. You either take twenty-five percent and give me seventy-five percent, or I will take my book elsewhere." She crossed her arms and stood straight and firm. She was outraged. How dare he take her work and give her nothing in return. While she was sure that twenty-five percent of the book sales for such a popular book would allow her to live comfortably, she was also sure that Severus would have a fit if he knew someone like Wilfred Mercury was reaping in the rewards from his life's story instead of her.

"All right, Mrs. Krum, no need to be hasty," said Wilfred, trying to pacify the situation.

"I am not being hasty. But if you thought twenty-five percent was good enough for me, then it is good enough for you. Do we or do we not have a deal?"

Wilfred sighed. He knew that if he let her walk out the door, she would take her book to another firm. Better twenty-five percent of a best-selling book than nothing. He made the necessary changes in the contract and offered her a quill. Hermione sat down to read over the changes, and smiled.

"Thank you," she said as she signed the contract, and they shook hands. The printing of the book would begin immediately. He assured her that the books would be on the store shelves by that coming weekend, then set his elves to work on the production of the materials. She also had him add a clause for any translations of the book for other countries. Hermione wanted it made clear, this was her book and she would be paid for her efforts, in any language.

Hermione stepped out of the office and onto the street a new woman. She would never have to worry about Viktoria's welfare. She knew deep down inside that the book she had written with Severus' words would be successful. She looked around the nearly empty street, and wished she had someone to celebrate with.

It would have been nice to be able to share this moment with Severus. But she knew it would have to wait. Severus was not able to leave the home. He told her at the beginning that whatever reason there was for him not having moved on was also keeping him in the house and on the grounds. Every so often she would be out in the garden and he would appear to her, but there was a certain barrier he could not cross. His home and his land were like a prison to him in the afterlife. She became sad thinking about it. He deserved better. After all he had done, he deserved better.

She walked slowly up the street towards the Apparation point, in a sort of daze. Her thoughts of Severus came to a halt as she bumped into someone.

"Hermione," said Reginald. "Fancy meeting you here."

"Hello, Reginald. It's nice to see you again." She smiled.

"And lovely to see you as well. Oh wait; you had an appointment with Wilfred, didn't you? I hope it went well," said Reginald.

"It went quite well. He's going to publish my book," she answered.

"Brilliant! That, my dear, is cause for celebration. You will allow me to buy you lunch, then?"

"I couldn't, really. I must be getting home." She saw the disappointment in the man's face. He had been so kind to her on Monday, listening to her talking about her book. Before she could even think about what she was saying, she found herself inviting him to dinner. He readily accepted, and agreed to meet her at her house at six that evening. As Reginald walked away, she realized what she had done.

*'Oh, no,'* she thought. Surely Severus would not be pleased. He had not even seen the man and had already accused him of wanting her for her money, money she did not even have yet. *'Well, it's my home now, and he will just have to deal with my visitors,'* she thought. She only hoped Severus would not give Reginald the same welcome he had given Viktor's sisters.

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I wanted to point out the name Wilfred used for a certain book. ShiloDark has written a lovely story called "The Beauty within the Beast." In this story she mentions some books written by Merlin. Any similarity between the book mentioned by Wilfred and Shilo's story is coincidental. I'm sorry if this caused any confusion. As I was writing this Merlin was the first name that popped into my head when wondering what other book would be seen as a classic in wizarding world.

By the way, if none of you have read her story, please do so, its a lovely piece of work for anyone who loves Lucius/Hermione stories.

## Chapter 8 - Guess who's coming to dinner

Chapter 8 of 11

Reginald comes to dinner and Hermione gets a letter from her publisher

Thank you to June for helping me with her beta work and suggestions.

## Chapter 8 Guess who's coming to dinner

Hermione returned home with Viktoria and began to put the house in order. As she was picking up some dolls and teacups from the living room, Severus appeared to her.

"Well?" he asked as he followed her around.

"Well," she said as she continued her cleaning. "The book is being published. The larger percentage of the profits will be coming to me, of course. Mr. Mercury expects that that they should be in several bookshops by this weekend."

He smiled. He had hoped that the book would be successful, and that it would allow her a bit of financial freedom. She continued her cleaning as he stood next to the window. Severus wondered why she was so frantic about picking up the few things in the living room, and then followed her as she walked to the kitchen.

"What are you doing?" he asked suspiciously.

"What does it look like I'm doing? Can't a person do away with some clutter?" she answered.

"Clutter, yes; but you can hardly call Barbie and Ken sitting on the side table clutter." He approached her, and noticed she had taken a small chicken out of the refrigerator and began to prepare it for roasting. "You have invited someone to dinner. Please don't tell me you have invited that Mercury person to dinner?" he asked.

"No, no. Mr. Mercury isn't coming to dinner." She then mumbled an almost inaudible name.

"What was that you said? Whom did you invite here?" he asked.

"I invited Reginald to dinner," she said, turning around.

"What? You invited a stranger to dinner?" he bellowed.

"He's hardly a stranger."

"Very well. Where does he live?"

"I'm not quite sure."

"Where did he attend school?"

"I don't know."

"Does he make his living writing, or does he have another job?"

Hermione rolled her eyes, knowing full well what he was doing.

"He's never actually told me," she snapped.

"How old is he? Who are his parents? Does he have brothers or sisters? He could be an ex-Death Eater, for all you know," he hissed.

"All right, all right, you've made your point. But, I have invited him to dinner, and you will not, I repeat, not in any way do anything to cause trouble," she lectured.

Severus narrowed his eyes.

"I won't? And how exactly are you going to stop me?" he said with the most evil smirk she had ever seen him wear.

She blanched.

"Professor, please. I am asking you, no, begging you. Please don't do anything to scare him off."

He frowned and turned toward the cellar door.

"You don't like this person, do you?" he asked quietly.

"As you pointed out, I don't really know him. It's just dinner, Professor. He saw me this afternoon and asked me to have lunch with him. I wanted to come home so I told him that I didn't have time for lunch, and before I knew it I was asking him to have dinner here. It's nothing, really." She wondered why she felt the need to make him understand she had no interest in Reginald, even though she herself was confused about her feelings, especially as it had only been a few months since Viktor's death.

She found Reginald to be a pleasant man ... also charming, rather witty, and very easy on the eyes. She found herself wanting to know more about him, just as she also found herself wanting to keep from hurting Severus' feelings. Severus had disappeared. She sighed and went about the task of making dinner.

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As expected, Reginald showed up on her doorstep at six o'clock. He had in hand a bouquet of chrysanthemums. All in all, the evening went on with little drama. Viktoria was a bit quiet and shy, but polite. Hermione spent the first half-hour wondering when Severus would pop up and say something uncalled for. But he did not. He was visibly absent.

After Hermione put Viktoria to bed, she walked Reginald out to the front door. It had been a long time since she had enjoyed the company of a man who seemed attracted to her. Reginald had been a perfect gentleman. As he left, he kissed her hand and asked Hermione if she and Viktoria would have a picnic with him that coming weekend. She happily agreed. They settled on a time, and he bid her goodnight.

When she went upstairs, she expected Severus to be waiting for her in her room, but he was not there either. She sadly wondered if she would see him at all in the next coming days, as she drew the covers over herself and settled into sleep.

As she finally fell asleep, Severus appeared over her bed. His face was a collage of emotions. He first felt anger towards her for inviting that buffoon to his, no, her home. Then he felt jealousy towards the man who was now in the midst of courting her. Finally, Severus felt sadness. He knew that she was not only developing feelings towards her new friend, but she also had feelings for him as well. It was something Severus could detect. It would not bode well for a healthy living woman to fall in love with the ghost of a Death Eater, who was seemingly in some sort of purgatory. He wondered if he would ever be able to wander out of the confines of his former property. He reached out slightly to touch Hermione, then thought better of it. Why torture himself more any more than he had to.

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The week went by, and Hermione only caught a glimpse here and there of Severus. She left him alone and didn't try to seek him out. He was obviously still upset about dinner the other night, so she felt she would just give him some time and he would at some point get over it.

Saturday came, and Reginald showed up at her door at the appointed time. She gathered some things for Viktoria to occupy herself with, and the three of them walked out

into the field behind the house. Hermione watched as Reginald attempted to fly a kite he had brought along with him, for Viktoria. As she sat on the blanket, she felt a chill.

"What in blazes is he doing now?" asked the familiar deep voice behind her.

She smiled and looked over her shoulder to see him.

"He is flying a kite."

"Why?" asked Severus, as he sat next to her.

"Because it's fun," answered Hermione.

Severus rolled his eyes.

"Fun would be flying on a broom. Fun would be blowing rose bushes to bits. Look at him," Severus said, nodding his head towards Reginald, who was now entwined in the kite string. "At this rate, the man will wind up hanging himself before he even gets that thing up in the air." He began laughing.

"Oh, stop," she said, chuckling. The two sat there in silence for several moments. Curiosity got the better of her, so she decided to ask him what had him so absent that week.

"I hope you weren't upset because of Reginald. I've hardly seen you this week," she said as nonchalantly as she could.

"I had not noticed I was gone long. I do live in a different plane of existence; time for me is of no consequence." He lied. He knew exactly how long he had been avoiding her. Severus felt a stabbing at his heart when he saw Hermione clapping at the fact that Reginald finally was able not only to disentangle himself from the kite strings, but he actually got it off the ground. Viktoria was laughing and running after the kite, reaching for it.

"Well, at least he seems to know how to do something right," Severus huffed.

Just then, an owl flew down and settled itself on the blanket. It was a large brown owl, one she had never seen before. She took the note it offered her from its leg, and she instantly beamed.

"It's from Mr. Mercury!" she yelled. Viktoria and Reginald immediately began to run towards her. She turned to look at Severus, but he had already disappeared.

"What does it say, Mummy?" asked Viktoria excitedly.

"It must be about the sales. Didn't you say the book would be on sale today?" asked Reginald.

Hermione unwrapped the note and began to read it out loud.

*Dear Hermione,*

*You are a success! The book sold out within an hour of its release. People are going mad, demanding more copies. I will contact you this coming week so that you may pick up your first payment from the sales. Congratulations!*

*W. Mercury*

Severus stood behind a large elm tree and smiled. All this time, he thought his life had meant nothing ... that the sacrifices he made for the betterment of the wizarding world would be forgotten, and that no one would care. And now, his life's story was the talk of the wizarding world. Today was a happy day for him. He looked at Hermione, being hugged by Reginald, and his happiness was replaced by envy.

But his envy was not towards Hermione, it was towards the buffoon that now had his arms wrapped around her and Viktoria. Severus turned towards the house and walked away, finding he couldn't stomach the scene any longer.

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Sorry, for some reason this chapter got chopped up.

## Chapter 9 — What a Beautiful Dream it Was

*Chapter 9 of 11*

Hermione's life takes an odd turn.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for her suggestions and beta work.

### Chapter 9 What a Beautiful Dream it Was

Hermione's book was indeed a success, not only for her but also for Mercury's Wings. Wilfred was able to move his office from the tired-looking dilapidated building to the second floor in a well-preserved and very stylish Victorian-looking building. His company also began attracting serious authors who didn't write fluffy romances.

Harry and Ginny threw a party for Hermione after the book had reached number one in the best selling book lists in the Quibbler, the Daily Prophet and the Hogsmeade Post. She had asked Reginald if he would accompany her to the party, but he couldn't due to a business trip. They had grown close during that last month. He came to dinner at least once a week sometimes twice, and every so often she and Viktoria would have picnics with Reginald in the yard.

Hermione now stood in the corner of Harry and Ginny's living room, with both Harry and Ron at her side.

"Hermione, I can't believe I'm saying this, but this book is fantastic," said Ron.



"Why can't you believe it? Because the book is about Professor Snape?" she asked him. Ron smiled, knowing he had to tread carefully. She had always been one of Snape's staunchest defenders.

"In a way," he said as he saw a flicker of fire in her brown eyes. "Don't bite my head off just yet now. I fully admit that even though Snape was a git, he did do right by us all in the end." Ron looked at the book and shook his head, as a sad look crossed his face. "He really went through a lot. I never realized how much."

"Neither did I," Harry interjected. "I guess it was just easier to believe he was an evil bastard. The book's dedication was nice."

*A man should not be judged by the actions seen on the surface alone. Within these pages lies the story of such a man. I dedicate this book to Severus Snape, one of the forgotten heroes of the Great War against Lord Voldemort.*

Hermione smiled and was glad she had added that after Severus looked at the final draft. He would never have allowed that dedication. She stayed at the party until after midnight, then made her way home with Viktoria fast asleep in her arms.

As she walked up to the house, she wondered if the professor would be around. Hermione wanted to talk to him and let him know how many people at the party enjoyed the book.

She put Viktoria to bed and walked into her room. Deciding not to turn on her lights, she lit a small candle next to her nightstand and jumped when she heard a rustling of clothes coming from the large leather chair.

"You're home rather late. I gather the party was enjoyable?" asked Severus from his spot.

"It was, yes," she answered with a smile, as she took off her outer robes.

"And was the buffoon there?" He couldn't help himself. Reginald's name would not go past his lips without making him want to grow ill. Or as ill as ghosts could get.

"Professor, he has a name. I would get used to using it, if I were you," she said, turning away from him.

"Why would I do that?" he asked.

"Because. He may be around more often, that's all."

"Again, I ask, why?"

"It's just that someday...well, that remains to be seen. Someday he might ask me to be his wife, and he may be living here." She waited for the explosion, but it never came. She turned back around to see if he was still there.

He was standing next to the window, looking out into the night. The moonlight coming through the window gave him an almost ethereal glow.

"You asked me once," he spoke softly, "why I chose to turn my back on Voldemort. My mother was the only person who I felt ever loved me. In her eyes, I was the most beautiful child in the world. In her eyes, I was perfect. My fondest memories of her are of the times we would walk through fields covered with bluebells."

"The night Voldemort killed Potter's parents, I arrived at the house just before he killed Lily. I saw her throw herself in the path of the Killing Curse. At that moment, it reminded me of what my mother had done to protect me and love me. I had always suspected my father had a hand in her death. I had my confirmation when I took his life." He didn't turn to look at her, but he knew she was shocked. "I used Legilimency, and I saw what he did to her. Yes, I killed him. When I saw Voldemort kill Lily, it was as though I were seeing my father kill my mother all over again. Only this time it was happening right before my eyes. Before I could do anything, he had his wand pointing at Harry. It was over before it had even begun, really. He tried to kill Harry and, well, you know the rest. I heard a commotion outside and saw Sirius running towards the house. I left before anyone saw me there. That night, I went to Albus and told him everything."

Hermione wiped a tear that had escaped down her cheek. She often wondered if he had been there the night Harry's parents had died.

"I don't trust him," he said suddenly.

Hermione was confused.

"Who?"

"Him, the buffoon, Reginald," spat Severus.

She sighed heavily.

"Professor, I'm tired. Can we please not get into this tonight?" She hoped that if she put him off, he would forget the entire situation. She didn't understand his intense dislike for Reginald, when the aspiring author had been nothing but warm and loving towards Viktoria and her.

"No, we will get into this now. Can't you see he is toying with you?" Severus hoped to make her understand that there was something he felt off about Reginald. He couldn't explain it, but there was something about the man he didn't trust. Severus acknowledged there was a bit of jealousy in his heart, but this had nothing to do with his feelings. He always had good instincts about people when he was alive; this had helped him survive as a spy.

"Why are you saying that? Why can't you be happy for me?" She closed her door, not wanting Viktoria to hear her screaming, and then cast a silencing charm.

"I am ecstatic for you and the freedom this book has allowed you. You do not need this man in your life. All he will do is hurt you!" he yelled.

"You always think the worst of people. I always defended you when Harry and Ron said things about you, but you know, they were right. You're just a nasty git, aren't you? Reginald likes me, and he likes Viktoria. He treats us well. At least he's..." She stopped herself, not wanting to make things worse.

"He's what? Go on, say it. He's a living, breathing man ... not some ghost haunting your daily existence. If it's a living, breathing man you want, why not just go to the Three Broomsticks; there are plenty of men there looking for..."

"Don't you say it. Don't you dare make this into something dirty and sex-driven! If I could, I'd slap you into oblivion." She was furious. How could he even think something like that? She looked down and closed her eyes as she took several long calming breaths. She then looked into his dark eyes. "I will not discuss this further with you. I am very tired, and I would like to go to sleep. We can discuss this when you are in a more rational mood. Now please, just go."

He disappeared without another word.

Hermione fell onto her bed and began crying. Did he even know how much he had hurt her with his words? She cried until she had nothing left inside of her. Exhausted from crying, she finally fell asleep.

The candle had just about burned itself out when the figure of a dark man reappeared in her room once more.

Severus walked to her bed and stood over her. Inwardly, he berated himself. She had been crying, the proof on her tear-stained cheeks and on the now wet pillowcase. His words had been harsh, and at the time he said them, that's how he wanted them to be. He wanted to hurt her the way he felt she had hurt him. He wanted to be that flesh-and-blood man she needed, but that was something that could never be. He felt her feelings for him, even now. She was dreaming of him, he knew that. Even as a ghost,

he still had a few magical abilities, and he would use one of them now.

"How I wish I could give you what you so desire, but I cannot. Perhaps you are right about me after all. I will never accept any man by your side; I realize that now. You must live, my love. Live and be happy. Give your daughter everything she desires, and allow yourself to love. You will forget the ghost of this house. He never really existed; only in your dreams did you ever have anything to do with him." He bent down and allowed himself to push away the tear-soaked hair against her forehead as he whispered soft words into her ear. "This, Hermione, has all been a dream ... a wonderful dream. You found my journals and notes in the cellar that day you moved in. You wrote the book entirely on your own. The ghost has been nothing but a dream."

"Mmm...wonderful dream," she whispered.

"Goodbye, love." He kissed her lightly on the lips and disappeared.

That night Hermione dreamed of a man she knew long ago. A man she had written a book about. A man she once knew as Professor Severus Snape.

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Okay, don't shoot. Remember, its always darkest before the dawn.

## Chapter 10 - A New Day, A New Man, A New Heartache

*Chapter 10 of 11*

After a night of odd dreams, Hermione wakes up ready to get on with her life. But things don't work out the way she planned.

All canon characters belong to JKR.

Thanks to June for her suggestions and help.

### Chapter 10 A New Day, A New Man, A New Heartache

Hermione woke up the next day feeling out of sorts. She attributed it to having a few too many glasses of wine at the party, although she knew she could not have had that much, since she would never Apparate with Viktoria under the influence. She shrugged it off, and she went on with her daily routine.

That day, she planned to go into town to pick up another royalty check, as well as meet with a Muggle publishing firm. Her book had made it to the hands of Muggle readers, and the Muggle publishing firm was interested in publishing it as a fictional account of a brave and very powerful wizard. There was also talk about a film, and she hadn't even sat down with the executives to work out the Muggle publishing deal. Due to the International Confederation of Wizards' Statute of Secrecy, she would have to rewrite parts of the book and oversee the movie script, so that Muggles would not learn about the real wizarding world.

She was happy that she was able to do something with the journals she found belonging to Professor Snape. She had never truly thought him to be a traitor, even after he killed Professor Dumbledore. Both men were very intelligent and loyal to the cause of ridding the world of Voldemort.

She got Viktoria ready and decided to drop her off at Mrs. Weasley's. Molly had scolded her only a few days ago about not bringing the little girl by enough. Hermione knew that Viktoria would enjoy some time at the Burrow.

After dropping Viktoria off, she made her way to Mercury's Wings. She decided that, since she would be in London, she would pay Reginald a surprise visit. She had missed seeing him at her party, and wanted to invite him to lunch. Hermione remembered how just last week he had presented her with the loveliest poem, holding promises of love and a future together.

Wilfred was his usual happy self. Every since he became the publisher of the most successful book in the wizarding world, he was deluged with truly interesting manuscripts. Gone were the days when Mercury's Wings was known as the trashy romance novel king.

"Hermione, lovely to see you as always," he said as he greeted her warmly.

"Hello, Wilfred. I see you are busy." She smiled as she looked at the desk full of potential novels.

"Isn't it wonderful?" he said, smiling. He reached into his desk and took out an envelope, which he promptly handed her. While he knew she would be publishing a version of her book in the Muggle world, he also knew that their contract gave her full rights to her work. A few months ago that would have bothered him, yet it was her masterpiece that allowed him to make his firm one of the most respected now, and for that he was truly grateful.

"Wilfred, I was wondering if I might ask you for a favor," Hermione asked.

"But of course, my dear. Ask away," he said.

"I'm going to be in London this afternoon, and I wanted to pay Reginald a surprise visit. Do you think you could give me his address?" She hoped he would not say no and give her some lecture on other writer's privacy.

"That's not a problem. I don't have it, but on your way out just ask my assistant for it." He scribbled a small note on a piece of yellow parchment and handed it to her. "Just hand this to Felicia, and she'll get it for you."

She thanked him and walked out of the office with the note clenched in her hand. She happily handed it to Felicia, who wrote out the address on the same note and handed it back to her as she waved goodbye.

After looking at her watch, Hermione knew she needed to get going. She would meet the new publisher first, then drop in on Reginald. She knew he would be so surprised.

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The publisher meeting went without a hitch. She anticipated them trying to do to her what Wilfred tried in the beginning, but they were incredibly cooperative, especially when she agreed that a movie might be a good idea. As she walked down the street heading towards Reginald's house, she remembered how excited the Muggle



Thank you to June for all of her help and suggestions in writing this story.

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"Isn't he wonderful?" Viktoria beamed as she turned and set the cups on the table. "I know he's not conventionally handsome, but I simply adore him. And he loves me so much. Mum."

Hermione Krum was now in her one hundred and thirtieth year. She had been ill for the past year, and spent most of it in and out of St. Mungo's. Her daughter and son-in-law, along with their two sons and their own wives and children and grandchildren, often visited her. Today she was home for the first time in two weeks. Harry and Ginny moved into the small house on Spinner's End in order to better care for their friend. Hermione had insisted on going back to her house. Much as they all tried, there would be no changing her mind. Hermione wanted to go home.

"Hermione!" yelled Ginny from behind her. "You just got back from the hospital. Get away from that window." Ginny came in and set a glass of warm milk on the table next to the chair. She walked to Hermione and pulled her gently away from the window. Hermione had always been somewhat petite, but because of her illness, she had become so fragile.

Ginny placed a blanket over her and handed her the glass of milk.

"Ginny, I don't think I can get much worse than this unless I were dead," she said, slightly laughing.

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I hope you like it.