

Bound to Happen

by *Battle of Lissa*

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

Silently and patiently beta'ed by the wonderful **Madbrilliant!**

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

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Author's Notes: Thank you to my excellent beta, **Madbrilliant!**

"Severus... you're acting...strange."

Unable to ignore his wife's genuine concern any longer, Severus Snape turned sharply, nearly knocking over a short, old witch who'd tried to squeeze through the narrow doorway without rubbing against the front of his robes.

"No! NO, don't touch them!" the woman shrieked, waving her hands at the books scattered on the floor.

Snape rolled his eyes and bit the inside of his cheek to mind his temper. Forgetting why'd he turned around and caused a ruckus in the first place, Snape leaned against the window display to continue his search.

"Severus," Hermione hissed in reprimand, pulling him away from the door. "You've been hovering around me all day. You *hate* waiting for me when I shop for books."

Pulling himself to his full height, Snape straightened his teaching robes over his shoulders and glared down at her. But before he was able to complete the full effect, his attention strayed back towards the door. "I don't *hate* anything you do... You can certainly become insufferably irritating at times..."

"Then go to the Apothecary like you always do."

Snape had been too preoccupied with eyeing everyone who'd passed by the shop window that he hadn't comprehended what she'd just said.

He didn't want to anger his wife, but Severus couldn't ignore the danger today could bring. He'd dreaded this very day his entire life with the cursed awareness of knowing exactly what consequences were brought about and how it all would finish off. Snape knew he had a role to play, but he was determined to change history nonetheless.

The very idea of leaving Hermione, alone... His hand instinctively reached for his wand as past memories unwillingly accumulated in his mind.

"Severus? Severus, I'm speaking to you!"

Snape had meant to turn around and soothe his wife's irritation in the way he only knew how.

But at that moment Severus recognized *him*.

Without a backward glance or a word of reassurance to Hermione, he threw open the shop door and ran down the street in chase.

Severus Snape was in trouble.

Serious, catastrophic trouble.

He'd barely been employed at Hogwarts for less than three years, and already he'd succumbed to his horrid habit of 'investigating' mysteries that were never his business in the first place.

And he'd promised Dumbledore never again. That incident with the filthy werewolf... Snape groaned to himself, wishing away unwanted memories with a hard clench of his eyes. He should have learned. He should have known better.

Dumbledore was going to sack him for sure.

Eyeing one unfamiliar face after another, Severus yanked at his hood until his entire face was masked in shadow. He shouldn't be out on the open street like this. Sweat beaded along his hairline as the sensation of overexposure plagued him. He hadn't felt this...threatened...since he'd been a servant for the Dark Lord.

It hadn't taken Severus very long to comprehend the magnitude of his predicament. He'd obtained a vague impression as to what Dumbledore's contraption could do. It just fascinated him was all. Severus merely wanted to get a closer look at the object that'd been created under such intensely guarded secrecy.

Maybe if Dumbledore hadn't enlightened Snape that he'd been forbidden by the Ministry to continue experimenting on the creation of such an object, Severus wouldn't have been so tempted to test it out.

Snape rolled his eyes and snorted. *Wouldn't Dumbledore be ecstatic to know his experiment was a success?* But come Monday morning, the old man would know once Severus failed to show up for lecture and once he realized something exceedingly valuable was missing from his office.

Hovering in the doorway of an abandoned shop, the young wizard warily glanced around Diagon Alley...at least, what he assumed was future Diagon Alley...before tugging the wretched chain out of his cloak. Turning Dumbledore's invention over in his fingers, Snape gathered that it was relatively unharmed from such a journey.

A mighty gust of icy wind fluttered Snape's voluminous black robes. His vision pulled away from the delicate contraption in his fingers to glance at the rubbish collecting around his feet. Inhaling sharply, Severus lunged for the parchment he recognized to be the *Daily Prophet*.

With shaking fingers, Snape eyed the heading in search of the one thing that would prove his suspicions true no matter how much he wished them to be false.

His hands widened in his disbelief. The paper fell carelessly back to the ground after he'd read, "21st of December, 2001."

"No..."

And then Snape ran, not knowing where he was going and totally unconcerned with whom he knocked over in his haste. The need for immediate action surged through him, viciously sending his legs bustling in speed before he grasped a fraction of a plan leading towards a solution.

He didn't even understand how this damned thing dangling around his neck got him here, never mind figuring out how it could send him back.

Severus knew that the only person who possessed the answers was Dumbledore. But the idea of confronting the very man whom he'd just stolen from terrified Snape.

Preoccupied by his senseless ramblings, Severus didn't take care where his boots landed. One steel toe touched down upon frosted blackness for less than a second before the ice rejected his footing. Accepting the inevitability of his fall, Snape wrapped his hands around his ears, shielding his skull from cracking on the pavement.

But he never reached the ground.

The young man was fiercely grabbed behind the neck by his robes and thrust back into the standing position.

Someone very strong...and very angry...was shoving him into the darkness of an alley.

"What the fuck? Get the hell off me you..."

"*Shut up, boy!*" The voice that hissed in his ear was ripe with threat and yet eerily familiar.

"What do you think you're...LET GO!" Snape planted his feet, resisting the will of his attacker.

"You arrogant, witless, pathetic excuse of a Hogwarts instructor! Dumbledore was mad to trust you unequivocally! You were not ready..."

Snape froze, all will in the fight gone. "How did you know..."

Reaching the end of the alley, the man finally released Severus only to roughly yank him at the shoulder. Snape violently whirled around, his back shoved against the brick wall behind him.

His breathing quickened at the feel of a wand pressed painfully under his jaw.

"I'm going to warn you and only warn you once. I will try to help send you back to your time...I remember how it was done. But if you lay one pre-pubescent hand on my wife, I will kill you where you stand."

The wizard was mad.

"Why the fuck would I want to touch your ruddy old..." But the words died on Snape's tongue. Finally glancing up to send a venomous glare at his subjugator, he could only blink, exceptionally stunned to acknowledge the impossible.

The older wizard's face altered grotesquely, brow creased, black eyes narrowed and gleaming with hatred. It was truly a frightening sight... but a familiar sight nonetheless. The sallow complexion and sharp cheekbones. The black eyes and lifeless, greasy hair.

The nose.

Severus finally comprehended the identity of this middle-aged man in relation to himself.

"Your... *wife*?" A devious smirk spread across his jaw. Jerking his hair out of his face, Snape drawled, "Kill me and you will never live to have a wife—will you?"

The older man blanched, obviously comprehending the enormity of his mistake.

Prompt:

9. Hello, It's Me

a. Snape has a Time-turner, and he 'bumps' into a later/earlier self as he's going about his day-to-day business. What happens next? What do they get up to? Does one Snape get the option to rest and have fun? Or do they share in the pains and struggles? Do they offer each other moral support? Does Snape become far too reliant upon this illegal Time-Turner activity, and does another Order member have to help 'wean him off' himself? Do they do other... more lascivious things :D ? Does Snape use this function to save himself in the Shrieking Shack? etc.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

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After Severus had spat his threat with as much wickedness he could garner, he wasn't given the opportunity to relish the older wizard's stricken expression for very long. As quickly as the fleeting appearance of deep regret had cleared from the man's features, Snape was snatched by the robes and hurtled into an unsuspecting Apparition.

What the fuck is happening? He couldn't understand the resentment this wizard had against him. It was his future self, for goodness sake!

Severus hated not being in the dominant position during complicated situations. He shoved the older wizard away from him the moment his surroundings ceased spinning. "What do you think you are doing?"

"Silence!"

"I did not give you permission to bring me here." Snape whirled around, eyeing the mediocre spread of houses in what he assumed to be Muggle London. "Where ~~is~~ here, by the way?"

"My home," the wizard sneered in response.

"I *would not* live here," Severus said, voice dripping with implied arrogance. He ignored the groan of disgust directed at him.

"I do not need to be reminded of what you would and wouldn't do. Walk."

He crossed his arms in defiance at the wizard's demand, who'd just pointed at the gated walkway leading to a home directly across from them.

"Fine. Hard way it is then."

Unsuccessfully ducking from his older-self's vicious snatch, Severus was forcibly pushed through the gate by a vice grip on the back of his neck.

He was the younger, more virulent wizard here! Shouldn't *he* be the stronger of the two? And Snape had a distinct impression that they weren't the exact same height either. *Old fart must've added an inch to his boots...*

With a harsh shove at his back, Severus was propelled through the front door, nearly colliding with the stair banister. "Are you quite finished? I get it! You're my big, bad future self. What are you trying to prove anyways? Shall we compare the size of our pricks now?"

"What the hell is wrong with you?" Snape senior slammed the front door shut behind him. Pulling himself to his full height, he slowly stalked across the entrance hall to the young man leaning rudely against his wife's china hutch. "Can you refrain from making witlessly snide remarks for one minute?"

"You're one to talk..." Staggered and peculiarly distressed, Severus inhaled as the back of his older-self's hand smarted across his cheekbone.

"Wake up, Junior! Don't you have any idea what has happened? The danger you are in?"

"Don't you mean the danger *we* are in?"

"YES! That implication should be obvious; I did not think I needed to say it. If this isn't successful, you will be forced to spend the rest of your existence in this reality."

"Fine! Send me back!" Snape thrust his hand beneath his collar. Snatching the gold chain, he yanked the blasted object over his head and shoved it into the older wizard's expecting hands.

A pathetically repressed laugh echoed in the silence around them.

"That was much easier than I had anticipated."

"What...?"

"I needed to be Stunned in my sleep before I'd finally given it up." Sending the younger man a challenging smirk, Snape the elder whirled away.

"How dare you trick me?" Hands balled at his side, Severus quickly followed the man through the closest door and into what he assumed was the study. Skidding in the doorway, the sight that awaited rendered him...uncomfortable. "You bested me. I'll give you that... so why are you frowning, now?"

A hand pulled through greasy hair in a typical display of worry that both men knew well. "This proves that a suspicion I had was correct and I do not like its implications."

"What suspicion was that?"

"That history never completely rewrites itself. Anything can change, so easily..."

The younger wizard snorted.

"Don't you take this lightly!"

"Bloody hell! Dammit, stop hitting me!"

"Show some sense and I wouldn't have to!"

Snape senior retreated to a worn armchair beside the hearth. With a flip of his wand, the fire erupted, setting his worry-lined face aglow.

Not expecting an invitation, Severus crossed the room to join him. Uncertainly, he perched himself on the settee across from his older-self and studied the man who was a combination of both familiarity and strangeness.

Except in their appearance, they didn't seem anything alike.

"So... when do I get to meet our wife?" He was anxious to know the color of her eyes. "I can't believe I actually succumbed to such a mundane tradition. Sap." Smirking, he enjoyed the sight of the stoic wizard stiffen, hand fisting around his wand.

"You will not meet her."

Severus snorted. "From the sound of it, you still have a few bugs to work out before I'm sent back. You cannot intend to hide me forever."

Jerking forward in his seat, Snape senior spitefully eyed the young man across from him. "No, but I will hide you for as long as it takes to finish the potion that will send you back. The first time you encountered...the first time I encountered Hermione, I nearly killed her. It was an accident, of course, but not one I am eager to relive again...especially from this side of my existence."

Severus fidgeted uncomfortably at hearing this. *Hermione*. He hadn't thoughtlessly hurt or intentionally killed another in years. Not since before the Dark Lord's fall. *don't think about it. He's dead. It's over.*

The young man's defiant manner appeared to have calmed, and for logical reasons. Whoever this woman was, his future self seemed to truly love her.

I need to know the color of her eyes. "How did it happen?" the younger of the two asked cautiously.

Reluctant at first, Snape turned his face towards the fire before speaking. "After I'd read the date on the *Daily Prophet*, I bolted down the street like a frightened first year. I don't even now why I ran like that, now that I think about it... Well, I hadn't paid attention...I didn't *care* where I was going. I collided into a young woman who'd just exited the bookstore. Not only did my shoulder strike her in the jaw...breaking it...I'd also sent her crashing through the glass paneling in the door."

"That's... horrible." The man's eyes had a strange emotion behind them that Severus couldn't put a name to. Unable to stand it, he turned his attention to the bookcases.

"*I know.* Which is why you're going to be staying in here for the time being."

"You want me to sleep in the study?" In the very least, he acknowledged that he had to stay in this house. No one in this reality could see him. "Does she even know about me...us? That all this had happened to you... and is happening again?"

Snape senior paled. "No... she doesn't. And I don't intend to tell her."

"Don't you think she'd find out with me..." Severus choked on his sentence when the wizard quickly flicked his wand in response to his words. A bookcase in the corner of the room slammed open to reveal a hidden passage.

A dark, cramped passage that obviously descended beneath the house.

Severus jumped from his seat, face lit in agitation. "If you think I'm going to let you lock me down there, you can go bugger yourself!"

The older man slowly raised himself, matching his younger-self's defensive stance. "This is not up for debate."

"I am not staying in there."

"You don't have a choice."

"No."

"This is not your house, you foolish boy! You are not my guest, and you're barely a step above prisoner, so you'd..."

He'd said the wrong thing.

The younger man blanched, sharply turning on his heel to flee from this house at the sound of 'prisoner' spitting from the madman's mouth.

"Get back here!" Snape senior bolted after him in chase.

These two men, unfortunately, weren't the only two occupants in this house. To his horror, Snape recognized the sounds of his wife's arrival in the entrance hall. And apparently, mother fate was close on her heels.

The young man was too quick for him. The Stunning spell he'd sent at his back missed the boy by inches.

"What the..." a feminine voice on the other side of the door gasped half a second before it cracked against her face.

The force of the blow to her jaw and the violent speed of the stranger on the other side sent Hermione flying backwards, her head and shoulders crashing into the glass cabinet doors of the china hutch.

"HERMIONE!" her husband bellowed in a ghastly, grief-stricken voice that sounded disturbingly memorable in his ears.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

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"Severus..."

She couldn't move. Her limbs were bound to her sides. Sweat saturated the back of her neck and shoulders, intensifying the excruciating heat that consumed her body from head to toe.

Hermione hadn't had this dream for weeks. Just when she thought she'd recovered from the worst of her memories...

"Professor Snape... help me..."

Her eyelids wouldn't obey her commands. Unwilling to give up, Hermione was finally able to pry one open. Bright, white light of numerous candles hit her pupil, pain in her head and jaw shot down her spine. The immediate response to this was a whispered spell from across the room that extinguished every candle save one.

The Malfoy dungeon hadn't felt this warm in her memories.

Hermione tensed, anxiously awaiting the shrill pitch of Bellatrix's mad cackle and the picture would be complete.

"Calm yourself," a smooth, resonate voice demanded gently.

The pain seemed to vaguely subside at the realization that she wasn't dreaming. She exhaled at the feel of a welcomed body cautiously sitting on the edge of her bed. Hermione leaned towards the dip in the mattress, hoping the expression she was making mirrored the encompassing relief that slowed her heartbeat and spread to the very tips of her toes.

"Y-you have a fever."

Her husband's voice sounded bizarrely uncertain. Nevertheless, Hermione submitted to the persistent hands sliding through the hair at her temples, lifting her neck slightly. Cool glass rested against her lower lip. With acute patience, Hermione carefully trickled the contents of a vial down her sore throat.

Why was she taking a potion? She was in pain.... She had a fever.... Without warning, the memory of her arrival home hit Hermione like a Bludger to the head. She whimpered, recollecting the deafening vibration the base of her skull had created breaking through multiple layers of glass.

"I...I'm sorry... I tried to be careful...did I hurt you?"

"No." Hermione ventured to pry apart her eyes once more. Finding the task easier with the lights out, she gazed up at the familiar outline of her husband. At the feel of Severus extracting his hand from the side of her face, Hermione hummed in protest. Heaving a weary arm from beneath the tangled bed sheets she pressed the palm of her hand over Severus', nuzzling the inside of his wrist.

Maybe this all had been a dream. Severus didn't press his lips to her forehead like she'd expected. His arm seemed to freeze awkwardly for a moment before her bedroom door flew open and the familiar rhythm of her Potion master's angered screaming lulled her back to sleep.

With a growl of repressed infuriation, Snape shoved his younger-self into the nearest guest bedroom. Seconds before slamming the door in a petulant fit of anger, Snape reminded himself that Hermione was in the next room and needed as much quiet rest as possible.

Once the door had been silently shut, Snape pressed his forehead against it, willing himself to control his temper. "I should have known better than to leave you alone with her. It wasn't even a quarter of an hour...I asked you to watch her, not fondle the woman in her sleep!"

"She had a nightmare."

"She always has nightmares!" Snape whirled around with a snarl. Ready to hurl a stream of expletives, he clenched his jaw instead as he watched the young man pull his shaking hand through greasy hair.

"You say that to me like I should already be aware... And I didn't fondle her! She thought I was you."

"No *shite*."

The boy began to pace in obvious anxiety. "She talked in her sleep. Malfoy. Bellatrix. She even called the Dark Lord by his name."

Severus groaned, turning his face away from his younger-self's expectant gaze. He'd only wanted to...*prevent*... a few things. Save Hermione from whatever turmoil this boy could cause her...the turmoil he himself had once caused. *I've made a right mess here, haven't I?* Snape regretted leaving the boy alone with her, but he'd had no other choice. The Healer from St. Mungo's who'd looked Hermione over had said she'd be all patched up in less than a week thanks to a variety of healing spells and potions that Snape could manage on his own. As much as he wanted to watch Hermione round the clock, Severus still needed to attend to his basic bodily needs.

Snape had known that in attempting to change his past...Hermione's future...that there'd most likely be consequences. But he never anticipated the idea of 'fate' itself having a hand and refusing to be altered.

Sighing, Severus felt much older than his forty-two years. Pushing himself away from the door, he shot an irritated glance at the young man glaring at him with a presumptuous air. "We need a drink."

A house-elf popped in the center of the room. Silver tray braced on her bony shoulders, she effortlessly balanced an unopened bottle of Ogden's and two crystal tumblers.

"Thank you, Mops," Severus said wearily.

The house-elf shot her master a challenging glare. She floated the tray onto a small table between two armchairs facing the hearth. "Madam Snape?"

"She's... recovering..."

"Mops insists to attend Madam Snape!" Hands on either side of her hips, the house-elf stamped her foot in frustration, the frills of her blue baby-doll dress ruffling comically.

Her master smiled apologetically. "You know how Hermione feels about house-elf labor. When has sheever allowed you to lift a finger for her?"

"You is master of Snape house! Madam Snape'd let Mops nurse her if master demands it!"

"I will do no such thing," Snape responded quickly, as if the very idea was beyond contemplation. "Hermione forbids you to serve her, and as she's your mistress, you know you must obey."

Mops jerked back with a squeak, her lower lip trembling as if she'd just been hit. Huffing back the urge to cry miserably, the house-elf popped out of the room with a snap of her fingers.

Severus ignored the boy's stunned expression and stormed across the room. Sloppily filling both tumblers, he slammed the bottle down, nearly breaking it. "Stop gaping at me like a bloody cod fish! Sit down, have a drink...or two...then perhaps we can talk."

He wasn't about to explain his relationship with the elf...or his wife for that matter...to this arrogant little prick.

Snape the younger leaned forward in his chair, arm extending towards the table that separated them. "She looks to be about the same age as me." He licentiously leered at the older man before adding, "Possibly younger..."

"Watch it."

The younger man continued, unwilling to abandon their previous topic. "Given her age, I cannot understand how she could know these people...the Dark Lord!"

"That is not your concern." He didn't want to have this conversation again, nor was he eager to repeat the same advice that he'd once scoffed at so many years ago. "I've lived one hell of a life... experienced much more than you can even imagine. *Obviously*. Trust me when I say that not being told everything that will come to pass is more for your own good... than mine."

"He's dead," the boy stubbornly insisted.

"Would you shut your mouth for five seconds and remember what got you here? Don't you think you'd be better off not knowing damnable information? Do not ask me questions about my past, which hasn't happened to you yet. *It's dangerous.*"

With a hiss of testiness, the young wizard gulped down the contents of his glass. Cheeks reddened from the potency of the alcohol, he unsuccessfully stifled a few choking coughs before topping off another tumbler.

Just when Snape senior had managed to relish a few moments of blessed silence, the boy dared to comment, '*She* doesn't look anything like *her*.'

Snape the elder groaned. The 'she', of course, was Hermione. And there was only one 'her' Junior would compare his wife to. "Thank goodness for that," he answered truthfully.

"How did the two of you meet?"

"What did I just say, boy? I'm not divulging *my* life to you."

"Don't speak to me like I'm one of those ineffectual students! And I *am not* a boy."

"You're a boy to me."

"Then would that make Hermione a little girl?" He laughed nastily.

Severus' practically lunged from his chair, his urge to strangle his younger-self was so strong. "You *are forbidden* to speak of her to me."

"Tut tut... what ever is the matter, sir? Such hostility... Am I making you uncomfortable? I seem like a child to you, but how does it feel to be reminded that your own wife is obviously the same age as me...how old is she anyway?"

He rolled his eyes, disappointing his younger-self's attempts to goad him. "It doesn't make me uncomfortable in the least. Hermione had always been years ahead of her peers. And I know without a doubt that she's far more intelligent and responsible than *you*."

"Her eyes are brown." Young Snape appeared surprisingly subdued given their heated banter not moments before. The topic had changed drastically in the direction of a subject that neither were comfortable with.

Turning away from the boy, Severus sighed. "Let her go."

Both men were acutely aware of the identity of this elusive 'her.' Severus didn't want to see the look of hurt his younger self undoubtedly felt in reaction to his words. After a few moments of uneasy silence in which both men were unwillingly overcome with memories, Junior had built up the necessary emotional shields to continue the conversation.

"How can you say that...? Because of me...us...she's dead."

He knew he should possess some small measure of sympathy for the boy, but Snape had already paid his dues concerning this woman. Potter had succeeded. By Merlin, it was *his* turn to live. "I won't lecture you on this. I can imagine how fresh the pain of Lily's loss still is for you... but you'll soon come to realize that many people had a hand in her fate."

Expectantly, Snape the younger wasn't absorbing very much. Still staring at the fire with the ghosts of a fairly recent war fresh on in his young mind, he asked, "Is Hermione a Muggle-born?"

Snape didn't move, blink, or even swallow. For a very, very long time he'd prepared himself for such a question. A question he himself had asked. Exuding the appearance of complete impassivity, Severus' stomach clenched while he remembered his own reaction to learning this information about his future wife.

"Is she?" the voice asked again, restless for information that could compensate for that brown which had muddied precious green.

Blasted fetishes. Snape shook his head in disappointment, rising from his seat to return to his wife's sick room.

"I'm sorry," a downcast voice called after him.

Snape paused in the doorway. He heeded the sincerity in the young wizard's apology... so he didn't turn around to eye the boy skeptically. Severus wasn't prepared to trust his former-self so easily.

He remembered his own intentions back then. He had possessed no regard for what didn't rightfully belong to him.

Nodding briefly in acceptance, Snape left the room without spitting a cutting remark.

Did he have a right to hold a grudge against this boy's actions that had seriously injured his wife? Especially since said actions were a mirror of his own?

Snape had memorized the exact pattern of the frayed threading in the duvet he'd gifted Hermione for their one-year-anniversary.

The color, texture, and design were certainly beautiful. Even she had said so. Olive green, satin finish with floral patterns that seemed almost reptilian from afar.

Compliments for the household were certainly the norm...a common gift that the average newly wedded witch enjoyed.

But not his Hermione.

She liked it. She loved his effort in shopping for it. But the duvet's frays and loose threads were not her concern. Snape's incredible, brilliant, intelligent wife was certainly not one to sit at home and sew all day.

He learned that much later than he should have, but he wouldn't change her for anything.

Upon about the sixtieth time Severus had scrapped his forehead against the loose threading, a much sought after hand weakly touched upon the crown of his head.

"Hermione..."

His voice was a miserable mixture of distress and relief.

Snape knew she'd get better. He'd remembered her in this very room. This very house.

And he'd remembered the pathetic, old man who'd paced the floorboards until his young wife regained full consciousness.

Back then Severus had scoffed at such useless sentimentality...such weakness. Never would he let a...*woman*... know how much control she could have over him.

I've been such a fool... for so long.

Is Hermione a Muggle-born? Damn and blast! He didn't want his younger-self anywhere near his wife now. Snape the younger's question repeated in his head, reminding Severus of the type of man he'd used to be and it shamed him.

Lily's first time making love had been to the gentle murmur of 'Mudblood' hissed excitedly against her ear.

Both of them were only forth years.

Despite overall assumptions, that 'incident by the lake' was far more than his and Lily's breaking point. It was her last straw. Their sickening emotional tug of war hadn't finally ended until he'd unleashed their private nastiness for all to hear.

She'd certainly been the better of the two, and for so long he'd never forgiven her for it.

"Severus," Hermione murmured with increasing clarity.

That pitch of her voice was music to his ears. She was obviously feeling much better.

Having the boy here was certainly putting Severus' life into perspective. Never...not ever would Snape take his wife's love for granted. More importantly, he knew he'd never deserve it.

Eyes puffy and worn from endless fretting, Snape lifted his head from the mattress, meeting those intoxicating brown eyes that never failed to gaze at him in such uninhibited adoration. Words were spilling out of his mouth before he knew it. "Forgive me... please. I should have never... *never* kept this from you."

"Severus... what has happened?"

"You're going to be so angry, my dear."

"Possibly," she laughed. Pain engulfing her once more, she hissed through gritted teeth. "I remember... I remember your terrified expression in the study... and yet I remember your eagerness in fleeing from the study... Am I going crazy?"

"No!" Severus schooled his voice. "Both were... me...technically."

The silence that followed made him physically flinch.

"What?" Hermione finally demanded.

"Do you remember... in your third year...the... Ah... Time-Turner..."

"WHAT?"

"Please believe that I had never...I thought...*I'd hoped* to shield you from so much."

"Who was that, Severus?"

He opened his mouth in preparation for an explanation, his heart dropping to his stomach.

"YOU'VE KEPT THIS FROM ME?"

Severus spewed firewhisky back into his tumbler. On the verge of hysterical laughter, he hungrily listened to the married couple's endless argument that easily traveled through the thin walls. Every time that woman shrieked at the old man, she'd suddenly bark out a range of expletives from 'ouch' to 'Merlin's left testicle' from the pain of exerting herself.

"Hermione, please... I was hoping it would never come to this. That I'd be prepared to send him back the moment he got here..."

"All this time! Our courtship... my return to Hogwarts for my uncompleted seventh year... We've been married for two years, Severus, and you never thought to tell me!"

"I was trying to save you...in the most literal sense!"

"Well, it didn't work, did it?"

"NO! It did not!"

Young Snape leaned forward in his seat at the uneasy silence that had followed. How he'd love to be in there watching all this unfold.

Finally the old fart spoke again. "Do you have any idea how I have beaten myself over this?"

"Oh, have you? Really? In your personal beatings had you managed a broken jaw and concussion?"

Ouch! Bet the old goat didn't enjoy hearing that one. This Hermione seems like one tough bird Severus sighed longingly. How he'd relish the enjoyment of breaking such a girl if she were his.

He had more questions about Hermione than ever.

"Never, not once, Severus, did you think it important to tell me that you had *met* me before?" Hermione's voice had grown very restrained, almost sympathetic. She must have finally achieved the amount of repentance she'd wanted from her husband.

Severus choked on his drink once more as the woman's voice magically amplified in his ears. "And I know you've been listening to us, you little shite! GET IN HERE NOW!"

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

Silently and patiently beta'ed by the wonderful **Madbrilliant!**

"Please, Hermione. I don't *want* you speaking to him." Despite the sincerity in his plea, Severus the elder struggled to suppress the authority that was finding its way into his voice.

Snape the younger snorted and dared to continue eavesdropping on their never-ending argument. Placing his tumbler on the end table, he slowly rose from his seat to answer the harpy's...Hermione's *summons*.

He shook his head, tugging furiously on his ears. It would be days before the high-pitched ringing went away.

Severus edged himself into the hallway with very mixed emotions about confronting the married couple. Maybe if he could get her alone...*Merlin help me if my future wife is nothing but a shrew... although taming her might lead to a bit of fun*. Severus pressed his ear against Hermione's door before knocking.

"I feel...I feel betrayed. So don't think you can forbid me this...ENTER!"

Sneer properly prepared, Severus threw open the door. Instead of stepping into the room, he crossed his arms, tilting his head forward to cover the majority of his face with his hair and leaned impassively against the doorframe. "Hello, Hermione," he droned. "My, you certainly seem to be feeling a bit more... energetic."

"No thanks to you. And I shall be addressed as Mrs. Snape," the woman countered immediately.

Severus scowled. He truly did regret the...accident...he had caused. He didn't know this woman well enough to wish her harm. Typically one to be quick with a snide remark, he remained silent. She was sitting up in bed, and the bandages around her curly head had been removed. Not only did Severus use this opportunity to inspect her from head to toe, he shook his hair out of his face so she could watch him do it.

Instantaneously, he identified the type of woman this Hermione was. She was unacquainted with the art of suppressing one's emotions. She didn't really *want* to really look at him, but curiosity was getting the better of her.

Severus quirked a knowing eyebrow and smirked when her cheeks burned red.

Interesting. Quickly glancing at the silent, fuming older man at her side, Severus returned his full, penetrating attention to the witch. "I take it we're not on a first name basis, then?"

"Obviously not. *We* are complete strangers. Now, if you are to be a guest in our home, I would appreciate it if you'd heed our warnings and restrictions."

Lip curling, Severus looked past the woman. "Do you always let your wife speak for you?"

Of all the things said that could alter such a grave expression, the old man's sudden smirk was unbearably puzzling to Severus.

"History has shown that my wife does tend to be the more levelheaded between the two of us. But I'm not surprised such a thing in a woman would threaten *you*."

"Oh, for goodness sake, I'm not going to tolerate this for...how long is he to be here?" Hermione asked her husband.

"I don't... know. A month at the most," he reluctantly admitted.

"Oh, just perfect!"

"I'm still waiting, you know?" Hermione abruptly challenged the young man, ignoring his outburst.

"Waiting for what?"

"Your apology!"

Severus glared at the woman through narrowed eyes. His silence was his answer. Regardless of the fact that she'd been delirious from pain, sleep and medication, Severus told himself that he'd already apologized and wasn't going to do it again. "Do you mind if I ask you a few questions, Mrs. Snape?"

"Fine," she snapped.

"While the cot your husband had prepared in anticipation of my arrival is touching... instead of the basement, might I use one of your numerous supply of extra bedrooms? As much as I enjoy a well stocked potion's lab, the idea of sleeping in one has little to no appeal."

Aghast, Hermione turned to her husband. "You made him sleep in the basement?"

"Certainly."

The woman sighed before reluctantly turning to the wizard in the doorway. "Of course you may use one of the spare bedrooms..."

"The last one at the end of the hall," Snape the elder snarled in clarification.

The bedroom furthest from theirs. The young man smirked at the insinuation.

"We have our own bathroom here," Hermione continued warily, "so the one across from your room will also be yours. And perhaps I can persuade my husband to lend you his old robes? You both appear to be the same size."

"Do we?" Severus asked with a smirk.

But Hermione failed to rise to his bait. Two hands entwined above the covers. Frowning, Severus watched as the young woman quickly turned to his older self, who had slid a reassuring palm into her own. After whispering a few words into her ear, the woman closed her eyes and dropped her head onto the older wizard's shoulder.

"Might I ask something else... Mrs. Snape?"

Hermione reluctantly turned to face him.

"What was your maiden name?"

"OUT!"

Taken aback by Snape senior's demand, Severus faltered at the sight of the wizard dashing around the bed in his direction.

"I know what you're getting at, you twisted... get out now!"

Stumbling backwards out of the room, Severus met Hermione's confused expression seconds before the door slammed into his face.

Not until he recognized that a Silencing Ward had been placed upon the door did Severus finally turn in search of his new room.

He growled, feeling far from satisfied.

"What in heaven's name was that?" Hermione asked her husband. His back was still facing her. Hands braced against the door, Severus fought to control his breathing.

"The boy asks an obscene amount of questions."

"Severus," Hermione tsked, "I'm not naive. *I have* used a Time-Turner, which means I'm fully aware of how essential it is to keep as much information from... that man as possible. But my name?"

Finally pushing himself from the door, Severus returned to his wife's side. "It's not so much your name he wants to know but its history. 'Granger' has no foundations in pure-blooded society."

Hermione spoke tentatively to mask her growing hurt. "Despite the prejudices inflicted upon you in Slytherin house, I thought you said you ultimately never believed in such things."

"*I didn't*.. He doesn't." Snape was reluctant to elaborate. "The idea of ever entering into a friendship...relationship with a Muggle-born was beyond consideration. Even a harmless shag was unthought of. And because of all this and his...our common history, I am quite certain Junior is hoping your maiden name is Muggle. "

"This is about Lily, isn't it?"

"Partly. As much as I do not want you to become acquainted with him...the man I used to be...I think it's imperative for you to understand more." Severus leaned forward in his seat. Clearing his throat, he reached for Hermione's closest hand and pulled it into his lap. "Despite my mother's own choices, she forbid me to associate with Muggles and Muggle-borns. She hated Lily, which of course made the girl even more enticing." Severus quickly glimpsed at his wife. "I'm...I shouldn't speak of her like that to you."

Hermione gifted him with a tight smile. "It's fine, really. Continue."

"That's all there is to it, I'm afraid. It was a grudging friendship. We were the only witch and wizard on our block and had no other magical family to associate with. Being in two different houses made our school years volatile, but every summer it was best...easiest to pretend our squabbles never took place. She was just as alone as I was, which I knew and took advantage of. I reveled in the fact that I had the upper hand, teaching *her* about the magical world, preparing her for Hogwarts, then finally being placed in the better house..."

Hermione sat up straighter. "You thought yourself superior to her."

"And I reminded her of it every chance I got. Until one day, she finally saw me for what I was. By the time I finally appreciated her friendship for what it could have been, she was already..." The implication was there, so Severus didn't finish that sentence.

Leaning against the pillows, Hermione didn't think better of dramatically clutching a hand to her chest. "That is the most... It's so sad."

Severus' eyes flashed knowingly. "He's not a house-elf, Hermione. It took some time... but I got over it."

She nodded blankly, suddenly distracted. Comprehension drawing together in her expression, Hermione turned to her husband and gifted him an evocative smile. "It does explain some of your actions though. You've never treated me like that," Hermione quickly reassured him in response to his wounded glare. "But yes... it explains quite a bit."

Hermione tugged her hand free of his and placed it on his knee. Slowly messaging up his inner thigh, she teased him before ultimately stroking his growing hardness.

"If you remember, my dear," Severus hissed, his eyes blazing, *you* were the one to initiate that game."

Kicking the covers away, Hermione began to unbuckle his trousers. "Indeed I did, but you enjoyed it just as much as I... if not more so," she whispered meaningfully, continuing her stroking in earnest. "It appears we've been conditioned as mirror opposites. Whereas you reveled in your superiority... my adolescence was spent drowning in the need to prove I had a rightful place in this world. I remember the first time I saw you in full livery. The idea of the Dark Lord's second in command... a Death Eater... desiring me. Wanting me despite his years of training to judge otherwise..."

With a hiss of frustration, Severus leaned forward, pulling her eager hand out of his trousers. "I don't think we should...you should be resting. It's too soon."

"We'll be careful," she insisted, eyes hazed with lust.

Swallowing, Severus dutifully summoned his Death Eater robes from the bottom of his trunk.

"And the mask," his wife demanded seconds before she flicked her wand and heavy chains restrained her limbs to the bed.

The amorous couple hadn't anticipated the longevity of their coupling. That or they had underestimated the strength of their Silencing Ward.

Either way, Severus the younger had been rudely interrupted in his perusal of the Snape family library by not only high-pitched screams echoing down the stairs but also low, baritone grunts that he *really* could have done without.

If Severus ever had a sibling and heard him having sex, he'd probably be feeling just as disgusted as he did right then.

Despite his... curiosity... regarding this Hermione woman, Snape wasn't eager to overhear her in the throes of lovemaking.

Unless, of course, he was the wizard forcing those alluring noises from the back of her throat.

A deep, rumbling... *manly*... groan pierced through the air and ripped that enticingly feminine image from his mind.

Oh, bloody hell... He jammed the book he'd been reading back into the shelf. *I refuse to be imposed upon like this if I am to stay in this cursed house a whole blasted month.*

By the time the sounds of bedroom furniture began to rhythmically scrape against the wooden floor, Severus was past his limit.

Throwing open the door, Snape leaned into the entrance hall and bellowed towards the ceiling. "FOR THE LOVE OF NIMUE, I CAN FUCKING HEAR YOU, YA' KNOW!"

All noises had ceased before his echo died off.

Turning back into the library, just before he slammed the door, Severus could have sworn he detected the faint sound of girlish laughter.

He couldn't prevent the smirk growing on his face.

Severus suddenly startled at the sound of two feminine voices arguing downstairs. The curtains of his four-poster, the heavy duvet restraining him, even his pillow felt foreign to him. He jumped from bed, wand raised until awareness finally settled him.

Day four, he sneered to himself.

"Tis' my duty!" a shrill voice cried wretchedly from afar.

Severus groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose. Mrs. Snape was arguing with the house-elf...*again*.

"Please, Mops. I am more than capable of answering the door to my own house."

"Mistress should be resting."

"Thank you for your concern, but I assure you, I'm fully healed from the... accident."

Severus couldn't help frowning at the apparent hesitation in her voice. *Accident, indeed.*

"Mistress is two years with no Snape babies! Mistress never fill house with Snape babies if Mistress refuse rest after Master Snape plant the cabbage seeds. Too much activity spoil the cabbage roots!"

Severus burst into absurd laughter. *What the hell?*

"What have I told you about monitoring my ovulation cycle!" Hermione screamed at the house-elf. "NO! No, I'm sorry, Mops! Please, stop hitting yourself... You don't want to ruin Severus' umbrella, do you?"

The doorbell was ringing wildly now.

"LET ME ANSWER THE DOOR, MOPS!"

"GIVE ME SNAPE BABIES!"

Grudgingly submitting to the pile of robes hanging in the wardrobe, Severus dressed himself in his future-self's hand-me-downs. Severus listened to the ridiculousness vibrating throughout the house and couldn't believe the type of life he was doomed to tolerate.

Babies? he sneered to himself.

Although... he wouldn't be adverse to the idea of digging around in Mrs. Snape's cabbage patch. A graceless snort expelled through his nose before he promptly reined in his emotions.

By the time he'd managed the fastenings of each cuff, Severus froze at the sound of a male voice warring with Hermione's.

"Oh, Ron," Hermione sighed with a disappointed shake of her head. "Not again..."

"Ello, love."

"Ugh! You smell like a pub."

"Well... I did sleep in one last night, so..." He threw his hands in the air dismissively. "Invite me in already, I'm freezing my bollocks off out here!"

"Don't be crass, you know Severus doesn't like it."

"*You know Severus doesn't like it?*" he repeated, his face pinched mockingly.

Hermione stepped back into her house, intent on closing the door in his face.

Ron quickly edged his foot just in time. "All right! Sorry! Didn't mean it... Say, shouldn't you be at work? It's almost midday!"

"Well, if you thought I'd be at work, what are you doing here?"

"I was planning on waiting on the doorstep until you got home."

"Did Lavender throw you out again?"

"Merlin, lower your voice!" Ron warily glanced at the adjacent houses. "Can *please* come inside?"

Hermione didn't answer him with words. Hand on her hip, she expelled a reluctant groan and pulled the door open fully.

"Thanks! Hmm, smells excellent... Mops makes the best fried tomatoes."

Without waiting for a sign of approval, Ron crossed the entrance hall in the direction of the kitchen.

"Sure," Hermione droned at his retreating back. "Help yourself."

Not until Ron had polished off his third plate of scrambled eggs, did he finally take notice of Hermione's humorless glare.

"Ah... thanks for the grub."

Her expression refused to change.

Sighing, Ron finally cut the pathetic jokes and turned his full attention to the woman across from him. "Look, I'm not asking for a place to crash. And no, Lavender didn't kick me out. I just... I can't go back. Not yet..."

"What are you doing?" Hermione demanded, her voice somber and heavy with insinuation.

Clenching his eyes, Ron slammed his fist on the table. "Why do you always have to...? Look, just don't, all right! I don't need another lecture on growing up. I'm only twenty-one, for fuck's sake! Don't take it out on me just because you threw your youth away to marry a man twice your age."

"Decided to throw my youth away, huh?" Hermione repeated his words through gritted teeth.

"Fuck! No... no, I didn't mean it. I'm sorry, okay?"

Hermione had heard more than enough. She brusquely rose from the table. "I think you should leave."

"She's pregnant! And I have absolutely no desire to marry her... just grand, right? There, happy now? Something else for you to lord your superiority over!"

Face red with anger, Hermione wrapped her hand around his bicep, tugging him from his seat. "Quiet! Get up now!"

He rose, whirling around to face her and yanking himself from her hold. "That's all you have to say to me? I just told you Lavender's pregnant, her twenty-second birthday is fast approaching... and you're kicking me out of your house?"

"Oh, excuse me. What I must have meant was... Get the hell out of my house and face your own damn responsibilities! I'm done cleaning up your messes, you know that!"

"This is your fault, you know!"

Hermione was appalled. "My fault? How'd you manage that?"

"If you'd just married me when I asked you to, we'd both be happy right now!"

Ron cried in fright at the sight of Hermione's wand whipping from her pocket. Before he knew what happened, his limbs were bound and his mouth was clamped shut.

"For the last time, Ronald Weasley... *I am* happy. I love Severus more than I am capable of verbally expressing. And I am sick of your childish tantrums. Until you learn how to act like an adult, you are forbidden from entering my house again. The moment I release you I want you keep your mouth closed for once and silently walk straight out the front door without another word, do you hear me?"

"I hear you," a smooth voice purred from the doorway. "And I will ensure what you request takes place."

Shoulders hunching, Hermione cursed under her breath. She didn't bother turning in the direction of the voice to decipher its owner. Ron's widened eyes were telling enough.

In a flash, her husband's former-self was at her side. His arm extended sardonically in Ron's direction before he introduced himself. "Tobias Prince, cousin-in-law to the glorious duelist who's currently holding you captive. Do be sure you heed her instructions once you're released, or I will be forced to use more...corporeal...means in ensuring your removal from Snape house."

Ron rubbed his arms sullenly once the binds melted away. He gazed at Severus for a moment before opening his mouth.

Severus promptly shushed the redhead. "Ah, do remember Mrs. Snape's warning. And to answer your unspoken question, yes, I am aware of my uncanny resemblance to Severus Snape. Now, if you don't mind?" Severus pointed in the direction of the entrance hall.

When Hermione made a move to follow them, he intercepted her. "No need. Stay here, I'll take care of this."

Once Ron had been thoroughly escorted from her house, Hermione was sitting at the kitchen table, a formidable glare plastered across her face once again.

Severus sneered at the sight. "No need to thank me," he said sarcastically upon his silent return to the kitchen.

"I wasn't planning to."

"Right. Because you handled that marvelously all on your own."

"That," Hermione barked, jumping from her seat, "wasn't any of your business. And *you know* no one from this reality can see you. Why would you expose yourself so carelessly?"

"You needed assistance, first of all. And once more, it was not only obvious that the man was still heavily intoxicated, but even sober, I doubt him to be the quickest broom on the Quidditch pitch."

"Do not," Hermione's words came out quiet and slow, "do that again."

Severus ignored her reprimand. He couldn't help but admire the sight before him. Hermione's words to the house-elf this morning appeared accurate. She did look better. Much better. The swelling in her face had completely gone down, and Severus was pleased to note that the woman didn't favor the use of cosmetics.

"Your husband doesn't want you alone with that man, does he?"

"My husband has complete trust in me."

"My, my, Mrs. Snape. You just gave me an answer to a question I did not ask."

"Do not play games with me, Junior. Believe it or not, I am trying to be kind to you."

"Do not call me that. That man is not my father."

"*That man* is the only Severus Snape I am willing to acknowledge. You are not Severus. You are not Snape. You are not Mr. Snape. Since I am more than unwilling to address you as such, 'Junior' is the only option."

Severus quickly crossed the kitchen before she was able to reach the door. He blocked the doorway, looming over Hermione with a wild glint in his eye. "You asked me to address you as 'Mrs. Snape.'"

"And?" Hermione's attempt at impassivity was crumbling. When he'd insinuated himself in the doorway, she was reluctant to give him the satisfaction of seeing her flinch away. Individually, they both were aware of each other's body heat.

"And you are not my wife... technically, at least."

She didn't say a word.

"I can see it."

"See what?" she snapped impatiently.

"Your appeal," Severus licentiously dragged his eyes across her body. With his face very close to hers, Hermione flushed as his breath followed the direction of his eyes, trailing down her face. "You're a very... feisty... witch, Mrs. Snape. No doubt inside the bedroom as much as out."

Hermione finally pushed past him. "Don't be disgusting."

"I'll tell you what's disgusting," Severus barked behind her, following her into the entrance hall. "Hearing two complete strangers shagging each other's brains out is pretty damn disgusting."

Hermione froze. Slowly turning around, she shocked the hell out of him by smiling.

"Is it now?" Hermione couldn't help smirking derisively as she stepped closer. "Well... in the future I'll try to shield your fragile sensibilities." Unable to gauge his expression, she leaned forward and gently pushed the hair away from his face. Unaware of what she was truly doing, Hermione lost herself in the movement, grinding a lank strand between her index finger and thumb. Her face was curious yet deliberate, as if he was no more than an interesting potions ingredient.

She was comparing his hair to her husbands'.

Severus suddenly felt unbearably hot and uncomfortable. When a foreign rush filled his head, he silently turned from Hermione's enticing smirk and cocked brow.

It wasn't until Snape was alone that it suddenly dawned on him that the woman had made him blush.

Chapter 5

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

Silently and patiently beta'ed by the wonderful **Madbrilliant!**

"You may have tried to reassure me otherwise, Severus... But I just don't understand it!" Finally calling defeat, Hermione closed the book she'd been attempting to read for the past half hour.

Her husband had been gone all day, hunting down a variety of ingredients that were needed to complete an intricate potion. Hermione didn't want to bother him, but keeping her mouth shut had been very difficult. Severus' exhaustion was obvious. In not wanting to overwhelm him the moment he'd walked through the door, Hermione had waited until he'd settled himself into his favorite armchair beside her before besieging him with questions concerning this strange dual existence.

Past and present Severus Snape were living in her, home and it didn't make one ounce of sense.

Severus sighed, warily eyeing the door before finally speaking quietly. "I don't exactly understand it either... and yet it's logical to me all the same."

"But how? If Junior doesn't do or say the *exact* same things you did when you... abused the use of a Time-Turner..."

Snape's neck snapped in her direction, eyes wide.

"Don't you look at me like that! You know that that is exactly what you did."

"I'm fully aware of the mistakes I made, *thank you*."

Hermione threw her arms up defensively. "I'm dropping it... What I am asking is, even the slightest deviation from your previous choices would alter your memories, would it not?"

"No... yes. Yes and no."

"That doesn't make any sense!" Their conversation had become a repetition of the discussion they'd had the previous evening.

Severus groaned and pinched the bridge of his nose.

Hermione relaxed back into her seat, suddenly feeling guilty for her inquisitive predisposition. She'd merely wanted answers to these never-ending questions, but couldn't help looking away from the pain her demands were causing him.

"It does make sense in my mind," Severus ground out through clenched teeth before continuing more calmly. "Junior's me, so nothing he does... everything he does..." Explaining this was much more difficult than Snape had anticipated. "It is Junior's *intentions* that are precisely identical to mine...my past intentions I should say...so his current actions and my previous ones are blurring together. Ultimately, every minor detail becomes inconsequential in comparison to the... *motives* behind them."

Smiling to herself, Hermione tossed her book onto the end table and rose from her chair. Plucking the *Daily Prophet* from Snape's inattentive grasp, she effortlessly lowered her bum into his lap.

Severus' immediate response...his natural response...rendered him immobile. But once he remembered they were alone and that the door was locked, he allowed himself to express the wanton ease that only Hermione ever witnessed in him. Unsuccessfully masking a throaty groan, Snape greedily wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her hips down onto his growing hardness.

Hermione leaned back against his chest. "And what exactly would those motives be, Mr. Snape?"

Prominent nose against her temple, Severus allowed himself to glare callously, knowing she couldn't see his face. "Selfish intentions. I am certain you don't need me to explain that to you. He is locked in this house with only a house-elf, a wizard, and one *witch* to amuse him...I don't want to discuss this anymore!"

Hermione sighed. Given his dismissive anger, she was further reminded of their previous argument. Severus refused to tell her anything of his past actions...or of Junior's possible ones. In the very least, she was certain that if Junior was capable of anything seriously horrendous that her husband would warn her. But as it was, Severus was mum.

Since her husband had ultimately demanded a change in topic, Hermione thought that this was as good a time as any to inform him of what had transpired earlier in the day.

"Ron... *visited*... this morning."

His hands ceased their intoxicating massage of her waist.

"*Excuse me?*"

"I know, Severus. *I know*. But you didn't see him. He's getting... worse."

"Of that I am certain, and I don't need to *see him* to determine it. You cannot save everyone, Hermione."

"Why not?" she snapped before thinking.

"Let me rephrase that," Severus rasped through clenched teeth. Strong arms wrapped around her once more, urging Hermione back into her previous cozy perch upon his lap. "You cannot save those who are determined to live as miserably as they possibly can."

"Severus..."

"You dare to tell *me* that I am wrong in this? After everything?"

"I...no, of course not."

"Then believe it. Accept it. And God's sake, can you for once listen to me while keeping your mouth shut in the process?"

Heated by his scolding, she whirled around so he could see her defiant stare. But just when Hermione caught the slight tilt of his lip, Severus pulled her against his chest, finally silencing his wife the only way he knew how.

Twenty-three year-old Severus Snape didn't know what to make of them.

He especially didn't know what to make of his middle-aged self.

The man despised him, of that he was certain. Most likely Snape senior had never forgiven himself for the...*accident*... he had caused Hermione during his own trip to the future. And because of this, it was easy for the elder wizard to hold a fierce grudge against his younger-self.

Pondering all these misgivings in a very hot shower, Severus pressed his forehead against the cool tiles and groaned.

He didn't want to be in this reality one single moment longer. Snape wanted to go home.

Desperately.

If I even still have a home...

If he was able to return to 1983, Severus prayed to Merlin that Dumbledore wouldn't sack him for stealing the Time-Turner from the Headmaster's office.

Time-Turner, Severus repeated with a snort. Mrs. Snape had enlightened Severus as to the proper name of the horrid object *And how sufficiently it's been named...* Time...reality as he'd known it, even...had been so rightly turned over that Severus was finding it difficult to make heads or tails of things. Back in his time, Dumbledore's invention had been exceptionally innovative, therefore naming the blasted thing wasn't even thought of yet.

Despite what had happened as a result of his manhandling the object, Snape hadn't truly intended to filch it...he especially hadn't planned to keep it for any stretch of time. He'd merely wanted to discover how the damned thing worked.

Well, I know now, don't I?

He snorted in disgust.

Snape turned off the shower and crossed the bathroom to open a window, expelling some of the humidity.

Palm flat against the mirror, he wiped away the condensation and glared at his own reflection. He glared because he was actually bothering to ponder the image before him and despised the reasons why. Severus admitted that his hair was significantly longer than his future-self's. Snape could see the...draw...in keeping it shorter upon his shoulders.

Perhaps when he returned to his time, he'd cut it a bit.

Perhaps.

He most certainly would not do it now. Severus didn't want that irritating woman to think it was for her benefit.

Frowning, he returned to his previous opinion and muttered, "*Those two don't make any sense*"

In the anger and resentment Snape senior had shown him, there was no doubt that the old fart loved his young wife. And after that revolting lovemaking session he'd been forced to listen to, there was also no doubt that they possessed a passionately... *vigorous*... relationship.

Snape threw his robes over his shoulders with a shrug. He supposed, that if expected, he *could*ise to perform such routine husbandly duties. The woman wasn't a breathtaking beauty, of course. Hermione had her own style of prettiness, which was improved upon by her lack of artificial enhancements.

Her temperament, however... Severus smiled wickedly. Yes, that had to be her main appeal to the middle-aged goat.

But...

Young Severus Snape possessed an endless supply of 'buts' concerning the married couple. He could visualize how he himself would interact with such a woman...and it wasn't coinciding with the mannerisms of his future-self.

Whenever young Snape happened to be in the same room with Mr. and Mrs. Snape, he noticed that the old man never touched her. He didn't kiss her. The most contact he'd seen was her hand gently cradled in the crook of his elbow.

His left elbow more often than not, actually.

And Severus the elder constantly maintained his severe expression, even when he gazed at his wife from across the room.

What was even more disturbing to young Snape was that all of this made the woman smile endlessly. Even the times she'd tease her husband to the point of inciting her own laughter, Hermione would then smile wider once she received an even harsher glare from the man in question.

Was this love?

Snape the younger couldn't say. He'd never experienced mutual love.

Whereas he'd certainly once loved a girl named Lily Evans, he hadn't experienced that crushing emotion until after her death. And as far as being on the receiving end of such ardor, Snape had been a very young man when Lily had gasped those three little words. At the time, the only response he'd known to give was an ungentle thrust against her hymen.

Enough! he scolded to himself.

Fastening the last button of his worn robes, Severus sighed, dreading the day to come.

What a way to spend Christmas morning...

The old man wanted his assistance in the lab today. If he was diligent and precise, Snape could assist his future-self in completing the potion that could send him back to 1983.

Hopefully, Severus would be sent back much sooner than the three additional weeks that he was expected to remain.

Forty-two-year-old Severus Snape was a licentious, beastly excuse for a wizard.

What a way to spend Christmas morning...

Cock in hand, Snape scolded himself over and over again as he gazed up at his flushed wife from his intoxicating view between the crux of her inner thighs.

Due to the sight before him, one hand had been appropriately employed in pleasuring himself while the other had been used to maintain Hermione's propped knee upon his shoulder.

Knowing his intentions to be perverse, Severus cursed his honor profusely for his merciless, wicked desires...and all the while he continued in his pursuit of said wicked desires. He slid his thumb across her stocking-clad leg until his fingers found themselves under the Muggle suspender that kept such a garment in place.

Magic does the trick so easily for witches, making a garter entirely useless.

But that hadn't deterred Snape from gifting his wife the one she was currently wearing.

Tongue swathing her sex eagerly, Severus attentively observed as he challenged the elastic as far as it could extend before releasing it...willing it...to smart against his wife's already bruised flesh.

She moaned loudly, back arching off the bed. Her modest bosom painfully strained against the Muggle corset confining her and began to spill over, gifting him with the rosy hue of an irritated nipple.

Horrid, despicable wizard...

Severus began tugging at the suspender once more. His wife moaned in anticipation, her wetness pooling into his mouth.

SNAP!

He was going to come.

Hours later, neither men enjoyed the situation they now found themselves in.

Alone, together, and in a windowless basement-turned-Potions lab.

"Are you even paying attention?" Snape senior snapped at his younger-self. Adding the necessary ingredients to his cauldron, Severus caught Junior's brief moment of distraction. "One day, you might find yourself in my position and will be forced to make this potion for your very own pathetic past-self. If we do not complete this right the first time you will be forced to remain here an additional month."

The young wizard rolled his eyes, resuming his monotonous task of measuring and labeling the newly acquired potion ingredients.

"One day you might find yourself in my position..." Well, since they were on the topic... Junior cleared his throat before asking, "So... how do Hermione and I meet?"

"You know I'm not going to tell you."

The elder wizard should have been more diligent against about releasing that snort of disgust before spitting out such a comment. Junior froze and truly observed the type of Potions lab he was working in.

It heavily resembled one he himself would keep if he happened to remain teaching Potions some ten plus years from now.

Good God!

Snape senior whirled around at the sound of glass shattering on the floor. "What did you drop?"

"It was... empty...did Hermione attend Hogwarts?"

The elder wizard snorted once again.

That was all the answer Junior needed. He was conversing with 'himself,' after all. Ignoring the mess on the floor, he snarled, "You were bloody daft enough to actually fall for one of our...for a fucking *student?*"

"Ah, so we're now talking about Hermione in relation to me and not you?"

"This is *not* a laughing matter!" Of all the horrid... Junior couldn't believe his ears.

The old man rolled his eyes, refusing to look at him.

"Tell me, Junior... What is more worrisome to you? The apprehension that you might never recover from your sick addiction to Hogwarts' populace of Muggle-born seventh-year girls... or that you might actually feel affection for one of your conquests?"

The peal of shattered glass echoed once more.

Both men caught the slip. After ten excruciatingly long seconds, Junior gasped in a disturbing, breathy voice, "Hermione's a Muggle-born?"

"FUCK!"

"No, thank you, Mops," Hermione insisted warily, irritated at the elf's persistent interruptions. She regarded cooking a meal as seriously as any other task she was determined to complete.

The house-elf stamped her foot upon the flagstone, tiny fists balled at her side. "But I's made the Christmas dinner last year!"

"And now I want to do it."

"Mistress should be *resting* after such a busy morning..."

"Dammit, Mops, mind your tongue!" Despite Hermione's guardedness, she couldn't help sending an uneasy glance towards the lone figure situated across the kitchen.

A figure that had been attentively watching her every move while sitting very, very still.

Hermione sighed, grudgingly yanking a rolling pin out of the elf's hand before the creature managed to inflict critical damage to her skull. If only Severus...her Severus...were here to assist her, Hermione might be able to mind her temper a bit better.

Yes, Hermione had allowed Mops to cook Christmas dinner last year. But that had only been out of pity. Now she knew better. ~~She~~ally knew better. Hermione had never owned her very own house-elf. Unfortunately she learned, much later than she should have, that elves couldn't comprehend the concept of pity. The more she had allowed Severus' house-elf...their house-elf...to do for her, the more Mops insisted and expected to complete the same tasks continuously.

And the young clone of her husband wasn't helping matters...at all.

Hermione slammed an iron pot onto the stove and screeched, "And what the hell is your problem? You've been rudely staring at me since you pompously strolled in here. Don't you have a potion to complete?"

Young Severus Snape flinched at the unexpected clang of metal, but was otherwise unaffected. Straddling a chair, he returned his chin to its perch upon the straight back. Hermione had been so distracted by his mocking smile that she hadn't caught the inconspicuous adjustment to his trousers.

Voluminous robes were a godsend when one wanted to hide an aching erection.

"I'm merely watching you cook. And...*Mr. Snape*... is cataloging the ingredients that were used today. There is no need for such hostility... Hermione." Severus' voice was richer than black velvet.

The hairs on the back of Hermione's neck rose. The only time she had heard *that voice* speak in such a tone was in her bedroom...

It made her very angry for some reason.

"And what is so fascinating about my cooking, if I may ask?"

"You do not use magic."

"*And?* What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing," Severus barked quickly. Catching himself, he cleared his throat before continuing. "Nothing at all. So may I watch?"

Hermione merely grunted in response.

Severus the younger had been so quiet in his attention to Hermione's cooking that before long she had forgotten his presence. Not until she began scrubbing a pot by hand did she recognize the distinctive creaking of wooden chair-legs straining under the weight of a fidgeting body.

His... staring... was unnerving.

"What?" Hermione snapped again.

"So... I am able to entice you away from marrying a Weasley?" he asked casually, as if they'd been having an engaging conversation for the past hour.

"You know the Weasleys?" Hermione asked absently, caught off guard by the unexpected topic.

"One of them is currently my least favorite student."

Hermione smiled. "I'm sure Bill will say the feeling is mutual."

Severus regarded her through narrowed eyes. "Indeed." Of course the woman would be acquainted with all the present and potential Weasleys. But all the same, Junior didn't enjoy the knowledge of it one bit. "Are you finally going to tell me your maiden-name, or shall I seek your husband's permission first?"

"I'll tell you."

"Just like that?" he asked gracelessly, caught off guard by her quick response. He'd been so certain that if Mr. Snape declared something forbidden, his young wife would obediently obey.

... *Not one ounce of sense, these two* he quickly thought to himself.

Hermione flashed Junior a bright smile. His trousers felt tighter than ever.

Not until Hermione began speaking did he realize she was mocking him.

"I don't understand why you keep trying to intimidate me? I'm not afraid of you... after all *have* seen 'you' naked. Tell me... is the slight curve to the left a natural born trait or did you have an accident on your broom when you were younger?"

For the second time this week, and probably his life to date, Snape flushed profusely. Traces of sweat beaded along his hairline. Under such a horrid threat of embarrassment, he flung himself up from the chair to stand in his habitual looming manner. Drawing his robes around his shoulders, Severus edged closer to Hermione's stance by the stove.

"It's Granger, by the way."

After a long, contemplative pause Junior responded, "Never heard of it."

"No, I suspected not."

Junior stepped even closer to the stove... and dared to lean into her.

He spoke casually the moment he detected a suspicious glance sent his way. "While the Weasleys have never been known for their money, *they* are one of the oldest, pure-blooded lines to date. Older than the Malfoys. And yet... you turned down an offer of such a marriage... for a half-blood of no substantial wealth or station?"

"I didn't love Ronald enough to marry him."

"Once again...an answer to a question I did not ask."

"That was the answer to your question, as a matter of fact. You're just too shortsighted to realize it. The simple truth is I loved yo..."

Severus flinched, stepping back quickly.

"...I loved *Severus*, and that was more than enough for me. I never cared for all the pure-blooded rot."

"Indeed?" Severus' cynicism was blatant. After a moment, he decided to take her proclamation with a grain of salt and advanced down an alternative avenue of possibilities. "Ah... I see. A Potions master's reliable salary at a prestigious school would have been a much more handsome conquest... especially to an over-achieving witch such as yourself. You *do* live quite comfortably here, don't you?"

Hermione froze, thoroughly revolted. "*What are you insinuating?*"

"Better to be comfortable with a half-blood than poor with a pure-blood, no? You did just say that you don't care for blood-purity. It appears my future-self's assessment of

your character was accurate... Although it's disheartening to see myself so duped. But not only are you young, and attractive... you *are* highly intelligent. And it's obvious my appearance doesn't get any... better with age. So I suppose once I passed the age of forty, I knew I had no other choice but to *settle...* down."

"Severus would never say such a thing about me!"

"He didn't need to. It's blatantly obvious that you are an overachieving, money-hungry witch who'd probably grown comfortable to her life at Hogwarts and sought to replicate such easy living in her own home. All you Muggle-borns are the same! Always on the hunt for a formidable wizard to take care of you..."

Before Junior could make sense of Hermione's reddened face and appalled snarl, or the reasons behind it, her hand flew through the air and collided painfully against his cheekbone.

His body was propelled a number of steps back before he managed to right his disorientation from such unexpected power behind the blow.

"You foul, disgusting excuse of a man! How dare you speak to me in such a way... in my own home!"

Junior wiped the blood from the corner of his lip, unsuccessfully masking his sadistically pleased grin. If the woman had hexed him, he would have been infuriated. Most likely he would have hexed back.

But Hermione had resorted to Muggle-dueling.

Blood rushed to his groin so fast it made him dizzy. *Dizzier*, disorientation considering.

"You don't know *anything* about me," Hermione continued. "I would never... I have never needed a wizard to take care of me. I've experienced some sick... the truest evil of men... and never went running to a man for help!"

Junior inflamed at her words. "What evil could you possibly know?" he bellowed. "Some of us have *actually* experienced horrors, so don't you dare speak of such things so flippantly. Spoiled, self-important Muggle-born!"

Hermione clenched her eyes. Electricity crackled around her. If she'd been holding her wand, sparks would've showered the room. "Mops!"

The house-elf popped into the kitchen in an instant. "Yes, Mistress?" she answered eagerly.

Hermione spoke through gritted teeth. "I've suddenly come down with a forceful headache. Would you be so kind as to finish this up?"

"Yes, Mistress! Mistress is so kind to poor Mops!"

Before Hermione reached the door, she grabbed at a wrapped box that Junior hadn't spotted earlier. Both hands clamping down on package, she hurled the box clear across the kitchen where it smacked against Junior's chest.

"Happy Christmas, you miserable git!"

Frowning, Junior waited until he'd distinguished the fading vibration of Hermione's stomp up the stairs before he reluctantly opened it.

His displeasure only increased considerably.

Inside the box was a brand-new set of black robes. Robes that were his alone and not some faded hand-me-downs that previously belonged to a foreign, devastating wizard who was to be himself at the end of eighteen-years.

Junior sighed, vexed at the strange, crushing emotion filling his chest.

He didn't understand those two...especially Hermione...one bit.

I am not apologizing... Junior said to himself for the tenth time the last hour.

Steeling himself for the unpredictable, he threw open his bedroom door and edged down the hallway. Junior refused to admit to himself that he'd been pacing his room, working himself into a right state.

No, he was not going to apologize to Hermione for his judgments against her. He was certain everything he said was accurate and the woman had merely grown angry at having such blatant, ugly truths thrown out in the open.

Junior's upper lip curled involuntarily. He grudgingly admitted...very, very grudgingly...that he should at least... thank... Hermione for the much desired new robes.

She had been acting the proper hostess and had been treating him decently, Severus admitted. It was this thought in his mind that bade Junior to loudly knock upon her bedroom door.

He wouldn't have dared such a thing if he wasn't certain that the old man had been wholly occupied down in the Potions lab.

A few tense moments passed without an answer. Knocking once more, Junior's hand stilled in the air when the door pushed away from the force of his fist.

"Mrs. Snape?" he called tentatively.

No answer.

Slowly pushing the door open in the hope of exaggerating his entrance, Junior called to her once more. When he received silence again, Severus carefully stepped into the bedroom.

It was empty.

That was when he noticed a door opposite him slightly ajar. A thin streak of bright light cut clear across the room's dark interior. Junior's ears prickled when he recognized the sound of off-key humming echoing against tile.

Junior edged himself closer.

All instinct told him that this was not only inappropriate but also incredibly dangerous if he were discovered. He knew exactly what Mrs. Snape was doing in there. The thunderous pounding of rushing water was telling enough.

But that cracked door called to him, ridiculed him. He needed to get closer.

Once Junior had managed to level his face against the doorframe, all licentious aspirations drained from his groin as quickly as his face whitened to a sickly pallor.

He was truly at a loss for words.

A part of him was exceedingly aroused at the sight offered, of course. His bollocks ached, begging for release after such a ... trying... day. But his rational mind warred with his fantasies.

Facing away from the door, Hermione was perched on the edge of the bathtub as she waited for it to fill with hot water.

Only a small towel was wrapped around her waist. She lowered herself to test the temperature of her bath, gifting Severus with the soft swell of one bare breast.

As Hermione raised her mane of riotous curls into a sloppy coil at the crown of her head, Severus' breath stopped short, and the rational section of his brain finally gained control.

What the hell?

The sight of her scarred back startled Junior to the point of rendering him nauseous.

He wasn't repulsed by the scars themselves, for there weren't that many and it was obvious that they'd been expertly healed. Only a faint scattering of white discoloration was visible.

It was the patterning of the scars that made Junior break out into a cold sweat.

"Impossible," he muttered to himself.

Those scars were very distinctive to a particular person's style of torture. A combination of the Slicing Hex and Cruciatius that only one woman he knew was able to master. And the only surviving victims encompassing such markings were permanently confined at Mungo's while the perpetrator was currently imprisoned in Azkaban, hopefully for the remainder of her life.

Unless...

He didn't even want to imagine the implication that those scars exposed.

"Impossible," he repeated once again, his baritone accidentally rising over the rush of water.

Hermione's back straightened.

Her neck carefully turned and immediately locked eyes with the dark figure hovering at her bathroom door.

Hermione didn't say a word. Her face didn't even twitch in anger or disgust.

And all of this went against Junior's expectations. He almost wished that she'd strike him again.

In less than two seconds, Hermione had risen from the tub with such apathetic deliberation that she hadn't bothered covering herself from the young man's unblinking gaze.

Junior's appalled expression had ripped all sexuality from this encounter.

Her face totally indifferent, Hermione smoothly grasped the edge of the door and propelled it to slam against his face.

Severus didn't say a word. It took much longer than he would have liked to acknowledge before he finally removed himself from her bedroom.

By the time he returned to his room, he recognized that the crushing, suffocating heaviness he'd suffered in the kitchen had returned with a vengeance, and it had nothing to do with the new robes he'd been given.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

Silently and patiently beta'ed by the wonderful **Madbrilliant!**

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Severus the elder's chest felt... heavy. The heaviness generally experienced when one had forgotten something important, like payment on an outstanding debt or procrastination in giving a long overdue apology.

Hermione had been in the tub for well over an hour, and the door was locked. She never locked the door against him. Somehow, Snape knew that she was all right physically, even though she hadn't responded to his knocks upon the door.

This was exactly the development that Severus had feared.

Subsequently, Snape perched himself upon the four-poster, head in his hands as he waited for his wife to come to bed. He possessed a vague idea as to what was troubling Hermione, but Severus didn't have the slightest notion on how to handle it.

This was precisely why he had asked her, virtually demanded her even, to speak as little as possible to his former-self.

Hermione's acquaintance with Junior would serve no purpose *for them*, especially in regards to their marriage...

Severus feared the idea of Hermione associating Junior's personality with his own and causing serious havoc in this bliss he'd fought so hard to achieve.

At that last thought, Severus growled even louder, his hands clenching at the hair of his temples.

There was another turn of the dice that he needed to acknowledge. His wish that Hermione refrain from acquainting herself with Junior or, rather, that Junior wouldn't get to know his future wife had been a dangerous scheme as well.

When I was younger... back when I was in Junior's position... if I hadn't come to know Hermione, would I have pursued her... later? Where would I be now if not for my mistakes?

Snape didn't have an answer of course, but he readily acknowledged his guilt regarding this woman. He had taken so much for granted, even when the war was said and done and Hermione had returned to Hogwarts for her final year. But given where he was now...what he had now...he wouldn't change his life for anything.

The bathroom door finally flew open. Severus jerked, eager to speak to his wife.

Towel wrapped tightly around her figure, Hermione stiffly approached her wardrobe without acknowledging his presence.

Severus' entire body physically ached. Knowing Hermione had always been keen at sensing his emotions, he promptly reigned in his hurt. This moment wasn't about him.

When he'd finally stood up from the bed, Hermione quickly turned around.

"I didn't mean to ignore you. I just needed a bit of time, Severus," Hermione said carefully, eyes darting around the room.

"I know."

"I just," Hermione continued, not catching on to the complete understanding behind the force of his words. "I just couldn't bare the idea of associating *you* with *him*."

"I understand that."

She took a step toward him and stopped. "You were such... a bastard."

Severus snorted dryly but wasn't offended. "Indeed." Matching her step, Hermione didn't give any indication that his touch was unwelcome. Another thought crossed his mind. After Junior's... vileness... Hermione might need the intimate reassurance of the husband she had come to depend on.

Snape quickly crossed the room and gathered her into his arms. When Hermione eagerly let go of her towel to return his embrace, sighing deeply into his chest, Snape cursed his idiocy. This was one confrontation he knew to anticipate, but had also never witnessed.

Given everything he had experienced in his own time-travel to the future, whenever he thought he knew what to expect, life always threw him for a loop. "His appearance is a blow, and you're... hurt... that I've never given you some idea of all this before. I know. But there's one thing I've never lied to you about. I...when I'd told you I'd waited a lifetime for you... I meant it."

"You resented me," she said in argument, face pinching in disgust at the insult present in her voice.

Severus held her moistened body even tighter as he admitted, "Yes. I resented you as long as I'd waited for you. It had taken me a very long time to... separate those conflicting impressions of you."

"I can... see that. It's so...strange. I'd thought I'd understood you, but now so much is coming into perspective."

"My proposal..."

"I was horrid to you, I'm sorry."

He laughed again. "I deserved it."

Hermione pulled away and socked him in the arm. She hadn't put all of her power into the blow, and Severus knew it. He made a show of flinching from the movement and held his elbow as if wounded. "You did deserve it, git!"

He chuckled, pulling her back into his arms. "I'm aware, Hermione. *I've known*. Surely that seems obvious to you now as well."

"Yes," she frowned. "Severus... you should have told me. I would have..."

"Treated me differently?"

"I...yes."

He smoothed her wet curls away from her face, breathing deeply against her neck. "Then how would I have known if you truly wanted me?"

"Severus..." Hermione's voice mirrored the ache in her heart. She pulled him towards the bed and reveled at the sight of his pupils dilating, just as they always did when she initiated intimacy.

Eagerly falling on top of her, Snape yanked the towel to the floor, pulling her bare thighs around his hips as she whispered, "What have I done to you?"

The next day, Junior had welcomed the complete denial that had been his mind's immediate response to that crushing emotion. That twinge he'd felt as he'd stared at Hermione's closed bathroom door...

Walking back to his bedroom, eyes clenched, Junior had almost allowed that one, forbidden word to form. *You fool. Idiot. Admit you judged poorly and accept your guilt...*

Junior's eyes flew open with a snarl. There was only one woman he'd allow himself to regret and that female *did not* have brown eyes.

In *his* lifetime, Hermione was *nothing* to him.

The future could always change.

Hours after Junior had... encountered... Hermione during her bath, he'd locked himself in his bedroom with the determination to recount everything his older self had attempted to teach him in the Potions lab. Severus wrote and rewrote his notes, memorizing every step that would be crucial to complete the potion needed to send him back.

That seemed to be the answer to his confusion... He needed to be sent back.

Junior refused to dwell on the fact that his future wife held the answers...unspeakable, calamitous answers to the path his life would take.

Given how I've seen them... the old man must have been completely open to his wife about everything. Mrs. Snape knows what will happen to me five years from now... ten years from now...

Whenever such thoughts crossed his mind, Junior would fiercely shake his head and pour himself into Potions research.

Somehow, he'd managed to avoid Hermione for three full days...and this was the result.

Severus Snape the younger couldn't stop thinking of her.

In the most random of moments...usually when he'd been taking a shower...her bare body would enter his thoughts. Smooth shoulders and slim waist followed by the memory of her neck carefully turning while she gazed blankly at his unwelcome presence.

Junior cursed, body jerking the quill in his hand and splattering ink across his notes. Thinking of Hermione's half-naked figure made him remember the things he'd said... many things... that she probably hadn't deserved.

Accept your guilt...

NO! Not her... not another fucking Mudblood..

Junior didn't know the first step to make things right, which was one of many reasons he'd welcomed the denial.

Two more weeks... Merlin, help me, I'm almost there.

Lost in thought, Junior carelessly descended the stairs on his way to the potions lab. Hand clutched around the banister, he skipped over the last step, propelling himself into the entrance hall.

His feet nearly gave out under him and skid across the wet floor.

In his adrenaline rushed haze at the threat of breaking his neck, Junior scowled. He inhaled deeply, ready to summon that blasted elf for a proper scolding at such sloppy cleaning.

His mouth gracelessly snapped shut before he was able to expel a single sound.

Just across from where he was standing, there was a figure... a body braced on all fours, scrubbing furiously at the aged tile.

Junior swallowed.

A well-defined rear end was facing him. A... gyrating... rear end clothed in that ostentatious garment Muggles call 'denim.'

"Fucking hell!" Severus whirled around, face aflame at the unwanted thoughts rushing through his mind.

"What happened?" Hermione gasped, releasing her rag to face the unexpected outburst.

"What the hell are you doing?" Junior snarled over his shoulder.

"I'm scrubbing the floor, obviously. And what are you yelling at me for?"

"That's what house-elves are for, you imbecile!"

"Not all of us get enjoyment out of relying on helpless creatures to complete tasks we are capable of managing on our own."

"You're a bloody witch, aren't you?"

Hermione expelled a disgusted sound.

"Relying on magic for every minor task isn't satisfying either! And if you're going to speak to me like a git again, at least turn around when you do it. I don't understand why *you're* so angry with *me*."

Junior inconspicuously yanked at one trouser leg and pulled his robes tighter around him. Brows furrowed, he managed to face Hermione in profile. "I am not angry with *you*."

"Then what..."

"I'm angry that I'm still in this cursed house when all I want is to go home...why am I explaining myself to you? I am not your husband, Mrs. Snape. You've already made that distinction very clear. Perhaps you should remember it before you think you have the right to lecture me on proper behavior!"

Severus snapped his wand through the air, drying the sudsy floor before storming towards the potions lab.

"I know the step," Junior ground out very slowly in response to his future-self's demand.

"Then say it," Snape barked, leaning over the boy's worktable.

"Don't speak to me like a dunderheaded student!"

"Answer the question! What is the final step?"

In his struggle to suppress his growing irritation, his hands clutched at the rim of his stool. "After this simmers for seventy-two hours, hellebore is then added followed by three clockwise turns."

"Three clockwise turns," Snape snapped.

"I just said that!"

"I'm ensuring you remember it! Clockwise, not counter-clockwise."

"*I understand.*"

"If for some hair-brained reason you do such a simple step wrong, this potion will be useless and it will take another month to complete a fresh batch."

"Dammit! I said I understand."

It happened so fast. Teeth gritted grotesquely, Snape hurled himself around the worktable, snatching Junior by the collar of his robes. Kicking the chair out from under him, Severus suspended the boy in the air by a vice grip to his throat.

He took advantage of his younger-self's fear and quietly entered his thoughts.

Snape saw much. Far too much, but things were progressing as he had expected.

"*Good.*"

"You have married a *beast!*"

Hermione did not divert her eyes away from her cookbook. Why this man thought he was welcome to accompany her while she cooked, she had no idea.

He'd been very adept at making himself scarce the last few days, and Hermione wished he had continued with the habit.

"Had a bit of a tiff, eh?" Hermione emotionlessly responded.

"He's off his rocker! I cannot fathom... Am I to become a heroin addict?"

"Not that I'm aware."

Hermione never heard him approach. Two hands slammed down on the granite counter beside the stove, his breathing labored. Her stirring spoon fell to the floor in her abrupt step back, spraying the cupboards with tomato paste.

Junior spoke quick and nasty, "The two of you have been mocking me since I came here, and I'm putting an end to it now!"

"Step back..."

"You ask too much of me. Now... now I wish that madman *had* locked me in the basement for the past month. I would've come away from...this...with my sanity intact if I hadn't been forced to share a house with *you.*"

Hermione didn't know what to say.

I resented you as long as I'd waited for you. It had taken me a very long time to... separate those conflicting impressions of you.

Her defensive stance immediately softened. For the briefest of moments, she identified a portion of her husband within this man.

Her husband had been this man.

Face almost sick with paleness, Junior struggled to voice his next words. "Ignorance would have been bliss, indeed."

"No," Hermione answered softly. "I'm... content... you're here, ultimately. It's meant to be this way, I'm sure. If you had remained in the basement, you would never have met me and..."

"And what?" Junior snarled. In one step, he was upon her, shaking hands curled around her shoulders. "And what? I would never have waited fourteen years to have you to myself?"

His entire front, chest down to his knees, were pressed tightly upon the woman in his arms.

"Re-release me."

That single stutter was her doom.

"You'll never tell me, will you? If I beg, demand, threaten... You'll never tell me the hundreds of minute details you know about me. About a life I am yet to live..."

"I can't! You know I can't..."

"I wish I never met you."

Ignoring her struggles, Junior filled whatever little bit of space still separated them. Hand clenched into her hair, he pulled her face up to his, forcing his frustrations upon her with a kiss.

A kiss he would not allow to end.

Not until he had grabbed her hand and forced it upon his aching cock did she finally open her mouth.

"GET YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF OF HER!"

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 7

Jealous. Possessive. Endlessly devoted. Such words could easily describe a man like Severus Snape, especially in regards to his wife. Unfortunately, Snape finds himself in the position of shielding Hermione from the temptation of a hot-blooded and much younger man—himself.

Silently and patiently beta'ed by the wonderful **Madbrilliant!**

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"GET YOUR FILTHY HANDS OFF OF HER!"

The world had not only flipped upside down, but it had also managed a few back flips in the process. Hand on her heart, Hermione struggled to even out her breathing while she absorbed the sight before her and rationalized what in the bloody hell had just happened.

The sight of her husband choking the life out of himself was disturbing, to say the least.

Touching two fingers to her lips, Hermione muttered, "Enough, Severus."

Neither man seemed to notice her. Hermione panicked. Junior's face had a slightly purple tinge to it.

"Severus, I said enough!"

Snarling monstrously, Severus shoved his younger-self in the direction of the door. Junior collapsed upon the floor, gasping and coughing in his struggle to return oxygen to his lungs.

Teeth clenched, Snape stepped threateningly towards the boy's continued presence. Hermione grabbed his arm, forcing him to remember her warning.

With one finger extended, Severus threatened, "Go to your room now! And if you have any value for your miserable life, you will securely lock and ward the door.*from the inside.*"

One hand still stroking his tender throat, Junior clumsily rose from the floor and fled the kitchen.

"Severus," Hermione called tentatively, in a sense begging him to turn around and look at her.

Back facing her, Snape ignored the apologetic tone of his wife's voice. His shoulders rose and fell in exaggerated movements in his attempt to compose his temper.

"Severus... I have no idea what happened. Honest. I could have...should have put more of an effort into fighting him... please, forgive..."

"*Shut up.*"

Hermione inhaled sharply. At the feel of her throat tightening, she snapped her mouth shut and fled towards the door.

A strong hand clamped around her upper arm and yanked her back.

"What are you...?"

"*I said, shut up.*"

A little frightened and thoroughly confused, Hermione was pulled tightly against her husband's chest. His arms came around her, almost painfully, as her lips were forced open for the second time that afternoon.

A satisfied groan whimpered in the back of her throat.

"I don't understand." Panting slightly, Hermione voiced the first thing that came to mind.

"Neither do I. But do not apologize again. I was...*I am* angry with myself."

"Him or..."

"*Myself*, Hermione. I vividly remember my first kiss with you. Unfortunately it wasn't*our* first kiss. So I apologize... for throwing myself at a very beautiful, and very married, woman."

"You don't have to explain."

"As you can see," Severus continued loudly, suggesting that he'd explain exactly what he wanted. "I did not have the most... moral... of characters. I hadn't been within Dumbledore's ranks for very long. I may've been fighting for the right side, but my motives in my day to day life were extremely... selfish."

"You were a horrible kisser."

Severus held her at arm's length, taken aback by her vivacious comment.

Hermione dared to giggle.

"I beg your pardon! I was only twenty-four and had *very little* experience. Besides... I haven't heard you complain since."

"I've had no reason too."

Hermione's teasing smile faded at the sight of his licentious grin.

"Nevertheless, you still deserve to be punished," Snape threatened.

"Wait a minute..."

"Silence." One hand clenched around her elbow, Severus pulled Hermione away from the stove. He then kicked a chair out from the dinner table before grandly lowering himself into it. With one not so gentle shove, Hermione was instructed to stand before him.

"I believe I need to wash that vile boy's taste from your mouth."

"Shall I fetch the soap?" Hermione asked mockingly, a smile pulling at her lips.

"Unnecessary. Get on your knees."

Eyes filled with excitement, Hermione gathered her robes in a bunch of fabric in front of her.

"I don't think so," Severus ridiculed. He yanked her makeshift cushion out of her hands. "I cannot allow you any measure of respite."

"My knees will scrape."

"Punishment," he reminded her. Severus extended his hand to her, palm up. Ignoring her accusing glare, Severus loudly cleared his throat.

Hermione finally placed the hem of her robes into his waiting hands and lowered her bare knees against the flagstone. Pressing her chest against his inner thighs, Hermione urged Severus to spread them further.

Snape feigned boredom, leaning against one of the armrests with his chin rested in his hand. But his quickened breathing... and tented trousers gave his enthusiasm away.

Hermione took her time unfastening his belt, intentionally rubbing her arms against his length.

"NOW, Miss Granger!"

"Yes, Professor," Hermione purred, her tongue brushed against the tip of his cock as she spoke.

Snape growled, hands clenching against the arm rests.

He should have remained in his room.

Junior was conscious of this foreboding awareness from the moment he opened his bedroom door.

That madman had instructed Junior to remain behind a locked door, no doubt for his own protection.

Junior's neck would be black and blue for a week, at least.

But he couldn't stop thinking about Mrs. Snape. The smoothness of the woman's lips still burned upon his own. The warmth and wetness of the inside of her mouth taunted him. Promised him an array of unknown pleasures. His cock engorged as dozens of scenarios involving said wet mouth flashed through his mind.

Grasping himself through his trousers, Junior groaned. Eyes closed, he also remembered the expert feel of her hand wrapped around his shaft.

And that single, eager stroke she gave him right before her beast of a husband exploded into the kitchen.

He should have remained in his room.

But Junior couldn't. He needed to speak to her again. He needed to see her again. Under a guise of extreme apology, Junior believed he could coax Mrs. Snape into sharing another... encounter.

Junior approached the kitchen door slowly until he was suddenly alarmed at the sounds of struggled, labored breathing issuing from within.

He imagined his future-self torturing Mrs. Snape in fashion similar to what was inflicted upon him. Junior should have known better than to leave her alone with the brute!

Wand raised, Junior exploded through the door.

He gasped, alarmed at the sight of Snape bent over in his chair, face red and sweaty with one hand clenched into a pillow on his lap.

Junior's concern altered to mortification when the pillow moved, and he realized it was Mrs. Snape's head.

"GET OUT!"

Mumbling a profoundly embarrassed apology, Junior whirled on his heel and fled up the stairs to hide in his room.

An explosion of curse words boomed through the house.

He should have stayed in his room!

It wasn't until Junior had settled himself quietly upon his four-poster was he finally able to discern the true recipient of Snape's wrath.

"RELEASE ME THIS INSTANT! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE...I SAID NO, HERMIONE! WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT FINISHED? THIS IS HARDLY APPROPRIATE *NOW*... CAN YOU AT LEAST STOP LAUGHING!"

Junior rolled his eyes, appalled and disgusted at what he was hearing... and especially what he had just witnessed.

He lowered his reddened face into his hands and groaned.

As much as he didn't want to admit it to himself, Junior would have gladly switched places with the geezer *He'd* be more than willing to allow Mrs. Snape to lower her face

between his legs, to hell with whomever might hear or see them.

With that visual growing increasingly in detail, Junior reached for his wand and warded his door with locking... and *silencing* spells.

Today had finally come.

The potion that would send him back to 1983 would be complete this very afternoon. Junior's last day in this wretched house had finally arrived.

But to his absolute horror, Junior felt nothing but dismay at this realization.

Get over it, you daft fool! Get over her! I finally get to go home. I have no place here... in this reality.

Junior repeated this to himself over and over again, all the way down to the basement.

The old man didn't say a word of acknowledgement to Junior's presence. Thin-lipped and face completely dispassionate, Junior would have thought the man had forgotten the actions committed against his wife... if it wasn't for the red tinge to Snape's face and the beads of sweat upon his hair-line.

In fact, Snape appeared almost... nervous.

This is what I want, Junior reminded himself. *I finally get to go home.*

This is what I want...

"Do you remember the final step?" Snape demanded briskly.

Junior nodded. *"Hellebore is added followed by three clockwise turns."*

Snape placed the final ingredient into Junior's outstretched hand. The old man then reached into his inner-ropes, retrieving that horrid object which had caused this hell weeks ago.

Junior tipped the Hellebore into the bubbling caldron, swallowing thickly as Snape placed the Time-Turner around his neck.

"... do such a simple step wrong, this potion will be useless..."

Junior's shaky hand extended, uncertainly grasping the stirring rod.

"... and it will take another month to complete a fresh batch."

"On with it!" Snape snarled behind him.

"Fuck off!"

Sneering in disgust, Snape whirled around, allowing Junior the breathing space he obviously desired.

This is what I want...

No!

... I've not had my fill of Hermione.

Junior sucked in one long, apprehensive breath and stirred the potion three times...*counter-clockwise*.

"It's fin-ished."

Face harder than stone, Snape whirled around and quickly filled a vial with the concoction Junior had created. He then shoved the potion into Junior's hand, instructing the boy to swallow it.

Palms sweating in anticipation of Snape's rage, Junior obediently gulped every drop.

Silent and thin-lipped, his older-self began winding the Time-Turner.

Junior's heart plummeted from his chest. Finally taking in the sight of the caldron, he realized that the potion looked--perfect. Absolutely and gut-wrenchingly perfect.

"Impossible!"

"Quiet."

"I stirred it wrong!"

"I know."

But three-counter clockwise turns... The actual, final step had always been...

"You-you tricked me!" Beginning to feel the effects of the potion, Junior struggled to center his mind and body in this reality.

He wasn't ready to leave.

Hurling himself out of the chair, Junior lunged towards door.

A vice grip on the base of the neck hurled him backwards upon the floor. Severus Snape descended on him, face full of loathing.

"I never... I never said goodbye."

Despite everything this selfish creature had done, Snape couldn't ignore the anguished, familiar face below him. For the first time since the boy had arrived, Snape shook his head in pity.

The boy was disappearing before his very eyes.

"NO!" Junior yelled.

"You don't deserve her."

When Severus Snape arrived back in 1983, Dumbledore would claim that the Potions master had physically aged a good number of years.

His missing instructor materialized out of thin air. Snape landed directly in the same chair he'd occupied moments earlier when Dumbledore had left the young man alone in his office. Both feet heavily planted on the floor, Snape leaned forward and slouched oddly against his thighs.

The only facial features visible to Dumbledore at the distance from behind his desk were two furrowed brows cradled between long, lank hair.

Severus didn't acknowledge the Headmaster as the old man had expected. He hadn't begged forgiveness for his burglary of his invention, nor had he spluttered his typical stream of endless promises. Promises that he'd never betray the Headmaster again.

All this Albus had expected with growing disappointment, and he would have fired the man for it. The Headmaster was prepared to banish Snape from this school and revoke his membership to the Order. The resignation paperwork was laid out in front of him.

Snape breathed hard threw his nostrils. Long seconds of silence passed as he silently glared at the golden object still dangling around his neck.

Once the Time-Turner had completely stopped spinning, Severus finally made an attempt at speech. His voice cracked embarrassingly, but he managed a weak, "If you don't mind, Headmaster?"

Dumbledore was actually caught off guard, which was demonstrated by his flinch. "What is it, Severus?"

"Would you please remove this cursed Time-Turner from around my neck?"

Dumbledore sighed. This enigma of a man had gone from obsessively hovering over his creation to absolute refusal of touching it.

Little did either of them know, Severus Snape would never touch one again.

Slowly, the older wizard rose from behind his desk to stand before Severus. But the young man's body language hadn't changed.

Dumbledore softly rested his hand on the crown of the boy's head and slid his fingers down the nape of his neck until the chain was curled in his grasp.

It wasn't until the Time-Turner had been lifted off his shoulder's did Snape finally attempt to sit up.

He blankly looked up at the Headmaster, his face schooled with such dispassion that this exact expression permanently burned upon his features. It was a look that he'd come to master for decades to come.

"My classes?"

"It's only been a few minutes... here at least. You've been gone...?"

"A month." Severus nodded once before rising. "I've not created as much chaos as I've feared. O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s will be upon us before we know it. I'll be off then."

Dumbledore paled, suddenly clicking something into place. He should have recognized the signs the instant this man returned.

Once Severus had finally released his morbid self-censure at Lily's death, he had grown crass and selfish. He ate life with glutton enjoyment, totally unconcerned with those affected. Dumbledore didn't know which Snape was worse, nor which one he preferred interacting with on a day-to-day basis.

But now, it seemed Snape was back to square one.

"You'd mourned her," Dumbledore reminded the boy's backside. "Not forgotten... but you had finally accepted her fate."

"I had," Severus answered with such conviction he had never shown regarding the red-haired woman.

Yet this strange, soul burning sadness that lit vindictiveness behind the Potions master's eye told a completely different--a new--story. Snape was acting so...similar...to the reaction he had shown when he'd learned of Lily's demise.

And like he'd done years ago, this was the only reason Dumbledore didn't punish Severus for his transgressions.

"Severus... what have you done?"

Severus paused in the doorway, and a variety of emotions engulfed him at once. Pain, love, desire, lust, embarrassment, pain, resentment, envy, passion, and finally, scorn.

"Only time will tell, sir."

He only had less than ten years to meet...meet again...the woman of his dreams. His alluring, passionate soul mate that he was determined to hate with every fiber of his being.

The... End?