

The Little Flat

by Valady

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Chapter 1

In a little cottage in Hogsmeade, Hermione Weasley prepared to leave. She was going to ~~td~~*their* flat, the one place in the whole of Wizarding Britain that no one except she and her love could enter. The spell they'd used to ward their little world was borderline Dark Magic, each had spilled blood in order to set it to recognize only them and let no other inside. The magic used was ancient, Purebloods had used it to protect their homes and estates for centuries from unwanted intruders. It's not as if anyone else knew about the flat, or about the two lovers, not even Hermione's parents knew. Hermione walked out of the cottage setting the wards before she made her way to the public Apparition point and to the one place in the world she longed to be.

Hermione stood at the counter watching the knife she'd charmed cut up the vegetables she'd set out to add to the stew that would be their dinner that evening. Her thoughts wandered to him, the one wizard she truly loved. Who would have thought that of all the wizards she knew HE would be the one for her?

Adding the potatoes, carrots, and celery, she sent the knife and cutting board to the sink. It was hard to believe that already ten years had passed since Voldemort's demise. She was now married, a Potions mistress, and had the job of her dreams as a potions researcher with a prestigious company. She travelled to so many different countries, had seen so many wondrous sites. The only thing that would make her life perfect would be to be married to the one wizard she loved with all her heart, and therein lay her dilemma.

The distinctive *pop* of Apparition let her know that he had finally arrived. She covered the pot and set the flame low so the stew would not burn before making her way to the sitting room to greet her love. She opened the door, and there he stood, dressed in his trademark black robes and frock coat, looking at her with a smile he reserved just for her.

She moved towards him, holding out her arms, reflecting the same welcoming stance, and they came together and kissed. His kisses always made her toes curl and made her want more... so much more.

It was Friday; the week had seemed to drag on, but now it was time for him to leave. Severus packed for the evening. Even though she normally couldn't stay, he did; he enjoyed the little flat that was their world. Heading out the door, he made his way to the Apparition point, stepping quickly, anxious to get to his destination. He hated that they had to keep their love a secret, but there was nothing he could do about that until she decided to change things.

He reached the gates and stepped outside the wards, and with a slight turn, he was gone only to appear in the sitting room of their shared flat. He heard the door open, and there she stood the witch who owned his heart. As he opened his arms to her, she stepped forward; arms encircled and lips met. She felt so good in his arms. *They*

felt so right. His lips left hers and moved to her cheek, temple, to the top of her head.

"Hello, my love, I have missed you," he said.

"I've missed you as well. Did you have a good week?"

"As good as it could be without you near. How was your week?"

"The days were good. I had a few breakthroughs, but my nights were long and lonely."

"Did he give you a hard time again?"

"When doesn't he? I do have good news though... I don't have to leave tonight. Ron has gone to Ireland; he's playing tomorrow. The first string Keeper came down with Dragon Pox last night."

"I'm sorry to hear about the Keeper, but it's good news for us. It's been too long since I've been able to hold you all night."

"I know, love, it'll be so good to wake up next to you."

"Mmm, what is that wonderful aroma?"

"Dinner, I made beef stew. It should be done soon. Why don't you go change and I'll check on dinner."

"I'll take a quick shower and join you shortly, then."

One last kiss and Severus went to take his shower.

After having checked the stew, Hermione went to the bedroom; she could hear the water in the shower still running. She quickly changed into her green silk nightgown; it was floor length with a slit that went up to her hip. She covered it up with a matching robe and left to set the table in the little alcove off the kitchen.

A/N: Much thanks to my betas Nicole and bookofsecrets. This story was originally written in 2007 for MistressMalfoy's It's My Birthday Challenge.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Chapter 2

After setting the table, Hermione placed the stew in a serving dish and sent it, along with a plate of hot rolls, to the table. She took a bottle of wine out of the rack to serve with dinner and made her way to the alcove to wait for Severus to join her. The view from the room wasn't much, but she could watch as the sun set in the sky. The purples and reds the sun set off before it disappeared over the horizon brought to mind another time she witnessed such a display...her honeymoon in Dover. It seemed almost a lifetime ago, and she wished that she had listened to her heart and to her mother when both had misgivings about her marrying Ron Weasley.

Begin Flashback

"I'm just saying, dear, that perhaps you shouldn't rush into this marriage. It shouldn't matter if you delay the wedding a few months, not if you both really love each other."

"Mum, Mrs Weasley has already started making the arrangements..."

"Excuse me, but why is Molly Weasley arranging my daughter's wedding? That task is supposed to be mine."

"She just, well, she sort of took it upon herself I guess, right after Ron and I announced our engagement. She went into a wedding planning frenzy. I really didn't have the heart to stop her. Besides, she knows what is needed for a Wizarding wedding ceremony."

"Tell me that your father and I are at least invited, or has she forgotten she didn't give birth to you? Look, Hermione, I don't like this one bit. It seems as though you're being pushed into this marriage way too fast."

"I know it seems that way, Mum, and sometimes it does feel that way. But what can I do? I can't just call off the wedding. Everyone is expecting Ron and me to get married."

"Hermione, what does your heart say?"

"That I do love Ron, but I don't know if it's the kind of love to build a marriage upon."

"Then why are you going through with it? Why are you allowing Molly Weasley and everyone else to dictate what you should do?"

"Mum, it's my decision, okay. I don't want to disappoint everyone, especially Ron. He does love me, and maybe I'll come to love him the same way."

End Flashback

Hermione sighed to herself. Why hadn't she listened to her mum? If only she had stood up to Molly and everyone else all those years ago and told them she wasn't ready to actually get married yet, then things wouldn't be such a mess.

Severus stepped into the alcove. Hermione, with a faraway look in her eyes, was obviously lost in her thoughts. He stood in the doorway and observed her for a moment.

The last rays of the sun casting her in an ethereal light, the beauty of the moment almost took his breath away. Breaking out of his own musings, he stepped up to the table and sat in the chair across from her.

"Dinner smells wonderful."

Hermione didn't respond. She still sat there looking out the window at nothing.

In his best professorial voice, Severus spoke a bit louder, "Ten points from Gryffindor, Miss Granger, for inattentiveness."

"What?"

"Ah, you're back. I was saying dinner smells wonderful. You were off in your own little world. Do you want to talk about whatever is bothering you?"

Hermione shook her head. "No, I was just thinking of my mum and dad. I haven't gone to see them in over a month. Well, let's eat; I'm famished."

After dinner, Severus and Hermione could be found on the sofa Hermione reclining with her legs up on Severus' lap reading the newest edition of *Potions Monthly*. Severus absentmindedly rubbed her leg as he read his copy of the same journal.

"What an idiot," Hermione mumbled as she read one of the articles.

"Who's an idiot?"

"Uh. Oh, Vanderwilder. I mean really who can take him seriously?"

"I concur; the man is an idiot. How he ever became a Potions master is beyond my comprehension."

"How does he get articles printed in here? I mean you'd have to be blind not to see what tripe he's written."

"His brother-in-law is an editor for the journal."

"That explains it," Hermione said with a smirk planted firmly on her face.

Severus put the journal down as he leaned back and stared at the fire. He needed to talk to Hermione. He had come to a decision, one that could change things for the both of them. Looking over towards her, he noticed the bottom portion of her robe had slid open revealing a very naked leg that his hand couldn't help but slowly travel the length of up to her inner thigh.

Hermione felt Severus' hand going up her leg, stopping just short of the juncture of her thighs. Keeping the journal in front of her, she waited to see what he would do next. She didn't have long to wait, as she felt his tongue taking the same route that his hand had just traveled.

Suddenly her leg was lifted and placed on his shoulder. She felt him move forward and yank the journal from her hands and toss it to the floor.

"Now that I have your undivided attention," Severus said as he lifted her gown. "No knickers? You naughty witch; I'll just have to take full advantage of that." The next sounds she heard were her own moans as Severus' talented tongue delved between her legs, arousing her as only he was able to.

"Mmm, I never get tired of the taste of you, my love."

"Severus, please..."

Smiling up at her before returning to his task, he said, "Always so impatient."

Hermione's hand sought out his head, her fingers grabbing onto his hair to hold him in place as she writhed under his ministrations.

Grabbing hold of her hips, Severus held her as still as he was able as he drove her to the edge of the precipice. Taking her clit between his lips, he sucked on it, pushing her over the edge. Her moans and cries made it clear he had achieved his goal.

"Oh gods, Severus, what you do to me," said Hermione as her breathing returned to normal.

"Complaining, my dear?"

"Never."

"Shall we continue this somewhere more comfortable, like our bed?"

"Wonderful idea, my love."

A/N: Much thanks to my betas Nicole and bookofsecrets.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Chapter 3

They stood next to the bed, kissing passionately; they each untied the sash holding the other's robe closed. Moving from her lips, Severus made his way to her neck, kissing, licking, and nipping each sensitive spot as his hands pushed the robe off her shoulders allowing it to fall to the floor.

He took a step back and let his eyes feast upon the vision he uncovered.

"Mmm, you know I love how you look in this gown, witch. It shows off all your assets to perfection," he said as his eyes roamed over her body, his hand stroking her naked thigh and hip.

Hermione's hands made their way beneath his open robe, making contact with his skin as she wrapped her arms around his waist. Even after two years together, just touching him sent a thrill straight to the core of her being. Bringing her body flush with his, she rested her head against his chest and sighed softly.

"I love you, Severus."

His arms tightened as he drew her even closer and he laid his cheek on top of her head. "I love you, too, Hermione."

Slowly, they removed what clothing was left on one another. Lying down on their bed face to face, they touched, kissed, and expressed without words the depth of their love.

Hermione wrapped her hand around his cock, remembering the first time she saw it and how she wondered if he could ~~fill~~ *fill* of *that* inside her. She slid the head of his cock between the lips of her pussy before placing him at the opening.

Severus entered her, slowly, savoring the feel of his body becoming one with hers. His eye's held hers and he could literally see her love for him within them.

Hermione felt him slowly filling her. Oh, how she had missed this, missed him when they could not be together. Her mind, body, and soul seemed to sing out in the glory of their lovemaking. She wrapped her legs around his waist and moaned deeply as he started driving rhythmically in and out of her, bringing them both slowly to the pinnacle of rapture.

"Oh, Merlin. Hermione, I love you... Gods, how I love you. Come with me, love. Come with me," he said, his breathing becoming heavy as he drove into her harder and faster.

"Yes, Severus... Yes... please... harder, Severus," she pleaded with him as she felt her world about to explode around her.

The pulsing of her pussy around his cock sent him over the edge also.

The two lovers, sweaty and sated, held on to each other as their breath and heartbeats slowly came back to normal. Severus moved off his lover, managing to grab hold of her to bring Hermione onto her side as he held her close.

"Mmm, that was... wonderful, Severus."

"I do aim to please," he said somewhat smugly.

"I'm so glad I don't have to leave tonight, that I can spend it here in your arms," she sighed as she burrowed closer to him, putting her head on his shoulder.

"As am I, love."

Should I talk to her now or wait until the morning? Mmm, perhaps now would be best. She's relaxed, sated... happy Severus thought as they lay in each other's arms, basking in the afterglow of their lovemaking. "Love, there is something I want to discuss with you. It's something I've been thinking about for quite a while now."

"Hmm, and what is that, Severus?"

"Well, you know I've been teaching for nearly thirty years now...and you know I only started teaching because Albus required it of me. I believe it's time for me to 'retire' from teaching. I've never really enjoyed it, and I have wanted to dedicate more of my time to researching."

"If that's what you'd like to do, Severus, then I support your decision. Will you be moving back to Spinner's End or are you moving into the flat?"

"Neither. Spinner's End does not have adequate room for a proper lab, nor does the flat. Albus left me a small estate... I've been thinking of moving there."

"That's wonderful, Severus. Where is it located? Scotland?"

"No, itslocatedinspain."

"It's what?"

"It's... located in Spain."

Hermione sat straight up in the bed and turned to face Severus. "Spain! Are you... Do you?" Hermione didn't know what to think or what to say. Was Severus leaving her?

"Are you trying to tell me that you're leaving me?" she asked as she tried to hold back the tears.

"No, love, I'm not leaving you. We'll still see each other; we just won't be together as often as we are now. Of course, you could move to Spain with me."

Hermione hung her head. "When will you be moving?"

"I plan to do so a few days after the Leaving Feast. I still have to write my letter of resignation to Minerva, who is not going to be happy."

No longer able to hold back her tears, she turned away from Severus so he wouldn't see her cry *Merlin, what am I going to do without him? Just knowing he wasn't too far away made everything else bearable!*

Severus noticed her shoulders shaking slightly and knew there were tears streaking down her face. He sat up and took her in his arms.

"Hermione, love, I'm not leaving you. I love you. But there is so much I've wanted to do with my life, and staying where I am...I just feel as if my life has gone stagnant." He could feel the warmth of her tears against his chest, and it was breaking his heart. However, he couldn't allow the situation between them to hold him back any longer.

"There are still four months left of school. Please, my love, consider leaving Britain with me. Leave Weasley, and come start a new life with me in Spain."

"I want to, Severus, more than you could know, but..."

"No more buts, Hermione. You need to stop worrying about what others think or say; it's past time for you to put Hermione first. I can't promise that what we have now will always be enough for me. I want you to be my wife; I want to have a family with you."

Hearing his words, Hermione cried even harder.

"Come, my heart, let's lay down. Let me hold you tonight and wake up with you in my arms."

Severus held her as she cried herself to sleep. When he was sure she was safely in Morpheus' care, he too slipped into sleep.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Hermione didn't want to wake up just yet, for she felt safe and warm in her love's arms. She hated the thought that in a few hours she would have to leave the little flat once again and go back to the cottage in Hogsmeade. However, now she knew that one day, in the not too distant future that when she looked up at Hogwarts, Severus wouldn't be there. He would be thousands of miles away in Spain. She had some hard thinking to do and a decision that was long overdue.

She felt Severus stir behind her and knew that he would soon be waking up*He wants to have a family with me.*Hermione smiled as she remembered the words he spoke the previous night. She tried to picture a life with Severus, days spent in research together, nights spent in his arms, and perhaps a child or two in the not too distant future. To her it was an idyllic picture and one she so wanted to have for her own. The arm around her tightened, and she felt him place a kiss on her shoulder.

"Good morning, love."

"Good morning, did you sleep well?"

"I always sleep well when I have you next to me. Have you been up long?"

"No," Hermione said as she turned to face him, placing a kiss on his lips. "Would you like a cuppa?"

"Yes, please."

"I'll be back in a moment," she said as she sat up and bent down to retrieve her robe from the floor.

Severus watched her walk away, and his thoughts wandered back to last night and their 'talk.' He hoped she would choose to leave with him. He would miss her desperately if he had to leave her behind in Britain, only seeing her, maybe, once a month.

Hermione set the water to boil on the stove while she set up the teapot. She didn't want to leave here today, but if she didn't show up at the Burrow, Molly would go in search of her. Well, at least Harry, Ginny, and their kids would be there too. Harry... Gods. Harry would take her leaving Ron about as badly, if not more so, as Ron!

Flashback

"This is going to be fantastic, Hermione--Ginny and me, Ron and you, We'll be like one big happy family! Our kids will grow up together..."

"Whoa, Harry, we haven't even discussed having children yet. We can't afford to have children right now. I'm still in my apprenticeship, and Ron is still in Auror training."

"Well, once you're married you can give up the apprenticeship, Hermione. I mean you won't need to be a Potions mistress. Mrs Weasley says being a mum is a full-time job in itself. When would you have the time to work too?"

"I am NOT giving up my apprenticeship, Harry, no matter what anyone says. It's something I have always wanted, and I don't care what 'anyone else' thinks about it."

"I'm sure Ron won't mind your completing your apprenticeship. By then he'll be a full Auror and making enough so you two can start a family. You know I've always thought of you as the sister I never had, Hermione, but now with you marrying, Ron we'll really be related."

"Yes, Harry, it'll be wonderful."

"Hey, maybe you and Ron could live with Ginny and me at Godrics Hollow, you know, until you two can afford a place of your own. I know living at Burrow would put a crimp..."

"Excuse me? Who said we would be 'living at the Burrow'?"

"Uhh, Ron... and Mrs Weasley. I mean even you said you two can't afford to have children yet. This way the two of you could save some money."

End Flashback

Hermione shuddered as she remembered the two years of living at the Burrow: constantly being under the ever 'watchful eye' of her mother-in-law; the so unobvious hints about how they shouldn't wait too long to have children; the constant criticism and unasked for 'advice' about how she could be a 'better wife to her son'; and Ron just sitting there silent while his mother's mouth kept going on and on. Unless of course it was a criticism about him, then he'd say something!

Hermione poured the hot water into the teapot and placed the lid on top. While the tea brewed, she put some biscuits on a plate and set it on the tray. A nice quiet morning, having tea and biscuits in bed... Ron would never do that. For one, he had to have a huge breakfast every morning.

"My mum makes a hearty breakfast every morning for my dad. It's what a good wife does, Hermione."

Pushing the thoughts of Harry, Ron, and the Weasleys out of her mind, she focussed on the wizard awaiting her in the bedroom.

She entered the bedroom, the tray floating in behind her as she sat next to him and allowed the tray to settle down on the small nightstand next to the bed. She took the plate of biscuits, placed them on the bed, and then proceeded to serve the tea.

"You spoil me terribly. You do know that, don't you?"

"Of course, but it's my prerogative to do so!" Hermione smiled at him as she handed him the cup.

"So, what are your plans for the day?" she asked.

"I suppose I should go to Diagon Alley and replenish some of my stores that are beginning to go low, perhaps stop by Flourish and Blotts to browse a bit."

"I don't look forward to my day at the Burrow," she sighed. "I just hope Harry and Ginny's children keep Molly occupied enough so she'll stay out of my hair today."

"She's still giving you a hard time?"

"Every chance she gets. I swear the woman isn't happy unless she has her nose in every aspect of her children's lives. I've been tempted a number of times to invite her to watch to make sure Ron and I are 'doing it' to her satisfaction."

Severus laughed and blanched at the thought. He tried to keep thoughts of Hermione in bed with Weasley as far from his mind as he could, but the image of Molly Weasley's face being issued such an invitation was just too funny to ignore. Severus reached over his lover and placed his cup and the plate back on the tray. He untied the sash to her robe and began kissing her neck.

"Perhaps I can give you something to think about while you're stuck at the Burrow today," he said as he took her in his arms and eased her back down on the bed.

Hermione spread her legs invitingly for her lover as he eased down upon her, kissing her neck, lips, shoulders, breasts--awakening her need to become one with him, again. The two lovers kept the world outside their little flat at bay for a little while longer.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Chapter 5

The pop of Apparition could have been heard by anyone if Hermione hadn't chosen a spot just down the road from the Burrow to appear. The walk would give her a few minutes to gather her thoughts and steel herself for the day ahead. Her thoughts were on the wizard she had just left; she really did love him. So why was it so hard for her to leave Ron? Hermione sighed. She knew deep down the answer to that particular question she always strove to be accepted in this world, and that led to her doing what everyone else thought 'Hermione' should do, whether it was what she wanted or not. She soon found herself at the gate leading to the Burrow. Taking a deep breath, she opened the gate and walked up to the door and knocked.

The door opened, revealing her sister-in-law, Ginny. "Hey, Hermione," she said as she moved to the side to allow her to enter. "You're just in time for lunch."

"Hey, Gin. Mmm, yes, it smells delicious. How are the children doing?"

Ginny proceeded with her usual twenty-minute report on everything her little ones did, and/or said, since the last time they saw each other. This gave her enough time to greet everyone sitting at the kitchen table with a silent nod while Ginny babbled on and to eat a bit before Molly found an opening to interrogate her on whatever bug was up Molly's arse at the moment.

"So, Hermione, why aren't you cheering Ron on at the game?" asked Molly in a saccharine tone.

"I already had plans to see my parents. Besides, Ron didn't say he wanted me to go."

"Of course he's not going to beg you to go; a good wife would just go and support her husband," Molly said, looking smug.

"A good wife would just go? What about you, Molly? Why aren't YOU in Ireland rooting on your son? It's what a GOOD MOTHER would do!" Hermione retorted.

Harry reached over and grabbed Hermione's hand. "Calm down, Hermione. You know how Molly is where Ron's concerned," he said to her in a soft voice so only she could hear.

She looked at Harry; he had been her best friend since she was twelve years old, but she had reached her limit where Molly Weasley was concerned, and she wasn't going to take it sitting down any longer.

"I'm sorry, Harry, but enough is enough. I can't deal with this bloody bullshit any longer."

She could hear Molly gasp at her use of foul language. "Really, Hermione, you need to watch your language and start acting like a lady."

Arthur sat at the head of the table, his eyes going back and forth between his wife and his daughter-in-law. He'd known this was going to come to a head one day; he just wished it would happen while he wasn't home.

"Act like a lady? Are you insinuating that I do not act as a lady, Molly?" Hermione said through teeth clenched so hard her jaw was starting to hurt.

"Well, dear, with that kind of language..."

Arthur saw the look in Hermione's eyes and thought it best to step in now. "Now, Molly, it's not like this was an important game, and it was a last minute call for Ron to go fill in. Hermione is entitled to go see her parents."

Harry saw guilt flash in her eyes. No one else would notice, but after knowing her for so long, he saw things that others missed. He decided he would have to talk to her soon.

"That isn't the point, Arthur. *She* should be putting Ronald first, not her parents or herself. I always knew she could be a bit selfish, but really..."

Everyone else at the table sat in shock as the words flew back and forth between Molly and Hermione.

"Selfish? Why you sanctimonious old cow, you talk about me being selfish, YOU could give lessons on it! I've been silent for over ten years while you constantly stick your

nose into every aspect of our lives, trying to live vicariously through your own children. Not to mention all the UNSOLICITED advice I've had to put up with..."

"Well, I never! I knew I shouldn't have allowed Ronald to marry such an ill-raised little tart."

"Before you start calling other people ill-raised, you bloody bitch, perhaps you should look at what YOU raised! And your constant, sodding nagging, telling me what I should do and HOW I should do it!"

Arthur and Harry both looked at each other and nodded; it was time to pull these two apart before the wands came were drawn.

Arthur grabbed hold of his wife's arm. "That's enough, Molly. Let's go to the den so you can calm down."

At the same time, Harry took hold of Hermione's hand. "Let's go outside, Hermione; we need to talk," he said, looking over at Ginny who started to rise. "I think it would be better if it was just me, Gin, for now anyway. Okay?"

Ginny sat back down and watched her husband drag a furious Hermione out the back door mumbling under her breath.

He pulled Hermione along with him to a bench in the back garden and forcefully sat her down. "You need to calm down, Hermione. I know Molly can be self-righteous, meddlesome, and any other number of things. But it was getting out of hand in there."

"I'm sorry, Harry. I just couldn't take it anymore. Ten years I've put up with her, and I've had enough of it."

"Truthfully, I'm surprised this didn't happen sooner. But you're not the only one she nags. Ginny came close to hexing her after James was born--Molly had an opinion on everything Ginny did."

"I can't blame Ginny; her mother is an overbearing harridan, and Ron, well, Merlin forbid he say anything to his precious mother in my defence."

"Speaking of Ron, how are things between you two?"

Hermione sighed; she knew she had to answer truthfully. She could no longer pretend things were fine between them. "Not good, and they haven't been for a long time."

"I had a feeling they weren't; neither one of you have seemed happy lately. What are you going to do?"

"I don't know. I..."

"You've been seeing someone else, haven't you, Hermione?"

Hermione felt her stomach flip-flop. How did Harry know? Had he guessed? "What are you talking about?"

"Come on, Hermione, this is me you're talking to. I saw that guilty look in your eyes when Arthur talked about you visiting your parents. You didn't go see them, did you?"

Hermione sighed deeply; it was time to confess, at least to Harry, about her affair even if she didn't tell him yet who the other man was. "No, I didn't go see my parents today; they aren't even home. They're in Paris for a week."

"You were with him, weren't you?"

"Yes."

"How long has this been going on, Hermione?"

"It's been two years. I know you must be disappointed in me," she said, looking down at the ground.

"I'm not disappointed...I'm surprised. Two years? I'm impressed you were able to hide it that long. Do I know him?"

"Yes, but don't ask who, okay? Everyone will find out soon enough."

"All right, I won't ask, for now. Are you going to keep seeing him and hope Ron doesn't find out?"

"He's moving to Spain in a few months, and he'd like for me to join him there. He'd come back here to visit me as often as he could if I don't go, but..."

"Do you truly love this man, Hermione?"

"Yes, and he loves me."

"Again, I ask; what are you going to do?"

Hermione closed her eyes; it was time to make a decision. It wasn't fair to Severus, Ron or herself to keep things going the way they were. She loved Severus in a way she would never be able to love Ron. When she was with Severus, she was happy. However, with Ron, well, they were both miserable.

"I'm going to be moving to Spain, Harry," she said as she looked at her lifelong friend and smiled.

"I haven't seen that smile in a long time. If this man makes you happy, then I'm happy for you. When are you going to tell Ron?"

"I think a trip to Ireland is in order. Hopefully, it won't be a long game, and I'll tell him afterwards. It would be best if we weren't anywhere near the Burrow."

Harry laughed. "I agree. I think you or I should at least let Arthur know so he can be prepared for the backlash when Ron comes here and tells Molly."

"Please tell Arthur I'm sorry about ruining his lunch."

Harry smiled at her. "I will. I believe Arthur's been waiting for this blow up to happen for a while now." Harry put his arm around her and kissed her head. "You go to Ireland and deal with Ron. Floo me when you get back, okay?"

"All right, and Harry... thanks for being so understanding. I was afraid I would lose you as a friend if you ever knew."

"I have grown up over the years, thank you very much. Now, go talk to Ron, and I need to find Arthur and get him alone for a few minutes."

"I love you, Harry."

"I love you, too, Hermione."

Hermione waited outside the players' entrance for Ron. The Chudley Cannons lost the game... again. She paced back and forth, wondering how to tell Ron that she wanted to dissolve their marriage. The only things she wanted to walk away with was her personal belongings; he could have the cottage and do with it as he pleased.

When she finally saw him, he was walking hunched over towards the exit. The image made her wonder if he had always been this way and she just never saw it, or if he had become this way after they had married. She hoped once this whole fiasco of a marriage was in the past, where it belonged, that Ron would be able to find true happiness too.

He stepped out into the light and turned at the sound of her voice. "Hi, Ron. Sorry about the match, there's always another game though."

"Hermione? What are you doing here?" he said as he walked up to her. "Is everything all right; did something happen back home?"

"Everybody is fine, Ron... though something did happen."

"What?"

She could hear the panic starting to set in his voice.

"Your mother and I had it out, finally. It wasn't pretty."

Ron sighed. "Why do you let my mother get to you? Just nod and ignore her."

"That's easy for you to say, Ron. She doesn't insult you repeatedly... doesn't point out everything SHE thinks YOU'RE doing wrong. In fact, YOU don't say a damn thing when she's doing it to me."

"You know how Mum is, Hermione. Besides, sometimes she does make sense."

Hermione could feel her anger building up again; this conversation wasn't going anywhere. "I didn't come here to talk about your mother, well, not just about your mother. We need to talk, Ron. Is there somewhere we can go that's a bit more private?"

"Umm, we could go sit in the stands. The pitch should be empty by now."

"All right."

Taking her hand, Ron led her back inside and up the stairs to the stands where they sat down. "Now, what is so important that you had to Apparate to Ireland to tell me?"

She sighed as she looked at her husband of ten years; this wasn't going to be an easy conversation. "Are you happy, Ron? I mean in our marriage--are you happy with our marriage?"

"I guess, yeah... What's this all about, Hermione?"

"You guess, so you mean you're not sure?"

"Well, I mean there are some things I'm not too happy with, but I can live with things the way they are."

"Some things... like what?"

"I'd really like to start a family soon. I know you want to wait though."

"Anything else?"

"I... well, I really wish you would quit working, Hermione. I know you enjoy it, and you like making new discoveries and all, but...I always pictured having my wife waiting for me at home at the end of the day, and more often than not, you're still at work when I get home."

"I'm sorry, Ron... I can't be that kind of wife. It's not who I am."

"I know that now. Are you happy, Hermione?"

Hermione felt the tears threatening as she looked at Ron; this was harder than she ever thought it would be. "No, Ron, I haven't been happy in quite a while. Things haven't been the way I pictured them either."

"What can I do to make you happy, love?"

"I don't think you can, Ron. I'm not even sure if I was ever really happy in this marriage. I've been thinking that maybe this whole marriage was a mistake."

"That's not true, Hermione."

"Why did you marry me?"

"Because I love you, why else?"

"You love Harry, too, yet you wouldn't dream of marrying him. Think back to when we first became engaged, didn't you feel as though we were rushed into getting married?"

"Ummm, I guess we were a bit rushed, yeah."

"Maybe, if everyone hadn't pushed us into it, we may not have gone through with it. I know I felt pushed into it."

"Do you regret marrying me, Hermione?"

She turned away from him; she didn't want to see the hurt on his face when she answered him.

"I'm sorry, but yes, sometimes I do."

"What do you think we should do?"

The tears were now trailing down her face. "I think it would be best if we dissolve our bond and see if we can find what we've been looking for in someone else."

"There's someone else, isn't there, Hermione?"

She looked down at her feet; she couldn't answer that question.

"Who, Hermione? Who have you fallen in love with?"

"Does it matter? It won't change anything."

"I want to know who I lost my wife to."

"This would have happened anyway, Ron, whether there was someone else or not."

"Probably, but I still want to know."

"Severus Snape."

Her answer was met with dead silence.

She looked up at Ron, his face turning almost as red as his hair. "That murdering son of a bitch... I lost my wife to a bloody ex-Death Eater!"

"He was CLEARED of all those charges years ago, Ron. You just refuse to believe what everyone else has accepted."

"Of all the bloody wizards in this world, why choose that greasy bastard?"

"I didn't set out to fall in love with Severus; it just happened."

"How long has this been going on, Hermione?"

"It doesn't matter; I want out of this marriage. You can have the bloody cottage... I don't care. I just want my personal belongings."

"Fine, get your things and leave. I'll file for dissolution of marriage with the Ministry tomorrow, and we'll be divorced within a week. Then I'd really like not to have to see you for a very long time."

"You won't have to. In a few months, I'll be moving to Spain."

"Good... Now, please, just... GO, Hermione. I need to be alone right now."

"I'm sorry things didn't work out for us, Ron."

"Yeah, right... just go... please."

Tears blurred her vision as she made her way out of the stands and back out of the pitch. Hermione calmed down enough to Apparate back to Britain and to the little flat, hoping Severus was still there.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Severus was not there. Hermione was crestfallen; she really needed him right now. *He's probably in Diagon Alley*, she thought, hoping he would come back to the flat before heading back to Hogwarts. Errol was back at the cottage, and there was no Floo access, so she had no way to find Severus. There was only one option left: she'd have to Apparate to Diagon Alley. She paced the length of the sitting room several times, trying to decide if she should wait or go find Severus herself.

"Sod it!" she said as she gathered her thoughts and Apparated to an alley next to the Leaky Cauldron. She entered and, after giving Tom a short nod, made her way into Diagon Alley. *Now, where did he say he was going... ah, right, replenish his stores. So the apothecary first.* She made a beeline for the apothecary shop that Severus used most often. Searching up and down the aisles, she saw no sign of him.

"May I help you, miss?" said the clerk behind the counter.

"Yes, has Professor Snape been in here today?"

"Yes, he was here just a bit ago. You missed him by about ten minutes, I'd say."

"Thank you," Hermione called out, hurrying to the door. The next stop was Flourish and Blotts; she hoped he was still there. "Excuse me," she said to the witch stacking books on a display in the window. "Have you seen Professor Snape come in here?"

"Yes, just a few moments ago. He was headed towards the Potions section."

"Thank you very much." Hermione's heart was fluttering, now that she knew Severus was close by and she hadn't missed him. As she turned the corner, he was standing there, reading. Taking a deep breath, she smiled and approached her love.

"Severus."

"Hermione, what are you doing here? I thought you were going to be with the Weasleys all day."

"It's a long story. Was there something you needed to get here? I'd rather talk someplace a bit more private."

"No, I was just looking, trying to kill some time before going back to Hogwarts. Did you want to go back to the flat?"

"No. How about we go to that little tearoom down at the end of the alley?"

Severus nodded. "That's fine," he said as they headed out the door.

They settled at a small table toward the back of the room and awaited their order.

"Now, what is this about?"

Taking a deep breath, she began, "Well, I lost my temper with Molly. We both said some very nasty things to each other. Harry and Arthur stepped in before we both drew

our wands."

"Oh, to have been a fly on that wall, I can imagine the scene that must have been."

Hermione laughed. "I'll put the memory in a Pensieve one day so you can witness it."

"I'll hold you to that, continue."

A pot of tea appeared on the table; they each fixed a cup for themselves and sat in silence for a moment while Hermione gathered her thoughts.

"Anyway, Harry sort of figured out that I was seeing someone. He doesn't know who, though, and I didn't volunteer that information. He took it better than I thought he would. We talked, and he convinced me that I needed to make a decision and that I needed to talk to Ron. So I went to Ireland..."

Severus took her hand, giving her support so she could finish telling him what had happened.

"When I got there, the match was already over, so I waited for Ron outside the players' entrance. He finally came out, and we went up in the stands to talk. Well, to make a long and emotional story short, he now knows that I've been seeing you for two years. I told him I wanted a divorce; he's filing for dissolution of marriage with the Ministry tomorrow morning. I need to go to the cottage and get my things.

"Would you come with me? I doubt Ron will be there. Knowing him, he'll be at the Burrow for a few days, sulking, while Molly coddles him. "

"You know I will. Where are you going to live?"

"The flat. I don't have anywhere else to go."

Severus smiled. "If I could get Minerva to cooperate, I'd have you move into the dungeons with me."

"I doubt Minerva would ever allow that!" said Hermione with a laugh.

"Ahhh, at least I'll be able to see you more often than at the flat."

"You had better come to see me every chance you get!"

"I guess we won't have to keep us a secret for much longer, then. Who else did you tell?"

"No one, though I am sure Ron will tell anyone who'll listen that his wife turned out to be a slut who cheated on him with you, and that he left me, instead of it being a mutual decision."

"Does it really matter, love, what others think?"

"No, I couldn't care less; I just want to be with you."

He brought her hand up and kissed it. "That is what I want too. I think it would be best if we went to Hogsmeade now and retrieved your belongings."

Hermione nodded her assent as Severus signaled to the waiter for their bill.

They Apparated in front of the gate outside the cottage. It was spring, and the ivy was starting to make its way up the walls; by summer the cottage would be covered with ivy. She had, at one time, been happy in this little home. She and Ron had done much to fix it up, and they had been proud of the results of their efforts. Now, she was here for the last time to gather her things, leave, and never look back.

Severus watched her out of the corner of his eye. He knew this would be hard for her, but the sooner it was done the better. "Your things won't get packed by just standing out here, dearest."

"I know. Let's just get this done."

"You know, you can always tell Weasley you changed your mind and you want to keep this cottage, if it means so much to you."

"I'm moving to Spain with you, so why would I want to keep it? It would just get run down again," she said as she opened the door and stepped in; Severus followed her inside.

"I kept the boxes for all my books in the cellar. Boxing my books will probably take longer than anything else."

"Help me get the boxes, show me where your books are, and I'll get those. You take care of your clothes and whatever else you want, okay?"

"That will be fine, Severus. Thank you," she said as she stood on her toes and kissed him.

Even with magic, it took them both well over two hours to pack and shrink the boxes holding all her possessions. With all the shrunken boxes tucked into every available pocket they both had, they left the cottage and Apparated back to the flat.

"Perhaps you should just unpack your clothes and whatever else you will need for the next few months."

"I agree, since we'll be moving again soon."

Severus kissed her on the cheek and then removed all the boxes he had in his cloak pockets, placing them on a nearby table.

"I'll make dinner tonight, you go unpack."

"Thank you, love," she said as she went to the bedroom.

As she busied herself with hanging her robes and putting things in their place, Hermione went over the events of the day in her mind. She had finally done it: she had left Ron; however, the feelings of guilt were weighing on her conscience.

No, I refuse to feel guilty anymore just because I did what was right for me. Hell, it was right for both Ron and me. We were miserable together, whether anyone else wanted to see it or not. I should go see my parents tomorrow and tell them before they hear about it from someone else. Damn, I should have owled Harry while I was in Hogsmeade... I'll have to go to Diagon Alley tomorrow and send him a letter, although he probably knows by now, if Ron has made it back to the Burrow. Ugh, I can just imagine the scene that'll occur there when he tells everyone.

While Hermione was in the bedroom, Severus was busy preparing dinner. Nothing extravagant, just heating up stew from last night with a little wine added for flavour, a

salad, and a fine bottle of wine. On the table, he placed candles and the single red rose he transformed from a sprig of parsley that had been growing in the window box. Today was, for him, a milestone in their relationship; she had finally left Weasley, and they could now move forward.

Hmm, something is missing... he eyed the table and the room, trying to figure what it was he missed *AHH, yes! Music! Must have soothing music.* He turned the Muggle radio on to a classical station. Perfect!

Placing dinner on the table, he went to let Hermione know it was ready.

He found her sitting on the chair, staring out the window. She seemed to be lost in her own thoughts. Standing just outside the door, he watched her, wondering what he could do to help her with this emotional turmoil. It took years for him to learn to deal with his own emotions, after having to bury them for so long. He could listen, if she needed him to, but he doubted he could offer any advice. *What would Albus have done in this situation? Offer her a lemon drop, of course, and then just listen until she was all talked out and then give some sage wisdom.* Well, the sage wisdom he couldn't give, but he could listen.

"Hermione, love... dinner is ready. Come, you probably haven't eaten since breakfast."

She walked over to Severus, a smile on her face as she took his arm, and he escorted her to the table.

As they entered the kitchen, she drew in a breath. "Oh, Severus, this is wonderful! Thank you," she said as she drew him into a kiss.

"Well, this is a special night," he said as he pulled out her chair to seat her.

"How so?"

"Tonight is the first night in over two years that I no longer have to wonder if you'll be coming back here again. No more sneaking around, no more hiding our relationship, no more..."

"No more wondering when or if I was going to leave Ronald?"

"Yes," he responded with an inward shudder. "No more sharing you with a man who never deserved you in the first place."

He poured the wine and raised his glass in a toast. "To Spain and to our new lives together," he said as he looked into her eyes and then took a sip of his wine.

"Mmmm, this wine is lovely."

"I've been saving it for a special occasion. Shall I serve?"

"Please. This is all so thoughtful of you, Severus. The candlelight, the rose, the music... You make me very happy."

"I'll endeavour to make sure you stay that way."

When dinner was done, he took her in his arms and danced to a romantic instrumental playing on the radio. They held each other close as the moonlight shone down upon them in their little flat. His hands were moving up and down her back and sides, etching each curve of her body into his memory.

They swayed together in time to the music, arms wrapped around each other, and Hermione laid her head on his chest and listened to the sound of his heartbeat increase every time she pressed harder against him.

His hand moved up to her shoulder, then her neck, as he drew his fingers across her jaw to her chin. Gently, he lifted her head so he could see her face, her eyes sparkling at him as he held her gaze. Severus tilted her head back as he brought his lips to hers, the contact sending waves of desire shooting through them both.

His tongue licked at the seam of her closed lips, seeking permission to enter. She opened her mouth, submitting to his exploration as their tongues entwined, their breathing grew heavier. The need to touch, to taste, to become one became an all-consuming obsession.

Severus' other hand found its way to her still-clothed breast, cupping it in his hand as she moaned her approval. His experienced fingers made quick work of the buttons holding her robe closed. As he exposed each inch of her skin, his fingers skimmed over it, taking in the warmth and softness that drove his passion even further. His lips moved from hers, making a path along her jaw to neck, to shoulder and back to her ear, sucking the soft lobe into his mouth. "Hermione, Gods, what you do to me."

Hermione had brought her arms around his neck, her fingers running through his now silky hair. Sometime after the war had ended and he was cleared of the charges of treason and the murder of Albus Dumbledore, he began to take better care of himself and his appearance. The efforts clearly showed in his hair--it was no longer lanky and greasy, but clean and silky. She loved the feel of it slipping between her fingers, the citrus scent from the shampoo he made to keep his normally oily hair clean and shiny. "Severus," she sighed, "Take me, make me yours... forever."

Taking her hand, he led her to their bedroom, where with a flick of his wand and a muttered spell, candles placed around the room lit up. Severus then slowly undressed the witch before him, touching, kissing, and tasting every bit of her. When she, at last, stood before him in all her naked glory, he picked her up and placed her on their bed. He stood up and looked at the sight before him, his erection threatening to rip open his trousers if he did not join her in that same state.

"Are you going to join me or are you going to stare all night?"

Hermione watched as Severus slowly stripped, not saying a word. As he bared his chest, she purred in approval, and when his trousers and pants made the journey down his long legs, Hermione licked her lips as she took in the sight of his cock. She wanted to show him, not in words, but in actions, how much she truly loved him--all of him.

Severus watched as her eyes traveled about his body, stopping at his erect cock. When she licked her lips, he felt it jerk at the thought of those luscious lips wrapped around it. Taking himself in hand, he moved his fist up and down the shaft, watching her reaction as she writhed, moaned, and spread her legs in invitation to him. He walked to the end of the bed, and she spread her legs wider to him as her hands skimmed down her body. The scent of her arousal reached his nose, and it took all of his control to not dive between her legs and taste her thoroughly.

"Touch yourself, love... Show me how much you desire me."

Reaching between her thighs, her fingers slid between her lips; she was so wet for him, so aroused by him. She played with her sensitive clit, rubbing it gently in time with Severus' stroking of his cock. She surprised him when she slipped two fingers inside herself and began showing him what she wanted him to do to her. Her eyes were on Severus the entire time, watching as his fist moved quicker over his shaft. A bead of pre-cum appeared on the tip, and Hermione wanted to lick it off.

Severus moved closer to the bed, his hand touching her calf, stroking her soft skin as he progressed up her leg. His knee was on the bed as his hand continued upward. Hermione watched his every move as he stared at her centre watching her fingers dip in and out. His mouth came down on her thigh, licking and kissing the sensitive area, but his eyes never strayed from the show she was putting on for him. When she removed her fingers, he finally spoke, "Don't stop, vixen, not until I tell you to." Slowly, she reinserted her fingers; she was becoming more and more aroused, she needed... wanted, craved the fulfillment only he could give her.

Hermione didn't know how many agonizing minutes had passed before Severus took hold of her hand, stopping her ministrations. When he put her wet fingers in his mouth, she almost came as he licked and sucked her juices off her fingers. "So delicious," he moaned as his tongue made contact with her sensitive folds before licking down and back up again. Hermione grabbed a fistful of his hair, holding him in place as his talented tongue set a fire in her blood, her body tightening, her hips bucked with

every stroke of his tongue. She was aware of the fingers he now had inside of her, those long, amazing fingers stretching and filling her in a way hers could not. Harder and faster they moved, his tongue not stopping until she reached her peak and fell over into her own personal paradise.

Severus loved the taste of her, how responsive she was to him, and most of all, how she made him feel. As she recovered from her first orgasm, Severus slowly and methodically worked his way up her body, bestowing kisses on her still quivering pussy and on her belly. Cupping her breasts in his hands, he kissed, licked and sucked each hardened nipple, causing her to arch up towards him.

"Gods, Severus... please," she said in low, breathy voice.

"What do you want, my wanton little witch?" he said with a smirk firmly planted on his face.

"You know what I want, Severus"

"Say it for me, Hermione."

His face mere inches from hers, he looked into her eyes and spoke, "Say it, witch."

Hermione could feel his hard cock pressing against her lips, waiting to be buried deep inside her.

"Take me, Severus... make me yours."

As he entered her wet heat, she clamped her legs around his waist, drawing him in deeper. "Mine," he whispered.

"Mine," Hermione whispered, wrapping herself around him.

With a practiced rhythm, Severus moved in and out of her warm, wet channel, fanning the flames of her desire. He alternated between hard and fast to slow and easy, bringing her to the edge and then allowing her to come down, until he was ready to come with her.

Panting and sweating, Severus removed her legs from his waist, hooking the back of her knees with his arms and drawing them towards her, opening her up to him as he drove hard into her.

"Come with me, Hermione... my love... come with me," he rasped.

"Oh Gods... Severus... I LOVE YOU," she screamed out as her world exploded once again.

As Hermione came, the rippling of her walls sent Severus over the edge. "Hermione... oh, FUCK YES... I LOVE YOU," he yelled out as he joined her in their mutual bliss.

Easing his body off Hermione's, he lay at her side and wrapped an arm around her, pulling her close to him as they both fell asleep.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

A ray of sunshine fell upon Severus' face; he tried to turn away from it, but something was holding his arm. He peeked through half-closed eyes and saw that Hermione had grabbed his arm sometime during the night. He closed his eyes and buried his face in the crook of her neck, breathing in deeply her scent. Sighing to himself, he knew he had to be up shortly. Minerva had called for a teachers' meeting today right after breakfast, and he had to make an appearance. Severus slowly eased his arm out of her death grip. He didn't want to wake her just yet; he would wait until after his shower.

After performing his morning ritual, Severus walked back into the bedroom to find Hermione still sleeping peacefully. He would have given anything at that moment to just crawl back into bed with her and never leave. However, he still had other obligations, to the school, his students, and Minerva. He already had his letter of resignation completed, and today he would hand it to Minerva and deal with her disappointment at his decision to leave. He sat on the edge of the bed and stroked Hermione's cheek. "Time to wake up, love."

Hermione stirred as she felt his warm hand on her face and heard his silken voice imploring her to awaken. Slowly opening her eyes, she saw he was already dressed. "Morning, love, why are you dressed already?" she asked him, yawning.

"There's a teachers' meeting after breakfast this morning that I'm expected to attend."

He saw the disappointment in her eyes as she averted her gaze. "Perhaps you could come to Hogwarts and have lunch with me in my chambers, or did you plan on meeting Potter for lunch?"

"I never had the chance yesterday to owl him. I really should go to the Owl Post and send him a note today."

"I really must leave, my dear," he said, noticing the sun steadily rising. "Should I expect you for lunch, then?"

"Unless you hear differently, yes. I love you, Severus."

"I love you too, Hermione," he said, kissing her good-bye. He stood and with a turn Disapparated to the gates of Hogwarts.

The meeting was in the staff lounge where once again the upcoming N.E.W.T.s were discussed...as if the subject hadn't been talked to death over the years. As the meeting concluded he approached Minerva. "Headmistress, do you have a few moments? I need to speak with you privately."

"Of course, Severus, you know I always have time for you. Meet me in my office in say, twenty minutes?"

"That will be fine, Minerva."

Twenty minutes later, Severus was standing on the moving stairs, heading up to the door of the headmistresses' office.

"Come in," she said in response to his knock. Severus entered and walked up to her desk. "Thank you for taking the time to see me, Headmistress."

"Don't be silly, Severus, and I've told you to call me Minerva."

"Minerva. This isn't a social visit. I've made some decisions, and one has a direct impact on the school. There is no easy way to do this." He reached into his robes, taking out the rolled parchment and handing it to Minerva. "This is my letter of resignation, Headmistress. This will be my last term as a professor at Hogwarts."

"I didn't come to this decision easily, Minerva. I've been teaching here for over thirty years... and if you add my years as a student here, it's over forty years. Hogwarts has been my home, my refuge, but it's time to move on. Albus left me a small estate in Spain. We'll be moving there a few days after the students leave for the summer."

"We? Who is we, Severus?" Minerva asked, perplexed by this revelation.

Severus sighed as he pinched the bridge of his nose, angry with himself for slipping like that. He had hoped to wait before telling Minerva and the others that he was in a relationship with the former Hermione Granger.

"I was hoping to put off this part, and I ask that you keep this between us for now, Minerva."

"I know you cherish your privacy, Severus; you always have. You know I won't reveal anything you do not wish to become common knowledge."

"Thank you, Minerva. Although, I'm sure that shortly, it will become 'common knowledge' anyway. With that said, for the last two years I've been having a clandestine relationship with someone well-known in the Wizarding world. You know her well, too, and I hope you'll listen to the whole story before jumping to conclusions and making accusations."

"A relationship? With someone I know? Please, Severus, stop beating around the bush and get on with it already."

Severus rose and walked to the window overlooking the Quidditch pitch before turning around and speaking, "I've been seeing--Hermione Weasley. She has told her husband that she wishes to dissolve their bond, which to my knowledge he has agreed to; she will be moving with me to Spain when I leave."

Minerva sat stunned, her mouth agape when Severus told her who was leaving Britain with him. It took her a few moments to recover from the shock before she could speak.

"Hermione Weasley? You and Hermione? The former Hermione Granger?"

"Yes, Minerva, one and the same."

"But she's married, Severus! You've been carrying on a clandestine affair with a married woman? A former student, no less, not to mention she was in MY HOUSE!"

"Yes, Minerva, we have already established who the witch is and what we have been doing. Perhaps you would like to flay me for my transgression?" he said, sneering at Minerva.

"This has been going on for... What did you say... Oh, yes, TWO YEARS! You put yourself in the middle of someone's marriage, Severus. I expected better of you, really! How did this happen? When did this happen?"

"The how's and when's are no one's business but mine and Hermione's. Suffice it to say, I did not step into their marriage and break them up. Hermione had not been happy with Weasley for a long while before I came along. We've fallen in love, and if she'll consent to it, I plan to make her my wife as soon as possible. Does that satisfy your Gryffindor sensibilities?"

Minerva stared at him; she had watched him grow from the scruffy, shy little boy who had come to Hogwarts so many years ago, to the confident, though still reserved man who stood before her today. She had watched him suffer silently and alone for almost twenty years as he had fulfilled his duty to Albus. *I'm being silly. Severus deserves to have someone to love him. I can think of no one better suited for him than Hermione. Though I never thought I'd live to see the day he would marry.*

"That's... wonderful, Severus. I'm very happy for the both of you!" she said pulling him into a hug.

Severus was quite shocked at Minerva's sudden change in attitude. "What are you playing at, Minerva?"

"Anyone not wearing blinders could see those two were unhappy and shouldn't have been pushed to marry in the first place. Albus, did you hear what Severus said?"

"Yes, my dear, I did," the portrait of the deceased, long-time headmaster spoke, his trademark twinkle well in place. "It's about time, my boy. You've hidden it quite well, Severus. I don't believe anyone ever had a clue!"

Merlin, no... Please, he couldn't deal with Albus, too. Meddling old pouf. He shuddered as he thought what the old man would say if he were alive. He would probably insist on making sure they were properly bound before they left Britain.

"How am I going to find someone to fill your position, Severus? I wouldn't know where to begin."

"Minerva, I have several names of possible replacements. I wouldn't leave you in such a lurch. By the time the term ends, someone else will be ready to step in and take over."

"I'm going to miss you," Minerva said as she took a handkerchief to her eyes.

Oh, dear Gods, now she's going to cry. I can't deal with this right now Severus thought, searching his mind for a reason to leave. "The term ends in fewer than four months, Minerva. It's not as if you'll never see me again. It just won't be on a daily basis," he said as he made his way towards the door. "I need to owl the people I have in mind to see if any of them are interested in the position. I'll let you know when I have an interview set up," he said as he closed the door and breathed a sigh of relief.

Hermione stood at the gates of Hogwarts. It had been a long time since she had visited her old school. She placed her hand on the gate, and the wards shifted, allowing her to enter. She walked slowly up to the side of the castle and hoped that the secret doorway was still there--it wouldn't do for her to be seen at the castle just yet. Walking past Hagrid's hut, she made a mental note to stop in to see him before she left for her appointment with Harry... It would be a good reason not to be able to stay for tea and rock cakes!

Making her way over the hill, she walked to the side of castle. Behind the evergreen tree, she found the stone with the P carved into the corner and tapped it with her wand three times. The old stones dissolved and a door revealed itself to her; pulling down on the ancient door latch, she opened it and descended the stairs. The door to Severus' office was a short walk down the hall. She knocked on the door. "Enter," she heard him say and she opened the door. His office was exactly as she remembered it, the slimy, lifeless 'things' floating in neon-green-coloured fluid in the jars on the shelves, and the gloomy feel of the room was designed to make the most stalwart student shake in fear.

She stood there looking at him. He was hunched over his desk, quill in hand, marking some poor student's essay. After several minutes of being ignored, she spoke, "Hope I'm not interrupting anything important."

He looked up at the sound of the voice he wasn't expecting to hear. "Hermione, love, sorry I didn't realise it was you. I thought..."

"I was a student?" she laughed.

"Yes, however, I'd rather see you than any of my students. It's lunchtime already?"

"Just about. I came in through the secret entrance you told me about. After all, we don't want to give the students anything to gossip about, do we?" She smiled as she walked up to him and kissed his cheek.

"Come, we'll have lunch in my private rooms," Severus said as he took Hermione's hand, leading her to the bookcase. "Now pay attention, my dear: fourth shelf down, third book from the left." He pulled the book activating the mechanism that opened the entrance into his rooms.

Severus Floo-called the kitchen, requesting lunch for two to be served in his rooms. They sat at a small table, eating, and talking, when Severus heard a loud knock on his office door. "Excuse me, love, that might be a student. I'll return shortly," he said as he made his way back to his office, leaving the door open a crack.

Not five minutes later, Hermione heard loud voices coming from Severus' office, one sounding quite like Harry's. She went over to the door and placed her ear close to the opening, "I want to know what you did to her, Snape!" She was sure that it was Harry in the other room, apparently confronting Severus.

"I did nothing to her, Potter. Your friend Weasley should have treated her better. If he would have, she would not have come to me." She could hear the snarky reply, imagining the sneer on his face.

"Bullshite! You slipped her something... A potion probably, knowing you. Couldn't find a witch of your own, so you had to go after Hermione, and destroy her marriage!"

"I guess when you told her yesterday you only wanted her to be happy you were lying to her then, Potter. Of course, I forgot, everyone has to clear what they do with the great Harry Bloody Potter first."

"I didn't know it was YOU. If I had, I would never have allowed her to leave and end things with Ron."

"Allow her? So, you run her life then, or think you do?"

"I would have talked her out of it and sent her to break it off with you... You slimy, murdering bastard."

Enough is enough; it's time to end this now, she thought. Taking a deep breath, she pushed the door open and stepped into the room.

"What is the meaning of this, Harry? How dare you..." said Hermione, a growl escaping her throat as she fought to control herself.

"How dare I? How dare you walk away from a ten year marriage for... for... HIM!"

"After all I said to you yesterday, this how you react now? What does it matter WHO I am with, as long as I'm happy?"

"Ron's right! HE must have done something to you; you're not in your right mind!"

Severus fingered the handle of his wand, hidden in his sleeve. The temptation to hex the boy wonder was growing with every foul word that came from his mouth.

Harry watched as Hermione gave him 'that look,' the one he knew meant he had better have a quick escape route because she was getting ready to hex him into next week.

"Not in my right mind?" Hermione said, her voice low and calm. "You're right; I wasn't in my right mind when I allowed everyone to push me into marrying Ronald. I should have listened to my mother and waited."

"What do you mean, Hermione? I didn't push you to marry Ron so fast."

"No? Think about it, Harry. Do you remember saying, 'Oh, this is wonderful. Now we'll all be together, just like I always pictured us. Ron and I have vacation time coming in three months. You two should have the wedding then so you can have a week's honeymoon.' Do you remember now?"

"It was just a suggestion. I didn't say you HAD to do it then."

"Then you shouldn't have said it in front of Molly. She, of course, thought it was a WONDERFUL IDEA. Next thing I know I'm at the altar, getting married! Also, this idea you have that Severus pursued me, try that one the other way around... I pursued him."

Harry stood there in shock. "You... You pursued him? Why?"

"Didn't you listen to me at all yesterday? I was miserable with Ron, and he was miserable with me. I'm happy when I'm with Severus, I love him, and he loves me. If you can't be happy for me, Harry, then perhaps we need to end this friendship."

"I don't want to do that. I love you like a sister, and you know that. It's just that all... this is sort of a shock."

"I realise that, but I'm a grown woman, and I'll decide who I want to be with, and I don't need yours or anyone else's permission."

Severus watched as they went back and forth with their argument, both seeming to forget he was there. He was proud of Hermione though, standing up for herself as she was... standing up for 'them.' There was a lull in the bickering, and he chose then to step in.

"Potter, I don't particularly care for you, or your friend, Weasley. However, for Hermione's sake, I've stayed quiet whilst the two of you went at it. I love Hermione, and it doesn't matter who pursued whom. We are together now, and I hope we'll be together the rest of our lives. I've let her handle all this as she saw fit, but from this moment on, I will not stand by and watch her so-called 'friends' try to bully her into doing what they desire. If you can't be happy for her, then the best you can do is move on and out of her life." Severus stood next to Hermione, looking as if he smelled something nasty in the air.

Harry looked at Snape and then Hermione. He couldn't understand how she could be happy with the bat, but he loved her and didn't want to lose her. He closed his eyes and breathed deeply. "I do love you, Hermione, and you're one of my best and oldest friends. I do want you to be happy, and I'm sorry Ron wasn't able to do that. If Snape makes you happy, then I'll try to accept all this. Just don't expect me to be best mates with him, okay?"

"Merlin forbid," said Severus.

"Thank you, Harry," Hermione said as she hugged her friend. "I love you, too."

"I'll be in my room, trying to eat," said Severus as he left the room.

Monday afternoon, a Ministry owl delivered a parchment--it was a request for the dissolution of her marriage to Ron. She had the option to be there Friday morning to add her signature to the final papers, if she so wished; otherwise, they would owl the papers later that day for her signature.

She thought of going, but then decided she really didn't want to see Ron and have to deal with his anger. Her parents took the news well and were happy for her, though they weren't thrilled she'd had an affair. They did want to meet Severus before they left for Spain, and she promised them they would.

Friday afternoon, another Ministry owl appeared at her window. She untied the parchment, read it, and taking a quill, she signed her name to the bottom. It glowed blue for a brief moment, and then beneath both her and Ron's signatures appeared writing stating that the marriage was dissolved.

It was finally over, and now she could look forward to her future with Severus.

The months passed quickly, and before they knew it, it was the last day of the term. In three days' time, they would be leaving for Spain and their future.

They had packed all they wanted to take with them to Spain and left the rest at the flat. They had decided to keep it so they would have a place to stay when they visited London.

Severus stood inside the entry hall of Hogwarts one last time. The staff had thrown him and Hermione a small going-away party the night before, and he had said his farewells to them then. Now he was faced with a teary-eyed Minerva.

"Well, Severus, I guess this is good-bye," said Minerva as she dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief. "You two take good care of each other, and do write occasionally to let me know how you are doing."

"I will, Minerva," said Severus. He realised at that moment just how much he would miss the old biddy. He did something totally out of character; he hugged Minerva. A few moments later, he released her and stepped back.

"Hermione, remember to invite me to the wedding, I so look forward to seeing the both you tie the knot."

"You can count on it, Minerva," she said as they, too, hugged each other.

They walked to the gates of Hogwarts and turned to take one last look at the castle that had been a large part of both their lives. Severus then took Hermione in his arms, and with a loud pop, he Apparated them both to Spain.

"Severus. I thought you said this was a small estate?"

"I guess to Albus, this was small."

The End

Epilogue

Chapter 8 of 8

Hermione is in a miserable marriage with Ron, but having an affair with Severus. Will she finally leave Ron for Severus or vice versa?

Epilogue

One Year Later

"Happy anniversary, love," said Hermione as she kissed her husband of six months.

"We haven't been married a year yet, my dear, but I'll take your kisses anytime."

She laughed, "No, not our wedding anniversary; it's been a year since we moved to Spain."

"I do believe you are correct, and what a wonderful year it has been."

As he took her in his arms, a familiar owl landed on the top of a nearby chair, making its presence known. "Minerva always had bad timing," he said. "It's most likely for you, love."

Hermione moved to the chair, untied the scroll from the owl and offered it an owl treat. "Were you told to wait for a response?" she asked the owl who nodded with a hoot. "You can go rest in the owlery; it's over by the line of trees. I'll call for you when I have a return letter ready." The tired owl hooted and pecked at her hand in thanks before it took off for a much-needed rest.

"Minerva says she is going to be on holiday in Madrid on next week. She asks if we'll be available for a visit."

"I suppose we can spare her a couple of hours."

"Don't be silly, Severus. I'll invite her to stay here with us for a few days. We haven't seen her since the wedding."

"That was only six months ago."

Hermione took a seat at the table on the terrace; it was a glorious morning. She hoped that her news would make it even so. She poured herself a cup of tea and put a wedge of dry toast on her plate.

"Is that all you're eating this morning?" Severus inquired.

"I don't think I can hold down much more right now. I'll eat a bit more later on."

"What's wrong, don't you feel well?" Severus asked.

"Oh, there's nothing wrong. I'm fine. It's normal for a witch in my condition to suffer from nausea," she said with a shy smile, wondering if he would pick upon what she had just told him.

"In your condition?" he said, an eyebrow, rising up his forehead. "Hermione, is there something you're trying to tell me?"

She smiled brightly as she put the cup down and looked into his eyes. "Yes. I'm four weeks pregnant."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure. Have you changed your mind? We did discuss trying to have a baby a couple of months ago..."

"No, of course I haven't changed my mind. I just didn't expect it to happen so fast."

"I'm not surprised; after all, I have a very virile husband," she said with a lustful look in her eyes.

Severus stood and approached Hermione and lifted her up into his arms. "Let's go back upstairs, and I'll show you just HOW virile your husband really is."

Wrapping her arms around his neck, she kissed him passionately and then looked into his eyes. "I love you, Severus."

"I love you too, wife."