

Mater et Pater

by ApollinaV

Finding out she was adopted was the easy part. Discovering the identity of her mother? That was something entirely different.

Mater et Pater

Chapter 1 of 1

Finding out she was adopted was the easy part. Discovering the identity of her mother? That was something entirely different.

Losing a parent is difficult; losing both parents is a nightmare. It's a long and lonely process of grief and paperwork. It's full of well-meaning friends who say all the wrong things, but bring oodles of comfort food. But after the lawyers have taken their share, and there's nothing left but to move on with life, there's always the crap to go through.

In Hermione's case, it was three floors worth of memories and ghosts to linger over and give away. It took her a bit more than a year to work her way to the attic where her mother had stored her finger-painted masterpieces and perfect attendance certificates.

That was where she found the yellowing documents – her adoption paperwork.

One might have presumed Hermione would have broken down and sobbed, 'Why didn't they tell me?' or wailed, 'It's not true!'

Instead she cocked her head thoughtfully at the Muggle typewriter-struck page and huffed, "Bugger."

She knew she sort of looked like Aunt Stella, if she crossed her eyes until they blurred. Her father had remarked how closely she resembled his brother Edgar who had died in the war, but sorry, no pictures were available. And she'd been told many times that she had the exact same eyes as her mother's cousin Emily. But none of that deception mattered because what cut Hermione the most was the bereavement of her Muggle-born status. On her adoption paperwork the birth mother was listed as 'Unknown,' which was a great big flashing sign for 'Witch.'

Sometime later Hermione breezed into Snape's Apothecary with a curt nod in his direction and a bee-line towards the fresh herbs section. The thin line of his displeasure, as Severus pursed his lips, caused Hermione to remark, "It's not what you think," while pointing to the bundles of pennyroyal.

Just because she occasionally shared her bed with the wizard did not mean she shared her secrets with him. Yes, pennyroyal was a natural abortifacient, but in reproductive testing potions, it forced the maternal donor to reveal herself.

Twenty-eight days later, when Hermione returned for more pennyroyal, a pefflower, and fuckloads of mugwort, Severus began to understand; she wasn't flushing his child. Wizards were so slow on the uptake.

For nine months Hermione nursed the softly simmering potion, adding more pennyroyal every twenty eight days. When Severus spent the night, he made himself useful, tending to the brew. He never asked beyond an inquisitive eyebrow, and Hermione never elaborated. Sometimes she watched him, leaning on the doorframe to the bedroom, as he prepared ingredients. Observing Severus brew naked in her dining room was a treat.

Three days before her Mater Revelio Potion was finished, he carefully set out a copper cauldron and began the Pater Revelio potion without her asking. Severus was

becoming a monumental bother. The more he stayed the night, the more he became a part of her daily life. Still, he was damned useful.

When both potions were cooled and bottled, he quietly offered to snip a lock of her hair. Hermione was tempted to throw the wizard out and demand he never return. Instead she chewed on her lower lip and nodded. Severus gently combed his fingers through her mane, massaging the tension out of her neck, until she breathed evenly. Then he selected a thick curl from the underside of her tangled mess, where she'd never miss it, and made the cut.

Hermione fingered the honeyed brown hair. It was wild and independent, like her, and looked nothing like Aunt Stella's. Idly she wondered if she got her hair from her mother or her father as Severus poured the first potion over the strands. It fizzled and popped, and smelled a bit like roasted almonds, before the purpling smoke coalesced into an image.

The first thing Hermione noticed was the hair. She had her mother's hair; it was just as lush as her own, and it was beautiful. Then the glasses began to take shape, and Hermione pressed her face into Severus' chest as he rubbed circles into her back.

"Shall I do the Pater Revelio?" he murmured.

Hermione gagged a little bit and shook.

Trelawney. Someone did the nasty no-no with Trelawney. She couldn't begin to think of the witch as her mother, but still the idea of some poor wizard having an erection and well... things happening, with Trelawney, that was beyond the pale. Unbidden as it was, she found herself nodding in his embrace, and Severus poured on the next potion.

A furtive glance over her shoulder showed a wizard she'd never seen before, and Hermione sighed in relief.

"Mickelson," Severus identified. "He died in the first war. He was a decent man."

"Oh, thank God," she breathed.

"What now, Hermione?" He stopped rubbing her back to watch her with concerned eyes.

"Now?" Hermione wasn't ready to process anything more and spoke the first thing on her mind. "Take me to bed, Severus."

A/N:

Special thanks to debjunk who wrote the fun prompt, and the amazing Christev20 who beta'd it in a jiffy.