

Graduation

by my little secret

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

Sometimes A Fantasy

Chapter 1 of 5

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

You want me.

Gods, yes. And you want me.

I will have you. Tonight.

Hermione didn't know how he was doing it. She understood that it was Legilimency that had first allowed him into her mind. It had happened during a Double Potions class when he had caught her staring at him.

If you're going to be so rude, Miss Granger, as to daydream in my class, at least grant me the privilege of seeing what it is that has you so otherwise occupied.

She jumped at the sound of his voice in her head, but wasn't able to turn her gaze away. Before she could react, he was rummaging about in her mind, and - oh, bloody hell! - watching her most recent daydream. She felt all the blood drain from her face.

Reaching out, she tried to steady herself against the tree trunk. Gods, what he was doing to her! One hand was at her throat, caressing her hotly as his mouth devoured the soft skin at the juncture of her neck and shoulder. His other hand was wrapped around her, his fingers rubbing steady circles on the outside of her knickers, his middle finger pressing just a bit more insistently toward her heat than the others. Reaching back, she pulled him tighter against her, feeling the hard length of his cock pressing against her bottom. Oh, how she wanted to raise herself up so that she could feel the head of it slide along her hot, wet lips! She moaned loudly, and he chuckled in her ear, his breath hot and his voice husky.

"Shhh, love... you wouldn't want anyone to see us, would you?"

The tree they were hiding behind was no more than 100 feet from the Quidditch pitch, and the stands were full as Hufflepuff took on Ravenclaw. Hermione could see the backs of Harry and Ron's heads from where she stood, and this only excited her more. All they had to do was turn around, and they would see her pressed against the tree, being dry-humped from behind by their Potions Master.

His hands moved roughly to the front of her thighs, and he sank his fingers into her flesh, yanking her back even more tightly against him, grinding against her as his tongue licked the rim of her ear.

"Tell me what you want," he whispered.

Her knees weakened more at the sound of his dark voice in her ear. She whimpered as his fingers traveled inward and began to lazily trace their way just underneath the elastic of her panties. Her struggles to move her hips and allow him to touch her were thwarted by the strength of his arms.

"No," he hissed, "TELL me!"

Her mouth moved silently as she struggled for the breath to voice her desire. His ragged breathing on her neck and in her ear, the thrust of his hips, and the tease of his fingers dragging through the outer edges of her pubic hair were driving her crazy. She struggled to hold on to her last bit of lucidity and beg him for what she needed.

"Touch me," she gasped. "Please, gods, please, touch me!"

She felt, more than heard, the growl that erupted from his chest as his composure broke. He grabbed both of her wrists and pinned them above her head against the tree, then shoved one hand into her knickers and began to rub her clit frantically. His muffled groans caressed her neck as he rocked his hips manically against her arse.

"Oh! Oh, yes... oh, Severus, yes, please, don't stop!" she moaned under her breath.

As his fingers continued rubbing rapid circles on her swollen clit, she again found Ron and Harry in the crowds before her. 'Don't look, boys,' she thought as she felt her first spasms growing, low in her belly. 'Don't turn around, or you're going to see your best friend come all over Professor Snape's hand!'

Panting, she felt the first waves of her orgasm starting to break. "Oh, oh gods! Oh, Severus, now! Don't stop! Oh! OH! Oooohhhhhh..."

....hhhh shit!!!

He saw it all.

He heard it all.

Oh, bloody hell, she was going to get kicked out of school!

His eyes had widened as he watched her fantasy play out before him, and the tell-tale movement of his Adam's apple told her that he had swallowed - hard - a couple of times. Not yet being able to tear her eyes away from him, she slowly came to notice that the rise and fall of his chest had increased... Merlin's mother, he was breathing heavily!

She felt him slip from her mind as easily as he had entered, and she immediately turned her eyes to the floor, her face flushing a dull red. 'Here comes the explosion,' she warned herself, cowering unconsciously. 'What have I done? What have I done? Oh, he's going to *destroy* me!'

"Hermione? You okay?" Harry was looking at her over his cauldron, the steam from his potion starting to fog his glasses.

"Yes, I'm fine," she choked out, on the verge of tears.

"You don't sound fine. What's wrong?"

"Harry, please!"

"Tell me what's wrong!" he hissed.

Oh, sure. Okay, Harry... I just shared a particularly raunchy sex fantasy about Snape WITH Snape, and now, he's going to go completely nutters on me, and I'll probably be expelled. Do you suppose you could help, Super Boy?

"I have female problems, Harry!" she finally snapped. *That's putting it mildly!*

"Oh. Oh, uh... okay, then..." He fumbled about on the table as if looking for some missing ingredient before leaning over and giving her a clumsy pat on the shoulder. "Right. Well, hope you feel better, then."

Moments passed as she waited for Snape's tirade to begin. Around her she heard the gentle chopping sounds and murmured hissing of cauldrons as her classmates prepared their mixtures. She was tensed, waiting for a sharp word, a heavy footfall, a foreboding shadow to fall over her.

Nothing.

Eventually her insatiable curiosity won out, and she glanced up toward his desk.

His position had not changed, but he had composed his facial expression to its customary dour appearance. His eyes were still trained on her, and she felt as though her skin was on fire under his scrutiny.

Finally, he cocked one eyebrow at her and looked away.

When class was over, she sped from the room without looking back.

At dinner that night she spent so much time staring at her plate that Harry and Ron finally questioned her actions. With a half-smile, she muttered a feeble excuse about not feeling well and went back to her room. It was not a complete lie; she had spent all afternoon waiting for Professor Dumbledore to come and serve her with an expulsion notice. Surely Professor Snape would have gone to him already?

But no one came to her door, and by the time she went to bed that night, her anxiety was somewhat abated.

At breakfast the next morning, she was careful to avert her eyes from the Head Table, but allowed herself to engage in normal conversation with her Housemates. It was during such a conversation that it happened.

She was listening to Ron and Harry argue about a call in one of the Chudley Cannon's most recent Quidditch match, when he spoke to her.

Miss Granger.

She turned in her seat as her blood ran cold, expecting to find him standing behind her. No one. Before she could stop herself, her eyes darted to the Head Table. There he was, sitting as stoically as always. She blushed and looked away.

I know you heard me, Miss Granger. Five points from Gryffindor for ignoring a professor.

Bloody hell, it's like he's in my head!

*I am. I can hear your thoughts, Miss Granger. And, Gods, she could **feel** him smirking! I can see them as well.*

Between the heat saturating her cheeks and the tears welling up behind her eyes, Hermione felt as though her face was melting.

I am so sorry, sir. I didn't... I mean, I wasn't... that is... she thought incoherently.

Stop babbling, for Merlin's sake!

Are you going to expel me, sir? The question came across before she even had time to realize what she was thinking, and when it did she found herself holding her breath, constrained by a horrible trepidation and awaiting his answer.

Expel you? What on earth for?

Unsure if he was taunting her yet again, Hermione snuck a glance toward him. He was looking down at the goblet in his hand, but he immediately looked up and met her eyes. A look of honest confusion was on his face.

For what... for what you... saw. For what you saw, Professor.

He chuckled then, and it was amazing. A low, dark joy spread throughout her, making her feel at once invincible and vulnerable. Oh, heavens... if he could make her feel like this just by laughing, how would her body react to his mouth - his hands - on her?

Well, I imagine you would writhe beneath me like a madwoman, as I brought you to the edge of orgasm over and over, yet not quite allowing you the sweet release you so long for.

Hermione's sharp intake of breath caused her tablemates to look at her with concern. Harry shook his head.

"Mione, are you still having... those... problems?" he asked awkwardly.

"Just cramps. I'm fine," she muttered, feeling another of Snape's shadowy laughs bubbling in her mind.

Harry looked toward Ron and shrugged. Within seconds they had resumed their Quidditch discussion.

Feeling almost smothered by her bewilderment, Hermione pressed the heels of both hands above her eyes, as if soothing a particularly vicious headache.

Miss Granger, listen to me. I would no more expel you for having sexual fantasies about me - or anyone, for that matter - any more than I would expel you for having nightmares while you sleep. The subconscious is beyond our control... an intangible little demon that lives inside all of us. You may be an incredibly brilliant witch, but even you cannot master the subliminal.

Turning her eyes to meet his, she thought, *So are you saying that you will not hold me responsible for the... scene... that you witnessed today?*

The voice that answered her was impossibly low, indescribably smooth. *No more so than you would for mine.*

Instantaneously, Hermione was hurtled through a long tunnel, filled with images of people and places. Some seemed familiar to her, but most flashed by far too quickly for her to be sure. *It's like Willy Wonka!* she thought breathlessly, and no sooner was the thought formed in her mind than the sense of movement stopped.

She realized that she was still in the Great Hall, but it was now empty. She turned to look around the room and gasped as she caught sight of the Head Table.

Two figures were naked and entwined on top of the table. The man, who was lying on his back, had black hair and a long, lean body checkered with scars. It was difficult to see much more of him, as he was covered by a woman, small of stature, with disheveled brown hair. She was straddling the man's face and had her own head thrust between his thighs.

Hermione's knees weakened. *It's us*, she realized.

Muffled groans filled the air as the couple devoured each other. Snape's strong hands were clenching her ass cheeks, his fingers digging into her soft skin as he buried his face in her wetness. His hips thrust upward as Hermione sucked his long shaft into her mouth, her hand working in tandem with her lips as she moved up and down the length of him. Her cries of ecstasy, vibrating around him, seemed to drive him crazy as he bucked beneath her.

Move closer, she heard him say. *I want you to see what I'm doing to your beautiful pussy.*

Without even realizing she was moving, she suddenly found herself closer to the table, near Severus' head. From this vantage point she could see so much more; the way his tongue would alternate between slow, lazy circles around her clit and long, deliberate laps from her engorged nub all the way back to her anus; how his nostrils would flare when he would suddenly cover her with his whole mouth as if he was trying to guzzle the juices that were coating his jaw; how that same jaw would work when he moved his lips to suckle her clit. When he did that she could see her own body jerking in reaction, her hips thrusting violently against his face as the moans coming from between his legs became louder.

Standing there and watching herself and her Potions master, Hermione was fighting a tremendous internal battle. Part of her knew she should turn away, that what she was looking at was wrong on numerous levels. She knew she should be embarrassed for both of them and put an end to it all right then and there.

But the other part of her was only paying homage to the throbbing ache between her legs, and the dampness that was threatening to drip down her thighs.

Don't look away, Severus whispered, and she would have sworn that she could feel his hot breath tickling her ear. *Watch.*

So she did.

She watched as their fury mounted, as their whimpers and grunts grew into shouts and howls. She watched as he finally pulled his face away from her and, with a strangled roar, tangled his hands in her hair and came in her mouth. "AAAAAH!!! GODS!!!" he cried as her thrust into her eager lips over and over again. She watched her own throat working to gulp his hot, salty liquid as she continued to bob her head up and down, her arms wrapped around his thighs to swallow him as deeply as she could.

And then, as his orgasm waned, she watched as he renewed his assault on her hot flesh, his tongue ramming into her wet hole as his fingers came up to stroke her swollen button. She saw her push herself upright so that she was sitting on his face, her own hands working her nipples as she moved erratically over him. Her head was thrown back and a keening noise was coming from her throat. Snape was shaking his head from side to side almost violently; the panting sounds coming from his open mouth made Hermione feel dizzy. She knew that if Snape - the REAL Snape - were to somehow touch her right now, she would come almost instantly.

Severus! Oh, Severus, I'm coming! Oh, now, yes, NOW!! OOOHHHHHHH!!!!

In absolute surrealism, Hermione watched herself ride Snape's tongue to climax, her own shouts mingling with his smothered cries as he lapped up the wetness that trickled from her slick lips with his own. The dream Hermione collapsed forward over his body, their mutual gasping the only sound in the room.

And suddenly, she was flying through the blurred tunnel again. This time, when she came to a halt in the Great Hall, she was still surrounded by students... and she was still staring into the black eyes of Professor Snape; eyes that now held a slightly glazed look that she had never seen before.

"I have to go," she announced suddenly, standing on legs that felt wholly incapable of carrying her anywhere.

"Hermione, I really think you should go see Madam Pomfrey if you're still not feeling well."

"No, Harry. I just... I just... I have to go," she finished weakly and made her way to the entrance doors.

Miss Granger?

Turning back, she saw him watching her with a look of measured dispassion. Without thinking, she flashed him a small smile; in return, he curled one corner of his mouth up and inclined his head almost imperceptibly.

And so it began.

Disclaimer: J.K. Rowling owns all thing Potter. And I've been a bad, bad girl with some of them.

A/N: Okay, my first try at PWP!! Hope it's enjoyable...smut biscuits for all...bring your own tea!!

I've very limited knowledge of all things British...I apologize for my flopping back and forth between "arse" and "ass". Please pick whichever one you like better and use it in your head when you read this. Thanks ever so!

Drawing Closer

Chapter 2 of 5

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

I can't wait to touch you.

Patience, love. It is only a matter of hours now.

Damn these speeches! Must they drone on and on like this?

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Hermione wiggled impatiently in her seat, wanting to turn around and look over her shoulder at where she knew Severus was sitting. Her fingers tangled in the edges of her crimson graduation robes, nervously twisting the material. She could feel his eyes on her and hear his voice in her head, but they were sharing no fantasies today. At the end of this *ungodly long, ridiculously drawn-out (people-with-big-mouths-who-want-to-hear-themselves-talk!)* ceremony, she would no longer be a student at Hogwarts. Tonight she would be with Severus, finally feeling his hands, his mouth, his body on hers.

Harry leaned over from his seat next to her and whispered, "Are you okay?"

With a smirk that looked eerily familiar to her friend, she whispered back, "Oh, yeah."

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The past few months had been an absolute jumble of feelings for Hermione. Her life had changed unexpectedly, and in many ways. Her parents had written her a letter explaining that, since she did not plan to return home to live after graduation, they were selling their house and would take some time to travel the world. She had learned that her N.E.W.T. grades were good enough to get her accepted at the University of Alatar, and she would be starting there in the fall.

And there was Severus.

After he had taken her into his fantasy in the Great Hall, she had fled to her room. Lying there on her bed, she had tried to approach the situation logically. She wanted him. This was a fact that she had come to terms with months earlier. He wanted her. This was as much of a surprise as her desire for him had been, yet there was no denying it. It was against school rules for a teacher and a student to have an intimate physical relationship. Even if that was a regulation that she was willing to overlook, it most definitely was not one that Severus would. And so, they would wait.

Her stomach fluttered at the thought. It was one thing to see herself and her Potions master in such lewd, fiery scenes, to be a spectator at what could only be called a mental peep show. But to actually *do* those things with him? To touch him, to kiss him... to ***fuck*** him? She wasn't sure if she was prepared to take that step. Oh, she was no virgin; there had been the Muggle boy at home between her sixth and seventh years that she had known since she was a little girl. Reuniting over the summer, they had become lovers; tentative at first, then becoming bolder and more experimental as the months passed. Hermione was glad that she'd had that experience, and was content that it had been with him. They were comfortable together, and it was clear from the beginning that neither of them expected any type of commitment. When they had said goodbye at the end of the summer, all she had felt was a faint touch of pleasant melancholy.

But Severus was no boy from home. Indeed, she was quite sure that the positions and techniques she had learned during those languid summer days wouldn't scratch the surface of Snape's sexual repertoire. She would go to him being exactly what she was: a scared, shy schoolgirl. And he would scoff at her and send her away, disgusted.

Wouldn't he?

Truth be told, she wasn't sure. A man like Severus did not move hastily; indeed, his work with Potions would have had to instill in him enormous amounts of patience and focus. This... whatever it was they had... was surely not something that he would have jumped into hastily. But that, she reasoned, would mean that he had harbored feelings for her for some time now. *Not feelings*, she corrected herself. *Lust does not mean he has feelings for you. Lust means he wants a shag. Well, maybe a few shags.*

She giggled to herself as she rolled onto her stomach and gathered her pillow under her chest. She couldn't believe that she was actually considering this. It was so out of character for her, and she knew that there was no one that she could share this with. Harry would probably hex his own ears off rather than listen. Ron would start vomiting up slugs again. Ginny... no, Ginny was too enamored of Harry. She couldn't trust her not to say anything to him. No, this would have to remain her own intangible little secret.

Hermione had sighed.

It was three months until Graduation.

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*I have thought of nothing but you since I woke this morning.*

*I know. I can't concentrate on anything other than being with you tonight. Thank goodness the wizarding world doesn't expect valedictorian speeches!*

*Pardon?*

*Never mind. Trust me, you don't want to know.*

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While those three months had not exactly flown by, they had certainly passed more quickly than Hermione thought they would. After the overpowering rush of those first few interludes with Snape, her real life had come back into focus. Between Head Girl duties and studying for her N.E.W.T.s, her days returned to a more familiar pattern.

Her nights, however, belonged to Severus.

He had taken to calling to her late in the evenings when she was preparing for bed. Sometimes he would pull her into his mind to share a fantasy. At other times, he would simply speak to her, telling her in warm, dark tones what he wanted her to do to him, and more frequently what he wanted to do to her. At first she had simply listened, biting back an occasional moan as his monologues enticed her. One night, though, he made it clear that listening was not enough.

'Hermione.' His voice had an almost lilting quality to it, as though he was trying to draw her out of hiding.

'I'm here, Severus.'

'Mmmmm... say it again.'

'Severusss...' she sighed, drawing out his name in a breathy hiss. He loved to hear her say his name, and she planned to use that bit of knowledge as best she could on graduation night.

'Ah, witch, you will be the death of me,' he murmured. 'Tell me what you are doing.'

'I've just put on my nightgown, and I am about to climb into bed.'

'Oh, that I could be there with you!' Snape growled. 'Describe your nightgown to me.'

Looking down at herself, Hermione shrugged. 'It's more of a nightshirt, really. Not terribly feminine, I'm afraid. Cotton, short sleeves, comes down to about my knees, lace-up neckline...'

'What color?' he interrupted.

'Gryffindor red,' she snickered.

'Well, in my mind it's going to be Slytherin green,' he shot back, and they both laughed quietly.

'Are you in bed yet?' he asked.

'Just getting in,' she replied, as she slid underneath the sheet.

'Is the neckline of your nightshirt tied shut?'

'Yes.'

'If I was there, I would untie it slowly, pulling the string deliberately through each hole until it was completely unbound. And I would stare into your eyes the entire time.'

With a smile, Hermione put her head on the pillow and shut her eyes, waiting for his next words.

'Unfasten your nightshirt for me, Hermione.'

'What?'

'Unfasten your nightshirt for me. I can't be there to do it. I want you to do it for me.'

'Severus, I... I don't know...'

'Please,' he breathed, and she brought her hand up to the drawstring at her neck.

'What should I do?'

'Untie it slowly. Tease yourself... let your fingers trail along the skin of your neck and between your breasts as you go.'

Hermione did as she was told, weathering alternating waves of embarrassment and arousal. His voice, silken and dangerous, felt almost corporeal in her head. She wanted to touch him so badly it hurt.

'Slide your nightshirt off of one shoulder. Your left,' he continued before she could ask, and she smirked. 'Touch your fingers to your neck just below your left ear. That is

where my lips are. I'm kissing you there, drawing little circles on your skin with the tip of my tongue.' Hermione let her fingers trace the sensitive area he spoke of, making small circular motions with her fingernail. 'Now I'm licking my way down the side of your neck until I reach your shoulder. I start by planting small kisses from the juncture of your neck and your shoulder and then move down your bared shoulder to the top of your arm.'

Hermione stifled a sigh as she let her fingers play out the scene he was describing.

'Now I'm moving back up to your throat where I start to kiss and suck on the skin there. As I do that, my hand moves down to lift your nightshirt up.'

'Severus, I...'

'Shhh,' he soothed. 'This is you and me. I want to make you feel good.'

She continued running her fingers gently over her throat as she pulled her nightshirt over her stomach and breasts. As the material grazed over her nipples, she felt them harden. Her quick intake of breath was minute, but Severus felt it.

'Gods, Hermione, I want to see you.'

'Severus,' she moaned. 'Please, isn't there a way? Can't you come to me? No one would have to know...' She trailed off, but she knew what his answer would be.

Cursing softly under his breath, he confirmed her doubts. 'No. You know we can't. I want to so badly, you know that. But we can't risk your education.'

'Or your job,' she finished.

'Or my job,' he agreed quietly. 'We're getting so much closer, love. Just a little while more, and then there will be nothing stopping us. Then my hands, my mouth, my tongue, my body will claim yours as mine.'

Shivering at his words, Hermione shifted on her bed. 'I'll wait for you, Severus.'

'Touch yourself, Hermione,' he ordered, his voice husky. 'Touch yourself for me. Play with your nipples. My tongue is on your nipples, licking them, my lips are sucking them gently. My hands are running over them, feeling them harden in my palms.'

She rubbed her hands over her breasts, rolling her stiffened nipples between her fingers. As she arched her back, a moan escaped her.

'Tell me what you see,' Snape whispered, and the heady, desperate tone to his voice pronounced the dampness between her thighs.

Before she could stop herself, she whispered back, 'No. I'll show you, instead,' and she reached her mind out to his.

A moment later, she could see him standing beside her, watching the scene in her mind unfold before them.

'Keep talking,' she murmured.

As Snape described what he wanted to do to her, the figures before them portrayed what she saw inside. His dark hair brushed against her stomach and chest as he tongued and sucked on her hardened nipples. His hands traveled from her shoulders down to her waist and hips, then to behind her back, where he pulled her up closer to him, taking her breasts even further into his mouth.

In her bed, Hermione continued to touch herself.

'I'm going to work my way down your body, kissing and licking you all the way. My tongue is circling your navel while my hands move around to cup your bottom.'

Real Hermione's hand drifted down to draw lazy patterns around her belly button as Fantasy Snape's mouth covered her abdomen.

'Yesss...' both Hermiones moaned simultaneously.

'Now I'm spreading your legs with my hands.' As the Real Hermione's thighs parted, Fantasy Snape traced his fingers down to her knees and back up, pushing her legs aside as he went. The Hermione that was watching all this drew in a sharp breath and turned to find the Watching Snape staring at her.

'I want to taste you,' Watching Snape moaned, and Watching Hermione started.

'We can't talk to each other?' she gasped. Watching Snape's eyes held hers as she stepped toward him, her hand outstretched. 'Can we touch each other?' she breathed. He was shaking his head before she reached him, before her hand passed through him with no resistance. 'Why can't I touch you?' The frustration in her voice was palpable.

'Remember, we are not really here,' he sighed reluctantly. 'We can only tell or show each other what we would like to do, but we cannot feel each other physically. That is why I want you to touch yourself in the way that I cannot. At least,' he amended, 'not yet.'

Looking into lust-filled eyes, a thought occurred to Hermione.

'Are you touching yourself, too?' she asked.

'Yes.'

This thought sent a strange pulling sensation through the Real Hermione's groin, and her breath quickened as her fingers continued to wander over her stomach and thighs.

'Now,' continued Watching Snape, as he stood above her, bending down so that his mouth was only inches from hers, **I want to taste you.**

Fantasy Snape's mouth moved down to the mound of moist curls between her thighs, and he began licking her in long, slow strokes. Real Hermione let out a loud gasp as her fingers began rubbing through her own wet folds.

Watching Hermione shivered.

Fantasy Snape pushed her thighs further apart with his hands, moving his head in slow circles as he continued to caress every inch of her pussy with his mouth. Fantasy Hermione moaned as one hand moved down to tangle in his hair. With the tip of his tongue, he explored each crease and fold. He sucked her lips in between his own, rubbing her most sensitive spot with his thumb as he lapped at her wetness as a dog laps at water. When he stiffened his tongue and probed inside of her, she moaned loudly.

'I want to hear you scream,' he growled. 'I will **make** you scream.'

He quickly set up a rhythm that soon had all three Hermiones panting for release. Long, slow strokes of his tongue were interspersed with a sudden thrust into her opening or fast, hard flicks of her clitoris. Real Hermione's fingers were moving at an almost blinding speed, rubbing her sensitive nub and delving inside herself to mimic his movements. Fantasy Hermione had reached behind her to grasp the headboard; her head thrown back, she cried out his name over and over.

He licked her faster.

She ground herself into his face.

Her fingers rubbed her clit harshly, coated in her own juices.

His breath came in short, fast spurts, accompanied by a low growling sound.

She arched her back.

He used his fingers to spread her open further, closing his mouth around her throbbing button. His lips sucked at her gently as he rolled his tongue around her endlessly.

Licking...

Sucking...

Moaning....

Thrashing...

Thrusting...

Her eyes met his, and she came.

In her room, the Real Hermione muffled her scream into her bed pillow as she slammed her thighs tightly around her own hand.

On the bed, Fantasy Hermione screamed without abandon, her hips bucking wildly against Snape's mouth as he held onto her and rode out her orgasm. His long hair flew about wildly as his tongue continued to plunder her cunt.

'SEVERUS! AAAH, SEVERUS!'

In his room, Snape's hand moved faster and faster, up and down his hardened shaft, not realizing that he was moaning with her.

Looking into his eyes, she begged him, 'Inside me. Please. I need you, now...**please!**'

'Gods!' he cried as Fantasy Snape wrenched his mouth away from her and pulled himself up her body. Still looking into her eyes, he took his cock into his hand and used the head of it to draw small circles around her still swollen clit.

'Now, please, now, gods, Severus, now!' Her pleading turned into a breathy cry that mingled with his own ragged wail as he thrust himself completely into her in one stroke.

On his knees on the bed, he lifted her legs over his shoulders and began slamming into her with no pretense of tenderness.

In her bed, Hermione felt the wetness trickling down her bottom as she filled herself first with one finger, than with two.

The Real Snape's head was now thrown back, the expression on his face bordering on pained. His fingers played up and down his cock, twisting around the head.

Watching Hermione and Watching Snape stood mere inches apart, eyes glued to one another, their chests heaving with their labored breathing.

Fantasy Snape grunted louder and louder with each thrust. His balls slapped against Fantasy Hermione's bottom as he tried to go even deeper every time. She cried out as he drove into her over and over again and reached up to gently tease his nipples.

Slam!

Slam!

Slam!

She was so tight around him, so hot, so wet!

'Gods, Hermione!'

'Severus! Yes, yes, Severus!'

Thrust!

Thrust!

She raked her fingers over his chest, his arms, his neck... anywhere that she could reach. When she reached around to grab his buttocks and pull him even deeper into her, he broke.

'I'm coming... oh, gods, witch, I'm coming!'

Slam!

Slam!

'Yes, come inside me! Ooooh... now!'

Fantasy Snape threw back his head and let loose a howl that would have put even Lupin to shame as he felt himself shoot deep inside her.

Real Snape roared out her name as his hot, thick liquid spurted over his thighs and stomach.

Watching Snape reached for her. He could not touch her.

They continued facing each other as their hearts raced. On the bed, Fantasy Snape and Hermione had collapsed together, their ragged breathing the only sound.

Tears filled the eyes of all three Hermiones. One from the powerful lust that had just infused every pore of her being... two with the anguish and unfairness of not being able to feel the skin of the man she wanted more than any book she'd ever read.

'I don't know if I can keep doing this,' she admitted.

'I'm sorry,' he answered, trying to regain control of himself. She was shocked to hear these words from him, but made no comment. 'If it is too difficult, I will try to leave you alone.'

'Can you?'

He looked at her for a long time, watching a tear trace its way down her cheek to the corner of her mouth. Oh, how he longed to reach down and catch it with the tip of his tongue!

Could he stay away from her? He knew the answer, although he'd been trying to deny it to himself for weeks. He wasn't just thinking of her now when she was in class; his thoughts turned to her all during the day and could not seem to leave her at night. Indeed, he had taken to watching the clock more than he ever had, counting the minutes until he could invade her thoughts again. Now that they both knew of their mutual attraction, he felt no shame in his desire for her. His thoughts, his fantasies, had become more wanton. While on patrol at night, he often found himself noticing small nooks and hidden recesses in the corridors that he had never paid much attention to before. Suddenly he was picturing himself and Hermione there, entangled in all sorts of lewd and gravity-defying positions, tempting fate with the possibility of being discovered. These thoughts did not seem wrong to him.

What he found disturbing were the images that flitted through his mind that weren't of a sexual nature. The first light of day creeping over his bed where they lay sleeping in each other's arms... Hermione lounging in one of his chairs, legs thrown over the side, her blasted cat curled up next to her as she read... Returning to his chambers after a teachers meeting to find that she had a special meal waiting for him... These were the scenes that gave him pause, that discomfited him.

He felt no hesitation toward wanting to fuck this woman. However, allowing himself to feel affection toward her was an entirely different story.

Was he bordering on obsession? Yes.

But that didn't make him a bad person... right?

She was still staring at him, waiting for an answer. He ached, both from the exertion of their imagined coupling and from wanting to actually feel her moving underneath him.

'No,' he answered truthfully.

'Oh, thank Merlin!' she sighed, and he laughed. She shivered when he did it seemed that his laughter could arouse her as much as his voice and his imagination. After all, they were three very rare finds, indeed!

'I should leave you now,' he told her. 'Do you think you'll be able to sleep?'

'Oh, I imagine I will,' she purred. 'And you?'

'Does a Centaur shit in the woods?' he smirked and was rewarded with a burst of laughter from Hermione. He was amazed at how good it made him feel... It had been ages since he had made anyone laugh like that.

'Goodnight, Hermione,' he whispered, and as she felt him pull back from her mind, she opened her eyes.

Her room looked the same, but she couldn't help feeling as though something had changed. She knew that it was silly... Anyone would laugh at her if she ever told them, not that she ever could... but she felt as though she and Snape had just drawn closer. She wouldn't kid herself into thinking that he cared about her, for he was not that sort of man. He wanted her, that she knew, but it was purely in a sexual way. But something... something about this envisioned union had felt different.

It was probably just because we could see each other this time, she rationalized to herself as she muttered a Cleansing Charm and curled up under her blankets. It made it seem more intimate. That's all.

Six weeks until Graduation.

~~~~~  
Disclaimer: JKR owns all things Potter. Not only have I not made any money from this story, I also kinda made myself blush a little...

A/N: A heartfelt apology to all who have read and reviewed. I had planned to get this chapter up much earlier than I have, but there were holidays and sickness (I have an almost-four-year-old in daycare. Need I say more?) and an occasionally moody muse who didn't always want to come out and play. Oh, and my boss at work has suddenly taken to actually expecting me to **work** when I'm there, instead of writing!! I mean, RUDE!!

There are many reviews that I have not answered yet. I SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT I AM GOING TO ANSWER THEM ALL.

Thank you to Southern Witch and Not So Saintly, who review my chapters and never yell at me about all my misuses of commas. Peaches, both of you!!

Alatar is a name I lifted from JRR Tolkien. It is the name of a mythical wizard. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alatar>

As always, it's to the hubby. His inspiration has been... enlightening. Muwahaha!!!!



# Private Proper-ty

## Chapter 3 of 5

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

'Severus?'

'Hmmm?'

'I was wondering what you had planned for this evening?'

'I thought it was fairly obvious what I had planned for this evening, love.'

'That's not what I meant, you old fool! Where will we be going to... be together? Will we go to your quarters?'

'Why, Miss Granger. I hardly think that accompanying a professor to his quarters is **proper**, do you?'

~\*~

Hermione and Severus' hidden relationship continued to progress as the time wound down to graduation. Although it was difficult for them to maintain their composure when in close proximity to one another, they both found the strength to act just as they had before. If any of Hermione's friends noticed anything off about her, they never mentioned it. And Snape... well, anyone whom he considered a 'friend' knew that questioning the reclusive man about his emotions or moods garnered nothing pleasant in return.

An interesting development occurred after the night that he admitted to her that he could not stay away from her. The first time it happened, Hermione was rushing back to her room after a late night House meeting. Staring down at her Arithmancy notes as she walked, she never noticed Peeves lurking ahead in a doorway, and she never saw the sheet of ice that he had formed on the floor.

Thinking back, she realized that she must have looked like a character from a Muggle cartoon. Her right heel slipped from under her, her legs flew skyward, her books and papers careened away from her in graceful arcs. Hermione's descent to the floor was anything but graceful; she landed hard on her back and her arm. A muffled, "crack!" caused her to cry out in pain.

Madam Pomfrey assured her that the broken elbow would heal completely, but she would need to spend the night in the hospital wing. Hermione settled herself back into the bed as the mediwitch went to retrieve a painkilling potion.

'Hermione?'

Her eyes snapped open, and she looked around, expecting Severus to appear from behind the bed curtains. It took a moment for her to realize that he was calling to her mind.

'Hello, Severus.'

'Hermione, is everything all right?'

The question caught her off guard. She had expected him to come to her for another rendezvous, not out of concern. Severus' indifference toward others was legendary, and Hermione hadn't tried to fool herself into thinking that she would be any different. Yet, here he was... clearly worried enough to call to her even though he knew people would be around.

Wait a minute... How DID he know?

Hermione had managed to levitate her books and papers back to her room after her fall, then had gone straight to see Madam Pomfrey, cradling her injured arm against her body. She hadn't passed anyone in the hallways, nor had there been any other students in the hospital wing when she arrived.

So how had he known?

'Hermione?' His voice broke through her thoughts, and she realized she'd not answered him.

'I'm okay, Severus. I fell in the hallway and fractured my elbow. Madam Pomfrey has already given me a bone-binding potion and says I'll be fine in a day or two.'

She thought she heard a sigh of relief, but was convinced she was mistaken when his voice returned, snappish and professor-y.

'She should administer a painkilling potion as well. You will have difficulty sleeping without one.'

'She's just gone to get one. In fact, she's returning now. Wait a moment.'

As Madam Pomfrey helped her back into a sitting position on the bed, Severus continued to talk.

'Ah, Poppy. Stubborn old bat.' Hermione tried not to smile as the nurse lifted the vial of smooth golden liquid to her lips. 'Would you believe that Flitwick finds her attractive? Told me once that he had a particular fantasy about her wearing her mediwitch hat, Muggle cowboy boots and a holster.'

With a loud snort, Hermione began coughing. The rush of potion up her nose brought tears to her eyes, and she felt as though her face was on fire. "Miss Granger!" Madam Pomfrey snapped. "Oh, dear. There, there. It's all right, child. I can get you another dose. Are you all right?" Still coughing, Hermione managed to nod her head and wipe the tears from her cheeks. The nurse hurried off to the storeroom again, making soft clucking noises under her breath.

'You unbelievable prat!'

'I'm sorry. Perhaps that wasn't the most opportune time to recount that story.'

With a start, she realized that he was teasing her. Even more fascinating was that she found this even more exhilarating and unsettling than their normal encounters.

'Severus, how did you know that something was wrong?'

After a momentary pause, he answered. 'Apparently the Somnium Redimio spell has some residual effects on the individuals. It would appear that when you were in pain I

*could... feel it.'*

*'You felt me break my arm?' Hermione asked in astonishment.*

*'Not the physical pain, no. But I could sense that you were not well.'*

Though she was alone, she felt her face flush. Despite the months of unabashed lust that they had shared, this new aspect of their bond seemed even more intimate. She had never shared a connection that deep with anyone, and she found herself unsure of how to react.

*'Will you be returning to your chambers?' Severus continued quietly.*

*'No, Madam Pomfrey wants me to stay here tonight.'*

*'Then I will let you get your rest.'*

*'Okay. Goodnight, Severus... and thank you for worrying about me.'*

There was a pause, and then a soft reply. *'I am glad that you are all right. Goodnight, Hermione.'*

She slept well that night. She slept very well, indeed.

~\*~

Hermione was woken early the next morning by the sound of clinking bottles and someone grumbling under their breath. Rubbing a hand over her face, she sat up and saw that the door of Madam Pomfrey's storeroom was open. She tested her arm gingerly; still a slight bit sore, but definitely better. As she sat up and swung her legs over the side of the bed, Madam Pomfrey walked out with an armful of vials.

"Oh, Miss Granger! I hope I didn't wake you!"

"No, not at all," Hermione lied smoothly. "I tend to be an early riser."

"How are you feeling, dear?"

"Much better, thank you. Is it all right for me to go back to my room now?"

"Let me just run some quick checks on you," the mediwitch replied, placing the vials on a table and withdrawing her wand. She ran it over Hermione's arm several times, then over her entire body once.

"You're in fine shape, Miss Granger. Oh, to be young and have that kind of resiliency!" She smiled warmly as Hermione pulled her robe back around herself.

"Thanks, Madam Pomfrey. I hate to just run out, but I have a lot to do today."

"I do too. Unfortunately, Professor Snape has pretty much seen to it that I will get none of my own work done today!"

At the mention of his name, Hermione froze. "Professor Snape?" she asked cautiously.

"Yes," huffed Madam Pomfrey, fussing with the vials on the table. "He comes storming in here last night, shortly after you fell asleep. I'm surprised he didn't wake you... I tried to usher him into my office, but he seemed intent on discussing matters out here. Just between us, I was a little afraid that he was going to start poking his nose in where it didn't belong; kept looking over toward you, probably wondering what was going on. It took me forever to get him out of here!"

Hermione looked down, concentrating on the clasp on her robes; if it helped to hide her bemused smile, all the better. He had come here to see her last night! The affectionate overtone of the act was not lost on her, and she found herself suppressing giggles. She tried to force a serious expression back on her face as a squadron of Muggle cheerleaders thundered repeatedly in her head, "He likes me! He likes me! He likes me!"

"And now," the mediwitch continued, paying no attention whatsoever to Hermione, "I have to spend the better part of my morning testing these potions because the flakes of bloodstone he used in them MAY have been tainted. Honestly!"

She wanted to feel badly for her, but it's hard to commiserate from cloud nine.

~\*~

They didn't speak of this newfound aspect to their relationship there was no need. With decreasing delicacy they learned their way around each other's emotions and moods, building an ever-tightening wall around themselves that others could not penetrate. Hermione learned that when Severus had had an exceptionally frustrating day with his students, he tended toward fantasies of rough, animalistic coupling. Conversely, when his day had gone well, he would paint her pictures of passionate, tender lovemaking.

She would have been hard-pressed to tell you which she enjoyed more.

Sitting in Professor Binns' History of Magic class one afternoon, Hermione found herself struggling to stay awake. As a seventh year student, she needn't have taken the class, but she had challenged herself to get through it for just one more year. It was days like this one, though, that made her regret that decision. Blue skies, white clouds... it was a textbook summer day, and for one of the first times in her life, Hermione didn't want to learn. She wanted to be outside, lounging on the grass with her friends, soaking in the warmth of the sun and forgetting all those responsibilities that usually took first priority.

His voice was so quiet that at first she thought she must have fallen asleep momentarily.

*'Hermione.'*

She snapped upward in her seat, looking around her to see if anyone had caught her napping. Thankfully, the rest of her classmates were either staring absently around the room or dozing in their seats. The ghost at the front of the room remained oblivious to the lack of hold he had on his class and continued to drone on in his customary monotone.

*'Severus?'*

*'Mmmm. Lovely little girl,' he murmured. 'So soft, so beautiful. I want you, Hermione.'*

*'Severus, I'm in class right now.'*

*'Mmm, I know,' he purred. 'History of Magic, I believe?'*

*'What are you doing, Severus?'* Although she knew no one could hear their thoughts, she shot nervous glances around the room.

'Thinking of you.' His voice was innocence personified, wickedly imbalanced by the waves of lust she felt coursing through her body.

'I can't do this,' she insisted. 'Not here. Not now.'

'I understand,' Severus said smoothly. 'So I shouldn't do this?'

*Instantly her mind filled with the vision of herself tied face-down and spread-eagle on his bed, the only light in the room from a lone candle sconce above the headboard. Severus held himself above her, his tongue trailing a long, slow path between her shoulder blades to the nape of her neck. As he opened his mouth to suck the soft skin there, she watched him gently flex his hips forward, the head of his hardened penis disappearing between her plump and glistening labia.*

Her loud gasp caused Professor Binns and several of her classmates to turn toward her. She quickly feigned a coughing fit, allowing her not only an explanation for the disruption but also a chance to cover her flushed face with her hands.

'Severus, stop it!'

'I'm sorry, love. Is this better?'

*Another image, this one of her straddling him in a chair. Her back was to him, her legs tucked under her next to his on the seat. She was leaning backward toward him, causing her breasts to just forward. One was covered by Snape's hand, his fingers squeezing and rubbing her stiffened nipple as his tongue ravaged her ear. His breath was harsh, ragged panting. Allowing her eyes to travel down his other arm, she swallowed a guttural moan. The wide stance of her legs and the tilt of her hips permitted a clear view of his thick cock ramming into her cunt. His ass rose off the chair with each violent thrust, and Hermione was mesmerized by the wetness glistening on his veined shaft. "My wetness," she realized and felt a surge of moisture between her legs. The three middle fingers of his left hand were pressed to her clit, rubbing in vicious circles.*

As she watched herself bouncing up and down on her Potion master's swollen prick, she pressed her thighs together tightly under her desk. Her hand twitched involuntarily, itching to reach down to soothe the pulsating ache at her core.

*She could hear her own voice crying out each time his cock plunged upward into her.*

'Gods! Oh! Yes! Yes! Oh! Uh! Harder! Oh! Fuck! Me! Gods! Yes!'

'Severus,' she begged in her mind, 'please, don't do this.'

'Oh, but I do want to do this to you, Hermione! I want to bury myself in you over and over again.' Spurred on by her anxious whimper, he growled, 'Touch yourself.'

'Severus, no!'

'Why not?'

'It's... it's just not proper.'

His snort was derisive, even in her head. 'Proper? I hardly think that now is the time to be concerned about being proper, dear. Nothing we've done up to this point has even been close to proper.'

'Merlin's sake, Severus, I'm in class!'

'So?' he drawled lazily. 'You're not paying attention, anyway. Touch yourself for me.'

Knowing that she would do as he asked, she couldn't help saying, 'And what would you do if you caught someone doing that in your class, Professor?'

'One hundred points from their House and two weeks of detention,' he responded, sounding utterly bored. 'But that's not the situation. I want you to touch yourself. I want you to run your fingers over those wet lips of yours and pretend that they're mine, that I'm inside of you, that I'm touching you everywhere and making you come.'

Hardly aware of what she was doing, Hermione's hand had slipped inside of her robes and gathered her skirt up between her legs. As she concentrated on the image in her mind where her alter ego was obviously edging closer to orgasm as Snape's middle finger was thrumming over her clit as though satisfying a particularly nasty itch she slid further down in her seat and slid her fingertips under the edge of her knickers. Sparing a quick glance around at her classmates, all of whom had once again drifted off into oblivion, she ran one finger up from her opening to her clit.

A quick intake of breath through her nose let him know that she was doing what he had asked.

*In their fantasy, he snarled loudly and began thrusting into her even harder, a harsh grunt accompanying each movement.*

Hermione marveled at her own wetness as she slipped one finger inside herself, grinding down slightly into her chair to rub her heated nub against her palm. As she watched the couple in her mind, she clenched her thighs together tightly and began to feel dizzy.

'That's it, Hermione. Gods, you're amazing!'

'Severus,' she panted. 'I have to stop! I can't finish this here; there's no way!'

'Leave the room, then.'

'What?'

'Leave the room. Tell Binns you don't feel well. That you need to use the bathroom. Not really a lie, is it, Miss Granger?' His dark chuckle shot through her, and her hips jerked involuntarily.

Cautiously fixing her clothing, she raised her hand still damp with her own juices and asked permission to go to the lavatory.

She walked down the hall, not even remotely aware of where she was going. A corridor opened to her left, but she moved toward it blindly. Her eyes stared blankly ahead, but behind them ran rampant visions of Snape's lips, tongue and fingers on her skin. Each step she took caused the ache between her thighs to deepen, and the minimal brush of her blouse against her nipples was nearly painful.

As she drew even with the intersecting hall, she was caught in a sudden whirl of black, and thrust backward into a narrow, hidden alcove at the end of the passageway.

Severus.

Shoving her against the wall, he pressed his forehead to hers and whispered, "Finish it, Hermione."

"I can't!" She gasped. As she suddenly became aware of his closeness, she lurched forward, trying to kiss him, but he grasped her shoulders and pushed her gently back against the wall.

"Do it! Finish it for me, now. Here. I want to see you."

Dizzy with lust, she hurriedly unfastened her school robes and let them fall open. Yanking her skirt up around her waist with her left hand, she sank her right into her knickers and began rubbing wantonly.

"Oh, gods!" moaned Severus, his forehead slick against hers, his hair swaying slightly against her face in time with her motions. His voice caused her to widen her stance, allowing her to once again slide her fingers into her wet hole. The alcove was filled with the sounds of their ragged breathing and the wet, smacking sounds of her masturbation.

"Severus, please, touch me!" she groaned, leaning toward him with her body.

"No!" he answered, passion strangling his words. She felt his hands, strong on her shoulders. His lips were mere inches from hers, and she snaked out her tongue, trying to touch him. He pulled back, his eyes screwed shut in an expression that bordered on pain. The heat from his body flooded her as she began stroking her clit at lightning speed.

"Gods, oh, gods!" The burning feeling centered in her vagina began to spread to her legs and belly, heralding her impending climax. Tilting her head back, she arched her back toward Snape, trembling as she tried to keep her knees from buckling beneath her.

"Dear Lord, Hermione, come for me. Come for me! Come for me!" His breath was warm on her face, and she felt her muscles begin to tighten.

"Please!" She gasped. "Please, please please, oh, now, Severus, please!"

As he felt her orgasm begin to rip through her, Severus latched his mouth onto the skin where her shoulder met her neck and sucked hard, muting the roar that escaped from his throat.

And then, as the lust-induced fog around her began to lift and she raised her head to look at him, there was another swirl of black.

And he was gone.

It was three weeks until Graduation.

~\*~

Disclaimer: All JKR's characters, all my sick little puppetry.

Author's Note: Again, multiple apologies for the long wait. I originally planned this chapter to be longer, but I thought that ending it here worked out nicely. I might do one more chapter before Graduation...not sure yet.

Thanks, as always, to my hubby. Love your body, Larry.

## Explosions

### Chapter 4 of 5

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

Dumbledore's voice rose above the crowd, warm and all-encompassing. "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you this year's graduates of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry!"

The seventh-years all bounded to their feet as one, wands held high in the air, multi-colored sparks shooting from their tips and raining down over the group. Amidst the cheering, crying and hugging throng, Hermione turned to look for Severus. She finally spotted him toward the outer fringe of the area, shaking hands with Draco Malfoy.

'*Severus.*'

His black eyes immediately swung to hers, pinning her to the spot where she stood and crushing the breath out of her before they returned to Draco. She watched him for a moment more, seeing the corner of his mouth twitch upward in a wry smile oh, how she *loved* that! and then she was grabbed from behind and spun into Padma's exuberant hug.

"Oh, Hermione, can you believe we've done it? Doesn't it seem like just yesterday that we were learning our way around the castle? And now, here we are graduating!"

Hermione peered back over her shoulder toward Severus, hoping to catch his eye again. He was still talking with Draco, his face angled away from her. Turning back to Padma, she gave her a wan smile. "Yes, it's hard to believe, isn't it?" she commented weakly.

"It *is*! And it's so strange to think that we won't all be coming back next year! That we won't be living together... maybe not even seeing each other anymore!"

And the enormity of the situation finally struck Hermione.

There would be no more meals in the Great Hall. There would be no more classes to hustle Harry and Ron off to. No more Peeves, no more fussy portraits, no more moving staircases. No more Dumbledore, McGonagall...

...Severus?

Turning towards him again, she found him staring intently at her. His mouth turned up as he moved his gaze longingly over her body and back up to her face.

"I will find you," he mouthed, and disappeared into the crowd.

"Can you believe how much things are going to change, Hermione?" asked Padma, unaware of the interaction.

Smiling broadly at her, Hermione gave her a warm hug and laughed, "Padma, you have no idea!"

~\*~

He had left her in the alcove; that much he knew. He had no recollection, however, of thundering back to the dungeons. He was aghast at what he had just done; it was far too dangerous and foolish, and he *knew* that! But the raw desire for her had consumed him, and even now when he was not in her head, she was not in his reach even now he could smell her, feel her... almost taste her.

His chamber door slammed closed behind him, and before the reverberating echo had quieted, he had torn his robes open and wrenched his pants down his hips. Collapsing against the door, he took himself in hand and pumped furiously. *Her eyes, so glazed with lust... her breath, hot and fast against his face... the hot, sweet smell of her juices floating up to him... the wet, slurping sounds of her fingers sliding in and out of her hole... faster and faster and harder and harder and then feeling her stiffen and then the taste of her skin in his mouth as she came...* It took only a few strokes, and then Severus exploded, an unholy sound ripping from his throat as thick, white jets spouted from his fisted hand. He slid to the floor, panting hoarsely and trembling gracelessly from the aftershocks of his orgasm.

After a few moments, Severus' head dropped down into his hands, and he groaned an entirely different type of groan altogether. Now that the lust-induced haze that had been fogging his judgment was lifted, he was beside himself. How could he have *done* that? He had jeopardized both of them, just for a few moments of pleasure that, in the end, were very bittersweet. They had found no release together, and now his desire for her, his *need* for her, had grown exponentially.

*I cannot keep doing this to her, or to myself. This has gone beyond innocence. I will not take her with me into madness.*

Pulling himself to his feet, he cast a *Scourgify*, put his clothes in order and made his way to his liquor cabinet. While pouring the first of what he was sure was going to be many drinks that night, he heard her soft voice.

'Severus?

He set the bottle down sharply, trying to ignore how his hands shook. *Dear gods*, he thought to himself. *She must be mortified.*

'Severus? Please answer me.'

Leaving his glass on the ledge, he began to pace the floor, rubbing his hands fiercely over his face. Try as he might, he could not scrub the memory of what he had just done or the sound of her voice from his mind.

'Severus, answer me. I know you're there. Have you forgotten that I can feel you?

He *had* forgotten. Coming to an abrupt halt, he reached his mind out toward hers, trying to latch onto her emotions. If he could just get a peek into how she was feeling... without having to **ask** her, of course...

'Severus, stop it! Don't sit there and probe at me without acknowledging me! I deserve better than that!'

He pulled back as if he had been slapped. She was right. Damn it all, she was right. She deserved better than lecherous manipulations. Better than being enticed and tortured at every turn. And certainly better than being forced to masturbate in front of her Potions master in a cubbyhole and then left alone, to be discovered by anyone.

She deserved better than to be ignored.

'I am here, Hermione.'

The exasperated sigh that breezed through his mind made him smile, despite himself. *'I know you're there. I wanted to be sure that you were okay.'*

Was she serious? He had just talked her her, Hermione Granger, of all people! into skipping out of class, forced her physically into a secluded spot, made her finger herself until she came, and then abandoned her... and she was checking to see if HE was okay?

So much for destroying her innocence.

'I am fine, Hermione.'

A pause.

'Well... are you sure? Because I can feel a lot of dismay, and... well, you seem so upset, and... I just wanted to make sure.'

His hands were on his face again. Maybe if he scrubbed harder...

'To make sure of what? That I am all right? I assure you, I am fine.'

When her voice came back, it was small... and very, very scared.

'No... to make sure you weren't mad at me.'

Snake's stomach clenched painfully, and he stumbled into his chair. Is that what she thought? That he was *angry*? With **her**? Merlin's mother, he'd heard of the dangers of a woman's mind, but this was insane!

'Hermione, believe me when I tell you that I do not feel angry with you **at all**.. But I cannot have this conversation now.'

'Severus, let's just talk about what happened. I need to know that things between us are still okay!'

'Okay?! His voice was thundering now, and his hands were clenched on the arms of the chair. 'No, Hermione, things are most definitely NOT 'okay'! I had no right to do what I did tonight! Don't you realize that?'

'Severus, please...'

'No! Do NOT drum up that infuriating Gryffindor courage and make excuses for me, Hermione! What I did was inexcusable, don't you understand? I am your teacher. I have a responsibility to you until the day that you graduate, and I am sworn to uphold that! And what is worse, I gave you no option but to perform a lewd act in an area where we both could have been caught!'

*'No option? Severus, don't be ridic-'*

*'I cannot discuss this now, Hermione. I cannot. I am disgusted with myself, and if you could remove those rose-colored glasses that you insist on wearing in life, you would understand that you should be disgusted with me as well!'*

*'Rose-colored glasses? Disgusted with you? Oh, now you're being foolish...'*

*'Please. Please, I implore you, Hermione. Let this be. I **cannot** discuss this further now. Please.'*

There was a lengthy pause before she answered, and he found himself wondering which would be worse: her leaving or her staying.

*'All right, Severus. But know that this has not changed my feelings for you.'*

*'Thank you.'* He wanted to assure her that his feelings for her had not changed either, but he knew to do so would make it impossible for her to put the issue to rest. So he remained silent.

*'Well... you know how to find me if you would like to talk.'*

*'Yes.'*

*'Be well, Severus.'*

He felt her slip from his mind, and walked to his bedroom, intent on ignoring the emptiness inside that he had never felt before.

\* ~ \*

Hermione lay on her bed, rubbing her face in an unintentional homage to the man who was driving her insane. Her head was swimming with a mix of emotions: confusion, fear, arousal, anger. A brief internal battle took place, with one side being her headstrong personality, determined to find a solution to the problem as quickly and efficiently as possible, and the other side the eventual victor being the part of her that realized that Severus was a man who needed his time and space.

She wasn't sure what had happened just now. He had left her in the alcove so quickly, and now it was obvious that he regretted the incident ever taking place. She understood that it had been dangerous and careless on both their parts, and she wasn't surprised that Severus was angry with himself. But Morgana's tight white ass, it had been **HOT!** Giggling behind her hand, Hermione felt her cheeks warm as she remembered his forehead pressed to hers... the ache in her limbs as she tried to reach him... the feel of his mouth, hot on the skin of her neck...

*Oh, gods! He must have left a mark!* she realized with a start.

Rushing to her bathroom, she leaned close to the mirror and immediately realized that it was completely unnecessary to do so; the love-bite at the juncture of her neck and shoulder was huge and already an angry brick color with hints of purple seeping in. She touched it gently with the tip of her finger and winced.

She knew that her first thought should be, *'Look at what the bastard did to me!'*

But her first thought was, *'Look at what I made him do!'*

For the first time in her short life, Hermione felt the rush of sexual power course through her. *She* had done that to him. *She* had made the most self-possessed man become obsessed with her. *She* had unraveled the very thread of his composure and felt him shuddering in her arms. *Her* arms. *She* had done this.

And she wanted to do it again.

She knew that there was no sense in dwelling on the matter now. Severus needed to be alone, and she would respect that. They would talk about it, of that she was certain. And she intended to make very sure that he knew that he had neither hurt nor disgusted her with what he had done.

Raising her wand to charm the spot away, she suddenly paused. Then she smiled, and her parents never would have recognized her. "*Occultus de electus*," she murmured, and watched as the bruise momentarily glowed a whitish-silver. There. Now the mark would be hidden from everyone except for herself and Severus.

After all, she had Potions first thing in the morning. It certainly wouldn't do to have everyone staring.

\* ~ \*

Severus was a man who knew the truth to the saying, "There's a first time for everything." He was in the midst of experiencing a first for himself: apprehension over entering his classroom. Schoolboy anxiety had been until this moment a blurry phase from his past, and he ridiculed himself with each step as he paced outside the doorway.

*You are a fool, Severus. She is a child and no threat to you.*

*She ceased being a child in my eyesmonths ago.*

*True. She still poses no threat.*

*A mental scoff. She threatens me in ways I cannot begin to comprehend.*

*You act as though she is in control of the situation.*

*It is not a matter of control. It is a matter of loss of control and right and wrong.*

*Well, whatever it is, you'd best find a way to deal with it. Class is about to start, and you can't very well go in there and ignore the situation.*

His pacing stopped, and his eyes slid slowly up over the roughly-hewn wood of the door in front of him.

*Oh, no, my friend... on the contrary. I can do whatever I please. That is **my** classroom.*

He slammed through the door as he had so many times before: sneer in place, robes billowing... the whole package. Familiarity breeds comfort.

*Don't look at her, don't look at her, don't look at her...*

"The assignment for today can be found on page 442 of your textbook. Begin." Seating himself at his desk, he immediately began marking essays from his fourth-year Ravensclaws.

*'Severus?'*

*'Please begin the assignment, Miss Granger.'*

*'Don't tell me you're still angry about yesterday?'*

*'Miss Granger, do not make me tell you again.'*

*'At least look at me, Severus.'*

He continued marking his papers, neither lifting his eyes to her nor answering her.

*'You're being a child.'*

No response.

*'So this is how the great, feared Potions master deals with a problem, huh? He just ignores it. Gosh, how terrifying.'*

He gritted his teeth and kept his eyes down. Concentrating on the essays was a joke; right now he was using all of his energies to keep from looking at her. Irritation and desire clashed within him, and somewhere deep in his subconscious, Severus realized that the 'irritation' he felt would be anger... if it were anyone else.

*'This is your plan? Assign a ridiculously simple project so that you can just ignore the class and me the entire time?'*

*'There is a time and a place, Hermione...'*

*'Oh, for Heaven's sake, Severus! I don't expect to discuss this now, I just want you to look at me!'*

*'Hermione, begin the assignment. NOW.'*

*'I've already started it, you stupid arse, which you'd know very well if you had the nerve to look up from your bloody desk! But no, you can't bear to look at me. Big, dangerous Hermione. What's the matter, Professor? Afraid of what you're going to see there?'*

He knew she could sense his feelings, and any answer would have been useless.

*'We both know it is not necessary for us to make eye contact in order for either of us to share with each other, Severus.'*

He suddenly felt tired... no, beyond tired. He felt weary down to his bones. He didn't want to have to think anymore, to hide anymore. He just wanted something that was real, and honest, and easy.

"Professor Snape?"

She almost got him. In a moment of self-indulgence, his concentration was broken, and he turned toward her voice. At the last second he realized his slip, and directed his gaze downward again.

"Yes, Miss Granger?"

*'What are you doing, Hermione?'*

"I have a question on the assignment, Professor."

*'Is it so horrible that I want you to look at me?'*

"The assignment is self-explanatory, Miss Granger."

*'Damn it, Hermione!'*

"Sir, please, if you could just clarify one step here for me?"

*'Is it so horrible that I miss you?'*

He didn't need to look into her eyes to see her expression; determined, pleading, and, oh, so familiar.

"Miss Granger, if you are unable to complete this task without assistance, it is quite apparent that you do not belong in my class."

A moment of silence passed, in which it seemed that the entire class held their breath. And then, like an iceberg, "Yes, sir."

*'Hermione...'*

He reached his mind out to her, knowing he'd been harsh. He would not apologize, but he could soothe. He found nothing but resistance, and heard a single, sharp, bitter word.

*'Coward.'*

He felt the well-known bubble rising inside of him, aware that he would be completely encompassed by it shortly. It happened every time someone called him a coward; this anger would churn into a frenzy inside him until he exploded. He knew that she knew this, and he was amazed that she would lash out this way. Amazed... and hurt.

His face grew hotter, and his breath quickened as the space inside of him grew smaller and smaller, consumed with...

Wait.

Her voice echoed in his head. *'Coward.'*

This was different. This was not anger. This was...

*'Coward.'*

Pushing his chair violently away from his desk, Severus stormed across the classroom and into his storage room. Once he was around the corner, safely out of sight of the students, he leaned against the tall shelves and closed his eyes.

This was dismay.

Was this really what she thought of him? A coward? He swallowed thickly. Being called names was as much a part of the fiber of his being as Potions. Greasy? That he could live with. Cruel? It just made him shrug. Snarky? Hell, he strived for that! But cowardly... that was the word that cut directly to a place inside of him that he tried his best not to acknowledge.

She was right; he was afraid to see what feelings lay behind her eyes, for he would have no idea how to deal with whatever he found there. There weren't supposed to be feelings involved in this... this... affair. It was supposed to be nothing more than an exciting, fun sexcapade... When had this bloody *plot* developed? Yet here they were, feelings and all.

He didn't want to hurt her. If he found out he had, he would have to look deep inside this rusty old soul and find a way to make amends. Nor did he want to lose her. He'd found a sense of peace over the past few months that he had never before believed could be his. Whether he deserved it or not was an argument that others could have; he, for one, would not look a gift horse in the mouth.

Shaking his head, he realized he had to find a way to work this. His life his work revolved around precise calculations, timing and movements. He would assess the situation in a quiet setting, decide upon the most rational course of action, and then employ his

The explosion was deafening.

Severus rushed back into the classroom, encountering a thick, purplish smog and a coppery scent. The students, most of them waving their hands in front of their faces and coughing, had unconsciously formed a loose circle around the offending cauldron. Severus' eyes flew instantly to its owner.

*Right there*, she said, and he was drawn into her mind.

He felt himself stiffen; this was NOT the time nor the place for a shared fantasy! Merlin's mother, he didn't even know if the classroom was safe to be in after the explosion she had created! But his concerns faded as the picture before him played out.

*He sat underneath a large tree on top of one of the hills overlooking the lake. His teaching robes were folded neatly on the ground beside him, and he rested against the trunk of the tree wearing only a white shirt unbuttoned at the throat and rolled up at the sleeves and black pants.*

*Hermione sat between his legs, her back pressed to his front. His fingers played idly in her hair as she rested her cheek against his chest. There was little sound save for the gentle rustle of the leaves above them.*

*Tilting his head back and closing his eyes, he spoke. "I do not know what I can offer you, Hermione."*

*"I know," she answered, her voice as quiet as a prayer. "I don't yet know what I want... or expect. But Severus," she continued, tilting her face back to see his, "I trust you."*

And as quickly as that, he was back.

*Dear gods.*

He held her gaze for what felt like eternity, finally noticing that the rest of the class had gone quiet. Knowing what they were expecting, he cleared his throat and snarled at her, "As I said, Miss Granger, perhaps you do not belong in my class."

"I'm sorry, Professor," she said demurely, a smile hiding in her eyes. "I thought that perhaps mincing the thistle root as opposed to crushing it would increase the potion's stamina. Apparently I was mistaken."

"Indeed you were." *And you're not much of a liar, my dear. You knew exactly what would happen.*

"Yes, sir. However, I felt I should take the chance. Don't you agree, Professor," and her eyes lifted to his again, filled with such gentleness and longing that he nearly stepped toward her, "that sometimes it's worth it to take a chance?"

He didn't realize how hard his heart had been pounding, but now it felt as though it was going to burst through his chest wall. She was insane... all of these students watching... What was he going to do with her?

Turning toward his desk and hiding his smirk, he instructed her, "Miss Granger, clean up your mess. There is sufficient time remaining for a student such as yourself to complete the project... *correctly* this time, please." He sat back down in his chair as she waved her wand, clearing the spilled potion and ruined ingredients from her table. He looked at her proudly; she had courage, this one.

The rest of the class progressed normally. As the students brought their completed potions forward and left the room, Severus reached to her.

*Hermione... I will not be free until later this evening. There is a staff meeting I must attend in Dumbledore's office at eight o'clock.*

*Okay. If you want me after that...*

*Rest assured, Hermione. I want you. I just did not wish for you to... worry.*

He felt her smile. *Thank you, Severus.*

*Oh, and Hermione?*

*Yes?*

*One point to Gryffindor for having the courage to... experiment.*

~\*~

Severus sat in a chair in Dumbledore's office, the sole of one boot propped against the low table in front of him and his forehead resting on the heel of his hand. He hated these meetings. He understood that it was necessary for the Headmaster to gather them periodically to review lesson plans, student progress and any upcoming special events. These type of meetings, however what Dumbledore called "brainstorming sessions" were completely ludicrous in his opinion. Seated leisurely about the room, Professors were encouraged to suggest and discuss changes to the syllabus, the events calendar, or anything else that struck their fancy. Severus had attended many of these sessions and had yet to voice a single suggestion. Appealing to Dumbledore to allow his absence from the meetings had proven fruitless.

"I certainly can't force you to *participate*, Severus," he had conceded kindly. "But I can and will require your presence. The time may come when you will feel compelled to offer your opinion, and I will, as always, find it invaluable."

Oh, well. Perhaps if he was lucky, Madam Hooch and Professor Sprout would get into an argument and start flinging hexes. Their fights were always enjoyable; they were both extremely creative.



'Severus?' The sing-song voice broke through his thoughts, making him jump. 'Se-ve-rus?'

'Hermione?'

'Mmm... hello, sexy.'

Severus shot a quick glance around the room. No one was paying any attention to him.

'Hermione, this is not the time. I am...'

'... in a meeting, yes, I know. Dreadfully boring, I'm sure.'

Tiny alarms started sounding in the back of his head. Something sounded different in her voice, something more sure, more... confident.

Oh, no.

'Oh, Hermione, don't.'

'Don't what? This?'

*His hands were tied to the bed, a blindfold over his eyes. Hermione lay next to him, her hand playing over the hairs on his chest as she lazily kissed his neck.*

'Hermione, please, I understand why you're doing this, but really... not now.'

'Oh no, love,' she breathed heavily. 'Now. Right now.'

*Rolling over, she reached for a small silver bowl on the bedside table and fished out an ice cube.*

Severus felt his cock twitch inside of his pants and casually shifted in his seat. His eyes closed briefly. *I've got a bad feeling about this,* he murmured to himself.

*Holding the cube between her thumb and middle finger, Hermione rubbed it over her lips, flicking her tongue out to lick it. Then she leaned forward and pursed her lips around one of his nipples. The sudden shock of the cold caused him to convulse beneath her, and she chuckled darkly.*

'Come now, Severus. I thought you approved of my "experimenting."'

*Slowly, almost tenderly, she traced the ice cube around his chest, bending to lap the wetness from each of his hardened nipples. Moving up, she drew a line through the hollow of his throat, over his Adam's apple and up to his chin. Rising to straddle his hips, she pressed her warm mound against his hardening penis as she followed the path of the ice with her tongue. She saw him lick his lips and placed the ice to them, watching in fascination as small drips of water ran down to the corners of his mouth. Mesmerized, she leaned forward and snaked the tip of her tongue out to lick it up.*

*Feeling her mouth so close to his, Severus turned his head, trying to capture her lips. She pulled away just enough so that he couldn't reach her and placed the ice cube between her lips. Leaning toward him again, she lowered her mouth to his so that the ice was just skimming over his lips.*

*With a deep moan, he opened his mouth and Hermione ran the ice along his tongue. His breathing became more labored as she teased him, her lips and tongue always just out of reach.*

*After a few moments, she drew back, placed her hands on his hips and slid further down his body so that her breasts rested against his groin. A smile of pleasure flitted over her face as she dragged them over his pubic hair, allowing his swollen cock to slide between them.*

Inside Dumbledore's office, Severus continued to fidget in his seat, struggling to keep his hips under control. His hands gripped the arms of the chair tightly, lest he reach down to rub himself through his trousers. Across the room from him, Professor McGonagall glanced over, then looked at him more closely. "Severus, are you all right? You look flushed."

"I'm fine, Minerva," he replied, as all eyes turned to him. "Please, continue." He gestured vaguely toward the entire room, as he had no idea who may or may not have been speaking.

*The ice cube had melted a fair deal by this point, but Hermione was still able to hold it between her teeth and glide the edge of it from his sternum to his belly button. As she moved further, nuzzling the wiry hairs at the base of his cock, she slipped the ice cube into her mouth. It wouldn't last much longer, she knew, so after running the tip of one finger down his length and back up, she bowed her head and took him into her mouth.*

Severus bit back a cry at the image and leaned forward in his seat. He was so hard now he was beginning to ache. Glancing down, he realized that the sizable tent in his pants was in plain view for anyone who looked, so he quickly pulled his robes around himself. As he did, his forearm brushed against the throbbing shaft, and he couldn't contain a low groan.

"Severus?" This time it was Albus who was looking at him with concern. "What is it?"

Recognizing that he was practically doubled over in his chair now, he grimaced and replied, "My stomach, Headmaster. I must have eaten something that did not agree with me."

*On the bed, he was straining against the ropes and moaning loudly. The alternating sensations of Hermione's hot mouth and the cold of the ice were sending shockwaves of pleasure through his groin, down his legs and up his spine. His hips were bucking, and he knew he wouldn't last long. Hermione had moved over slightly to straddle one of his legs, and was now grinding herself forcefully against his knee. Her moans were almost as loud as his.*

'Hermione, oh gods, please don't stop!'

"Shall I get a potion for you, Severus?" Minerva asked kindly. Her concern was growing as she watched her colleague's breath coming quicker, beads of sweat beginning to pop out on his forehead.

He looked as though he was going to explode out of his seat.

"No, thank you," he hissed. Turning to Dumbledore he asked, "Albus, perhaps if I could use your lavatory?"

"Of course, Severus. Through my quarters, the far door. You know the way."

He stood awkwardly, keeping his robes clasped tightly about him. He was as hard as a railroad spike, and was afraid that even his voluminous robes wouldn't be enough to hide his condition.

"It's very painful, isn't it?" Madam Hooch looked at him compassionately as he swept past her.

"You have no idea," he growled.

He crossed Dumbledore's bedroom and slammed the bathroom door behind him. With a gasp he finally allowed his hand to stroke himself through the cloth of his pants. Gods, he was surprised he hadn't ripped a hole through them! Sinking to the ground against the door, he smirked at the fact that he found himself in this position for the second time in two days. He freed himself from his clothing and turned his concentration back to their dream.

*He could make no sounds now other than incoherent groans and panting. She was driving him crazy; pumping him in and out of her mouth until his balls started to tighten, then slowing her pace and leisurely running her tongue around the head of his cock. His leg was damp with her juices, and it felt as though she had worked a finger between their bodies to tease her clit.*

*He was afraid he was going to have a heart attack if she didn't let him come soon.*

*Suddenly she swung off his leg, thrust one hand between her own thighs and began swallowing his entire length in deep, rapid movements. He gasped and wrenched his hips upward, realizing that he was fucking her face as much as she was sucking his cock.*

*They moved faster and faster, and he felt his scrotum start to pull up against his body. This time she wasn't stopping, he knew. With a flick of her wand, she freed one of his hands, and he immediately ripped the blindfold off. As he did, she reached up and squeezed one of his nipples, and he cried out as his orgasm began to streak through him.*

*With a speed he didn't know she possessed, Hermione rose up and positioned herself directly above his crotch, stroking him feverishly as she spread her labia wide with her other hand and rubbed her clit.*

*'Gods! Oh, gods, Hermione, good Lord, don't stop! I'm coming! Oh, now, now, NOW!!!' His last word came out as a wail as he began jerking spasmodically in her hand. His hot semen shot out directly onto her exposed and swollen nub, and she reared back and screamed as her body began to shudder.*

The idea of Hermione doing something so wanton, so *nasty*, pushed him over the edge, and he bit down on a handful of his robes to keep himself from crying out her name as he exploded in his own hand.

Moments later, still sitting on the floor with his back to the door, Severus chuckled.

'Well, now.'

'Indeed,' Hermione giggled.

'This is one of those instances where I should not ask where you learned that, correct?'

'Actually, I've never done that. It's just something that I thought might be fun to try.'

'I agree wholeheartedly,' Severus sighed, using his wand to clean himself and putting his clothes to rights. 'That is definitely one to add to the list.'

'I'm sorry I interrupted your meeting,' she offered quietly.

'No, you're not, you cheeky little wench. You knew exactly what you were doing. How long have you had that planned for?'

'Only since you mentioned the meeting to me this morning. Turn-about is fair play, after all. Rule number one in the Slytherin handbook, isn't it?'

'Number three, actually. After "Every wizard for himself," and "Payback's a bitch."'

Another giggle. 'I wish more people could experience your sense of humor. Seems a shame to keep it all to myself. Oh, well,' she sighed. 'I never was very good at sharing.'

Severus smiled and checked his reflection in the mirror. Nothing amiss.

'I'm afraid you're going to have to share me for right now, my dear. I really do have to get back to this meeting.'

'All right. I hope you enjoy the rest of your evening.' He didn't have to see her face to imagine the innocent smile she would be giving him.

'Well, I'm sure it won't compare to **that**,' he snickered, 'but I'm sure it will be more tolerable now.'

'I'm glad you're feeling better about things, Severus. I mean... about us.'

An uncommonly soft smile graced his face. 'As am I, Hermione. As am I. Goodnight, love.'

'Goodnight, Severus.'

~\*~

Hermione was beginning to feel exhausted. The celebration feast in the Great Hall had been going on for hours and she had talked, eaten and danced more this night than she had all year. Though she had glimpsed Severus several times during the course of the party, he had not yet approached her. She was surprised to find that she was glad he hadn't. This would most likely be the last time she would see many of her classmates for who knows how long, and she was grateful for the chance to spend some time with them.

Her thoughts, however, had never been far from her Potions master. This was the night that she that **they** had been waiting for, and the anxiety she had felt all day had been tempered only by a deep, pulling sensation in the pit of her stomach.

Now she was on the dance floor, being twirled around again by Harry. He was an absolutely horrid dancer, but seven years of friendship kept pulling them back out to the floor. Her face and sides ached from laughing so much; the only thing that hurt more was her feet.

When the dance ended, she and Harry stumbled over to the refreshment table, joining Ron, Parvati and Ginny. Ginny handed her a cup of water and then went still.

She felt the hairs on the back of her neck rise, even before his breath stirred them.

"Good evening, Miss Granger."

~\*~ ~\*~

Disclaimer: JKR owns all things Potter. I've just made them my lusty little flesh-puppets for a bit!

A/N: A heartfelt thank you to all who have read and reviewed, and especially to all who have been so patient waiting for this chapter. You guys are the best.

Okay, we're finally there... next chapter, GRADUATION!!!

The line, "I have a bad feeling about this," is stolen directly from **every** Star Wars movie. My hubby is a fanatic, and I threw that in there for him. I love you, honey. (Dead monkey on a fence... zzzzzzzttt!)

## Moving Up... and Down... and Up... and Down...

### Chapter 5 of 5

Hermione and Severus have kept their passion at bay, knowing that a student and a professor are forbidden to each other. But now it's Graduation Day...and all bets are off!

"Good evening, Miss Granger."

Hermione wasn't sure which spread more quickly over her face: the nervous blush that crept up her neck to her cheeks or the ecstatic grin that bloomed involuntarily, causing Ginny to look at her in the oddest way. She stared down into her cup for a moment, watching as the small bubbles on the surface would float quietly, then suddenly burst and disappear.

*This is it. Her stomach clenched. There is no turning back after this point.*

With her heart in her throat, she turned to him.

She hadn't noticed him leave the celebration, but he apparently had slipped out at some point to change his clothing. He stood before her, not in his ever-present formal teaching robes and high-necked jacket, but in black pants and a pin-striped dress shirt. His hands were settled in his hip pockets, and the smirk that tugged at the corner of his mouth was tempered by the warmth she saw in his eyes. She had never seen him looked so relaxed... nor so young.

*Don't forget sexy, she thought to herself. You've imagined him naked and in the throes of passion, but never has this man looked this unjustly hot!*

She knew that Ginny and the rest of her friends were staring at her, and she didn't care. She was done playing this game, this charade. They wanted each other, and they had waited. They had been good, they hadn't broken (technically) any rules, and they weren't hurting anyone. Now they were going to be able to collect their reward, and finally forget about the whole rest of the worlds: Wizarding, Muggle, and otherwise. This night was theirs.

She couldn't wait.

"Good evening, Professor. Are you enjoying the party? You certainly look..." Pausing, she let her eyes glide over his form before returning to his gaze. "...well."

Ron's eyes bulged so far out that she actually glimpsed them in her peripheral vision. Ginny surreptitiously took the cup from Hermione's hand and sniffed its contents. She couldn't see Harry she honestly couldn't see anyone other than Severus but she knew that his face would show only confusion and bewilderment. For all that he had seen in his life, Harry still had one of the purest hearts she had ever known; it was terribly difficult for him to comprehend betrayal. And this he would see as a betrayal of the worst kind. It was going to take a long time to clean this one up, she knew. But she would deal with that later. Right now, she just wanted to be with Severus.

Tilting his head slightly, Snape allowed his eyes to travel a similar path over her body, and she felt a twinge of embarrassment at her bold move. She was no seductress, she realized; not when compared to this man.

***That***, she thought, *is how it's done.*

"Indeed, Miss Granger? I should thank you. I should also start referring to you as Hermione, should I not?"

"Well, we're no longer teacher and students now, are we? I think a first name basis is acceptable... Severus."

The tension and turmoil that was emanating from her friends was almost palpable now, and she found herself anxious to escape them before something ugly began. But Severus only continued to stare at her calmly, seemingly in no hurry to advance things along.

*I can't believe this great, overgrown child is expecting me to make the first move! Oh, honestly!*

Trying her best to hide her nervousness behind what she hoped would pass for flirtatiousness, she glanced coyly up at him from beneath her lashes and murmured, "Is there something you wanted, Severus?"

He moved so suddenly that she barely had time to register his actions. In two quick steps he was standing directly in front of her, close enough that she could feel the placket of his shirt brushing the front of her blouse. The topmost buttons were undone, and she found herself staring, completely mesmerized, at his collarbone. She was overcome with the desire to lean forward and lick it, and it was only his voice that stopped her from doing so.

"Why, yes, Hermione," he purred, and she could feel his breath on her face. "There *is* something I want." With that he put his hands on her shoulders and bent his head toward her mouth.

*He's going to kiss me! He's going to kiss me! Zeus's great-grandmother, he's going to kiss me!*

A collective gasp rose from her circle of friends.

But he didn't kiss her. Instead, he stopped with his mouth mere inches from hers and, looking intently into her eyes, spoke in a husky voice.

"I'd like to get to the refreshment table. Could you please step aside?"

Hermione stared ahead mutely as Severus gently guided her to the side and stepped past her.

*He... how... I... he didn't... how could... what?*

She turned around to find him leaning casually against the table, drink in hand. The lazy grin on his face looked completely out of character to almost everyone around him. Everyone except for her.

"What's the matter, Hermione? Did my answer not... *satisfy* you?" Draining his cup, he strode toward her again, and this time his eyes were blazing. "Because if it did not," he continued, drawing a finger slowly down her cheek to her neck, "I'm sure we could find something else that would."

Hermione reached out her mind to him and felt a tremble beneath the surface.

He was nervous.

*'Did you think I was going to change my mind?' she murmured, her gaze never leaving his.*

As inclined as she was to read textbooks and education material, Hermione also enjoyed fiction including the occasional torrid romance novel. So she was familiar with but had never before experienced firsthand the sensation that came next. Everything around her faded.

Everything except for Severus.

All sound, all sight, gone. All that remained was his eyes... eyes that flooded her with so many feelings at once that she couldn't separate them. Arousal, fear, hope, affection. She felt as though she was drinking in an elixir that was taking her to euphoric heights...and at the same time, suffocating her. The intensity in his stare was staggering; so much restrained... what would it be like when he finally let go?

*Could he let go?*

*'I have found, Hermione, that in this life, it is better to count on nothing.'*

Placing her hand on his, Hermione let her thumb rest on his wrist, feeling the pulse beat under it. Beneath her thoughts, she wondered if she would ever be the cause for the pounding of that tired heart.

*'If that is what you've found, Severus, than you have been looking in the wrong place.'*

For the briefest of moments, his eyes closed and a smile graced his lips. In that instant, the world around them rushed back in, and Hermione became aware of a small crowd gathered near them, murmuring and watching them intently. Knowing his hatred of public attention, she wasn't surprised when he grasped her hand and said, "Shall we?"

"Absolutely."

As they began to walk toward the door, she stopped and turned to her friends. "We'll talk tomorrow," she promised with a smile.

Tugging her along gently, Snape took a few more steps before he, too, turned back to her friends... this time with a decidedly more evil grin than Hermione's. "I wouldn't count on tomorrow, Potter. This should take us at least through the weekend."

And with that he swept her out the door.

\*~\*

"You're horrible!" Hermione laughed as they strode down the hallway, hand in hand. She had been shocked at Severus' suggestive comment to Harry, but even more so at how much she enjoyed it. For the first time since their friendship had begun, she was getting to be the bad one. She didn't have to reel anybody in, quote rules to them or finish their homework. For tonight, she didn't have to be the voice of reason.

Tonight she could be the voice of a slut.

The thought made her stomach tighten, and she looked at Severus. He met her gaze and smiled, and she found herself wishing that he would simply push her up against the wall and take her, right there.

He must have been having similar thoughts because the smile faded from his face, replaced by a look of hunger and need. He stepped toward her, his hand curling around her neck, beneath her hair. She reached up to lock her arms around his neck as he bent down

"Ahem."

They jumped apart as quickly as if they'd been opposite ends of a wizard cracker. Professor McGonagall stood nearby, her arms crossed and her face pinched.

"Oh, Professor!" Hermione gasped. "I... we... that is..." Severus silenced her with a hand on her shoulder.

"Minerva, I was just asking Miss Granger about her plans..."

"Oh, Severus, stop it," McGonagall waved her hand at him. "I know what you were doing. It's precisely the reason I was looking for you two." As she walked toward them, Hermione shot a nervous glance toward Snape. She *knew*? Had she known all this time? What exactly was going on?

Severus drew himself up to his full height and glared down his nose. "Professor McGonagall, I assure you that we..."

"Oh, for Merlin's sake, Severus, be quiet!" She turned toward Hermione, and Hermione was shocked to see that she was *smiling*. "Really, my dear, how do you put up with him? Well, to each his own, I suppose."

"You... so, you... you know?" She knew that she was stammering, but she was completely confused. If Professor McGonagall knew about them... if she wasn't shocked by finding them in a compromising position in the hallway... then she must have known for some time. But if she had been aware of what was going on between them while Hermione was still a student, she would have gone to Dumbledore.

Wouldn't she?

Hermione stared at her dumbly as she began searching her robes for something. Glancing up quickly, she noticed her former student's bewilderment and sighed. "Honestly, Miss Granger, just who do you think cast the spell on you two?"

"YOU?" Severus gasped, as Hermione simply stood with her mouth open. "YOU cast the *Somnium Redimio*?"

"Of course," she stated simply. "A relationship like yours doesn't come along very often, you know. I wasn't about to let the opportunity slip by. Now," she continued, pulling a battered pill box from her robes, "you'll be needing these." She opened the box and withdrew a silver key, which she handed to Severus. "Be very careful with this, my boy. It is the only copy we have." Snape nodded mutely and slipped it into his pocket. She then tapped the box with her wand and spoke a few soft words under her breath.

Handing it to Hermione, she instructed, "That is now a Portkey. It will activate in less than one minute. You will find everything you need there. You can charm it to return whenever you are ready with a simple *Vicis Praecessi* spell. Enjoy yourselves," she cooed with a knowing smile.

Severus and Hermione began speaking at once.

"Wait, where is this..."

"Minerva, I demand to know..."

"... do I need to pack clothes..."

"...insane if you think that I would just..."

"... has to look in on Crookshanks..."

"...outrageous scheme to..."

Exhaling deeply, McGonagall turned back to them and held up her hand for silence. She addressed her colleague first.

"I'm slightly offended by your lack of trust in me, Severus, but there isn't time for me to huff and puff. The Portkey will take you somewhere that you two can be alone for a bit. Accept it in the spirit that it is given, and don't quibble with me. I am **still** your superior," she added as he moved to argue with her. He snapped his mouth shut, nodded curtly and looked away.

"Hermione, please go relax and enjoy yourself. Don't worry about Crookshanks. I will look in on him myself. Nor should you concern yourself with Harry, Ron, or anyone else. This is *your* time." Smiling, she tilted Hermione's chin up with her hand. "You remind me so much of myself when I was your age," she murmured. "Oh, and as for clothes... I would expect them to be more luxury than anything this weekend, wouldn't you?" Hermione flushed deeply and McGonagall turned, laughing, to walk down the hallway.

"How did you cast the spell?" Hermione blurted out.

"The *Somnium Redimio* can only be cast by one upon whom it has been previously cast. I will teach you how when you return."

"You mean you..."

"Oh, yes, my dear. Which reminds me... Severus, you are to be commended on your patience and strength of character." Blushing slightly, she continued. "If only Albus had had your willpower, perhaps Gryffindor wouldn't have lost the House Cup in my seventh year." She looked at her watch and her eyes widened. "Grab the Portkey now!"

Severus reached for the pill box in Hermione's hand, and they both disappeared.

\*~\*

They landed, stumbling, in the front yard of a small, secluded log cabin. The sky overhead was heavy with dark clouds, and the air smelled of rain. Severus, taking a page from Moody's "constant vigilance" handbook, checked the house for any dangerous charms or spells. Finding none, they went inside.

Hermione's face broke out into a huge grin as she looked around. The setting was simple, but undeniably romantic. Fresh flowers were arranged in each room in lovely, cut-glass vases. Small lamps were lit in the kitchen, while the sitting room was illuminated by the glow from the fireplace. Without moving, she knew that the sole source of light in the bedroom would be candles. The only furniture near the fireplace was an oversized sofa and an equally large armchair. Other than that, the cream-colored carpeting was bare.

"Oh, my," she breathed.

"Indeed," Snape replied. "Shall we look around more?"

Hand in hand, they explored the other rooms. As she had expected, the bedroom was bathed in candlelight, long shadows thrown on the mammoth bed that occupied most of the room. The loo was simple and nondescript, except for the huge bathtub that looked as though it could seat an entire Quidditch team. The remaining room was a library, which under normal circumstances would have thrilled Hermione to no end. Tonight, however, her mind was no more on books than it was on Hagrid. They found that the back of the house sported a large porch, and the ground dropped away to give a spectacular view.

"Well," Severus commented as they returned to the sitting room, "this house is obviously most accommodating to... couples."

"Yes," she agreed, and an overwhelming sense of shyness came over her. "It certainly is." She broke away from him to walk to the window. She felt silly, but now that they were here, now that it was time, she had no idea what to do.

Her dilemma was solved when Snape put his hands on her shoulders and whispered in her ear, "Dance with me?"

"But there's no music," she protested.

"Trust me." Taking her hand, he pulled her to the center of the room. Wrapping one arm around her waist, he took her other hand in his and began to sway gently. Soft music immediately filled the air.

"How did you do that?" she cried in amazement.

"Just a hunch," he snickered. "This house seems to be, on a much larger scale, of course, much like the Room of Requirement. It would appear that if there is something we need, that need will be fulfilled."

"Whatever we need?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Or desire," he said softly, trailing his fingers lightly along her spine. She found that she could not look away, and they continued to dance closely, staring into each others eyes.

Severus finally broke both the silence and their gaze by moving his eyes down to her lips and saying softly, "Do you realize, Hermione, that we have never kissed?"

"Well, yes..."

"I don't just mean in real life," he interrupted. "Not even in our fantasies. It seems to be almost the only thing we *haven't* done," he chuckled, rubbing her arm gently from shoulder to wrist and back again.

"That can't be right," she muttered. But as she replayed scenes in her head, she realized he was, in fact, correct.

"I wonder why that is?"

"Perhaps," Severus purred, dropping his head to hover near her ear, "we felt that we couldn't do it justice."

Hermione's breath caught, and she suddenly became amazingly aware of his body against hers. The arm that was around her waist was slowly moving up and down, his hand caressing her back, one finger lightly tracing the lines of her bra straps. His thighs pressed against hers gently, but now she could feel the gentle nudge of the bulge in his pants against her belly. His chest brushed against hers as they turned, and she could feel her nipples contracting from the friction. Her eyes fell on the base of his throat, where she could see his pulse. As she watched, it seemed to speed up... almost to mimic her own increased heart rate.

She suddenly realized that it had begun to rain outside.

His cheek was pressed to hers now, her mouth near the sensitive skin at the curve of his jaw. "Severus," she whimpered helplessly, and his grip on her tightened. The hand that had been on her back crept lower, hovering just below the waistband of her jeans. Loosening the fingers of his other hand from hers, he brushed them softly along the underside of her arm, then up along her shoulder to settle on the nape of her neck. In turn, her arms curled around his middle, feeling the tightly-strung muscles there. She splayed her hands widely, wanting to feel as much of him as she could.

"Hermione," he breathed. He pulled his head back slightly, so that his right eyebrow was pressed to hers. Their mouths were less than an inch apart now; all she had to do was turn her head ever so slightly...

"Please," she sighed, not knowing exactly what she was asking for. Her breathing was becoming ragged, as was his. Everything inside of her seemed to be tightening, and as he moved against her again, causing her to feel just how aroused he had become, she began to feel lightheaded.

"Hermione," he whispered again, and this time she could feel his breath on her lips.

*Oh, gods, just a little closer...* she thought.

The corner of his lips trembled so close to hers that she was no longer sure if they were touching or not. She didn't know when they had stopped dancing, but she was vaguely aware that they were now standing in the semi-darkened room, simply wrapped around each other.

The music had stopped.

Lightning flashed through the windows.

"No turning back," Severus murmured, his hand moving up into her hair. She recognized it for the warning it was and accepted it as a promise.

"None."

Turning just a fraction, he brought his lips to hers.

Looking back, Hermione would remember it as the most perfect kiss of her life. He captured her lower lip between his tenderly, releasing it almost immediately. Hesitating for a moment, he kissed her again, gently moving his lips over hers. His head tilted slightly so that their mouths were more fully pressed together, and she tightened her arms around him as she kissed him back, amazed at the softness of his lips. For a long moment they stood there, kissing almost chastely, until a sound much like a whimper came from his throat. His hand fisted in her hair, and she felt his mouth open slightly against hers. When his tongue came forward tentatively, she ran the tip of hers along it lightly.

Thunder crashed outside.

He broke.

A deep moan erupted from him, and he clutched her to him forcefully, making her gasp. His tongue ravaged her mouth, tussling with hers and delving deeply as his hand moved down to grasp her bottom. His hips bucked and she felt his cock like an iron rod against her stomach. Her head spun, and she was only vaguely aware of the hot moisture between her legs.

Slowly, so as not to trip, Severus began backing her toward the sofa. When her legs bumped against it, they lowered themselves down awkwardly, trying to maintain their kiss, but they broke apart as he settled over her.

"Gods," he panted, before crushing his mouth to hers again. Hermione groaned beneath him, her arms locking around his neck as his knee pushed her legs apart. Cradled between her thighs, he aligned himself against her center and began thrusting rhythmically.

Their movements were frantic and desperate; they were beyond reason, beyond return. Hermione's hands grappled over his body, touching wherever they could reach. Severus' mouth moved from hers to her ear to her neck and back again, kissing, sucking and licking as though he was a starving man and she a feast. Supporting his weight on one arm, he moved his other hand to her blouse and began to pull roughly at the buttons.

"Rip them," she gasped between kisses. With a stifled growl, he did just that, tearing the front of her shirt open. He lowered his head, placing hungry kisses down her throat and over her chest as she struggled to free herself from the torn garment. Pulling roughly at her bra straps, he wrenched them down her arms as far as he could, then attacked her neck and shoulder with his tongue and teeth. Hermione cried out as he hit a particularly sensitive spot, and with a wicked smile he concentrated his efforts there, licking and sucking harshly at her skin as she bucked beneath him.

"Severus! Oh, Lord!" Her hands wound through his hair, pulling him even closer and his hand moved down her body to cup her breast. The contradiction between the gentleness of his thumb caressing the nipple and the ferocity of his mouth devouring her neck nearly made her see stars.

Around the cabin, the storm raged on.

Severus lost track of everything except for the woman beneath him. He wanted to be slow and tender, to take his time and savor every inch of her skin, but he was rapidly losing his mind. Her smell, her taste, her feel... she was a study in seduction, and she didn't even know it. *She's here, this is happening... She's here, this is happening...* kept thrumming through his mind as he filled his senses with her. They had waited so long, and now there was no more waiting. He felt sanity and self-control slipping away as desire overwhelmed him; he wanted his hands, his tongue, her mouth, her skin, everywhere, all at once. He wanted to be inside her, to feel her under him, to feel her over him, around him, warm and wet and *real*. A sound much like a sob caught in his throat as he pressed her even deeper into the sofa.

Dimly, he became aware that Hermione had unbuttoned his shirt and was trying to remove it. He knelt over her briefly, shrugging it off his shoulders as she tore off her bra and threw it to the floor. Then he swooped down upon her again, their voices joining in a singular throaty cry as bare skin met bare skin.

Hermione threw her head back and arched her back up to him, a sharp "Oh!" escaping her lips as his tongue circled one nipple and drew it into his mouth, sucking deeply. Tucking an arm beneath her to hold her to him, he continued to engulf her breasts in his mouth, moving from one to the other. She couldn't believe how wet she was getting; surely there must be a damp spot on her jeans by now! It felt as though every inch of her skin was on fire, and every part of him that touched her was like pouring gasoline on an open flame.

Working his way back up to her mouth, Severus kissed her deeply, his hands moving from her hair to her shoulders to her hips and back again. "Hermione," he panted, his forehead pressed to hers, "I'm sorry... I can't stop..."

"Oh, gods, don't you dare!" she snapped and lunged for his throat, running her tongue over his Adam's apple before raking her teeth along his jaw line.

"I want you, please... I have to have you," he groaned, slipping down her body.

His tongue traced the line of her jeans around her belly as he fumbled with the closure. As he pulled them over her hips and down her legs, he trailed his fingers along her skin. The effect was amazing; it was erotic and ticklish all at the same time, and she jerked beneath him. As he moved to unfasten his own pants, Hermione grabbed his wrist. "No, please... I want to do it."

Severus stilled as she sat up and began to remove them. Once she had them pushed down to his knees, he stood up quickly and let them drop to the floor. Extending a hand to Hermione, he pulled her up to him and wrapped his arms around her. Their kiss was less hurried this time, but just as passionate. Their hands trailed over each others' bodies, reveling in the newness of things they had thought they knew. As their embrace intensified, and their breathing became ragged and labored, Severus moved his hands down to cup Hermione's bottom, then slowly slid his fingers under the material at the juncture of her buttocks and thighs and teased her entrance with one finger.

His head reeled when he realized how soaked she already was, and with a feral growl he picked her up and fell back on the sofa with her. She quickly moved to straddle his lap and immediately began grinding herself against him. Severus' head fell back as he gripped her hips and began thrusting against her. He was so hard and she was so wet it was almost as though their underclothes weren't even there. She could feel the ridge of his swollen penis sliding over her clit, and he could feel the plump and sopping lips of her pussy opening for him with each stroke.

Leaning forward, he caught one of her nipples in his mouth and drew hard on it. His vision was starting to fill with flashing lights, and he knew that he was going to come in his shorts if he didn't stop her now.

Grasping her by her waist, he flipped her off and in one smooth movement yanked her panties down to her ankles. Rolling her back over to her stomach, he pulled them over her feet and flung them across the room. "On your knees," he snarled, his hands roaming over her bottom. Hermione, breathless and aching with need, got to her knees on the sofa, bracing herself with her hands on the back, in front of the open window. As lightning sliced through the sky, she felt him run a finger along her swollen labia, tickling the curls there. "Please," she begged, as he continued to tease her. A second finger joined the first, now stroking the length of her slit. Moaning, she leaned her forehead against the window, the coolness of the glass doing nothing to dampen her need. She felt him draw away from her and started to raise her head when stars exploded in front of her eyes.

He was licking her.

Holding her open with both hands, he ran his tongue the length of her cunt and then circled her clit. "Aaaaah!" she cried out as her pelvis wrenched forward. Severus began lapping at her with long swipes of his tongue and she found herself wantonly bucking her hips in rhythm with him. Rolling his head in wide circles, he alternated pumping his tongue in and out of her clenching hole with rapid flutters over her clit. His nose filled with the scent of her, and he gripped her flesh harder to keep himself from reaching down and drenching his own fist with his come. As his teeth grazed her erect nub, a low, keening sound began to radiate from her, and she held on to the back of the sofa for dear life. "Now, witch, *now!*" Severus breathed, and taking hold of her clit between his lips, he began to suck.

Hermione shrieked as her body stiffened and then jerked spasmodically. Severus' cries of lust and approval, muted as he greedily consumed her juices, joined hers as she shouted his name over and over before finally collapsing against the sofa.

She felt his hands pulling her back toward him, and then the hot heaviness of his cock was at her entrance. There was a moment when he rubbed the head of it over her clit that she thought she would come again, but then he grasped her waist and pushed forward, sinking fully into her.

"Fuck!" he cried, at the same time that she yelled, "Christ!"

Unable to control himself, he began driving into her as hard and fast as he could. Stiffening her arms, Hermione began pushing backwards, forcing him even deeper into her.

He wasn't going to last long. He had to come inside her, he had to come NOW.

"Oh, god, oh, god, oh, god, *oh, GOD!*" he chanted, his hands reaching forward to wrap in her hair and pull her head back toward him, her back arching even more. At this angle, his balls began slapping against her clitoris, sending jolts of pleasure through her still-trembling body.

"Fuck me! Oh, dear gods, Severus, fuck me harder!" she screamed, and he felt his scrotum tighten against him. His hair swung around his face as he rocked against her, strands of it clinging to his forehead and nose. For a moment the only sounds in the room were the wet smacks of skin slapping skin, his brutal grunting, and Hermione's arduous panting.

Then he felt her fingers graze the base of his cock as he pulled back, and a violent noise rose from his chest.

"I'm coming, I'm coming! Fuck, now, now, **NOW! AHHHHHH!**"

As he grabbed her hips and thrust inside her as deeply as he could, erupting into her hot wetness, the thunder nearly drowned out his roar.

Nearly.

~\*~

When their breathing had returned to normal and they were able to see clearly again, Severus pulled Hermione to the floor with him and wrapped his arms around her. Her hair tickled his nose as he rested his chin on her head.

"That was... amazing," she murmured.

"Mmm," he agreed, his eyes closed. They sat that way for several minutes, watching the rain whip against the windows and the lightning illuminate the darkened cabin. Eventually, Hermione began to fidget slightly, and Snape knew what was coming.

"Are you cold?" he asked.

"No. Well, maybe a little," she admitted, and laughed as a blanket materialized next to them. Severus draped it around his shoulders and then enfolded her in his arms again, nestling them both inside its warmth.

"So," he began, unwilling to draw the moment out, "you are wondering what happens now."

She jumped guiltily, then lowered her head. "Yes," she mumbled.

"Well, what would *you* like to see happen, Hermione?"

Shifting nervously, she gave a small shrug. Severus waited patiently.

"Well, I don't want to leave yet," she finally confessed.

"That, my dear, is not a concern," he whispered huskily into her ear. "I am far from through with you." The shudder that ran through her pleased him; what did *not* please him was the anxiety that was building, unbidden, in the pit of his stomach. He knew their conversation was far from over, and he was chagrined to find himself concerned over what the next few minutes would bring.

Giggling, she replied, "I don't just mean here, now... I don't want to leave*this*." She snuggled closer to him.

"This **is** nice. Much nicer than I anticipated," he muttered into her hair.

"As much as I dread the answer to this question... what do *you* want to see happen now, Severus?"

They sat in silence, the drumming of the rain on the roof the only sound. As the time stretched out, Hermione's stomach blossomed into a jumble of nerves. *I shouldn't have asked*, she thought to herself. *At least not so soon. I'm pressuring him. No one likes to be pressured.*

Just as she made up her mind to tell him, Never mind... forget she asked, he spoke.

"I don't have an answer to that, Hermione. There are many different scenarios, many different ways that this could go. Some, I think I would enjoy. Some, I know I would not. But right now, I can only tell you these three things: One, I don't want us to feel that we have to make a momentous decision about our future or futures tonight. Or even in the next few days, or weeks. Two, I want to enjoy this time with you to the absolute fullest. And three..." He tilted her chin up so that she looked over her shoulder at him. "... I am so, so thankful that this happened."

Hermione lifted her hand to gently trace the planes of his face as he kissed her. The tears that formed behind her eyelids would dissipate by the time the kiss was through, she was sure. He was right; there was no need to settle everything tonight. No need to draw up intricate and exact plans for the coming days. It was enough that they were there, together, with something already substantial enough between them to necessitate that talk somewhere down the road.

Lowering her slowly to the floor, Severus kissed her slowly and thoroughly. Moving her mouth from his, she trailed soft kisses to his ear, where she ran the tip of her tongue delicately around the outer rim until her moaned. She was kissing her way down his throat toward his chest when he suddenly gave a sharp bark of laughter.

"Um... yeah. That's generally not the desired reaction to that move," she grumbled, pulling back to look at him.

"I'm sorry," he apologized, looking not in the least bit remorseful. "I just realized how much fun it is going to be to flaunt this in front of your little friends." He snorted again, and she scowled at him.

"Excuse me, *dear*, but if you call my friends 'little', you're insinuating that I, too, am such. And I believe that I proved tonight that I am far from 'little.'"

"Mmm... indeed you have," he purred, tickling the hollow of her throat with his tongue.

"They will have a hard time getting used to this, though," she continued thoughtfully.

"I'm sure they will," he agreed, nibbling at her collarbone.

"Especially Harry."

"Yes, I'm sure the adjustment will be most difficult for him," he snickered.

"Severus! These *are* my friends, don't forget! You're going to have to make an effort not to make things more strenuous than they'll undoubtedly be."

"Of course, love," he murmured, kissing behind her ear.

"Severus, I'm serious!"

"I understand," he assured her, moving his lips to her jaw. "I will attempt to be on my best behavior when I'm placed in a situation with them."

"Especially Harry?"

"Especially Potter... unless he starts something first."

"Severus!"

"Hermione, calm down," he sighed. "I'm joking. I will try to make the transition as smooth as possible... for your sake."

"Thank you," she said softly, with a smile that melted his heart. Leaning down, he moved to claim her lips before pulling back suddenly.

"What is it?" she asked, concerned.

"Does this mean that bending you over the dinner table at the Burrow is out of the question?"

"*Severus!*" Laughing, she pulled him back down to her.

Sometime much, much later, they finally made it to the bed.

## ***The End***

~\*\*~

**Disclaimer:** If you've just read this story, you know without a doubt that I am NOT JK Rowling. She is a fine, upstanding citizen, and an excellent role model for children. I am a horn dog.

### **Author's Notes:**

"*Somnium Redimio*," loosely translated means "dream binding."

"*Vicis Praecessi*," - loosely translated means "time to go."

I have many people to mention this time around.

First and foremost: props go out to Anouska Draconius, for the idea of Snape asking Hermione to move so that he could get to the refreshment table. She suggested that, and I thought it was so perfectly Snape that I had to use it. Thanks, AD!

Secondly, a huge thank you to all who have read and reviewed. I know that I have not answered all the reviews, and I apologize. But I thought that you would rather I get this chapter done, so that's what I did!

A special thank you, as well as a bon voyage, to Layla (Dreamsong11.) who gave me the inspirational kick in the butt to finish this baby. Two weeks without internet? I couldn't let you go without knowing how this turned out! Ciao, bella!

Lastly, and certainly not least... to my hubby. I know I thank him all the time - usually with some funny or bizarre comment thrown in - but he truly is the strength in my life. Not only has he encouraged me to write, but he is the one who takes care of our son so that I can do so... usually after a long day of work. He is my best friend, and a far



better person than I could ever hope to be. Dream all you want, ladies... I wouldn't trade him for a castle full of Snapes. I will love you forever, Papa.

Now... let's go meet the pansies!