

# Coming Home

by Mint Stick

The battles are over and the healing can begin. SS/HG/HP.

## Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 3

The battles are over and the healing can begin. SS/HG/HP.

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A/N: This was written as a gift for Alienor77310 in the SS/HG Gift Exchange on LiveJournal. Her prompt was *SS/HG/HP threesome: either two of the three are an established couple and take in the third, who is wounded/homeless/amnesiac/... The third one heals/recovers, and they discover in the process that they're even happier when they are three.*

Huge thanks to my wonderful betas, Ayerf and JunoMagic.

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### Chapter 1

"Hermione? You up there?"

Hermione put her book down.

Sometimes she wished they hadn't succeeded in silencing Mrs Black's portrait. She could have spent almost two more minutes reading if Harry had been forced to come up instead of calling from downstairs.

"Yeah, I'm here," she called back, patting Crookshanks, who looked somewhat put off by the disruption.

Harry must have taken the stairs two at a time, considering the way his feet thudded noisily on the steps and the speed at which he appeared at the drawing room door, winded and gasping for air.

"Guess what I just found out?"

He looked both excited and full of indignation. One of his more endearing looks, Hermione thought, even if sometimes annoying.

"Something to do with Snape?" she guessed, knowing that Harry's plans for the day had included a visit to St Mungo's.

"Yeah, I'm just back from there sorry, didn't make it to Diagon Alley today, but we can go get the stuff you wanted tomorrow..." He took a deep breath, visibly forcing himself to calm down. "Look, I'd better get us something to drink first, I'm dying of thirst here. Butterbeer or pumpkin juice?"

"Butterbeer, if we've still got some."

"Sure!" Already Harry was half-way down the stairs again.

If Harry didn't even bother calling for Kreacher, the news must be quite something. Or perhaps he just needed a moment to collect himself.

Hermione flicked her wand and lit the fire although the weather had been unusually balmy for October, Grimmauld Place never seemed to warm up properly.

"Anyway, as I was saying," Harry started, handing Hermione her bottle of Butterbeer and uncorking his own, "I spent the whole day at St Mungo's. They're wanting to release Snape!"

"But that's great!" Hermione exclaimed. "Is he doing so much better, then?"

"Well, not really. Somewhat. He can get around on his own a bit, although I gathered he still has to stay in bed most of the time and would really need looking after. That's not really the problem though, he could get someone to come over every day, but..."

"Oh. Fuck."

"Yeah."

"But surely they know that Snape's home was destroyed in that fire last year? I mean, it was even in the *Prophet* at the time!"

Harry stared grimly into his Butterbeer.

"Exactly. They do know. They just don't care. Said that he's a difficult patient and now that he doesn't need constant Healer supervision, they're just doing what they'd be doing with any other patient in a similar condition kicking him out. Not in those words, obviously, but you know."

"But they can't do that! Snape is well, I don't need to tell you that, but can't they see how much *we* owe him?"

Harry shrugged.

"That's why I didn't make it to the shops today. Spent a few hours there, going as high up as I could, trying to get through to them. Didn't help. I guess that there are limits to what the Saviour of the Wizarding World can manage, after all." He grimaced. "They all just smiled at me and said that yes, they understand the problem, but he's well enough to be let go and that's it."

Hermione considered the problem for a moment. She knew very well too well, almost how Harry felt about Snape since the final battle. He'd been ecstatic with relief when the Aurors who had gone for Snape's body in the Shrieking Shack had reported he was still alive, if barely, and had championed his cause ever since.

"Did you talk to Kingsley yet?" she asked. Minister Shacklebolt was always willing to spare some time out of his busy schedule to listen to them.

"Yeah. He said he'll see what the Ministry can do, but that it will take weeks if not months to find a suitable place for Snape to live. Apparently there are security issues they'll have to consider."

Harry got up and started pacing in front of the fireplace. "Look, I was thinking ... we could take him in. I'm sure that if I keep reminding Kingsley, it'll only take a couple of weeks, so it's not like we'd have to..."

"...not like we'd have to put up with him for ever," Hermione finished the thought for him. "I think it's a great idea." She beamed at him. "I was just thinking the same thing. After everything he's done and suffered through, we can't allow him to end up on the streets!"

Letting out a relieved breath, Harry pulled her up and into his arms.

"Thanks. I knew you'd agree, but I was still worried," he admitted, pressing a quick kiss on her lips. "After all, he's still Snape. And we'd have to look after him."

"We'll manage," Hermione murmured, sliding her fingers into his messy hair. "We've managed far worse things before. Putting up with Snape for a bit won't be a problem."

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Getting one of the unused second floor bedrooms sorted out and prepared for Snape was not an easy task, even with the help of magic and Kreacher. It was amazing just how much grime could accumulate in a house. And hadn't they cleared it all out before fifth year, when the Order first started using the house as Headquarters?

At least Harry helped without any complaints! Hermione smiled. Even now, having shared the house with Harry during the holidays as friends since the battle ended, and as lovers for the last three months, she was constantly surprised by how much he had matured in the last year. Not without a price, as his nightmares suggested, but that was the price they all had to pay.

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Hermione had offered Harry her help in getting Snape packed and moved in, but Harry had refused, saying it was something he needed to do on his own. Something to do with paying that debt he felt he owed Snape, he had explained.

She hadn't been to see Snape in the hospital. Harry had, several times, although he didn't talk much about those visits, and she hadn't wanted to pry. She knew Snape had been in a coma for months and had only started to show signs of recovery in the last few months; it was quite possible he hadn't been thrilled to see Harry again once he'd come to.

Thus she felt a certain amount of curiosity mixed with trepidation when she got home from work on the day their new house guest was scheduled to arrive.

Harry had warned her that they'd likely Apparate right inside the house to avoid any accidents with the Floo, so the louder-than-usual crack of Apparition didn't come as a surprise. She still couldn't help flinching; even after all this time, Apparating inside the house at Grimmauld Place brought back memories of the most unpleasant kind.

"We're home!" Harry called out. "Can you come down and give us a hand?"

"Sure!" she called back, giving the room one last look. Everything seemed in order. There was still an air of desolation about the room, but she'd kept the window open for hours, the bed was freshly made up with clean linen, there was a glass of water on the bedside table with a self-filling decanter next to it, and at least it was not Sirius's room they'd cleaned up for Snape.

They were waiting for her in the hallway once she had made her way down.

"Professor Snape," she greeted their guest. This was the first time she had got a good look at him since ... since that day in the Shrieking Shack, with all that blood and the snake and those wounds, those awful, gaping wounds in his neck, the blood bubbling out of him and gathering in a puddle no, a pool on the floor...

She drew in a ragged breath and smiled.

Professor Snape was alive. *No thanks to you*, her inner voice chastised her, but she decided to ignore it for the time being. She had forced herself to face that particular guilt already, assuring herself and the boys that there hadn't been anything they could have done at the time that there was no time, that her skills were too modest to have

sufficed even knowing that if anything, her only rational excuse was shock at witnessing Nagini's attack, and the odd numbness that came with it.

But Snape was alive, here, with them, right now. So she smiled, determined to do her best to avoid showing any discomfort.

He looked not well, obviously, but she had expected him to seem worse. He had lost weight, and he hadn't had much to lose to start with; but he was still unmistakably Severus Snape, the great, greasy, hook-nosed bat of the dungeons and bane of their schooldays. Even if she had remembered him as bigger taller, more imposing he was still Snape.

"If you're done with gaping at me, I'd like to be shown to my room now."

His voice was hoarser and raspier than she remembered, too. Lack of use, possibly, or perhaps the wounds in his neck...?

"Sometime today would be preferable, Miss Granger."

Same old Snape, then.

Harry cleared his throat. "I didn't want to Apparate straight into the room. Making it here in one piece was difficult enough!"

Hermione smiled, knowing full well that Harry's Auror training had honed his skills in that area to near perfection and appreciating his gesture of not wanting to scare her any more than necessary.

"I was thinking about using a stretcher to levitate the professor up the stairs," Harry continued, "but I don't know if I can hold the spell and take enough care to avoid the corners at the same time."

"Oh. Yes, that's a good idea," she agreed, snapping out of her reverie. "You do the *Leviosa*, I'll do the steering. And I can get the professor's things, too."

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Getting Snape settled in had gone relatively smoothly. He didn't say much, indicating his acceptance or displeasure with certain things mostly by nodding, grunting or sneering. He refused help with changing into his nightshirt, but accepted grudgingly Harry's support for getting to the loo.

Hermione almost felt a bit left out. On the other hand she wasn't really very keen on spending too much time in Snape's presence. Especially as he seemed to feel more at ease in Harry's company.

"Thank you," Harry breathed into her shoulder later, after they climbed into bed. "It's not easy, I know. The guilt ... not just for leaving him there, but all these years, the way I suspected him ... I wanted to kill him, I really thought I would, back when the Headmaster ... Merlin, had I only known!"

"Shh," Hermione murmured. "You couldn't have known. He couldn't afford to let you know to let any of us know. Just think how it would have looked if you'd got on well with him."

Harry smiled weakly. "Yeah. But even so ... He's an amazing man, Hermione. He should hate me, I know, I've always been such a prat and especially now that everyone knows ... you know how some people have been ridiculing him? Thinking he's weak, for loving my mother so long. If I hadn't told everyone during the battle but I had to. And I didn't ... I didn't know he wasn't dead. He should be angry, really angry with me, but he's not. We talked a few times when I went to St Mungo's, when he was conscious again, and he just ... he said he wasn't."

"Perhaps he feels he's had enough of hating," Hermione suggested, feeling like she should say something but with no idea what could be behind Snape's change of mind. It was possible, after all. Perhaps he was simply tired of all the animosity. Or perhaps he was simply tired.

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Snape was looking out of the window when Hermione entered with the breakfast tray.

"There's bacon and sausages and some eggs," she said, putting the tray down. "We're out of beans, I'm afraid. And potatoes. If there's anything else you'd like, let me know. Or you can tell Harry if you prefer."

Snape turned around, looking at her properly for the first time. "Thank you. I appreciate this..." He gesticulated tiredly, indicating the room and the tray. "...a great deal. *Harry*..." He grimaced at saying the name. "...informed me that this was your idea as well as his."

Hermione wondered when he'd started calling Harry by his first name. Probably at St Mungo's. If Snape really had overcome his hatred for Harry, he wouldn't want to keep referring to Harry by his father's name, she supposed.

"It's not a problem," she said and offered an encouraging smile. "We're pleased to have you here with us. And honoured." She blushed a little, somewhat embarrassed about that last bit. "I'm sorry I never came to see you at the hospital but ... I didn't know if you wanted visitors. Especially any Gryff... former student visitors."

"I didn't." He tucked into his food. "I had some regular visitors, Minerva Professor McGonagall, that is came by a few times too, and it was all so ... most of the time, I didn't want to see anyone."

She nodded. "I'll leave you to your breakfast. There's a bell by your bed I don't know if Harry showed it to you yesterday if you need someone. Or you can call for Kreacher, if Harry and I are not here. I need to go to work now. Harry's already left, but he should be home before me this evening."

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The next few weeks were quite uneventful. Hermione went to work, Harry went to Auror training, and Snape stayed in. She did notice that he was getting a little better less gaunt, less pale, a bit stronger every day. He even spent a few hours in the drawing room now and then, reading, mostly on his own, but sometimes sharing it with Hermione in the evening. He still didn't talk much, but when he did, he was polite. Most of the time, at least.

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"Have you talked to Kingsley yet?" Hermione asked Harry at dinner one evening.

"I've tried." Harry sighed. "He keeps apologising, and saying he's just so busy even though he's been Minister for a year now, there's still so much for him to do."

"I know," Hermione said. "I've seen him rush past me in the Atrium occasionally but he's always seemed in such a hurry that I didn't want to bother him. He's doing a great job the others in my department say we've never been so well funded before. Apparently he's the first Minister in a long time who has actually cared about the welfare of other magical creatures."

"Yeah, Kingsley's a good guy," Harry agreed. "I don't reckon they'll get Severus's situation sorted out any time soon, though."

"Severus's?" Hermione raised an eyebrow.

Harry's cheeks flushed with a pink glow. "Erm, yes. He told me the other day that he's tired of me calling him *Professor* all the time. That he's done with that part of his life."

Hermione smiled, although she felt once again inexplicably a bit jealous. Well, not jealous, perhaps. Envious. Left out. Snape was polite enough with her, but he gave no indication of wanting to move to friendlier terms with her.

Not that Hermione knew why that should matter to her there had never been any love lost between them, after all. And she wasn't even the child of his eternal love.

"Have you talked to him about the ... how did he take the news of his home not being there any more?"

"Not too well, I think. He just sort of stared at the wall for a while and then said 'I see.' And that was it. I haven't wanted to say anything about it again."

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Hermione joined Snape in the drawing room later that evening. He looked up, nodded in greeting, and returned to his book.

They read in companionable silence for a while until Snape remarked, "When I was last here in this house, the drawing room was in a dreadful state, in spite of Mrs Weasley waging a war against it some years ago. You've done a good job here, Miss Granger."

The praise, so unexpected, made her grin.

"Thank you. I haven't had as much time here yet as I would like to I assume Harry mentioned that I returned to Hogwarts last year to take my NEWTs but I'm quite pleased with what I've managed so far."

She put down her mug of tea and took a deep breath. "Professor ... do you think you could call me Hermione? It's just that you call Harry by his first name, and it feels a little..."

Snape looked at her, black eyes glittering in the still too thin face.

"Of course. *Hermione*."

The way her name sounded in his voice, not as silky as in her school days but with its velvety timbre, still so irresistible...

No. Not irresistible. Hermione gave herself a mental slap. This was Snape, their house guest and patient, a man still mourning a love lost years ago.

"Thank you ... Severus." She gave him a cheeky smile.

He inclined his head in response, indicating that he wasn't about to protest.

"I gather that I might stay here for longer than expected," he said after a while. "I hope that it is not too inconvenient. I find that I am getting stronger; I may be able to start looking for new accommodation soon."

"It's no trouble at all!" Hermione exclaimed. She felt oddly disturbed by the thought of Snape moving out. "Please don't even think about leaving yet. Not before you're at full strength."

She considered her next words carefully.

"I have wondered ... well, that is, I don't want to be too nosy, so please tell me if I'm out of bounds with this, but do you have enough savings to live on? I mean, you're getting better every day, but I'd imagine it will be a while before you can return to work."

"I have some," Snape replied after a few moments. "Not enough to buy a new house, or to replace my own library..." He swallowed visibly at this. "...but I should be able to rent something."

"Please remember that you're welcome here as long as you wish to stay," Hermione said. "We have more than enough room this place is far too big for just me and Harry anyway."

"No plans for children yet?" Snape smirked when Hermione, who had just taken a sip from her mug, spluttered.

"Not yet. Harry and I ... we haven't really discussed anything like that."

"I see." Snape picked up his book.

He didn't seem to make much progress before he sighed and put it down again. He cleared his throat, looking somewhat uncomfortable.

"If you don't mind me asking, you and Harry ... I always had the notion, both from my own observations and Minerva's gossip in the staff room, that you had an eye on the Weasley boy, Ron? And that Harry was interested in his sister an interest, which, in both cases, seemed clearly mutual."

Hermione harrumphed.

"Yes, well, things change."

She considered how much she could should tell him. On the one hand, this was personal; on the other, this was the first time Snape was actually engaging her in conversation. She liked that.

"I don't know if you knew ... well, I guess you did, yes, that Ron left us at one point when we were on the run?"

Snape nodded.

"Harry and I became ... closer, during that time. Nothing happened really, well, nothing romantic, but we were feeling so alone and betrayed, I suppose, that we we comforted each other as best we could. Not, you know..." she said, blushing, "but we did spend some nights together. Just hugging, cuddling, keeping warm, making sure the other was still there.

"Anyway, Ron returned, and things went back to normal, sort of, and when it was all over, Ron and I did what everyone had expected of us, and got together. It was nice in the beginning all new and exciting, and Ron told me he loved me, and always wanted to be with me ... I thought I felt the same way, at the time, although I wondered sometimes. But then when Hogwarts opened again in October, and I just *knew* I had to go back well, Ron wasn't happy. We had a big row because he had no intention of returning neither he nor Harry did and he told me that it's over between us if I left him. He took it as a personal insult, I think. So ... that was it between me and Ron."

Snape rolled his eyes. "Weasley is a fool."

Hermione smiled weakly. "There was a time when I'd have been offended by that."

"What about Harry and Miss Weasley?" Snape asked. "He's never mentioned her at all."

"Harry and Ginny ..."

Hermione went quiet for a while.

"What do you know about what we went through, anyway? What we suffered while you were away, hiding in the woods, and wasting months on fuck knows what?" Ginny had yelled at Harry when Hermione had walked in on their argument during the Christmas holidays. "If you did, you'd shut up about Snape! I'm fucking fed up with Snape this and Snape that I don't CARE what he did, he was a fucking bastard to all of us."

"And you you just couldn't wait to get your paws on him, could you?" Ginny shouted, turning to Hermione. "While me and Neville and Luna and the rest of us were suffering, never knowing where the next blow would come, having to spend our days cowering before Snape and the Carrows, being forced to see our friends being tortured, being made to torture their own friends you have no bloody clue how good you had it, do you?"

"I'm not sure I should be telling you this, it's really Harry's story to tell. But from what I know, they did also get together after the battle ... it all looked so perfect, really. Mrs Weasley was so happy! Both because of Ron and me, and with Harry and Ginny finally getting their chance."

Hermione took a sip of tea again. "I don't know exactly when it happened, actually I was at Hogwarts at the time. When I came here for the Easter holidays, they'd broken up already. Harry told me later that ... well, one of the things that happened was that he found out Ginny had been with Neville."

Snape's eyes glittered again. Hermione wasn't sure whether it was with amusement or fury. His clipped tone suggested the latter.

"So she cheated on him."

"No!" Hermione exclaimed. "Not as far as I know. But Ginny and Neville had become close during that year at Hogwarts. In any case, Harry was quite badly shaken by finding out about it, and they broke up soon afterwards. I don't think it was only because of that ... After all, Harry wasn't there. But they kept having bigger and bigger rows over all sorts of things, mostly because, well, Harry hadn't been there. And Ginny I mean, that year wasn't easy on any of us. But she couldn't really understand what we'd all been through. What Harry had been through. Or perhaps she just couldn't deal with that on top of her own nightmares."

"And you and Harry..."

"It just sort of happened, not long after I was done with school. Harry had nightmares. I had nightmares. We talked, and ... I guess we remembered what it was like, just the two of us. How much we'd needed each other then. And we just ... thought we'd see how this goes, if it might work between us. There's no grand passion," she said, smiling slightly, "but it's comfortable. We're best friends, and we've been through things together that no one else could understand."

Snape nodded. "I understand. And I hope you forgive me my curiosity I've never been one for idle gossip, but at Hogwarts, I was always in the middle of everything. Now ... I feel out of touch, I suppose. My world in these last few months has been a ward at St Mungo's, and now this house."

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Hermione was on her way up to Snape's room when she stopped, hearing voices coming from the inside. She took a step closer, not quite able to quench her curiosity, taking care to stay as quiet as possible.

The door was slightly ajar, offering her a view in.

Harry's back was to the door. He was sitting at Snape's bedside, fidgeting with the edge of the quilt. Snape was saying something but not loud enough for Hermione to hear.

Quite unexpectedly, Harry straightened his back and bent his body towards Snape. Was he...? No. He couldn't possibly be thinking about...

Hermione's mind was reeling. Harry *had* just done it. Kissed Snape.

Kissed. Snape.

Harry.

Was still kissing Snape, in fact. And Snape didn't seem to be protesting.

Hermione swallowed. She felt vaguely numb. A part of her was thinking, quite clearly, that she ought to make her presence known, that she ought to be horrified ... Wasn't it her boyfriend there, with another? But she was too caught up in her fascination with the scene to protest.

Only when she experienced a frightfully familiar tingle inside her, did she take a step back. She couldn't just burst in like that. This was ... this was something she had to think about. With a clear mind.

She hurried to the bathroom and locked herself inside. Merlin. How... why...? She'd never thought that seeing two men locked in a kiss could feel so intensely erotic. Not that she'd ever really thought about it. Or had expected to witness it. Surely she ought to feel betrayed sickened by this?

A few minutes later, she managed to get her ragged breathing under control again.

She knew she should feel furious ... She would have, had it been Ron. If anything, she felt a bit left out. Again.

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Harry was already in the kitchen when she made her way downstairs. He looked a bit pale, perhaps a bit shaken; but even to Hermione, who knew Harry and his moods better than anyone, nothing would have seemed too out of the ordinary if she hadn't just witnessed what she had.

What was out of the ordinary was their lovemaking that night; it had never been anywhere near this intense before. But while Harry was pounding into her with a newfound passionate fury, she couldn't help but imagine how it would feel to kiss those thin lips in that gaunt face, and when their encounter reached its peak, her elation was dampened by a deep pang of envy.

## Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 3

The battles are over and the healing can begin. SS/HG/HP.

A/N: Thanks to my wonderful betas, Ayerf and JunoMagic.

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## Chapter 2

Severus was feeling wonderfully dreamy and relaxed. Had someone told him a year ago that he'd feel this good in the care of the two students he had most disliked in the past, he'd have laughed. And possibly hexed the person for impudence.

But this arrangement was indeed turning out better than he could ever have wished. Learning about the fate of his Spinner's End home had been ... hard. Not that he'd ever been particularly happy there; in fact, the house held so many memories of the worst kind that he could not truly miss it.

Although there had been some good times, too, when he was still a very young boy and didn't know to expect better yet. And the house had always meant a connection to Lily, even after their row even after the Evanses had moved away after his fifth year, thus taking away his last chance to see her alone in the summer, without her Gryffindor friends around to poison her mind against him.

And then there was his library. His painstakingly built collection of books and manuscripts, many of them rare and valuable. He had never needed to spend much on himself, and after his parents' deaths, he stopped burying money in the house to make the place more habitable. He didn't spend that much time there, anyway. But the library ... Severus cursed himself over and over again for moving anything of value away from his Hogwarts quarters and to Spinner's End. But he had known that his term as Headmaster might one day come to a swift and sudden end, and it had felt prudent at the time. Even so, he wished he'd had the forethought to take precautions to charm the house, or at least his books, against fire. If he only hadn't had so much else on his mind at the time!

However, the months of coma seemed to have changed him. As hard as learning of the fire had been and the fact that Harry had been the one to tell him about it hadn't helped. He had certainly not been prepared to express his sorrow in front of that boy. Still, it had not cut him as deeply as he might have expected under normal circumstances.

And now he was here, at Grimmauld Place, the childhood home of one of his worst school time tormentors, being tended to by two young people whom he would have expected to dislike him, if not hate him. And ... enjoying it.

Which was really becoming a problem.

When he'd lain unconscious perhaps already in the Shrieking Shack, perhaps later at St Mungo's he had seen Lily. At least he thought he had. And she had talked to him, telling him to let go of the past, now that everything was over; to start anew, perhaps even find love, or at least companionship.

He had sneered. He definitely remembered that part.

But then he had returned to the world of the living (and of pain, and of boredom, and of having to deal with idiotic Healers and mediwitches and junior Healers and hangers-on, who all seemed to either hate him with a passion, or try and treat him with exaggerated sweetness), and Harry had arrived. Or Potter, as he had still thought of the boy then. With his messy hair and a thousand apologies and, which surprised him the most, sheer adoration in those painfully familiar eyes.

Severus had always had eyes for only one woman. No other ever came close. But he was still a man with certain natural urges. He'd been more than glad to have the occasional roll in the hay (or in the boys' dormitory four-poster beds or on the luxuriously soft carpets in some pureblood fellow Death Eater's manor) with those of his mates with similar inclinations.

So when Harry kissed him, it came as a surprise ... well, not completely. At first he had wondered if the boy was looking for a new father figure, now that he had none. But then he realised Harry was well on his way to turning his hero worship into something more physical. He had just never expected the boy to act on those feelings.

A surprise, but certainly not a negative one. Especially as he had managed to ignore how the boy still looked so much like Potter, and focused on his eyes and his strong arms and pleasantly squared shoulders instead.

But ... there was Granger to consider. Hermione. He really couldn't understand how any heterosexually inclined male, which Harry certainly had seemed to be, would want *him* if they could have Hermione, who was well on her way to growing into a very delectable woman indeed. And a pleasant companion at that. He'd enjoyed spending time with her so much so that he'd tried to limit it, not wanting to risk forming an ... attachment.

Hermione Granger was a puzzle to him. Especially as he had spotted her outside the door that day, so he knew that she knew of her boyfriend's? lover's? digression. If there was one thing Severus knew about Hermione Granger, it was that if she felt wronged, she made very certain that everyone knew about it. And yet he hadn't seen any signs of fireworks.

Yes, she was a puzzle. He liked puzzles.

Severus sighed, put the last piece of bread in his mouth, and got up to take the empty dishes back to the kitchen.

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Harry's increasing moodiness over the next days was impossible to miss. Hermione preferred the bursts of energy over the sullen silences, but both extremes were getting a little tedious.

On the other hand, as Harry was busy ignoring Severus as much as possible without coming off as rude, it left Hermione to spend more time with their guest something of a mixed blessing, she thought, as the man in question had been steadily on her mind ever since she had witnessed *the kiss*.

She was confused. And that annoyed her. She was never confused, not when it was about feelings. She was a practical girl, after all, not given to illusions about great passions. She had known from early on that Ron was cute and that they were destined for a life together, she'd had no confusion about her feelings for Viktor (he'd been a very, very nice choice for gathering, cautiously, some basic experience), and she had always known her feelings for Harry first as a friend, then as the only person she knew for certain she could rely on, then as someone she could share everything with.

With Severus ... she would never, ever, have expected to feel anything (but respect) for him. He was so unapproachable, or so she had thought. But now ... now she knew he was a man of flesh and blood and, as she had seen, quite approachable indeed. And he had the most intriguing eyes and a wonderful voice and lovely hands with long, well-proportioned fingers ... and he also seemed to like men.

Hermione sighed.

Never one to give in easily, her mind started considering the options.

Yes. This needed further research.

If Severus had really loved Lily as much as Harry seemed to believe (Harry had never shown Snape's memories to anyone else, not even to Ron and Hermione, so she had to take his word for it), things might not be the way they looked.

She wondered if she should be feeling guiltier over entertaining such thoughts about their guest. But if Harry hadn't led the way ...

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Once again, Hermione was sitting in the drawing room, with Crookshanks curled up on the floor in front of the fireplace. The day had been more exhausting than usual, and she accepted the mug of tea and tray of sandwiches from Kreacher with immense relief.

"I thought you were still fighting for the freedom of house-elves?" Severus remarked.

"I am. It's the main project of our department."

"Yet you seem happy to accept Kreacher's services."

"Kreacher gets paid for his work."

Hermione neglected mentioning the part where Harry had practically had to chain Kreacher to the wall to get the old elf to accept payment. Freeing him had been quite out of the question had they tried, Hermione suspected he might have committed suicide. Even she wasn't principled enough to offer him clothes. And if he preferred to stash his Sickles away in his nest instead of spending them ... Well, that was his money and his choice.

"Ahh."

They sat in silence for a while, Hermione sneaking covert glances at her companion now and then. When their eyes finally met, she offered him a small smile.

"Is there anything I could help you with?"

Severus looked at the book in her lap.

"I was hoping to take a look at that book you've been reading, but there's no rush."

"Oh go ahead, I can always read it later."

She handed him the book, letting her fingertips brush against his.

"Thank you," he said, looking at the book, then at her, then at their hands, and then at her again. He didn't seem any more eager to draw his hand back than she was.

Hermione's breath hitched. Was it ... No. She was just reading too much into things.

When he put the book down with his other hand and hesitantly covered her fingers with his, she wasn't so sure any more.

"You have lovely hands, Hermione," he murmured after a short pause. "I wish ... I wish things were different."

~\*~\*~

The incident in the drawing room left Hermione even more confused. And she didn't care for that feeling at all.

Severus had been flirting with her, she was certain of that. At least she thought so.

She swallowed dryly, noting how her heartbeat quickened at the thought.

She was certainly less confused about her feelings for the man than before. He was oddly attractive. She realised, of course, that she knew nothing about him, really as a man, and not as a teacher or a spy. But that didn't change the fact that she would have been more than willing to learn to know him better in some very personal ways.

She decided that it was time to have a chat with Harry.

~\*~\*~

Harry had apparently come to the same conclusion.

"Look ... there's something we need to talk about," he said without any preamble. "The thing is well, the thing is that..."

"...that you're attracted to Severus," Hermione finished the sentence for him.

Harry blinked.

"How did you know?"

Hermione looked down, feeling a bit embarrassed.

"I, um, nearly walked in on you the other day. When you were talking to Severus and then ... I saw you kiss him."

Harry's eyes went wide with shock.

"And you're ... you didn't say anything! Aren't you mad or something?"

Hermione considered her next words carefully. She still wasn't sure how much to reveal but maybe, just maybe, her insane plan would work.

"No. And it surprised me, too I'd have expected to feel cheated, or betrayed, but ... Our relationship's different, isn't it?"

Harry nodded, apparently not quite sure what she was aiming at.

"We share things. We can always be honest with each other, can't we?"

Harry nodded again.

Hermione took a deep breath.

"You like Severus. That much is obvious. And he seemed to like you, too."

Harry couldn't do anything but nod, blushing a little.

"The thing is ... I've realised that I rather like him as well. And I think he ... that he might be interested in me, too."

Harry blinked.

"So we both fancy him and you think he fancies both of us?"

"Yes."

"But ... what do we do now?"

Hermione stared at her hands. This was the part she'd feared. She had to force herself to sound calm.

"When I saw the two of you kiss ... it turned me on. Very much so."

Harry's cheeks reddened even further.

"And I've been thinking ... If we both fancy him, and if I'm right and he fancies both of us, perhaps we could ... you know ... both go for it? Together?"

"Together?"

Hermione hadn't heard Harry's voice go *that* high since his fifth year. That didn't bode well for her plan.

She closed her eyes, hoping her disappointment wasn't too obvious.

"Never mind. It was just an idea."

"Wait!" Harry grabbed her hand. "Just give me a moment or two to digest this. You're saying that we should go to Severus and uh propose to him that we'd both want to, erm, shag him?"

"Pretty much, yes. Well, something like that, anyway."

Harry considered this for a few moments.

"The thing is ... I thought for a while there that I was starting to fall for him, properly. I mean, I still think I might be. But I don't know. I've been thinking so much about it ... and ... I didn't even know I liked blokes this way! I never have. But Severus ... There's just something about him. It's not just about sex for me, Hermione. I don't even know it *is* about sex."

"I know," she soothed. "I never thought it was. It's not for me, either. At least I don't think it is," she added, not really wanting to lie to him.

Harry shook his head. "I just don't know. I didn't think about this at all. I don't even know what I was thinking about, apart from wanting to be honest with you. I don't want to give us up! And me and Severus, it might not even work. Probably wouldn't work, really, if I'm honest with myself. And if you say you think he might fancy you as well ..."

Hermione took his hand in hers.

"I care for you, you know that, yes?"

Harry nodded.

"If I didn't think Severus might be interested in me as well, I would never suggest this, especially if you think you're having feelings for him that go beyond physical attraction, no matter how desirable I might find him."

"I know," Harry said, fidgeting. "It's just all sort of sudden. Let me think about it, all right?"

"Sure."

Harry stared at her with amazement. "You really are something, you know? I was dreading this conversation, having nightmares about what sort of hexes you might unleash on me if I admitted to having feelings for someone else ... Even if our relationship's always been a bit different compared to yours and Ron's or mine and Ginny's, I didn't think you'd take this so well."

"I don't know how I'd have reacted under different circumstances," Hermione admitted. "Had I come home and found you in our bed with another woman ... I don't think I'd have been quite as understanding."

~\*~\*~

"I've been thinking about what you said, about, you know," Harry said the next day, when they were getting ready for bed. "And the more I've thought about it, the more I like the idea." He blushed. "I meant what I said earlier, that I wouldn't want to give you up either ... I need you. It just feels right, you and me, together, even if I'm having all these confusing feelings for Severus, too."

"I know," Hermione said. Taking a deep breath, she admitted, "I feel rather the same way."

Harry gave her a quick kiss and pulled the blanket over them. "And then there's this other thing," he muttered. *Nox!* I, uh, well, as I said, I've never felt this way about a bloke before. And now that I do ... Well, it's a bit scary. When I see him, I get all ... turned on, but ... the idea of going further than a kiss is terrifying."

Hermione grinned in the darkness, remembering that she'd felt vaguely similar before her first time with Ron.

"Anyway," Harry continued, "I was thinking that perhaps if we did go to him with this idea, and if he agreed, and I'm just really not sure he would because this is a completely insane idea and most people we know would be horrified by it, but if he agreed, having you there too might actually be good for me ... at least there'd be something familiar and, uh, maybe I wouldn't be expected to start, uh, doing stuff with him right away." He chuckled a bit nervously. "Not that I don't want to, because I think I do, I just don't have a clue how it works. I mean I know in theory but ... I remember some of us once tried to get Seamus to explain what it's all like but he just went red in the face and told us to sod off."

Hermione's eyebrows shot up. "So you think I'd make a good buffer zone between you and Severus?"

"Well, not quite like this, but ... I suppose."

"As long as you don't mean wanting me literally between the two of you!" Hermione gulped, feeling more than a little worried all of a sudden. Having a threesome with two very appealing men, who also fancied each other, had been a great fantasy so far, but she wasn't quite prepared to consider the finer points in practice yet.

"No! Um, no, I wasn't thinking about *that* at all."

They stayed silent for a while, until Harry groused, "Although I can't see why you shouldn't agree to being buggered if it's what you want to see me do with Severus or the other way around."

Hermione pulled Harry's pillow out from under his head and hit him with it.

"Now you're just being silly!"

She could tell he was grinning, even if she couldn't see it in the dark.



"So we'll go to him tomorrow then, yes?"

"Tomorrow it is."

## Chapter 3

*Chapter 3 of 3*

The battles are over and the healing can begin. SS/HG/HP.

A/N: Thanks to my wonderful betas, Ayerf and JunoMagic.

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### Chapter 3

Severus enjoyed a nice afternoon soak in the bath. Actually, he preferred showers, but the ancient bathrooms at Grimmauld Place would have protested against the inclusion of such modern Muggle contraptions too much. Or so he suspected, as he hadn't yet remembered to inquire about it.

And in any case, while he was getting stronger by the day, thanks to the nourishing meals a far cry from the disgustingly thin porridge he'd been served three times a day at St Mungo's and the care of his hosts, a bath was less taxing. Perhaps also less invigorating, but that didn't exactly matter.

He got out of the bath and dried himself off as well as he could with a towel. He didn't bother with his wand; his magical energy still wasn't up to what it used to be. And drying charms, while handy, did nothing for his hair lost cause or not, a few extra hours of clean hair felt rather pleasant. So he pulled on a bathrobe and headed for his room.

He expected to find his bed cleaned and made up by Kreacher, and was rather looking forward to getting dressed and spending a few hours in the drawing room, perhaps even in the company of Hermione. Severus dearly hoped he hadn't scared her away the day before, but he hadn't been able to resist ... It was clear that she had an interest in him, and his cunning mind simply couldn't let a chance like this pass. It would be up to her now to decide whether she wanted to play or not.

What he had not expected to find was his two hosts seated on the edge of his bed, looking rather pale but determined as only Gryffindors could.

From the way Harry's jaw was set, his first thought was that something terrible had happened and the youngsters had taken it upon themselves to inform him. Hermione's slight blush spoke of something else, though.

"We were thinking," Harry started, fidgeting with his wand.

Severus's eyebrow went up but he resisted making a comment.

"We were thinking," Hermione picked up where Harry left off, "that we've realised that we both..."

"That we, uh, find you attractive." Harry cleared his throat, keeping his eyes at the threadbare carpet covering the floor.

Severus's other eyebrow went up as well.

Well, well. This was a somewhat unexpected development. Clearly, he didn't know these two as well as he should have.

"And we were thinking..." Hermione's cheeks turned beet red. Severus wondered if he'd ever seen her blush as much as during his stay here in the whole six years he'd spent as her teacher. "That is, I was thinking, that perhaps, if you were interested, you might be, um, interested in both of us? Together?"

From the way she was gripping her wand, Severus suspected that if he gave the wrong answer, she wouldn't hesitate to leave him with no recollection of this conversation.

Wait. Had she just...?

His mind, obviously not as lightning fast as it used to be, needed a few moments to process what he'd just heard.

Hermione Granger, Minerva McGonagall's pride and joy, and Harry Potter, Saviour of the Wizarding World, had just propositioned him. Offering him a chance for a threesome.

Him. Severus Snape.

If this hadn't sounded so impossible, he'd have laughed.

Even knowing that each, separately, had seemed interested ... but there was surely a world of difference between a young woman or a young man having an interest in a quick, never-again-spoken-of affair, and this sort of deliberate, open offer? Even the Death Eaters, who never shied away from anything amoral, didn't go for this sort of thing (unless they did and simply never invited him, a small voice whispered).

He needed to sit down. Fortunately there was a chair only three steps away, where he slumped down ungraciously.

This was ludicrous.

And yet ... they seemed serious, very serious about this. No wonder Potter Harry looked like he was preparing to face the Dark Lord again.

Hermione looked as if she was about to lose her nerve, getting twitchy twiddling her wand between her fingers.

*Why not?* his inner voice suggested. *What have you got to lose? You were quite happy about that kiss from Harry the other day, and you've been eyeing Hermione for weeks now ... and here they are, offering themselves to you. No need for guilt, no need to worry about tempting either of them to betray the other ... This way, it would all be honest, and no one would feel cheated on. And it's something you've never had a chance to try before.*

He looked at Harry, then at Hermione.

"You are actually serious about this ... proposition, I take it?" he asked slowly.

"Yes," Hermione confirmed, not meeting his eyes.

"And if I said I was interested ... just how do you suggest we go about it?"

Hermione bit her lip, looking a little uncomfortable. "We haven't actually thought about that yet."

Harry kept quiet, squirming a little on the bed. Severus wondered if he was simply embarrassed or if the mere idea and talking about it was turning the boy on.

He'd certainly noticed his own cock, which had been feeling lazy and relaxed most of the time since he had regained consciousness, was showing signs of interest. He adjusted the bathrobe subtly and cleared his throat.

"Well, since we're all here now ... I don't have any plans for this evening, and as it's Saturday, I assume that neither of you has any work-related obligations."

Hermione shook her head. Harry followed her example, wide-eyed and speechless.

Severus was feeling ridiculously awkward.

What was the etiquette in cases like this? Was there an etiquette for cases like this? Who was supposed to make the first move? Was anything even supposed to happen right away, or were they to agree that now they all knew of the others being interested, they should have further meetings to discuss this?

He assumed the wise thing would be to take it slow, to get to know one another a bit better ... but on the other hand, the more time passed with his brain trying in vain to process this situation, the more insistent his cock was getting, and really, the best way to go about things would be to jump right in. Not the most Slytherin thing to do, perhaps, but he was thoroughly tired of being cautious and having to plan each step three months ahead.

He got up from his chair and went to the bed, squeezing his lean frame between the two. At least neither of them recoiled from his touch this was certainly a positive sign.

"Oh, this is stupid!" Hermione exclaimed, to Severus's relief. "Let's just get started. We're three intelligent people here yes, Harry, you too and I'm sure we'll figure things out soon enough."

She turned a bit, grabbed her wand and wordlessly enlarged the bed. Once she was done, she gave Severus a light push, indicating that he should lie down. Severus complied happily, not minding a bit. Being ordered around by a woman was most certainly a new experience.

As was being kissed by one.

He'd dreamed of doing it with Lily but never actually had the chance.

This ... Perhaps it was for the best that he had never kissed Lily. Because he very definitely didn't want to compare Hermione to Lily, and if this kiss was anything to go by, Lily might have come out the loser in any case.

His mind was busy cataloguing the various facets of this new experience the softness of her lips and skin, the lack of stubble, the odd-but-thrilling feeling of breasts squished against his chest but his mouth and hands didn't need his brain to issue instructions, so he was free to respond to her enthusiasm.

It was only when they stopped, out of breath and flushed, that he realised Hermione's roving hands seemed to have pushed his bathrobe aside at some point.

Turning his attention to their left, he saw that Harry was still sitting where they'd left him, his eyes glued to Severus's erection and his trousers tented.

"Need a hand with that?" Severus smirked. From the way the boy looked, he very much suspected that he needed to exercise some patience with this one no need to scare him off right away.

~\*~\*~

Hermione looked at them, grinning, her heart beating wildly. She was nearly dizzy with relief. Approaching Severus had been terrifying, but this was going better than she could have wished.

She reached out her hand and let it run slowly up his thigh, past his penis and across his stomach, enjoying the way his skin, sparsely covered with black hair, felt under her fingers coarser than any of the boys she'd been with. She hungered to touch his erection, to find out if it was as silky smooth as it looked, to feel the contrast between the hot velvety softness of the skin there and the rough texture of the rest of him, but resisted, waiting for him to decide what to do next.

She didn't have to wait long.

Harry considered Severus's question for a moment, following the movement of her hand with his eyes.

"Yes. Please."

Severus sat up, pulling Hermione up with him. He let his nose trail against her neck and said in a wonderfully soft, low voice, "I hope you don't mind if I turn my attention to our friend over there for a bit."

Hermione could only shake her head.

Severus turned towards Harry.

"It would appear you are a bit, shall we say, overdressed for the occasion."

Harry blushed and pulled off his T-shirt. When he started unbuttoning his jeans, Severus stilled his hand. "Let me."

Hermione's breath hitched as she watched Severus's skilled fingers make quick work of Harry's buttons. When Harry's penis sprung free he had obviously foregone underwear today and Severus's hand closed around it, a wave of heat flowed over Hermione, accompanied by a definite sense of wetness that made her squirm a little. She wondered how long she could bear just to watch, as sweet as the feeling of torture was.

Severus was kissing Harry, one hand still around Harry's erection, the other roaming around his body, teasing, caressing, exploring. Harry moaned audibly into Severus's mouth when Severus moved his hand behind him and let it slide lower.

Hermione wasn't even aware of what she was doing when Severus lowered his head and started trailing kisses and light nips along Harry's body. It was only when Severus's mouth covered Harry's glans that she realised she'd half unbuttoned her own jeans, her hand sneaking inside. More than a little mortified, she started pulling it out when it occurred to her that they were, truly, beyond embarrassment.

She was very near her own peak when Severus finally released Harry with a small smile on his face.

"Wow."

Harry took a deep breath.

"Wow."

Severus smirked, looking rather pleased with himself.

He turned to look at Hermione, his smirk widening when he saw what she was doing.

"Patience, Miss Granger, is a virtue," he admonished her, giving Harry one more long, appraising look before turning back towards her. "Now ... I must admit that my knowledge of the female body is somewhat theoretical, but I can assure you that I am a quick learner. So if you would allow me to..."

*Theoretical?*

It took Hermione a moment to regain her senses and consider his words.

*Oh. Should have guessed. Still, he seems eager ...*

"With pleasure," she purred, hoping that what she thought of as her seductive voice didn't sound too ridiculous.

He shrugged out of his bathrobe. Hermione followed suit, tugging off her T-shirt and quickly unfastening her bra no point in letting him deal with that, inexperienced as he was. Jeans next, followed by knickers.

"Socks?"

How could someone look so authoritative even when entirely naked?

*Oh. Socks.*

Hermione scrambled to take off the socks, too. Damn this weather.

"Better?" she asked with a mere hint of irritation. She'd been so, so very close before, and the lack of release was starting to vex her.

"Much better," he whispered, taking in the sight before him. Hermione's annoyance melted as quickly as it had arisen. Glancing quickly over at Harry to make sure he wasn't having second thoughts not that he should have, considering what had just happened, but Harry could be unpredictable she found him quite relaxed on the bed with a wide grin still on his face.

Severus kissed her hard. She could still taste Harry in his mouth, a taste she didn't usually care for, but this time, it didn't bother her. Especially not when he was such a terrific kisser.

He pushed her gently back on the bed. She wriggled a bit to adjust her position, enjoying the feeling of him against her body. His hand slid down her side, thumb flicking over a nipple and sending a shot of heat straight between her legs.

"You don't need to be quite this careful," she murmured. "Gentle is good, but girls don't break any more easily than boys."

"Mmm," he agreed.

Hermione let him explore for a bit but soon grew impatient. Exploring could wait for another time. She gave him a small but firm shove, communicating her intent quite clearly. Severus seemed to have no issues with her being on top. Good she certainly preferred to be in charge this time.

His sharp intake of breath as she lowered herself onto him made her smile, as did finally feeling him inside her. She closed her eyes, enjoying the sense of being filled. It felt so right. *He* felt so right.

Finding the right angle and establishing a good rhythm took a few moments. Harry had come out of his daze at last and snuck up behind her, turning her head to kiss her, his hands caressing her breasts, while Severus was holding on to her hips.

She quickened her pace when Severus's movements started becoming more forceful and erratic, orgasming just before he did. She'd have collapsed on him if Harry hadn't been holding her; so she just lay back against him, savouring the familiar sense of safety, drained by the feeling of complete and utter bliss.

At least all that build-up, torturous as it had been at times, was good for something, Hermione thought once she was capable of thinking again.

Noticing that she was still on top of Severus, she scrambled off as quickly as she could; with Harry still behind her, this took a bit of effort. She snuggled up against Severus, bringing Harry down on the bed with her.

"This was ... perfect," Severus murmured, tilting his head to look at them.

Hermione turned to Harry, searching for assurance in his eyes, too.

Harry grinned. "Yeah. Can we do this again?"

At this, Hermione felt the last bit of tension leave her.

Severus let out a weary chuckle. "I fear I need to rest and recover for a bit now. As enjoyable as this was, don't forget that I'm still a convalescent. But yes, if Hermione is willing, I certainly wouldn't be opposed to a repeat performance. Perhaps even with a bit of something new thrown in." He raised an eyebrow at Harry, who blushed.

~\*~\*~

They fell into a comfortable arrangement over the next weeks, spending more time together than apart whenever Harry and Hermione were home.

Even so, the realisation that she was starting to fall in love with both men took Hermione by surprise. She'd never expected to feel more than friendship for Harry, but the way her heart fluttered when she looked at him, happier and more fulfilled than she'd ever seen him before, told her things might be changing. And Severus ... what had started out as respect mixed with curiosity and a purely sexual attraction was well on its way to growing to something else, too.

It was different from what she'd felt for Ron, so very different. The way she missed both of her men when at work, the way she looked forward to evenings and weekends spent at home ... It worried her.

~\*~\*~

Severus's first venture outside was not wholly successful.

He insisted on going alone. He did not want to feel any more dependant on Harry and Hermione than he already was. And finally he felt strong enough, physically at least,

to know that he shouldn't have trouble managing a few hours at Diagon Alley.

What he hadn't expected was how agitated all that the attention made him. The way people stared. The way they whispered. The way children pointed at him. The way no one would address him directly, apart from the shopkeepers.

It hadn't even been two hours yet, and he wanted to go home.

Home.

Home to Grimmauld Place, he realised.

Home to Harry and Hermione.

~\*~\*~

"I saw Kingsley today," Harry said later that day. He looked glum.

Hermione didn't like the way he sounded. Hard. Edgy.

Severus put his book down.

"He said the Ministry has at last found a suitable place for you." Harry looked at Severus. "And that as he understands you're not in need of constant care any more, you are welcome to move in right away."

So, that was it then.

Hermione bit her lip to avoid bursting out with anything ridiculously foolish and embarrassing.

From the way he was staring at the floor, Harry evidently had the same problem.

She'd been hoping ... Well, she'd been naïve to hope anything. Severus had enjoyed the sex and perhaps even the company, but he'd never ... Not that either she or Harry had ever talked about their feelings, either. Or about the future. Not that she knew for certain what Harry's feelings were, but she was reasonably sure that they were similar to her own, at least regarding Severus.

Severus cleared his throat, looking rather uncomfortable.

"I ... Well. That is good news. You two have been kind enough to put up with me for this long. I'm sure you'll be welcoming the return to normal life."

A corner of his mouth twitched. "As for our arrangement ... perhaps you can come for a visit, sometimes. If you want to."

Harry's head jerked up at that. Hermione was taken aback by the sudden flash of anger in his eyes.

"Is that all this was for you then?" he yelled, getting up. "Just sex? A quick shag now and then? We 'put up with you', as you put it, because we wanted to, not because we had to! I *CARE* for you! As much as I care for Hermione! I don't..."

He swiped at the tears falling down his cheeks.

"Oh, fuck this. I'll get Kingsley to Floo you with the address and whatever. You can start packing for all I care."

He would have stormed out of the room if Severus hadn't got up and blocked the door.

"Potter, you're an idiot!" He grabbed Harry by his shoulders and shook him. "I don't *want* to leave. I never wanted to leave! I never asked you to get Kingsley to arrange a new home for me! I never expected anything I didn't expect anyone to put up with me, or this to happen, or starting to care for you!"

Severus turned and looked at Hermione who'd jumped up as well. "Nor for you. I don't ... I have no right to expect anything else of you, either of you, but if you feel the same way as Harry does ..."

"Yes."

Severus wouldn't leave. Harry wouldn't break.

Indescribable relief flooded her.

She walked up to them, slowly, and pulled Severus's head down for a kiss, hoping it would express everything that she couldn't, yet, put into words. Releasing him, she and turned to Harry, kissing his tear-streaked face as well.

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"I know it's not conventional," she said later, wedged between her two dark-haired, temperamental men, "but I think this will work. I don't want to be without either of you."

Harry planted a kiss on her hair before caressing Severus's cheek.

"Who will break the news to Kingsley?"

"Can't we just tell him that I do still need care?" Severus asked, turning towards Hermione. "A lot of tender, loving care."

"What, and avoid shocking the whole wizarding world?" Hermione smirked, letting her hand slide over the insistently hopeful hardness poking at her hip. "Just think of Rita Skeeter fainting when she finds out about this."

Harry grimaced. "I was just getting ready for another round and you *had* to mention Skeeter! Now look at what you did! It's gone all limp and curled up and trying to hide away."

Severus quirked an eyebrow, bending over to squint at Harry's little problem.

"Oh dear. Well, there's plenty of time for more."

"Quite," Hermione agreed and leaned over for another kiss.

*The End.*