

Hermione Has a Secret

by sunny33

Severus suspects his new love is keeping something from him.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: They don't belong to me. Really.

He knew she had a secret. It showed in the way she held her shoulders, the angle of her head as she spoke, and the quick glance sideways when he looked in her eyes. Her atypical evasiveness when he enquired of her plans for the weekend – so Slytherin – so unlike her.

The last few months had been a revelation to his senses. Who knew the boundless magic of the scent of honey and vanilla, the glint of sunlight on a cinnamon curl, the feel of slender fingers on one's skin? The reality of her naked body next to his, soft and warm, sticky with the essences of their lovemaking, was a dream fulfilled; her kisses forgiveness incarnate. What gave him the right to believe he deserved her love? In the weeks after the war had ended, her presence by his bedside had soothed his urge to run, absorbed his anger at the hand he had been dealt by fate, and allowed him to heal, both in body and in soul.

Now, he watched as she worked. Totally absorbed in the parchment before her, she paid no heed to the intent gaze of her dark lover. The scratching of the quill and crackling of the flames in the hearth were the only sound. Closing his eyes, he leaned back in his armchair and pondered her behaviour. It had changed only a week earlier, just after New Year. Her kisses were as sensual, her words of love true, but something was withheld. Something was going on in that prodigious brain of hers, and he was determined to find out what it was. Secrets had almost ruined his life once; he was not about to allow them to ruin his chance at happiness.

All too soon, it was time to leave. Rounds at Hogwarts waited for no man, renewed sex-life notwithstanding. Time to take out his frustrations on some unsuspecting teenagers. After a bout of serious snogging, he walked uncomfortably up to the castle with unfulfilled arousal in his trousers and in a fine snit. His witch had once again deferred meeting him the next day, citing too much work. It was a Saturday, and his birthday, although he rather doubted that she was aware of the significance of the date, as he had rarely paid any attention to it himself in the past. However, by the end of the evening enough points had been deducted from Gryffindor to appease his temper.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, accompanied by the usual bottle of Firewhisky from Minerva and socks from Rolanda. For some reason, the latter had taken over where Albus had left off. Nothing from his new ladylove, which did not surprise him in the least. He wondered what she was up to. If he weren't such a gentleman, he would Apparate over to see what she was doing, but pride kept him closeted in his rooms all day instead, lambasting students' pathetic attempts at prose.

A knock on the door after dinner roused him from a self-pitying slump in front of a cold fireplace. Opening the door, he was greeted by a whirlwind of brown curls, woollen cloak, and frozen hands.

"Happy birthday, Severus!" she cried, thrusting a silver-wrapped parcel into his hands.

"Er... Thank you," he managed to reply. She *did* remember. So, what was all the secrecy about? He carefully opened the parcel. "This is absinthe."

"Yes." She grinned.

"This is Staropizenecky Absinthe."

"Yes."

"From *Prague*?"

"Yes."

"How on earth...?"

"Portkey to the Old Town Square. Floo to the Lucerna Music Bar. Tried the Absinthe – can't see the appeal, myself. Had a bit of a look around; I wanted to see the Charles Bridge and the fantastic architecture. Do you think we could go back and spend some time there sometime soon, Sev?"

"Mmm," he replied absently as he hunted around in his drinks cabinet and found a glass, a spoon, and some sugar cubes. "A little flame here would be helpful, witch."

"You do realise that stuff contains a psychoactive neurotoxin, thujone, derived from wormwood, don't you?"

"Shh. I *am* the Potions Master."

"No wonder you were so obsessed with wormwood in my first year!"

A/N: Written for ladyinthecloak's Saturday Night Drabble prompt: Hermione, a secret, and Prague. Thanks to ladyinthecloak for the beta as well!