

The Everglades Rendezvous

by silverdoe

Hermione Is anxious to hear from her lover.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Hermione was terribly distraught. It had been months since the end of the war, and she had yet to hear from her lover. He had promised he would contact her as soon as he was settled. She knew he was still alive, as he had left flowers for her at her parents' home. Tulips. Her favorite.

She had managed to sneak him some potions to help heal his wounds, and a Portkey that would take him safely to her home where he could recover some strength before leaving the country. He was listed as a casualty of the final battle, declared dead and his remaining possessions distributed among various members of the Order.

When Hogwarts reopened in October, Hermione was so eager to finish her academic career and to escape from the Weasleys she arrived a few days early. Though she loved all of them dearly, she felt they were trying to pressure her into a relationship with Ron. Was she the only one who could see how unsuitable she and Ron were for each other?

October quickly turned into November, and Hermione was buried in her studies. The Ministry had agreed to a special N.E.W.T.s testing that was to take place just before the holidays. Without Harry and Ron there to distract her, she spent most of her time studying. The revision kept her mind off of her heartache most of the time. It was only when she couldn't sleep she would remember the times she had snuck out to meet her lover while she and her friends had been on the run those many months.

Three days before Christmas, Hermione was at the Burrow anxiously awaiting the results of her N.E.W.T.s. and trying her best to avoid Ron's advances. Fortunately for her, the Weasleys' Wizarding Wheezes shop was very busy, and Ron spent most of the day helping George with customers. Unfortunately, Molly seemed to think that meant they could spend the days discussing ideas for weddings. Hermione tried several times to tell her she had no intention of getting married anytime soon. Molly always patted her hand and replied that one should always be prepared in case the right man decided to propose. Hermione had to fight the urge to roll her eyes every time she heard that.

On Christmas morning everyone gathered in the sitting room waiting to open presents when an owl started tapping on the glass. Harry got up and let the bird in. It flew directly to Hermione and dropped a parchment before turning and quickly flying out of the house. Before Harry could shut the window, another owl flew in with a parcel that was also for Hermione.

She set the parcel aside and eagerly tore into the envelope from the Ministry. It was her results. Everyone could tell by the look on her face that she did exceptionally well. She proved it by shouting and jumping up to hug everyone in the room. She had achieved Outstandings in all of her subjects.

Once everyone had offered up their congratulations, they all settled down to open their gifts. Hermione was not surprised when Harry got down on one knee to propose to Ginny. She was a bit surprised by the looks Ron was giving her. When he stood and walked over to her, she panicked and remembered the gift that was delivered earlier. She bounded to her feet and retrieved the parcel from the table by the door. Ron quickly sat back down, quietly placing a small box back in his pocket.

The Weasleys and Harry watched as she opened the package. The sender had labeled the note, Tulip. It was not signed. Hermione knew right away who it was from and tore into the gift wrappings. She was not surprised to open it and find a blank book. The inscription simply said 'A gift to help you with your research.' Pressed in the pages

was a ghost orchid. A clue. A place to begin her search for the man who held her heart.

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A/N: Thanks to ApollinaV for looking this over. This is in response to DawnEB prompt "An unusual flower found pressed between the pages of an old book
Who, why, what, when, where is completely up to you."