

Magie Noir

by Stefdarin

Lucius thinks he has lost everything, but changes his mind when he receives insight from an unlikely source.

Chapitre Une

Chapter 1 of 5

Lucius thinks he has lost everything, but changes his mind when he receives insight from an unlikely source.

A story about love...

Darting out, his tongue savored the sweetness of the rain where it fell softly on her neck, drawing a moan from her lips. Her breath burst forth in pants, and her body trembled from the heat generated as he traced a tantalizing line along her delicate collarbone. The heavy drops fell, drenching them cool against heated skin, bodies clinging passionately to each other against the wall of a forgotten alley in Paris.

Fervently he gripped the bottom of her damp robe, dragging it slowly up her smooth thighs, his fingers a light caress, causing heat to build within her. Leisurely he brought his mouth to hers, claiming her very soul, her lips opening to his invasion, and their tongues danced in tune to the falling rain. Languidly, her hands tangled in his blond hair, pulling him closer, and she felt his desire rising when he leaned into her.

With a slight movement of his wrist, all barriers were gone. Hiking her leg up around his waist, she gasped when he slid into her and leaned back with a moan. Her chestnut curls clung to her shoulders, and her fingers dug into the flesh of his buttocks as he moved in a steady, fluid rhythm. His thrusts became more frantic as his orgasm approached, and her guttural moans became elongated at her rising pleasure. Together their voices converged at fever pitch with one final, hard thrust, and they collapsed to the ground in a tangle of arms and legs.

Resting there, attempting to catch his breath, Lucius Malfoy reflected on how so many things had changed since the war and how he had come to need this scrap of a girl like he needed air to breathe. It could have happened differently events in lifetimes past replaying themselves but Trelawney had warned him about that, and for once, he had listened to the old bat. His mind drifted to happenings which had been out of their control some time ago.

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Lucius frantically searched the thick brush surrounding them. He stood in the depths of the Forbidden Forest, stretched out his arms, and raised his head to the canopy above. "NO!" he shouted with anguish, the word ripped from his very soul. Before him, their eyes staring blindly up at nothing, were Narcissa and Severus. They had been taken by the Magical plague, Voldemort's final parting gift to the wizarding world before his demise.

Throwing himself down on top of them, he wept inconsolably, the sobs torn from his chest. *Why? Why?* he asked himself, tormented with the thought that they had left him behind and now he had no one: no reason to carry on with life, no one to conspire with, no one to love and love him in return.

Suddenly, he felt his body shake. *Oh, Merlin! I thought it was over, the last of the plagued, dead,* his thoughts penetrated through his tortured mind.

His body shook, harder this time, and some unknown force shoved his head back. Blinking rapidly, he found himself staring at indistinct, watery brown pools. Leaning back, Lucius realized they belonged to Sybill Trelawney, the seer from the school just beyond the trees.

"Good God, man, pull yourself together!" she told him forcefully, causing him to frown through his tears. "Come on. I have something you need to see."

Sniffing derisively, Lucius composed himself and stood, wavering a little from fatigue. "What do you want with me, witch? Can't you see I am in mourning, beyond consoling...?"

Gently nudging Lucius out of the way, Sybill bent over Severus and Narcissa, murmuring an incantation. Instantly, their bodies illuminated, and a glowing essence rose from Severus, swirling around Trelawney. Motioning for him to follow, Sybil disappeared into the thicket.

Hiccupping and rubbing a hand over his face, Lucius let out a pent-up breath and reluctantly followed the bushy-haired eccentric.

She led him through the trees and into a thatched hut, well hidden by vegetation. Inside, the air was incredibly warm and musty, and the scent of patchouli lingered like a blanket over the room. A thread-bare cot hovered in the corner, and a heavily draped, round table holding a large stone Pensieve occupied the center of the space.

Lucius flinched as his eyes fell on a boarhide rug lying in front of a blazing fire, crackling in exaggerated life.

"This century does not have to end like centuries before; you have not lost everything. Love waits for you in another; all you have to do is nurture it, and your soul which has been drawn to hers will be fulfilled, finally, in this lifetime," Trelawney's voice rasped.

Lucius ran his finger around his collar, the bright fire overheating the too-small room, and watched with trepidation as Sybil flicked her wand over the Pensieve. With ethereal grace, the essence of his friend floated into the stone bowl, then traveled up, consuming the seer.

Looking up, she made a choking sound, followed by Severus' voice, which flowed from her lips. "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return," she said calmly, reaching out and grabbing Lucius by the shoulders.

The odd glow encircled him, and a strangled cry emerged from his mouth as he felt himself falling, spinning away from reality. The ground below traveled towards him faster as he fell, and he gasped for breath when it was knocked from him as he landed roughly on a dingy floor.

Shaking his head, Lucius regained his bearings and looked around the dark room. His eyes rested on Severus, whose lank hair fell limply around his face as his eyes followed an enchanted typewriter.

"Her mouth curved up in a sultry smile, and slowly, she extended her arm, beckoning with a single finger and prompting the man-who-lived to her side. He took her in his arms, bestowing loves sweetest kiss upon her lips." The keys clicked away in rapid succession. "BAH! That doesn't scream love to me!" Severus exclaimed to the room, yanking the page from the typewriter, pointing his wand at it and causing it to incinerate in a burst of flames.

Abruptly, Lucius and Severus looked to the ceiling as it gave way with a repulsive groan, depositing an unconscious man onto the dirty floor. A disgusted look crossed Lucius' face as he identified the sleeping man: Neville Longbottom.

Soon, a dwarf dressed as a nun, resembling Sirius Black, burst through the door. "Oh, hewwo! I am Marius Nigellus Regulus Cygnus Phineas Sirius Black! I am so tewwibwy sowwy; we were just wehearsing a play..."

"A play?" Severus asked enthusiastically, causing Lucius to look at him with one brow raised.

"Oh, yes! It is called Magnificent Magnificent! And it is set in Newfindwand!" Sirius explained excitedly.

"How is he?" A voice questioned from above. Looking up, Lucius saw three more faces he knew: Remus Lupin, Percy Weasley, and Harry Potter. Percy looked very agitated.

"Asleep again, ugh!" Motioning in frustration with his hands, Percy shook his head with disgust.

Twitching on the floor, the unconscious man snorted loudly but did not awaken. Looking down at him, Sirius explained, "My poor Argentinean fwiend has narcolepsy; he's always falling asleep spouting sonnets with one breath, unconscious the next." He laughed through his nose.

"How are we ever going to be ready to pitch the play to the financier tomorrow if we don't have anyone to read the role of the whimsical, love-struck, goat herding wizard?" Percy questioned in exasperation, panting heavily.

"I still have to finish the music," Harry informed.

"What about you?" Remus asked Severus.

"I...Well...."

"Yes, yes, you would be perfect!" Pulling his wand from his sleeve, Sirius cast a levitation spell on the unconscious Argentinean and began moving him toward the hole in the ceiling. "Come on, Neville, time to sleep it off."

Once Neville was clear of the gaping hole, Remus took over the levitation of his body to a rumpled bed while Harry lowered a ladder through the hole, allowing Severus and Sirius to join them in the loft above. Lucius was pulled along as Severus traveled.

The space above Severus' room was cluttered with paint cans, scaffolding, and a giant mural of a mountain dotted with goats. There was a scratched and scarred piano in the corner, and every available surface was covered with dirty glasses. The other corner held a wide bed where Neville had been deposited.

Percy handed Severus a red hat with a green feather attached and a thick piece of parchment. "Put this on, stand up there and read the lines in red." He pointed to the top of a flight of stairs that had been erected in front of the mural and ended at the top of the mountain.

Studying the hat momentarily, Severus chuckled, jammed it on his head, and bounded up the stairs. At the top, he turned, held out the manuscript and read aloud. "The hills have such elusive decorum...."

"No, no, no. That isn't how the hills are!" Sirius picked up a script near him and flipped the page. "Ah, the hills are magical! They should be magical hills; he is a wizard after all."

"There are hills? I thought this was a mountain," Remus pondered.

"I thought they were filled with Nargles," Harry piped into the argument from the front of the piano. He fluttered the keys and sang, "The hills are green and they're filled with Nargles."

"The hills are confused if you ask me," Lucius muttered under his breath after rolling his eyes.

"Your music is covering my words. Just stick to lightly enhancing notes, please," Percy told Harry, looming over him superiorly.

Bolting upright suddenly, Neville added strongly, "The hills have sycophantic desires and tendencies!" He stopped abruptly and fell back, instantly asleep again.

"The hills are alive with the sound of music..." Severus sang from above them.

The brood of Bohemians in the room quieted, and all eyes turned to him. Sirius' eyes lit with approval while Percy's nostrils flared and his face turned red.

"With songs they have sung for a thousand years...."

"That is amazing!" Remus exclaimed. "You have described them perfectly."

"The hills are alive with the sound of music I love it!" Neville exclaimed, awake once more.

"That's brilliant! You should help Percy write the show. Don't you think he should help you write the show?" Harry asked Percy excitedly.

Opening and shutting his mouth a few times, Percy blew out a long breath. "I know when I am not appreciated, and I most certainly do not need anyone to help me write the play. Goodbye!" Percy flounced out the door, slamming it behind him.

"Or not," Remus announced to the room. "Now what are we going to do?"

"Severus will help us; he will write the show for the financier. We can finally put on the show we have always dreamed of!" Sirius exclaimed with excitement.

"Have you ever done anything like this before?" Harry asked.

Severus shook his head.

"But he has talent! That is all he needs. I like talent," Neville informed.

"But how are we going to get Slughorn to buy into it?" Harry asked sadly.

"I can get Hermione to meet with him to hear it," Sirius explained, allaying their doubts. "We can tell her he is a famous English writer! I'm sure she will love it and insist that ol' Sluggo hear it."

The smile falling from his face, Severus pulled the hat from his head and tossed it aside, trotting down the stairs without saying a word. He then began back down the ladder from the loft before the motley crew could stop him.

"Where are you going?" Sirius took hold of his arm to slow his descent.

"I can't do this. I'm not even sure if I am a Bohemian revolutionary," Severus explained, prying his arm from Sirius' grasp.

"But your words are wonderful do you believe in beauty?"

"Yes."

"Freedom?"

"Indeed."

"Truth?"

"Yes."

"Love?" They all asked Severus together.

"Love? Yes, above all things, I believe in love. Love is like oxygen, love is a many splendored thing, love lifts us up where we belong all you need is love!"

Laughing hysterically, Sirius shouted, "See! I told you you could do it! Your words tell the story of the revolution! Where's the Dragon's breath?"

"Dragon's breath? What's that?" Severus inquired with a raise of his brow.

Looking at the darker man with shock, Sirius told him, "It is the most wonderful drink ever created by wizards. You must try it, for tonight we celebrate and tomorrow we travel to the Magie Noir and you meet Hermione, my new bohemian friend!"

Setting cloudy glasses on the table they were huddled around, Remus poured light, fire-colored liquid into each glass, giving Severus a slight shove and a wink while he ignited the concoction with his wand. Each wizard threw back his head, swallowing rapidly and fell back into a dazed state.

Lucius simply stood over them, an appalled look upon his face. However, given his fresh wounds, he wished he could join them. Oblivion would feel wonderful.

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**A/N:** This story was written for pokeystar on the LMHGexchange. The original prompt will be posted at the end of the story. My sincere thanks go to ladyinthecloak for her insight and help with all my endless questions, especially things beta. Also, I want to thank Sempra for betaing when she could, pointing out inconsistencies, and steering me in the right direction. OSUSprinks, thank you for cheering me on and convincing me that the ending needed something else. And, Pajamapants, thank you for calming me in the middle of a potential meltdown. Last, thank you, pokeystar, for the unequalled prompt. You ladies are truly an inspiration. ~Hugs, glomps, and squishes to you all.~

**Disclaimer:** J.K. Rowling owns the characters, the artists own their songs, Baz Luhrman owns Moulin Rouge, but any similarities, real or fabricated, are intentional.

## Chapitre Deux

*Chapter 2 of 5*

Lucius and Severus get their first glimpse of the Magie Noir and Hermione.

Standing outside, parts of his crisp white shirt gleaming in the moonlight, Severus paced the cobbled street as he waited for the others. His tuxedo, paired with his top hat, was exceptionally cut and emphasized his height while taking away from his lanky build. The door opened and Sirius stumbled out, followed by Remus, Harry and Neville.

"Sevewus, there you are! Are you weady?"

"A herd of Hippogriffs couldn't drag me away," Severus replied dryly.

Laughing wildly, the group of men ambled across the street, stumbling occasionally, to the Magie Noir. So many people were inside, a slight roar could be heard each time the door opened to admit a patron.

Inside, there was a slight haze from cigar smoke, and motioning with his arm, Sirius led them to a booth near the center of the club and sat down. Remus, Harry and Neville slid in next to him, leaving Severus on the other end. A hush fell over the crowd when the lights lowered and spotlights converged on the red, velvet curtain concealing the stage.

Simultaneously, Severus' and Lucius' mouths fell open as Horace Slughorn emerged from behind the curtain face meticulously made up followed by dozens of beautiful, corseted witches, flailing their skirts in the air. "It's Magie Noir!" he announced excitedly.

Amidst flying skirts, the dancers' voices rose above the cheers that filled the hall upon their appearance. *"Voulez vous coucher avec moi ce soir... Hey, sista; go, sista; soul, sista; flow, sista. Hey, sista; go, sista; soul, sista; flow, sista."*

Horace's voice also rose above the den. *"If life's a formal ball and living's just a draw that you do cause that's not much fun. I just omit the dirt, and hell I mustn't gloat, at the Magie Noir, you'll have fun. Yes, you can, can, can... Not you can't, can't, can't."*

Across the room, scores of fine gentlemen gathered, their voices adding to the mix. *"Here we are now, entertain us, we feel stupid and contagious..."*

A plethora of activity surrounded Severus, Lucius and the Bohemians. Scantly clad dancers flashed knickers and kicked their legs high in the air. Tuxedoed wizards partied with staffs, and Horace Slughorn directed the chaos.

Suddenly, the commotion died down, and all eyes were drawn to the enchanted ceiling. A shower of sparkling confetti rained down, followed by an alluring and curvaceous woman with chestnut curls. She was dressed in a sparkling, mock tuxedo, complete with tails and top hat, but the front was cut low, showing off generous cleavage, and the bottom hugged her thighs, revealing her slender legs. Lucius, Severus and many other men in the room whispered, "Hermione."

Slowly, provocatively, using a Levitation Charm, Hermione descended on a swing to the gathering below. "The French are glad to die for love; they delight in fighting duels. But I prefer a wizard who lives to give expensive charms." Arching her back in a seductive move, Hermione sang, "A kiss on the hand may be, quite continental, but diamonds are a girl's best friend. A kiss may be grand, but it won't pay the rental on your magic flat, or help you feed your pussy cat."

Leaning out of the booth, Sirius watched Slughorn as he moved across the floor, making his way to the stall opposite them. "I'll be wight back. I am going to set up your meeting with Hermione." Severus and the others nodded, watching Sirius rise and stride to the right, out of view.

Sirius walked through Lucius to stand on the opposite side of the table next to him, leaning behind the curtain out of sight.

Following Sirius' retreat and standing next to Severus' seat, Lucius sucked in his breath when he turned and came face to face with himself. Sitting down, Horace leaned in and spoke to Lucius' likeness. "I've arranged a private rendezvous with the girl."

"When do I get to meet her?"

"My dear Duke, just as soon as her number is over, she'll meet you in the Dragon suite."

Out in the crowd, Hermione sang on, *"Cause we are living in a Material World, and I am a Material... Girl! Come and get me, boys."*

Narrowing his eyes, Lucius studied his doppelganger copiously. He saw a different light in the man's eyes, one he recognized very well because it was a look he had held often when he was younger, especially when the Dark Lord had been alive. Those feelings were now a thing of the past, but a reminder still of what had come to pass.

"Oh, excuse me." Horace quickly rose from the table and scurried off toward the on-going number.

As Horace strode away, Sirius crept toward the table where the duke was seated. With a twitch of his wand, the tray on the table flipped forward, drenching the blond with Firewhiskey. A conniving smile flashed on Lucius' face, but the duke gasped with disdain.

Turning the corner, Sirius let out a wail. "Oh, my goodness, I am so tewwibly sowwy. Here, let me help you," he insisted, pulling out his handkerchief and swiping at the amber stain forming on the other wizards' neat, white shirt. Leaning toward Severus abruptly, Sirius inquired, "Sevewus, do you mind?" He snatched the younger wizard's handkerchief whilst Severus tilted away, for Sirius' unexpected reappearance had startled him.

Moving in slowly, Sirius held out the hankie and shoved it in the duke's face. "No, no, that's not necessary," the duke replied, standing and pulling his wand from his coat to vanish the liquid from his pants. But Sirius advanced more forcefully toward him, and the duke backed away from the booth.

Lucius grinned, enjoying the folly of his twin, but his smile faded when his eyes fell on a pale face he knew very well. It was younger and less snake-like, but he would never forget Tom Riddle's face. When the duke had risen and was being advanced upon, Tom had moved closer.

Clearing his throat, Tom gained Sirius' attention and opened his robe to reveal a black, heavily carved wand. Immediately, Sirius backed off. Letting out a sound of disgust and spinning on his heel, the duke motioned to Tom and left the smaller man behind.

Sirius grinned madly, turning to rejoin his compatriots, but Lucius had a sick feeling in his gut. He did not like where this vision was going, and he could not get rid of the feeling of dread that had fallen over him suddenly.

"I have awwanged a pwivate meeting for you with Hermione, totally alone," Sirius whispered conspiratorially to Severus, bending over the table.

"Me? A...and Hermione? Alone?" Severus' Adam's apple bobbed nervously as his gaze traveled to the stunning woman in the center of the stage now dancing toward their table.

Opening and shutting his mouth, Severus sat dumbfounded when he turned and came face to chest with Hermione arriving at their table. She had changed; her form was now encased in pink feathers that had been charmed to sparkle when she shimmered. "I believe you were expecting me," she told him breathlessly.

Severus merely nodded, speechless.

"Hmmm, why don't you join me on the dance floor?" she asked him seductively, turning to the crowd. "Come on, ladies, it's time to dance!" she announced, causing a roar to rise from the crowd.

Whirling around, Hermione held out her arm, wand extended, and Summoned Severus to her from his seat. "Ah, that's more like it," she purred, wrapping her arms around his neck. "I believe you owe me a dance." She grinned in a cat-like way.

"B-but..." Severus began but was cut off as Hermione hopped in his arms and bent backwards in a daring dip.

"H-Hermione, this is the..." Sirius tried to explain when her upside-down head was at his level.

"I know, Sirius. I've got it under control," she told him breathlessly.

Harry turned to Remus and Neville with a surprised look. "Severus is so lucky and a wonderful dancer, too!" The other two simply nodded, grinning as they watched Hermione whisk Severus off across the room.

Out on the dance floor, Hermione pulled Severus to her bosom briefly, then pushed him away, giving a loud squeal. Circling each other, their feet stepping intricately to the beat, Severus' and Hermione's bodies vibrated to the music. From the wings, Lucius watched their interaction and tried to listen to the conversations around him. Mayhem surrounded him; wizards and scantily clad witches danced wildly while an extremely short woman who looked like Poppy Pomfrey sang. Suddenly, his breath stopped short.

Just ahead, Narcissa was twisting her body around Ron Weasley. Moving forward, Lucius prepared to tear the redhead away from her, but when he reached them, his hands passed right through them. Clenching and unclenching his fists, he breathed slowly, trying to calm himself. Tears rose to his eyes as he remembered his losses and attempted to will himself out of this torture.

At that moment, the torches lowered and the enchanted ceiling lit once more. Hermione was levitated above the crowd on a swing while she sang. *"Diamonds. Diamonds. Are a girl's... best..."*

Gasping, Hermione grasped the ropes tightly, and all eyes in the room turned to her as everyone fell silent. Slackening on the ropes, Hermione's hands dropped to her side when her unconscious form slipped from the seat, plummeting to the ground. The patrons, Severus, and the Bohemians collectively sucked in their breath.

Abruptly, Horace yelled, "NO!"

"NO!" Lucius called out, moving forward and raising his wand, but nothing happened.

Lunging forward, Kingsley Shacklebolt pointed his wand at Hermione. *"Arresto Momentum,"* he called out, and Hermione's limp body slowed its descent, coming gently to rest in the center of the circle. Kingsley moved forward, levitating the girl away from the crowd.

"HOORAY! What a dramatic ending! Let's hear it for my 'Sparkling Diamond'! Hermione, Hermione, Hermione," Horace chanted, and the crowd joined him. Holding out his hands, Horace signaled for the intoning to stop. "I see so many lonely Magie Noir witches out there. Why don't you lucky wizards let them weave their magic for you!" he exclaimed, restarting the bedlam that had ceased at the end of the show.

Rising from the seat, Severus tugged on his coat. "Hermione told me to meet her in the Dragon suite," he told Sirius nervously.

"Don't wowwy, I'm sure she'll be fine and meet you there like she said. Go on up, we'll be newby, don't wowwy," Sirius reassured the young writer.

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**A/N:** My thanks and hugs go to the lovely Ladyinthecloak, Sempra, and OSUSprinks.

**Songs included in this chapter are:**

*Lady Marmalade* by Labelle

*Because We Can* by Fatboy Slim

*Smells like Teen Spirit* by Nirvana

*Material Girl* by Madonna

*Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* by Carol Channing

## Chapitre Trois

*Chapter 3 of 5*

Hermione meets Severus face to face, but he isn't who she thinks he is.

Chapitre Trois

Waiting patiently in the head of a perfectly replicated horntail, Severus watched the lights of Paris play across the sky while he stood at the window. Behind him, Lucius studied the view. He remembered Paris from his youth. This Paris was, for lack of a better word, more French than the one he remembered.

At that moment, Hermione came through the door. Her figure was swathed in a red satin dress, laced tightly up the back. The garment hugged her form, accentuating every curve, emphasizing her pale skin. Her chestnut locks were pulled up in a sophisticated chignon, and her hands were encased in grand, black velvet gloves to her elbows. Standing just inside the door, she placed her hands on her hips, smiling enticingly.

Severus' eyes grew wide, but he quickly recovered, clearing his throat. "Good evening, mademoiselle," he greeted, moving closer, raising her hand to his lips.

"Is it... hot in here? Oh, just let me get more comfortable, will you? These costumes can be murder sometimes." Hermione laughed breathlessly.

Severus nodded when she turned back before slipping behind a partition on the far side of the room. Soon, the slither of satin reached his ears as Hermione hung her dress over the screen.

Sighing, Hermione reappeared adorned in black lace. "Mm, that's more comfortable, isn't it? Perfect for a poetry reading, don't you think?"

"Yes, yes, of course!"

"How about a little Ogden's or some pumpkin pasties?" Hermione offered, grabbing the bottle of amber liquid.

"Well, I was hoping we could just get it on? Er, I mean, get on with it."

"Oh, well... if that's what you want," she replied, returning the bottle to the table with a thump. Spinning around with an alluring smile, she moved to the generously stuffed bed and sat down. "Then why don't you join me over here..." She trailed off, rubbing the blanket beside her.

Running his finger around his high collar, Severus swallowed almost audibly. Lucius swallowed hard too, even though no one could see him, at the sight of this Hermione, this smoldering temptress.

"A actually, I prefer to stand," Severus told her. Her deep brown eyes examined Severus then frowned in puzzlement.

"You see, it's quite lengthy... and at times I find it hard..." He stopped abruptly as her eyes widened, and she let out a cooing sound. "Uh, I I mean what I do is very contemporary, and it might feel odd at first. But I really think you'll like it."

"Then let's get started if you like, of course." Hermione spread her arms out.

"Indeed, started, started," Severus muttered to himself.

Lucius frowned as he studied Hermione and Severus. He could plainly see they were not talking about the same thing. His lips tugged up in a smile as he was struck by the mirth of the situation. Hermione remained on the bed while Severus paced back and forth nervously, muttering to himself. Suddenly, the dark, young man spun around.

"L like a spell, I its tendrils a fine green..." Severus trailed off, turning back around. "Uh, uh..." His eyes scanned the room, desperate for words he was having trouble finding.

Dropping her hands against the bed, Hermione got up with a sigh of frustration. "Perhaps I can help you?" she offered.

"No, you see, sometimes it takes a moment to awaken the Muse, but..."

"Oh, I see. I'm up for a threesome if you are," Hermione told Severus, advancing like a predator hunting food.

At her comment, Lucius' eyes grew hungry as he watched the others dance around the meanings of their words. He reached out his hands, trying to touch them both, but his fingers passed right through.

"Uh, that isn't what I meant. Inspiration is..." Severus began to explain, but Hermione grabbed his coat-front and threw him on the bed.

Jumping on top of him, Hermione leaned over and ripped open his shirt. Buttons fell like gentle rain, pinging surfaces as they flew in every direction. "I think I can give you inspiration," she told him, her hands traveling to his pants and tugging them open.

Gasping, Hermione looked up at Severus. "Merlin's beard!"

Attempting to look the other way, Lucius found his eyes drawn to Severus' groin, and his eyebrows rose in surprise. Abruptly, there was a clatter against the window above, and Lucius saw Sirius hanging upside down outside. The dwarf's eyes grew big when he realized what was going on, and he quickly motioned for someone to pull him up.

"Mm, let's make love. I *need* your words *now*!" Hermione moaned, breathing hard as she pinned Severus to the bed.

"Yes, of course! You have awakened her!" Severus managed in exasperation, pushing Hermione back on the bed when he got up. "*It's a little bit funny... t this feeling inside. I I'm not one of those who can easily hide.*" Severus paused when Hermione sat up, gasping for breath.

"Wha..."

"Is this acceptable?"

'Hm, oh, yes, yes! That is what I want, magic words! Your words are like magic..." She slid to the floor.

*"I don't have much money, but boy if I did, I'd buy a big house where, we both could livë"* he continued.

"Yes, yes... moorre," Hermione begged, moaning and writhing on the floor. Running her hands across her thighs seductively, she wriggled her hips with wanton abandon.

Severus turned away, pacing to the window. "*If I was a sculptor, but then again, no...*" He turned back as Hermione moaned again. "*Or a man who makes potions in a traveling show, I know it's not much but it's the best I can do.*"

"No, no! Don't stop. Oh, oh, oh, yes, yes, yes." Hermione continued to thrash about on the floor, her body bucking wildly in the seeming throes of an orgasm when she abruptly stopped at the sound of Severus' singing.

*"My gift is my song and this one's for you."*

Lucius looked at Severus with surprise. He had no idea the man's voice sounded like that or he had such words inside him.

*"And you can tell everybody this is your song*

*It may be quite simple, but now that it's done,*

*I hope you don't mind*

*I hope you don't mind that I put down in words*

*How wonderful life is while you're in the world*

*I sat on the roof and kicked off the moss*

*Well, a few of the verses, well, they've got me quite cross*

*But the sun's been quite kind while I wrote this song*

*It's for people like you that keep it turned on*

*So excuse me forgetting but these things I do*

*You see I've forgotten if they're green or they're blue*

Anyway, the thing is what I really mean

*Yours are the sweetest eyes I've ever seen"*

Trailing off at the end, Severus spun Hermione around, holding her close in his arms.

Staring at Severus as his words died away, a light entered Hermione's eyes. "That was wonderful; I think I'm in love. Finally, I have found love with a young, breathtaking, song-writing duke."

"Duke?" Severus frowned. "I'm not a duke."

Frowning, Hermione pushed him away from her. "Not a duke?"

Shaking his head, Severus replied, "No, I'm a writer..."

"A writer!? No! Please tell me you are not another one of Sirius' adopted, struggling wizards?"

A worried look crossed Severus' face. "But, Sirius said..."

Turning away from him, Hermione paced agitatedly. "I don't understand. I was supposed to meet the duke..." Her words were cut off as someone knocked on the door.

Swinging the door open wide, Hermione gasped. "The duke!" she cried out and slammed the door in Horace's face. Spinning around, she covered the door with her body. "It's the duke, you have to hide. Hide!" she ground out through clenched teeth when Severus just stood there, looking shocked.

At the sound of the door opening behind her, Hermione quickly Transfigured Severus into a black ferret and shuffled him under her robe at her feet.

"Ah, my little Snidget, where have you been?" Horace queried, entering the room, the duke just behind him.

Whirling around, Hermione answered him breathlessly, "Why, I've been waiting for him. A and practicing my rrrrrrrrhumba." Rolling the r to cover Severus' sudden ferrety chitter, she moved forward and back, swaying her hips in a maneuver to keep the ferret beneath her robes.

Striding forward, his eyes gliding down to her swinging hips lustily, the duke extended his hand. *"A kiss on the hand may be quite continental!"* He took her hand when she offered it, raising it to his lips.

*"But diamonds are a girl's best friend"* Hermione countered, looking mischievous.

"I'll just let you two get to know each other better," Horace announced, backing out of the room, shutting the door behind him.

Chuckling, the duke began to move toward the table of food. "How about some refreshment, my dear? All of that dancing must have worked up an appetite."

At that moment, Severus as ferret ran from beneath Hermione's robes under the dangling tablecloth. "Oh!"

Pausing half way to his destination, startled by her abrupt exclamation, the duke looked at Hermione like she had coughed up a Phoenix. "Is something wrong?"

Running her hands seductively down her body, she turned toward him and the table. "I'm not hungry, I I you see, *it's a little bit funny... this feeling inside. I'm not one of those who can easily hide,*" she told him, running her hands along his lapel.

Severus poked his head between the duke's legs, looking up at Hermione.

Seeing him, she slid down the duke's body, moaning. *"Mm, I don't have much money,"* she told him breathlessly, *"but boy if I did..."* She grabbed Severus and shoved him toward the window, mouthing for him to go out that way, then climbed back up the duke. *"I'd buy a big house where we both could live"*

Lust filled the duke's eyes as he looked down at Hermione when she began to sing.

*"I hope you don't mind*

*I hope you don't mind that I put down in words*

*How wonderful life is now you're in the world."*

A light shone from the duke's eyes. *"That song is very beautiful..."*

"It's from Magnificent Magnificent," Hermione whispered. Her gaze graced the floor and spotted Severus the ferret heading back toward the duke. Abruptly, she grabbed his coat and pulled him down onto the bed. "Let's make love!"

"What?"

"Oh, you are such a virile man. So... poignant, so..." Hermione grasped for words as she pulled the duke to her bosom and searched for Severus over his shoulder. Waving her arm, she mouthed for him to go out the window while she distracted the duke.

"You want me, don't you?" she asked, looking back at him after ensuring Severus was heading for the window.

"But, of course, my dear."

"Oh, Duke," she breathed, showering him with kisses. She pulled his head back to her breasts to check Severus' progress. Her eyes widened when she saw Severus rise up on two legs, watching their lovemaking.

"My dear..."

"Actually... we s should wait."

"Wait?"

"Yes, you are absolutely right! We should wait until opening night to make love," Hermione told the duke, convincing him it was his idea while keeping his eyes on her and away from Severus.

"I am?"

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed, shuffling off the bed and dragging the duke with her. "I agree. We should wait. I mean, we will see each other often enough with rehearsals. Now, out you get. Goodbye." Hermione practically threw him out the door.

Turning around quickly, wand in hand, Hermione changed Severus back into his true form. "Do you have any idea what he would do to you if... he... found..." Hermione began gasping for air and fell forward as her eyes rolled up in her head.

Jumping up from his position on all fours, Severus managed to catch her before she hit the floor. Shaking her gently, he murmured, "Hermione? Hermione?"

Hermione hung in his arms, and he shifted, looking around the room. Spotting the bed, he shuffled over to it and laid her down gently. Straddling her, he softly caressed her face, attempting to wake her. At that moment, the door swung open, and the duke walked in.

"I apologize, my dear, but I seem to have forgotten my ca..." he began, pausing as his gaze fell on Severus lying on top of Hermione.

Hermione regained consciousness, instantly recognizing him. "Oh, Duke!"

"It's a little bit funny... *this feeling inside!*" he bellowed, his face flushing with anger.

"You remember the lines, how wonderful?" Hermione wheezed, struggling to sit up, but Severus was still on top of her. "Let me present the writer." She reached up, turning Severus' face toward the duke.

"The writer?"

"Yes, we were... just rehearsing a scene from the play." Hermione and Severus moved quickly to the edge of the bed.

Pulling his wand from his pocket, the duke advanced on them, forcing them off the bed and toward the window. "Am I to believe that you are rehearsing a show, in the middle of the night, indecently dressed, in the arms of another man, inside a dragon?"

"Did the spell wowk fow the wehearsal?" Sirius called out as he stepped from behind the curtain by the window with a drink in his hand. "Oh, look! We have a guest fow the wehearsal!" he informed, turning toward Harry, Neville and Remus who emerged from behind the drapery as well.

"Go' day, mate!" Harry saluted as he walked by the duke to the piano.

"Your Excellency." Remus nodded, proceeding past Severus and Hermione, wand in hand. He was casting his Patronus, its white shape a whisper in the air, over and over.

"He has talent, you know. He really does," Neville told the duke, leaning into him when he backed away. When the duke didn't respond, Neville shrugged and made his way to the piano by Harry.

As the crew charged past him, the duke stood rooted to his spot, dumbfounded. Hermione and Severus also looked confused at first, but then an air of knowing replaced it, and they nodded as Sirius and the others passed them.

The duke found his bearings and closed in on Hermione once more. "If this is a rehearsal, where is Slughorn? Surely he would be here, too." He looked at her with a self-satisfied smirk.

With a crash, the door banged open, admitting Horace to the room. "Duke!?"

Moving forward, blocking the duke's view of her face, Hermione smiled at Slughorn. "Horace," she greeted breathlessly, "how lovely you have finally joined us. Now we can really get started with the rehearsal."

"Rehearsal?" Horace frowned, then a smile lit his face. "Ah, yes, the rehearsal! I wouldn't miss it for the world, my girl. When I saw the work that Percy..."

"Y you mean the work that Severus..." Hermione began, eyeing Horace piercingly.

"Yes, of course I mean Severus! Slip of the tongue, you know, ha, ha," Slughorn chattered nervously, watching the duke's reaction.

Raising one eyebrow, the duke sniffed derisively and crossed his arms in front of him. "Rehearsal, you say? Well, if I am to invest in this... show... then what is your story? Don't you think I should know the story in order to truly invest?"

"The story?" Horace laced his fingers together and rocked on the balls of his feet. "Of course, Siriu..." Hermione cut him off.

"Severus, you mean. Severus, tell the duke about the story."

Standing silently in the center of the room, looking self-conscious, Severus glanced around as all eyes fell on him. "W well..."

"It's a stowly about twue love!" Sirius announced, raising his hands and tucking them beneath his chin sweetly.

"Love?" the duke questioned with surprise.

"Yes! And it's set in Newfinland! Ha, ha," Sirius continued excitedly.

Half the faces in the room frowned and echoed, "Newfinland?"

"Uh, h he means Scotland!" Severus chimed in quickly.

"Scotland," the duke repeated with a considering expression. "So tell me the story. If you want me to invest, I need to know the story."

"You see... there is an evil sorcerer who casts a spell on a beautiful courtesan the most beautiful courtesan in the land. And in order to break the spell, the courtesan must lure the evil wizard into a web of seduction," Severus informed, looking directly at Lucius' likeness. The other man frowned in concern at the implication. Abruptly spreading his arms wide, building the suspense, Severus went on, "But on the night of the deception, she mistakes the sorcerer's song-writing..." he breaks off, looking around the room for inspiration. Spotting a Potions apparatus, he grabs a vial from the set and swivels around, his face newly concentrated on his tale. "...Potion maker for her target and falls desperately in love with him."

"You see, the Potion maker had just perfected the Polyjuice potion the evil sorcerer had requested from him to fulfill his evil plan to take over the world. The Potion maker was only testing it; he was not trying to deceive her at all," Severus finished, his eyes softening as he looked at Hermione.

Running forward, Neville snatched the vial from Severus' hand, wielding it like a sword. "I will play the tango-dancing, song-writing, Potion maker! I can dance like no other, even without Felix Felicis!" he said forcefully.

"Yes, well, what happens next?" the duke inquired, intrigued.

"The song-writing, Potion maker and the courtesan must hide their love from the evil sorcerer, or he would surely cast *Avada Kedavra* on them," Severus explained, and the duke nodded.

"Oh! And the potion vial contains Veritaserum..." Harry added, but was cut off by Sirius.



"Ah, it is a magical potion vial of Vewitaserum, and it only speaks the twuth. I will play the magical potion vial. Bubble, bubble, toil and twouble... you are beautiful," he announced, facing Hermione. "Bubble, bubble, toil and twouble... you are ugly," he continued, turning to face Horace. "Bubble, bubble, toil and twouble... you are..." Sirius was stopped from making his pronouncement by the others as he faced the duke.

"I see... the truth serum gives the ruse away," the duke added, giving them all a smirk.

"Exactly!" Horace chimed in. Leaning toward the duke, he announced in a hushed tone, "It will be the coup de grace of shows! It is a broom-soaring, fire-breathing, lust-filled, edge-of-your-seat, wonder-filled bedazzlement! And it encompasses all the thrusting... the rapture... the beauty... the ecstasy... the sexuality... the spectacular majesty of the magical bohemian revolution!"

"What do you mean by that?" the duke asked, looking shell-shocked by Slughorn's description of the play they would produce.

Horace moved to his side and spread his hands wide. "Magnificent Magnificent... No words were ever Merlin sent... which can describe this thrilling tale, not even from beyond the veil...." He trailed off, giving a sense of mystery to his words.

As he moved to the other side, the duke's eyes followed him, and then Horace leaned over his shoulder to continue with the pitch. "Profits will mount if you invest, and Gringotts' goblins do the rest... And on top of your fee..."

Severus, Hermione, Sirius, Neville, Harry and Remus joined Horace and advanced on the duke. Together they sang, "You'll be involved artistically." Taken aback by their forward movement, the duke fell back into a chair behind him.

*"So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm.*

*So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm."*

The duke's eyes lit with curiosity as the others dispersed about the room. Severus danced with Hermione, leaned back and shouted, "Hippogriffs!"

Harry played the piano and dragged his fingers across the keys. When he stopped, he yelled, "Flicking wands!"

Wrapping himself in a rainbow afghan, Sirius announced, "Weasleys!" Then he curtsied and said, his voice laced with sensuality, "And cowtesses!"

Horace bent forward, close to the duke's face, and roared, "Pixies! And Phoenixes!"

Behind Horace, casting his Patronus, Remus chimed in mysteriously, "Veelas! Dementors!"

By the piano, Severus leaned nearer to Neville, and they sang, "Dragons! And Potionists!"

Hermione danced up behind Severus, and they added together, "Intrigue, danger and romance!"

Then, all their voices united as they converged in the center of the room and advanced toward the duke. "Flying spells, sorcery, with vast amounts of energy!"

*"So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm.*

*So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm."*

Backing away, they all continued, "Magnificent Magnificent, no words were ever Merlin sent, which can describe this thrilling tale, not even from beyond the veil."

With the sounds of snake-charming music and serpentine hand movements, they sang, *"The hills are alive with the sound of music..."*

*"So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm.*

*So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm."*

As their words flowed longer, all the men Levitated Hermione, and they all raised their arms in finale. But the duke leaned forward and inquired, "But what happens in the end?"

Hopping up, Severus, Harry, Horace, Sirius, Hermione, Neville and Remus ran around, Summoning items to them and bumping into each other. Flicking his wand, Severus caused the heavy, red drapes in front of the door to fall closed, concealing his comrades. Spinning on his heel, he threw up his arms, and the torches on the walls lowered. "The courtesan and Potions man..." he began, trailing off as he moved his arm, and the curtains rose, revealing Neville and Hermione in a passionate embrace. *"Are pulled apart by an evil plan..."*

*"But in the end, she hears his song"* Hermione broke in.

*"And their love is just too strong"* they finished together.

From his seat, the duke eyed them wearily. "It's a little bit funny, this feeling inside..."

Hermione and Severus' eyes widened, but all the bohemians jumped up and crooned the main stanza of the show.

*"So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm.*

*So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm.*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm."*

Recovering himself, Severus sang on, "The Potion maker's secret song helps them flee the evil one though the wizard rants and rails, it is all to no avail!"

With a flash of smoke, Horace appeared in front of Hermione and Neville. "I am the dark sorcerer! You cannot escape!" Neville moved in front of Hermione, clasping her to him in a move of protection.

"Oh, excellent, Horace, I knew the part would be perfect for you!" Hermione told him excitedly. Horace grinned wide.

Sirius aimed his wand at the duke's henchman and quickly *Transfigured* him into a Hippogriff. He then mounted him before the man could gather his senses while everyone moved in for the finish.

*"So spellbinding, we'll make them laugh, we'll make them cry!"*

*Mesmerizing...!"*

The duke cut in, *"And in the end, should someone die?"*

Everyone looked at each other, but didn't comment about his question. They simply seemed to avoid it altogether.

*"So spellbinding, viewers need a breathing charm."*

*Mesmerizing, for years and years you'll see them swarm...!"*

Panting heavily, the verse died from their lips, and everyone seemed to hold their breath as they waited for the duke's final verdict on whether he would invest in the show.

"Generally, I like it," he said after some consideration.

His announcement was met with cheers from the players surrounding him who all converged on him, Levitating him in the air with their joy.

When the noise died down, Horace accompanied the duke and his bodyguard to the office to discuss the details. The others took their leave from Hermione: Severus to write the show and the others to party with the girls downstairs in celebration of their new financier.

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**A/N:** My sincere thanks go to ladyinthecloak for all of her hard work and help with this piece. Also, many thanks go to Sempra and OSUSprinks for their suggestions.

**Songs featured in this chapter:**

*Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* ~ Carol Channing

*Your Song* ~ Elton John

\*Also, some featured lines are from Bah Lurman's film ~*Moulin Rouge*

\*\*The song *Magnificent Magnificent* is a filk of the song *Spectacular Spectacular* from *Moulin Rouge*, and the tune was derived from *Galop Infernal* (*Can-can*) by Jacques Offenbach

## Chapitre Quatre

*Chapter 4 of 5*

Severus confronts Hermione, and Lucius learns a secret.

Back at his flat, Severus couldn't seem to concentrate, Lucius observed. He watched as Severus paced back and forth, then opened the French doors to walk out onto the balcony. Sitting down, Severus stared across the way at the dragon. As Lucius watched him, he saw the younger wizard's eyes light suddenly. Following his line of sight, Lucius recognized Hermione's silhouette cross the room.

"How wonderful life is, now you're in the world..." Severus sang to himself, causing Lucius' brows to rise. It seemed Severus was also in love with Hermione, in this life as well.

Looking back across the cobbled street, Lucius wondered about the curvaceous woman himself. She certainly was different from the schoolgirl he'd known. But he wondered if there was more to the girl. Certainly Severus had seen it; the man had married her after all.

A lilting voice drifting on the breeze stirred Lucius from his thoughts. Beside him, Severus looked up, and they both saw Hermione sitting in the open window. *"One day I'll fly away, leave all this to yesterday. What more could your love do for me? When will love be through with me? Why live life from dream to dream and dread the day when dreaming ends?"*

"How wonderful life is now you're in the world," Severus responded, but Hermione didn't seem to hear him.

As Lucius and Severus watched, Hermione made her way up the stairway winding around the dragon to the top of its head. Once at the top, Lucius saw her lift her head with pride and heard her words floating on the wind. *"One day I'll fly away, leave all this to yesterday. Why live life from dream to dream? And dread the day when dreaming ends. One day I'll fly away... fly, fly away."*

As her words died away, Hermione leaned back into a settee, looking into the distance.

Severus got an odd look on his face, pulled his wand from his pocket and held it close. With a crack he Disapparated, then reappeared behind Hermione.

Lucius' world seemed to turn upside down for a moment, and he suddenly found himself opposite of where he had been. With a slight scream, Hermione jumped out of the chaise, wand pointed directly at Severus. She frowned, lowering her wand. "You really need to stop startling me; I would hate to accidentally maim you."

"Indeed, I will make note of that," Severus responded dryly, looking directly at her wand and frowning as well. "I was having a hard time concentrating, and I noticed you were up here. I wanted to ask if you meant what you said earlier."

"What I said? What did I say?" She frowned in thought.

"That you loved me when you thought I was the duke you said you loved me. Did you mean it?"

"Severus..." she began, shaking her head. "You must realize I am a courtesan. I get paid to give men what they want. And when I thought you were the duke, I was simply giving him what he wanted..."

"But what about what I want..."

"What? Love? I'm not capable of loving anyone."

"What? Not not capable? But that's horrible!"

"No, it's not horrible. Having a roof over your head..."

"But love is like oxygen, love is a many splendored thing, love lifts us up where we belong, all you need is love!" Severus exclaimed, looking at her intently.

"Oh, please don't start that again," Hermione pleaded.

"All you need is love!"

"A girl has got to eat."

"All you need is love!"

"She'll end up on the street," she groaned.

"All you need is loooooove!"

"Love is just a game."

"I was made for lovin' you baby, you were made for lovin' me."

"The only way of lovin' me baby, is to pay a lovely fee."

"Just one night, give me just one night."

"There's no way, 'cause you can't pay."

"In the name of love! One night in the name of love!"

"You crazy fool; I won't give in to you."

"Don't... leave me this way; I can't survive without your sweet love. Oh baby, don't leave me this way."

"You'd think that people would've had enough of silly love songs..."

"I look around me and I see it isn't so, oh, no."

"Some people wanna fill the world with silly love songs."

"Well what's wrong with that? I like to know. 'Cause here I go... again.... Love lifts us up where we belong! Where eagles fly, on a mountain high!"

"Love makes us act like we are fools. Throw our lives away, for one happy day."

"We could be heroes... Just for one day."

"You, you will be mean."

"No, I won't."

"And I, I'll drink all the time."

"We should be lovers..."

"We can't do that."

"We should be lovers! And that's a fact."

"Though nothing would keep us together."

"We could steal time..."

"Just for one day. We could be heroes, forever and ever. We could be heroes, forever and ever. We could be heroes..."

"Just because I... will always love you..."

"I..."

"Can't help loving..."

"You..."

"How wonderful life is..."

"Now you're in... the world..." As their words died, Severus and Hermione looked into each others' eyes and smiled.

"Well... maybe I could love you..."

"Shh..." Severus hushed, raising a finger to her lips. Taking it away, he lowered his mouth, covering hers as they held on to each other. In the sky above, the bohemians shot fireworks as the celebration continued.

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Leaving the lovers behind, Lucius floated down through the floor, testing how far he could move from Severus. Off to his left he could hear voices. Drifting pleasantly, he found he could only go as far as the window. But he found that the window belonged to Slughorn, and inside, the duke and Horace were discussing the stipulations of their venture.

"Slughorn, if I am to invest, I find there are certain needs that must be met. After all, it is going to take many Galleons to turn Magie Noir into a theatre."

"Yes, Duke, what is it you require?" Horace asked, grinning so broadly he looked like the cat that had swallowed the cream.

"First, the deed to the Magie Noir. That should be sufficient collateral for the sum of money I will be investing."

Horace's eyes grew wide. "B but..." He stopped when the duke raised his hand abruptly.

"Secondly, Hermione... she will be bound to me..."

"A binding? Binding rituals haven't been held..."

"It... is what I require, Slughorn. Or my associate, Mr. Riddle, will take care of all of you the only way he knows how." He motioned to a bald man sitting in a chair a few feet away. "Oh, and I want to see the girl tonight. We will have dinner on the veranda."

"Yes, yes, of course," Horace replied with a pained look on his face, sinking slowly into the chair behind his heavy, mahogany desk.

Outside, Lucius felt powerless against the events unfolding around him. He also wondered when the duke planned to bind Hermione to him. If he did, Lucius wondered how strong it would be and if that bond would be strong enough to transcend centuries. Could that be what Trelawney had been talking about when she had mentioned another love for him? Since the duke looked exactly like him, was he the reincarnation of the duke? Was this his past life as well? While he pondered these questions, time seemed to fly, and before he knew it, it was morning.

A/N: Thank you, Karelia, Sempra, and OSUSprinks for helping me retain my sanity. You guys rock!

Songs featured in this chapter:

One Day I'll Fly Away ~ The Crusaders

**The dialogue between Severus and Hermione in this chapter is: *Elephant Love Medley* from Moulin Rouge by Baz Luhrmann. It contains excerpts from the following songs:

Love Is Like Oxygen ~ Sweet

Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing ~ The Four Aces

Up Where We Belong ~ Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes

All You Need Is Love ~ The Beatles

Lover's Game ~ Chris Isaak

I Was Made For Lovin' You ~ Kiss

One More Night ~ Phil Collins

Pride(In The Name of Love) ~ U2

Don't Leave Me This Way ~ Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes

Silly Love Songs ~ Paul McCartney and Wings

Heroes ~ David Bowie

I Will Always Love You ~ Dolly Parton

Your Song ~ Elton John

Chapitre Cinq

Chapter 5 of 5

Severus and Hermione rehearse while the duke lurks around every corner.

The following day, Horace rallied the troupe to introduce the duke and announce the changes they would be making to the club. During the proceedings, Hermione and Severus watched each other and the duke watched Hermione.

Knowing what had happened in Slughorn's office, Lucius was apprehensive about Hermione having dinner with the duke that evening. Therefore, he was deeply relieved when Hermione made an excuse to the duke and spent the evening with Severus and Sirius instead.

"You have deceived me! cries the Potion maker when the evil sorcerer forces the courtesan to make him believe she doesn't love him. He rages with jealousy," Severus explained, descending the stairs from behind a curtain.

Giggling, Hermione added, "Not in love? Why that's horrible."

"With disgust, he tosses his Galleons at her feet and thanks her for lifting the veil from his eyes. And then... then the magical potion vial of Veritaserum says... he says..." Severus described, moving to lie over Hermione on the chaise.

"Severus, that is my part," Sirius reminded, sitting down at the table with a glass of Dragon's breath in his hand. Slinging it back, he slammed the glass down on the table and rose to stagger over to the settee by Hermione and Severus.

Laughing, Hermione pushed upward to plant a kiss on Severus' chin. "This is brilliant, you do know that." She smiled at him, then at Sirius.

Looking down into her eyes, Severus added, "The vial says, 'The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return.'"

"Yes, yes, that is my part," Sirius said almost dreamily, seeming to lose focus altogether. He sat down heavily on the thatched rug and began to laugh, the effect of the drink taking over.

Studying her face, suddenly serious, Severus leaned down and kissed her tenderly. Seeming to savor the moment, he reluctantly withdrew and carried her to the bedroom, beyond Sirius' riotous laughter.

The days that followed encompassed a large amount of work. Lucius watched as Harry fashioned the musical arrangements, Remus demonstrated the wandwork required, and Neville taught the dances to the troupe. Severus and Hermione ironed out the story line and used their time spent together to carry on their love affair. Meanwhile, the duke only had eyes for Hermione, and he attempted to court her at every opportunity.

In Hermione's dressing room, passion flared between the two lovers. Holding her to him tightly, Severus crushed his lips upon hers and let his tongue invade when he felt her mouth surrender to him. Her hands traveled up his chest, linking behind his neck, pulling him closer. Abruptly, a rap at the door startled them and they broke apart.

Pushing open the door, the duke stepped into the room, a leer on his face. "My dear, I thought we might enjoy an afternoon in the sun. A picnic sounds divine, don't you think?" he questioned, moving to reveal a picnic basket floating behind him.

Panting irregularly, Hermione gasped, "Duke! Well... normally that would sound lovely, but we still have so much rehearsing to do."

"Ah, indeed, but you can practice just as well in the park, can you not?" he supplied, eyeing them both.

"W-well, Severus still has to settle the final love scene for the show..."

"Pish, posh, you can do all that while we're there; come along," the duke insisted. Hermione and Severus cast longing looks at each other, but followed the duke and his floating basket to the square.

The following day, the duke almost caught the younger wizard and witch in a passionate embrace when he flung open the door to Hermione's dressing room once more. This time, he Transfigured flowers plucked from a vase into oars and invited Hermione on a moonlit boat ride.

"I'm so sorry, Duke, we are still working."

Raising his eyebrow, the duke studied them with suspicion. "Then bring the story-writer along. I see no reason why you both can't do your work in my presence."

Sighing heavily, Severus and Hermione joined him on the river.

Soon, the duke became more demanding of Hermione's time. He often accompanied her while she waited for her part in the rehearsals to begin. As they stood watching Kingsley dance in a mock battle with a flying dragon, Severus approached them.

"Hermione, I still need to finish that scene in the Potion maker's laboratory, and I was wondering if you could help me finish it tonight?"

Turning to him, the duke frowned, then quickly faced Hermione and added, "But, my dear, I have already planned a spectacular feast in the tower for us tonight."

Shifting his eyes from the duke to Hermione and back, Severus let out a breath. "That is fine, we can rehearse it first thing tomorrow then." He bowed to them both and began to walk away.

"No, wait! Every scene is important, I want to make certain I know it forward and back. My dear Duke, surely you understand the need to ensure the quality of this production. I know you wouldn't want to deny me the much-needed time to complete and rehearse the scene," Hermione spoke quickly before the duke could respond. "Severus, I will see you tonight."

Severus nodded and strode away swiftly.

"B-but, my dear..."

"Oh, Duke, I knew you would understand! Please excuse me."

Standing near the duke, Lucius watched Severus as he made his way to the balcony. Behind him, the duke pivoted on his heel and stomped over to Slughorn's side, up by the stage.

"That's a wrap for today! Tomorrow we will be preparing for the lovers are discovered scene. Thank you, everyone!" Horace exclaimed, clapping his hands. Spinning around, he smiled when he saw the duke approaching him. "Ah, Duke! Everything has been assembled for your rendezvous tonight."

"But we won't be eating it!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, Hermione said she won't be attending. I understand that she wants to produce a quality show for me, but she incessantly spends all of her time with that writer! You were supposed to ensure she was mine!"

Looking up at the balcony, Slughorn drew in his breath, then carried on in a rush. "And I am, don't worry, Duke. I will insist she attends supper with you tonight."

Following Horace's gaze, Lucius' mouth dropped open when he realized what the other man had seen. There, gripping each other tightly, were Hermione and Severus, the darker wizard looking as if he might swallow Hermione whole. Pressing her against a column, Severus tangled his hands in her hair, then released her to whisper something in her ear.

"Very well, I shall expect her tonight," the duke replied, striding off, looking pleased.

His face twisted with fury, Horace strode to the dim stairs leading from the balcony, startling Hermione as she descended them into the light. "Oh, Horace, I didn't see you there!" she gasped, raising a hand to her mouth and letting out a slight giggle.

"What are you doing?" he snapped.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean... carrying on this affair with Severus the writer?"

"Don't be silly..."

"I saw you! And if I hadn't thought quickly, the duke would have as well."

Laughing, Hermione told him, "It's just a fascination, Horace, really!"

"Well, the fascination will end."

Before Lucius could hear more of their conversation, his translucent form was dragged away as Severus made his way to his flat across the street.

That evening, both Lucius and Severus paced, each going an opposite direction. Severus constantly walked through Lucius, traveling from one end of his apartment to the other, worry evident on his face. Lucius was in constant turmoil for he feared that tonight the duke would bind Hermione to him and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Earlier, Severus had explained to Sirius that Hermione would be joining him to figure out one of the final scenes. Sirius had wiggled his eyebrows and staggered back up the stairs. All night, Severus paced, but Hermione never came.

A/N: My sincere thanks goes to Karelia and Luvsev for all they do. You two ladies are in a league of your own.

Disclaimer: The characters belong to J. K Rowling, and any resemblance this story has to *Moulin Rouge* by Baz Luhrmann is completely intentional.