

The Grass Is Always Greener

by *orm irian*

Getting older in the Wizarding world has its own special set of problems...

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I'm not JKR, I don't own the Potterverse, I am not making any money from this. The only payment I can hope for is feedback, so please review!

Hermione sighed. Sometimes, being a witch was just a huge pain in the arse. Sure, she could look forward to a longer lifespan than her parents. But what did that actually get her? Twenty additional years of taking birth control followed by 'magical menopause.'

Tucking a strand of her graying hair behind her ear, she stared resentfully at the pamphlet the young, attractive Healer (now) had given her: Menopause, Magic and You, a Witch's Guide. She didn't really need to read the thing – that dratted Healer had summarized the upcoming events quite thoroughly. Hot flashes and vaginal dryness paled beside the uncontrolled magical outbursts that commonly accompanied the mood swings of menopausal witches. *How humiliating! Everyone will know!*

Finally, she gave in to the unconscious twitching of her fingers (a deep-rooted reaction to the presence of reading material) and opened the leaflet. *Oh joy... this can last for up to 15 years! An extended lifespan gets me a lengthy change-of-life to go along with it.* She squeezed her eyes shut and tried not to give in to the tears that were welling up inside her. *Great! Just great! A fucking mood swing while I'm reading about fucking mood swings!*

Sunk in her own misery, she was startled by the sudden slamming of the front door. Severus was home! *Just what I need,* she thought morosely, wiping away the tears that had escaped down her cheeks. *He'll probably just make some snide comment if he finds out why I'm crying.* Her husband of 45 years was many things: intelligent, powerful, brave, passionate – but he was rarely sympathetic. He adopted a 'that's the way it is so deal with it' approach to most of the bumps life threw in his path.

He strode into the bedroom, his long black robes flaring behind him. His shoulder-length hair was completely grey, but his eyes were as arresting as ever. He had, as always, an indefinable presence which dominated the room. There was no question about it; Severus Snape was still a striking man.

I'm getting old and unattractive, but he still looks great, Hermione thought, resentment swelling again. *He won't have to go through night sweats or puerile magical outbursts... It's not fair! Why couldn't I have been born a man?* Immersed in her irrational funk, Hermione failed to notice the pamphlet in her husband's hand and the shell-shocked expression on his usually imperturbable features.

Severus sank slowly onto the bench at the foot of their bed. After a minute, he remembered to greet his wife. "Hello, my dear," he said in a hoarse voice.

At that, Hermione's head snapped up. "Severus, are you all right?"

"This morning, I overheard some students from my house," he replied faintly. "They were talking about me. They called me 'the Old Man of Slytherin.'" His voice expressed incredulity and Hermione felt an immediate pang of sympathy. She crossed the bedroom and sat beside him, placing her hand on his thigh. He covered her smaller hand

with his. "That's not the worst of it," he said. "I've just come from my annual physical. The Healer gave me this." He lifted the brochure from his lap and Hermione took it. 'Impotence and the Older Wizard' was emblazoned across its front.

Hermione offered her own pamphlet to Severus with a tiny smile. "Trade?"

With a wry twist of his lips, he plucked it from her fingers and they settled comfortably against each other to read.

A/N: Special thanks go out to my beta reader, Hechicera.